Helping Students Become Independent Learners

**Definitions:**

**Empathy:** Imagining yourself in another person’s situation so you can understand the reasons that he/she feels a certain way or “walking a mile in someone else’s shoes”.

**Tutor:** A person who is knowledgeable in a specific content area and provides help or clarification to one or more student(s).

**Helper:** Someone who assists another in coping with a difficulty. This can include simply listening or planning an alternative action.

**Chameleon:** An animal with the ability to change as needed-adaptable.

*Tutoring is a caring, helping relationship based on empathy not sympathy. You can communicate empathy to a student by listening, focusing on the student’s emotions and reasons for them and then helping to develop a plan to overcome the academic obstacles.*

**What are the goals of the Peer Tutoring Program?:**

- Personalize instruction for the student.
- Provide a student perspective on learning and student success.
- Help students learn how to learn.
- Lead students into discovering and finding the answer themselves.
- Provide support and encouragement.
- Increase the student’s self-confidence, study efficiency and motivation.
- Increase the probability of success.

*Success in tutoring is not tied to the grade a student receives but to the progress the student has made in understanding course content and improving their study skills.*
Do’s of tutoring:

- Provide an open environment where students can ask questions.
- Give the student your total attention during tutoring sessions.
- Be flexible with learning styles, adapting to the student’s needs.
- Let the student do their own work.
- Allow the student to answer their own questions.
- Use praise to encourage and show the student that they are headed in the right direction.
- Provide the student opportunities to use a resource other than yourself.
- Ask for help if you are not sure how to answer a question.

The most meaningful reward from tutoring is knowing that you have helped a fellow student.

Don’ts of tutoring:

- Your role as a tutor is not to provide the answers but to guide the student in finding the answer themselves.
- Do not take the pencil from the student. The student must be the active participant and do the work in order to learn the concept.
- Do not do all the talking. You can help the student more by listening in order to identify problem areas and suggest possible solutions.
- Do not lecture. Tutors are not instructors.
- Do not concentrate only on weaknesses. Tutoring can also build upon the student’s strengths.
- Do not share student’s confidential information with friends or family. Don’t break the trust that the students have placed in you.
- Do not become the student’s counselor. Refer them to Student Services at 769-7818.

Let the student do the work. By giving control of the process to the student, you will encourage active learning and increase the student’s self-confidence. The learning process can be frustrating and slow. Part of the learning process is also getting things incorrect and learning from it. If you are doing the work or “showing” everything to the student then the learning experience is yours and not the student’s. Turn the learning over to the student and guide their thinking but do not think for them. The more independent they become, the better tutor you are.