TUTORING DO'S AND DON'TS

Tutoring Do’s

There are several things as a tutor that one should do in order to maximize the experience for the student listed below are some basic characteristics and mannerisms that a good tutor should posses:

• Punctuality: If meeting one-on-one, the tutor should certainly set an example by being on time. If working in a drop in lab, the tutor should be on time and ready to begin helping the other tutors.

• Honesty: Don’t hesitate to say that you do not know about a particular concept. Trying to bluff your way through will only hurt the student and your reputation in the long run.

• Enthusiasm: If the tutor does not display a love for the subject they are tutoring, how can they expect the student to enjoy it. Come to the lab with a positive attitude that will rub off on the students.

• Hard work: Make sure you are familiar with the textbooks and the computer software that is available to students. This may take some time while you are not on the clock.

• Listening: The tutor should develop good listening skills so that they will better understand students’ misconceptions and errors.

• Willingness

• Maintain academic standards

• Good personal hygiene: If you smoke, you may want to use a breath mint.

• Mobility: Tutors should make themselves mobile if in an open lab. You should move quietly about the room at least 4 times during a 1 hour lab session. This helps the student get easier access to the tutor.

• Good questioners: The tutor should ask the student questions in order to evaluate a students understanding (see section on probing questions).

• Encourage independence: You do not want the student to rely on you at all times. Let them know that they must put forth an effort to benefit from tutoring.

• Patience: This is probably one of the most important characteristics of a tutor. Never act annoyed that the student does not know something. Even if they ask the most basic question, always demonstrate your patience.

• Maintain confidentiality: Any personal information such as medical conditions, handicaps, test sores should be between only you and the student.

• Introduce yourself and wear a name tag if in an open lab.

• Encourage the student to focus on learning how to learn.

• Encourage the students to identify several alternative study strategies from which to choose.
• Do allow for periods of silence. Avoid feeling like you have to interrupt a moment of silence by talking. Allow the student to reflect on the subject at hand before going on.

**Tutoring Don'ts**

• Sometimes a tutor can do more harm than good. Listed below are some things not to do when tutoring.

• Do not assume the role of the instructor. You are only to help them not replace them. You are only an assistant. As the assistant you are in the position to greatly enhance a student’s perception and understanding of a subject.

• Do not think of yourself as the dispenser of all truth and knowledge. Try to relate to your tutees as equals. Do not talk about all of the upper level course that you have had (unless they ask about it).

• Do not judge someone’s ability or intellect based on appearance or age.

• Do not allow your tutees to just scrape by. Challenge them to reach for the "A" instead of settling for a C.

• Do not use the tutoring lab as your personal dating service. This could do more than just hurt the students' grades; it could jeopardize your future.

• Do not let one student monopolize all of your time if you are in a drop in lab setting. Remember that you are trying to enable the student to become an independent thinker. This can't be done if they use you as a crutch the entire time.

• Do not introduce fancy ways you learned in your upper level classes to help the students solve their problems. Stick as close as you can to the way the instructor did it. If there is a slight variation that you know has worked well with others, you may want to share it, but be cautious! It is always safe to show them the way their instructor did it.

• Example: You may want to show a student another way to get a common denominator when adding or subtracting basic fractions. But you would not want to introduce limits to infinity to help an algebra student find asymptotes.

• Do not just sit in the chair staring out the window when there are students in the lab. This lackadasical method discourages students form asking you questions.

• Do not work the students’ assignments for them. In math, you may want to make up similar problems to work as examples and let them do the actual homework. For writing assignments you will want to make sure that you do not write their paper nor provide the main ideas for them. You should only be helping them generate their own ideas and helping them with the structuring of their paper.