

Co-Educational Experiences in a Peer Tutoring Program: Reflections from Peer Tutors



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Reflections of peer-tutors on their experiences at SAAS (sampling):

"I have learned to not be afraid to take a leadership role with peers. I have also learned many different ways in which to approach a tutoring session and based on the needs of the student, I can apply different methods. I am also learning to not worry as much when I do not know the answer."

"SAAS tutor training has helped me realize that everyone learns differently. It has helped me understand how to tutor in a way that works well for people's different learning styles. It has also helped me understand my role as a tutor in helping students."

"I have gained confidence in myself, both in terms of teaching and just in general. Also, I have learned how to communicate my thoughts with a multitude of different personalities."

"Personally I have become more confident when working with students and working with new people. Also, going over subjects after learning material before has helped me to understand it better myself."

Academic Advising

As an advisor, part of our responsibility is to connect students to campus programs and resources. We all look for ways students can become engaged with campus and with their peers. In our work, we typically refer students who are struggling in specific course(s) to a tutoring program on campus; **how often do we think to refer a student who is a good student to a tutoring program as a way to get involved with peers?** Why is this important? Retention and persistence are hot topics in higher education with institutions looking for ways to engage students so that they are more likely to be retained, persist and graduate.



In my work as a peer-tutoring program coordinator, my goal is to set-up purposeful and meaningful connections between students in a loosely structured academic setting. I have observed peer-tutors emerge as leaders, become better students as a result of their engagement in academic coursework, and develop meaningful connections with their peers. This led to the start of a qualitative study where peer-tutors are asked to reflect on their experiences in our program.

RESULTS:

- Theme #1: Tutors gained confidence in their own abilities as students
- Theme #2: Tutors learned how to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds
- Theme #3: Tutors learned to consider different perspectives
- Theme #4: Tutors became more organized
- Theme #5: Tutor experience led to: 1) affirmation they were in the right academic discipline and/or 2) becoming interested in teaching/education.

Team of Tutors



Creating Confidence & Success



Reflections of peer-tutors on their experiences at SAAS (sampling-continued):

"Tutoring at SAAS helps me view school from a refreshing perspective and understand the importance of diversity in learning, regarding both in academic disciplines and learning styles. Working as a tutor at SAAS prepares me for working with students in my professional future."

"I have learned how to incorporate a variety of teaching styles/ methods into my approach to accommodate different learners, different group sizes, and different course types. I have learned to push students and hold them accountable for their work while fostering a positive atmosphere in our sessions."

"Teaching is one of the best ways to learn. I know a lot about the subjects I have tutored than when I started, but I am also more familiar with different ways to think about things, which will ultimately make me a better student."

"I have become more aware of my abilities as a student and have realized all that I am capable of doing. This semester I was tutoring a lot on a subject that I thought I wasn't too good at, but I surprised myself at how much I knew. Now I know better than to always doubt myself:"

"During my experience as a tutor I have personally learned how to manage my time more efficiently. I also learned how to manage different situations while facilitating a group and how to create bonds as a peer to help with the material to the best of my ability."

Tutor Training

As a tutor coordinator, how do I support our peer-tutors in their work with students? I have set-up the following training support:

1. **Formal training curriculum. Each tutor attends a one-hour training class weekly. Topics include: facilitating learning and student engagement, learning styles, academic reading and writing support, note-taking strategies, organizational and time management strategies, test taking strategies, working with reluctant learners, interactive activities.**
2. Round table discussion with other peer-tutors to provide "community" support.
3. Informal training support through an open door policy where tutors can trouble shoot with me and my graduate assistants.



Assessment:

How do we evaluate whether we are effective?

- Survey data: we ask students receiving tutorial assistance to evaluate the tutors.
- Survey data: we ask tutors to evaluate the formal training they received
- Qualitative survey data: we ask tutors to reflect on their growth and development through their experiences in SAAS peer-tutoring program (NEW)



Takeaways:

1. Tutors **AND** tutees benefit from participation in peer-tutoring programs.
2. Peer-tutoring programs create purposeful and meaningful connections between peers in a loosely structured learning environment.
3. Peer-tutoring programs provide a forum where learning takes place outside the classroom.
4. The peer-tutors reflections provide evidence of the impact this program has on their development.
5. More research needs to be done to measure the impact programs like these have on retention and persistence.

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