Kirkwood
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

High School Completion and ESL Programs Volunteer Tutor Guide

Revised September 2019

Contents

Introduction—Welcome!

We would like to welcome you as a new tutor to the Kirkwood Community College High School Completion Program! We are pleased and honored that you've chosen to volunteer in one of our literacy departments. Volunteers make such an important impact on our students' success rates in education and on their lives in general. We hope you enjoy and see the tremendous value of all you bring to our literacy program.

The following guide has been prepared by our tutor coordinators to assist you in understanding the policies and procedures of our program as well as the characteristics of adult learners. Also included are a few websites, tips, and tools to assist you when working with your student. In addition, your tutor coordinator is available to help with any questions or concerns.

Our students are truly fortunate to have you to assist them as they gain the skills they need for their education and future career opportunities.

Thank YOU!

The Role of the Tutor

Adult Literacy Program Volunteer Tutor Position Description

Volunteer literacy program tutors support lifelong learning among adults in the community by working with them one-on-one toward attaining their goals for skill development, personal growth, career advancement, and/or enhanced community involvement. Volunteers contribute their energy and skills to guide adult learners' progress toward individual goals to learn to read better, develop numerical skills, and/or navigate digital spaces.

The role of the tutor is to help adult learners become more independent and intentional in pursuing their goals. Tutors respect learners' potential, build on their strengths, and help them address their needs.

Tutors typically meet with a student for one to two hours a week over a period of months, either at a Kirkwood center or another public place, such as a municipal library. Tutors keep a record of meetings with tutees and share this record with the tutor coordinator at the end of each week. Tutors adhere to Kirkwood policies regarding confidentiality, training, and other matters as stipulated in this guide.

Program Policies

Accommodations for Students

Students needing accommodations for their program of study may be eligible to receive accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A student must request accommodations and fill out the necessary paperwork before any accommodations can be granted. If one of your students is requesting an accommodation, please ask them to contact their advisor or the tutor coordinator.

CASAS Testing

Kirkwood receives funding for our adult education programs via the Iowa Department of Education. As part of our funding requirements, all students being served with adult education funds are required to test annually using a federally approved exam to indicate student growth during a program year. The state of Iowa uses the CASAS assessment for this purpose. Students are placed in classes depending on the results of this assessment.

Communications

Because our staff and tutors work at various times of the day, email is our primary communication source. Please be sure to check your email on a regular basis for updates from our adult literacy coordinators.

Conduct Policy

All students in our programs are to sign a conduct policy document as part of the enrollment process. The signed copy is then placed in the student's file. If you have an issue with a student in regard to behavior, please contact the tutor coordinator.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Student education records are official and confidential documents protected by FERPA. Confidential education records include student registration forms, graded papers, computer-displayed information, and social security numbers.

Students attending a postsecondary institution like Kirkwood Community College, regardless of age, must be permitted to inspect and review their own education records to the exclusion of third parties. There are no rights guaranteed under FERPA for parents of adult students attending a postsecondary institution.

Institutions may not disclose information about students, nor permit inspection of their records, without the student's written permission unless such action is covered by certain exceptions as stipulated in the Act. Students may sign a Consent for Release of Education Record form to release information to parents or to a third party.

No information from a student's education record will be released on the phone. Third parties who have been granted access to a student's education record may come to the Iowa City Learning Center, or main campus' Kirkwood Center for Lifelong Learning (KCLL), to receive the specific information as designated.

Unless a student requests otherwise in writing, the following student information may be provided on the phone or in person without a release:

- Program student is enrolled in (HSED/high school equivalency diploma)
- Past dates of attendance
- Full- or part-time status
- Degree awarded

No other information (grades, credits, course registrations, or specific schedule—i.e., whether a student is on site) will be released about a student without the Consent for Release of Education Record form signed by the student. Persons to whom the student gives consent may come to the Learning Center or KCLL during the centers' hours to check on student progress.

Meeting Locations

When arranging to meet students for tutoring, **sessions are to take place in a public location**. Kirkwood campuses are the first suggestion, as each building at Kirkwood has public spaces available for tutoring. Public libraries are also a preferred location.

Programming

The High School Completion Program provides a variety of programming options for students in addition to tutoring. Key programs include:

- **English as a Second Language Courses** (Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, Monticello, and Washington)
- **Adult High School Diploma** (All locations except IowaWorks and Linn County Jail)
- **HiSET® Preparation** (All locations)
- **Kirkwood Pathways for Academic Career Education and Employment (KPACE)** (Cedar Rapids and Iowa City)

Professional Development

The state of Iowa requires volunteers to have a minimum of six hours of professional development annually. Tutors may attend meetings or read educational items in order to attain the six hours. If not, tutors will be unable to continue tutoring the following fiscal year until hours are reported. Hours are due to the tutor coordinator by the end of June. Professional development hours are not needed if the tutor has a valid teaching license that covers up to the 12th grade. Adult literacy coordinators will communicate with tutors regarding available professional development opportunities.

Student Transportation

Due to potential liability issues, students must arrange for their own transportation to and from tutoring sessions. Tutors are not to provide transportation for students.

Updating Student Information

Per Iowa Department of Education guidelines, student attendance, including tutoring hours, is to be updated in our data system monthly. Tutors are expected to provide the adult literacy coordinator with the number of tutoring hours for each student by the end of each week.

Additionally, students must be deleted from the program after 90 days of no attendance/scheduled service as well as at the end of the program year. Please contact your adult literacy coordinator when/if you reach 90 days of no tutoring with a student so we may accurately update his or her information.

Program Protocol

1) A prospective tutor volunteer submits a volunteer application form and then will meet with the tutor coordinator either individually or in an orientation group.

2) A student needing a tutor will be referred to the tutor coordinator by an instructor or other staff member. The student will fill out a Student Application for Tutor Assistance form.

3) Student academic needs and times the student is available are matched with a potential tutor. Schedules and other preferences—such as locations for tutoring or certain tutor characteristics—are taken into consideration when matching students to tutors.

4) The coordinator will contact the tutor informing him/her of a match. This information is also shared with the referring instructor.

5) A meeting in a public location is arranged between the student and the tutor at a date/time convenient to both.

6) The tutor coordinator will use information gathered from the student, and from attendance center staff, to provide or suggest available resources.

7) The tutor coordinator will contact the tutor to receive feedback about how things are going within the first few weeks of starting with a new student.

8) The tutor is responsible for reporting the hours spent in tutoring sessions to the coordinator on a weekly basis.

About Adult Learners

As much as it might make tutoring easier, there are no typical students. All adult learners have unique personalities and come from diverse backgrounds—socially, economically, and culturally. As a tutor, you must respect those differences and, we hope, learn from them, since students have much to teach you, too! Although adult students are individuals, many share some of the following basic traits.

Adult learners:

- are not blank slates and have rich, varied life experiences that are different from children. A tutor should integrate new knowledge with what is previously known to build on those experiences.
- often bring preconceived ideas about learning and are sometimes resistant to change.
- usually have specific goals: get or keep a job, attend college, be able to read to their children or grandchildren. Tutors need to include students in goal setting to make certain their goals will be met.
- want to know the relevance of learning. They need meaningful content and practical applications using a variety of tutoring/teaching methods. Tutor coordinators can assist you with this task.
- often take fewer risks and sometimes react personally to errors, which can affect their self-esteem.
- sometimes have emotional barriers to learning. They may lack confidence and have anxiety over learning or testing, be overwhelmed with personal issues, or have a negative self-image.
- may have physical barriers to learning. Transportation issues, child care or elder care, and/or work may consume a large portion of their free time leaving little for studying.
- might be reluctant to ask for clarification or admit they don't understand a concept.
- sometimes have poor study habits and may need guidance in order to succeed.

English Language Learners (ELL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) Students

Immigrants and refugees share characteristics of English-speaking adult students but also have additional concerns and cultural differences.

ELL or ESL students:

- come from varied cultural backgrounds and have far different life experiences than learners in this country. Some may have experienced severe trauma before coming to this country.
- have had different experiences educationally. Some may not be literate in their own language and may not have participated in a school setting, but they often develop useful coping skills; others might be fluent in several languages.
- usually have a strong motivation to learn.
- sometimes have disparate needs. Some read better than they speak, while others might speak better than they read.
- usually have definite goals in mind. Skills for job seeking, learning to communicate with neighbors, or just learning survival English to get along in our culture may be some of their aspirations.
- may have different expectations of the tutor/tutee relationship. Either they put the tutor on a pedestal or they attempt to be best friends with the tutor.
- sometimes have body language that is dissimilar from that of our culture. They might smile and nod when disagreeing. Some are also reluctant to ask for clarification or admit they don't understand a concept.

Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities (LD) are neurological disorders that can hinder learning. Reading, writing, spelling, organizing information, or performing math computations become problematic. An LD student's performance doesn't match his or her abilities; by all measures, the student should be performing at higher levels. Students often know they've had difficulty learning even if they've never been diagnosed with a learning disability. Any student can have learning disabilities, including ELL. Examples of a few learning disabilities are dyslexia, language processing issues, dysgraphia (problems with writing), and dyscalculia (difficulties with numbers).

Students with LD:

- often have average or above average intelligence.
- may have mild or severe cases. One student may have several different learning disabilities, which can make learning even more challenging.
- suffer from learning difficulties throughout their lives but may have developed learning strategies in order to cope.

- most likely had or are having negative experiences in school. These problems may exacerbate low self-esteem.
- give up easily due to frustration.
- may be able to easily explain things orally but struggle in other areas.
- often need extra time in accomplishing tasks. Those with diagnosed LD may ask for accommodations, including extra testing time.

Students who self-disclose a learning disability may be eligible for accommodations with coursework or testing. If a student indicates a disability to you, please refer them to the tutor coordinator for additional assistance.

Tutoring Tips

Once you have accepted an assignment to tutor a student, getting started can be daunting. Perhaps these tips can give you guidance and confidence.

Since each student has unique experiences, learning styles, and needs, the first meeting with a student can be used as a "getting to know you" session.

Struggle is an important component of learning. Allow your student to "struggle" with problems. Too much struggle is frustrating and demeaning and is to be avoided. However, too little struggle can thwart long-term memory. If a tutor gives the answer readily, the student does not have a chance to use or develop deeper cognitive skills that can be applied to other problems.

Allow your student to make mistakes. Learning comes from experience, not memorization, and an expectation of perfection. As a general rule, gently correct errors for material already learned, or for the skill that you are currently working on. In time, a student will learn to self-correct.

Respect that your student's learning style may be different from yours. A visual learner has a strong reliance on visual cues, such as written materials, posters, pictures, and videos. An auditory learner is better able to remember new information if it is presented orally, such as by recordings, recitation, conversation, and questioning. A tactile/kinesthetic learner learns by physically doing tasks. Don't let awareness of learning styles limit you, as most of us have more than one learning style and can benefit from approaching new concepts and skills in various ways.

Learning is experiential. Use authentic materials—application forms, menus, brochures, newspapers, ads, schedules, instructions, and safety manuals. Encourage your student to bring in mail or documents that he or she may not understand.

Listen to your student—you will discover many teaching moments.

Teach in *chunks*. Some skills and tasks require many steps, which can be overwhelming. Help them to understand that some skills require many steps, and focus on one step at a time.

Allow your student some silent time to process material that has been presented. Taking a break allows the brain a chance to create long-term memory connections. English learners need extra time to subconsciously connect a new language with their first language. Silent time is also needed after asking a question. Give the student the time to process what is being asked and how to formulate an answer.

Talk less, practice more. English language learners have a limited capacity for comprehending what they hear. English speakers can retain only about 20 percent of what is heard, so this strategy applies to them as well. Of course, your job is to present new material, but don't monopolize the session.

Enjoy the connection that you make with your student. Tutoring is a rewarding experience for both the student and the tutor.

Resources

Multiple/General Use

HiSET® – hiset.ets.org/resources/prep Preparation and free pretests for HiSET® subjects.

GCF Learnfree – www.gcflearnfree.org From Goodwill Communities, reading, math, and technology lessons with multiple activities that let students learn content using a variety of approaches. (Very simple explanations. Work through together.)

Khan Academy – www.khanacademy.org All subjects. You must register, but the service is free.

Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) Learner Center – learner.lincs.ed.gov Includes resources for reading, math, and other subjects (including TV411, *listed below*, and resources in Spanish).

Literacy Online – sites.google.com/site/literacyonline Resources for all areas of literacy, including lesson planning and study tips. (Citizenship)

Multicultural Pavilion – www.edchange.org/multicultural Principles of cultural responsiveness, activities for instructors and students, and links to additional valuable sites.

Kirkwood **Adult Literacy Program** – www.youtube.com Video for tutors.

TV411: Tune in to Learning: READING – www.tv411.org/reading

Reading & ESL/ELL

Breaking News – www.breakingnewsenglish.com This site contains current news articles for ESL readers. Some are harder and some are easier, and they come with additional activities, which include vocabulary and comprehension exercises.

News in Levels – www.newsinlevels.com Frequently updated, high-interest news stories at various levels, with selected vocabulary, and companion videos for some stories (Level 1 – 3).

TextProject – www.textproject.org Materials for teachers, tutors, and beginning readers, including articles on literacy.

Web English Teacher – www.varsitytutors.com/englishteacher Materials for beginning readers.

Southwest Adult Basic Education – www.southwestabe.org Contains lesson plans (click "Student Lessons").

Dave's ESL Cafe – www.eslcafe.com ESL information.

GrammarBook.com – www.grammarbook.com

Math

Math.com – www.AAA.Math.com Grade-level math.

Math Planet – www.mathplanet.com A free online math video site for pre-algebra, algebra, and geometry (Advanced).

Math Worksheets Land – www.mathworksheetsland.com More than 6,000 printable worksheets. (Paid membership, but still enough that is free. Grades 3 and up, H.S. algebra, geometry, math topics K through 8.)

Common Core Sheets – www.commoncoresheets.com Lots of great worksheets already made or make your own.

Skills Workshop – www.skillsworkshop.org Worksheets for all subjects, including math.

K5 Learning – www.k5learning.com Read or print worksheets on many topics.

Education.com – www.education.com Printable worksheets.

DadsWorksheets.com – www.dadsworksheets.com

Tutor Training

Chandler-Gilbert Community College – www.cgc.maricopa.edu Tutor training manual; includes a code of ethics and tips for structuring a session.

ProLiteracy – www.Proliteracyednet.org Contains lots of information for tutoring, including a new tutor training program. To enroll in the online training course, ask a tutor coordinator.

Minnesota Literacy Council – www.mnliteracy.org Suggestions for one-to-one and group instruction. Click on "tutor tips."

Towson University – www.towson.edu

Study Guides and Strategies

Study Guides and Strategies – www.studygs.net Study guides and a variety of linked documents presenting strategies and advice.

Study Guides and Strategies – www.studygs.net Time Management (how to study).

YouTube

Videos about learning disabilities and ADHD.

What is Dyslexia? Dyslexia Explained. (3:29 minutes)

Overcoming Dyslexia – An Award Winning Short Documentary (8:55 minutes)

[What Is ADHD?](#) (7:42 minutes)

[What Is Dysgraphia?](#) (6:10 minutes)

[What Is Dyscalculia?](#) (7:45 minutes)

[Discovering Dyscalculia](#) (28:03 minutes)

Thank you for volunteering.

Your efforts can enrich another life.