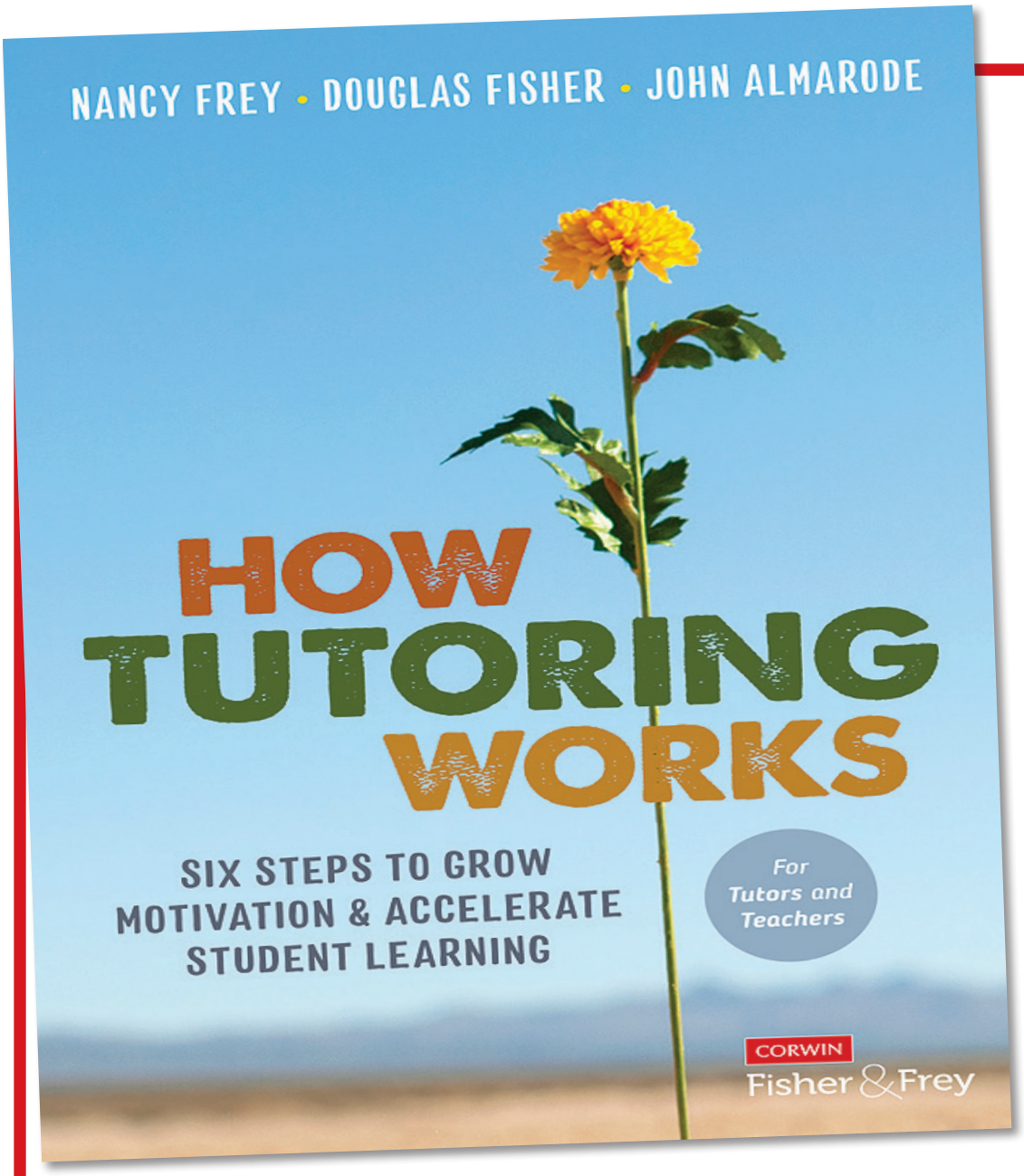


# Thank you

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CORWIN

# Introduction

"Is it my turn?" asks Jesse.

His teacher smiles. "No, not yet, but soon. Can you finish your brainstorm so you're ready?"

Jesse returns to his paper and reviews what he has already written. He begins to add words and phrases to the list already there. A few minutes later, the door opens, and another adult enters the room. Jesse looks up and smiles, knowing it's his turn. The adult nods and Jesse leaves his seat and walks to the door. As he approaches the adult, Jesse says, "Hi, Mr. Joe. I'm ready! I have a big list."

Joe Sacheverell is pleased and responds, "That's great, buddy. I can't wait to get started."

Mr. Sacheverell, or Mr. Joe, as the students call him, is a supplemental teacher who was hired to provide tutoring for students. Of course, tutoring can be provided by classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, and even volunteers who have been trained and supported to engage students in learning. In studies of tutoring, it's not simply the instructional knowledge that makes a difference. Yes, tutors need to know how to engage students in meaningful learning. But it's more than that. Tutors, whoever they are, need to be caring and work to establish a strong relationship with the students they tutor.

*In studies of tutoring, it's not simply the instructional knowledge that makes a difference.*

As Jesse and Mr. Joe walk outside, Mr. Joe asks Jesse about the Packers. "I know it's your team and all, but what about last night? What happened?" They engage in some banter about the players, the referee who made a bad call, and their hope for the next game. As they sit down at the table, Mr. Joe says, "So, now we have this writing assignment. The last time we talked, you told me that you were a bad writer. I don't see that. In fact, your opening sentence is pretty amazing."

Jesse responded, "Yeah, but it's just the first sentence. The rest of it kinda sucks. Oh, sorry."

"I get it. But you have a list of ideas, right? Now we have to figure out how to get your ideas out there. But before we do that, I just want to say that I think you've made a lot of progress on this. You've hooked the reader and you have a good organization already. We just need to focus on the details and your conclusion. It needs to have a punch, like that opening sentence. I think our goal today should be to add the details that you've been thinking about and edit the sentences a bit. We can work on the conclusion later. Agree?"

The session continues and Mr. Joe asks Jesse about the details that he has brainstormed and where they can be added to his draft. Mr. Joe also focuses on some sentence-level work that Jesse needs. Jesse writes with many fragments and run-on sentences. He also starts sentences with the same word and has little sentence variation.

Mr. Joe also asks Jesse to read his draft aloud, noting that "when you hear what you have written, sometimes it helps you make corrections yourself." At the end of their session, Mr. Joe asks Jesse to reflect on their time together. "How did this work for you? How are you feeling?"

"Well, I still have a lot to do, but I think it's better now. I think I get the part about run-ons with too many *and*s in the sentence and how to make them more sentences. I'm not sure about it when you say *fragments,* so I need more help with that. Oh, and I know how to start sentences with different words and make some shorter and some longer. Like you said, we gotta keep the reader with us. Do I see you tomorrow?"

*Effective tutoring builds students'* confidence *and* competence.

Mr. Joe responds, "Yep. I get to see you tomorrow. Remember, you have some practice to do before I see you. Can you read it aloud to yourself and see if there are things that you'd like to change? And can you add details to the last two paragraphs like we did for the first ones?" Jesse agrees and they head back to the classroom.

## A Model of Tutoring

Mr. Joe understands the power of tutoring and the ways in which his moves impact the learner. Tutoring is not just making sure that students complete their homework. And it's not just about telling students the information they are missing. Effective tutoring is much more complex than that and involves several strategic moves that

build students' *confidence* and *competence*. Both are important in the tutoring situation, and we will devote an entire chapter to this issue. For now, let us recognize that we want to increase students' knowledge and skills, or their competence. But students who are receiving tutoring know that they have gaps in their learning and are sensitive to experiencing failure again and again. Thus, a significant focus of effective tutoring is in rebuilding students' confidence.

Our model of tutoring has six components. They are derived from research evidence about effective tutoring and interventions. Throughout this book, we will include effect sizes from Visible Learning® (www.visiblelearningmetax.com). This database is a collection of meta-analyses, or studies of studies. There are thousands of them, and the overall average impact on learning is an effect size of 0.40. Thus, anything that we report above the 0.40 effect size is an accelerator of learning. In terms of the tutoring components, all six are important, and missing any one of them places the student receiving the tutoring at risk. The six components include

1. **Establishing, nurturing, and repairing relationships.** To paraphrase the late Rita Pierson, "Young people do not learn from older people they do not like." The effect size of teacher credibility is 1.09. Relationships are especially important in the tutoring situation. Tutors work with students who have experienced failure, students who have difficulty learning and remembering, and students who have had ineffective instructional experiences. As we will see in Chapter 1, tutoring begins with establishing a healthy, growth-producing relationship. This is more than a getting-to-know-you phase; this relationship needs to be nurtured and grown. And sometimes, things happen that strain the relationship. Imagine studying with a tutor only to fail on an assessment. Naturally, the student will blame the tutor and the relationship will be fractured. Effective tutors recognize that this is part of the process and work to reestablish the relationship and, when they have done so, help the student identify what went wrong and how to address it in the future. Tutors do not blame students for their circumstances and display great empathy with the students they tutor.

*All six tutoring components are important, and missing any one of them places the student receiving the tutoring at risk.*

2. **Addressing confidence and challenges to learning.** As you noted when you read about Mr. Joe and Jesse, there was a lack of confidence on the part of the student. This is not unusual. Students receiving tutoring typically recognize that they are struggling. They know that they need help. Part of the power of tutors is their ability to address confidence issues as they arise. Given that tutoring is individual or small group, tutors can recognize the signs of lack of confidence and include confidence-building activities in each session. Tutors can also be on the lookout for cognitive challenges to learning, such as a student's mindset or limits to working memory. Each of the common cognitive challenges to learning has specific actions that tutors can take to address those challenges. When students have high levels of efficacy, they learn more. The effect size of self-efficacy is 0.71, meaning that it holds the potential to accelerate learning.

3. **Setting goals.** Every single tutoring session should have a goal. Tutors and students should talk about the goals they have for the session and then reflect on those goals at the end of the session. Of course, the goal is about learning something. Having learning goals versus not having them has an effect size of 0.51. It's key that students have a mastery goal orientation rather than a performance goal orientation. In other words, it's more valuable to say, "I want to learn to write well" or "I want to use my writing to create changes in the world" than to say, "I want to get an A on this essay" or "I want to pass this class." When students have goals, they are more likely to engage in the tutoring session and to complete the practice tasks that are assigned to them. When students seek help, meaning that they know where they need help, the effect size is 0.72.

4. **Learning how to learn.** Many students who require tutoring are unsure how to learn. They may possess ineffective learning strategies, meaning that the effort is there, but the result isn't. They may complete their assignments, but they may not be learning much in the process. Tutoring is an opportunity to help students learn how to learn. Of course, students also need to learn content, but the tutor (and teacher) are only with students for a

finite number of hours a day. If we can teach students how to learn, the impact increases as students begin to teach themselves. One of the ways to learn is study skills, with an effect size of 0.54. Figure I.1 presents a list of learning strategies and their effect sizes.

5. **Learning content.** This is the core of the tutoring session. The whole point of tutoring is to ensure that students learn more concepts and skills. The tutor needs to know the content well enough to guide students in their thinking without simply telling them answers. But knowing content, or teachers' subject matter knowledge, has a surprisingly low impact on students' learning, with an effect size of 0.23. That's probably because knowing *how* to teach that content is even more important. Our take on this influence is that you have to know the content and how to teach that content, or what is referred to as pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). Of course, there is not a single "right" way to teach. There are a number of effective instructional approaches, depending on what students need to learn and where they are in their learning journey. But there are also bad choices in terms of instructional moves. What we care about is learning. As we will discuss in the chapter on learning content, the focus should be on whether the selected tools actually increased student learning. Knowing what success looks like and monitoring students' progress toward that success has an effect size of 0.88.

*You have to know the content and how to teach that content, or what is referred to as pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986).*

6. **Practicing deliberately.** Relationships and credibility, confidence, goals, and instruction are all important aspects of the tutoring experience. But if the learning is going to stick, students need to practice. Practice does not make perfect; practice makes permanent. The truth is that a lot of students in need of tutoring have had reasonably good instruction. They just didn't practice enough to ensure that the instruction had a chance to stick. Of course, there are students who have experienced instructional loss, reduced instructional minutes,

**Figure I.1** Sample Learning Strategies

| STRATEGY | DEFINITION | EFFECT SIZE |
|---|---|---|
| **Outlining and summarizing** | This practice involves identifying the main ideas and rendering them in one's own words. The core skill is being able to distinguish between the main ideas and the supporting ideas and examples. | 0.66 |
| **Rereading** | When students encounter difficulty in understanding, rereading aims to enhance meta-comprehension—enabling students to know better whether they have understood the text—and it can involve asking students to reread a passage with various purposes in mind. | 0.53 |
| **Summarizing** | The ability to summarize a text is often taken as a marker of reading comprehension, and for this reason many scholars have advocated explicit summarization training for students who struggle with comprehension. This can include deleting unnecessary material, deleting redundant material, substituting a subordinate term for a list of items or actions, selecting a topic sentence, and constructing a topic if one is only implicitly suggested by the text. | 0.74 |
| **Annotating (underlining, highlighting, etc.)** | This involves underlining or highlighting the main ideas, or how ideas are related, and aims to help the reader with recall and recognition of the links between parts of the text. | 0.44 |
| **Note-taking** | This involves students making notes in a systematic manner. Such note-taking has been linked to increased engagement, more generative learning, and greater self-efficacy. Of note, this is not sharing or providing students with notes, but the student learning the skills of note-taking. | 0.51 |
| **Strategy monitoring** | A metacognitive practice whereby a student monitors their own strategies to complete a task, this often involves students being trained both in problem-solving techniques and in monitoring techniques (through which they observe how and whether they are following problem-solving protocols). | 0.58 |

*Source:* www.visiblelearningmetax.com

and ineffective instructional events. They also need practice aligned with good instruction. Two things are important here. First, the practice needs to be spaced out, not occurring all at once. In other words, the tutoring session is not just a pile o' practice. Distributed practice over time has an effect size of 0.65. Practice testing has an effect size of 0.46. And deliberate practice, which we will explore further in the last chapter of this book, has an effect size of 0.79. The overall effectiveness of our expanded opportunities to learn through tutoring is likely going to be dependent on whether we can get students to engage in practice.

## Acceleration, Not Remediation

The worry we have in writing a book about tutoring is that we contribute to deficit thinking about students. The students who are assigned tutors have needs. And these needs are generally greater than the needs of other students in the school; thus, the allocation of resources for tutoring. In some places, the students receiving tutoring are labeled as the adults talk about them as a group. We've heard of the "Covidians" and the "DLVs (distance learning victims)" labels used to identify students receiving tutoring. In the past, this group might have been labeled the "ostriches" (birds that don't fly but run fast) or the "bubble kids" (students who need to pass a state exam). Not labeling students has an effect size of 0.61. Yes, that research comes from special education, but the point is well taken. When we label students, we run the risk of lowering our expectations for them.

*Not labeling students has an effect size of 0.61.*

And when we create these groups of students, we tend to focus on remediation of skills that have yet to be developed. As noted in Figure I.2, remediation slows down the learning and focuses on isolated skills. The lessons are not seen as relevant and instead the focus is on "catching up" with others. Acceleration, on the other hand, based on the research done with students identified as gifted (and yes, we recognize the label), suggests the opposite. The effect size of acceleration is 0.68, well worth the effort to change the focus. Acceleration does not mean skipping a grade level or covering two chapters in five minutes. Instead, acceleration and learning recovery means focusing on and ensuring that the core and

**Figure I.2** Acceleration and Remediation: A Comparison

| | ACCELERATION | REMEDIATION |
|---|---|---|
| **Self-efficacy** | ◗ Self-confidence and engagement increase.<br>◗ Academic progress is evident. | ◗ Students perceive they're in the "slow class," and self-confidence and engagement decrease.<br>◗ Backward movement leads to a sense of futility and lack of progress. |
| **Basic skills** | ◗ Skills are hand-picked just in time for new concepts.<br>◗ Students apply skills immediately. | ◗ Instruction attempts to reteach every missing skill.<br>◗ Skills are taught in isolation and not applied to current learning. |
| **Prior knowledge** | ◗ Key prior knowledge is provided ahead of time, enabling students to connect to new information. | ◗ Prior knowledge that connects to new learning is typically not introduced. |
| **Relevance** | ◗ Relevance is treated as a critical component of student motivation and memory. | ◗ Relevance is not seen as a priority. |
| **Connection to core class** | ◗ Instruction is connected to core class; ongoing collaboration is emphasized. | ◗ Instruction is typically isolated from the core class. |
| **Pacing and direction** | ◗ The pacing and direction are active, fast-paced, hands-on.<br>◗ There is forward movement; the goal is for students to learn on time with peers. | ◗ The pacing and direction are passive, with a focus on worksheets or basic software programs.<br>◗ There is backward movement; the goal is for students to catch up to peers. |

*Source:* Rollins (2014).

key parts of the curriculum are covered and that they are covered with depth. In terms of the evidence on acceleration, several areas are important in creating these types of experiences for students. We'll highlight three of them here as they transcend the tutoring experience.

1. **Identify skills and concepts that have yet to be learned.** When you understand the skills and concepts that students are expected to master, you can identify which of these have yet to be learned. As Nuthall (2007) noted, about 40% of instructional minutes are spent on things that students already know. To accelerate learning, that number has to be much lower. Importantly, that 40% could differ from student to student. They all come to class (or to a tutoring session) knowing things. The problem is that some of them know this and others know that, so we tend to teach everything that anyone might need to learn. Obviously, that's not very effective and will not allow us to accelerate learning. Assessments provide information about what students have yet to learn. These assessments can be informal or more formal. But you need the data if you are going to accelerate learning. Think about the data the tutor needs to determine what students have already learned and what they still need to learn.

*Research suggests that about 40% of instructional minutes are spent on things that students already know.*

2. **Increase the relevance of students' learning.** When learning is relevant, students are more likely to allocate resources to learn. And by resources, we mean time and attention. The typical ways for increasing relevance include making connections beyond the walls of the classroom and providing students with opportunities to learn about themselves. For example, a tutor might note that this content will help them understand why it rains more in one place than another. Or the teacher might explain that this is an opportunity for them to understand how they solve problems and how their skills in problem

solving differ from others'. Generally, these still work to ensure that students find relevance in their learning. But the reality is that this aspect of learning is often neglected or rushed. There are far too many students who have no idea how to answer the question, "Why am I learning this?" And there are so many of us educators who aren't sure either. We need to seriously consider the reasons that students need to know or be able to do something and then explore that with students. When they accept the challenge of learning and see that learning as relevant, they are much more likely to learn. And that's acceleration. Before we leave the topic of relevance, we'd also like to note that your passion for students, their learning, and the content they are learning contributes to relevance. We can all remember a time that we learned something simply because the person teaching us was so excited. Bring that passion and excitement to your class or tutoring session and show students how amazing it feels to learn things. When we do, our students might just suspend their disbelief and engage with us on another level, opening the door for further acceleration.

3. **Create active, fast-paced learning experiences.** One of the norms with remediation is slowing down the learning and focusing on smaller and smaller aspects. Perhaps that's not always intended, but the trend in these types of efforts is to assume that students are far behind and need the pace to be slower so that they can learn. The opposite is true. Acceleration requires that we create active lessons in which students have multiple response opportunities. Remember, we're trying to build a memory trace through repetition and retrieval. The more often learners retrieve information, the more likely they are to remember it and be able to apply it.

*When students accept the challenge of learning, and see that learning as relevant, they are much more likely to learn. And that's acceleration.*

## Build a Tutoring Program for Success

Tutors may be drawn from the credentialed teaching ranks, or they may be paraprofessionals. In other cases, tutors may be community volunteers. Whatever your level of experience, we want to acknowledge what it is that you need from a tutoring program. The first is that tutors should receive regular professional learning in order to refine skills and provide feedback to the school about the program. Tutors need (and deserve) to know the goals of the tutoring program, especially knowing that it is for the purpose of strengthening knowledge of concepts and skills, and not just providing homework help and passing classroom tests.

*The more often learners retrieve information, the more likely they are to remember it and be able to apply it.*

Collaboration between teachers and tutors is crucial for aligning student experiences between the two settings. The evidence on collaboration between educators resoundingly notes that communication among adults about monitoring progress toward academic goals increases student learning. Collaboration should also happen with families, but who is the communicator? Is it the classroom teacher or the tutor? Again, these questions should be clarified in advance.

Tutors must have access to supportive instructional resources, including textbooks and other curricular materials. In addition, these materials should include supportive supplemental materials that support core texts. This extends to access to results of diagnostic assessments that have been completed. Ask as well about the responsibilities of tutors in conducting interim or benchmark assessments. Student progress should be monitored carefully and not solely constructed as a time-based project. Be sure to ask what the criteria are for discontinuing tutoring services when goals have been achieved.

Students who need specialized attention, especially those who qualify for special education services or 504 supports, deserve to have a coordinated network around them. When this is the case, ask for the student's applicable individualized goals, and speak regularly with the student's case manager. In addition, inquire about how best to report on progress so that this information is documented in the student's individualized education plan. In support of your efforts, Figure I.3 lists possible questions to ask as you move into a tutoring role.

**Figure I.3** Questions to Ask About the Tutoring Program

| TOPIC | QUESTIONS |
|---|---|
| **Program goals** | ◗ What are the goals of the tutoring program?<br>◗ How does the tutoring program work in conjunction with classroom learning?<br>◗ How is the success of the program measured?<br>◗ How is the success of students measured?<br>◗ What is the supervision model for the tutoring program? |
| **Collaboration** | ◗ How do tutors and classroom teachers collaborate and exchange information? Is there a designated time or channel for doing so?<br>◗ What are the best ways for me to access supports (e.g., coaching and supervision)? |
| **Professional learning** | ◗ What are the initial onboarding and program training opportunities?<br>◗ How are tutors continuing their professional learning throughout the year? |
| **Curriculum and materials** | ◗ What core curricular materials are available?<br>◗ What supportive supplemental materials are available?<br>◗ What modified materials are available for those students with IEPs (individualized education programs) who need them? |
| **Communication** | ◗ Do tutors attend IEP and 504 meetings?<br>◗ Who are the individuals that should be included in electronic communications?<br>◗ How are families informed about tutoring progress? |
| **Assessment** | ◗ How are the results of applicable standards-based assessments shared with tutors?<br>◗ How are the results of applicable diagnostic assessments shared with tutors?<br>◗ What are the benchmark, interim, or curricular assessment responsibilities of tutors? |
| **Recordkeeping** | ◗ What are the documentation requirements of tutors?<br>◗ How is progress reported? |

## Conclusion

Extending learning and addressing the unrealized potential in students is the goal of tutoring. When we develop strong relationships, focus on students' confidence, establish shared goals, teach students well, and ensure that they practice, amazing things can happen. Most important, tutoring is a specialized skill set and differs from teaching the whole class or even small groups. With support, nearly anyone can be a tutor. Whether you are an educational specialist, resource teacher, classroom teacher, paraprofessional, or volunteer, you have the potential to impact students—specifically students who have a damaged relationship with learning. What a powerful role and responsibility. Be that person who makes a difference in the lives of young people; our future depends on it.