

Tutoring Cycle

Learn the 12 steps of the Tutoring Cycle, understand the reasons for each step, and practice knowing what to say to begin each step.

Step 1: Greeting and Climate Setting

—Set the session up for success!

- Set positive tone for the session
- Arrangement of furniture
- Be Proactive!! (with the greeting, furniture arrangement, avoiding distractions, noise level, etc.)
- Individual Tutoring—
- sit side by side, work in front of the tutee (left-handed—sit on the side they write with—you are closer to the work & it's harder for you to write on their work)
- Hands off of student's work! All tools should be in the hands of the tutee!
(pencil, pages, chalk, calculator)—remember, goal = tutee's independence

Step 2: Identification of Task

Now,...purpose of the session...what to work on...?

—Provide opportunity: *Let the tutee direct your attention to their needs, her terms, her pace!*; Giving the tutee the responsibility for learning, and the opportunity to act like a peer with you

- Getting started: *"How is that math class going?"; this is much more productive than, "So, tell me what you want to work on today?"*
- Focus their questions (feels less overwhelming) *"I don't understand how to develop good transitions in this essay" vs. "I need help with my writing"*
- Follow-up: 2 purposes to follow up questions:
- to help tutees make statements which clarify their immediate concerns
- Show tutee that they DO know something, and that it is on their knowledge that you intend to build. Building on tutees knowledge is a healthier approach to learning because it respects and acknowledges what the tutee has learned and does know. Reinforcing the tutee as a knowledgeable person empowers the tutee.
- Restatements: Give the tutee the opportunity to acknowledge for himself what he knows and to focus the day's activities. Ex: Tutee: "I need help with my writing"... Tutor: "You need help with your writing." PAUSE. Tutee: "Yeah, I got this essay back and the teacher said something about transitions"...The session is developing a focus, and the tutee is doing the focusing.
- Empathetic statement: Another strategy—Tutor: "Writing a good paper for Mr. Winkler can be really frustrating"

Before moving on to step 3, it is very important that you understand what the tutee needs help with. Better to take more time now to clarify and investigate, then to spend 10-15 minutes tutoring something the tutee does not need help with!

Step 3: Breaking the Task into Parts

—Very important in the structure of the session to do this with the tutee! —

—Decide together what steps are involved & how much time to spend on each step. Planning is the sign of a skillful tutor.

- Ex: Transitions in writing—a)knowing what a transition is, b)where they go, c)identifying places in tutee’s paper where transitions are needed, writing transitions for each of those places.
–Providing opportunity—Restatement can be helpful here. Ex: Tutee: ”I’ve got to understand mitosis, be able to diagram it, identify each of the parts in each of the stages... Man!” Tutor: restates, more calmly and organized “That is a lot! OK, let’s see...understand mitosis, diagram it, and label its parts” then, perhaps you discuss the time limitations, can you cover it all? Then ask the tutee again, “Now what are the three things you want to cover?”

Step 4: Identification of Thought Processes Which Underlie the Task

- This is one of the two most critical steps in tutoring. And the 2 least practiced!*
- “Identification of thought processes which underlie the task” means that you help the tutee learn how to approach learning the type of task with which he is having problems. Show the tutee how to do this type of problem, using a particular problem as the example
- Promoting independence—1st, ask tutee to explain to you how he’ll proceed with each of the problems in the set. Your objective here is to hear a fairly detailed procedure. Once you have procedure, then ask tutee to work the first problem using those steps
- Resources—Always keep in mind resources like textbooks, handouts, workbooks, lecture notes, teacher’s manuals (available to tutors in the tutoring lab), and the instructor. You, the tutor, are not the only resource! Don’t become the one who possesses course information & then explains it to the student. You want the student to process information in the course materials for himself.
- Example phrases: *“Let’s see how the text tells you how to do these kinds of problems.”* OR *“I know the explanation in the text helped me when I took the class.”* OR *“Good thing for you, Dr. Smith picked a text with a good explanation.”*
- Utilize the text

Step 5: Set an Agenda for the Session

- Agenda: A plan with time in mind! A budget for time.
- Giving the tutee the opportunity to set the agenda greatly increases the likelihood that the tutee will actively participate in making the agenda work!
- Follow the agenda, but be flexible

Step 6: Addressing the Task

- Herein lies the business of tutoring!

Step 7: Tutee Summary of Content

- This is where you see results! The “light bulb effect”!
- Stay out of the way! Let the explanation run its course without interruptions! This will help with long term memory!
- Beware of the “fake light bulb effect”—“oh, OK, I get it. Thanks.” Your job here is to keep the session at this step of the cycle or to back tract in the cycle until the tutee can explain the info himself. Give tutee plenty of time to keep talking after the initial “light bulb” statement.

Step 8: Tutee Summary of Underlying Process

- Your task here is to be sure that a summary statement of the learning process happens.
- Unless you make a point of this, your tutee will not work on these underlying thinking skills at all.
- Provide opportunity!! Once again...Unless you act to make this step happen it probably won't. And this is what helps move the info from short to long term memory storage.

Step 9: Confirmation

- Reinforce specific accomplishments
- Thoughtful evaluations

Step 10: What Next?

- helps tutee plan what to do next
- reinforces connections between what she learned in tutoring and what she'll be learning next.
- Example statements: “*Well, where do you go from here in this class?*” OR “*What will you do next and how will what we've done help you?*”

Step 11: Arranging and Planning the Next Session

- Simply remind of next standing session, or arrange another meeting if necessary

Step 12: Closing and Good-bye