

# PEER MENTOR TRAINING & REFERENCE

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## Planning Your Peer Mentor Session

Planning every peer mentor session is vital to the success of your study group. You should never go into any peer mentor session with the idea that you'll just "wing it." An hour is a long time when you have nothing planned, and without a plan you run the risk of alienating students who are counting on you to lead them in group study.

As a peer mentor, you are provided with ample preparation time each week, but the amount of planning time is not as crucial as the actual planning itself. Always take some time to think about the students you are working with; for the most part, these are first year students who are developing their study skills strategies and learning to traverse the institution while trying to have a social life. Think back to when you were in the same situation and try to develop peer mentoring sessions with content that will be useful and meaningful to a diverse group of students.

Every mentoring session should include key elements of time management and goal setting and a review of these strategies, as well as an opportunity for you to provide feedback on the students' efforts. Inclusion of universal study skills strategies (note-taking, textbook reading, prepping for exams, etc.) are also highly recommended. Your mentor sessions should not be just about course content. Be sure to provide a good mix of processes and a chance to work on skill development.

Use of the Mentor Session Planning Form for **each** mentor session is mandatory for several reasons:

- Walks you through the preparation process, helping you to focus in on specific content to cover and activities/strategies to use.
- Offers a record or documentation of your work but also provides you with a tangible way to analyze what works and what doesn't.
- Used in combination with work samples, allows you to showcase your mentor sessions, providing work examples for faculty member to review.

Most mentors are embedded in freshman seminars, which meet once a week for 16 weeks, so weekly mentor sessions will be held on the alternate day of class. (For example, a Monday 10:00 a.m. class will have a mentor session scheduled for Wednesday at 10:00 a.m.) If you are a peer mentor a course other than the freshman seminar, it is highly recommended that you survey the class for their availability. During the first week of classes, give the students a Time Survey that asks them to indicate their one-hour blocks of free time. Review the surveys to arrange a regularly scheduled mentor session that the majority of students will be able to attend.

Regardless of your course support, all mentors should be willing to hold one-on-one meetings and/or accompany students to support services and campus resources. Team up with tutors to hold mentor-tutor sessions in the ASU Tutor Center.

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## Planning Your Mentor Session (Cont'd.)

As preparation for your mentor session, follow these steps to design a well-planned meeting:

1. Get in the habit of using an icebreaker to get to know students' names. During the session, arrange the room so the students can see each other and always wear your nametag.
  2. Reintroduce yourself, when necessary; and continually share a little of your background and past experience with the students. This helps to build rapport.
  3. Keep the Mentor Attendance Sheet close at hand, so you can familiarize yourself with the students and their names as they sign in. Always stress that students print legibly. Be sure to tell students the sign-in sheet is for program evaluation purposes; no one has access to it.
  4. Make effective use of the Socratic Method. This questioning technique requires practice and preparation, so think about the questions you will ask and make note of them on the Mentor Session Planning Form. (For more information on the Socratic Method, refer to the Important Techniques section in the Training Resources tab.)
  5. Refer to Bloom's Taxonomy as a source of higher-order verbs to use when prepare question for your mentor session.
  6. Each mentor session should include at least three activities, following the Peer Mentor Cycle. See the Activities Shuffle Deck for a quick and easy way to select activities.
- **PHASE 1**— This is the instruction to the session. Following your warm-up and rapport building activity, identify a key topic or an issue with which you think students might be struggling. You can introduce that topic offering a brief quiz or an open-ended question. Other suggestions for openers include *Create a Calendar*, *Syllabus Review*, *One-Minute Paper*, *Hangman*. Whether your session activities are the same week after week or you prefer to vary your format, always provide students with a daily session agenda. Get in the habit of writing your session agenda on the chalkboard or distributing a typed agenda.
  - **PHASE 2**—This is the heart of the session where you focus on *what to learn* and *how to learn*. Learn to combine what-to-learn activities with how-to-learn study strategies. Suggested activities include *Jeopardy*, *Think-Pair-Share*, *Jigsaw*, *Matrices*, *Incomplete Outline*, *Poster Session*, *Flowcharts*, while suggested strategies include *note-taking skills*, *questioning techniques*, *understanding lectures*, and *textbook reading*. In planning the body of the session, keep the following in mind:
    - Involve all the students.
    - Model a strategy that students can adopt or copy... "*How can we organize this material?*" *Do you have any ideas? Here is one way.*"
    - Make sure students can hear each other's questions. Repeat them to the class if necessary, and encourage the students to answer each other's questions.
    - Model effective questioning techniques using the Socratic Method.
    - As you lead the study group, be a facilitator and not a lecturer.

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### Planning Your Peer Mentor Session (Cont'd.)

- **PHASE 3**—Don't allow the time to escape without summarizing the session or highlighting a segment of the session. Then offer the following:
  - ❖ Suggest a method of independent study.
  - ❖ Suggest follow-up activities.
  - ❖ Ask the students to tell you what's coming next.
  - ❖ Remind students of your mentor session schedule and invite them back.
- 7. After each session, review your Mentor Session Planning Form to analyze your efforts, asking yourself. How did it go? What worked? What didn't work and why? How well did you do with the Socratic Method and your use of open-ended questions? Where you able to provide sufficient wait time when you asked a question?

Remember: While having "good" mentor sessions all the time helps you to feel confident and successful, it is the "bad" mentor session that teaches you the most and offers the greatest sense of accomplishment.

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## Conducting Your Mentor Session

As a peer mentor, you are a steward of learning resources for students and your role is to model effective classroom behavior and study skills strategies to use throughout the learning process. Critical to the goal of FYE peer mentoring—to help first-year students transition to college—you should continually challenge students to use higher-order thinking while developing time management and goal setting skills. Below are tips and techniques for conducting effective and efficient mentor sessions.

1. Refer to the syllabus regularly; check that students understand the course requirements and dates of reading assignments, projects, and test dates. Ask students to follow this process with all of their course syllabi.
2. Have students take out their daily planners and then ask them pointed questions about their independent study session. Have students tell you what goals they set for their study session.
3. Prepare open-ended questions which you will ask of the group. Always use your Mentor Session Planning Form to record these questions. (Refer to the Socratic Method for more questioning techniques.)
4. Provide students with sufficient time to develop their answers, because when students learn to do this it allows high-level thinking to take place. Standard wait-time is about 10 seconds; if you are uncomfortable waiting that long, you might try rephrasing the question, provide a hint, or suggest that students to join you in looking through notes or text. Refer to Breaking the Dependency Cycle for more information in this area.
5. Encourage students to summarize major concepts of the lecture. Let other students fine-tune the responses. If information is incorrect, make reference to specific areas of the text or notes.
6. If your group has more than 15 students, divide into subgroups. Provide discussion topics that the groups can explore. Move from group to group, participating from time to time, reassuring the group that you are still there for them. Provide time to reassemble as an entire group to process.
7. Learn to be flexible. You may have planned to work on a particular concept only to find that the students wish to work on something else.
8. Keep track of the time and as the session comes to a close, provide a summary segment that allows the students an opportunity to review as well as predict where the course is going.

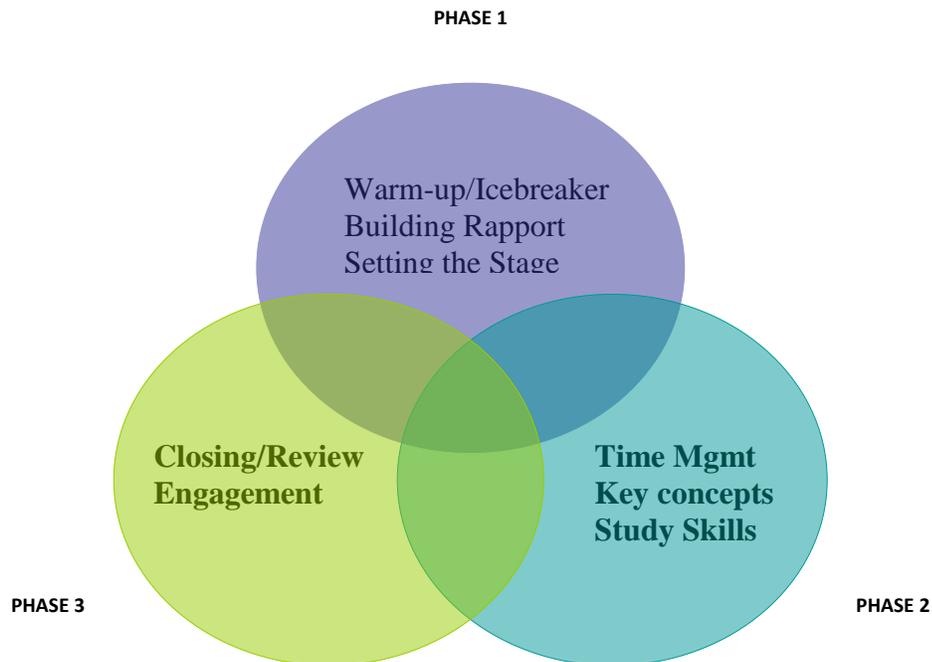
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## Closing your Mentor Session

To ensure students do not lose sight of the “big picture,” reserve the last few minutes for wrap-up and review. Your closure should consist of one or more of the following: a session summary, suggested follow-up activities, or forecasting of what to expect next as well as an emphasis on student engagement. Always remind students of your weekly mentor session and include an invitation to accompany you to upcoming campus events. Whatever you plan to discuss for your closing, realize that the students should be doing most of the talking. Have them review both process and content.

**Closing a Mentor Session Key Principle:** *The one doing the talking is the one doing the learning.*

### Mentor Cycle



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## The First Week of Class

During the first week of classes you will have several tasks that must be accomplished in order for your mentoring sessions to run effectively and efficiently. To start, begin attending class on the first day and always model effective classroom behavior— arrive on time, take copious notes, and participate. If the instructor has assigned seating, ask if you can sit at the front, so all of the students can easily see you. Before class, chat with students who are sitting nearby. Get two copies of the course syllabus. One copy is for your records; the other copy will be kept on file in the FYE Office.

Also make a point of meeting with the instructor during his/her office hours to arrange regularly scheduled meetings. Plan to meet weekly with your mentor instructor to keep him/her informed of what is happening in your mentor sessions. During your initial meeting with the instructor, the two of you must review and sign the **FYE Peer Mentor Roles & Responsibilities Agreement**, which identifies the parties involved with peer mentor support (FYE executive director, peer mentor, and instructor) and details the responsibilities of each. (You will sign two copies of the agreement; leave one copy with the mentor instructor. The other copy will be filed in the FYE Office.)

Most mentors are embedded in freshman seminars, which meet once a week for 16 weeks, so weekly mentor sessions will be held on the alternate day of class. (For example, a Monday 10:00 a.m. class will have a mentor session scheduled for Wednesday at 10:00 a.m.) If you are a peer mentor a course other than the freshman seminar, it is highly recommended that you survey the class for their availability. During the first week of classes, give the students a **Time Survey** that asks them to indicate their one-hour blocks of free time. Review the surveys to arrange a regularly scheduled mentor session that the majority of students will be able to attend.

As soon as possible, complete the **Room Request** and submit to the FYE executive director, who will in turn submit to Reservations to reserve your classroom space. There is at least a 24-hour turnaround with this form, so the sooner you get it in, the better off you'll be.

All peer mentors are required to make weekly classroom announcements—a few minutes at the beginning of class. These weekly announcements are your opportunity to offering a teaser about upcoming mentor sessions and to invite students to campus events. During the first week of classes, it's best to wait until the second day of class to make your introductory announcement. The first day of class tends to see a lot of fluctuation with students dropping and adding to their schedules.

Your initial announcement provides the initial opportunity to introduce and promote peer mentoring. Practice the sample announcement and make it your own. Speaking to a classroom of students is not easy. The better prepared you are with this announcement, the more comfortable you will be and the more apt students will listen. If you are unprepared to speak and it shows, that's all the students will remember.

As always, but most importantly on this day, arrive on time. Remind the professor you'll need a few minutes your initial announcement and that this is best done at the beginning of class. Be cognizant of the time you use for any announcement. If you have literature or handouts, distribute this as students file into the classroom; collect the Time Survey as the students leave the class.

It's always best to make your announcements at the start of class. If you wait until the end of class, you run the risk of losing students' attention as they pack up and get ready to leave the classroom.

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## The First Week of Class (Cont'd.)

Practicing for this initial presentation as well as subsequent weekly announcements, cannot be stressed enough. Practice what you are going to say and how you will say it. There is a lot of information you must convey to your audience and it's difficult to stand in front of a group without a script. If you like, use the script and/or modify to your liking. Just remember: this announcement and the way you present it sets the tone for the semester; it is your most important marketing strategy, because students will decide whether to attend your mentor sessions based on your presentation. Therefore, market yourself as an intelligent professional and practice!

- The instructor has approved you to be the peer mentor for the course.
- You will serve as a steward of learning resources and help students to develop effective study skills habits.
- Additional information about yourself.

### Practice Announcement

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## Working with Faculty

*FYE peer mentoring is offered only with the support of the instructor. Likewise, for peer mentoring to achieve its potential effectiveness, we need faculty to positively encourage students to attend your mentor sessions. It is, therefore, critical that you establish and maintain a good working relationship with your mentor instructor. To that end, ensure you do the following to establish a positive working relationship with faculty.*

1. Introduce yourself to the instructor before classes start.
2. During the first week of classes, meeting with your instructor and do the following:
  - a. Arrange weekly peer mentor/instructor meetings
  - b. Review and sign the Mentor Roles & Responsibilities agreement
3. Give copies of any announcements to the instructor.
4. Meet with your mentor instructor once a week during his/her office hours, providing information about questions or concerns students have regarding course material, levels of class participation, and advance copies of study aids. It's a good idea to schedule a regular meeting rather than meet "on the fly." These meetings to do need to be long—15 to 20 minutes should be enough time to provide an update on your mentor sessions as well as receive advice on how to proceed. Do not assume you will be able to meet during the instructor's scheduled office hours (this time is for students) or that you will be able to have an impromptu talk either directly before or after class.
5. Prepare for your instructor meetings as you would with any other meeting:
  - Plan to showcase your mentor session activities (give your instructor a copy of anything you use in your mentor sessions, such as handouts and study aids)
  - Document student questions and/or problem areas
  - Always show the instructor your session plan and ask for advice or suggestions (content ideas and/or study skills strategies)
6. E-mail your instructor if you're going to miss class—even if you e-mail him/her after the fact. Professors expect to see you in lecture class every time. Make sure they know in advance if you will NOT be taking any tests. You are not required to take tests, but it is highly recommended that you take a good look at the tests so you are better prepared to debrief students in the following mentor session.
7. Invite your professor to visit your mentor sessions.
8. Always ask the instructor for permission to make weekly reminders about your mentor sessions as well as upcoming campus events (student engagement). Any announcements you make should be done at the beginning of class, so you have the students' full attention.
9. Give the instructor your CID # and ask to be included on his/her Blackboard course site. This allows you access to the course syllabus, lecture notes, and review sheets, as well as a host of resource materials specific to the course. Also ask the instructor to setup a Peer Mentor folder. If the instructor provides you with GA access, you will be able to "dump" your session information and activities into the Bb course.

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## Working with Faculty (Cont'd.)

### Initial Contact

The FYE executive director is responsible for contacting faculty before the semester begins to confirm peer mentor placement. The executive director also gives faculty a copy of the Mentor Bio, which you complete during pre-term training. The Mentor Bio some background information about you, which the instructor can file with current term information.

Initial contact is important to establish and maintain a good working relationship with faculty. It's best to make this initial contact before the start of classes and then maintain weekly faculty visits for the duration of the semester. During pre-term training, the FYE executive director will ask if you know your mentor instructor and whether you have had an initial meeting. Sufficient time during pre-term training will be provided to make introductions. During your initial instructor meeting, be sure to relay the following information:

1. You will be present in class from the first day on and that on the second day of class you will need a few minutes to make an introductory announcement about the peer mentor program.
2. Expectations for the FYE executive director, peer mentor, and instructor. Use the **FYE Peer Mentor Roles & Responsibilities Agreement** to review and discuss these expectations. Leave a copy of the agreement with the faculty member.
3. You will want to make weekly class announcements about peer mentoring and that these weekly announcements will be brief and to the point.
4. Mentor-instructor meetings will take place on a weekly basis, keeping the instructor informed and updated about peer mentor activities and what the students are saying about the course.
5. If you don't already have the class textbook, ask the instructor about borrowing one. If the instructor can't provide you with a copy, fill out the **Book Request** and give to the director.
6. Assure faculty that FYE staff are available to answer any questions or concerns that may arise throughout the course of the semester.

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## FYE Mentor Responsibilities

As a peer mentor, you have many responsibilities. Following is a list of peer mentor Dos and Don'ts.

### Mentor Dos:

- Understand the purpose and components of the mentor program so you can work toward accomplishing program goals.
- Attend lecture regularly. If you cannot attend for whatever reason, contact the program director and email the instructor.
- Be a visible presence in the classroom so students will know you. As a peer mentor, you should talk with students in class, sit in different areas of the classroom.
- Exhibit appropriate classroom behavior, acting as a role model for the students—arrive on time, listen, take notes and collect handouts—even if you've taken the course.
- Review the syllabus so you understand the instructor expectations and course objectives.
- Model effective time management, goal-setting, and organization skills.
- Possess humility.
- Practice problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
- Act as a faculty ally and maintain a professional attitude regarding faculty, staff, and students.
- Provide support and guidance to students outside of class.
- Maintain weekly meetings with your mentor instructor to keep him/her updated and get advice.
- Attend bi-weekly mentor staff meetings (in service training/professional development) and meet regularly with the program director to continually review your peer mentor role and responsibilities
- Attend campus events and participate in out-of-class activities with mentees.
- Visit campus resources and academic support services with mentees.
- Maintain and submit records that will be used to evaluate the peer mentor program.
- Respect diversity.
- Cultivate a growth mindset.

### As a peer mentor, please DO NOT:

- Reveal confidential or personal information you may obtain regarding the students you mentor, except to peer mentor staff.
- Contribute to criticism about professors and/or ASU courses.
- Provide your class notes to mentees.
- Do mentee homework or classroom assignments, even if they beg.

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## FYE Peer Mentor Roles & Responsibilities

Through application and practice, the philosophy (WHY) of peer mentoring focuses on the transition and transfer of student knowledge and skill competencies. Special emphasis is placed on supporting and enabling independent problem-solving techniques. Below is a chart with a breakdown of the

| Process (WHAT)         | <b>COMMUNICATION SKILLS</b><br>Giving and exchanging of information; the art of expressing ideas and opinions. | <b>COACHING</b><br>Instructing and training—helping prepare and form study skills strategies.                       | <b>PEER COUNSELING</b><br>Advising with regard to personnel problems that affect course work/performance; a mutual exchange of ideas and opinions. | <b>PLANNING/MANAGEMENT</b><br>Facilitating mentor sessions as planned; maintaining mentor status; detailed method of processing                       |
|------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Procedures/Rules (HOW) | How to/Rules/Guidelines  | How to/Rules/Guidelines   | How to/Rules/Guidelines  | How to/Rules/Guidelines   |
|                        | Demonstrate constructive feedback using non-judgmental observation, as opposed to praise/criticism             | Categorize interests, skills, and knowledge; examine professional accomplishments                                   | Maintain non-directive approach to student needs, allowing student to discover problem areas <u>and</u> work out solutions                         | Follow Diagnostic Plan for identification and examination   |
|                        | Develop rapport emphasizing trust, focus, congruence, and empowerment  | Model networking by providing references ; accompany to support resources; improve student networking opportunities | Act as a sounding board to work out solutions to problems, challenges, and/or dilemmas   | Utilize proper documentation:<br>* Mentoring Worksheet<br>* Commitments Worksheet<br>* Mentor Planning Session<br>* Partnership Evaluation            |
|                        | Exhibit integrity involving reliability, openness, sincerity, and humility                                     | Offer observations as insight to spark discussion   | Provide guidance, especially with learning objectives & action plans   | Document accurate account of instructor meetings and summary of mentor sessions   |
|                        | Apply active listening.  | Assist with transition to college— institution, social and academic environment                                     | Advise from a personal perspective/experience re: professional issues  | Follow proper guidelines, involving time, duration, and frequency of mentor sessions, engagement activities, meetings, etc.                           |
|                        | Use the Socratic Method during questioning (involves but not limited to open-ended questions)                  | Assist with development of learning objectives  | Provide encouragement as a source of motivation and satisfaction   | Set personal goals and assist with clarifying goals   |
|                        | Utilize paraphrasing and summarization   | Model problem-solving techniques, time management skills and goal setting   | Foster self-awareness and knowledge of results   | Participate in pre-term training, in service and professional development, including staff meetings, monthly reviews, and end of term self-assessment |

- Risks/Concerns:
- 1) What if a mentor goes rogue?
  - 2) What to do about questions concerning mismatches (mentor placement)?
  - 3) Diversity issues
  - 4) Dependence and counter-dependence

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## FYE Peer Mentor Role

The mentor role cannot be pigeon-holed into one general area. The term itself implies many different things: role model, guide, teacher, friend... and these roles can change as the mentor-mentee relationship develops. Your primary roles as an FYE peer mentor is act as a peer coach and counselor, helping first-year students transition to college and develop self-advocacy and self-regulation skills. While there are no hard and fast rules regarding the mentor-student relationship, there are guidelines for what a mentor is and is not.

### An FYE peer mentor is a . . .

- Knowledgeable and experienced guide who leads by example.
- Caring and supportive friend who offers access to people, resources, and experiences outside the students' routine environment.
- A role model who exemplifies in word and deed what it means to be an ethically and morally responsible student.
- A trusted ally who works with (not for) the students and has their best interests at heart.

### A mentor is *not* a . . .

- (Surrogate) Parent.
- Professional counselor, therapist, or social worker.
- Flawless or infallible idol who can do no wrong.
- Crutch or plagiarist who does the students' homework and answers all their questions.
- Lending institution.
- Playmate or romantic partner.

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## FYE Peer Mentor Principal Objectives

### 1. Establish a positive, personal relationship with students.

- Make a proactive effort to offer help and guidance.
- Seize on all social events to develop a positive, personal relationship that is built on trust and respect.
- Maintain regular interaction and consistent support to sustain the mentor-student relationship.

### 2. Help students develop academic and life skills.

- Work to accomplish specific goals (e.g., effective use campus resources, mastery of study skills strategies, setting goals and time management).
- Model appropriate student behavior.
- Relay your experiences and lessons learned.
- Emphasize decision-making techniques, conflict management, values clarification, and skills for coping with stress).

### 3. Accompany students to academic support and university resources.

- Provide information and help students access academic resources (academic support, student services, student organizations).
- Emphasize the importance of talking to professors, and help students learn how to faculty.

### 4. Enhance student's interaction with people/groups from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

- Demonstrate your own interaction with individuals and groups different from yourself.
- Acknowledge (do not ignore) our differences and recognize preconceptions and stereotypes.

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