

## The Pool's Not Too Deep, Don't Worry

Dear future (or current as of now) tutor,

I was in the same position as you 12 weeks ago. I was so excited to start my job and looked forward to meeting new people and further familiarizing myself with different cultures. Fortunately, I had tutees from literally all over the world: China, Nepal, Yemen, Mexico, and Vietnam. It was quite interesting to read the papers and personal thoughts of my tutees and so I connected with them on a personal level. In the beginning, I was worried about handling 5 tutees and remembering everything about them but that thought went away quick enough! One of my tutees was from Nepal and he talked about the poverty existent in his country and his aspiration to respect his parents' wishes. I also got to expand my knowledge on Buddhism and Hinduism since my Nepalese tutee was both Hindu and Buddhist. It's always nice to create that warm environment in which the tutee feels you're more than just a "teacher". So not only do you get to feel that sense of pride that arises from the tutees looking up to you as the tutor, but you also become more culturally informed. Trust me, you will love this journey.

Specifically, one of my favorite assignments in this class was the videotaping session in which you record yourself tutoring one of your tutees then proceed to watch yourself stumbling over your feet and rambling on. For instance, I noticed I tend to shift my eyes a lot and get distracted easily so it was quite humorous to observe myself. I was tutoring one of my international students from China, in that session and I adore her since I know she is going through a lot. She mentioned to me how she lives with a host family that has small children and how it gets hectic at times trying to study amidst all the distracting noises of children playing. I told you her story because often it is really easy to judge a person, for example, when she plagiarizes or doesn't do all her assignments. As a tutor, you have the ability to soothe tutees and encourage them to succeed; don't underestimate your role. Working with that student was a challenge since she needed help precisely on sentence-level tutoring and I had to familiarize myself with terms such as noun clauses, subordinate transitions, and adverbs. I'm sure you're thinking to yourself "does she seriously not know what those terms mean" but no worries you'll be in the same position once you start tutoring. Don't be afraid to tell them you don't know about a certain concept. When you aren't sure how to explain something or just need a refresher, grab one of those grammar sheets from that "treasure" closet, or look through grammar websites. You can teach your tutee the concept while meanwhile teaching it to yourself- good deal right?

Isn't there always that one tutee who wants you to edit their paper... Okay I'm exaggerating since none of my tutees were like that. Don't fret over situations like that, just change the topic or remind them of the contract they signed, the yellow sheet, in the first session. That only happened to me once in the quarter when one of my students requested that he send his final essay to me so that I look over it. I felt sympathetic toward him since his essay was due tomorrow but didn't fall for it since he was indirectly implying that I edit his paper; I told my tutee that he could take advantage of the wonderful drop-in tutors.

There's a lot of analogies and simplified explanations when you are in need to explain punctuation rules, sentence structure etc. These analogies get passed down tutor to tutor and so we all use these strategies to ensure our tutees' success. For instance, there's the FANBOYS abbreviation for coordinating conjunctions, the traffic sign analogy for punctuation use, and the car and trailer story for differentiation between independent and dependent clauses. I strongly urge you to use these strategies to ensure your student gets the concept you are trying so hard to explain. Since I had a lot of male tutees, the car analogy seemed to spark their interest; Actually me and one of my tutees went off to a side conversation about cars for a few minutes. Unfortunately, when it comes to mastering verb tenses practice is the first and foremost important task. There really are no analogies for verb tenses but there are these funny animation clips that you can email your tutees. I learned all this information and went through all these experiences in just one quarter's worth of time. To sum it up, it's going to be a fun experience, new tutor, and you're definitely going to adore Victoria and Sandy, meet new people, and find new friends-so good luck and have fun!

