

As a peer tutor in the AVID program, my main responsibility was to facilitate learning during TRF sessions. In these sessions, students would present a challenging question related to their current coursework, and they would then work together as a group to solve it. My role was to guide the conversation, helping students figure things out on their own rather than just providing answers. Additionally, I helped with binder grading each week, reviewing students' binders to ensure they stayed organized and on track with their work. I had tutored the year prior and returned since I was interested in the new methods. I also saw it as a chance to connect with younger students I wouldn't typically interact with. On a personal level, I wanted to challenge myself to take a step back and assist others in their learning, rather than doing things for them—a habit I've been working on.

During my time as a tutor, I faced a variety of challenges and successes. One major challenge was working with students who weren't really engaged with the TRF process. Their lack of enthusiasm sometimes made it hard to keep things on track. I learned to be more direct and honest with them, explaining that no matter what they did, I still got my credits for the session. However, if they didn't fill out their TRF or complete the work properly, they would receive a zero grade and wouldn't get their question answered. This helped me hold them accountable while also making it clear that their success was in their own hands. Another challenge I encountered was my tendency to step in and solve problems myself. I remember a session where we were working on an algebra problem that I could solve quickly, and I had to resist the urge to give them the answer. Instead, I guided the conversation with questions, helping them understand the process. By the end of it, they fully grasped the concept—not just the answer, but the reasoning behind it. That was a key moment for me, as I realized how important it is to let students take ownership of their learning.

One of my favorite successes happened during a session with a group of Intro to CompSci students. Given my background as a student developer, I expected to have to take the lead, especially because the students historically had trouble staying on task. Surprisingly, the group worked so well together that we finished early, with very little input from me.

Through tutoring, I learned the importance of stepping back and finding new ways to explain concepts. It taught me that the goal isn't just to provide answers but to help students figure out the process on their own. I also gained a deeper understanding of how flexible learning can be, especially as I saw

students using different methods to solve math problems than what I was familiar with. Their perspectives broadened my understanding of how various techniques can work for different learners. There's no one-size-fits-all way to learn, and seeing these alternative methods firsthand opened my mind to the diversity of learning styles.

On a personal level, I developed better interpersonal skills. When students were frustrated with a problem, it was easier for me to empathize because I'd been in their shoes recently. I also noticed a huge improvement in my communication. At first, I struggled with explaining things clearly, but over time, I grew more confident. I learned how to listen more carefully and ask guiding questions that would steer the conversation without interrupting the flow of their thinking. These skills are something I'll continue to rely on, especially as I take on more leadership roles in the future.

The AVID principle of "facilitating, not teaching" really stood out to me. You don't have to understand the answer to be a good tutor; what matters is knowing how to ask the right questions and guide the conversation. This approach has reshaped how I think about learning and teaching. It made me realize that sometimes the best way to help someone is by helping them come to the answer themselves. This mindset shift has also helped me with my own learning, making me more patient and open to exploring solutions instead of rushing to find them immediately.

Tutoring also changed how I view myself as a student. When students didn't fill out their binder forms correctly or cut corners, I started to appreciate the challenges teachers face in keeping students on track. This experience gave me more empathy for teachers and made me think about how I communicate with them. It was also a reminder that the process of learning can be messy, and mistakes or missteps are part of the journey.

On a personal level, tutoring helped me build confidence in guiding others without taking over. I learned to trust the process and let students figure things out on their own. I now feel more comfortable leading by facilitating, rather than always solving problems myself. Moving forward, I know these skills will help me in how I communicate. I've learned to let go of perfectionism—especially when it comes to other people's learning. If a student reaches the right answer and understands it, that's what matters. I will continue to work on overcoming my own perfectionism, especially in how I view myself, and tutoring has been a key part of that growth.

Looking back on my time as a peer tutor, it's clear that this experience was incredibly valuable. It pushed me to grow both academically and personally. From learning how to guide discussions rather than provide answers to improving my communication and empathy, each aspect of this journey helped me become a better student and a better person. What made this experience so meaningful was how it allowed me to see learning from multiple perspectives. It wasn't just about helping others—it was about growing alongside them. I'm proud of the progress I made in becoming more patient, less perfectionistic, and more mindful of how I communicate.