Student Support Programme

Job Description of a Tutor / Peer Mentor

A Tutor / Peer Mentor should:

- Provide students with an opportunity to evaluate their progress
- Make it clear to students that we have high expectations and that you will help students to set and achieve high aspirations
- Provide students with an opportunity to increase their self-esteem and confidence
- Provide students with active encouragement
- Provide students with an opportunity to review the level of "SMARTness" they applied to their target setting.

These targets will sometimes be related to the student's well being and attendance but need to be linked to the student's attainment.

Setting the Climate

Building relationships
The student should arrive with the self-review activities completed and you will have had the opportunity to review the student's data – e.g. Attendance, recent academic reports and
G & T mentoring sheets. This information will give you a good starting point for discussion and getting to know the student.

The Meeting Place
Minimise distractions - organise the furniture so that you are sitting at the same level - make sure the tutee feels safe and comfortable.
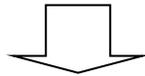
Positive Affirmation
Using the data and the student self review information focus on the positives. Your tutee must feel that they have a lot of support from you if they are going to achieve their targets and goals. This means that you should praise the tutee for their achievements whenever they reach a target or when they have done a very good piece of homework or class work.
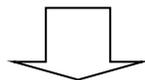
Stages of the Relationship

Preparation:
Shared understanding of purpose
Helping learners prepare through self-review activities
Collecting and using performance data
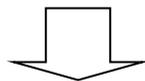**The agenda: a framework for discussion**

Setting the Climate:
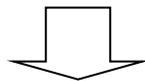
Building relationships
The meeting place
Positive Affirmation

The Dialogue:

Listening
Asking Questions
Knowing when to refer on

Setting Targets:
Long-term goals
Short-term SMART targets and action points

Closure:
Summarising
Leaving them feeling good
Record Keeping
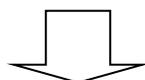
Review:
Targets set at the previous meeting will need to be reviewed in a supportive way and then the same process as above will need to be followed but if the student was unsuccessful in achieving the target it may be a case of adjusting the previous target rather than setting new targets.

The Dialogue:

When we communicate it has been said that initial impact is based on 60% visual messages, 33% vocal messages and 7% content. As time goes on content increases but it is never more than 50% of the impact. With this in mind non-verbal communication is an important consideration for tutors when working on developing a positive and supportive environment for students.

The following will need to be considered:
What level of eye contact?
Facial expressions can speak volumes if a tutor is annoyed or distracted, where as genuine care will be shown through sincere smiles etc.
Open hand and arm gestures indicate openness and interest.
Pitch, tone rhythm and inflection of the voice will have an impact on what is said.

Listening
- Look interested in the learner
- Minimising distractions
- Being patient and not interrupting
- Keeping up with learner's reflections and ideas
- Avoiding making early judgements or evaluation
- Using non-verbal signs to encourage or agree

Be aware of the following barriers to listening:
- The physical environment e.g. other people talking
- Preconceptions about what the learner might say
- Thinking fast and moving quickly to process information
- Unable to sift out key messages from a lot of detail
- Selective attention, which can lead to hearing only those things, which confirm prejudices
- Thinking of the next question or piece of advice
- Thinking about own agenda, own life

Keys to Motivational Interviewing

Demonstrate Empathy
Careful and reflective listening
Warm acceptance of the student
Respect for the students point-of-view

Build a Sense of Alliance
Avoid the expert trap
Avoid the question-answer trap
Use non-verbal communication skills
Avoid arguments

- Win the person before the debate
- Avoid being cast as the "champion of change"
- Roll with resistance (e.g. accepting reluctance/ambivalence, reframing in a positive light, inviting alternative perspectives)
- Support the student's confidence for change in current behaviour

Asking Questions
A good tutor/mentor relationship can often be judged on how much talking the student does and how much talking a Tutor does. The more the student dominates the better as it means that the student is taking responsibility for their own learning and thinking through their issues for themselves. To allow this to happen the Tutor needs to be skilled in asking the right questions.

Open Questions
"Open" questions should be used to encourage learners to talk, to share knowledge of their progress and experiences. It should not be possible to answer these questions with a "yes" or "no". For example:

Building a rapport:
- What do you feel you have achieved at school?
- What do you feel you have achieved in your personal life?
- Tell me about your work experience/and or part time jobs?
- What do you want to achieve by coming to school?
- What is your experience of school so far?

Strengths / potential:
- What have you achieved so far (look at data to provide factual evidence)?
- Do you know what you should be aiming for by the end of year . . . . ?
- What are your aims for the future?

Identify areas for improvement:
- Which subjects are you strongest/ do you feel most confident in (use student self review information)?
- Which subjects need particular attention at this stage?
- What other factors may affect your performance?
- What makes you work best?

Target setting:
- What targets need to be set now to bring immediate and visible improvement?
- What time-scale?
- Who needs to be involved?
- Who will check that you have achieved your target?
- How will you know whether you have reached your target?

For a review meeting:
- What have you achieved since your last review?
- What has helped you to achieve this success?
- What has been difficult for you?
- How have you overcome these difficulties?
- What action do you intend to take?

Motivational interviewing:
- How do you feel about school?
- How do you feel about your absences?
- What do you feel would happen if you do not make a change?

Probe Questions
Probe questions are excellent for using when you need to find out more information. Also, it helps you to guide your tutee to finding a solution to their problem and it helps them to set a SMART target. For example:

- How long do you think that will take realistically?
- You say you are struggling in English, what particular area are you concerned about?
- You say you will revise to improve your grade, have you considered what techniques you might use?

Reflective and Summary
This can be either a question or a statement. But, it's mainly so that you sum up what your tutee has told you and then shows the tutee that you have been listening.
It's better to say a reflective and summary style question back to the tutee, using the words that the tutee has used when telling you. This helps them to feel that what they have said has been fully understood by you. It also gives the tutee the opportunity to talk some more about the problem if they want to. i.e. they can either say yes to agree with you or tell you some more information.

- So you are saying you are a lot happier about your progress in Geography now?
- So you are worried about your French Oral exam?

Closed Questions
Closed questions are there if you want a yes or no answer. Sometimes you may get more information than yes or no but, this isn't a problem. You can mostly use closed questions if you want a definite answer about something your tutee has told you. This will then help if you need to know important facts about a situation quickly. For example:

- Do you understand that now?
- Have you completed the work for Dance?

Hypothetical Questions
This is a great questioning style for getting your tutees point of view. By asking them what they would do in a certain situation, they get to think through what they will do and how it might effect them.

- What would you do if?
- What would have happened if…?
- Given the choice what would you do if?
- How do you think she/he would react if you…?

Knowing when to refer on.
It is important to note that the role of the tutor does not equip you to be a counsellor/social worker etc.

"Counselling is about working with the student as a whole person, Tutoring is about working with the person as a student."

When expert knowledge is required you will usually sense that you are unqualified to advise the person (e.g. bereavement or personal relationship issues outside school).

It is important to acknowledge the problem and then move on with the interview, unless the problem needs to be dealt with before any further progress can be made. If this is the case please refer on to the appropriate person.

Setting Targets:

Long-term goals
Before you are able to set short term SMART targets it is important that the student has identified a long-term goal that they want to achieve academically. Referring back to this throughout the relationship is useful to keep the conversation focussed and motivated. This can be discussed after basic rapport building has taken place using the data and student self review information. Examples may include:

- A future career
- GCSE results
- A Level Results
- Qualifying for Higher Education
- An apprenticeship

Short-term SMART targets
Once you have the long-term goal you are able to focus on the steps that are needed to get there. It is really important that the targets are **SMART**

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Timed

SMART targets need to cover:
- What needs to be done
- How it needs to be done
- By when
- Who or what will need to help them

Students can find this difficult but it is important to let them formulate their own targets rather than suggesting what their target should be so that they take ownership over the target. If the student is struggling a lot refer back to the questioning styles from earlier to help the student think it through.

Here are some examples of SMART Targets:

- I will complete my media coursework to meet the December deadline.
- I will read 2 lead articles from a broadsheet newspaper each weekday so that I can make more of a contribution to discussion in Politics classes this term.
- I will use my planner to record all set work with the date it needs to be handed in so that I can write in planned study time through to Christmas.
- I will learn the different food groups for my assignment on balanced diets set for January 6.
- I will make sure I ask at least one question and answer at least one question in each of my theory classes before my next tutorial on May 16th.

Action Points
Often SMART targets will need to be broken down into smaller more practical action points for example:
SMART Target - I will complete my media coursework to meet the December deadline.
Action points:
1. I will check next lesson that I know precisely what I have to do and that I have the right resources to complete the job.
2. I will use my planner to work out when I will do the work exactly breaking it down into sections.
3. I will ask the teacher for any help that I need.

Closure:

Leaving them feeling good and Summarising
End the session in a positive way so that the learner is clear about what they need to do. Encourage the learner to summarise the actions that have been agreed and the targets that have been set. Ownership of action points is important.

Prompts may take the form of:

What did you say you want to do about organising your work time?

How were you going to improve your research?

Can I remind you about . . . . . .

We spoke earlier about . . . .

Can I suggest that . . . .

End of session:

Check understanding of targets
Ask if there are any questions they wish to ask
Be positive and supportive
Formally end session by telling them when you will next review their progress i.e. beginning of March
Thank them for attending
Keep a record

Record Keeping
- Tutor keeps record of sessions on Sim's
- Peer Mentor Provides tutor with information to put on Sim's
- Student keeps record in planner

Review:

Once SMART targets and action points have been set the following meeting will involve reviewing those targets and giving effective feedback.

To give effective feedback you should:
- Use an open question method to find out how well the target has been achieved by the tutee.
- Find out if there were any problems, if so why?
- If for whatever reason tutee did not achieve their target, maintain a positive attitude to the target. This will encourage the tutee to do the same and will keep their motivation levels up.
- Also get the tutee to think about why they think the target was not achieved.

- When a target has been achieved praise the tutee.
- Then get them to think about what the next step might be and point out that they are now closer to achieving their big goal.

Aims

The role of the Student Support Programme is to help guide students to the right sources of information, to prompt reflection upon career goals and upon the skills that are needed in the work place and to set targets for this to happen. This booklet aims to provide the Tutor/mentor with the means to refer students to the correct information sources, to guide them in setting targets and to demonstrate the key stages in the guidance process.

The Stages of an IAG Guidance Interview

1. Self-Awareness

Do they know what they enjoy? Do they know what they are good at? Do they know what skills they need to improve? What do they want from a career? What do they think the point of working is? Does this help them get an idea of what they want?

2. Opportunity Awareness

Do they know what is available? How can they find out? Which people do they need to speak to? Have they used software packages that will help them? Can they match their skills with the opportunities? Have they researched what the career entails? Is it a realistic career plan based on their likely achievements? How far can the career go?

3. Decision Making

Have they decided which path they want to follow? What criteria are they using to make their decision? Do they have a back-up plan if things do not go well?

4. Transition Skills

Do they know what they need to follow their chosen path? Do they have what they need? What transferable skills do they have that will assist them to achieve their career goal? What courses do they need to take? What will they need to do outside of school? Do they have any need to take part in College extra-curricular activities? Do they have experience of leadership? How can they get this experience? Have they organised work experience?