



Letter to future tutors

Dear future tutor,

I will start off by saying that tutoring will be one of the most developmental, interesting, and valuable experiences you will encounter during your life because it encompasses so many different aspects that will push you to becoming a more adept writer, reader, listener, and person.

Being a tutor, you may feel as if you need to know all the answers right away and be the all-knowing, experienced writer, but as hard as it is to believe, that is not what makes you a good tutor. It is good to be well-versed in grammar rules and have a good feel of how to organize a paper but one of the most important skills a tutor must have is interpersonal communication skills. It does not matter if you are naturally shy or outgoing, what matters is how you disclose yourself to each and every tutee. Every tutee is different, with a different learning style, a different background, and a different culture. Trying to fit them into an idealistic idea of a tutee is impossible and will not help you create a connection with your tutee. What is important is that you as a tutor, views you and the tutee as a team, two equals who are working together to achieve a goal or overcome an obstacle. Your tutee is capable and has the potential to succeed in English and writing. It is your responsibility to believe in that and relate to their struggles and experiences. Being open-minded is key in this process because it helps your tutee feel secure and unjudged.

You will be faced with tutees on all levels of English, from ESL to EWRT 2 students, international students to native speakers, sixteen-year olds to forty-year olds, and so on. The one commonality you can be sure to find is the process of learning English. Some may not want to be there and some may want all the help they can get; the one thing you can be sure of is that you can help them. Keep in mind that you may not always feel as if you helped them but your session that may have seemed unproductive has planted a seed of knowledge and experience in the tutee that s/he may briefly recall later in the future. Your time and effort is valued and by sticking to the basic ethics of patience, kindness, and honesty, you can serve as a positive influence in your tutee's English learning experience.

If you are anything like me, I would like to preface you on some challenges I faced, which were trying not to help too much and managing my time. I was always trying to do too much in one hour. It is important to remember that as a tutor you are there to guide them, not serve as an editor for their paper. It is not your job to restructure their sentences, reorganize their paragraphs, or ensure that they will receive an A. It is your job to point out where and how they could restructure their sentences, paragraphs, and encourage them to achieve the best grade they possibly can. I

always struggled with wanting to perfect their papers and help them get the grades they wanted. Just remember, there is always a fine line between caring and pampering. You do not want your tutee to be dependent on you and not know what to do if you were not there.

As a tutor, you want what is best for both you and the tutee. It will not help you develop as a tutor by giving the right answers and having instant results. It will help you become a better tutor and writer by figuring out different ways to explain and guide a tutee down the right path. You want to give your tutee the tools to succeed, not succeed for them. Planning out your tutoring session is very important as well because it helps you manage your time and make your tutee feel as if s/he got the most out of his/her time. I always wanted to jump straight into the paper and tackle everything at once. It is important to step back, evaluate the situation, and figure out a plan of action to tackle the paper in the most efficient way.

The tutoring process is a very complex and multi-faceted experience. You will find yourself constantly adapting to different situations and relationships. There is never a moment where you will find yourself zoning out or bored. To me, I found tutoring rewarding because I am not only more aware of my technical writing skills such as grammar and organization, I have also established connections with my tutees, the support team, and my fellow tutors. I strongly encourage you to integrate yourself in this constructive community of people who genuinely want you and others to succeed.

Commit and open yourself up to this job, it is an opportunity for you to improve yourself and become a person who can improve others. Have fun and good luck!  
(not that you really need luck)