Dear future tutors,

First and foremost, welcome to the EWRT/LART 70 class. Trust me when I say this that you are going to enjoy this class a lot and make many friends, just like I have. When I started with this class 10 weeks ago, I was really nervous because I thought everyone must be experienced tutors, who know what to do and how to tutor proficiently and I would be the novice tutor, but as we continued, I realized that all of us were on the same boat. We all faced the same or at least similar issues during our tutoring sessions and this made me more confident. The fellow tutors and the other tutors at the tutoring center would all help you grow and become a better tutor.

In the class itself, the first thing I learned was how to be professional, yet build a friendly relationship with your tutee. This had to be one of the most important parts of the learning curve, as building a good relationship with the tutee is necessary in order to understand them and be able to help them better. The tutoring center gets tutees from a variety of cultural backgrounds and this class also taught me how show empathy and be patient towards students. One of the things which I use all the time is 10 second rule, where after asking the tutee a question you give them 10 seconds to figure out the answer. This technique really helps as most of the time the tutees do know the answer, but they just need to stop and think about it. One of the things which concerned everyone in the class was teaching grammar. This is probably one of the hardest things to do as we don’t always remember the grammatical rules. The teachers gave us some of the techniques which we could use in order to help the tutees better. Also the assignment which required us to do a grammar consultation with our senior tutor was really helpful as well. The tutor I interviewed gave me some of the suggestions and resources to use and they also helped me. The next thing I learned in this class how to organize the tutoring sessions. Prioritizing things is the most effective way to help a tutee and it also makes sure that you are using the given time well. The last thing which I learned in this class was how to deal with students of different levels of English. You may think that teaching ESL is easy but it is definitely not. The first workshop we had was with an ESL teacher and she really gave us some of the tools to use in order to help the ESL students. In another workshop, the instructor told us about generation 1.5 students and how to help them. The last workshop we had taught us how to help tutees
with the reading skills and this was probably my favorite. I really needed to learn these skills in order to help my tutees as all this while I helping them the wrong way. Reading out loud may help me but it doesn’t work for everyone. My tutees always ask me how to remember a certain word after learning it and I never had answers for them, as the only thing I knew was asking them to write down the words. But this reading workshop helped me learn other ways such as: having the students activate their schema and associate the word with something they know of, also making up sentences with the words and such. There will be some times when you will face other challenges such as cultural differences, language barriers and other social level problems and these are something which takes time to adjust to. Tutees feel that they only need to come in for their weekly tutoring sessions when they have an essay to work on and because of this thinking, my tutees canceled on me many times, so it is rather to have to inform your tutees at the very beginning that they can come to the tutoring sessions with other things as well, such as reading materials or they could come in to practice grammar and vocabulary with you, if that’s something they are weak at. Well, these are some of the things which I learned through this class and hope to continue using these skills.

I know you must have a lot of things going through your mind right now and trust me, anticipating a tutoring session at the beginning can be pretty daunting but once you begin tutoring, things just get easier. Expect to learn much from this class and from the instructors. They will give you the tools you need and eventually you will start to learn new things on your own too. During the tutoring sessions you will be surprised when you discover that not only do you help your tutees learn, but in fact you learn something from them in return, as well. It could be about their culture or even some grammar rule which you had forgotten. Also at the tutoring center you will receive support from everyone and I think this is the best part, as it is nice to have supportive and helpful colleagues. Usually when your tutees don’t show up, you could always ask one of the support staff for any other work you can do. Because of my tutees’ cancelations, I found out about the DLAs, which are activities designed for EWRT 200 students but these I realized, can be helpful to anyone. So you might want to check those out, if you get a chance.
I think I have finally found a job which I truly enjoy doing. Tutoring as I mentioned is not just beneficial for the tutee but the tutor also. It in fact makes a better writer of you as you start thinking more about why a certain grammar rule is, the way it is. The skills you learn at this job will definitely help you in the future, so enjoy it!

Best Wishes,