

# 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.

### Dos 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.

