



# **NV ABE Tutor/Classroom Volunteer Training Manual**



Dear Tutor/Classroom Volunteer,

Welcome to Nevada's ABE Tutor/Classroom Volunteer Manual. Providing quality, exceptional service is our priority. We believe that all students are capable of learning and achieving. We make every effort to create a supportive environment where active learning takes place, and we are committed to fostering a dynamic, effective learning atmosphere.

In choosing to be a tutor/classroom volunteer, you have accepted an important and very satisfying responsibility. You have an opportunity to be instrumental in the success of the many students you serve. Your positive interaction with another student(s) could make a critical difference in that student's educational path. Your role involves not only the command of an academic subject area, but also a strong command of interpersonal skills.

The purpose of this Tutor/Classroom Volunteer Training Manual is to provide an orientation to the process of tutoring/classroom volunteering. In the following pages, you will find principles and procedures that have been developed by many educators. They are designed to help you achieve the best results possible in the tutoring/classroom volunteering process. This material is designed to help you become an efficient and effective tutor/classroom volunteer.

## **WELCOME TO THE EXCITING WORLD OF HELPING OTHERS BECOME BETTER LEARNERS!**

With gratitude for giving Nevada permission to adapt this  
manual from The Tutor Manual by Chandler-Gilbert  
Community College Learning Center

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## Definition of Tutoring

Tutoring is, by definition, a one-to-one or small group activity where a person who is knowledgeable and has expertise in a specific content area or discipline provides tutelage, help, or clarification to one or more who do not. The goal of tutoring is to assist students to become independent learners and increase their motivation to learn. As a tutor, you will have an opportunity to be instrumental in the success of the many students you serve.

## Role of the Tutor

The tutor plays a vital and multifaceted role in supporting students' academic learning. Here is an overview of the roles a tutor often plays simultaneously.

### 1. The Tutor as a Helper

The tutor's job is to help students to learn and problem solve on their own. Tutors do not just give students answers; rather, they are ready to help the student begin to make progress toward a solution. Tutors understand that learning is a process of comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. To assist in actively becoming involved in the learning process, tutors help tutees to:

- Know the type of problem being solved.
- Understand and use the vocabulary of the subject.
- Practice the application of principles.
- Realize that all learners make mistakes but that learning from one's mistakes is a very effective way to learn.
- Perform the work themselves.
- Verbalize what they have learned.

### 2. The Tutor as a "Model Student"

Tutors are successful students, not experts. Tutors demonstrate the thinking, study skills and problem solving skills necessary to learn new information. Since tutors are successful learners, tutors exemplify the behaviors of a model student. They must assess the areas where a student may need additional assistance and take the time to share tips and strategies that work.

### 3. The Tutor as a Program Employee

As an ABE program employee, tutors help to preserve the reputation of the program. Tutors follow the rules and policies outlined in this manual as well as stated during the tutor training. Also, tutors are responsible for explaining the program's policies to the students utilizing the program. Tutors are respectful to the students, program staff, and administration.

## Tutor Code of Ethics

- Subject proficiency and knowledge-ability have top priority.
- One of my goals is building the student's self-confidence.
- My student deserves and will receive my total attention.
- The language my student and I share must be mutually understood at all times.
- I must be able to admit my own weaknesses and will seek assistance whenever I need it.
- Respect for the student's personal dignity means I must accept that individual without judgment.
- The student will constantly be encouraged but never insulted by false hope or empty flattery.
- I will strive for a mutual relationship of openness and honesty as I tutor.
- I will not impose my personal value system or lifestyle on my student. (the student).
- I will not use a tutoring situation to proselytize my personal belief system.
- Both the student and I will always understand my role is never to do the student's work.
- I count on the student to also be my tutor and teach me ways to do a better job.
- Good tutoring enables my student to transfer learning from one situation to another.
- I will keep confidential any information that my student decides to share with me or that I have access to in the helping process.
- I will help my student "learn how to learn" by helping him/her improve study skills.
- I will remember that I may be a role model for someone; therefore, I should conduct myself in an appropriate manner at all times.
- I will not comment negatively to students on faculty's grading policies, teaching methods/styles, assignments or their personalities.
- I will strive to provide excellent customer service. I will be encouraging, positive, and maintain a professional attitude in the center.
- My ultimate goal in tutoring is to foster independent and autonomous learning in the student.

## General Tutoring Tips and Techniques

- **Relax and be yourself.**  
You have been selected to tutor because you have the qualities that make you a positive role model for your tutee. Also remember that you are tutoring your peer. While he or she has a challenge in one subject area, you may have a challenge in another. Nobody is perfect.
- **Establish rapport.**  
Learn and remember your tutee's names. Be friendly and sincere in your efforts to understand your tutee as a person with unique interests and academic needs. Create an atmosphere of mutual respect and confidence.
- **Respect your tutees.**  
No positive rapport can exist without mutual respect between tutor and tutee. Be non-judgmental, accepting their personal integrity without trying to manage or change their frame of reference to suit your own value system. Try for an equal status, non-patronizing relationship.
- **Maintain confidentiality.**  
Be professional! Information gained about your tutee's challenges, problems, test scores, grades, etc., is strictly confidential.
- **Be sensitive to the individual needs of your tutees.**  
Your tutee might be embarrassed to ask for help. Offering help in a patronizing or condescending way can easily compound the feelings of inadequacy you are working to help him or her overcome. Take some time to establish rapport; let the tutee know you want to be there. Consider such factors as the instructor's style of teaching; learn about your tutee's special sensitivities and learning styles as well as their particular interests and talents.
- **Be informative without being intimidating.**  
Resentment closes down communication. Help the tutees understand what is expected of them by themselves, by you, and by the instructor. Make them aware of the scope of the subject to be covered as well as the requirements of individual assignments.
- **Be positive.**  
Your tutees may have had little success in school and need a rewarding experience. Focus on what the tutee is doing right. Help them recognize their strong points and work with them to strengthen their areas of challenge. Be honest, direct, and tactful. Praise and success are the best motivators.
- **Encourage independence.**  
Do not become a crutch. Your tutees must be aware at all times that you are not going to do their work. Let them know that they must put forth an effort in order to benefit from tutoring. Insist that they do their assignments, study on their own, and do their own thinking. In general, the less work you do for your tutee, the better. Although it is quicker, easier, and less frustrating to do the work for him/her, it is of little permanent help to the tutee. Help him or her learn how to do his or her own work. If you do supply an answer, be sure that your

tutee understands how you arrived at it and make sure you check for retention and understanding of that concept later on in the session.

- **Be patient.**

Try not to act annoyed with student's progress or lack thereof. Focus on the learning activity. Your annoyance may reinforce negative attitudes toward the course and their general ability.

- **Be a “prober.”**

Rather than feed the student answers, probe or prompt the student to remain in an active role in the tutoring process. Engage him/her in a joint exploration of problems and concerns. Verbalization builds self-confidence and enhances learning. The tutee should be talking about 75% of your session. (You should be talking only about 25% of the time.) Don't turn your tutoring time into just another class lecture.

- **Be flexible.**

Remember that the style and content of the material to be learned should be adjusted to the individual being tutored. Be resourceful and use initiative in devising or trying new methods and approaches to learning the subject at hand.

- **Encourage your tutees to focus on “learning how to learn.”**

Try to get them to concentrate on developing mental processes and learning strategies rather than on getting the “correct answers” and using rote memorization. Poor use of time and lack of good study habits are major shortcomings. Help tutees to master techniques that will help them to become efficient learners.

- **Be a good listener.**

Be aware of both verbal and non-verbal clues. Listen carefully to all of the messages about their feelings, the progress being made, concerns with the subject matter and course requirements. If you end up doing most of the talking at tutoring sessions, something is wrong.

- **Have confidence in yourself, but don't be afraid to ask for help and guidance.**

Don't hesitate to say that you do not know an answer. Be willing to research the matter and get back to your tutees at the next session. Your tutees will enjoy finding out that you are human too!



## Characteristics of Successful Tutors

### Successful tutors:

- Have fun!
- Are on time and prepared.
- Are friendly and acknowledge students (by name if possible) when they arrive.
- Encourage the student to develop good examples/discover examples provided in the text.
- Let the tutee do the work.
- Ask leading questions to help students learn and understand the material.
- Are patient and provide appropriate “think” time.
- Provide encouragement.
- Are aware of their nonverbal communication.
- Check the tutee’s learning by having the student summarize information at the end of the session.
- Are aware of and acknowledge cultural differences while treating tutees consistently and with respect.
- Relate successful study strategies to the tutee.
- Use questioning rather than answering strategies.
- Pay attention and are sensitive to the self-esteem issues of each tutee.
- Are able to explain concepts from several different angles.
- Focus the session on the process of learning rather than on the correctness of the answer.
- Rotate around the room spending time evenly with students.
- Conduct themselves in a professional manner.
- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Encourage students to fill out a tutoring evaluation form.
- Attend tutor training and “Hot Topic” meetings.
- Help to maintain the cleanliness of the center.

### Successful tutors DO NOT:

- Teach magic tricks.
- Expect the student to hear and remember everything they’ve said.
- Say, “This is easy” or use any other phrase that might imply the student is not smart.
- Put down or criticize the student or their abilities.
- Solve the problem or give the answer. The student should be holding the pencil.
- Criticize a teacher or the assignment.
- Go too fast.
- Make off-color jokes or suggestive comments to students.
- Use profanity.
- Waste the student’s time talking about themselves.
- Over socialize with other tutors when not tutoring. When students think you’re busy talking they’ll be discouraged from asking questions because they don’t want to interrupt you.



## Effective Tutoring Tips

Knowing something is one thing. Sharing it effectively is quite another. Being an effective tutor means taking the time to understand the student you are working with. Here are some questions to keep in mind before, during and after tutoring a student.

1. What does this student already know?
2. What does he or she need to know?
3. What does he or she hope to learn?
4. How does the student feel about being tutored?
5. How does he or she feel about the subject in question?
6. How can I best meet the student's needs without giving them the answers?
7. How can I conduct myself so that I may make the tutoring experience a positive one?

It is not necessary to ask these questions of the student. Just keep your eyes open, listen to the person and you'll have most of your answers.

## Study Skills: Hints from Experienced Tutors

The techniques presented here hints to share with students to help them make connections and study efficiently.

- Make flash cards to build vocabulary.
- Use mnemonics to help retain and recall information. For example, FOIL is a mnemonic created to remember how to multiply two binomials; First, Outer, Inner, Last.
- Look for patterns in formulas.
- Create a formula sheet and keep it handy.
- Use drawings to illustrate concepts rather than relying only on words.
- Make analogies to discuss how two concepts are similar to each other.
- Pay attention to words that are bold, underlined, or italics in the textbook.
- Use "practice" quizzes to help reinforce learning.
- Tutor other students in the class. The best way to learn something is to teach it to someone else.

## Tips for Group Tutoring

### The Advantages of Group Tutoring

- Students benefit from helping each other.
- The group benefits from a diversity of ideas and points of view.
- It builds tolerance for differences in background, personality, and intellectual style.

### Tips for Successful Group Tutoring

- *Inclusive Seating.*

Arrange seating in a circle to include everyone.

- *Face the Blackboard.*

When using the blackboard, be sure everyone can see.

- *Students Explain.*

Have students explain answers, concepts, and definition to each other.

- *Equalize the Talk Time.*

Make sure everyone in the group gets a chance to participate. Control vocal students by ceding the floor to others.

For example: “We’ve heard your thoughts on the previous point, Shawn, let’s see if someone else wants to suggest a different perspective.”

- *Praise.*

Praise students who come prepared to work.

- *Encourage Participation.*

Provide opportunities for quiet students to participate.

For example: “We haven’t heard from you in a while, Ralph. What do you think of Shawn’s answer?”

- *Summarize Everyone’s Contribution.*

Summarize the contributions of all students and integrate them into a whole. This reinforces learning and helps all to see their contribution and feel included.

# The 10 Steps of Tutoring

## Step 1: Greeting and Climate Setting

- Greet the student by name.
  - Be warm and friendly, setting a positive tone with eye contact and a smile.
  - Arrange seating to facilitate interaction between you and the tutee.
- Your goal is to set the session up for success.*

## Step 2: Identify the Task

- Encourage the tutee to initiate and identify the focus of the session.
  - Follow up with questions to clarify the tutee's main concerns.
  - Restate what the tutee wishes to work on so that the purpose is clear.
- By keeping the tutee involved in the organization of the session, they are in charge of the learning that will take place. It also continues to foster their independence.*

## Step 3: Breaking the Task into Parts

- Provide an opportunity for the tutee to break the task into manageable pieces.
  - Restate the steps the tutee suggests.
- This approach reinforces the idea that the task requires distinct pieces to accomplish and suggests there is a sequence to accomplishing them.*

## Step 4: Identify the Underlying Thought Processes

- Have the tutee clarify the problem solving approach learned in class.
  - Help the tutee discover how to approach learning the type of task with which he/she is having difficulties.
  - Help the tutee understand/use information sources like textbooks, handouts, notes, etc.
- This is a very important step in the tutoring process. It helps the tutee develop a learning strategy for problems of this type and it gives them practice applying their strategy.*

## Step 5: Setting an Agenda

- Discuss with the tutee the amount of time necessary to complete each part of their task. In a drop-in center the agenda is a flexible one since you must circulate around the room helping all students. This step helps to keep the student on task while they are in the center.

## Step 6: Addressing the Tasks

- Encourage the tutee to do most of the talking and writing.
- Use appropriate responses but do not interrupt the tutee's thinking.
- Ask leading questions of the tutee and allow for sufficient response time.

*It is at this step that you conduct the tutoring session and help the tutee learn the information. Remember that you are not the sole source of information. The course resources should also be utilized to help the tutee become proficient in using them.*

### **Step 7: Tutee Summary of Content**

- Give the tutee the opportunity to summarize what they just learned. (“Ok, let’s review. What did we just do?”)
- Wait for the tutee to finish his or her explanation before you interrupt or correct them.
- Use this summary to determine if the tutee really understands what was just discussed.
- If necessary return to addressing the task to clarify any misconceptions.

*Having the tutee summarize what they just learned allows them to convert the information from short-term memory to long-term memory. Once in long-term memory the tutee can begin to recall the information independent of tutoring.*

### **Step 8: Tutee Summary of Underlying Thought Process**

- Have the tutee summarize the process of addressing this type of task.

*This step is the companion to step 4 and it’s necessary to have the tutee summarize the thought process as they understand it. Often you must act to make this step happen.*

### **Step 9: Confirmation and Feedback**

- Confirm that the summaries of both content and thought process are correct.
- Offer positive reinforcement and confirm that the tutee understands or has improved. *This reassures the tutee that they can now do similar work independently and be successful.*

### **Step 10: Closing and Goodbye**

- End session on a positive note.
- Thank the tutee for their specific contributions toward the success of the session.

*Ending on a positive note encourages the tutee to continue to seek tutorial assistance. This continued assistance will lead to the tutee’s academic independence, the ultimate tutorial goal.*



## **Asking the Right Questions**

As a tutor, you must learn to ask effective questions throughout a tutoring session—the more effective the questions, the better the response from the student. Here are several ways questioning can be used during a tutoring session.

### **Ask questions to determine problem areas for the student.**

The most frequent question in the tutor session is “What are you having problems with?” This question is an important one; however, the problem comes from tutors taking the student’s answers at face value or not examining the answer in detail. A good tutor will want to know more, while one not versed in the importance of using questions will plunge into an explanation without asking anything else. With more questions, the tutor is able to give more specific help and better diagnose the student’s problem.

### **Ask questions to determine what a student knows.**

Too often a tutor will focus on what a student does not know. However, it is important to evaluate what a student does know. A student’s knowledge will not only help the tutor give more specific instruction and provide the student with some positive reinforcement, but also provide a better starting point for instruction. This information is especially true in subjective areas such as writing and interpretation. Always ask: “What do you think and know about this?” “What are your ideas?” “Can you explain this to me?”

### **Ask questions that help the student determine the right answer.**

Generally, the student will always know more than he or she thinks, so it is often the tutor’s job to show a student what he or she does know. If you are reviewing problems with a student and the student is stumped for an answer, use questions to show him or her how to solve the problem. Ask things such as “What is the first step?” “How did we solve the other problem similar to this?” “At what point are you getting stuck?” “What is the rule concerning this area?” The questions you ask will vary from situation to situation, but well asked questions are often the key to helping a student overcome anxiety and realize that he or she possesses the knowledge to solve the problem.

### **Ask questions to see if the student can apply new skills.**

A very effective teaching tool is to have the student teach you. After you teach the student new skills, ask if he or she can explain to you how to solve the problem. Ask, “What did you

learn about this?” “Can you show me the steps to solve this problem?” Try to get him or her to practice what they have learned and to apply it. This practice reinforces the learning process for the student and allows both student and tutor feedback on the effectiveness of the tutoring session.

### **Ask questions to clarify something that is not clear.**

When teaching new skills, the tutor should stop and ask, “Do you understand this?” “Is this part clear to you?” “Do you have any questions about this?” Often, students are afraid to ask questions, even to a tutor, for fear of appearing incompetent. A tutor should use questions like the ones above and positive reinforcement to teach the student differently. Also, a student will often say he or she does not understand something but not be specific. Use questions as stated above to determine exactly where he or she loses understanding of the subject. Ask, “Do you understand this part?” “How much of the problem can you solve” and continue until you reach the part or step in the problem that he or she does not understand.

When asking questions, keep the following in mind:

**Ask open-minded questions.** Do not ask questions that require yes or no answers; instead, ask questions that require elaboration.

**Allow the student time to answer one question before moving on to the next.** Do not bombard a student with several questions in a row without allowing him or her time to answer. Also, do not rush a student’s answer. Give him or her time to analyze the question and answer before moving on to another one. Some tutors will give hints if the student does not answer in a reasonable time so as not to make the student embarrassed by lack of knowledge.

**Mix questioning with other tutoring methods.** Asking questions is very important and very effective, but a session with only questions can overwhelm a student and not allow the tutor to give enough feedback or instruction. You must learn to ask the best questions at the most appropriate times.

**Make questions specific.** Try to avoid general questions as much as possible. At times, you must be general, such as when you ask, “What are you having problems with?” However, always narrow the focus as much as possible once the general questions have been asked. Specific questions will help a tutor pinpoint the student’s needs.

How to formulate good questions:

Questions should be posed that encourage thinking at each of the following levels of learning. Often questions only stimulate thinking at the knowledge, comprehension or application stages. To engage the tutee in active learning it is best to stimulate thinking at all levels by varying the questions asked.

<b><i>Level of Learning</i></b>	<b><i>Type of Thinking</i></b>	<b><i>Examples</i></b>
Knowledge (Remembering)	Remembering or identifying something without necessarily understanding it, using it or changing it.	Define... What is the sum of...? How many are there?
Comprehension (Understanding)	Demonstrating understanding of the concepts; transforming, reorganizing or interpreting.	In your own words... Compare... What is the main idea of...?
Application (Applying)	Using a general concept to solve a specific problem.	Calculate the area of... Apply the rule of...to solve...
Analysis (Analyzing)	Breaking a problem down into parts and analyzing conclusions to see if they are supported by evidence.	Make a graph of... Interpret the results... Does the answer seem reasonable?
Synthesis (Creating)	Original thinking, plan, proposal, design or approach.	How would you start? How many ways can you...? What would happen if...?
Evaluation (Evaluating)	Judging the value of ideas and offering opinions.	Which method is the most effective? Is there a better solution?
Adapted from Education Psychology 9th edition. Anita Woolfolk. 2004		

## **Active Learning**

Imagine a tutor is helping a student work a homework problem. What are the differences between passive learning and active learning?

### **Passive Learning:**

Tutor: "Here, let me show you how to do that."

### **Active Learning:**

Tutor: "What section of the textbook discusses this?"

### **Passive is when...**

- Tutor lectures or explains without engaging the student with questions.
- Tutor answers the student's questions rather than asking the student to call upon prior knowledge and skill to try to figure them out, or to consult the lecture notes, textbook, or other reference materials.
- Tutor solves homework problems rather than asking the student to solve them.

### **Active is when ...**

- The student does something to participate in learning to seek mastery of the material.
- Activities are structured so that the student is required to do the work.
- The student is engaged in the process summarizing the content he or she has learned.

### **Active learning has the following affects:**

- It makes tutoring more interesting and fun.
- It fosters appreciation of learning.
- It helps students practice self-expression, critical thinking, and self initiated inquiry.

# How to Stimulate Active Learning While Tutoring

## The Prompt Response Method

A prompt is a statement or a question that requests a response. Generally, tutors prompt with a question and students respond.

### The following scenario is an example of the Prompt-Response Method:

*Tutor (prompt):* "How do I find the horizontal intercepts?"

*Student (response):* "I plug zero in the y and solve for x."

The tutor's prompt is a leading question, a very common tutoring technique. This question helped the tutor identify the information the student has already mastered. Tutor initiated prompts should be questions designed to engage the student. See the 'Asking the Right Questions' section of this manual for more information about effective questioning techniques.

### Another example of using the Prompt-Response Method:

*Student (prompt):* "I don't get the difference between a domain and range."

*Tutor (response):* "What do you know about domain and range?"

The tutor did not answer the student's question, but instead responded with another prompt in the form of a question. Again the tutor offered a prompt to help clarify for both of them the student's level of knowledge.

## Advantages of Tutor Prompt Student Respond

- Focuses attention on the topic keeps the session on track.
- Focuses attention on the student, not the tutor.
- The student is an active learner.
- Helps the student gain self confidence as a learner.
- The tutor can assess the student's knowledge and understanding.
- Demonstrates an effective learning strategy that the student can apply independently.

## Disadvantages of Tutor Prompt Student Respond

- Can turn into a frustrating guessing game (Guess what's in my head?).
- Can become an interrogation (Since you don't know A, then do you know B?).
- Can be frustrating for the tutor if the student doesn't respond.
- Student may come to feel inadequate.
- Questions may seem like threats.
- Questions may be seen as prompts for thought and consideration rather than a response.
- Some students respond better to being shown what to know and then asked to repeat it.
- Sometimes it is more efficient to exchange information rather than prompt.

## Common Prompts and Responses

<u>Common Prompts</u>	<u>Common Responses</u>
<p><b>A direct question:</b> "What is a light year?"</p> <p><b>A fill-in question:</b> "A light year is..."</p> <p><b>Challenge with problems:</b> "A star is 1000 light years from earth. How far away is that in miles?"</p> <p><b>Be a devil's advocate:</b> "I don't believe in black holes. How do you know they actually exist?"</p> <p><b>Seek alternatives:</b> "I've heard it said the other way, how do you know this is right?"</p>	<p><b>Answer a question:</b> "A light year is the distance traveled by light in a year."</p> <p><b>Explain an answer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-How we arrived at our answer.</li><li>-The thought process underlying a process or concept.</li></ul> <p><b>Summarize progress so far:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-The steps to arrive at an answer.</li><li>-The relationship of one concept to another.</li></ul>



## Tips for using the Prompt Response Method

1. Wait...be patient. Give the student time to think about and respond to a prompt. Don't rush to fill in the answer.
2. Ask one question at a time. Don't ask questions in rapid fire succession or it will seem like an inquisition.
3. Use learning resources. Use the text, lecture notes, and other learning resources to demonstrate where to find answer to questions. Don't give message that the tutor is the only source of information.

## Active Listening Strategies

**How to Listen so That you Really Hear.** Good listening skills are one of the most vital qualities of a tutor. The better you listen, the more you will understand. The more you show understanding, the more your tutee will talk. For a tutoring session to be successful, a non-judgmental atmosphere is critical, as is your ability to understand the other person's point of view.

**Active Listening** intentionally focuses on the speaker in order to understand what he or she is really saying. Active listening is more than just hearing; it's hearing with the focus placed on what the speaker is saying and reserving your reply until comprehension is complete. An active listener never interrupts the speaker and always listens to understand. Once the speaker has finished, an active listener is able to paraphrase the speaker's remarks including both verbal and nonverbal cues.

### Good summary phrases include:

"What you're saying is..."

"It seems to me what your saying is..." "You sound..."

"It sounds to me like..."

**Empathy** is imagining oneself in another person's situation and experiencing that situation from their point of view. You try to become the other person so you can understand the reasons behind their feelings.

You communicate empathy with feedback: After listening to the other person, you "feed back" a summary of what you heard, focusing on both the person's emotions and the reason(s) for them ("You feel this way because . . ."). For example,

*Student:* "I can't believe I bombed that Chem exam. I studied and studied; I can't figure out why I can't get it. I don't want to blame the professor, but the average was only 47; no one I talked to did OK either. I need to do well in this class. I'm getting desperate."

*Tutor:* Your distress is understandable. It's really frustrating to work so hard and not have things turn out and not know why.

The tutor's response focused on the student's emotions by using the words "distress" and "frustrated."

### The Tutor did not:

*judge* - "You should have studied harder"

*negate* - "Don't feel that way. It's only one test."

*sympathize* - "Sometimes professors can be such jerks"  
*rescue* - "It's too bad. I'm sure you'll do better next time."  
*own* - "It's my fault for not focusing on those problem sets."

In summary, the process of actively listening and communicating empathy allows the tutee to control the direction, pace and conclusion of the tutoring session. The tutee does most of the work which better equips him or her to answer similar questions in the future.

Arkin, M. and Shollar, B. *The Tutor Book*, New York, Longman Inc., 1982. Adapted from:  
<http://www.ccsf.edu/Services/LAC/lern10/listening.html>

## Common Listening Challenges

- 1. Subject or speaker is uninteresting or boring.**
  - Active Listener – Listens closely for information that can be important and useful
  - Inactive Listener – Becomes distanced from the listening experience, loses focus, daydreams, chats or sleeps.
- 2. Criticizing the speaker's delivery.**
  - Active Listener – Pays attention to the content and reserves judgment until the talk is over.
  - Inactive Listener – Criticizes the speaker's voice or delivery and decides the speaker won't say anything important.
- 3. Disagreeing with the speaker's message.**
  - Active Listener – Writes down what they disagree with for later discussion and continues to listen.
  - Inactive Listener – Becomes so involved with contradicting the speaker and stops listening.
- 4. Listening only for facts.**
  - Active Listener – Listens for main ideas and themes and notes the facts that support them.
  - Inactive Listener – Focuses only on facts and believes the rest of the speaker's talk is only opinion.
- 5. Trying to outline the talk.**
  - Active Listener – Listens for the main ideas and organizes them once the speaker has finished.
  - Inactive Listener – Loses main ideas and themes because time is spent trying to organize and find a pattern.
- 6. Faking attention.**
  - Active Listener – Continually refocuses attention on the speaker knowing that attention may sometimes wander.
  - Inactive Listener – Is present in body but not mind.
- 7. Allowing distractions.**
  - Active Listener – Filters out distractions and concentrates on what's being said.

- Inactive Listener – Uses distractions as an excuse to stop listening.

**8. Evading or avoiding difficult material.**

- Active Listener – Desires to learn something new and is not afraid of complicated ideas.
- Inactive Listener – Gives up when material is complicated and tunes out the speaker.

**9. Letting emotion-laden words throw you off focus.**

- Active Listener – Listens very carefully to understand the speaker’s point of view before challenging what is said.
- Inactive Listener – Gets upset at words which trigger certain emotions and stops listening.

Adapted from: <http://www.ccsf.edu/Services/LAC/learn10/listening.html>

## Learning Styles

**Introduction**

The different approaches people use to learn or study are called learning styles. Each of us has a unique preference for how, when, where and with whom we’d like to learn or study, and these preferences help to enhance our learning potential. Learning styles do not reflect a person’s academic ability or achievements. Rather, the styles are a combination of environmental, emotional, sociological, physical and psychological factors that influence how a person receives, processes and stores new information. Often times a person has more than one learning style or preference. Therefore, it is good practice to present information in a variety of ways to help encourage the student to be successful regardless of how information is presented. As a tutor, you must be sensitive to the signals that indicate a student’s learning style.

**Major Learning Styles**

There are four main learning styles, Visual Learners, Auditory Learners, Read/Write Learners and Tactile Learners, and their characteristics are given below. Tutoring strategies are also provided to help you capitalize on the strengths of each style.

	<b>Visual</b> <i>If I see it, I know it!</i>	<b>Auditory</b> <i>If I hear it, I know it!</i>	<b>Read/Write</b> <i>If I read it, I know it!</i>	<b>Tactile</b> <i>If I do it, I know it!</i>
Learning Style Signals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prefers to get information by seeing</li> <li>• Likes looking at books, pictures, puzzles, etc.</li> <li>• Strong sense of color</li> <li>• Difficulty with spoken instruction</li> <li>• Trouble following lectures</li> <li>• Misinterpretation of words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prefers to get information by listening</li> <li>• Likes to tell jokes and stories</li> <li>• Remembers spoken words, ideas, lyrics to music</li> <li>• Difficulty following written instruction</li> <li>• Problems with writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prefers to get information from text</li> <li>• Likes reading and writing in all forms</li> <li>• Likes lists, textbooks, handouts, etc.</li> <li>• Emphasis placed on words and the meanings of words</li> <li>• Difficulty with spoken instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prefers to get information by touching</li> <li>• Likes to work with hands</li> <li>• Learns better when physical activity is involved</li> <li>• Difficulty sitting still</li> <li>• Not avid readers</li> </ul>

Learning Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graphics reinforce learning</li> <li>Color coding to organize notes</li> <li>Written instructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study by talking the information through with someone</li> <li>Learn by participating in discussions</li> <li>Recite out loud anything that needs to be remembered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write out words again and again</li> <li>Read notes (silently) over and over again</li> <li>Summarize flowcharts or diagrams with words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow your finger as you read</li> <li>Take frequent breaks while studying</li> <li>Pace or walk while reciting information on index cards</li> <li>Tracing letters and words to remember facts</li> </ul>
Tutoring Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give visual directions and clues</li> <li>Use flashcards, maps, graphs, color coding and other visuals to increase understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow the student to verbalize whenever possible</li> <li>Talk through steps in tasks</li> <li>Reinforce all visual directions with verbal clues</li> <li>Allow a lot of wait time for questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize handouts</li> <li>List steps used to arrive at the conclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use movement to help reinforce the concept</li> <li>Use manipulative learning aids</li> <li>Use role playing</li> <li>Use the computer to write drafts, etc.</li> </ul>

Adapted from <http://www.ccsf.edu/Services/LAC/lern10/newlearnsty.html> Adapted from <http://www.vark-learn.com/english/index.asp>

### Factors that Influence Learning

Once a student has determined his or her learning style, it is important to consider the factors that can influence their learning both positively and negatively. For most people four or five of the following elements become extremely important as we attempt to learn new or difficult information.

- Environmental Factors – sound, light, temperature, room design
- Emotional Factors – motivation, responsibility
- Sociological Factors – work individually, work with peers, work on a team
- Physical Factors – time, transportation, food intake
- Psychological Factors – right/left brain, impulsive/reflective

By paying attention to the elements that most affect a person’s learning you are being attentive to their learning style.

### Summary

It is important for tutors to have a fundamental understanding of each learning style. The knowledge of your own learning style and the learning style of your tutee will help you:

- Determine why you tutor the way you do.
- Develop strategies to help tutor people with different learning styles.
- Recognize how you affect others and how they affect you.
- Recognize how your personality type affects your tutoring style.
- Provide the most productive tutoring environment possible.



Adapted from <http://www.ccsf.edu/Services/LAC/learn10/newlearnsty.html> Adapted from <http://www.vark.com/english/index.asp>

## **Tips for Working with English Language Learners (ELL)**

- Discuss the student's goals with him/her before getting started.
- Speak clearly, naturally and avoid using lots of slang.
- Ask students to repeat what you have just said to show understanding.
- If a student has trouble understanding you, write down what you are saying. If you have trouble understanding the student, ask him or her to write down what he/she is saying.
- Use lots of repetition.
- Put everything you study into context.
- Encourage each student to take an active part of the tutoring session; there should be "equal time" for the student to talk or ask questions and it is sometimes easy to forget to stop and wait for questions to be formulated. Sometimes you need to wait in silence before a question gets asked. In some cultures a student does not ask questions.
- Thank the student for questions. Some students are deathly afraid to ask a question, so praising a question is a good way to encourage more.
- Encourage students to make friends outside of class because this will improve their English.
- Don't treat students like children. English language proficiency does not indicate intelligence or ability level.
- Don't try to change your students' language patterns by teaching them Standard English. Respect their oral speech habits and encourage them to add Standard English to their everyday language patterns. ESL students may ask you to correct their speech when they feel comfortable, but don't assume this is the case unless asked.
- Use plenty of examples.

- Don't act as if you understand the student if you don't.
- Don't speak too slowly; it might tend to raise your voice volume and/or to make your speech unnatural. Although it might be hard to understand your normal speech pattern, with practice the student will become familiar with it and in the long run, it will help him/her understand other native English speakers. You can lengthen your speech and insert more pauses; this might help a student understand more easily.
- Don't be afraid to correct the student.

## **Techniques for Questioning ELLs**

Within the tutoring session, frequently check students' comprehension to make sure they really understand concepts. ESL students may nod their heads as though they understand when they really don't. Encourage participation and check comprehension in non-threatening ways, and provide cooperative experiences by using the following techniques.

Most Difficult: Wh- questions (Who, What, Where, When, Why, Which & How) "Why is A more difficult?"

Easier: OR questions. "Which is more difficult, A or B?"

Easiest: YES / NO questions check comprehension, but do not rely on this strategy too much. "Is this difficult for you?"

Begin with the most difficult question type. If these cannot be answered by the student, try a less difficult level to help them understand what you're asking; then work toward the more difficult levels.

- Ask the students to give examples when explaining concepts.
- Ask students to become the tutor and explain the concept to you.
- Search for answers to questions with the students.
- Use restatement to clarify students' responses; "I think you said . . ."
- Admit it if there is a communication problem; "I don't understand."
- Write down words the student does not know.



Compiled by Tracy Henniger-Chiang (1997), Director of Global Language Institute; UW-River Falls.

## **Adult ESOL Learners who Struggle: Is it REALLY Learning Disabilities?**

Adapted, condensed and in some parts directly quoted from Robin Lovrien Schwarz from LINCS Learning Disabilities Discussion List, September 17 - 21, 2010

Educators have difficulty distinguishing adult ELL learners who truly have learning disabilities from learners who are failing for other reasons, such as limited English. It might be easy to think that an ELL has problems caused by LD. The problems of an adult language learner and an adult with LD often resemble each other a great deal. Unless they have been formally assessed for having a particular learning disability, it's really up to the instructor to observe the student's way of learning and try out different ways to provide instruction to see if one way versus another helps the student to learn better. What do you see as getting in the way of your student's progress and learning?

You can employ strategies known to be effective with English language learners, such as drawing on their prior knowledge, providing opportunities to review previously learned concepts and teaching them to use those concepts, organizing themes or strands that connect the curriculum across subject areas, and providing individual guidance, assistance, and support to fill gaps in background knowledge. It's important to make the day to day lessons continuous and overlapping rather than introducing totally new content that doesn't connect to what was taught the day before.

Some behaviors that make us think of LD in ELLs are

- Extreme difficulty learning to read (for the first time in any language)
- Having unusual difficulty understanding grammar lessons and rules
- Having extreme difficulty with reading comprehension despite adequate decoding skills
- Making many grammar errors in speaking and/or writing and the grammar errors do not seem to get better

These kinds of behaviors can cause concern, but the first thing to remember is that the non-native speaker of English who is culturally different and an adult learner of a language is VERY different from an adult native English speaking American-born person who is a veteran of our education system but who cannot learn easily. For some individuals, processing unfamiliar speech sounds is extremely difficult, as you are observing in your student. His brain has settled into a different phonology and is having a hard time learning new sounds.

Some techniques that might help this person include:

1) Limiting the amount and type of items you want him to repeat. Keep it VERY simple, one or two syllables, and pay attention to types of sounds he has more difficulty with and don't present him with too many of those at a time. Slow down a LOT and repeat things carefully, sound-by-sound and syllable by syllable.

2) Work with the student to decide on a small list of words he REALLY needs to be able to say MORE clearly and correctly. Then YOU record the words saying them VERY slowly several times with lots of time between repetitions and have him practice listening to them with headphones and repeating them

3) Use a "**whisperphone**." You can make your own in about 5 minutes by going to a building supply store and getting two PVC pipe elbows and a connector and putting them together --use pipe about 3-4" in diameter. The student holds the device to his or her ear and talks into the other end--thus he is listening to himself. This enhances auditory input. We do not always know when students have reduced hearing. Even if there is no measurable hearing loss, some people just do not hear phonemes all that clearly, and this device makes the sounds MUCH clearer!! Then the brain has more accurate input to work with. Have the person repeat several times. You can twist the receiver end of the device so that YOU can speak into it while he listens if he really cannot get close to an accurate pronunciation.

4) **Use minimal pair drills** a lot to help your student begin to hear more clearly the critical sounds of English. Minimal pairs are two words that differ by only one sound and the sound difference changes meaning: sit/sat. Remember that pairs are different by one SOUND only and spelling often does not matter (look at laughed/lift). Drill these and do lots of little activities with them to help students build their ability to discriminate sounds. The short vowels are usually the hardest for them to hear; consonants are usually a problem only when the learner's first language interferes. Spanish speakers, for example, have a hard time hearing the difference between /sh/ and /ch/ and between /b/ and /v/. These might need more practice, but other consonants are not so hard to hear. A book that has all the minimal pairs of English is "**Pronunciation Contrasts in English**" (Nilsen & Nilsen). You can find this book on Amazon.

5) Visual input is critical to learning. Have your student add to the listening process by looking at his mouth in a small mirror. Show him very carefully how to place his tongue and teeth, how much to open his mouth for different vowels, and how to round his lips etc. Be careful of information overload!! Start slowly and give him PLENTY of practice one word at a time. Change will likely take weeks at first, but may speed up as he gets the hang of these techniques.

6) Another visual input device is on **Rosetta Stone**-- it has a feature that permits a student to see on a graph how closely what they say matches the model the computer has said (you have to have sound and headphones and a microphone for this). Many learners really like this and will practice a lot with a computer where they get nervous and embarrassed repeating to a teacher who corrects them all the time.



It is probably NOT necessary for your student to say most words of 5 or more syllables. He may need to say a town where he lives, street names, names of people he deals with, etc--so concentrate on those. Most Spanish speakers who are adult and who do not pronounce the final /m/ in words like "time" are not going to change that habit--but it rarely matters for those who listen to them. Other times it IS important to say the /sh/ /ch contrast correctly. This requires getting to know your learner and working with him to find out which words he REALLY needs to be able to say. Also remember that improved pronunciation in isolated words does not often transfer to speech in sentences, so practice sentences and phrases as a follow up to isolated word practice.

Focus on the weakness for only PART of the instructional time. If you start with a tape recording of himself repeating a few simple sentences or words, then date that, he can listen to it once a month and both you and he will hear that he is gradually making progress.

For other parts of the class or instructional time, focus on what he does well, and focus on gradually bringing up his literacy skills. He can do work that will support the listening AND the reading, too by practicing perceiving syllables in words in activities where he sorts pictures according to syllables (e.g. pictures of bicycle, television, microwave, suitcase, etc.) This makes a great activity for cards, etc., and can be transferred to a board game or bingo, too. The same types of activities can be used to build up perception of first and last sounds-- sort pictures, do bingo with pictures (you say a word that has the same SOUND as a picture on the bingo sheet) -- this can easily be a matching game, too. These hands on activities are very effective in providing the variety of hands-on practice adult learners need to master aspects of language.

There are MANY reasons that adult ELLs appear to have LD but really do not.

1. Spelling problems are very common with LD individuals. They are also very common in the normal English language learner and are not in and of themselves a symptom of LD.
2. Attentional problems are very common with LD individuals. These also occur among adult ELLs. They can be a learning difficulty, but if managed, do not prevent learning. Furthermore, it has been documented that when adult ELLs are not getting their immediate learning needs met or when they do not know what is going on in a text, their attention wanders significantly.
3. Working memory problems are very common with LD individuals. Working memory has been shown in studies to be significantly affected by an English language learner's familiarity with a topic or task.
4. Self-confidence problems are common in LD individuals. Low self confidence is a very prominent topic in adult second language acquisition. Persons who have never been to school, for example, are often very unsure of themselves as learners; similarly, elderly adult ELLs are often nervous because they may believe themselves to be too old to learn.

It is entirely normal for non-literate learners to not pick up on "correct" sentences when you repeat them. These learners have no sense of what "correct" is in language since they do not yet know, really, WHAT language is. That is what is gained with literacy---an understanding of language as a THING that can be thought about and manipulated.

Also, since these adults had no prior schooling, they may still be very confused about how the letters you are teaching them relate to words. The current, research-based wisdom about

teaching non-literate adults to read leans heavily to using a whole-word approach for a long time. Teach them a few words at a time that they need to know or want to know--these will be sight words. They can then read those, copy those, unscramble those, and sort by some common factor-- same first letter or last letter, for example.

Similarly, the numbers and days of the week mean very little without a meaningful context. They are just lists of words and are difficult to get a handle on for non-literate learners. Ask your student if he can do any of these things in his own language.

Relevance has to be 1,000% meaningful for non-literate learners to hang on to it. That is why they can remember the nouns they string together to communicate--THOSE words are essential to their daily survival!!

One technique that has proven quite successful for non-literate adults is the **Language Experience Approach**, where you write down a story that the learner more or less dictates to you--and you leave it mostly in his version of the language at first. Then you create dozens of different activities around that language. It is helpful to create a simple book with pictures. Also another fantastic resource is "**Making it Real**"--a handbook for teachers from the Tacoma Community House in Tacoma Washington. It is excellent. The URL is [http://www.camdencountylibrary.org/sites/default/files/files/Making\\_It\\_Real%20-%20teaching%20refugees.pdf](http://www.camdencountylibrary.org/sites/default/files/files/Making_It_Real%20-%20teaching%20refugees.pdf)

Also, it would be a good idea to see if colored overlays would make reading more comfortable for him. Ask your program if they have these or can get these for you.

Two excellent reading series are **Sam and Pat** (Hartel, Lowry & Hendon, published by Thomson Heinle) and **Talk of the Block** (Haffner), published by New Readers Press). These are terrific because they are organized by a phonics principle AND a basal principle-- that is, words have mostly one vowel per lesson and sight words and important words are used over and over. They also come with support exercises. The stories are about adults and adult life, too.

It is also helpful for a non-literate or low literate learner not to be working in books or from papers all the time. Much of the teaching and practice can be accomplished in games and activities. These can be used to practice and practice and practice. It is essential that the basic skills of reading be OVER learned in order for the reader to be fluent. Boredom can be avoided by making games and activities.

Visual fluency is important for Reading fluency. Visual fluency is the ability to react quickly to word patterns. Use flash cards to practice short a words (that he knows or needs--see the books above) or any other easy pattern. Have him search for and circle words in lines that have the same beginning or final letter, or double letters etc. The decoding MUST be fast and accurate for a reader to get meaning from text, and visual practice is essential. Again, that is what activities can help with--just presenting reading of the same words over and over in different contexts.

Cursive is MUCH easier for beginning writers to learn, by the way, because less motor energy and control is needed. The writing instrument stays on the page instead of being lifted off for each part of the letter. Typically, cursive writing books start with letters all of one type or including the same shape. A book called **American Handwriting Slow and Easy** (available on Amazon) by Janette Haynes has wonderful practice of writing with REAL items ELLs need, such as names of days of the week, months, numbers, terms for streets (i.e. parts of addresses) and items for completing checks. Students like this practice very much.

Like all other skills, motor skills require time and LOTS of practice, so provide the student with writing practice every day and for homework, making sure he has paper with wide lines (primary paper) to start with and a marker or other instrument that is not "slippery" on the paper-- ball point pens are slippery-- gel pens are not, nor are pencils. He may enjoy using fat crayons or pens and definitely will profit from using a pencil grip. Many nice new pens are now fatter at the stem and have a rubber grip built right in. These are great for beginning students.

Another great way to give a beginning writer practice is to have them do very large "writing"-- that is, the letter shapes he is working on, on newspaper or on a chalkboard.

Remember that non-literate learners need to start instruction at the VERY beginning, with beginning motor skills needed for writing (holding a pencil, being able to visually discriminate between shapes, sizes of written things—especially letters or numbers—understanding the concept of perspective in pictures etc.), and phonological skills—learning to pay attention to and then to identify initial sounds, and gradually, final sounds, and so on). These students must also gradually learn such school skills as turning pages, where to find and how to read page numbers, how to fill in blanks (how to track from left to right comes before the blanks!!) and all—ALL—the skills that we take so for granted that students have. It is NOT a good idea to start right off with the alphabet or phonics because these students often do not have enough language to be able to apply that knowledge to words. That is why it is recommended from research that teaching the non-literate begin with a lot of receptive language and then whole words—words that are extremely meaningful and relevant.

The 26 letter alphabet is not enough to give all the 41 English sounds. The free cartoon website <http://www.ozreadandspell.com.au> gives ch! sh! th! ng! nk! as a chant at the end of the ABC song and gives nineteen vowel sounds in cartoon format that exaggerates them with cartoon figures.

Then shows the sounds in songs and text. Also at YouTube in short videos, see ozread or [http://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=ozread&aq=f](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=ozread&aq=f)

Remember that the general idea is COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT. This means both the sounds in words and the meaning of words. This is referred to as CI, and is increased when learners both know the words and are familiar with the topic. It is REALLY important to self-monitor when you talk to ELLs so you are sure to use short sentences, basic words and clear pronunciation. It is necessary often to slow WAY down, repeat very carefully and pronounce words by syllable very slowly. This allows the brain of the learner to begin to grasp the sounds and the way they are pronounced.

Monitor material too. Is the topic well known to students? Is it of the highest interest possible to them right now in their lives? Is the reading too challenging? Are sentences too long or grammar above what the learner can manage?

Students in ESOL often struggle because too much is presented too fast (a complaint of average to poor foreign language learners, too). If you find that your student is not keeping up, pare down lessons, do a LOT of review and provide lots of ways for him to absorb, use and master vocabulary.

# Andragogy

Pedagogy is the method and practice of teaching, generally referring to children. Andragogy is the method and practice of teaching adults.

Andragogy presumes that adults have specific learning requirements. They learn best in environments that are collaborative and that use a problem-based approach to learning.

Malcolm Knowles (1913-1997), one of the pioneers in the field of Andragogy, made five assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners:

1. **Self-concept**  
As a person matures his/her self concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being
2. **Adult Learner Experience**  
As a person matures he/she accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.
3. **Readiness to Learn**  
As a person matures his/her readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his/her social roles.
4. **Orientation to Learning**  
As a person matures his/her time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his/her orientation toward learning
5. shifts from one of subject- centeredness to one of problem centeredness.
6. **Motivation to Learn**  
As a person matures the motivation to learn is internal (**Knowles** 1984:12).

Knowles suggested four principles that apply to adult learning:

1. Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
2. Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for the learning activities.
3. Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance and impact to their job or personal life.
4. Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented. (Kearsley, 2010)

## **Helping Adult Learners with Limited Basic Skills**

In the interest of helping adult students reach their educational and professional goals, it is best to address any limitations immediately. More often than not, such limitations are not due to an inability to do the work; rather, they can occur from a variety of correctable situations such as: the student has been away from studying for some time, the subject was poorly introduced and disliked in elementary and/or secondary school, or the student is in an environment that does not value good grammar or mathematical skills.

In some cases an adult learner simply has not been introduced to effective study habits and now has to balance study with work and family. A bit of guidance will put students on the right track.

The basic education skills of adult learners can often be improved by peer tutoring or in-class study groups. Oftentimes peer tutors are able to reach the student on a different level than the professional. Students proficient in writing or math make a more credible source for them, because they are going to school also.

### **Adult Learning Pattern One**

Adult learners tend to expect learning to be delivered in a traditional, teacher-led way, and to expect the faculty member to do the “work” of the learning. The adult learner is there to absorb the learning.

Now, this does NOT say that this is an effective way to teach adults. This is saying that most of us, for years, have been taught via a certain method, namely, faculty-led instruction. We have not been expected to be part of the hands-on learning process. This is a pattern that is in the process of being broken down; however, we are talking about breaking down a pattern that has been in existence for decades, even centuries. This mindset is not going away easily, and to expect adult learners to automatically embrace a brand new way of learning immediately, or without proper orientation, is expecting too much.

### **Adult Learning Pattern Two**

Adult learners who tend to undertake a project on their own (as opposed to being assigned the project) do so with the purpose of solving a problem, or applying the information right away, as opposed to learning a new subject for the sake of learning it.

This may be a factor of our “hurry up” culture; our plates are full with home, work, and family responsibilities. Any free time we have in our lives should be used as economically as possible... and we can see how this carries over into adult education.

### **Adult Learning Pattern Three**

Motivation for adult learners in education tends to come from a need to fill a professional gap or a direction from superiors.

So, this pattern should come as no surprise, based on the fact that pattern two illustrates the “practicality” mindset that adult learners have toward continuing education. This may be dependent on where adult learners are in different professional stages of their lives, though. The higher up the individual may be on the professional ladder, for instance, the more likely the individual may wish to learn new subject matter for the sake of learning it.

### **Adult Learning Pattern Four**

Adult learners tend to rely on colleagues or friends who may also be experts in their professional field for advice when seeking advice on learning or embarking on a new educational venture.

This has both positive and negative consequences: obviously, if we have colleagues who share our learning interests and who have had positive experiences, we want to know more about those experiences and apply that potential to our own lives. We trust and know these individuals to help us make a significant decision that will impact our free time, finances, and professional development.

On the other hand, reliance on opinions of others (and not doing the work of discovering our own personal likes, dislikes, and preferences) instead of our own may result in disappointment when the learning experience is not all what we expect it to be. A word to the wise here would be to seek out opinions of others, but balance them with the knowledge of our own preferences.

### **Adult Learning Pattern Five**

Adult learners tend to appreciate – and continue learning – in courses where they feel they have a significant contribution to make to the discussion, and that their contributions are acknowledged and appreciated by the group as a whole.

## Trends in Adult Learning

A variety of sources provide us with a body of fairly reliable knowledge about adult learning. This knowledge might be divided into three basic divisions: things we know about adult learners and their motivation, things we know about designing curriculum for adults, and things we know about working with adults in the classroom.

- Adults seek out learning experiences in order to cope with specific life-changing events-
- -e.g., marriage, divorce, a new job, a promotion, being fired, retiring, losing a loved one, moving to a new city.
- Adults who are motivated to seek out a learning experience do so primarily because they have a use for the knowledge or skill being sought. Learning is a means to an end, not an end in itself.
- Increasing or maintaining one's sense of self-esteem and pleasure are strong secondary motivators for engaging in learning experiences.
- Adults need to be able to integrate new ideas with what they already know if they are going to keep - and use - the new information.
- Information that conflicts sharply with what is already held to be true, and thus forces a re-evaluation of the old material, is integrated more slowly.
- Information that has little "conceptual overlap" with what is already known is acquired slowly.
- Adults tend to compensate for being slower in some psychomotor learning tasks by being more accurate and making fewer trial-and-error ventures.
- Adults tend to take errors personally and are more likely to let them affect self-esteem. Therefore, they tend to apply tried-and-true solutions and take fewer risks.
- Regardless of media, straightforward how-to is the preferred content orientation. Adults cite a need for application and how-to information as the primary motivation for beginning a learning project.
- The learning environment must be physically and psychologically comfortable; long lectures, periods of interminable sitting and the absence of practice opportunities rate high on the irritation scale.
- Adults have something real to lose in a classroom situation. Self-esteem and ego are on the line when they are asked to risk trying a new behavior in front of peers and cohorts. Bad experiences in traditional education, feelings on authority and the preoccupation with events outside the classroom affect in-class experience.
- Adults bring a great deal of life experience into the classroom, an invaluable asset to be acknowledged, tapped and used. Adults can learn well -and much - from dialogue with respected peers.
- New knowledge has to be integrated with previous knowledge; students must actively participate in the learning experience. The learner is dependent on the instructor for confirming feedback on skill practice; the instructor is dependent on the learner for feedback about curriculum and in-class performance.
- Integration of new knowledge and skill requires transition time and focused effort on application.

[http://adulted.about.com/cs/learningtheory/a/lrng\\_patterns.htm](http://adulted.about.com/cs/learningtheory/a/lrng_patterns.htm)

<http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/adults-3.htm>

Completing this Tutor Manual and passing the quiz at the end of this manual is Part A of Nevada's ABE requirement for tutors. Please print and complete the following quiz on the next page. Turn this in to your Program Director or Program Coordinator which will be kept in your files. Upon approval from your program that you answered all twenty questions correctly, you will be given a Certificate of Completion.

Part B is to complete the Pre Service Training online which can be found at [www.nevadaadulthoodeducation.org](http://www.nevadaadulthoodeducation.org). If you correctly answer the questions at the end of each section, you may print out the Certification of Completion at the end of this online course.

**You are now qualified to tutor any student at any of our AEFLA-funded programs! Congratulations!**



## ***QUIZ – Check Your Understanding***

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

1. What should be the goal of tutoring?

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2. Briefly describe the three roles of a tutor.

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3. What are the 15 tutoring tips described in this manual?

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4. What are the "Dos" and "Don'ts" of successful tutors?

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5. What questions should you be asking yourself before, during and after tutoring a student?

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6. There is a list of study skills that you can share with your students on page 6. Can you think of other study skills that may help them? Try to come up with 3 more ideas.

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7. What are some tips that you learned for group tutoring?

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8. Name the 10 steps of tutoring.

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9. What types of questions should you be asking your students?

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10. What are the differences between active and passive learning?

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11. What active listening strategies did you learn from the tutor manual?

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12. What are the 4 major learning styles? How can knowing which style(s) your student uses help you and your student succeed in the tutoring sessions?

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13. What are 4 factors that influence learning?

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14. What are some tips and techniques for helping ELLs to succeed with their studies?

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15. Briefly describe a few teaching strategies that you can use with ELLs who struggle.

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16. Describe some reasons that adult ELLs appear to have LD but really do not.

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17. Describe the Language Experience Approach.

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18. Describe the 6 characteristics of adult learners according to Malcolm Knowles.

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19. What are the 5 learning patterns of adults?

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20. Briefly describe the 14 trends in adult learning.

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