

High School Tutors for Elementary Students

By W.D.

Meet a recognized need in the community: About 30 high school students tutor elementary school students in two elementary schools. The students being tutored have learning difficulties or special learning needs. We have found placing ten to fifteen tutors in any one school to be the most efficient as any more creates an overcrowding problem.

Achieve curricular objectives through service-learning: Students are able to apply basic knowledge accumulated during their school experiences. Students reflect, synthesize and analyze while working on service-learning projects.

Reflection throughout service-learning experience: Students are required to keep a learning log for the children they tutor and this log is handed in at the end of each session. Two one hour sessions are provided each week for approximately thirty weeks of the school year.

Develop student responsibility: Tutors learn to communicate effectively with elementary students, ask for needed help from supervising elementary teachers, and to keep the high school advisor informed of any times they may need to be absent. Tutors are also responsible for remaining with the child until the parents arrive to take the child home.

Establish community partnerships: Parents of elementary students provide the school with information concerning their child's progress. P.T.A.s are most supportive of the tutors and of the tutoring program. There is excellent communication between teachers from the elementary school and the high school advisor to the tutors.

Plan ahead for service-learning: The tutoring advisor meets several times with the students interested in being tutors to inform each student of the importance of the task. An elementary student tends to become possessive of the tutor and can become upset if that tutor fails to attend a session without warning. Confidentiality is strongly stressed by the advisor and supervising teachers at the elementary schools.

Equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service: The supervising elementary teachers present two hour-long workshops for the student tutors before the actual tutoring begins. These teachers are also present at each session for support. The high school advisor for the tutors visits the elementary school during the tutoring sessions at least once every two weeks.