

Nothing to Fear

Dear future tutors,

Congratulations and welcome! You're one step closer to writing a letter to future tutors yourself. How do you feel? Not too nervous I hope. We were all in your shoes once. You're not alone, look around you, you're all about to embark on the same journey. Be excited because this is an awesome job!

The skills I learned in this class helped a great deal when applying them to tutoring sessions. In the beginning, I was very professional and rigid with my approach, but it's important to relax and help your tutees achieve their goals to the best of your ability, but also encourage that they be independent. Resist the temptation by not correcting every single mistake you may see wrong with your tutee's paper! It's so easy to do, but it won't help them because they won't learn. I learned how to identify my own mistakes when tutoring as well. For example, I adapted to each of my tutees personality. Some tutees are going to be more engaged and open than others and adapting to different personalities is a key factor to building trust. I learned that tutoring is so much more than explaining what a verb is and when to use the past or present tense, it's a process. Don't just try explaining grammar rules from your head; use the proper resources like the worksheets in the WRC to help guide you and your tutee. Also! If you're uncertain about something on their paper, say something like, "I was confused by x,y..." rather than saying, "You don't make sense here." This is very important because that can be taken offensively so remember to say "I" instead of "you", it takes the pressure off of the tutee.

There's much to expect as you begin your tutoring journey. Expect not to know every answer, it's okay, you're human! Expect to have a no show once or twice, but don't take it personally. Expect to explain yourself multiple times in a session; some are quicker learners than others. Expect to use other resources besides your own brain, again take advantage of them. Your explanation may not make sense to your tutee but something like a dictionary or website may. Also, always remember to listen to your tutee. The tutee should be doing most of the talking in a session. If you're not listening and reflecting back on what you think they're saying, then you're not tutoring properly. Expect to run out of time and expect too much time, it depends on how prepared your tutee is. Expect your best. Expect to have fun, not many people get a chance to help people the way you're about to.

Tutoring is not easy by any means, but it is so rewarding. Helping people with a language that is likely not their native one takes a lot of practice and patience, but being willing and empathetic helps a great deal. I wish you all the best of luck. Your tutees are in great hands!

Your fellow tutor,