

Getting Started as a Tutor | TOP TIPS



Whether you have been recruited as a tutor or are considering the “ask”, like many tutors, you may have questions about what the expectations are and whether this is a teaching format you can be comfortable with. This may be especially true if you were not taught in a case based learning (CBL) small group environment.

To assist you in developing comfort and confidence in acting as a tutor facilitating small group learning, we have compiled a few TOP TIPS to get you started. If you wish to learn more, we have an online Tutor Skills Development Module in Brightspace (also in the UGME Med 1 and 2 course space). Contact Susan.Love@Dal.Ca for access or to chat more about tutoring.

Why small group CBL tutorials?

In short, the objective of tutorial is to engage students in thinking about and applying the material available from the assigned readings and lectures. Tutorials are meant to be learner centered and self directed, encourage engagement through application of learning and new knowledge to case scenarios and allow for deeper learning through application of critical thinking skills. CBL tutoring is NOT about you teaching or lecturing the students. Most tutors are not content experts. Learn a bit more [here](#) (ignore 0:22-0:43)

Preparing for Tutoring:

Each Unit has resources for tutors including the Tutor Guide for each case. You will be able to access these resources on Brightspace within a week of the tutorial. You can connect with the Unit Head for any content or process specific questions. If your schedule allows, attending the corresponding lecture in right before each tutorial is advisable for context. Also, determine if you are tutoring alone or with another Tutor (as in ProComp 1) Contact UGME@Dal.ca with any concerns

Your Role:

The tutor role is to keep learning focussed and on track (using the confidential tutor guide), facilitate discussion, share real world context as appropriate, acknowledge and value learner contributions, observe and assess performance and create a safe and supportive learning environment.

Once again, you are not expected to be a content expert and it is OK to not know the answer to everything. This may be one of the main challenges to feeling like an effective tutor. Remain curious and comfortable with the students “teaching” you as they learn and explore the content together. Your role is to listen more than talk.

Tutor Tips:

Get the conversation started in the first tutorial by working with students to create group norms about how the tutorials will run. Consider an ice breaker. Get to know your students and let them get to know you.

Generate respectful and professional behaviour through role modelling including punctuality when starting and finishing, respect of case materials and authors, being prepared and enthusiastic and limiting distractions.

Be comfortable with silence from the group, don't feel the need to jump in and keep the conversation going. Particularly if you have quiet students. This may be the space they need to speak up. Turn questions back to the students and avoid asking yes or no questions. Encourage students to problem solve their own questions.

Take notes to provide concrete examples to individual students for formative and summative assessments. Make sure to provide sincere, accurate and actionable feedback that allows students to improve as they go through the course. Outline the positives as well.

Create a Healthy Learning Environment:

Work to build and maintain trust through confidentiality of conversations and the open sharing of different perspectives, feelings and values.

Reinforce that being wrong/making mistakes are learning opportunities. No shaming!. Deal with challenging behaviours individually when they arise.

Be mindful of student stresses, particularly around exam time and sensitive or triggering topic areas. Allow students to step away and take a break as needed.

Understand that everyone learns and interacts differently, make space for all learners to have time to interact. You may have to work with some learners to be ok with not taking center stage or answering every question. They worked hard proving themselves to get here, it might be a challenge to collectively facilitate the contribution of their peers.

Monitor for absences and if necessary report to UGME. Student Affairs is a confidential resource for concerns about a learner's well being.

Remember: Student knowledge will be tested via exams whereas participation, critical thinking and application of knowledge is assessed in tutorial.

Hope these few points are helpful to you. Again if you want to learn more, contact Susan.Love@Dal.Ca for access to our online module which also includes materials on the topic of tutoring in an online environment,

Good Luck!!