

Peer Tutoring

SELF-DIRECTED TRAINING PROGRAM



2007-08 Revision 1

WELCOME

From small beginnings come great things.

First off, we want to thank you for applying to become a peer tutor! When we say that peer tutoring is an integral part of student life at Sheridan, we mean it.

Over and over, both tutees and tutors have benefited from the peer tutoring service: tutees have gained a better understanding of their course material and received better grades, while tutors have deepened their understanding of course material and expanded their work experiences. All in all, it's a great service for everyone involved!

Your peer tutor training has three components:

- This mandatory **self-directed training program** is designed to give you the core knowledge of what tutoring is all about. Make sure you read the complete document thoroughly.
- After studying the self-directed training program, come into the Career Centre to complete the brief **tutoring Fundamentals Quiz (TFQ)** which will test you on the information you've read. You must score at least 80% on the TFQ in order to become a tutor.
- Optional **facilitated training seminars** are presented on an occasional basis by our Staff tutors. The Staff tutors also act as mentors and resources to help you develop your tutoring skills.

Our training program will help you deal with the challenges and triumphs that will come your way as a tutor. The outcomes of the mandatory and optional training components are:

- Understand your roles and responsibilities as a peer tutor.
- Equip you with effective tutoring skills that are useful no matter what subject you tutor.



- Help you navigate through challenging aspects of tutoring.
- Become aware of the resources available to you as a tutor.
- Help you connect with other peer tutors.

You're never alone in this venture. If you ever encounter problems in tutoring, the Career Centre staff are here to help. Refer to the Reference section for other people and resources you can turn to for assistance.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

*"Before beginning, prepare carefully." -
Marcus Tullius Cicero, Roman philosopher*

At this point you may be worrying, "What have I gotten myself into? Can I really be a good tutor?" Rest assured, even the best tutors start out thinking the exact same thing. After reading this section, you will understand what your role as a tutor is and what your responsibilities are.

Roles

As we mentioned before, you are not alone in this venture. Before learning about your own role, it's good to understand who your "team members" are.

Tutees: Believe it or not, the students who you tutor (tutees) are part of the team! Without them, you would not be able to experience the satisfaction of seeing someone improve their academic skills with your help.

For many students, it's scary and humbling to admit their weakness in a certain subject area and seek out help. As a tutor, it's very important to recognize this and be sensitive and compassionate to even the crankiest tutees during the tutoring session. This will enhance the effectiveness of your tutoring interaction.

(Following this section, we'll outline how you should approach a tutoring session.)



Coordinators: One of the great things about working as a peer tutor is the independence. Your supervision is generally hands off. It is the tutee who is responsible for contacting you, the tutor, for help. From there, the two of you will decide when are the best times to meet, where on campus you'd like to meet, how your tutoring sessions should run, and what materials you need to cover.



On the other hand, it's not to say that staff are so hands-off that they won't assist you when you need some help! If you have any problems or concerns regarding any aspect of peer tutoring, don't hesitate to contact your coordinator. The coordinators are more than happy to help you out in any way they can.

Coordinators are in charge of the administrative and logistical aspects of peer tutoring. They are in charge of hiring tutors, orienting new tutors, matching tutors with tutees, processing payroll, and keeping usage statistics.

You can help them by doing your part:

- Hand in your tutor timesheets by each due date (listed on web site). This ensures that you'll get paid for your tutoring on a regular basis!
- Let them know if you are no longer able to take additional tutees (either temporarily or permanently).

Instructors: While you would not normally have much direct contact with instructors regarding tutoring, they are often the people who refer tutors and/or tutees to peer tutoring.

In general, peer tutors do not need to deal with instructors concerning a tutee's progress. In fact, in order to maintain confidentiality, tutors should not discuss a tutee's matters with their instructor, unless a special meeting has been arranged by the tutee to do so. However, such meetings with instructors are very rare.

Staff Tutors: Co-op students from the University of Waterloo are hired as staff tutors to provide English and math tutoring to students at Sheridan. They have a broad academic background and get much experience tutoring Sheridan students. Staff tutors are a great resource to turn to when you're having challenges with your tutoring sessions. They can provide tips and suggestions on how to navigate through obstacles and challenges that you may face while you work with tutees. Feel free to sign up for an appointment with them and discuss any tutoring questions or concerns that you may have.



As well, Staff tutors lead the optional facilitated training seminars on various tutoring-related topics. You can also refer your tutees to them for help with English, math or general study skills. They are always glad to help!



Tutors: This is you! You are the most vital part of the peer tutoring service. Without you, many students would be left in the dark about the course material they need help with.

Time and time again, tutors have played a key role in helping to steer a student's academic ability and strategy in the right direction. Because you have been in the student's shoes most recently, you're well equipped with the most relevant skills in helping others cope in the situation that you are familiar with.

With that said, it's also important to realize that you are NOT a miracle worker, no matter what your tutees (or even you) may think. What's most important to understand is that your main role is to help your tutees become independent learners.

Your ability to achieve excellent marks in your courses indicates that you likely have effective learning strategies in the courses that you are learning. In contrast, while your tutees have the capacity to learn, they may not be using the right method to learn. One of the most important roles you will play is helping a student find the most effective way of learning for themselves. Interestingly, it may be different from your own preferred strategy, but we'll go over some of the different strategies later on.

In summary, while it's essential to help students understand their course material, it's even more important to enable them to become independent learners. Being conscious of this fact will allow you to become an effective tutor.

Responsibilities

Take note, these are your top 5 responsibilities as a tutor:

1. As we mentioned before, more than anything, you are there to **help your tutees become independent learners**. The key is to make sure that your tutees don't rely on you to get their work done. They need to be empowered with skills, knowledge and confidence to do their own work.
2. **Confidentiality** is highly important in a tutoring setting. No one likes having their secrets revealed to just anybody. Creating an atmosphere where privacy is greatly valued helps a tutee develop a trusting relationship with you, which in turn makes for more effective tutoring sessions.
3. Even though you and your tutees are peers, remember to **be professional**. While tutoring sessions are more casual than learning in a classroom, staying professional will keep the student on task with the course material you need to cover.
4. Always **fill in your timesheets** and get them in on time. That way, you will get paid at regular intervals. Also, you need to keep track of any time missed by the tutee on your timesheet, and inform the tutee that they have missed time. Have them sign on the timesheet to indicate that they missed the time.
5. **If your schedule changes** and you need to change the status of your tutor file, please let the peer tutor coordinator know. More information about this will be discussed in the Administrative Issues section.



There are also some things that you are NOT responsible for as a tutor.

1. You are not a miracle worker. There's no obligation to help your tutee complete an entire assignment or plow through unreasonable amounts of work. Show them enough to get them going, confirm their understanding, but ultimately their success is their responsibility. Don't feel guilty for not having covered everything that the tutee wanted to cover. We'll review the progression of a typical tutoring session in the following section.
2. You are not responsible for having all the answers. If you honestly don't know how to answer something, just admit it to your tutee. Then find out yourself in preparation for your next tutoring session or point the tutee in the direction where they can find the answer they need.
3. You are not a teacher or professor. Your job isn't to teach students the entire course, but to clarify and deepen the understanding of the course material the tutee is having trouble with.
4. You are not your tutee's personal assistant. If your tutee demands more from you than your role as a tutor includes, be firm but patient and let him or her know the boundaries you have as a tutor. If your tutee continues to press you, have them come to the Career Centre to speak with the coordinator about their concerns.
5. You are not a counsellor. If a tutee displays what you perceive to be academic or emotional problems, you can suggest they make use of the Counselling and Disabilities Services office. If you're especially concerned about a particular tutee, one thing you can do is to walk him or her there.

Finally, it's good to be aware of what the responsibilities each of your tutees has.

1. Tutees are responsible for **attending classes**. They shouldn't be relying on you to learn and teach what they should be learning in class.
2. Tutees need to **do their own assignments**. You are only there to give them assistance on understanding concepts required for doing their work. You can show them examples of how to do the work, but not to do the actual work itself. Remember, your most important responsibility is to help them become independent learners.
3. Tutees have to **remember to show up at an appointment**. If they don't, they lose one hour of their tutoring time. The tutee also needs to verify on the tutoring timesheet that he/she has missed the time. Also, if the tutee needs to miss an appointment, he/she should inform you, at the latest, at the beginning of the day the appointment is scheduled for.
4. Tutees should **prepare themselves for the tutoring session**. Remind them that tutoring is a two-way process, and that by bringing any necessary materials (e.g. assignment sheets, textbooks, calculator) with them and reviewing any concepts you went over in previous sessions, you will both have a more effective tutoring session.
5. Tutees are the ones who **arrange for a re-match if schedule conflicts** make it impossible to find common appointment times. If this happens, remind your tutee that it's their responsibility to do so.

Give each of your tutees a **Roles & Responsibilities Reference Sheet** (see last page of this document) at your first meeting. Be sure to indicate on the sheet the circumstances under which they may contact you. Note that only in-person tutoring is paid. You may not claim hours for assistance provided via phone or email.

TUTORING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

"Listen or your tongue will keep you deaf." - Native American proverb

Introduction

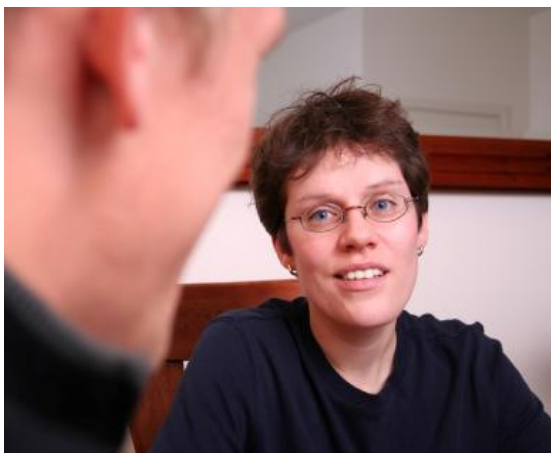
Here comes the good part of the training – you find out how to approach tutoring sessions and what to do! Before we get there, let's first explore the most important skill you'll need when you tutor: active listening.

Active Listening

Listening is a skill that we often take for granted, but **active listening** is a skill that needs to be learned. It's an invaluable tool required in tutoring settings. So what exactly does it involve?

The following are 5 key components of active listening.

1. **Focus on the person you're listening to.** It's incredibly easy to be distracted by your own thoughts when you're in a conversation with someone else. During tutoring sessions, it's very important to focus on what the other person is saying – not just verbally, but through their actions (e.g., facial expressions, yawns, etc.). It equalizes the relationship between tutor and tutee, which facilitates a better and more efficient tutoring session.



2. **Shut up and listen.** It's also incredibly hard to resist jumping in the middle of someone's sentence to correct them when you know they're wrong. However, taking the time to hear what they have to say is a helpful way to understand a person's way of thinking or their logical flow. Hearing them out will give you more insights as to what you can do to help your tutee more effectively.
3. **Paraphrase and clarify what the person has said.** Active listening isn't just about sitting there and taking it all in. You also need to reword what's been said and clear up any confusing or vague statements. You not only come to a full understanding of what the person means, but also show the speaker that they're being understood by the listener.



Here's an example of paraphrasing. If a tutee says something like this:

"I really hate this stuff. I just don't get it."

You might try responding:

"So you really don't like doing this work because it confuses you."

Afterwards, allow the tutee to fill in the details or expand on their comment.

4. **Cater to the speaker's needs.** All of us want to be heard and cared for accordingly. As a tutor, pay close attention to what your tutee is saying (including body movements) and make sure that you give a response whenever one is asked for (either directly or indirectly). If you are able to address your tutee's needs as they come up, not only will you have a more effective tutoring session, you will also gain the trust of your tutee.
5. **Be empathetic.** This skill requires you to read deeper into what the tutee is saying. It starts with stating what you think the tutee is feeling, and then continues with an evaluation of that feeling. Again, it helps the tutee feel understood, which helps him or her open up more. This, in turn, facilitates effective tutoring.

Here's an example of empathetic listening. If a tutee says something like this:

"I'm just so lost in the work. I don't know what to do."

You might respond:

"It sounds like you're pretty overwhelmed with your course, and you're not quite sure how to start your assignment."



The First tutoring Session

"A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step."

- Lao Tzu, founder of Taoism

While you and your tutee will probably be nervous during the first session, ideally it should be a relaxed and informal interaction.



Here are few things you should do during the first session:

1. **Don't focus on school work.** Instead, take the time to get to know your tutee. Talk about their day or how the term has been so far. Find out about his or her program, academic interests and goals. Also, ask about their personal interest in the program. This will establish a friendly working relationship with the tutee, which is always a nice way to start off.
2. **Determine exactly what kind of help the tutee is looking for.** All you need to do is ask. If the tutee replies with "everything", suggest more specific subject areas to focus on. As a tutor, you can't tackle the entire subject with your tutee anyway. Remember: It's not your job to teach the entire course.
3. **Discuss how you'll set out to achieve the goals.** It's best to set some goals and expectations right from the beginning, rather than set yourself up for disappointment at the end. At the same time, don't feel as if you need to meet the goals of the tutee fully. Talk about your own limitations as a tutor, and be realistic when you set the goals and expectations together.

- 4. Decide on tutoring parameters and guidelines.** Your tutees will be eager for help. Some, however, may be overly eager. It will be in your best interests to set some parameters when you begin tutoring. Besides limiting the time you tutor a tutee, we suggest you restrict phone and e-mail contact to appointment scheduling only. That way, you won't be flooded with calls and e-mails about course material from your tutee. After all, you have a life to live too. However, it's up to you to be clear about this with your tutee.

We have created a **Roles and Responsibilities Reference Sheet** that you can go over with your tutee so that you both know what to expect. In the first session, your tutee may not know exactly what he or she wants. In fact, your tutee is probably looking to you for direction. Take the leading role in guiding them along in goal and expectation setting, and you'll be well on your way for the term.

Later tutoring Sessions

"Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I'll understand." - Chinese Proverb

After you've gotten to know a bit about your tutees, what happens next? Well, essentially, you keep building the relationship you have with the tutee.

Just like snowflakes, no two students are exactly alike. This proves to be an interesting challenge for tutors, who have to constantly come up with new ways of teaching students the same concepts, perhaps attempting several methods in one tutoring session.



Realize that not everyone learns in the same way as you do. Diablo Valley College has an excellent page describing the four most common learning styles that students use and some useful strategies that benefit them (<http://www.metamath.com/lsweb/fourls.htm>). Read through the site carefully, and note the 4 learning styles and their associated strategies. You will have the opportunity to learn more about learning styles and strategies at an optional facilitated training seminar.

Furthermore, every subject will require slightly different tactics for tutoring. Here is a list of general questions you can ask to keep the tutee engaged in the session. You may want to have these questions close by during sessions in case you get stuck.



Starting the session

- What do you think would be important for us to study today?
- Have you been given an assignment on any of this material?
- Do you have an information or guideline sheet for this assignment?
- How far along did you get?
- How do you feel about learning this?
- Do you remember what we talked about in the last session?
- Can you explain what we did in your own words?

During the session (a.k.a. What to do when your tutee stares blankly at you)

- Have you had a chance to study these things before?
- Do you understand the things we are going over?
- Do you have any questions?
- Am I confusing you?
- Do you understand well enough for us to move on, or do you want to go over the material again?
- Do you understand enough to explain it back to me?
- Are you feeling tired/bored right now?
- Am I making this easy to understand?



Ending the session

- What have you learned today?
- Can you summarize what you learned briefly for me?
- What would you like to cover next time? (It's a good idea to write these down for your own reference!)
- Do you want to continue meeting here?
- Tell me what work you are planning to do between now and when we meet next.

Remember, the questions you ask should be open-ended. This allows tutees to engage in the tutoring session, which in turn helps them to remember the information better.



As well, remember to end the session on time. However, if you feel that there is something important you need to cover before the end of the session that won't take too long, you can do so. In your interest, it's best to tell your tutee that you are making an exception for that particular session. If you don't, there's a danger of your tutee expecting you to spend extra time with them all the time. Always manage expectations and be aware of setting unwanted patterns.

Tutoring Troubleshooting Guide

"You won't find a solution by saying there is no problem."

- William Rotsler, American author

While it's easy to lay blame on your tutee for problematic tutoring sessions, consider the fact that you might be the one using ineffective and untailed tutoring methods.

At the same time, we don't expect you to be a perfect, flawless tutor. tutoring is also a learning process. To help you along in becoming a better tutor, we've put together a brief troubleshooting for you to follow if you encounter any situation that you find challenging or don't know how to handle. It's not comprehensive but does cover many common situations.

(This chart is adapted from Wheelock College's "How should a tutor handle a difficult tutoring session?" in the *Peer Tutor Handbook*.)

Problem	Possible Solution(s)
<i>I don't know the answer to the client's question!</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Don't worry! It's okay to admit that you don't know the answer. •You can either let them know that you will try to find the answer for your next session (or by e-mail, if it's something quick and simple), or point them to a place where they can find the answer.
<i>The client seems to be dozing off or spacing out when I talk.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •You might be using the wrong teaching strategy. •Find another way of showing them the same concept. You might need to attempt a few different learning strategies before you find the way that works best for your particular student.
<i>I seem to be doing all the work in the tutoring sessions.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Your ability to resist doing the client's homework may be weak. But remember: your main objective is to help a student become an independent learner. Some students are particularly gifted in manipulating other people to help them do their work. •Tactics to try include downplaying your role and focusing your student on a specific task. Also, ask them what they are expecting from you, so that you can clarify their needs and priorities.
<i>When I show the client something, he/she just whines and says he/she can't do the work.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •What your client appears to suffer from is a low frustration tolerance, which means that they'd rather not do the work than have to try hard to do it. •Your job here is to find the areas they are good at and compliment them. This shows that they do have some knowledge about the subject. Next, build on what they know. Finally, give them a lot of support. In this case, slow and steady will win the race.

Problem	Possible Solution(s)
<p><i>The client seems to be really, really confused with the course material. He/she keeps saying things like “I don’t know what to do,” or “I try but keep getting bad marks.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Your client is probably feeling a little helpless and disoriented by the class. They probably feel like nothing makes any sense. ●Use the strategy described in the box above. Also, help your client get organized with their course material. Also, instead of tackling everything at the same time (which adds to the feeling of being overwhelmed), cover one topic at a time. Make sure there is a lot of structure in the way you cover each topic. ●As well, the client may have poor study skills. Ask if he or she has some trouble organizing the way they study, and if he or she says they do, refer them to the staff tutors at the Career Centre to get some study skills tips. You can also refer him or her to the Student Advisement Centre for additional help and resources.
<p><i>I can’t get the client to be more specific about his/her needs, but they seem eager to learn. I’m not sure where to start because he/she is just so vague.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●It looks like your client is doing some miracle seeking, perhaps hoping that you are the assignment completing machine. For your part as a tutor, realize that you are not. ●Reaffirm that you are only more familiar with the subject that you are tutoring, and downplay your role as a tutor. Also, explain that active participation in the tutoring session will help them understand the material better. Then, ask which specific tasks they’d like to focus working on, and engage the client as much as possible.
<p><i>The client just sits there looking bored and uninterested.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●It’s possible that the client isn’t at the tutoring session on their own, free will. They were either sent by an instructor to see you, or buckled into mounting pressure from family or friends to get help. ●It’s important to stress building the relationship between you and the tutee in the first session. You’ll probably need to establish your credibility as a tutor (e.g. point out you’ve taken the course before and you got good marks in it), and assure the student that everything you discuss together will be kept confidential. Later on, allow the client to vent their frustrations (and don’t interrupt their venting, because they won’t stop until it’s out of their system), empathize with them, then get them back on task.
<p><i>I’m frustrated with the client who constantly comes to me at the last minute for help.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Your client is displaying a classic case of procrastination. ●Your job is to remind them what tutoring is for (i.e. to help them improve their academic ability, not to complete their homework), and encourage them to book an appointment with you at least one week beforehand so you have more time to work on their skills.

Tips for Peer Tutors

“Human beings, who are almost unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are also remarkable for their apparent disinclination to do so.” - From Last Chance to See, by Douglas Adams, author

There’s nothing better than learning from those who have gone before you. Fortunately, past staff tutors and peer tutors at Sheridan have been kind enough to share some of their tips and wisdom:

- **Get to know your tutee and build a rapport with them.** It makes for more comfortable sessions with your tutee.
- **Be patient.** Other students may not be as fast at learning the subject as you are, so make sure they understand what you’re showing them before you move on. This might be a slow process, but the goal is not to cover as much material as you can.
- **Repeat and emphasize an important concept.** This helps drive home what’s important for the student to learn.
- **Watch for body language.** For example, when you show a tutee something, and they nod but have a blank look on their face, it’s a good indication that they don’t actually understand. Now is a good time to ask how well they understand what you are saying.
- **Be ready to use different tactics with different tutees.** Everyone has different ways of learning. One easy tactic to try is writing down the key points of what you’re saying. Visual learners appreciate seeing what you’re saying on paper, while auditory learners benefit most from you talking.
- **Speak slower, not louder.** You’ve probably seen scenes of movies where one person will speak louder when another doesn’t seem to comprehend, to no real useful effect. Avoid doing this. When your student doesn’t seem to understand something, just say it slower, rather than louder.
- **Keep checking if they understand by asking them questions** It’s better to demonstrate the same concept a few times rather than give your whole lesson and realize that the tutee had no clue what you were saying the whole time.
- **Encourage and affirm the tutee’s work.** It’s always nice to be praised for a job well done, and this works with tutoring as well. Whenever you see that your tutee is understanding something you’re teaching, praise them. It will keep them engaged.
- **Summarize what was covered at the end of the session.** Better yet, have your tutee summarize what you covered. That way, you can confirm whether they understood what you were showing them. You’ll also know what to cover in the next session you have with them.
- **Enjoy yourself!** tutoring can be one of the most challenging yet rewarding things you’ll do in your career as a student.



Skills Application!

Scenario 1: Blocking, Confusion, and Resisting

A first year Sheridan student named Teri Lynne is in desperate need of tutoring in her finance class. After only one week into the term, she has found herself struggling on the very first section of the text, which is supposed to be the review material. Teri explains to her tutor that she hasn't taken a math class since grade 10 and has been out of school for several years. A first look at Teri's notes shows that she simply copies down everything the professor says or writes, and she has no comprehension of what is actually happening in the class. Teri seems completely disorganized.

As the tutor tries to explain the basic principles and first topics of the class, Teri becomes frustrated. She explains that not only does she not understand the math fundamentals required for the course, but also has no idea what the class is trying to teach.

Given repeated examples, Teri still has problems trying to answer questions on her own. After 20 straight minutes of studying one topic, Teri gives up. She decides that on tests and assignments, she will skip the section dealing with that specific topic and attempt to learn the rest of the material.



The student seems to have a very low tolerance of frustration. Because of this, the student has very little understanding of the entire course and is confused about what the instructor wants. She is also very uninterested in the class material and angry that she must learn the material.

This student is demonstrating signs of **blocking, confusion, and resisting**. In order to help her as much as possible, the tutor should:

- a) Keep showing and describing examples of the current material until she starts to get a basic understanding.
- b) Determine what the student does know and show her that she has some foundation. Begin from what she knows and use simple steps.
- c) Advise the student that she probably does not belong in this course and should think about withdrawing or transferring.

Answer: The tutor should determine what the student does know and show her that she has some background knowledge. Begin from what she knows and use simple steps, while offering continual support. Give some structure to the student's course notes and papers, and show her how the class has progressed and the material has developed. Also, the tutor must be understanding and can indicate past successes in similar situations. Make sure the student knows the material is important for her course and her program.

Skills Application!

Scenario 2: Miracle Seeking and Over-Enthusiast

An older Sheridan student named Janet has just started her 3rd year and is finding her classes to be a bit more challenging than before. One morning, while reviewing the course outline for a class, she realizes she has been neglecting assignment due dates and midterm dates. Janet has to complete a major assignment in two days and write a midterm on the Monday following the weekend. She found the peer tutoring service helpful in previous years, so she signs up again and is matched for an appointment the following day.

Janet arrives at the appointment and explains her situation. The tutor is in awe at how much work Janet must complete. There is no possible way he can help her with this major assignment and review all the information needed for the midterm within one tutoring session. He explains to Janet that he cannot do the assignment for her, but what he can do is review the material covered on the assignment. That way Janet can complete the work on her own while learning some of the midterm material.

Janet had high expectations of the tutor and was depending on him to provide enough help to get her through this stressful week. Now, after hearing the tutor explain that he is not a miracle worker, she feels overly frustrated. Janet tells the tutor how she simply does not have the time to study for all of her classes while keeping up with her work obligations. Janet seems like she is about to give up.



The student has an incredible amount of work to complete which the tutor couldn't possibly help with in one tutoring session. When explaining why she has left studying and assignments to the last minute, she states that there is not enough time in her schedule to do everything. This student shows signs of **miracle seeking and over-enthusiasm**. In order to help this student through her frustrations, the tutor should:

- a) Help the student study for the midterm by doing the assignment together.
- b) Tell the student to focus only on the midterm because it is worth more marks. Take as many short-cuts as possible to complete the assignment.
- c) Explain the significance of active participation in the learning process and the importance of keeping up with assignments and studying.

Answer: The tutor should offer encouragement to the student that she has time for school related work, but it may mean a little less time for recreation. As for helping prepare for the upcoming exam, the tutor should focus on specific tasks or the subject at hand that may require more attention than others. Helping to prioritize which course material should be studied first will ensure that at least the most important topics are learned for the exam. The tutor should explain the significance of active participation in the learning process. Keeping up with assignments and midterms is a very important aspect of the learning process.

Skills Application!

Scenario 3: Passivity and Evasion

A student named John Skeen signs up for a peer tutor to help him with his Java homework assignment. It is his first year at the post-secondary education level and the first time he has seen any computer programming language. John attends all of his classes on a regular basis, but just feels a little extra one-on-one attention will help him complete assignments much quicker.

At the first tutoring session, John arrives with nothing more than the current week's assignment and his text book, which he admits he hasn't opened. After the introductions, John explains his situation and shows the tutor his assigned work, asking for help with the very first question. The tutor glances over the question, taking in all relevant information, and gets an idea of the Java principles that should be applied. The tutor then explains to John what exactly the question is asking and quickly reviews with John the principles he learned in class, that might help with the solution. John assures the tutor that he remembers all the lecture material, but does not know how the material should be applied to the question.

As an example, the tutor demonstrates how the Java rules can be applied. However, during the description, John sits quietly, staring blankly at the tutor as she demonstrates a similar problem. When the explanation is over, John stays quiet, staring at the assignment. John then asks the tutor how she would apply those principles to this particular example on his assignment.



The student seems to be attempting to manipulate the tutor into doing the assignment work for him. John Skeen participates very little in the discussion of the material and does not pay attention when the tutor reviews the principles. John only wants the tutor to do the assignment for him. The student is showing signs of **passivity** and **evasion**. This is shown by a lack of participation in the session and manipulation of the tutor's responsibilities. In order to handle this difficult session, the tutor should:

- a) Get the student involved by doing another example and continuously asking him questions.
- b) Show the student how to complete the question, using hints and tricks.
- c) End the tutoring session and tell the student to come back another day after attempting the question.

Answer: The tutor should involve the student as much as possible in the session. She can do this by continuously asking questions and establishing mini-tasks for the student to complete. Also, empathizing with the student will help build a relationship and mobilize the student. The tutor should also explain the importance of completing the assignment individually to reinforce the topics learned in class.

Student Services

“Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us daily.” - Sally Koch

This is a very brief summary of the available services at Sheridan. These are resources to which you can refer your tutee if you believe it may be of help to them. For detailed information on these services consult the Student Handbook.

Athletics

Offers a variety of opportunities to play sports, get healthy, and meet some new people. Both the Davis and Trafalgar campuses have gymnasiums and workout rooms that compare with some of the popular fitness centres in Oakville and Brampton. Athletics also offers various recreational and intramural activities to students.

Career Centre

Free math and English tutors on staff. Employment Advisors help students write cover letters, create effective resumé, and prepare for interviews. They also help students market themselves and find jobs. Career Counsellors help students find a career path that suits their unique qualities. They also answer questions students have concerning post-graduate education at university or another college.

Cooperative Education

Co-op placements give students a jump start on their careers by giving them valuable, on-the-job work experience while completing their academic studies. Benefits of the co-op program include: exposure to role models in the workplace, experience in the practical aspects of school material, and a large network of contacts. Students can largely fund the cost of their education and depend less on loans.

Counselling Services

Counselling Services are available to assist students with academic or personal issues that may impact their wellness or success.

All services are provided free of charge in a respectful, sensitive, private and confidential basis at a drop-in, individual or group session. Students may seek counselling for issues such as: coping with anxiety, sleep disturbances, financial problems, coping with loss or grief, confidence and self esteem.

Disability Services

The Disability Services Office offers equal access for students with disabilities by coordinating reasonable academic accommodations and support services. Accommodation plans and services are tailored to correspond with the disability related needs of each student and are determined based on the documentation provided and program specific requirements. Sheridan Disability Services provides the following services to support student academics:

- Testing accommodations
- Educational assistants
- Orientation
- Print enlargements
- Peer assistants
- Taped texts
- Extended programs
- Note takes
- Assistive technology

Health Services

Health Services are available at Sheridan’s Trafalgar and Davis campuses and offer professional health care, lifestyle and health counselling, and referrals for students. Registered nurses and physicians handle emergency matters, minor treatment, and health education and promotion on a strictly confidential basis. Health Services also offers health education. Students can learn about maintaining a healthy lifestyle, eating properly, nutrition, and more.

Library Services

Library Services offer a wide variety of resources, including an extensive catalogue of books and periodicals, internet access, network access to electronic databases of full-text newspaper and magazine articles, as well as a broad selection of audio/visual resources. Each library is also equipped with a quiet study hall, audio/visual equipment, printing and photocopying facilities, and computers for both dedicated research and drop-in use by students.

Student Advisement Centre

The Student Advisement Centre provides students with the advice, information and assistance needed to successfully navigate their way through their college experience. If the Advisement Centre does not have the answer, they will help students find the answer. From Orientation through to graduation, when questions arise, the Student Advisement Centre encourages students to stop in and get the assistance they need, including referrals to other Sheridan resources and departments.

Test Your Knowledge!

Scenario 1

Amanda has just begun her post-secondary education. After a couple of her classes, she decides a peer tutor may help her better understand the material discussed in the lectures. However, Amanda has taken very few (and barely legible) class notes. Amanda explains she does not have complete use of her hands and in high-school she was assigned a teaching assistant to help her take notes and complete work. The tutor should direct Amanda to:

- a) Counselling Services for counselling in learning strategies .
- b) Health Services for a referral to a health specialist in the community .
- c) Disability Services to discuss academic accommodation .

Answer: Amanda should visit Disability Services. They can coordinate reasonable academic accommodations and support services. Plans and services are tailored to correspond with the disability related needs of each student.

Test Your Knowledge!

Scenario 2

A first year student enrolled in the General Business Administration program arrives for his first peer tutoring session. His name is Brent and he hasn't decided which option (marketing, accounting, finance, human resources) he plans to follow in second year. After a fairly productive tutoring session, Brent asks the tutor what he thinks the best option would be. The tutor should:

- a) tell Brent which option is the most interesting and rewarding.
- b) direct Brent to the Student Advisement Centre.
- c) direct Brent to the Career Centre.

Answer: The Career Centre employs a full-time Career Counsellor who can help Brent decide what option would be best suited to his unique interests and abilities. The Career Counsellor can also provide information on the labour market, i.e. which industries are experiencing more growth, employment outcomes for various Sheridan programs, etc.



Scenario 3

Renee is a first year student at Sheridan who has moved from British Columbia to Oakville for her post-secondary education. Her family still lives in a small town north of Vancouver. Renee has signed up for peer tutoring for a few of her subjects, and arrives to her very first session late. She apologises for her tardiness and explains how busy she has been since classes started. Renee seems extremely stressed out from her workload and shows signs that she may be losing sleep due to stress and homesickness. The tutor should suggest that:

- a) Renee check out the disabilities office .
- b) Renee should visit a counsellor at Counselling Services .
- c) Renee should seek help from Health Services

Answer: Counselling Services can assist Renee with her problems. Counselling is available for coping with stress and homesickness, as well as dealing with time management and sleep disturbances. Students have commonly sought counselling for these issues and a variety of others. Health Services may also help Renee manage her sleeping related problems and manage her stress.

Administrative Issues

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” - Henry Ford, Founder of the Ford Motor Company

Now that you’ve learned the basics of tutoring and found out what supports you have as a peer tutor, it’s time to cap things off by reviewing your administrative responsibilities.

We understand that **your schedule might get busy and that you can’t take on new clients, or that you can’t do any tutoring in a particular semester**. Please indicate your request for a “hold” at the bottom of the last time sheet you submit, or come into the Career Centre and let the Peer Tutor Coordinator know. We will put a hold on your file until such time as you let us know you are ready for more tutees.

You need to **submit your timesheets and part-time pay sheets regularly by noon**, on the dates listed on the web site (print a copy for your reference) or you are liable to not be paid for the time you tutored. This will ensure that you get paid regularly.

Each tutee is entitled to a maximum of 10 hours of tutoring per semester, per subject, up to a maximum of 3 subjects. If a client doesn’t use up the 10 hours, they cannot transfer the time to another subject or semester. The \$20 fee is for matching with a tutor, not tutor wages. If your tutee has questions or misunderstandings please refer them to speak with the Peer Tutor Coordinator in the Career Centre.

If a client requests more than 10 hours of help (per subject, per semester), **you will not be paid for any additional time beyond that limit**. If your tutee wants additional help, you can make a private arrangement for them to pay you directly. We suggest that you charge them at a rate of \$10/hour, so that it is consistent with your rate of pay here at Sheridan. The arrangements you make are entirely at your own discretion. You have no obligation to tutor beyond 10 hours.

Appointments with clients must take place on campus, due to safety reasons. On campus, you can feel free to choose any place that both of you find suitable, including the Career Centre. You can meet on campus any day of the week.

Try your best to find a suitable time to meet with your client. However, if you really **cannot find a mutually agreeable time to meet with your client**, refer them to the Peer Tutor Coordinator so they can be rematched with another tutor.

Timesheet Tutorial

Avoid delaying your pay by (a) submitting timesheets no later than noon on or before timesheet submission dates, and (b) taking note of this tutorial and instructions on timesheet.

Timesheet submission dates are available in the **Downloads** section of the Career Centre web site: <http://careercentre.sheridaninstitute.ca>

Column Descriptions:

1. Name of tutee.
2. Program tutee is in.
3. What semester (1-8) of program is tutee in?
4. What year (1-4) is tutee in?
5. What subject did you tutor this person in? (abbreviate, if required) or use course code.
6. Date that tutoring took place (or date of no-show).
7. Number of hours tutored.
8. Tutee must sign to verify.

For group tutoring, write down the number of hours you tutored the ENTIRE GROUP in the table for each individual.

Sheridan
PEER TUTORING
Report of Tutoring

Please read instructions below before completing form

Tutor Name: Jon Smythe Student Number: 123 456 789

This report covers the time period Sept. 4, 2007 to Sept. 14, 2007 inclusive

Tutee's Name	Program	Sem	Yr	Subject	Date Tutoring Took Place	Number of Hours Provided	Tutee's Signature
<u>Craig Whitburn</u>	<u>Acct Fund.</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Life Draw</u>	<u>Sept 4</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>Chris Robinson</u>
<u>Suz Abound</u>	<u>Animation</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Life Draw</u>	<u>Sept 6</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Suz Abound</u>
<u>Vicky Adnan</u>	<u>Animation</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Life Draw</u>	<u>Sept 9</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Vicky Adnan</u>
<u>Daniella Lee</u>	<u>Acct Fund.</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Char. Des.</u>	<u>Sept 11</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>Daniella Lee</u>
<u>Chris Duguesen</u>	<u>Acct Fund.</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Char. Des.</u>	<u>Sept 11</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>Chris Duguesen</u>
<u>Neil Blundell</u>	<u>Animation</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Life Draw</u>	<u>Sept 13</u>	<u>N/S</u>	<u>Neil Blundell</u>

Total Individual Hours Tutored: 7.0 Total Group (2 or more students) Hours Tutored: 1.5

I certify that this is an accurate report of my tutoring hours for the time period indicated above.

Tutor Signature: _____

*Instructions:
 1. Each tutoring session must be signed by the tutee. Enter "n/s" for a "no-show" (claim 0.5 hours—see the Tutoring Coordinator for more details).
 2. Keep track of your hours. Each tutee is entitled to 10 hours of tutoring per subject each semester. You will not be paid for tutoring in excess of this limit (no exceptions).
 3. Hand in these reports with your Sheridan paysheets regularly. You may not carry over hours more than two pay periods.
 4. Tutors may work a MAXIMUM of 10 hours per week.

Hold (if applicable) - Please do not sign for any more tutees for now (just a hold on my file). If not contact The Career Centre should I wish my file to be re-activated.

<http://careercentre.sheridaninstitute.ca>
 Traf-D103 Davis-8219 · Traf x2533 Davis x5362
 Career Counselling · Educational Planning · Tutoring
 Job Postings · Employment Advising · Career Events

- Fill in your name and student number.
- These are the first and last dates that you tutored for this timesheet period.
- This information needs to be filled out with every student. Please see below for further details.
- "N/S" stands for "no show." Indicate this in the hours slot (0.5 hrs for N/S)
- Add up the total INDIVIDUAL and GROUP session separately.
- Please remember to sign your timesheet.
- Make sure you read these instructions carefully before you fill out your first timesheet.
- Check off this box if you want your file to be placed on "hold."

CHALLENGES AND REWARDS

Peer Tutoring: The Challenges

Sometimes, tutoring can be a stressful thing, and you may feel like you're stuck in a rut. We interviewed some Sheridan Peer Tutors to see what some of their challenges are, and we also compiled some tips of how to deal with these challenges. We hope that these tips will help refresh your tutoring experience.

Balancing the need to do your own work while spending time tutoring students.

Your own work should always come before that of others. If you find that tutoring is taking up quite a bit of time in your schedule, come to the Career Centre to put your file on "hold."

Having conflicting schedules with your students

If you are consistently having trouble finding a time to tutor students who approach you, have the student come back to get rematched with another tutor.

Getting frustrated that the students aren't understanding what you're showing them.

It's probable that your current technique is not working for the student. Try a few different techniques with your students. Check out the different learning style strategies at <http://www.metamath.com/lsweb/fourls.htm> for other techniques you can try with your student.

Getting students to understand the basics and coming down to their level.

Just remember that students often don't share the same level of understanding as you. Working from the student's level up might take some getting used to, but it's the most beneficial tactic you can use.

Realizing that you may not know everything that the students need.

This isn't a bad thing. After all, you're a student yourself! If you honestly don't know the information your student needs, admit it and point them to a place where they can get it.

Assessing where the students are in the course, and figuring how to help them progress in their learning.

This is another skill that will take some practice, since it differs with every student. Try using the questions listed in "Section 2: Later Tutoring Sessions" to assess students.

Experiencing communication barriers, especially with ESL students.

The key here is patience. You may need to speak slower (but not louder), and simplify the vocabulary that you're using. Also, you can suggest that your student visit the English Tutor at the Career Centre to improve their written and spoken skills.

Finding out that there are differences in the way instructors teach the course and they way you tutor the course with your students.

There are two approaches to this challenge, and the tactic you choose depends on the course you are tutoring. For some courses, demonstrating a different way of learning the material can help clarify the confusion for the student. For other courses, it's best to stick with the way the instructor has taught the material, since the instructor is the one who is going to mark any tests and assignments.

Not knowing how to end a session properly

It's easy to let the tutoring session go on and on sometimes. When the time is over, be firm when you end it. Also, it's good to have the student summarize what you covered in the session. It helps you figure out what you need to cover in the next session. For more questions to ask to end a session, refer to "Section 2: Later Tutoring Sessions."

Interpreting the reactions of students to see if they understand the material you've just showed them.

This is another aspect of tutoring that you will learn over time. Sometimes, there will be trial-and-error of trying out different tactics to the reactions you observe. Don't worry if a certain tactic doesn't "work" – just try another approach until something works.

For more information on navigating through challenges encountered during tutoring, refer to the *Tutoring Troubleshooting Guide*.

Peer Tutoring: The Rewards

Every challenging task has its rewards. Here are some of the rewards that Peer Tutors shared about their experiences tutoring others.

- Seeing the improvement in students' work, especially if they believed that they couldn't improve.
- It is flattering to see students request tutoring from you because they see something in your work they want to emulate.
- The opportunity to interact with other people.
- Reviewing the material for myself while I help others with it.
- Knowing that you're helping someone who is struggling.
- Receiving a source of income to help with everyday expenses.
- Sharing and talking about a subject that I enjoy.
- Creating a set of invaluable interpersonal skills that can be applied in a variety of places and situations.
- Gaining more work experience and being able to put "Sheridan Peer Tutor" on my résumé.
- Collaborating with students and staff to improve and better the learning community at Sheridan.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

The term learning disabilities refers to a variety of disorders which may affect the way an individual takes in, understands remembers or expresses information. People who have diagnosed learning disabilities have average or above average intelligence and therefore, have the potential to be successful in their programs. They may however need supports (such as having a tutor) as they navigate their way successfully through school.

As a tutor, it is good to have some familiarity with learning disabilities so that you are able to work more successfully with students by utilizing strategies that will be geared towards their learning styles and capitalize on their strengths.

Here are some useful websites to read in order to familiarize yourself with what learning disabilities are about.

Definition of Disability – Sheridan College

<http://www1.sheridaninstitute.ca/services/disability/Definitions.cfm>

This site gives a thorough definition of what a disability is, and helps give you an idea of what disabilities that students at Sheridan (even some of those you are tutoring) may have.

Disability Services – Sheridan College

<http://www1.sheridaninstitute.ca/services/disability/index.cfm>

Here, you can find out more about the various services that the Disability Services at Sheridan provides, including how to register with them, how to get disability assessment services, and how to accommodate or work with students with disabilities.

Eastside Literacy – Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities

<http://www.eastsideliteracy.org/tutorsupport/SN/LDTips.htm>

This site gives a general definition of what a learning disability is, and describes signs to look for with reading, writing, and numerical disabilities. Also, it gives some different teaching techniques you can try with students if you suspect that they have learning disabilities.

The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

<http://www.ldac-taac.ca/index-e.asp>

This site provides many resources on how to deal with learning disabilities, including information for adults with learning disabilities, and tools for those who work with people with learning disabilities.

Roles & Responsibilities Reference Sheet

(duplicate and review with each client at first session)

Tutors Main Role: While it is essential to help students understand their course material, it is even more important to *enable them to become independent learners*.

The tutor is responsible for....	You are responsible for...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helping students become independent learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attending and keeping up with class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving clients assistance understanding concepts required for work and assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doing their own assignments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remembering to show up to an appointment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remembering to show up to an appointment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating your tutoring file if your personal schedule has changed. Remember to fill in time sheets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arranging a rematch if your schedules conflict
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidentiality and staying professional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing themselves for the tutoring session

Client's Acknowledgement:

I have read and understand these roles & responsibilities: _____

Tutor's Contact Information:

The contact information below is to be used only for:

- Appointment related questions and changes.
- Brief content questions regarding the subject being tutored.

Tutor's Name:

Tutor's Phone:

Tutor's E-mail:

NEXT STEPS

Fundamental Skills Quiz

Once you have studied this training guide, the final step in becoming a Peer Tutor is to visit the Career Centre to do the Fundamental Skills Quiz. (Try the sample test on the next page.)

If you do not score at least 80%, you will be allowed up to 2 additional attempts.

To review our eligibility policy, in order to become a peer tutor, you must:

- Have at least a B average overall.
- Have A grades in subjects you tutor.
- Have a satisfactory faculty reference.
- Score at least 80% on the Fundamental Skills Quiz

Advanced Training

This Self-Directed Training Program is the only compulsory training you must complete. However, during the school year, you will have opportunities to attend various skills development workshops and events. You will receive a certificate at the end of the academic year listing any advanced training sessions you attend.

In-person Consultation

The staff tutor is a good person to talk to if you need additional help, resources, or input to problem solving tutoring challenges. Staff tutors are CoOp students from University of Waterloo, working a full-time work-term placement in the Career Centre.

For administrative, pay, or tutee matching issues, speak with your Tutoring Coordinator.

Choose the ONE best answer to each question.

You and your client are responsible for deciding:

- When to meet
- Where to meet
- How sessions should be run and what material should be covered
- All of the above

You would like some advice on how to handle a particular challenge you are having with a client. For tips and suggestions on what to do, a good person to see would be:

- your supervisor
- your friend
- one of the staff tutors in the Career Centre
- both a) and c)

The tutor's main role is to:

- help clients become independent learners.
- teach the course material to the client.
- help clients complete assignments on time.
- make sure the client has all the knowledge needed to ace their next exam.

Your supervisor's role is to:

- hire the tutors
- match tutors with clients
- provide administrative assistance
- all of the above

It's important to focus on the client you're listening to because:

- it allows you to pick up on their body language
- it conveys interest and equalizes the tutor-client relationship
- it relaxes the client
- both a) and b)

"Can you briefly summarize what you have learned today?" is a good question to ask _____ the session.

- before
- during
- after
- all of the above

What common problem can be solved by continually involving the client as much as possible in the session?

- The client offers very little discussion and participation in the session.
- The client is becoming increasingly frustrated with the work and is very uninterested.
- The client seems to want someone else to do the work for him/her.
- Both a) and c)

Passivity occurs when clients offer very little participation in a tutoring session. A solution to this problem could be:

- Get the client involved by continuously asking him/her questions.
- Change your tutoring style. Try another way of showing the same concept.
- End the tutoring session and tell the client to come back another day, after attempting the question.
- None of the above.

A client mentions that he/she is having trouble adjusting to life at Sheridan. He/she should be directed to:

- Disability Services
- Health Services
- Counselling Services
- Career Centre

If a student is interested in gaining on-the-job work experience in the practical aspects of their course material while completing their studies, the best place for them to visit would be:

- the Career Centre
- Cooperative Education
- the Student Advisement Centre
- Counselling Services

A client is allowed to get tutored in a maximum of ____ different subjects per semester.

- 3
- 2
- 5
- There is no limit

Time-sheets and part-time pay sheets must be submitted regularly by _____.

- 5:00 pm
- 9:00 pm
- 12:00 pm (noon)
- 12:00 am (midnight)

Your session time with a client is over. However, you take a few extra minutes to finish going over a topic that you feel is important for the client to understand before the end of the session. It's suggested that you:

- not acknowledge the extra time spent with the client, so it doesn't seem like such a big deal
- make it clear to the client that you are making an exception for that particular session
- ask the client not to tell anyone else that you went over the set session time
- none of the above