

Digging into Myths about Tutoring

Supporting Students, Supporting You

Morgan Gross
Zoe Speidel

OHSU Academic
Success Center
April 2025



Academic Success Center

Learning Support

- Bad Ideas About Learning: Sorting Trash from Treasure (4/18)

Writing Support

Tutoring

Study Space

Agenda

Exploring Common Myths and Realities

The Bones of a Typical Tutoring Session

The Benefits of Tutoring Support

Into Action: Case Study Examples

Referring Students to ASC Resources

Reflect

What concerns about tutoring and writing support do you have, or do you imagine other faculty may have?

Myth #1

Tutoring is only for students who are struggling, i.e. in need of remediation.

Reality

There are many reasons for students to use tutoring:

- accountability
- social motivation
- because writing is HARD

If you wait until a student is struggling to refer them to tutoring, they may view it as a punishment.

Myth #2

Tutoring can replace classroom instruction.

Reality

Tutoring is a unique context, separate from classroom instruction.

Tutoring doesn't teach students content--it's where students can process and integrate content.

Myth #3

Students should already know how to write / be able to learn course material independently.

Reality

This educational context provides new writing situations and challenges to students; there is always more to learn.

Students come to OHSU with different types of experience and preparation; tutoring can provide individualized support.

Tutoring can offer valuable modeling to students, so they learn how to learn!

Myth #4

A writing center can teach students how to write.

Reality

No universal standard of “good writing”--lots of disciplinary considerations

All teachers who assign writing are writing teachers

Like anything, writing instruction requires both didactic and experiential education

Myth #5

Students who earned the highest grades in a course will make the best tutors.

Reality

An excellent tutor is one who both performed *well* in a course and can empathize with students' struggles.

Tutors are not instructors; they need support in the work they do.
Tutoring is a great professional development experience.

What happens in a typical session?

Content Tutoring & Writing Support



What are students saying?

Writing Support

- 130 visits
- 60 unique students (SOM, SPH)
- 94% had a “very good” experience
 - “[The writing consultation gave] me confidence to see that a good writer is more than just grammar. Zoe was very helpful... She didn’t just tell me what I should write. Rather we worked through things together.”

Content Tutoring (PA, Pharmacy, Biostats, Math)

- 584 visits
- 84 unique students
- 96% had a “very good” experience
 - “[My anatomy tutor] explains things in a way that helps it stick easily! She also [tutors] in a way that forgoes any judgement on our current knowledge and allows us to learn without fear...”



Benefits for Faculty

Tutors can provide targeted support,
leaving faculty to focus on delivery of
course content

Tutors can highlight for faculty areas
where students are struggling

Increased student engagement in
learning process

Reinforcing and supporting faculty
efforts

Case Study #1

A doctoral student receives conflicting feedback from multiple committee members. But there are power dynamics at play about who to listen to--one member is their boss, one member is more highly regarded in the field, one member is their DAC chair.

How could a writing support session help them navigate this?

Case Study #2

A faculty colleague of yours knows that her students need more academic support. But she is worried that if she promotes tutoring to them, they will come to her office hours even less than they already do--which is not much.

What would you say to her?

**40% of ASC student users
found us through a
program email or direct
referral.**

Q: When should you talk to your students about academic support resources?

A: Early! Often!

Syllabus Blurbs

The Academic Success Center provides academic coaching, writing support, and content tutoring in select areas. Whether you want help strategizing your study skills, staying on track, or understanding material, make our office part of your academic experience. To schedule an appointment, follow the link on our website.

<https://www.ohsu.edu/education/academic-success-center> | learningsupport@ohsu.edu

Reflect

What questions do you have about
how tutoring might benefit your
learners?

 learningsupport@ohsu.edu

 3030 S Moody Ave, Suite 100

 <https://www.ohsu.edu/education/academic-success-center>

 <https://traccloud.goredrock.com/ohsu>

Academic Success Center Contact Info