



Peer Tutor Workshop Guide: Introductory Training Session

National Scholar Foundation

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Introduction

This peer tutor workshop guide will help you conduct an introductory training session for peer tutors. This guide is designed for students and educators organizing a peer tutoring program for middle and high school students (although, this guide can also be useful at the collegiate level). The objectives of the workshop include: having a discussion on the qualities of an effective peer tutor, understanding the different types of learning, and practicing peer tutoring in a fun scenario.

About the NSF

The NSF aims to empower students to achieve their fullest potential in the classroom through the development of strong peer tutoring programs. Aware of how peer tutors serve as powerful academic support resources, the NSF rewards outstanding peer tutors through an annual scholarship competition and works to educate the public on the power of peer tutoring. Students are encouraged to run peer tutoring programs as the NSF recognizes that student-to-student interaction is most effective

Why have a workshop?

As the demand and enthusiasm for peer tutor programs continues to increase, it is important that new tutors are both trained and are able to help tutees effectively. While peer tutoring has many positive advantages, research has found that tutors who were trained had significantly greater success with their tutees compared to tutors who do not receiving training (Staub and Hunt 1993). Further research has shown that a lack of trained tutors can impact the long term success of a peer tutoring program. Training tutors can also give them extra confidence in their abilities to be able to help their tutees using the best strategies they have.

How do I conduct a workshop?

There are several activities and handouts provided in this guide. The workshop is designed to be completed in 1-hour. Having an even number of participants can be helpful for the activities. Simply organize a workshop date and time with your tutors (it is helpful to have food at these workshops – contact us for details on how to get free food for your workshop), read over/prepare the activities as well as print out the handouts, and follow the provided directions. At the end of the workshop, have a brief discussion (~10 minutes) about what the students learned from the workshop and how it can be improved in the future (please share any insights with us!).

Where can I get additional help and find additional resources?

The National Scholar Foundation is currently partnering with schools to help develop more effective peer tutoring programs. If you would be interested in getting free help from our staff or

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have any questions, please send us an email: ContactUs@NationalScholarFoundation.org. In addition, continue to check the website as we develop additional resources: *NationalScholarFoundation.org*. Also, we highly encourage you to check out other resources available through one of our partner organizations, the Peer Tutoring Resource Center: <http://www.peertutoringresource.org/>

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Activity 1: A Great Tutor Drawing (20 minutes)

This activity is a great way to start the workshop as it creates a discussion between the participating tutors about what qualities make for an effective peer tutor.

Purpose: This allows students to learn about the different expectations for peer tutors, without giving them a list or telling them what the expectations are.

Materials Needed:

- Outline of a person template (*found on page 4 of this workshop document*)
- Handout for this activity with directions
- Easel/paper or whiteboard
- Markers

Directions:

1. Tutors will need to form teams of 2-4 (ideally, teams of 2).
2. Tutors will need paper and writing utensils such as markers
3. Tutors can be split up into several groups (size of groups depends on the number of tutors participating in the workshop)
4. In their groups, tutors will have 5 minutes to work together to draw and label a picture of “A Great Tutor.” (*The template for this activity can be found on page 4 of this workshop guide*). Each group can think of characteristics and draw an image that might represent those characteristics. For example, a watch could be drawn representing “lots of patience.” Label each what each drawing represents with words on the side. (*For a more comprehensive example for this activity, please see page 5 of this workshop guide*).
5. Spend 5 more minutes sharing your characteristics with another group nearby.
6. Using a whiteboard or poster, create one large image similar to the original template for the activity to display in the front of the room during the duration of the activity.
7. Spend about 10 minutes having all groups share and explain their drawings to each other and add their drawings to the large template. Include a discussion near the end of this collaboration about what quality traits and characteristics make up an effective tutor and make a top 10 list of these qualities.

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Example: A Great Tutor Drawing



Activity 2: How Do I Learn Best? (~20 Minutes)

Adaptability and understanding individual learning needs

Different learning strategies work best for different students. It is important that peer tutors are able to adapt and change their lesson plans based on the needs and strategies that are going to prove most effective to helping the tutee. For example, if the tutee is more of a visual learner, a peer tutor may try to implement more visual learning activities into the meeting sessions. This activity helps tutors realize the importance of adaptability with different tutees learning styles. It can also help tutors recognize and discover strategies that might work best with different types of learners.

Directions:

1. Print each scenario (*found on pages 10-17 of this workshop guide*) and place them in different stations around the room.
2. Allow 5 minutes for the students to review the handout *Different Types of Learning Styles and Strategies* (*found on pages 6-8 of this workshop guide*) before running activity.
3. Present the example scenario (*found on page 9 of this workshop guide*) to everyone to introduce the activity.
4. Have tutors create small groups based on their choice of scenario. Note: this activity can also be done independently if needed and you may also come up with more scenarios.
5. Tutors can work together in each group to brainstorm and discuss a list of strategies or ways they feel they could best help the student (~5 minutes).
6. Have the groups rotate or change scenarios with another group. The group will now read the new scenario and the other group's recommended strategies and will brainstorm ways to implement those strategies. For example if strategy is to use a mnemonic device, the implementation would be creating an example of a mnemonic device given the information in the scenario. *Please refer to the example scenario on page 9 for more information* (~5 minutes)
7. Have groups share their scenarios and their strategies to the other groups when finished (~5 minutes).
8. Share the "Concluding Comments" (*found on page 18 of this workshop guide*) after each group has shared their scenarios.

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Handout: Types of Learning Styles and Strategies

Visual Learners learn through images and pictures. These types of learners enjoy being able to physically see something that allows them to understand better.

- Draw images
 - This method works great for trying to memorize definitions or vocabulary words. Have students draw a picture next to the words or concepts they are trying to learn so that they can associate that concept with a given image to improve understanding.
- When explaining concepts use hand gestures
 - When verbally explaining a concept to a visual learning tutee, try using specific hand gestures for each concept. Then whenever mentioning that same topic repeat the same hand gesture so the tutee can associate your body language and hands with that concept.
- Color code
 - When having to read or write, visual learners can benefit from having a color code. For example, the student could write or highlight every vocabulary word in red, every definition in blue, and every explanation in green. This can help with organization and allow tutees to associate a given color with a concept.

Verbal Learners learn by reading and interacting with text or writing.

- White boards
 - During meeting sessions, ask your tutee different comprehension questions and have them write their answers down on a whiteboard or a piece of paper.
- Practice quizzes
 - If there is time before the meeting session, create a practice-like test that tutees could take. This will allow them to understand where in the subject matter are the concepts they understand very well, and the concepts they may need to review.
- Annotation
 - This strategy works great if a tutee needs to interpret a visual (such as an image, graph, or chart), or the tutee needs to listen to a recording and understand. Have the tutee annotate or write down explanations beside the visuals that they can refer to later that explain the visuals to them. While listening to an audio tape or watching a video, have the tutee write down notes to themselves that they can refer to later.
- Repetition
 - If tutees are struggling to memorize explanations or definition, have them write it down and copy it repeatedly. This act of repetition will allow them to better remember the concepts.

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Auditory Learners learn by hearing and speaking.

- Explain concepts out loud and clearly
 - When explaining concepts to the tutee, explain them outloud rather than having them read an explanation. As the tutor, it is important to explain things slowly, clearly and in a logical order so that the listening tutee can follow along in your explanation.
- Audio recordings
 - With the consent of the tutor, allow the tutee to audio record the tutor explaining a concept. Later, the tutee can replay this audio recording to review the concepts the tutor explained during their meeting.
- Come up with mnemonic devices
 - For example “PEMDAS” is a mnemonic device used in math to help students remember the order of operations. Each letter in PEMDAS stands for a different operation (P is parentheses, E is exponents, and so on). Tutors and tutees can work together to come up with their own devices like this to remember different concepts.
- Use the subject material in a song
 - Have the tutee chose a tune they known well (such as a nursery rhyme). Work together to write your own lyrics to this tune while incorporating subject matter and explanations into the song. This way, if the tutee can remember the little song, they can better recall different concepts.

Kinesthetic Learners learn by doing. Hands-on activities are the most effective for these types of learners.

- White boards
 - During meeting sessions, ask your tutee different comprehension questions and have them write their answers down on a whiteboard and hold them up to show you their answer.
- True or False questions activity
 - Ask the tutee different true or false questions. If the tutee thinks the answer is true then have them walk to one side of the room, if the tutee thinks the answer is false have them walk to the other side. (This could also work with having them stand up or sit down) This method is great for getting tutees active while still reviewing concepts.
- Games (please note that many of these games require the tutor to do some preparation before the meeting session)

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- There is a wide variety of games that can be played to help review concepts. Please note that not all games yield themselves to every type of subject material. Some examples are games are, writing many different questions on a inflatable beach ball. Pass the beachball to your tutee and when they catch it, have them answer the question that their right thumb is touching.
- A matching game also works well to review different material. Using flashcards, write a vocabulary word on one flashcard and write the definition on another flashcard. Lay all the vocabulary word cards on a table, and give the tutee the definition cards and ask them to match each definition with the corresponding vocabulary word. This activity does not have to be used just for vocabulary words and definitions but can also be used with matching concepts to explanations.
- Another activity that works great especially for foreign language learners is to write each verb the tutee may need to memorize on a different slip of paper and place it in a jar. Then have them pick a verb out a jar and roll a dice. If they roll a one, they have to conjugate the verb in the “I” form, if they roll a two, they have to conjugate the verb in the “you” form, and so on.

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Present this information before starting the activity.

Example Scenario:

Scenario – Your new tutee, Grace, has difficulty staying concentrated during your tutor sessions and prefers to be active. How can Grace’s tutor best help her?

Strategy: Her tutor could try to include some more hands-on activities into their tutor session. This could include coming up with games to play or some activity that involved moving around.

Implementation: *In this situation, the implementation would be coming up with an example of a game or hands on activity that was recommended in the strategy.* The tutor could ask Grace questions about a certain subject and Grace could write them down on a whiteboard and hold it up and reveal her answer when she thinks she has it correct.

Each scenario for this activity is included on a separate page with specific directions. They can be found on pages 10-17 of this workshop guide. These pages can be printed out and placed in separate areas around the room.

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History Reading Comprehension Scenario

Directions: Read the tutoring scenario below with your group. Spend about 5-10 minutes discussing how to best address the situation. The goal is to help the student you are working with learn best. Be prepared to share your ideas at the end with the other groups working different scenarios.

- Maggie, your tutee, believes looking at visuals such as pictures, charts, and graphs helps her to better understand material. Break down this piece of text as if you were trying to explain it to Maggie and/or come up with strategies that could help Maggie understand this piece of text:
 - “All of the powers specifically states in Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution are called enumerated powers. Chief among these exclusive powers of the national government are the authorities to coin money, conduct foreign relations, provide for an army and navy, and declare war. In addition, Article I, section 8, contains the necessary and proper clauses, which gives Congress the authority to enact laws ‘necessary and proper’ for exercising any of its enumerated powers” (excerpt from O'Connor, Karen, et al. *American Government: Roots and Reform*. 12th ed., Hoboken, NJ, Pearson Higher Education, 2014.)

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Math Comprehension Scenario

Directions: Read the tutoring scenario below with your group. Spend about 5-10 minutes discussing how to best address the situation. The goal is to help the student you are working with learn best. Be prepared to share your ideas at the end with the other groups working different scenarios.

- Your tutee, John, has a hard time understanding big blocks of text and would rather have the information verbally explained to him. Devise a way to explain this block of text and/or suggest strategies to John that would best help him understand the text:
 - “A function is linear if its slope, or rate of change, is the same at every point. The rate of change of a function that is not linear may vary from point to point. During the early years of the Olympics, the height of the men’s winning pole vault increased approximately 8 inches every four years...the height started at 130 inches in 1900, and increased by the equivalent of 2 inches a year. So the height was a linear function of time from 1900 to 1912.” (excerpt from Hughes-Hallett, Deborah, et al. *Calculus: Single & Multivariable*. 6th ed., Laurie Rosatone.)

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Developing Organization Skills Scenario

Directions: Read the tutoring scenario below with your group. Spend about 5-10 minutes discussing how to best address the situation. The goal is to help the student you are working with learn best. Be prepared to share your ideas at the end with the other groups working different scenarios.

- You've noticed that your new tutee, Christina, struggles with organization skills, often misplaces things, and forgets deadlines.. Give Christina some advice on ways that she can improve her organization habits.

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Reading Comprehension Scenario

Directions: Read the tutoring scenario below with your group. Spend about 5-10 minutes discussing how to best address the situation. The goal is to help the student you are working with learn best. Be prepared to share your ideas at the end with the other groups working different scenarios.

- For her English class, Callie has to do a lot of reading, but she has trouble understanding and synthesizing what she has read. Give Callie some tips to help her understand this excerpt:
 - “I was weeping because Richard Parker had left me so unceremoniously. What a terrible thing it is to botch a farewell. I am a person who believes in form, in the harmony of order. For example-I wonder-could you tell my jumbled story in exactly one hundred chapters, not one more, not one less? I’ll tell you, that’s one thing I hate about my nickname, the way that number runs on forever.”
(excerpt from Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi*. Canongate Books Ltd, 2016.)

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Science Scenario

Directions: Read the tutoring scenario below with your group. Spend about 5-10 minutes discussing how to best address the situation. The goal is to help the student you are working with learn best. Be prepared to share your ideas at the end with the other groups working different scenarios.

- For his biology and chemistry classes, David needs to memorize a lot of difficult terminology and concepts. Provide some strategies that could help David learn these terms: photosynthesis, DNA, chromosomes, evolution, ecosystem, bacteria, red blood cells, enzymes

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Concentration Scenario

Directions: Read the tutoring scenario below with your group. Spend about 5-10 minutes discussing how to best address the situation. The goal is to help the student you are working with learn best. Be prepared to share your ideas at the end with the other groups working different scenarios.

- Your new tutee, Grace, has difficulty staying concentrated during your tutor sessions and prefers to be active. Brainstorm ways that as a peer tutor, you could adapt your tutoring sessions to best help Grace stay focused and learn material.

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Different Learning Style Scenario

Directions: Read the tutoring scenario below with your group. Spend about 5-10 minutes discussing how to best address the situation. The goal is to help the student you are working with learn best. Be prepared to share your ideas at the end with the other groups working different scenarios.

- You've noticed that your tutee, Elaine, seems to have a hard time understanding material when the teacher is explaining it verbally without any visuals or handouts. Provide some strategies that could help Elaine better understand the information the teacher is saying during class.

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Foreign Language Scenario

Directions: Read the tutoring scenario below with your group. Spend about 5-10 minutes discussing how to best address the situation. The goal is to help the student you are working with learn best. Be prepared to share your ideas at the end with the other groups working different scenarios.

- Anthony is struggling with the foreign language he is taking in school. He gets easily frustrated whenever he doesn't understand something his teacher says in that language. Provide some strategies to Anthony that will increase his comprehension in the foreign language he is taking and allow him to succeed. Offer some steps he could take in addition to tutoring (Hint- what other resources does he have in school?)

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Share this information with all the groups after they have finished sharing all of their scenarios.

Concluding Comments:

It is important to note that tutees may not always say what strategies help them learn best. It is possible that they might not even know what does and does not work for them. One of the most helpful things a tutor can do, is get to know the tutee! A tutor can try out a wide variety of activities and games with their tutee to help them discover how they learn best. Also, find out what the tutee likes and dislikes, that way when a tutor is explaining things, they can relate concepts to a student's hobbies or passions. For example, a great way to help tutees understand difficult terminology or concepts is through the use of analogies. Making analogies that are related to things the tutee knows a lot about or is passionate about in their lives, makes those difficult concepts easier to understand.

For more information about different types of learning styles and strategies please see the handout for the Different Types of Learning Styles and Strategies.

Provide the handout of the Different Types of Learning Styles and Strategies to everyone participating in the workshop. The handout can be found on pages 16-18 of this workshop guide.

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Activity 3: Effective Communication - Omission (~15 minutes)

Participants- Groups of at least 2 people

Directions-

1. Print out the placards (*found on pages 20-21 on the workshop guide*) and distribute one of each to each group.
2. Explain the rules to each group and allow them to begin the activity.

Rules-

- Each person in the group will receive a placard each with a different word on. Participants should not let the other members of their partner/group see or know the word on their placard.
- The first person will get about 30 seconds to explain the word on their placard to their partner/group. There are no guidelines for how the explanation can be carried out, but the participant can not use any of the words specified on the placards.
- After 30 seconds, the partner/group will have the chance to guess what word the person was describing. The object is to get your partner/group to guess your word.
- Their partner or another member of their group will repeat the same task but with their own word. Keep repeating this process until everyone in the group has had a chance to describe their word.
- Have a discussion to allow all the groups to come together to reflect about what was successful, what didn't work as well, and what that means in terms of effective communication.
- Give the groups different placards and allow them to repeat the same activity again while applying the feedback from the group discussion to their new explanations.

Goal- To successfully explain a concept or an action to others without using specific vocabulary.

Purpose- To stretch the creativity and imagination of tutors, and allow them to re-address a situation when something isn't being understood. It allows exploration into different methods of explanation and communication and is valuable to the development of teaching.

(You can cut out the examples on the placards and distribute to different groups to be used for this activity.)

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*Explain how to blow your
nose.*

Do not use the words:

- nose
- blow
- tissue

Explain what a watch is.

Do not use the words:

- watch
- time
- clock

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*Explain what a computer
is.*

Do not use the words:

- computer/laptop
- internet
- keyboard

*Explain how to ride a
bike.*

Do not use the words:

- bike
- wheels
- handlebars

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Explain what an eraser is.

Do not use the words:

- eraser
- writing
- pencil

Explain what a car is.

Do not use the words:

- car
- wheels
- gas

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*Explain what a fire alarm
is.*

Do not use the words:

- fire
- alarm
- evacuation

*Explain what a television
is.*

Do not use the words:

- television (TV)
- screen
- cable

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Handout: Additional Thoughts to Share with New Tutors

Be positive. An important part of peer tutoring is helping a tutee build confidence in themselves as learners. Encouraging the tutee and even rewarding them with praise when they do something well or succeed is a big part of building that confidence.

Using humor. Humor can be a great tool for tutors during their sessions as it can help to relax the atmosphere and make the session feel more casual. This may help the tutee to feel more comfortable during your sessions and help the tutor make a connection with their tutee. While it may be advantageous to use humor, it is important that humor is never used to make fun of or to joke about a tutee's abilities.

Keep it confidential. Although there may not be an actual rule that a tutor must keep all information regarding a tutee confidential, it is good to do so. As a tutor, tutees might decide to share personal information such as their grades. Also, some students may be embarrassed or not want others to know they are being tutored, therefore it is best not to mention names of a student you may be tutoring. It is important that a tutor works to maintain the trust between them and their tutee to ensure a good relationship between the two.

Be adaptable. Find a way that works for your tutee and be aware that what works for one might not work for another. Be open to trying a variety of methods and strategies until you find something that works best for the tutee.

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