



Guidelines for Tutors

ASK QUESTIONS

Part of being a good tutor is being a good listener. Students will come to you with their academic problems. Asking several initial questions may assist with a realistic plan for remediation.

- ✓ **Examples:** Have you been attending class consistently?
May I see your notes?
How much have you studied for the class?
What topic are you currently learning about in class?
May I see your homework?

Students should be able to answer these questions if they are cognitively able and willing to work hard on class material. If they have been keeping up with the work, then perhaps ask them to write a list of problems they are having with the class or questions that may require further explanation from the tutor.

If the student has not been attending class, doing the homework, or taking notes, this may be a **red flag** that the coursework is too difficult. The student may not have the foundational skills needed to complete the work, or that other factors outside of overall ability are interfering with their success:

SIGNS THAT THE CLASS MAY BE TOO DIFFICULT AND THE STUDENT NEEDS INTERVENTION (BEYOND TUTORING):

- ✓ **Examples:** “I don’t know what questions to ask you.”
“I can’t remember the information long enough to do this on my own.”
Asking the same question(s) repeatedly
Asking frequent questions regarding vocabulary—“What does this word mean, again?”
“Will you read this to me?”

- ✓ If you suspect that a student is in a class and they do not have the necessary fundamental skills to pass the class without excessive support, please discuss these concerns with Ron Dannemiller, Coordinator of Learning Support Services.

HOW TO KEEP STUDENT LEARNERS FROM BECOMING DEPENDENT ON YOUR HELP:

- ✓ Have the students prepare a list of written questions. Simply saying “I don’t know where to start” is unacceptable after the first tutoring session.
- ✓ Students need to write down your suggested strategies and guidelines.
- ✓ When you teach a concept, give the student a few minutes to practice that concept independently. Then, review the concept with that student.
- ✓ Set time boundaries. It is important for persons helping and receiving help to know they only receive two sessions a week with you, and that those sessions will not last longer than 1 ½ hours. Knowing these limits encourages students to come in better organized, to get their questions answered, and set necessary and appropriate limits.
- ✓ **Avoid discussing personal problems during tutoring sessions.** Keep focused on the subject matter. If a student is in need of additional support for personal reasons, refer them to Ron Dannemiller.

INDICATIONS THAT THE STUDENT IS TOO RELIANT UPON YOUR HELP:

- ✓ Blaming behavior: “You’re not helping me at all!”
- ✓ Making excuses: “I didn’t go to class because...,” “I didn’t do the homework because...,” “The teacher is out to get me,” etc.
- ✓ Refusal to follow policies, requests, or boundaries set by the tutor and/or The Office of Learning Support Services: failing to prepare for sessions, asking you for more time/sessions
- ✓ Continuing to discuss personal problems

TIPS TO HELP YOU IN THESE SITUATIONS:

If a student has trouble taking responsibility for their actions or is too reliant upon you, do not argue with them. You can use empathetic statements such as “I know that this is frustrating” or, “I understand that this is difficult.” Try referring back to the original list of questions: “Did you go to class this week? Can I see your notes?” If a student continues to blame you or refuses to answer your questions, end the session and refer him/her to Ron Dannemiller.

- ✓ If a student does not have a list of questions prepared or has not done their reading assignment(s), ask them to write down a list of questions before the session can proceed.

A FEW FINAL TIPS:

- ✓ Ask the student if s/he is following and comprehending your instruction.
- ✓ If a student has disclosed that s/he has attention deficits and/or issues with distractibility, you may need to take small breaks in order to maintain the student's concentration.
- ✓ Having a student attempt to teach the material back to you is always a good way to check his/her comprehension.