



Tennessee High School

Peer Tutoring Handbook
for Tutors and Mentor Teachers

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Benefits of Peer Tutoring Programs.....	5
For Mentor Teachers	
Peer Tutors: What can they do for you?.....	7
Peer Tutors: Daily Implementation.....	8
Potential Pitfalls- What to watch for.....	9
For Tutors	
The relationship with tutees.....	10
Techniques of tutoring.....	11
Responsibilities.....	13

Introduction:

The Peer Tutoring program at Tennessee High School is concerned with matching students requiring enhancement in academic subjects or technical skills with peer tutors proficient in these skills. The program focuses attention on students with disabilities that are included in the general curriculum. Emphasis is placed on ensuring students are afforded the opportunity to receive one-on-one support to achieve success in school and reach their career goals. Furthermore, the program asserts that a place of learning is a community, and that it is the responsibility of all community members to contribute to the success and quality of the learning environment.

Tutees will be identified through the IEP process. Members of the IEP team will determine if peer-tutoring services are appropriate for individual students and the area(s) for which tutoring is needed. Faculty members, however, are also encouraged to identify students with difficulties in subject content or related skills, and refer them to the Peer Tutoring Supervising Teacher. Every effort will be made to assign peer tutors to appropriate learning environments in order to maximize success for all students.

Additionally, faculty members are encouraged to refer qualified tutors to guidance counselors and/or the Peer Tutoring Supervising Teacher. All tutors must display strength in subject matter through grades and recommendations of teachers. Tutors are then required to attend a training session with the Supervising Teacher. This training will detail specific information about the tutee's disability and needs in the classroom.

The role of peers in the successful inclusion of students with disabilities should not be underestimated. Peers are a readily, but frequently, untapped resource in the classroom. It is important to include peers every step of the way: preplanning, planning, and implementation. The involvement of peers needs to be ongoing. Open communication, valuing of diversity, fostering respect, fostering proximity, modeling and establishing behavioral expectations all contribute to positive peer interactions.

Preplanning:

- Educating peer tutors about the specific nature of their tutee's disability is important
- Teach peer tutors how to interact, to respond, to communicate and to behave

- Educate peer tutors with regard to disabilities in general

Planning:

- Include peer tutors in conferences concerning the student when appropriate
- Inform the peer tutors about program about program changes concerning the tutee

Implementation:

- Informally challenge peer tutors to make adaptations where necessary
- Include peer tutors in problem solving in regards to the tutee

Benefits of Peer Tutoring Programs:

There are numerous benefits associated with tutoring. As with any other school program, it is important to note that no two programs are the same. Student, school, and community dynamics all contribute to the uniqueness of any given program. In addition, the scope of tutoring can vary widely from school to school. Given these differences, common benefits result from tutoring in nearly any setting. The following lists detail the benefits of tutoring in general, as well as benefits to the tutees, the tutors, and the teachers.

In General, Tutoring

- Improves communication skills
- Improves organizational skills
- Improves learning
 - For tutee, there is more individual attention, language used is generally “cool”
 - For tutor, the understanding of the concept is raised to higher levels, rather than superficial levels
- Improves self esteem and self-confidence
- Provides positive role models and emotional support
- Creates opportunities for enrichment
- Creates the opportunity to “wean” students from educational assistants
- Increases mastery of academic skills

- Improves student's attitudes toward school: reduces dropout rates, trancies, and tardies
- Breaks down social barriers and creates new friendships

The Tutees Receive

- Individual instruction – lessons are tailored to individual students' learning styles and levels of understanding
- Instruction free of competition – students progress at their own pace
- Private instruction, apart from whole class instruction
- Increased praise, feedback, and encouragement over what they might receive from one teacher
- Closer monitoring (from the teacher and tutor) that maximizes time on task
- Skills demonstrated instead of just verbalized
- Companionship

The Tutors Receive

- A sense of pride and accomplishment for having helped someone else
- Increased academic mastery
- A greater sense of dedication to their own instruction, so they can effectively transmit it to the tutees
- Increased self-esteem, confidence, and sense of adequacy as a result of being named a tutor
- A new or increased sense of responsibility and awareness for what teachers must do to transmit knowledge to students
- Empathy for tutees for whom learning may be much more of a struggle

Mentor Teachers Receive

- Reduced time spent on repetitive work, allowing them to carry out more technical and professional tasks
- Increased personal monitoring of individual student progress over the monitoring they must provide during whole class instruction
- Personal gratification in seeing the rewards reaped by both tutor and tutee
- Improved skills as they perform monitoring, counseling, evaluation, and record keeping functions in conjunction with the program

For Mentor Teachers:

Peer Tutors: What can they do for you?

- Work with students who were absent for material
- Read to students – one on one
- Students read to them – one on one
- Review test material with students
- Go over poor test results – one on one
- Prepare and implement remedial work with teacher's consultation
- Assist in classroom
- Assist with writing process
- Lead small groups
- Help with study skills
- Develop planning and organizational skills
- Demonstrate effective learning skills
- Take attendance
- Collect and correct homework of class or individuals
- Supervise the rewriting of tests
- Provide regular workbook checks

For Mentor Teachers:

Peer Tutors: Daily Implementation

Once the program is off and running, the work has only just begun. The everyday functioning of the programs requires careful planning and organization. Remember that tutors are not responsible for lesson planning, scheduling, monitoring, or evaluation. These tasks fall to the mentor teacher and supervising teacher. Following are some helpful hints to keeping the program successful:

- Conduct regular meetings between tutors and supervisors as a way of keeping in touch and informing of developments in the program. This is also a time for tutors to receive further training as needed
- Communicate regularly with school staff and parents. Tap into both groups' skills. Teachers can assist with lesson plans and instructional suggestions. Parents can help to provide program materials and assist with working with individual students
- Strive to create a warm, relaxed, and noncompetitive environment for tutoring pairs to work
- Remember that tutoring can be scheduled during class time, during lunch periods, or before or after school. It is generally felt, however, that the most successful time is during class.
- Monitor the tutoring sessions and the program overall. Stop potential problems from becoming actual problems
- Make sure to positively reinforce the work of the tutors

For Mentor Teachers:

Potential Pitfalls – What to Watch For

To keep the program running smoothly, keep an eye out for these potential problems:

- Keep the noise level to a minimum. Classroom full of tutoring pairs have the potential to become very noisy, thus becoming ineffective
- Monitor tutoring techniques. Tutors should use effective instructional strategies under your guidance
- Watch for tutors that are bossy or authoritarian – this is not what tutees need
- Keep the programs engaging and exciting for both tutors and tutees
- Watch for bad tutor/tutee relationships
- Make sure you keep parents informed of school activities. Those that are uninformed may misunderstand the intentions of activities of the program
- Use tutoring to supplement instruction conducted by a competent teacher, not as a substitute for what the teacher doesn't have time to do

For Tutors:

The Relationship with Tutees

The Tutorial Rule:

Be a friend first, tutor second, and never the teacher.

Tips for the Relationship:

- √ Get to know your tutee. Find out his/her interests/likes, dislikes/hobbies
- √ Keep in touch with your tutee. Make an effort to speak to them outside the classroom-in the hall, at lunch, on the bus.
- √ Be patient. Your tutee may have difficulty with many things that come easy for you. Learning may not be easy for your tutee. His/her learning may be distracted by other problems in his/her life. This will require work on your part unless you are one of the lucky ones born with a lot of patience. It will be worth the effort, though.
- √ Be positive. Show your tutee what is right with their work before you point out what is wrong. Show them the progress that is being made. Praise them when success happens.
- √ Always exhibit a caring attitude. Remember the vehicle that carries what you know you care before they will care about what you know. Your success as a tutor is not dependent upon what you know. Your success as a tutor is not dependent upon how much you know, but rather how much you care.

For Tutors:

Techniques of Tutoring

- **Be positive, not negative.** Place yourself in your tutee's situation. Sincere compliments always work better than embarrassing criticism.
- **Be courteous and thoughtful.** This includes starting and stopping a lesson on time and being attentive to your tutee's conversation about him/herself. If you are willing to listen, you will be amazed at how much he/she can teach you.
- **Use humor to make a session fun.** Never hesitate to admit a mistake or that you do not know something. It can be a great learning situation together.
- **Be patient.** We all require understanding from others, and learning can be difficult when other problems in our lives demand attention.
- **Offer praise.** You will often be the one who provides the encouragement to continue. Discuss the progress you have made, and write down what has been learned. It helps your tutee see his/her progress.
- **Be flexible.** Never think that because you have started one method that changes cannot be made. Think about the way your tutee learns best. Remember that people learn differently. It is helpful when reading, writing, and listening are all used, but it is up to you to find out what works.
- **Make sure** every lesson not only contains challenging work for your tutee but also contains enjoyable material that can be successfully handled.
- **Your tutee should understand what he/she is to do.** It is easy to say too much, so say enough to be clear, and then provide time for questions. Let him/her practice with the material before working on their own.
- **Let him/her participate, not just listen.** Having him/her correct his/her own papers will help them learn what needs to be worked on.
- **You are guiding your tutee into independent learning.** Everything you do should lead to that. Be glad when he/she tells

you something is not working. That means he/she is analyzing some of their own learning needs.

- **Review for retention.** Practice is good. Allow just enough to learn the skill, not too much.
- **Always be alert** to any problems needing special attention, such as hearing or visual difficulties.

For Tutors:

Responsibilities

- ❖ Attend class daily
- ❖ Perform instruction according to the teacher. Follow correct teaching by watching.
- ❖ Get right to work as soon as you come into the classroom.
- ❖ Be a good role model. The students will be watching you and doing some of the things you do.
- ❖ Respect students' privacy. If you are told something about a student **KEEP IT TO YOURSELF**.
- ❖ Complete all assignments on time.
- ❖ Complete weekly journal reflections as instructed.
- ❖ Conference with supervising and mentor teachers as needed.