

Introduction to serving as a tutor or instructional aide



Congratulations on being selected to serve as a tutor or instructional aide! You will work with students in order to provide small group and/or individual assistance to those who need academic support. Your duties may also include teaching small groups, preparing materials and assisting during a variety of learning-based activities. You will take an active role in developing both academic skills and personal pride in your students. You have the unique opportunity to be a positive influence in the lives of others. Your experience is sure to be enriching and extremely rewarding!

As a tutor or classroom instructional aide, you will:

- Assist students with academic assignments.
- Provide assistance to teachers working with students during small group, one-on-one or other classroom learning activities.
- Serve as a role model by demonstrating appropriate social skills and behavior including language, dress, and interactions with students and other school personnel.
- Maintain a prompt and consistent schedule.
- Demonstrate positive, encouraging and respectful interactions with students.
- Participate in scheduled workshops, trainings and/or follow up meetings.
- Complete written assignments, student contact logs, data on student progress or other required documentation as directed by the program administrator or teacher.

Keys to Creating Positive Relationships

Students learn best when they feel respected and valued. Because of this, one of your most important tasks will be to establish and maintain a positive relationship with your students. Specific steps that will help you to earn your students' trust and respect include:

- Greet people by name. There is nothing as nice as a cheerful greeting. The sweetest music to anyone's ears is the sound of his or her own name.
- Smile. When you smile, your students will feel more at ease. Besides, it takes 72 muscles to frown and only 14 to smile!
- Choose to be happy. Speak and act as if everything you do is a genuine pleasure. Make sure your students feel that you truly enjoy your time together.
- Give service. What counts most in life is what we do for others. Your kindness will come back to you many-fold!
Be generous with praise. Notice the positive things that your students do and make a point to tell them.
- Be genuinely interested. Take a real and genuine interest in people. Make an effort to learn something special or unique about each of your students.
- Be considerate of others' feelings. Careless comments or disrespectful body language can unintentionally hurt feelings.
- Add humor, patience, and humility. Try not to take yourself too seriously. Have fun with your students.

Reflect:

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- Which of these "keys" do you value the most in your life? Why?
- Which of these "keys" do you feel is most important in working with students? Why?
- Think of your favorite teacher. How did that person earn your respect and trust? What qualities did you admire the most about him or her?
- Think of a time when you felt nervous or anxious and someone reassured you. What did that person do to make you feel comfortable?
- How could you reassure a student who was feeling anxious about working with you? How would you reassure a student who was anxious about taking tests?
- What types of nonverbal cues or body language would show a student that you were interested in helping? What types of nonverbal cues or body language could cause a student to feel hesitant about approaching you for help?

Dos and Don'ts

Do:

1. Express genuine pride in student success and accomplishment.
2. Maintain a relationship of respect with your students and other school personnel.
3. Show respect for your students' opinions, values and diverse cultural backgrounds.
4. Be patient. Students often need a lot of repetition and practice before learning a new skill.

5. Be flexible. There are usually several ways to approach the same problem. Consider your students' preferences.
6. Allow students adequate time to think. Avoid the temptation to respond too quickly or to talk too much.
7. Have students tell or write the process that they used to solve a problem. Make sure that your students understand how they arrived at an answer and why the answer is correct.
8. Be present and on time. Give your students your full, undivided attention.
9. Set a good example in your dress, language and behavior.
10. Ask your supervising teacher for suggestions and be willing to implement them.
11. Have fun. Students will respond to you if they can tell that you enjoy working with them.

Don't:

- Allow behaviors that distract from working productively with your students.
- Allow sarcasm, criticism, bullying or put downs of any kind.
- Compare students to one another.
- Discuss personal issues or engage in social media communication with your students.

- Speak negatively about a teacher or an assignment in front of your students.
- Show favoritism to any particular student or group of students.
- Use cell phones, have personal conversations with other staff members, or conduct personal business while in the classroom.
- Be afraid to ask your supervising teacher for help when confronted with challenging situations.

Motivate Students to Succeed

Qualities of Successful Tutors; Instructional Aides

List at least six personal qualities and attributes that you think someone should possess in order to successfully serve as a tutor or classroom instructional aide.

Now compare your answers with those of your classmates. Add at least four qualities and attributes that you did not originally identify, but that you think are also important.

" You will find, as you look back upon your life, that the moments that stand out are the moments when you have done things for others." -Henry Drummond

Promote a Growth Mindset

The human brain creates new cells and neural connections when it encounters new information and experiences. This means that we can actually improve the way our brains work. According to research conducted by psychology professor Carol Dweck, students who know and believe they can grow and improve have greater motivation and higher achievement than

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those who believe that their abilities are fixed or innate. The way that you interact and communicate with students can help them to develop a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006).

- Teach students that challenges help us to learn. The brain works like a muscle in that it grows with hard work, determination and practice.
- Acknowledge that learning involves struggle and effort. Help students to understand that disappointments and setbacks are a normal and expected part of the learning process.
- Share about a time when you had to persist, use a different strategy and/or seek help to overcome a learning challenge that you experienced.
- Discuss the value of the learning process. While grades are important, in the end, the goal is to grow, learn and understand.
- Embrace failure. Failing provides the opportunity to reflect, learn new strategies, and approach the task again with a deeper understanding. Through failure, we learn to face challenges and persevere to achieve goals.
- Teach students to use language that supports a growth mindset.

Fixed Mindset

Instead of thinking or saying,...

Growth Mindset

Try thinking or saying....

I'm just not good at this.

I can learn this if I am determined.

I'll never get it.

I'll use a different strategy and keep trying.

It's good enough.

I can always improve.

This is too hard.

This will take more time and practice.

I just can't do this.

I can train my brain to do this with practice.

I am discouraged when I make mistakes.

Mistakes are normal and help me to learn.

I give up when faced with challenges.

I persevere when faced with challenges.

This plan isn't working.

I can think of another plan.

I don't understand this.

I don't understand this YET.

I want to complete this perfectly.

I want to understand this concept.

I avoid challenges and I am afraid to fail.

I like to challenge myself.

Internet-Based Research Activity: Do an internet search on developing a growth mindset. Select two websites that contain information or resources that you could use in your work as a tutor or

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instructional aide. Explain how the websites would be helpful to you or your students.

Study Questions:

Review; Apply What You Have Learned

Section 1: Becoming an Effective Tutor or Instructional Aide

Name four responsibilities of a tutor or instructional aide.

How do you think that you can earn the respect and trust of your students? Include at least two specific ideas.

List four "Dos" for tutors and instructional aides.

Why do you think it is a bad idea to engage in social media communication or conversations about personal issues with your students? What are the potential pitfalls and negative consequences?

Suppose you witness someone calling one of your students names during lunch. How could you handle this situation?

How can you be respectful of someone's opinions even if you disagree with them?

Describe three ways that you can motivate your students.

What is the difference between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset?

According to research, why is it important to develop a growth mindset?

Section 1 Notes, Insights & Questions

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Section 2: Instructional Strategies that Work

Provide Positive Feedback & Encouragement

Everyone needs positive feedback and encouragement. Praise students when they work diligently or improve in a specific skill area. Be sure that your feedback and compliments are honest, thoughtful and genuine. Do not give students empty flattery, unearned praise, or false expectations as this can be insulting and patronizing. Here are some suggestions for providing helpful feedback in a positive and encouraging manner.

" You have improved in....."

Growth and improvement is something we should expect from all students. Students who struggle with academics or whose skills are below grade level should be particularly acknowledged for progress. Students will usually continue to try if they can see some improvement. Track improvement and provide specific, detailed feedback about the growth that you have observed. For example, " It took you less time to complete these difficult math problems today than it did last week." or " The last time that we worked together, you only remembered the definitions for three of your science vocabulary words, but this time you remembered 10!"

" You can help me (the teacher, the other student, etc.) by....."

Everyone wants to feel useful and important. Look for opportunities to allow your students to contribute. Be clear and very specific with students about how they can be helpful and acknowledge the contributions that students make.

" You do a good job of....."

Recognize and acknowledge small steps made academically as well as positive study habits, social skills or accomplishments in extra curricular activities. For example, your student may be struggling to learn a difficult concept, but you can still acknowledge the fact that he or she has not given up or that he or she has done a good job of seeking help and asking questions.

" First I'll show you an example, then let's try it together."

Be sure to offer assistance before students become frustrated. Give examples before asking students to do the work alone. Remember not to simply do problems for your students; but rather, work together in order to foster a sense of pride and accomplishment. If a student says that something is too difficult or hesitates to even try, encourage the student with the assurance that you will be there to provide examples and help along the way.

" Keep trying. Don't give up. You're really close."

When a student feels discouraged, encouragement can often help him or her to find the energy to persist. Be sure that your expectations are consistent with your student's ability and maturity level. Break tasks down into smaller, easier steps so that your student is able to feel some success and end your time together on a positive note!

99 Ways to Say " Very Good"

You're on the right track now.

SUPER!

You're doing a good job.

You did a lot of work today.

Now you have the hang of it.

That's the way!

You're really going to town.

Now you've figured it out.

You have mastered that skill.

That's RIGHT!

That's coming along nicely.

That's a lot better.

Good Work!

That's it.

Exactly right.

You should be proud of what you did today.

I'm happy you're working so well.

You've just about got it.

That's the best you've ever done.

Congratulations!

I knew you could do it.

Now you've figured it out.

Great!

Outstanding effort!

Not bad.

Keep trying-you are getting better.

One more time and you'll have it.

That's quite an improvement.

You're getting better at this every day.

You got it that time.

WOW!

That's the way to do it.

You haven't missed a thing.

Nice going.

Good for you.

You make it look easy.

Sensational!

That was first class work.

Nothing can stop you now.

Outstanding!

Terrific.

Now that's what I call a fine job.

FANTASTIC!

Superb!

You could teach this now!

You didn't give up and now you've got it.

You're hard work is paying off.

You've become an expert at this.

High 5!

Wonderful

Much improved.

You've just about mastered that.

You're doing beautifully.

You're really improving.

You certainly did well today.

You're doing fine.

Good thinking!

You are really learning a lot.

You rock!

It's a pleasure to teach you.

Marvelous!

That's really nice.

You remembered.

You figured that out really quickly.

You outdid yourself today.

That's the ticket!

FINE!

I couldn't have done it better myself.

You really make my job fun.

You must have been practicing.

This is easy for you.

Today you're hot!

You're all over that.

You're really focusing today.

AWESOME!

Cool.

Way to go!

I like how you tried a different strategy.

Seeing your progress is so exciting!

You must be very proud of yourself.

Right on!

Look at you go!

I like that.

You've really got the hang of this.

I respect the time you've spent practicing.

Good going.

You're learning so much!

Super duper.

I'm so proud of you.

You've done so much work today!

There's no stopping you now.

Okay.

You're on a roll.

Good for you.

EXCELLENT!

What an accomplishment!

You got # correct.

Beautiful!

You must feel great.

Make Study Skills Part of Each Session

You can make a lasting difference for students by teaching them how to study. In many ways, study skills can be more important than the specific

academic material that you will teach. Improved study skills benefit students in every subject area and last a lifetime! Try to end each session by giving your students a strategy or tip about how to study the information that you taught.

Here are some important study skills to teach students when you work together:

Organize: Teach students how to organize and keep track of work and upcoming assignments. Suggest creating a folder system for each subject or entering reminders and alerts about upcoming assignments into a smart phone or planner. Offer to assist your student to clean out his or her backpack. Ask how your student currently keeps track of assignments and teach ways to be more effective. Share helpful tips and strategies about organization.

Write, Rewrite, Highlight and Draw: The act of taking and rewriting notes helps students to remember information. Teach students to highlight key terms and essential facts or to draw small pictures in the margins of notes or on note cards to represent concepts. Encourage students to write important class material on flashcards and to review the cards each day. These visual strategies improve memory and recall of new information.

Break it Up: Research shows that students learn information more easily when it is divided into parts and studied over time. Teach students to divide information into chunks to be studied over several days or weeks instead of cramming to learn large amounts of information at once. Encourage students

to take 5-10 minute study breaks approximately every 45 minutes to allow the brain time to rest and absorb new learning.

Time Management and Planning: Talk with students about how they currently spend their time studying. Suggest that they create a consistent schedule for homework in order to keep themselves on track. Teach students to plan ahead and to schedule study time so that they are able to break large assignments into smaller parts.

Managing Distractions and Daydreaming: Ask students about what helps to keep them focused while studying. Does your student need to eat a snack first and turn off the television? Does it help to listen to music while working or does your student need a quiet study space? Does your student study best when he or she is alone or when working with a friend? Every student is unique and what helps one person may not be helpful for someone else. By asking questions, listening in a supportive manner and offering helpful suggestions without judging, you can help your student to discover how he or she learns best.

Keep it Real and Practical: Teach study skills while focusing on actual assignments and academic material. Showing students how good study skills can help them to complete their specific schoolwork is practical and useful. For example, teach note taking while looking over notes your student took in a history class. Practice time management and chunking large assignments into smaller parts while helping your student with an upcoming oral presentation or project.

Climb the Thinking Ladder!

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Skillful questioning by tutors and instructional aides empowers students and facilitates deeper learning. It is easy to fall into a pattern of asking students only basic content questions (level 1); however, more abstract questions are also necessary in order to help your students to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. Ask a variety of questions from the thinking ladder!