

Guide for Appropriate Action in a Challenging Tutoring Situation

Most volunteer tutoring matches go smoothly without much problem. However, there are times when some challenges may arise. The following information will help you to identify potential issues and deal with them before they become serious and the student drops out of the program.

Identify red flags for waning student interest

The items listed below are some things you might encounter as a tutor which might signify that there is a potential for the student dropping out of the program.

- Unable to keep the prearranged schedule for tutoring sessions
- No preparation for tutoring session - didn't do homework, didn't bring learning supplies
- General disinterest in the tutoring session - seems to be preoccupied, negative body language and/or little interaction

How to approach a challenge?

These red flags are a sign that you need to keep the communication going with your student. Encourage the student to explain the reason for poor attendance, no preparation, or seeming disinterested.

There are numerous reasons why someone can't comply with prearranged plans. A simple discussion about what barriers have come up could be a comfortable opening to discuss what other options might be available to assure the student can continue. Some of these other options might be:

- A change of time, frequency and location.
- Are the lessons too hard, too easy?
 - Are you teaching with the student's most comfortable method of learning?
 - Are you consistently offering positive reinforcement?
- Are their goals different now? Do you need to focus on something else?
- Is there something serious going on at home or a medical situation that is distracting their learning? Connect them with other resources for the distraction such as the Family Focus book in the office.

Who to go to for further support?

The office staff is available to you to discuss a situation at any time. They have had experience with tutoring and will be helpful in assisting you in devising a plan of action to keep your student engaged and successful. Feel free to stop by or call the office anytime (910-891-4111).

The staff know what other resources HCL might have available that could be helpful for your student. There are many resource books and pamphlets in the HCL library that may be helpful. Your role is not to solve a student's personal challenges, but to give them resources to address it. Reading pamphlets can be a lesson itself.

In most cases, a change of approach and a little creativity can conquer a challenge.

Instructional Strategies and Intrinsic Motivators

There are many ways to cover course content and effective instructors may find adult learners more enthusiastic when a variety of instructional methodologies are used (McDaniel & Brown, 2001). In encouraging active participation of students, a safe and supportive environment must be provided at all times. The following nine strategies can move the student from a reluctant learner to an engaged learner that is intrinsically motivated:

- Encourage students to draw on past experiences and facilitate a dialogue of discussion with regular active participation.
- Encourage students to share their own learning expectations and goals related to the course content.
- Provide announcements and emails with information about the resources available for struggling students (i.e., mentorships, coaching, or counseling services).
- Provide real life applications through simulations, case studies, and role playing activities.
- Provide visual aids or even field trips that enhance the students learning and application of learning outcomes.
- Invite guest speakers that are experts in the field. Experts can pique students' interests and highlight relevance of the learning concepts being taught.
- Talk with students about how the class assignments are relevant to future careers.
- Teach students to reflect and take control over their own learning by using weekly reflections (anonymously, if you like) to solicit feedback about their own performance and where they need to improve.
- Empower students by teaching them where to find materials and how to use resources in that will help them in areas where improvement is needed.

from <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-and-learning/nine-strategies-to-spark-adult-students-intrinsic-motivation/>

Our volunteer tutors report to us that this is one of the most satisfying activities of their life experiences. We hope this information assists you to enjoy your tutoring experience!