



Tutor Connections

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Your Tutoring Resource

Tutor Connections is an online, biannual newsletter for members of the Georgia Tutoring Association (GATA). If you have comments or ideas about the content, please contact us.

Jeannie Ruggerio
Secretary, GATA 2011-2012

GATA on the Web

[http://
facultyweb.maconstate.edu/
tim.vick/about.htm](http://facultyweb.maconstate.edu/tim.vick/about.htm)



Spread the Word!

By Timothy Ellis, Armstrong Atlantic State University and Sherrell Byrd, Albany State University

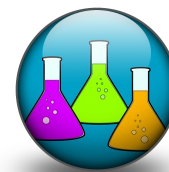
The 2012 Georgia Tutoring Association (GATA) Conference will be held on Saturday, February 18, 2012, at Macon State College. It's not too early to let your colleagues know about the advantages of joining GATA and attending this conference. Membership has been steadily growing and we want to continue this trend! So, what are the advantages?

1. Annual GATA membership is very affordable – only \$35 for students and \$50 for coordinators.
2. Membership in a professional organization is a resume enhancer.
3. The membership fee includes attendance at the all-day conference, where last year there were 21 presentations on seven different tracks. These presentations address topics of great interest to tutors and coordinators.
4. Breaks and lunch (included) provide a unique opportunity to talk to peers from across the State about problems, solutions, and issues that affect all of us in our day-to-day operations.
5. Tons of door prizes are given away! These are provided by university representatives from across the State.



Please don't miss this opportunity to let others know about the Georgia Tutoring Association (GATA) and the upcoming conference. They will thank you later!

Georgia Perimeter College (GPC) Clarkston Introduces Group Tutoring for Chemistry



Submitted by Charles Lyon, Writing Lab Supervisor, GPC Clarkston, Charles.Lyon@gpc.edu

In response to overwhelming student demand, the Learning and Tutoring Center at Georgia Perimeter College's Clarkston campus began offering group tutoring in Chemistry over the summer. The demand for Chemistry tutoring is second only to math, and one goal was to serve students

efficiently and eliminate the backlog of Chemistry students waiting for individual tutoring.

A group study room was set aside for drop-in Chemistry tutoring Monday through Thursday from noon until 5:00 p.m., with a Chemistry tutor always available to

circulate among students. No appointments were necessary, and students were encouraged to work together on common problems.

This was accomplished without adding staff or incurring added expense. By grouping Chemistry

students, other tutors were free to help individual students in math and other disciplines.

The summer experiment has proved to be successful and popular with students, and now the Clarkston LTC is looking for ways to expand the effort.



Which English Royal Family was the Smartest?

By Allison Boutwell, Master Certified (CRLA Level III) Peer Tutor, Macon State College

Tudors, of course! Humor is an important aspect of tutoring. Laughing breaks the ice in a session, sets the tutee at ease, and helps to de-stress both tutor and tutee.

Ways to Add Humor in Tutoring:

1. First and foremost, smile! Smile at the beginning of the session, throughout, and at the end of the session.
2. When tutoring something difficult or material that students have to memorize, include silly mnemonics, such as acronyms, funny sayings, and stories

using the words they need to memorize to help them remember the information. For example, the sentence "Dad And Brother Drink Apple juice" (a sentence adapted from some of my sociology tutees) has brought smiles and laughter to my sociology sessions (an acronym story for Kubler-Ross's Stages of Dying: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance). Such silly mnemonics lighten the mood and make learning fun and, therefore, easier.

3. Along the same lines, feel free to make jokes about the material students are

learning. Laughing at a joke about the material makes the material more memorable and, again, learning more fun.

4. When students make a joke, laugh *with* them, but never *at* them. Laughing *at* students will make them feel inferior and will lower their self-esteem. If students make cynical statements about themselves, try countering those statements with positive comments; however, if students laugh at their *mistakes* (and not themselves), laugh *with* them!

Some students are no-nonsense studiers. They focus so much on understanding the work, on doing a good job, and on getting a good grade that the inclusion of humor is difficult. The fact is that some students do not want humor. For these students, it is easiest to laugh or smile or add humor when *they* create the humor themselves. Letting the students create the humor *themselves* is the easiest and sometimes best solution.

Remember, laugh *with* the tutees, never *at* them. Life is not all work, no play – tutoring shouldn't be either.



Giving the Gift of Grammar

By Burgandy Mathis, Macon State College

Let's face it, when it comes to grammar, some students seem to ignore the importance of its usage not only in academics but also in daily life endeavors. This is perhaps because most students view grammar as just a set of rules to be memorized for passing exams or a course. Because of this mindset, English tutors should take on the duty of reminding students that grammar should not be forgotten nor taken for granted. After all, grammar is the core of English language. Effective communication would be interrupted if not for grammar. It is a necessary master skill that enables the development of competence in reading, writing, and speaking. Therefore, all students should desire this ability of self-sufficiency. Tutors can accomplish this by avoiding particular tutoring pitfalls and acknowledging students' concerns and issues. As a result of tutors doing so, students will learn to appreciate the gift of grammar.

It's easy for any tutor to commit a tutoring pitfall without even realizing it. One pitfall in particular that tutors seem to fall victim to is talking "at" the student, which involves the tutor

being occupied with only what he or she has to say during the session. The best solution to this problem is to talk "with" the student. Talking "with" the student will allow him or her to feel more comfortable during the session. A student may even start to feel that the two of you are on the same level instead of viewing you as intimidating. Another pitfall is emphasizing editing rather than understanding. Tutors usually fall victim to this pitfall when they don't have adequate amount of time to go over all of a student's grammar problems. However, no matter how much time you have allotted for a session you have to remember that your purpose as a grammar tutor is to help students have a deeper understanding of grammar usage through repeated collaboration on individual grammatical problems. Third, you need to stop assuming that you need to speak, read, and write grammar perfectly because no one is perfect. You will forget some rules or may not be familiar with others. You don't speak perfect grammar every single second of your life.

One issue to consider while tutoring grammar is the student's perspective of grammar. Some students put up a mental barrier when learning and applying grammar because they become frustrated with the rules. There

are some students, who only want to learn grammar so they can pass an exam.

There are students, who have a limited vocabulary, poor mastery of basic grammar essentials, such as subject-verb agreement, and a belief that communication only involves listening and speaking rather than grammar usage. Other issues could possibly be a student's learning style, background, and language level. Some students are right-brain learners, meaning they retain information better through charts or study sheets; while other students are left brain learners, who have to retain information through listening and repetition. A student's background may be he or she has not studied for years while another is familiar with grammar terminology. Some students' backgrounds may require them to need overt instruction that connects grammar points with communication context. When you consider language level, you are determining and keeping in mind that not every student's native language is English.

Yet, even while focusing on certain issues and the avoidance of tutoring pitfalls, there are still key techniques that a grammar

tutor should remember. Ask questions. Asking students if they fully understand a grammatical concept makes a big difference. Provide feedback. When you notice that a student has used incorrect grammar, do not just bluntly tell the student he or she is wrong. While helping a student, point out the error; you also want to be able to help the student understand the reasoning behind his or her mistake and ways of correcting the mistake. Help by looking for patterns of errors. For example, a student may do well in subject-verb agreement yet lack comprehension of verb tense. So, the student's pattern of error revolves around verb tense. You would want to concentrate more on helping the student understand verb tense. Most importantly, remember that grammar counts. It's just as journalist and novelist Joan Didion said, "Grammar is a piano I play by ear. All I know about grammar is its power." When you help students excel in grammar, you are giving them—a powerful gift.



MORE INFO

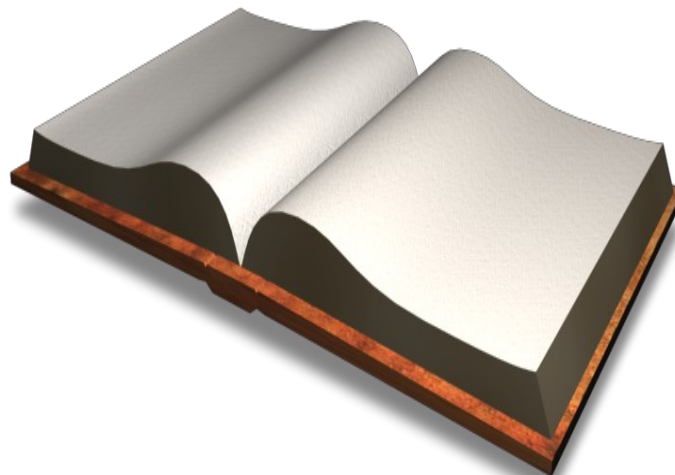
Tutor Tips and Strategies

10 Steps to Better Test Taking

Provided by Kimberley Sloan, Vice President, GATA 2011-2012

From Academic Success Press, Inc.

- 1. Memory Data Dump**
Write down information you may forget – formulas, dates and places, etc.
- 2. Preview Test**
Write your name on the test and review the entire test.
- 3. Second Memory Data Dump**
Write down additional important information you may forget.
- 4. Test Progress Schedule**
Decide the best way to get the most points in the least time.
- 5. Answer Easy Questions**
First, answer the easiest questions with the most points.
- 6. Skip Difficult Answers**
Read each question twice and set a time limit for solving it – or skip it.
- 7. Review Skipped Questions**
Recall related information about each question.
- 8. Guess At Remaining Questions**
Do not leave a question blank.
- 9. Review Entire Test**
Look for misread directions and careless errors.
- 10. Use All Of Your Test Time**
To stop early can mean lost points on your test.



We're on the Web

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facultyweb.maconstate.
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Announcements and Upcoming Events

Preparation for the 12th Annual Georgia Tutoring Association (GATA) Conference is underway.

The conference will be held at the Macon State College Professional Sciences Center in Macon, Georgia, on February 18, 2012.