

I can show you the world!

Hi there!

If you are reading this, then you must be training to become a new tutor for the WRC! You must be feeling really excited about this--and you should be! Tutoring has been one of the most rewarding experiences I've had the pleasure of going through, even if my reason for applying was completely different at first. You get to meet all sorts of people and make really good friends with other tutors and your advisors (remember to talk to Victoria, Sandy, and Diana!). You'll also get to work closely with your tutees and see how much they grow in the quarter.

A few of the things I learned came from the EWRT97 class with Diana. I learned how to set up the tutoring session (starting with introductions, leading into agendas, and remembering to wrap up the session and plan for the following week). I also learned about the different levels of English and what should be expected from each level. For example, ESL244 students are still learning basic English, while ESL262 & 263 should be writing paragraphs with topic sentences and concluding sentences. It's important for us to recognize the different requirements in every level so we know how to treat our tutee and set up the session accordingly. Also don't worry about the unfamiliar names of the English classes! Once you get into tutoring, you'll get a sense of how each student thinks and the things they want you to look over. It's also imperative that we take cultural differences into account. People may act differently due to their cultural background, and it may affect how the tutoring session goes and also how they write their papers. For some cultures, it's hard for them to write a persuasive paper because in their culture, it's not okay to write about their opinion. They may struggle with things we find second-nature, and taking their culture into account may help immensely. Also keep in mind that ESL students and native speakers learn differently: ESL students prefer looking at a grammar book and seeing the structure of the sentence using the grammar terms (present perfect, etc), while native speakers prefer reading sentences out loud and seeing if it "sounds right". Try to figure out what kind of learner your tutee is so that you can keep them active and engaged in your session.

As for the tutoring skills, some things can only be learned when they are put into practice. Your first tutoring session with your weekly individual tutee may seem intimidating and even a bit scary, but it's okay! Remember that they can be just as nervous as you, so you're pretty much in the same boat. Try to be as enthusiastic as you can so you can help them warm up to you! After all, you'll be working with this person for the entire quarter, so it's best to get on friendly terms with them. I found my tutoring style in my 3rd or 4th session, so it won't take too long for you to settle into the job.

Some things to look out for are no-shows and tutees wanting you to "fix" their paper. Fortunately, I haven't had any no-shows this quarter, but if you happen to have one, be persistent and contact them 3 or 4 times (both phone and email). Be clear that if they have 2 no-shows, their privileges for weekly individual will be taken away, and they will be restricted to only drop-in tutoring. Victoria will assign you another tutee if that one stops showing up, and don't feel too bad about it because it happens pretty often. Another thing to look out for are tutees coming in expecting you to do all of the work. As tempting as it is, do NOT pick up that pen and start correcting the errors for them because it won't help them learn anything! I know it's very hard to resist (I'm naturally drawn to editing things) but use your willpower and don't do it. If your tutee comes in wanting you to do this, calmly explain to them that you are here to help them learn and not to perfect their paper for them. Usually they get the idea right away but if it gets out of control, just get Victoria or Sandy to help you out. That also goes for any grammar concepts that you yourself don't understand. Yes, it's okay if you don't know the answer! You can also look at grammar books or online resources for help. They are there for you to use.

For sentence-level tutoring, it's easy to get caught up in all of the errors and mistakes, but the first thing you should look for is the meaning of the sentence. Does the sentence make sense? Read the sentence out loud and rephrase it to see if that is what your tutee means (and they will most likely explain to you what they really want to say, and you can go from there). Even though articles are important, leave those and

spelling for the very end and focus on the bigger problems. Take baby steps so that your tutee can improve, and you can move on from there.

All in all, the most important advice I can give you is to be professional about your job. It is so easy to overstep those boundaries and help your tutee outside of the WRC, but that can quickly get out of hand where the tutee is sending you their paper at 2 am and asking you to fix it “this one time”. The best thing to do is to tell them to either use drop-in or to bring the paper to your next tutoring session. Try to restrict the time you spend with them to the hour session in the WRC.

Well, that’s all I can tell you. The rest you’ll learn from the tutoring class and from your experiences! Remember to relax and have fun!