Online Tutoring Best Practices

The #1 requirement of an excellent tutor is to empathize with and encourage your students. Be patient and kind. Treat students with respect, recognize their efforts, and help them learn to succeed without you.

### Live Tutoring

#### Structure of a Live Session
- Using first names, greet the student warmly and introduce yourself.
- Welcome them to NetTutor and ask how you can help them.
- Collaborate to set session goals and expectations. Model how to break a task into parts. Promote growth mindset.
- Let the student do the work. Use the Socratic method, Bloom’s taxonomy, scaffolding, and active listening.
- Encourage metacognition. Ask the student to summarize what they learned in the session.
- Thank the student for their visit, tell them about the survey, and invite them to return if they want.

#### Do’s and Don’ts
- Sessions begin in the lobby. When you feel the session would benefit from using the whiteboard drawing canvas, audio/video, or screen sharing, seek confirmation/readiness from the student before you proceed.
- Be a good communicator (a kind tone matters); let them know if you need a minute to review what they shared.
- Model proper spelling and grammar, sentence structure, and academic discourse; use netiquette (e.g., no CAPS).
- Empathize with the student, but do not speak ill of their instructor, the assignment, or their grade.
- Give specific, positive reinforcement, but do not overpraise the student giving them a false sense of comfort.
- It’s okay to be human; tell the student when you need to look something up, and model how to use resources.
- Do not share personally identifiable information (PII), and flag any session where the student shares PII.
- Sessions may proceed as long as they are productive. Else, use an exit strategy (e.g., compliment sandwich).

### Asynchronous Tutoring (Paper Review or Question Reply)
- Take the time to read through the entirety of the student’s submission. Reflect on the help the student has requested.
- If the student has shown their work, add comments or ask questions about errors or omissions, but do not fix them. Else, give an alternate example, offer a resource with explanation, and/or suggest tips on how to get started.
- Include a greeting and closing comparable to those of a live session.

### Outside of Tutoring Sessions

#### Be prepared
- Ensure your device is fully charged and has stable internet.
- Plug in your earbuds and test your audio/video.
  - Make sure your background is reasonably clear of distractions (seen or heard).
  - Good lighting is critical! Face the light (backlighting is bad).
  - Tip: tape a picture of someone you love near your webcam. You’ll smile, making your voice warmer.
- Try to avoid distractions; create a study-like atmosphere. Every session deserves your full attention.

#### Take a break
- Get up and move (including hand/wrist stretches). Grab your water bottle and go outside for some fresh air.
- Look away from the computer screen; focus your eyes on an object across the room or across the street.

#### Be present in the workplace
- Check your email. Socialize with your coworkers and supervisor.
- Use the QC rubric to review past sessions. Celebrate “aha!” moments. Reflect on low scores for self-improvement.