

News & Announcements

Quick Study Tips

Teach others what you are learning. This is one of the best techniques for reinforcing knowledge. If you don't have someone to teach, review what you've learned with a friend.

The colour yellow helps people remember things better. (Try using yellow highlighters or notepads.)

Use index cards for reviewing quick facts, or rules.

Make sure that your neck isn't tilted too far forward or backwards or it will get sore and you'll get headaches. Keep your feet flat on the floor when at the computer, and make sure there is a light source behind you when studying.

Take short breaks in your studying – it will help you process the material faster in the long run.

Studying during daylight hours has been shown to be more efficient than late night studying.

Have a regular place to study – ideally, this should be in a TV-free location, and should be fairly quiet.

Make the Most of Your Schooling

Working one-on-one with an inspiring private tutor you can:

- ▶ feel more relaxed in your studies;
- ▶ enjoy learning;
- ▶ build your skills;
- ▶ raise your grade point average;
- ▶ be supported in your individual learning needs;
- ▶ meet your academic goals;
- ▶ explore new ideas.

This month's issue is an interview with Jane Cowan, Smart Tutor Referrals' tutor, and a very lucid, retired elementary teacher with 30 years experience.

Although this article is written from the tutor's perspective, it provides invaluable insight into the three-part student support system: tutor, teacher and parent.

"It is through cooperation, rather than conflict, that your greatest successes will be derived..."

Ralph Charell, American author

STR: Do you think it's important for a tutor to coordinate with the classroom teacher?

Jane: Yes. I really do.

STR: What benefits does the student receive from this cooperation?

Jane: Benefits are many and varied. Consistency is of primary importance. Both the tutor and the teacher must have the same goals if the student's needs are to be met.

This extra line of communication helps the student to feel that everybody is working together to achieve the same goals.

The student can get positive reinforcement from the tutor and the teacher. If, let's say Johnny did a good job on a certain aspect of an assignment, then I would tell the teacher. Then the teacher could say, in looking at Johnny's assignment, "Mrs. Cowan said you worked very hard on this and I can see that you did."

STR: What benefits does the tutor receive from cooperating with the teacher?

Jane: Cooperating with the classroom teacher keeps tutoring on-topic and relevant so that the tutor practises what needs to be practised.

▶ If you're working with homework, then knowing the teacher's expectations and the due dates, and so on, are obviously of benefit.

▶ The tutor can gain extra information about the student by talking to the teacher. The tutor can find out the teacher's expectations for this particular student. With this information, the tutoring becomes more individualized.

▶ The tutor can gain insight into how the teacher teaches, and as a result how best to support the child's learning. Perhaps the tutor will see that the teacher teaches mainly through the visual mode and it could be that the child really needs more of an auditory mode. The tutor can then supplement with the auditory mode in his/her tutoring so the student's needs are better met.

▶ The tutor can have knowledge of topics ahead of time so that s/he can be better prepared to help the student. If they know, for example, that after the class finishes with addition they're going to go straight into multiplication, when the tutor is working with addition, s/he can start making the links and connections between addition and multiplication. In this way s/he is preparing the student well for the next learning step.

▶ Cooperation can help to prevent rivalry and misunderstanding between the teacher and the tutor.

About Us

Our Mission Is:

- ▶ To provide top quality, flexible learning support and service to students and parents of students through:

Superior private tutoring matched specifically to each student's needs.

Stimulating workshops building skills in a practical and creative way.

- ▶ To enhance students' skills and increase learning confidence through individualized support, recognizing each student's unique abilities.
- ▶ To improve the quality of life, in individuals and communities through education.

Our tutors are certified teachers and professionals. Each is carefully screened and selected to match individual students' needs.

We help students to achieve.

For more information, and free study tips, visit us on-line at:

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It also opens up a feedback line so that the tutor can find out whether their mode of tutoring is actually helping the student or not, and can then adjust his/her approach accordingly.

STR: Can you suggest how a tutor might begin to establish the relationship with a classroom teacher?

Jane: After being hired, I would set up a meeting with the teacher. One needs to make sure that both the student and the parent know that you're setting up this meeting.

In this meeting, be it through a telephone call or meeting with the teacher before school or after school, you should begin with the approach that you're there to help the student.

Make sure that when you're first dealing with the teacher that s/he knows that you're open to suggestions for meeting the student's needs.

At the first meeting you could let the teacher know the times and days when you'll be meeting with the student. You could then suggest a contact notebook.

Contact notebooks work really well. For example a student Bill had a little notebook that belonged to him and me and the teacher. If the teacher knew that I was tutoring on Wednesdays, then the teacher would just write in the notebook – "must finish homework, work on addition." I would write something at the end of our tutoring session and that would go back to the teacher. That notebook made sure that we stayed on task.

STR: What information should a tutor seek from the teacher?

Jane: First, I believe a tutor should ask the teacher, "Were you involved in the decision to get a tutor?" The teacher's answer to this question will guide the tutor in how to approach tutoring the student.

Other questions I'd ask are:

- ▶ What do you see as Bill's primary needs in terms of tutoring?
- ▶ What do you feel is Bill's best mode of learning?
- ▶ What programs and resources do you use in the classroom in the area that he needs help? (If you're tutoring in math you need to be familiar with what math program is being used. This can help you, as a tutor, to become familiar with more resources.)
- ▶ How do you think Bill feels about his ability as a learner (in the past and now)?

STR: What information should (or shouldn't) a tutor share with the teacher?

Jane: I don't think a tutor should share any information given to him/her by the parent...that is for the parent to share.

One also shouldn't share the student's perceptions of either the teacher or a parent.

One has to be very careful that one doesn't try to take on the role of a teacher. Tutor and teacher are different roles.

I do think one should share any perceived confusion, misunderstandings or lack of basic knowledge related to the topics that you're tutoring.

If the child is having trouble understanding the homework, this is a very important issue to take up with the teacher. A student may not always understand the assignment. The tutor could work with the student to clarify the areas of misunderstanding and share these with the teacher.

If you've used approaches that were successful for the child then you ought to share them with the teacher. Then it's up to the teacher to do something with that or not.

"Learning and teaching should not stand on opposite banks and just watch the river flow by; instead, they should embark together on a journey down the water."

Loris Malaguzzi (1920–1994), Italian early childhood education specialist