

# Mesabi Range Community and Technical College Tutor Manual

## INTRODUCTION

This manual is primarily written for the peer tutor in postsecondary institutions. New tutors should read the manual before starting out, and read it again after several months of actual tutor experience. Thereafter, it will continue to serve as a valuable source of information. It is suggested that tutors add to the manual their own observations, experiences and teaching techniques, along with information gained in future training sessions.

The manual provides a general overview of policies, benefits, and responsibilities related to peer tutoring. It then proceeds into guidelines and procedures for accomplishing the task. The latter part of the manual deals with learning differences and communication skills, followed by suggestions and strategies for learning.

## WHAT IS TUTORING?

### **The Purpose of Tutoring**

Tutoring is not teaching. Tutoring is helping another person develop the skills necessary to become an independent learner. Tutoring involves more than just working with a student in a particular subject area. It is important to maintain contact with the instructor and the tutorial supervisor, to report on student progress and to become familiar with the proper expectations for each tutee.

While the goal of tutoring is to enhance academic achievement, a tutoring session involves more than just academic concerns. Tutors must be sensitive to feelings and needs of their tutees. Many students come to tutoring with feeling of defeat, frustration, and apprehension about their ability to succeed. A tutor can take on some of the functions of a counselor and a friend by reassuring tutees, empathizing with the feelings and praising their efforts. In this way, the tutoring process can help students develop the skills and the attitudes that lead to success.

**A Teacher:**

- Dispenses knowledge which students are expected to learn.
- Decides what is and is not to be learned.
- Often lectures too many students at a time.
- Has a preset goal as to how much needs to be covered during each class.
- Must teach a diverse population of students.
- Has a great deal of in depth training in the subject.
- Gets paid a lot more!

**A Tutor:**

- Does not dispense knowledge, but facilitate learning.
- Only tutors in the areas requested by the tutee.
- Tailors the tutoring session to the learning style of the tutee.
- Is usually able to focus on one individual at a time.
- Understands the subject from the student's viewpoint.
- Is a peer to the tutee.

- Learn more about the subject as he/she tutors.
- Has training specific to precise class in which he/she is tutoring.

As defined in “The Master Tutor” by Ross B MacDonald, Ph.D., a tutor is “a person who in a structured and supervised educational context, enters into a peer teaching and learning relationship with one or more others”.

Although originally begun to meet the needs of disadvantaged students, tutorial programs have proven to be helpful for students from all situations and backgrounds. The purpose of tutoring services is threefold: to help the students with a present, specific problem, to assist in developing learning skills (learning how much to learn), and to aid in building a positive self-concept.

Knowledge of the subject is, of course, the first pre-requisite for a tutor. Good grades and communication skills come next. It is vital for tutors to be sensitive, empathetic and nonjudgmental. Tutors must also have a realistic understanding of course requirements and college practices. Tutors must be dependable, committed to student success and skilled in interpersonal relationships.

## **BENEFITS OF BEING A PEER TUTOR**

Busy tutors ask, “What am I going to get out of this?” It’s important to realize the benefits that result from peer tutoring.

No measurement can be devised for intrinsic reward. Inner satisfaction that comes from helping someone or from recognizing a job well done is the primary motivation for tutors. The relationships that develop and the honing of interpersonal skills are also factors. Prestige and academic success come to those who lead in educational

surroundings. For other tutors the primary reward is the actual compensation. Though usually minimum, most students can find a use for the money earned.

An important benefit seldom emphasized is that of increased and reinforced knowledge. Tutors find that preparations for sessions and actual practice with materials review their own knowledge, making it more accessible and usable. It is especially beneficial to tutor in one's own career field. Tutoring also develops questioning skills.

Finally, peer tutoring is a job. It looks great on a resume and will be sure to impress future employers. In addition, if a tutor is consistently punctual, dependable and effective, glowing letters of recommendations are easily obtained from supervisors in the learning center.

Peer tutoring helps more than the student who is seeking help. It brings satisfaction to the tutor, give him/her a more secure base of knowledge and can affect future employment opportunities. It is definitely a worth while experience for college students.

## **TUTOR QUALITIES**

### **Professional**

You are part of a professional team on the MRCTC campus. As such, you are respected by administrators and faculty for your service. You may find that some of the students you tutor look up to you as a model for academic success. It is important that you take this position and its responsibilities seriously.

## **Confidential**

All tutors are in a position to hear information about a student's personal and academic life. You are not to discuss that these matters with other students or other tutors. If you are concerned about something that is revealed to you, please speak with the Learning Center Director.

## **Commitment**

Committed tutors perform above and beyond what is required. They willingly accept tutoring assignments and are flexible in scheduling, especially in emergency situations. They care, they attend meetings regularly, they communicate with supervisors and faculty, and they stick with the program, even when it is difficult. Committed tutors invest a great deal of their time and energy.

## **Patience**

As stated, it takes much more than good grades to be a tutor. It takes a great deal of patience and a double dose of understanding as well as the ability to get along with others. Don't expect miracles; however, with patience you can be instrumental in effecting positive change. If you find yourself becoming frustrated, please let the Learning Center Director know.

## **Equality**

It is important to remember that a tutee is a fellow and student and a peer. Respect for and sensitivity to both individual needs and the tutorial process are keys to success.

However, if you try to establish a superior-inferior relationship with your tutee, you will become an ineffective tutor.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF TUTORING**

**The purpose of tutoring is to help students to help themselves. They need to experience success to achieve independence. They need to achieve independence to feel successful.**

Tutors work closely with students, so interpersonal skills are vital. Sensitivity and respect for the uniqueness of the individual are part of the necessary ingredients. There are ways to improve these skills. Suggestions follow:

1. **Establish rapport** and a positive relationship without encouraging dependency.
2. **Work with the student** in setting objectives and boundaries for each session.
3. **Improve listening skills and develop patience.** Active listening with eye contact and alert posture communicates caring.
4. **Develop effective questioning skills.** Ask “why” and “how” questions rather than “what.”
5. **Avoid lecturing and other negative behaviors.** Negative behaviors which affect students’ learning include insufficient wait time after questions; rapid reward, when the tutor says “right” to the first answer given; programmed answering where questions reveal the answer; nonspecific feedback questions such as “Do you understand?”; and, fixation at a low level of questions that yield one-word or yes/no answers.

6. **Assess progress** through positive reinforcement. A student who responds slowly in class can be rewarded in individual tutoring sessions. The tutoring situation also lowers anxiety. Tutors can repeat material in different ways and alter cues to fit individual learner's needs, cultural backgrounds, and experiences.
7. **Learn techniques for dealing with problems.**
8. **Avoid student manipulation.**
9. **Know the special role of the drop-in tutor....**learn to facilitate informal (student to student) learning.
10. **Work with groups.** Study groups are useful in discussing issues, thus making subject matter more memorable.
11. **Remember the importance of being a role model.** Often the student you are tutoring may learn as much about studying by watching how you do it as by what you attempt to tell him/her. Remember to model positive and effective study habits.
12. **Talk with the instructor.** This is a critically important way to help both the tutee and yourself.
13. **Be flexible.** Change your plan if it's not working.

## **TYPES OF TUTORING**

Tutoring is a job with constant variety. Each of the five primary types of tutoring requires a slightly different approach.

- Small Group
- Test Review
- Basic Skills

Group tutoring sessions are similar to one-on-one tutoring, but you work with more than one student in the same subject over a period of time. These two types of sessions have subtle differences, for example, in how that material is presented, how well you get to know individuals, how you deal with learning strategies and how you deal with individual learning problems

Test review sessions are conducted prior to a major exam and may include as many as 25 or more students. This type of tutoring generally includes an overview of the material, a discussion of test taking strategies, and a time for questions and answers.

Communication with the instructors of the courses you are tutoring is essential to properly plan and publicize test review sessions.

Basic skills tutoring involves working with students whose problems are more serious and complex than those needing help with a particular course or a unit within a course. A student may have a learning deficiency, an attitude or confidence problem, a poor educational background, or a combination of some or all of these conditions. As a tutor you are an important component of the MRCTC support network designed to help these students deal with limitations, learn skills and reach their ability level.

## LEARNING STYLES INVENTORY

### Group 1

- I like to read when I have free time
- I like to read a report rather than be told what is in it.
- I understand something best when I read it.
- I remember what I read better than I remember what I hear.
- I would rather read a newspaper than watch the news on T.V.

**Total number of check marks in Group 1**

### Group 2

- I take notes when I read to better understand the material
- I take lecture notes to help me remember material.
- I like to recopy my lecture notes as a way of better understanding the material.
- I make fewer mistakes when I write than when I speak
- I think the best way to keep track of my schedule is to write it down.

**Total number of check marks in Group 2**

### Group 3

- I like to listen to people discuss things.
- I learn more when I watch the news than when I read about it.
- I usually remember what I hear.

\_\_\_ I would rather watch a T. V. show or movie based on a book than read the book itself.

\_\_\_ I learn better by listening to a lecture than by taking notes from a textbook on the same subject.

\_\_\_ **Total number of check marks in Group 3**

#### **Group 4**

\_\_\_ I remember things better when I say them out loud.

\_\_\_ I talk to myself when I try to solve problems.

\_\_\_ I communicate better on the telephone than I do in writing.

\_\_\_ I learn best when I study with other people.

\_\_\_ I understand material better when I read it out loud.

\_\_\_ **Total number of check marks in Group 4.**

#### **Group 5**

\_\_\_ I can “see words in my mind’s eye” when I need to spell them.

\_\_\_ I picture what I read.

\_\_\_ I can remember something by “seeing” it in my mind.

\_\_\_ I remember what the pages look like in books I’ve read.

\_\_\_ I remember people’s faces better than I remember their names.

\_\_\_ **Total number of check marks in Group 5**

**Group 6**

\_\_\_ I like to make models of things

\_\_\_ I would rather do experiments than read about them

\_\_\_ I learn better by handling objects.

\_\_\_ I find it hard to sit still when I study.

\_\_\_ I pace and move around a lot when I'm trying to think through a problem.

\_\_\_ **Total number of check marks in Group 6.**

**INTERPRETING THE LEARNING STYLES INVENTORY**

This inventory deals with six basic learning styles: reading, writing, listening, speaking, visualizing, and manipulating. You probably use a combination of several learning styles as you go about your work. The learning styles inventory is designed to point out your strongest learning styles. Look over the inventory you took. In which groups do you have the most check marks?

If you had 3 or more check marks in group 1, *reading* is one of your preferred learning styles. You find it easier to learn information by reading print.

If you had 3 or more check marks in Group 2, *writing* is one of your preferred learning styles. You learn information more easily when you express it in written form.

If you had 3 or more check marks in Group 3, *listening* is one of your preferred learning styles. You find it easy to learn information that you hear.

If you had 3 or more check marks in Group 4, *speaking* is one of your preferred learning styles. You are best able to learn when you express yourself out loud.

If you had 3 or more check marks in Group 5, *visualizing* is one of your preferred learning styles. Your mind's eye is a very powerful learning tool for you. You learn well when you use your brain to "photograph" information.

If you had 3 or more check marks in Group 6, *manipulating* is one of your preferred learning styles. You learn well when you are able to handle objects you're learning about. Manipulating situations by changing your location, moving around, etc., also helps you to learn.

Each of these six sections focuses on one learning style. Turn to the sections that feature your preferred learning styles to find general suggestions for taking advantage of the ways you learn best. Read about any learning style in which you had three or more check marks. These are your strongest learning styles and you should use them whenever you can.

## **READING**

If reading is one of your preferred learning styles, you take in, store, and retrieve information more easily when you can see it and read it yourself. Below are some general suggestions for how to take advantage of this style.

- Read a chapter before you listen to the lecture on it.
- Read a book or article about a topic instead of attending a lecture.
- When you watch demonstrations, take good written notes. Later you can refresh your memory by reading notes.
- Get information for reports by reading instead of watching videos or listening to speeches.
- Read your notes, study guides, and flash card over and over again.
- Back up what you hear by taking notes that you can refer to again.
- Read directions instead of having someone tell you how to do something.
- Read information yourself instead of having someone read it to you.
- Look up words you don't know the meaning of in a dictionary instead of asking someone what they mean. You'll be more likely to remember the meanings.
- Make travel plans by reading maps and travel guides.
- Choose a job that requires more reading than listening.

## **WRITING**

If writing is one of your preferred learning styles, you take in, store, and retrieve information more easily when you write it down. Below are some general suggestions for how to take advantage of this style.

- “Pencil read” by reading with a pen/pencil in your hand. Underline and take notes as you read. “Talk to yourself” in writing.
- Take good lecture notes.
- Recopy your lecture notes in your own handwriting.
- Choose to do written reports instead of giving speeches whenever possible.
- Write down the steps you need to follow in order to complete a project.
- Keep track of your schedule with a calendar system and write down commitments.
- Write lists of things you need to do.
- Carry a small notebook with you so you can take notes to remember what you have read or heard.
- Write people letters instead of calling them on the telephone.
- Choose a job that involves more writing than listening or speaking.

## **LISTENING**

If listening is one of your preferred learning styles, you take in, store, and retrieve information more easily when you hear it. Below are some general suggestions for how to take advantage of this style.

- Never miss a class. Listening to the information you have read about will help you to understand it better.
- Listen to information about a topic on video tape, TV or an audiotape.
- Tape a lecture so you can listen to it again.
- Read out loud the information you are studying.

- Interview people about the subject you are studying.
- Have another student read his/her notes to you.
- Study with other people. Discuss ideas and give each other oral tests.
- Discuss your notes, direction, or manuals out loud with yourself.
- Use a tape recorder to quiz yourself.
- Repeat information out loud after hearing it.
- Have someone read your tests to you or read them out loud to yourself.
- Call people on the telephone instead of writing to them.
- Choose a job in which listening plays an important part.

## **SPEAKING**

If speaking is one of your preferred learning styles, you take in, store, and retrieve information more easily when you talk about it. Below are some general suggestions for how to take advantage of this style.

- Don't miss class. You can ask questions about what is said.
- Dictate into a tape recorder what you need to write or study.
- Ask yourself questions out loud while you are studying.
- Study information by saying it out loud and discussing it with yourself.
- Study for a quiz by asking questions out loud and answering them.
- Choose to give a speech rather than do a written report whenever possible.
- Repeat things right after you hear them to help yourself remember them.
- Calm your nerves by saying positive things to yourself.
- Call people on the telephone instead of writing them.

- If you have trouble spelling a word, spell it out loud before you write it.
- Choose a job that requires speaking rather than writing.

## **VISUALIZING**

If visualizing is one of your preferred learning styles, you take in, sort, and retrieve information more easily if you can picture something in the mind's eye. Below are some general suggestions for how to take advantage of this style.

- Close your eyes and practice “seeing” what you need to remember.
- Watch movies or videos on a subject so you will have an easier time “seeing” the information again.
- As you read something, picture how it would look if you were seeing it in a movie.
- As you study diagrams and maps, close your eyes and “see” them again.
- Take special note of the shape of things you want to remember.
- Solve simple math problems by visualizing the numerals.
- Close your eyes and “see” a word you need to spell before you write it.
- Calm your nerves by picturing yourself calm and in control in that particular situation.
- Remember telephone numbers by studying them until you can “see” them in your mind's eye.
- Visualize your tasks on the job to more clearly understand what you need to do.
- For the visual learner, color coding notes, highlights and study materials help to organize material.

## **MANIPULATING**

If manipulating is one of your preferred learning styles, you take in, store, and retrieve information more easily if you can handle things and/or change your environment. Below are general suggestions for how to take advantage for this style.

- Build models of hard to understand concepts
- Experiment by doing things you read about
- Watch someone do what you need to learn before trying it
- Type a research paper on a typewriter or computer
- Watch demonstrations instead of reading or hearing about them.
- Visit a place you are learning about.
- Given a choice, build a project rather than write a report about it.
- Do math problems with an abacus or with objects you can move.
- Make sure your work area allows you to move around while you study.
- Be flexible with your time schedule so you can change plans and expectations.
- Choose a job that allows you to work with your hands and to move around.

Now that you understand learning differences, you are better equipped to help your students by teaching to their particular styles of learning.

## **TUTEE INFORMATION**

### **How the Tutee Comes to You**

In a variety of ways students end up in the Learning Center requesting tutorial assistance. Some come in on their own and some are referred by a friend, an instructor, a counselor, or a coach. Students first complete a Request for Tutoring Form. Then the function and operation of the program is discussed, an initial determination of need is made, and the date and time for the first session is confirmed.

### **The First Meeting**

The first meeting is extremely important and can be a key element in the success of future sessions. We have discovered from past practice that it is important for you to relax, be yourself, and use common sense. The tutee may seem tense or unsure, but that is understandable when you realize that sometimes it is difficult to ask for help or admit you are having a problem.

### **The Following are Suggestions for Your Consideration:**

- Introduce yourself and establish the tutee's name and the correct pronunciation.
- Help the tutee relax if you sense tension or nervousness. A few minutes of chatting is a good way to begin.
- Tell the tutee about the program and its operation and your role as a tutor.

Reinforce the fact that you are not a teacher and that you do not have all the answers.

- Make sure the student has clocked in, is aware of the No Show policy and the procedure to follow in the event of an absence.

- Try to set appropriate goals by first asking questions to identify the problem and then suggesting a course of action.
- Listen to both what the tutee says *and* means.
- Try to promote a positive, supportive atmosphere.
- Be alert to signals that the tutee needs a change of pace.
- Try to end the session on a positive note, and remind the tutee of the date and time of the next session.

### **Helpful Hints**

- State explanations as simply as possible.
- Limit criticism to the constructive type that does not further weaken self-confidence.
- Handle carefully and without ridicule or overemphasis the mistakes your tutee makes.
- Do not attempt to accomplish too much too soon.
- Bring your tutee to accomplish too much too soon.
- Ask questions to stimulate thought rather than supplying all the answers; and when you ask a question, give the tutee time to respond.
- Strive to create self-confidence and a sense of personal worth while minimizing the barriers that make learning difficult.
- Involve tutees in planning the tutoring sessions. You are expected to provide leadership, but you can give them a choice of alternative activities.
- Help tutees develop a personal study schedule and then follow-up to see how well they did in meeting course deadlines.

- Listen when a tutee seems to need to talk; however, set a professional tone during the sessions. Some tutees are expert in making excuses and/or wasting time. If there are interruptions come quickly back to the subject at hand.
- Structure the session so that the tutee is doing the work and not simply watching you perform. Ask yourself periodically, "Who is doing the work?"
- You are not expected to know everything. If you have a question tell the student you will try to discover the answer. Maintain a constant dialogue with the instructors.
- Be willing to listen to suggestions and constructive criticism.

## **TUTEE ASSESSMENT**

This is a list of questions that can help you discover how to most effectively help your tutee.

### **Introduction**

What do you want or hope to receive from tutoring?

Where should we start?

What do you think it is important for us to study?

Do you have any questions?

### **Course Information**

Do you have a course syllabus?

What are the assignments and when are they due?

Did the instructor give special instructions or an information sheet explaining the

assignment(s)?

What do you need to do to be successful on this assignment or exam?

### **Study Habits**

Where do you study?

How do you manage your study time?

Do you have lecture notes?

How do you feel about your ability to take lecture notes?

What techniques would you use in reading a chapter from your text?

### **Test Taking Skills**

What types of exams does the instructor administer?

What are the exam dates?

How would you study for this exam?

What strategies do you use when taking an exam?

## **TUTOR TEACHING TECHNIQUES**

### **MATH---*FIND OUT THE PROBLEM***

#### **Small Problems:**

1. Arithmetic Error
2. Calculator Error
3. Operation Error
4. Procedural Error
5. Copied Problem Wrong

6. Read Wrong Answer
7. If you can't find the mistake, re-do it on another piece of paper. You may be making the same error as the student.

### **Larger Problems:**

1. Student does not understand entire problem or procedure.
2. Help the student understand concepts involved.
3. Ask the student: "What are you looking for?"
4. Stress small points for student to understand.
5. Have the student tell **you** how to do the problem.
6. Be sure the student understands the vocabulary or symbols.
7. Read and follow the instructor's directions.
8. Check the examples in the textbook for similar type problems.
9. Ask to see the student's notes, looking for a similar example.
10. See the instructor if more help is needed.

### **Before a Test**

1. Re-do various types of problems from the assignments.
2. Check for a review sheet for sample problems to work.
3. Do problems listed under the review section at the end of the chapter.
4. Look for important vocabulary.
5. Review formulas.
6. Help the student recognize the type of problem-similar to previous problems.

7. Don't have student memorize a particular problem because they won't learn the procedure.
8. Don't spend hours on one type of problem.
9. Don't have student study up to the last minute. They need a small break before the test.
10. If they hope to cram 15 hours into 15 minutes, FORGET IT!!

### **Word Problems**

1. Read the problem carefully. Re-read if necessary.
2. Make a diagram, chart or drawing.
3. Identify the variable to be used for the unknown quantity.
4. Look for a formula or relationship that exists and write an equation.
5. Solve the problem or equation. Do the arithmetic.
6. See if you have found what the problem asks for.
7. Check the answer to see if it makes sense.

### **Other Helpful Hints**

1. **Don't** do the assignments for the students. Work out problems that are similar to the ones assigned. In most math books, the odd and even problems, side by side, are the exact same type of problems. If the odds are assigned, you do the evens.
2. Encourage the students to do their assignments daily and complete them. They run into fewer problems if they are always up-to-date on their work.

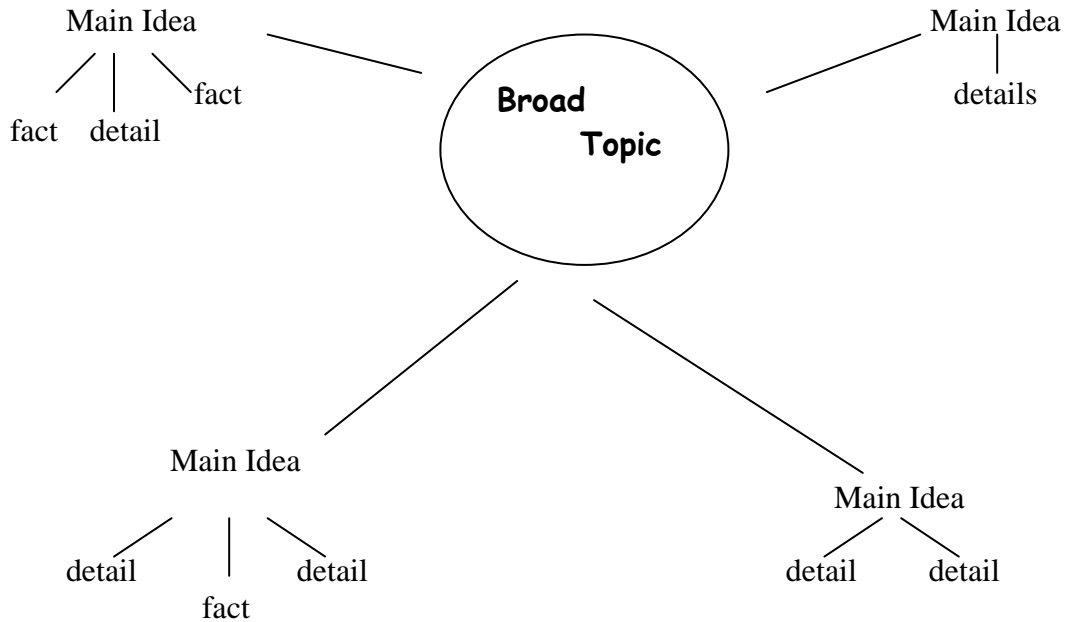
3. Tell the students to take more time doing their assignments. This will cut down on the “careless” mistakes.
4. Don’t have the student spend an hour straight on problems. Take a break and come back to their work.
5. If students want to do more problems, encourage them to do ones that are not assigned, if possible.
6. Don’t have the students rely on you, as a tutor, for all of their assignments. They **must** do the work on their own.
7. Encourage the students to read the text, work the examples in the textbook, and follow directions given for a particular assignment.
8. Be sure the student is taking notes in class and writing down the examples given.
9. Students can help each other. The one telling learns a lot from explaining the problem to someone else.
10. Make flash cards for procedures or problems. Use them to study from for an exam.
11. Check with the Learning Center Director for other materials (videos, tapes) that may be helpful.

## **WRITING**

1. **Brainstorm ideas:** get several topics-choose one.
  - a. Write down every word you can think of about the topic.
  - b. Group the words.
  - c. Choose a heading for each group.

- d. Write a topic sentence for each group; add heading, sequence, and details.

**General Mapping Example:**



Using the map above, create one using the topic and details below.

**Example:**

1. Blizzard

- a. Accidents, slippery roads, closed schools, shovels, snowplows, snow blowers, snow, sleet, snow banks, wind, cold, danger, snowsuits, snowmen, hot cocoa, puzzles, games, reading stories.

b. Effects      Cleaning Up      Weather      Activities

c. slippery roads    snowplows      cold      snowsuits  
accidents      shovels      windy      snowmen

closed schools	blowers	sleet	snow angels
dangerous		snow	snow forts

d. Weather: The blizzard's nasty weather influenced our lives.

Effects: The day of the storm...

Activities: Many unexpected opportunities...

**2. First Draft**

**3. Revise**

**4. Edit**

**5. Final Copy**

## **LEARNING STRATEGIES**

Often students perform poorly because they do not know “how to learn.” Students can learn “how to learn” through learning strategies. Learning strategies are techniques, principles, or rules students use to learn to solve problems and complete work independently. These strategies focus on how to learn and how to use information. As students advance in the education system, demands increase for the acquisition and memorization of information and for the demonstration of their knowledge of this

information. Strategies enable students to cope with academic demands and teach them how to generalize their skills to a variety of settings including classes, home and employment settings. The overriding goals are for students to learn skills and content and to complete tasks independently.

## **MNEMONIC STRATEGY**

Any memory aid to assist in retrieval is a “mnemonic.” Used primarily in memorizing lists, these strategies help identify and organize information.

A commonly used mnemonic device is the **acrostic**. For example, the word “homes” can help one list the Great Lakes (Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior). By using the first letter of each word in the list and forming a word from these first letters, the student can access the list. If a word cannot be formed, a sentence of words each beginning with the first letter of words in the list can help trigger memory. For example, “My vacation ends Monday. Send up nine pizzas.” List the planets from the sun (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto).

## **HIGHLIGHTING, ANNOTATING & NOTETAKING**

Readers typically highlight or annotate a textbook because they realize they cannot store all the pertinent information in the long term memory with one reading. Thus, they highlight the text or annotate in the margins the concepts that they want to return to before a test. Highlighting and annotating also assist the reader in concentration while reading.

### **Common Problems Readers Have With Highlighting**

- Too much text is highlighted
- Too many details, not enough key ideas
- Mindless highlighting as a result of passive reading

### **Steps for Effective Highlighting and Annotating**

- Preview the chapter and establish your purposes for reading
- Read one section and identify some concepts you must understand when you have finished reading.
- As you read, actively search for key ideas. Ask yourself, “What is the topic of this section?”
- As you read, be alert to how a section is organized. If you anticipate how it is organized, it will help your understanding, remembering, and subsequent highlighting and annotating.
- When you have finished actively reading a textbook section, try to reconstruct the main ideas in to your own words. Once you have done this, you are ready to highlight or annotate in the margins.
- Start reading the next section. You may need to preview or review before you begin reading.

### **CORNELL SYSTEM OF NOTETAKING**

Most note taking strategies involve a wider (three-inch) left margin for asking questions or writing main points about each topic area in the chapter or unit.

### **SQ3R**

This system involves the following steps: *survey, question, read, recite and review*. When used often, SQ3R will prepare you for tests and questions about the class material. Most “how to study” books contain more details for learning and teaching these and other strategies.

## **DIFFICULT TUTORING SITUATIONS**

The interpersonal dimension of the tutoring process is as important as the tutor’s subject competence. And while most tutorial sessions offer no significant interpersonal problems, the difficult, ineffective encounter is always possible. The following discussions may help if such an encounter should occur:

### **Dysfunctional Student Styles**

The majority of contacts between a tutor and a student go rather smoothly with both parties honestly and effectively engaging in the learning process. However, there are some tutorial encounters that do not go smoothly because of a disruptive affect or attitude presented by the student. Indeed, the student may even assume an entire “style” in relating to the tutor. The following list includes six such disruptive styles, common characteristics of each, and suggested approaches to aid in establishing an effective learning relationship. First, two notes of caution:

**#1:** Do not see these as mutually exclusive or as rigid postures evident from the first day. Under the various pressures of school, a previously efficient student may drift into one or more of these styles. The suggested approach is to talk with the student. “Well, three weeks ago, this was going fairly smoothly. Let’s figure out when it was that things got confusing.”

**#2:** Though much of what a tutor does involves academic “counseling” (tips on classes, study suggestions etc) the tutor should not slip into the role of psychological counselor. The tutor should be extremely cautious about probing into any issues that may seem to be emotionally charged or significantly volatile.

Please consult with the Learning Center Director or refer the student to a college counselor if such an incident should occur.

### **Seven Disruptive Styles**

#### **1. Blocking**

Characterized by low frustration tolerance, freezing up/blocking.

“It’s beyond me.”

“I’ll never get it.”

Best approach: Determine what the student does know, discuss that, build a foundation. Offer continual support. Reinforce success consistently.

#### **2. Confusion**

Characterized by bafflement/disorganization.

Helpless feeling about the class.

“I just don’t know what to do.”

Best approach: Use the strategies listed in #1. Give structure and order to the student’s sessions.

#### **3. Miracle Seeking**

Characterized by global interest but with little specificity.

Enthusiasm about being with tutor but passive in actual tutoring process.

High level of expectation.

Best approach: Downplay your role (I've had more exposure to this, that's all).

Focus again and again to a specific task. Involve student in questions, problems.

#### **4. Resisting**

Characterized by variations of hostility, boredom, passivity. Disinterest in class, work, tutor or defensive toward class, work, tutor.

Best approach: Allow student to vent. Use first session to build relationship. Be pragmatic, yet understanding. (I know this class is a bore to you, but you need it to graduate so let's make the best of it.)

**Keep complaints confidential and do not give your own opinion of the class or instructor.**

#### **5. Passivity**

Characterized by noninvolvement, inattention, low affect. Boredom.

Best approach: empathize (You're not crazy about asking questions in class, are you?) Attempt to build a relationship and mobilize the student. Reinforce all activities and sessions.

#### **6. Evasion**

Characterized by manipulation, verbal ability versus writing or problem-solving skills.

Best approach: Downplay your role. Focus on the student on specific tasks.

Ask, in a non-threatening way, why the student has come for tutoring and how can we work this so you are getting what you need.

### **Other Difficult Tutoring Situations**

**Age differences:** Sometimes age differences create a barrier in the tutoring relationship. An older student may feel resentment or frustration when being helped by someone much younger. On the other hand, a young student may be resistant to help offered by a person closer to his/her parent's age. The helping relationship can lead to inappropriate hostility, or even dependency. Tutors should consistently focus discussions on the course material. Thus, externals will more likely be put into perspective.

**Students gliding into failure:** These students seem calm and confident but grades reveal problems. It is important to be aware of underlying feelings. A serene exterior may be covering despair. Focusing on reality and accurate self-assessment may help. Explore the facts with the student and help him/her find where the problems may lie. Keeping the student on task and following up on their assignments can also help with the student's success.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

### **General Considerations**

In most ways students with disabilities are like other students. They have the same needs: the need to be challenged, to be part of a group, to be accepted, and to succeed. These students wish to be treated as individuals and not to be singled out or

stereotyped as disabled. The following general considerations are important in assisting students with disabilities to meet their educational goals:

- A disability is seldom “total” and usually affects a narrow range of activity.
- Many persons find themselves feeling awkward, fearful or self-conscious when interacting with persons who have disabilities. Common sense, courtesy, caring and experience will reduce these natural reactions.
- Students with disabilities are frequently “experts” regarding their condition and can often suggest solutions for the problems.
- Actions that call attention to deficiencies in students with disabilities should be avoided.
- Misconceptions and/or lack of knowledge concerning disabilities are common. The term “disabled” is not synonymous with cognitive impairment.
- Students with disabilities often resist identification and/or accommodation in order to avoid being “labeled.”
- If efforts and techniques are not working, or if you suspect someone may have other learning concerns, see the Learning Center Director or Disabilities Director.

(College Students with Disabilities: A Reference Guide for Faculty, Minnesota Community College System.)

## **GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

When speaking and writing with a student, put the student first, the disability second.

Example:

“Student with a learning disability.”

“Person with cerebral palsy.”

“Student who uses a wheelchair.”

Use the word “disability” to describe a functional limitation.

Example:

“The student has a physical disability which affects his/her ability to stand for long periods of time.”

“This employee has a visual disability and will need special lighting in his/her work area.”

Use the word “handicap” to describe a situation or barrier created by society, the environment or self.

Example:

“The high curb created a handicap for John in his wheelchair.”

- Remember, students with disabilities are people who have more similarities than differences with other students. These students enter the program for the same reasons as any other student. Build upon this common interest.
- Don't make assumptions about what the student can or cannot do. Let the student take the initiative to explain the disability, the limitations and the accommodations or modifications needed. If the student doesn't take the initiative, ask.
- Be consistent in what behavior is expected of all students. Don't accept inappropriate behavior from a student with a disability.
- Be a role model by showing appropriate behavior toward all students.
- Emphasize abilities, not limitations.

## **TUTOR POLICIES**

### **1. Confidentiality**

All information obtained in any student record or given verbally about the student that you are tutoring must be kept **confidential**. This confidentiality also extends to the tutoring sessions. Gossiping about a student's grades, progress or problems will be grounds for termination of employment.

### **2. Tutor Training/Meetings**

Tutors must complete the tutor training session. All tutors are responsible for attending tutor meetings.

### **3. Tutoring Assignments**

The initial tutor session is either arranged by the Learning Center Director or is a walk-in appointment according to each tutor's schedule. Subsequent sessions may be arranged on an individual basis to meet the needs of the student.

### **4. Tutoring Sites**

In order to meet the needs of all students, a specific campus location will be used as designated by the Learning Center Director.

### **5. Attendance**

Consistent attendance is of utmost importance for effective tutoring. If the tutor will be absent, it is his/her responsibility to inform the student ahead of time to make up the session. In case of an emergency, contact the Learning Center Director.

## **6. No Shows**

A “no-show” is when a student misses a scheduled tutoring session without any prior notice. The tutor will be paid for the one-hour session as long as he/she remains in the location where the tutoring was to occur for at least one-half hour following the scheduled beginning time. After a tutee misses 3 scheduled sessions, tutoring will be discontinued for that student for the remainder of the semester.

## **7. Time Sheets/Log Sheets/Payroll Procedure**

Tutors are responsible for filling out their own log sheet and time sheets after each tutoring session. Time sheets and log sheets will be completed, signed, and turned in to the Learning Center Director as scheduled. It is the tutor’s responsibility to include his/her name, social security number, total number of hours tutored, and signature in order for the time sheet to be processed. Paychecks will be picked up in the designated area. This information is campus specific. More details will be given at the tutor training.

## **8. Questions/Concerns**

The Learning Center Director is on campus from 8:00-4:40 daily during the school year. Stop in to make an appointment to discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

## **9. Evaluation Procedure**

Tutees will fill out an evaluation regarding the tutoring services provided for that semester. This evaluation may be viewed by the tutor, upon request, and be accompanied by a meeting with the Learning Center Director.

## **TUTOR REGULATIONS**

All tutoring must be done in the Learning Center except for a few limited situations that need prior approval.

The tutor board located in the Learning Center should be checked daily. Sign in on the sign in sheet and be sure to inform the Learning Center Director of any schedule changes.

Reference textbooks are kept in the Learning Center. Contact Learning Center Director if a textbook you need is not available. If you want to take a textbook home, please check it out through the Learning Center.

You must sign your time card on time (every two weeks). It is your responsibility to have it filled out and to have the Learning Center Director sign it. You must also turn your timesheet into the Financial Aid office.

Procedure for tutor absence:

- If you must cancel a session, make sure it is for a good reason. You must notify the Learning Center Director as soon as possible if you are going to be late or absent before the absence or lateness occurs.

Procedure for tutee absence:

- Check the tutor board and with the Learning Center Director for messages.
- Wait 15 minutes for the student, unless you have had prior notification of the absence.

#### No Show Policy:

- Tutees are required to notify you if they are not going to attend a scheduled tutoring session. If they fail to give notification the absence is considered a No Show.
- Unless extremely unusual circumstances exist, each tutee is allowed two no show absences before receiving a warning from the supervisor. If, after the warning, a third No Show occurs, the tutee will be discontinued from that particular tutoring session. This action does not affect other tutoring or review sessions. Do not discontinue a tutee on your own. Margaret will notify you if a tutee has been dropped from the program.

#### Policy for probation and dismissal:

- Tutoring, like any other campus job, has a 6-month probation period designed to determine your effectiveness on the job. All tutors are on probation during their first semester of tutoring. During that time your tutoring sessions will be observed and evaluated by your supervisors. Periodically you will meet with the supervisors to discuss your performance.

- If you fail to attend tutor meetings, complete the required paperwork, or conduct yourself in an unacceptable manner, you may be suspended from the tutorial program for that semester. You may reapply in subsequent semesters if you wish.

Finally, it would be nice if this handbook contained the answers on how to handle all those unusual and often awkward situations that arise from time to time. Unfortunately, we do not have all the answers. However, we have included some of the more common problems and their possible solutions.

Please feel free to talk to your supervisors at any time and to work together with them to reach a suitable solution.

1. My tutee fails to show up again and again. What should I do?

- Determine if the tutee wants to continue with the program. This is a voluntary program and attendance is not mandatory.
- Reinforce the No Show policy, including the drop rule.
- Stress the importance of attending regularly in order to benefit from the program.

2. My tutee is never prepared for the tutoring sessions but comes in expecting me to do all the work.

- Let the student know that tutoring is designed to help the tutee, not the tutor.

- Realize that providing all the answers encourages dependent, not independent, behavior.
- Reassure the student that it is all right not to have an instant answer.
- Reinforce a step-by-step incremental approach to problem solving.
- Phrase your questions in such a way that the student cannot simply answer "yes" or "no."
- Praise the student for small independent steps.
- Keep the pencil out of your hands.
- If you ever feel uncomfortable about the work you are doing, please contact the Learning Center Director.

3. My tutee wants to sit and chat. I can't seem to get the student to stick to the subject.

- Let the student know that the primary purpose of the tutoring session is to provide assistance with academic work.
- Interrupt, if necessary, and ask a question that brings the conversation back to the task at hand.
- Inform the tutee that excessive talking may disrupt other sessions, as well as encourage other tutees to think that this is acceptable behavior.

4. My tutee does not attend class regularly. What should I do?

- Contact the Learning Center Director immediately as there is no point in continuing. Tutoring is not a substitute for regular class attendance.

### **Standards of Conduct**

MRCTC expects all tutors and tutees to maintain a high standard of conduct. The following are example of unacceptable conduct:

- Excessive absences or lateness.
- Violations of safety rules.
- Use of abusive language.
- Drug or alcohol use on the job.
- Any conduct which results in the abuse, harassment, or intimidation of other members of the college community on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, age, marital status, national origin, the presence of any physical disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, or any other basis prohibited by applicable federal, state, or local laws.
- Intoxication (including the effects of illegal drugs) during working hours.
- Deliberate injury to another person.
- Violating a confidence; unauthorized release of confidential information.

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

- We have adopted the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) definition of sexual harassment, with a few modifications appropriate to an academic environment. According to this definition sexual harassment includes: Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's academic or work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive academic or work environment.
- In this context, sexual harassment occurs when unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature are made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's education or employment or when submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual(s) is used as a basis for employment or educational decisions.
- Mesabi Range Community and Technical College is committed to ensuring an educational and employment environment free of sexual harassment, sexual violence or harassment based on sexual orientation. Sexual harassment is a violation of Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1972 (42 U.S.C.S. 2000e., et. Seq.), the Minnesota Human Rights Law 363.03 subdivision 51. and Title IX of the Educational Amendments (20 U.S.C. 1681, et. seq.) and is punishable under both federal and state laws. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Please be aware that MRCTC has a zero tolerance policy on sexual harassment.

- For more information about the Sexual Harassment policy please refer to the MRCTC Handbook online at: [mesabirange.mnscu.edu](http://mesabirange.mnscu.edu)

## **STUDENT ORGANIZERS**

### **Weekly Schedule**

**Time    Monday    Tuesday    Wednesday    Thursday    Friday**

8:00					
8:30					
9:00					
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**TUTOR CODE OF ETHICS**

I will respect the dignity and the inherent worth of each individual.

I will give the student my full attention and accept him/her without judging.

I will encourage without flattering.

I will not impose my values and beliefs on my students.

I will work to build my student's self-confidence and independence.

I will learn from my students.

I will not do the student's work for him/her.

I will tutor in only subjects that I am proficient and knowledgeable.

I will be honest about areas where I am uncertain.

I will be punctual and dependable.

I will set an example of good time management, class attendance, and good study habits.

I will keep accurate records of my tutoring sessions.

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Signature

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Date

## **TUTEE CODE OF ETHICS**

I will respect the dignity and the inherent worth of each individual.

I will give the tutor my full attention and accept him/her without judging.

I will not impose my values and beliefs on my tutor.

I will work to build my self-confidence and independence.

I will learn from my tutor.

I will be honest about areas where I am uncertain.

I will be punctual and dependable.

I will practice good time management, class attendance, and good study habits.

I will bring the material I need to work on to my tutoring session.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Mesabi Range Community and Technical College does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, physical appearance, sexual orientation, familial status or disability.**

**MRCTC is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.**