Top 10 Tips for Personal Tutoring at a Distance

During this time of social distancing and remote learning, it is more important than ever to build effective relationships and keep in touch with tutees who may be experiencing social isolation and anxiety about their learning. Follow our top tips for effective personal tutoring at a distance.

Build your effective remote tutoring environment

Setup the information and communication technologies your institution provides on your personal equipment and learn how to use them effectively. Gather the information you need to support students, preferably in electronic format.

Focus on the human relationship

Regularly check in with your tutees to reassure and reaffirm. Take time to get to know your students, ask them how they are coping, encourage them to raise concerns and/or additional needs and be sensitive to difficulties a student may be experiencing but which they have not disclosed.

Establish clear boundaries and expectations

Add your availability to students, details of how they can contact you, and when they can expect a response to your email footer. Consider how to protect your own privacy and work/life boundaries when working from home.

Ensure your students can engage with you

Set - and keep! - virtual office hours. Take responsibility for proactively arranging appointments with tutees, providing them with details of how you will connect and who is responsible for making the video/phone call.

Make your personal tutoring accessible

Beware of relying on only technology. Ask your students what would be useful to them and let them choose what works best for them.

Follow established effective practice in supporting your students at a distance. Act in accordance with the UKAT Core Values of Personal Tutoring and Academic Advising, follow the competencies articulated in the UKAT Professional Framework for Academic Advising and Personal Tutoring, and make use of resources available to personal tutors through UKAT.

Don't overlook an old-fashioned phone call

Don't under-estimate the accessibility and value of a telephone conversation in supporting a student. Not all students can, or want, to use video. You can provide effective support over the phone, especially if you send notes and resources in a follow-up email.

Keep notes and send follow-up emails

After each meeting, email your tutee a copy of the notes, together with any links, documents, and resources that will be useful to them. Keep meetings notes electronically makes sharing easier.

Know how to refer when working remotely

Referral processes may be different when supporting students remotely and students may need support from services you don't normally refer to (e.g. IT service). Stay up to date on the services available and how you connect students to them.

Setup an online learning community for your tutees

Use your institutional VLE or MS Teams, etc to share information and resources with your tutees and hold group tutorial meetings.

Follow flipped tutoring principles

Not all of your tutoring needs to be synchronous, face-to-face interactions. Why not follow a flipped tutoring approach by creating some simple reflective activities, hosted in your VLE, for your tutees to engage with?

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