

# **TUTOR TRAINING FALL 2009 COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS: PART 1**

**October 21 and October 22, 2009**

**Presented by Erin Evans**

# GOALS

- Explain relationship between tutoring and retention
- Deliberate reflection your communication style and professional behaviors
- Discuss expectations for opening and closing sessions in the context of establishing trust
- Role model motivation; establish a culture of using each other as resources
- Practice tutoring scenarios



# **BIG PICTURE: OUR MISSION**

**To inspire and educate the scholar and leader in each student, building on a strong foundation in the liberal arts and sciences and a commitment to the best of human values, fostering a commitment to a lifetime of service and learning.**

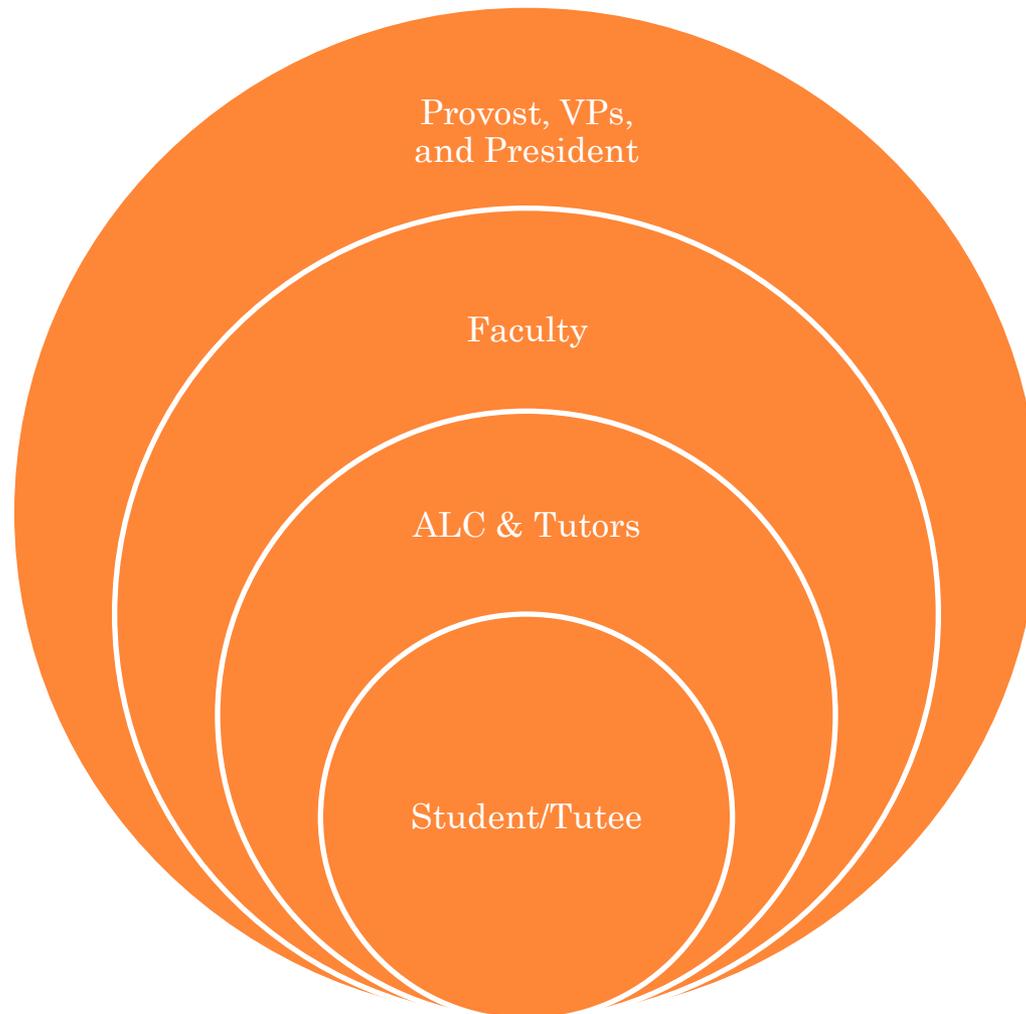


# BIG PICTURE: TUTORING, RETENTION & SUCCESS

- **Retention:** ability of an institution to retain a student from admissions to graduation
- **Persistence** – ability of a student to prevail from admissions to graduation
- Retention Efforts (not exhaustive)
  - Student Affairs and ALC
    - Early alert system
    - Student alert system
    - High impact courses
  - Student services, orientation, clubs, etc
  - Faculty relationships



# ALBRIGHT SYSTEM



# PROFESSIONALISM & EXPECTATIONS

- Know your boss - this is a professional relationship
- Communication: reflection on you & ALC
- Email etiquette
  - Formal style
  - Match the original author
  - Read the entire email and answer it
- Ambassador of the ALC – all types of students receive help (even the tutors)



# PROFESSIONALISM & EXPECTATIONS

- Business savvy and leadership potential
  - Solicit feedback
  - Take the first step & Hook your clients
  - Contact faculty for advice
- Confidentiality – student issues/tutor inquiries
- Future tutors will be interviewed and provided even deeper levels of support and guidance by tutor managers (observation and ongoing feedback) and ALC Director



# COMMUNICATION DEFINED

What is communication?

What are the key ingredients to effective communication?

What impedes communications?



# COMMUNICATION DEFINED

- Process by which we assign and convey meaning in an attempt to create shared understanding. It requires a vast repertoire of skills in intrapersonal and interpersonal processing, listening, observing, speaking, questioning, analyzing, and evaluating information. Leads to collaboration and cooperation between people.
- Simply – it is sending and receiving information which is packaged as a series of behavior exchanges between two people.



# TWO TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

- Verbal
  - Productive v. nonproductive
  
- Nonverbal
  - 80% of all communication
  - Consider intention and impact



## BODY LANGUAGE (NONVERBAL)

- Hand gestures (too distracting, enhances memory)
- Eye contact (conveys authority, signals nervousness, important)
- Facial expressions (smiling, blank stare, tip lips, grinding jaw)
- Posture (slouch, sitting upright, arms crossed, leaning forward)



# NONPRODUCTIVE VERBAL

- Hearing, but not listening
- Interrupting or talking over someone
- Personal problems
- Attitude and inattentiveness
- Expectations are not aligned
- Patronizing, teasing, preaching
- Lack of rapport between tutor and tutee
- Too many divergent topics (no focus/agenda)



# ROLE PLAY

“Tutor who is well meaning but always interrupts.”

- Tutee shares a problem
- Tutor interrupts constantly
- Observer notes feelings and gives feedback



# PRODUCTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- **Listening**: digesting words & making meaning
- **Empathy**: you (as a tutor) have the ability to be able to put yourself in a student's shoes.
- **Paraphrasing**: restating information received to make sure you understand it.
- **Clarifying/Questions**: seeks clarity on assumptions
- **Reflection**: demonstrates understanding/empathy



# TODAY'S FOCUS: EMPATHY & RAPPORT

## Rapport:

- understanding, respect, trust, comfort
- remember the student first in the context as a person, then someone needing help
- use body language and friendly demeanor
- listen, validate experiences
- remove barriers
- use motivation and positive reinforcement



# GOALS

- facilitate a positive environment to provide a safe, less intimidating space.
  - Assume that a disconnect has occurred in classroom and students need a new and varied approach to learning
  - Understand that you are in a very powerful position to increase one's confidence and impact motivation in learning
- make student comfortable, enhance confidence, initiate conversation, establish trust, listen attentively, remember conversation details, ask questions, provide instruction, allow practice, make referrals, notice body language, end session, and schedule next one.



## EXERCISE

Think of someone you trust, identify traits  
& someone you don't trust, identify traits.



# THE OPENING SESSION

- Key ingredients
- Tutee expectations
- Role plays



# THINGS TO DO & AVOID SKIPPING!

- Be intentional - inquire into the student's academic background. Ask about class year, number of courses taken in the discipline during high school, and generally ask about classes taken that are related to the subject area (what is their knowledge base)?
- Explain tutor role (especially to underprepared student), do's/don'ts
- Introduce yourself, and learn this is the first time for tutoring (either way they are likely new to you)
- Establish ground rules (electronics, confidentiality)



## TUTEE EXPECTATIONS: REMEMBER THIS!

- Some have no expectations due to novelty of tutor experience
- Others have diminished expectations due to a poor experience
- Others have high expectations due to working with a highly effective tutor

STRATEGY: determine if student has a blank slate v. an established perception of tutoring. Your job is to figure out if the students have a list of problems and questions or present as a person needing guidance.



# ROLE PLAYS

- Diminished expectations
- OPENING THE SESSION
  - ineffective
  - effective



# MOTIVATION IMPROVES COMMUNICATION

- Discover your students' interests, experiences, hobbies, goals, etc. As often as you can, relate the content to the students' interests.
- Use examples, illustrations, anecdotes, and stories.
- Use humor.
- Admit your mistakes or lack of knowledge.
- Talk less than your students do and listen more.
- Give positive feedback verbally (praise) and nonverbally (make eye contact, smile, nod).
- Try different teaching methods and various materials.
- \* Ask students how they would make the session more interesting.



# CLOSING THE SESSION

- Staying positive (acknowledge commitment and hard work)
- Review accomplishments, establish next steps
- Seek feedback from tutee on your style
- Complete paperwork

## ○ ROLE PLAY

- Ineffective
- Effective



## RECAP: EFFECTIVE TUTORING

- Give undivided attention to the tutee
- Demonstrate empathy for the tutee's problems
- Act honestly when an answer is unknown
- Act as a motivator, provide positive reinforcement, and add humor to the session
- Promote safe and cooperative learning for the tutee
- Always open & close the session by gathering information



# SUCCESS

Positive reinforcement (not to be underestimated)

+

Positive, safe, comfortable environment

=

Increased confidence, less anxiety, and a productive tutor session!!!



## THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- You can only do your best: tutees are not always prepared as you want them to be; they are likely not as patient as you hoped, and their sense of humor may be stifled by nerves
- You cannot help everyone; know the tutors in your discipline area and recognize some tutees do not want help and are instead trying to remain status quo.
- If you begin to complain about your tutees or dread your sessions, it's time for you to take a break or seek some supervision. Ask for a break or change of pace.



# TRAINING REFLECTION

- Reflection assignment on using strategies shared in this session
  - Develop a reflective journal: these contain questions and thoughts discussed during tutor training with intentional follow up on questions and techniques reviewed at training and your thoughts and action plans developed in response to these activities. These journals reflect successes achieved in implementing new ideas and monitoring difficulties experienced and your actions taken to improve your skill level.



## WRAPPING UP

- Use each other as resources (Spanish tutors can help with science ideas)
- Write reflection on blackboard – due Nov 4
- Next training -watch Fat City in advance
  - Wed, Nov 4<sup>th</sup> – 6-8pm (Masters 210)
  - Thursday, Nov 5<sup>th</sup> 6-8pm
- Training Evaluations

