To future tutors,

Maybe the title was convinced you to read this not-so-witty attention grabber or you need all the advice and perspective you can get in this journey. But seriously, if I were you – I would read all the letters posted. They all have great anecdotes and advice from my fellow tutors that have written with great thought and depth. Our experiences that we have written will be relatable to what you guys will encounter in this tutoring journey. Now, you may start off excited or just unsure. You may find what’s ahead of you filled with a few bumps or some challenges that you just don’t know how to handle. It’s okay because it will be rewarding and fulfilling in the end if you really learn to enjoy the whole package that tutoring offers. It’s a true gift to be in this position tutoring students and getting paid to do it!

From tutoring, there are many aspects that I have found engaging in helping others. You will also learn so much about grammar actually that you may become accustomed to being a grammar nazi or maybe you already are! But really, don’t expect to do all the work and tell the students what to change their paper. It’s then not their voice. The goal in tutoring is to lead them to write and express their thoughts in a way that will make sense and sound right in academic English to their level.

First things, first. Professionalism and friendliness is the key in tutoring. It is to establish a pleasant relationship in an inviting and comfortable atmosphere. From there, the whole experience of tutoring is easier because of how one relates to others and the responsibility and trust you show as a tutor.

Learning to be culturally open-minded is important. I learned a lot of other people’s cultures from tutoring. It makes you more aware of how diverse their backgrounds are especially if you are American born and bred like myself. You’ll also learn about the Generation 1.5 students who who grew up speaking English along with an additional language. You will also relate with the tutee's cultural and linguistic background because we all had and are learning English everyday. The thing that we can all relate to is that we don't always have the answers in language. There are some things we can't explain because it seems natural to us. Getting the tutors engaged is so important! Interpersonal skills are developed, especially for the tutees. Often, they come in shy and nervous. I’ve seen from each session they become more comfortable and are able to have a dialogue with you in tutoring. You also become more comfortable with them. This is why communication skills in being professional and friendly will come in handy to make this transition for the tutees smooth so they are at ease with tutoring.

In this journey, experience, whatever you want to call it you will grow and develop in so many ways from what you’ll learn and gain. You’ll develop your own style. You’ll learn to care for another individual’s own growth, too! For me, the experience humbled me and made me feel confident in becoming the tutee’s guide. I maintained my confidence and ability to be openness even if I did not know how to exactly explain the concept or know the answer. I am able to walk through each step with them in the writing process. I learned how there are many parts of sentence-level tutoring one could have trouble with. In explaining these grammar mechanics or how to write the sentence more clearly, I ask tutees how to visualize the sentence. You’ll see from your senior tutors how pro they are in explaining and handling these challenges. Make sure to utilize resources to help your tutees understand the concepts to a deeper level so it will stick with them so they actually learn and grasp the material. There are workshops, handouts, DLAs for the students to make use of for their academic success and learning!

Sometimes, in sessions there are so much to do and you want to really help the tutee. I learn to cut back on helping them with every issue and make sure we focus on the global issues and they can learn some of the grammar problems by themselves.

Training in the class goes beyond just meeting in the classroom once a week. You will learn how to prioritize in the session from observing others at the WRC. Guest speakers later in the quarter will enlighten to you with learning styles and approaches in addition with cultural differences of students in the writing process and learning English as a language.

You just may look forward to meeting with your tutees every week. If they don’t show up or late – it doesn’t mean you suck and they forgot. Okay, maybe they flaked. But I saw that for me, all my tutees were
motivated, encouraged, and prepared to come each with to learn improve and work on their writing, reading or even speaking assignments. As I mentioned before, communication is important tutoring between you, the tutor and the tutee. It’s a relationship so you have to let them know if you can’t make it and they better let you know that they cancel (so you don’t grow anxious and wait forever and can’t make up for lost time which sucks, right). Reschedule to meet again and all is well. Don’t take a heavy load if you don’t have time. If you have extra time and are just waiting around the WRC – be sure to observe the drop in sessions. If it gets extremely busy, you may be called on to take on some lower-level drop in sessions which is great to get that early experience so you know what it’s like handle and tackle drop-in sessions once you become one… quite possibly in the future!

You’ll get to know amazing and interesting characters and personalities at the WRC with the tutees and tutors. You’ll be amazed by their friendliness or their funniness or both! It really makes the work fulfilling and fun with working with these individuals. You may feel like you’ve become good friends with them at the end but do remember to be responsible and respectful. Keep things professional.

Make sure you get to know and talk with your support team at the WRC. The instructors, supervisors, senior tutors, and other tutees are always there to help you guys. I look forward to meeting you guys and having a conversation with you at the WRC because if I’m not doing drop-in or waiting for my weekly individual tutee sessions, I’ll be chilling in the WRC, staring at my computer screen or chatting with other tutors. Feel free to come up to us, myself and many of my classmates in the class/tutors like having random tutee discussion round tables. There’s so much that we learned from our first quarter of tutoring that we just don’t have the time to write them all out. I hope you can take or make sense what I wrote to make your tutoring experience as much fun as mine was and or even better.

Put in the effort and enjoy and be enriched with this experience. Stay positive, have fun and good luck~