

MENTORING AT LANSING, INC.

MENT@L

Tutor Handbook

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The MENT@L Tutoring Program

*The mission of Mentoring at Lansing, Inc. is:*

To encourage academic achievement and act as an agent of positive social change in the Lansing Central School District through peer-to-peer tutoring that is open to all students.

*In order to accomplish these goals, we will:*

• Assist students in meeting their educational goals.

• Encourage students to become independent learners.

• Promote a positive school community by forging relationships between peer, students, staff, and faculty.

• Abide by the Lansing School District’s standards for academic excellence.

• Encourage students to attend regular weekly sessions.

• Continually reevaluate MENT@L and its efforts toward realizing the goals stated above.

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MENT@L Tutor Policies

**1.) Confidentiality:**

Information that is exchanged between tutors and students is confidential (including grades, personal history, academic difficulties and disabilities, etc.). Information about students should only be discussed in a professional/confidential capacity with the Director.

**2.) Documentation:**

Complete honesty is expected from tutors regarding the information provided on applications, sign in sheets, etc. As a district recognized community service activity, accurate records are mandatory. These records provide the basis for earning annual community service certificates.

**3.) Communication:**

Tutors are expected to sign up for regular tutoring session at either the Middle or High School. They are required to provide 24 hour notice to the Director if they cannot make a session so that coverage can be obtained.

**4.) Code of Conduct:**

Adherence to the Lansing School District Code of Conduct (see Lansing website or ask Director for a copy of the policy).

**5.) Tolerance:**

Tutors must not discriminate against students on the basis of religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, or physical or learning disabilities. A tutor's judgment and ability to assist students with academics should not be influenced by any of these factors. Discriminatory jokes or slurs and other forms of intolerance will not be tolerated.

**6.) Tutorial Location:**

MENT@L is in regularly scheduled locations in the Middle and High School. Tutors will be informed of these locations when they begin tutoring. If any changes in location occur, tutors will be informed of the change by the director.

**7.) Professionalism:**

Tutors should be attentive and courteous and act in a professional manner at all times. In addition, tutors should be on time for their tutorial sessions. Tutors should not utilize tutorial time to impose personal beliefs on students or to comment on the teaching abilities or personalities of teachers. The relationship between a tutor and student should be kept professional during MENT@L sessions. If a tutor feels unable to treat a particular student with proper professionalism, he or she should contact the MENT@L director in regards to the conflict.

Appearance, language, and other behavior should be appropriate for the workplace environment and reflect the standards of MENT@L and the Lansing School District.

**8.) Academic Integrity:**

Tutors should not directly contribute to a student's graded assignments. If a student should request this type of inappropriate help from a tutor, it is the tutor's responsibility to report it to the Director. Any questions regarding the extent of appropriate assistance should be directed to the Director. Any evidence that a tutor has assisted a student with cheating is grounds for dismissal.

**9.) Autonomous Learning:**

It is the tutor's responsibility to the student to facilitate independent learning as the goal of the tutor/tutee relationship is to foster student academic growth so that the tutee may eventually work successfully without a tutor.

What is Tutoring?

Tutoring may be interpreted differently among individuals. Some students expect peer tutors to act as instructors and teach the course content while other students expect tutors to do the work for them and help with graded assignments. In many cases peer tutors are expected to provide support for a variety of personal, emotional, and instructional situations.

According to the 2005 edition of The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a tutor is "a person charged with the instruction and guidance of another." This definition facilitates personal interpretation, so it is easy to see why students have very different expectations in a tutoring session.

Our goal is to provide tutees with guidance and instruction that fosters independent learning and self confidence. In other words, to help students acquire the skills and strategies to help themselves.

MENT@L peer tutors serve as role models and as such have a great responsibility to affect both positive and negative outcomes. In addition to content knowledge, tutors should exemplify the qualities such as empathy, honesty, reliability as well as a sense of humor that serves as the "heart" of every effective peer tutor.

**How tutoring benefits the tutor:**

**• Career Development:**

As a tutor, you will be able to enhance your resume and gain skills applicable to most career fields. The interpersonal, organizational and leadership experience that you will obtain are highly desirable skills. In addition, you will earn a community service certificate after participating in 10 tutoring sessions. This can be used to document service on your college applications.

**• Subject Reinforcement:**

Tutoring increases and reinforces your understanding of the subject matter, aiding in more complete recall in the future. Tutoring also promotes critical thinking and helps you to develop confidence in your abilities.

**• Satisfaction from Helping Others:**

Helping others is rewarding, especially when you help students help themselves. As students gain understanding of an area that was initially challenging, you will begin to see the critical nature of your role as a tutor. Knowing that you've helped your peers succeed will motivate you to succeed as well. You will gain satisfaction from knowing that you are an integral part of the Lansing community.

Tutoring “Do”s

**Do** be friendly and welcoming to students, remember that some of them are nervous about asking for help and revealing their lack of knowledge and skills.

**Do** ask students what they want to concentrate on in the session. Remember you are there to help them with particular problems - not "teach" a whole course. Find out what students know and build on that.

**Do** expect students to be responsible for their own success. Students should come prepared with specific questions/areas to work on. They should have attended class; your role is not to fill in what they have missed when absent from class.

**Do** help the students develop and practice methods and learning strategies for helping themselves. Have them find and analyze problems and errors. Encourage use of dictionaries, work sheets, textbooks, and other resources.

**Do** work at students' own learning paces. Slow down and rephrase explanations if necessary. Students often need time to digest and practice new materials.

**Do** break difficult tasks into smaller, easier-to-deal-with sections. Conversely, sometimes a general idea of an entire concept or process is necessary first before the parts can be seen as meaningful.

**Do** listen to students. Allow students to feel confident in what they already know.

**Do** be polite and considerate of students' feelings. Be sensitive in your corrections.

**Do** review as much as possible. Have students repeat ideas and procedures. This helps them remember and gives you a check of their understanding. Ask your students questions to ensure they really have grasped what you have gone over.

**Do** protect students' privacy by not discussing their business with others.

**Do** be honest about your ability to help with certain problems. In the event that you run across a problem you can't handle, seek help from another tutor, or suggest students get help from their teacher.

**Do** offer study skill suggestions (time management, note taking skills etc.).

Tutoring “Don’t”s

**Don't** help students during their class time. Tutorial services exist to support classes, not to compete with or replace them.

**Don't** do the work for the students. Work with the students and help them understand how to solve a problem. Insist on students' maximum involvement. Remember every time you do something for students it is one less chance for them to experience what it is they need to learn.

**Don't** put students down if they don't understand something. Remember that a big part of your job is to build students' confidence in their own learning abilities.

**Don't** do all of the talking. Encourage students to discuss problems and express what they already know.

**Don't** take responsibility for student's success or failure. If students have put off an assignment until the last minute, that does not mean you have

**Don't** feel you must know all the answers.

**Don't** tolerate rudeness in students. Let the director know about difficult students.

Effective Tutoring Techniques

Some students know exactly where they are having trouble; however, most do not so you should spend some time isolating the source of trouble. Some strategies for this include:

• Review course materials with the student.

• Use the course outline, text, exercises, assignments etc. as reference points for defining what the student has to learn and figuring out precisely where the student's difficulties lie.

• Once you have located course materials relevant to the student's difficulty, you can further pinpoint the student's difficulty by asking additional questions about the material.

• Ask questions that encourage students to say what they know. Have them attempt to formulate answers.

• Sometimes students know more than they suspect. They just need to "think out loud" to organize their thoughts.

• Become familiar with the Socratic Method of teaching. It is the oldest, but still the most powerful teaching tactic for fostering critical thinking.

• Remember to ask leading questions. Questions that can be answered

with yes/no have less value than those that ask the student to demonstrate understanding.

• "What if” questions and analogies are excellent strategies for expanding student understanding. In other words, present the information briefly, ask the students to respond and talk about the material, and let the student know when the answer is correct or incorrect.

Communication

Communication is essential for an effective tutoring relationship. This includes verbal, electronic, and written interaction both between the peer tutor and student and between tutors. The most important thing to keep in mind is that communication is a two-way street - everyone's cooperation is necessary if open channels of communication are to be established.

***Ways to effectively communicate:***

• Use a designated email address and texting number and check frequently.

• Notify the director and colleagues of changes in your contact information.

• Complete all paperwork thoroughly, neatly and on time.

• Don't rely on second hand information or pass information through a second party.

• If you are unsure if information needs to be communicated, remember it is better to be safe than sorry and too much information is usually better than too little.

• Strive to be clear and precise in your communications and think before you speak.

• Set up a standard way of communicating. For example, if you pass information to other tutors through notes, be sure to leave the notes in the same place every time.

• Be organized and keep an address book with important phone numbers and contact information.

***Why Communication is so important:***

• Good communication saves time.

• Good communication prevents problems.

• Good communication contributes to accurate office reports

• Good communication is not optional. Your ability to communicate reflects other necessary skills such as organization and professionalism.

Active Listening Skills

*Attending*

A: Eye contact

B: Posture

C: Gesture

*S.O.L.E.R.*

Five steps to attentive listening

**S**quarely face the person.

**O**pen your posture.

**L**ean towards the sender.

**E**ye contact maintained.

**R**elax while attending.

*Paraphrasing*

What is it? Restating a message, but usually with fewer words. Where possible try and get more to the point.

Purpose: 1. To test your understanding of what you heard.

2. To communicate that you are trying to understand what is being said. If you're successful, paraphrasing indicates that you are following the speaker's verbal explorations and that you're beginning to understand the basic message.

When listening consider asking yourself:

• What is the speaker's basic thinking message?

• What is the person's basic feeling message?

*For example:* S: I just don't understand, one minute she tells me to do this, and the next minute to do that.

X: She really confuses you.

*Clarifying*

What is it? Process of bringing vague material into sharper focus.

Purpose: •To untangle unclear or wrong listener interpretation.

•To get more information.

•To help the speaker see other points of view.

•To identify what was said.

*For example:* I'm confused, let me try to say what I think you were trying to say.

You've said so much; let me see if I've got it all.

*Perception Checking*

What is it? Request for verification of your perceptions.

Purpose: •To give and receive feedback.

•To check out your assumptions.

*For example:* Let me see if I've got it straight. You said that you love your children and that they are very important to you. At the same time you can't stand being with them. Is that what you are saying?

*Summarizing*

What is it? Pulling together, organizing, and integrating the major aspects of your dialogue. Pay attention to various themes and emotional overtones. Put key ideas and feelings into broad statements.

*DO NOT* add new ideas.

Purpose: •To give a sense of movement and accomplishment in the exchange.

•To establish a basis for further discussion.

•Pull together major ideas, facts, and feelings.

*For example:* A number of good points have been made about rules for the classroom. Let's take a few minutes to go over them and write them on the board.

If I understand you correctly, The three major points of the story are...

*Primary Empathy*

What is it? Reflection of content and feelings.

Purpose: •To show that you're understanding the speaker's experience

•To allow speaker to evaluate their feelings after hearing them expressed by someone else

Basic Formula: You feel (state feeling) because (state content)

*For example:* Student: I just don't know how I am going to get all this math homework done before tonight's game especially since I don't get most of this stuff you taught us today.

Tutor: You are feeling frustrated and stuck. You are feeling frustrated and stuck with math you don't know how to do and you're worried that you won't figure it out before you go to the game.

*Advanced Empathy*

What is it? Reflection of content and feeling at a deeper level.

Purpose: •To try and get an understanding of what may be deeper feelings

*For example:* I get the sense that you are really angry about what was said, but I am wondering if you also feel a little hurt by it.

Tutor Code of Ethics

The National Association of Tutorial Services uses the following Tutor Code of Ethics, which is also adopted by Mentoring at Lansing, Inc.

1. Subject proficiency, knowledge, and ability have top priority.

2. My major motivation is building the student's self-confidence.

3. My student deserves and will receive my total attention.

4. The language my student and I share must be mutually understood at all times.

5. I must be able to admit my own weaknesses and will seek assistance whenever I need it.

6. Respect for my student's personal dignity means I must accept that individual without judgment.

7. My student will constantly be encouraged but never insulted by false hope or empty flattery.

8. I will strive for a mutual relationship of openness and honesty as I tutor.

9. I will not impose my personal value system or lifestyle on my student.

10. I will not use a tutoring situation to proselytize my personal belief system.

11. Both the student and I will always understand my role is never to do the student's work.

12. I count on my student to also be my tutor and teach me ways to do a better job.

13. I will do my best to be punctual and keep appointments, not only out of courtesy, but also as an example for my student to follow.

14. I will maintain records, lesson plans, and progress data as expected and required.

15. I will do my best to stay abreast of the current literature about tutoring as it relates to my work.

16. Good tutoring enables my student to transfer learning from one situation to another.

17. Making learning real for the student is what tutoring means and is an important part of my goal.

Peer Tutor Job Description

***General Job Description*** The responsibility of the peer tutor is to provide tutoring in a relaxed environment. Tutors assist individuals and/or small groups in a variety of subjects in the Lansing Middle and High Schools. Assistance includes, but is not limited to, reviewing class materials, discussing the text, predicting test questions, and working on solutions to problems. Tutoring is designed to be a supplement to regular classroom instruction.

***Key Responsibilities***

1. Encourage students to attend sessions regularly.
2. Regularly meet with students on a one-to-one or small group basis to provide tutoring services

c. Keep accurate records of tutor sessions using Attendance Sign In Sheets and Tutor Sign In Sheets.

d. Help students develop positive attitudes toward learning and studying.

e. Develop student self-confidence in seeking out help and shed the stigma associated with needing/seeking academic help.

f. Become familiar with learning strategies and methodologies and integrate them into the tutoring process to promote independent learning.

***Required Qualifications***

1.) Teacher recommendation

2.) “A” grade in coursework

3.) An interest in helping students with an attitude of support and encouragement

4.) Completion of tutor training

Mentoring at Lansing, Inc. Peer Tutor Agreement

To ensure the high quality of MEN@L tutors, you agree to make a commitment to abide

by MENT@L protocol as listed below:

1. I will conduct myself in a professional manner at all times and honor and value individualism and diversity in the campus community.
2. I will perform my tutoring responsibilities in an ethical manner and keep my tutoring relationships confidential.
3. I will adapt and personalize instruction to meet the individual needs of the student in an effort to facilitate student success.
4. I will act in an appropriate manner while tutoring for the MENT@L program.
5. I will encourage all students to be in close communication with their teachers.
6. I will abide by MENT@L policies and procedures as stated in the Tutor Handbook.

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Peer Tutor Signature Date