

P2Peer Tutoring

TRANSFERRING SUCCESSFUL METHODOLOGY AND LEARNING STRATEGIES TO REDUCE DROPOUTS IN iVET

Project
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Guidelines for the junior tutor

Children, how many of you do not like bullies, those who do not respect anything or anyone, the foxy ones who always make their way, those ones who soil, smash, scream? How many of you would like to participate, make their own opinion and cannot do it because of them? How many of you would like to be at ease, brave, protagonists of their own lives and of the life of their class or school and instead suffer in silence, feeling frustrated and disappointed?

If you are among these, welcome! This is the project for you!

What makes us say so? 30 years of life with you! 30 years of hard training, never finished, where we learned a fundamental principle, valid for both students and teachers: union is strength. Separated, we do not go anywhere!

The bully has understood very well this: why otherwise would he so much want to group, do his/her bravados when others look at him/at her? Why do you think a bully is almost always looking for a team? Because others are divided into two groups: those that follow and make a negative group, and the loose ones, who are attacked by the group, which makes them feel "out" if they do not behave the same way. Thus, that's it! The class, the school become a hell for both, a perfect reflection of the so-called "educational emergency" that everyone talks about but nobody does anything to deal with!

We, on the contrary, want to try. We are actually trying.

Ours is a school of 1,200 students, one of the largest in the province, result of the combination of what is commonly called "Accounting" ("Federico Cesi") and the Professional ("Alessandro Casagrande") of Terni. The cohabitation was not and is not easy: how to merge two different fan clubs! But, slowly, have we are succeeding. Frightened by the famous "educational emergency", made of wild monkeys who thought they could conquer the school, we reacted and we formed a large group of students (about 200) allied with an equally large group of teachers (about 30!) equally tired of having to undergo both this type of students and their lazy, unmotivated, boring or old-fashioned colleagues, those who spend their time criticizing everything and everyone and never putting themselves in question! This group has its own philosophy, which has been set down in a kind of "Ten Commandments", which outlines a real lifestyle ...



The tutor's "Ten Commandments"

"Falling in Love": with an ideal, with a feeling, with commitment, with a sacrifice! Not traditional love, but a step by step adventure to self-discovery, along which you can edit the behavioral scripts you have been prisoners of, which led to the repetition of mistakes and suffering, always the same.

A love that you can live as a "pair", with the sharing of plans and goals, trying not to isolate themselves as generally couples do, which often determines the end of the relation, by suffocation. **Do not be afraid of freedom!** It is the fear of losing control over the object of your love that pushes towards control of the loved one (person, group or ideal), but the control leads to the end of love.

Do not be ashamed of your feelings, you have the right to live without bullies who impose silence,



derision,

disqualification.

Be part of a group! Feelings are so delicate to be destroyed by derision and rudeness; they should be expressed within a group that is able to understand and accept them. The group, if positive, is the place where you meet different qualities and sensitivity which, by mixing, grow. The group welcomes you, feeds you, warms you ... It cannot just be thought as a place of study or entertainment, or worse, of transgression. Have you noticed how certain groups have great fun only if with they drink, or break something, otherwise they do not know what to do or to say?

Pain and injustice are part of life. An important goal is to become able to bear it and react. When a pain, physical or psychic attacks us becomes the center of our attention, sowing confusion and fear, compels to defense, and the agitation for the attempt to remove it makes the situation worse. Ignoring one's own daily wounds gradually weakens: the pain, the defeat should be accepted as an integral part of life and a powerful tool for growth. The humility to accept oneself injured hardens and teaches to support not only oneself, but others, too.

React to injustice with anger and you have already lost. We must learn to **neutralize the "unfair one"** with cunningness and a group of true friends helps you find the most appropriate strategies for doing so.

"Think positive." Charge in the group, but also by themselves. Do not waste energy! Thinking "I can not!" or "why should I do it!" must be avoided and replaced with "I want to do it" "I can do it" "If I want I can." Create a space in any place inside you where you feel invulnerable and share it with all those who think the same way: always remember that the union has the power to do much!

Learn how to **make your desires clear to yourself and to others expressing them clearly**, not expecting others to understand themselves. The first step is to clearly say to another what we like and what hurts us, the second is to ask the other not to do what hurts us. The third is to prevent us from doing what hurts the other! Overcome your defects, free from drugs to find freedom, from laziness to try the beauty of commitment, from shame to experience self-esteem, from incoherence to become responsible.

But to "grow" you need to have courage. **Acting responsibly** means to know the effect of the causes that you have moved (it is a physical principle!): what happens to us today is partly a response to what we did yesterday. If the earth is burning, it is because we overheated it for our comfort, if the city is dirty it is because we want it so (indeed, it is too clean for our rudeness!). Throw something (paper, cigarette butts, pollutant substances, etc.) multiplies this action for the 110,000 inhabitants of Terni and your city will be destroyed! Being responsible means "take care" (I care!): carry out your duties with care, respect people, things, the environment, pay attention towards oneself, others, the world. Every word, your every action has an effect, think carefully before you speak and act!

These are the first steps to **develop "empathy,"** that rare ability to "get in the shoes of others" and to share joys and sorrows, that is not born alone, must be cultivated. Through empathy, it is easier and immediate to meet others, recognize them, immediately establish ties, understanding and affection. You see a human being like yourself in the other, with the same desires and the same fears: offend him/her and you've lost a friend forever! Respect and you will "grow" together!



The tutor introduces him/herself to the children of the first classes...

We are here to help you deal with this new environment serenely. The best way to start is to **turn this class into a group of friends**. If you manage to become friends you will become a force for yourself and for those who will be with you. In order to do this you need a set of directions. From the first day of school there are a few of you who want to continue doing what they did at the comprehensive school: for example, some want to bully, others may have used to be a little shy, quieter, some study hard, some do not want to do anything. In the new school they will all try to do what they have always done, with the result that the class will never be a class of friends.

We who have more experience than you and we faced the same problems, tell you that there are ways to make a class together, since the very first day of school. First, it is important to **support each other**: if there is one that is already shy, you go there and make him/her feel even more shy, you do not make a friend, he does not improve and you quickly establish a relationship of antipathy. In our opinion, on the contrary, if you make the shy and unsure feel sure, congratulating him/her for making things he/she can do, you will make him feel a lion; it is clear that you will have to make feel less lion the one who is convinced to be such, not laugh when he says things he/she believes to be funny, ignore his silly jokes.

Highlight the positive aspects of your mates, instead of going after the bullies is a sign of great personality; **change your point of view, get in the shoes of others and try to understand how they feel** develops a great expertise, empathy, which is now even a factor required in companies, because a person who can understand what others feel knows how to mediate conflicts, is a resource for a company.

You want to support your opinions? **Have your say and let the other speak**, then speak again, respect the shifts and make them be respected, not like those TV programs where everyone speaks with the result that no one understands anything.

Is it really necessary to break your neighbor's eardrums to be heard? How relaxing is a place where everyone speaks in a tone of voice, instead of appearing as deaf people who scream their reasons!

There are presumptuous that can say only "I", the others do not exist: to recognize one's strengths but also one's limits is a great gift.

The bully thinks that aggression is a way to show how strong he/she is, but it's just a way to let others see how weak and scared he/she is, because real strong people need no violence to prove it!

We tutors **are here to suggest a style of behavior** and next year you will be able to be tutor of other kids who will start. We will follow you throughout the year, we will come to visit you often, you can tell us your problems and we will try to help, we are here to give you our friendship and our support, but also to try and remove bad behavior together. You will learn a lot of useful things, which are called "social skills". The one that has no social skills says the wrong things at the wrong time and in the wrong way.

The tutor should observe carefully the **group dynamics within the class** (if they have already formed, or if there are groups of kids who come from the same schools). Here are some ...

United groups against each other, you immediately see them; united group with the exclusion of the "different"; chuckles and glances of understanding exchanged constantly: those are already a group;



glances and giggles turned to someone in particular: that is already a candidate victim; someone who scribbles on the desks, does not stand still for a moment, chews all the time, plays with the mobile phone, screams at one meter from the nearby mate ... Make him/her feel inadequate!

The tutor as a facilitator of change

Besides respecting people, an ok boy/girl also respects the things around him/her: neither of you goes home and starts smashing furniture and chairs, writing on the walls, throwing bottles and trash on the ground! Why, then, that should be done when away from home, at school or around? **The school and the city is our home: if we contaminate or smash it we will have an ugly home, where we won't like to live longer.**

You say: "but I do not do it! It is true, but there are those who do. Do you like it? If the answer is no, then try to locate them, starting with your family and from the big rubbish bins in the street, which are often dirtier outside than inside, tell them that you do not like what they do, offer your behavior as an example. Then, pass to friends. And here it is difficult, it requires courage. Alone, it is useless even to try, but if you are a group, things change and you can try to grow in number, collecting all those who cannot tolerate such behavior, but are loose. The world is full of correct people, but in my view they are a silent "army". That's the point. You do not hear them. They must search and find each other, and join. They will then be able to face the minority that is destroying the earth!



You throw away the tissue after a single blow of the nose? You do not reuse the back of the paper after printing? You do not use recycled paper? Think how many trees are sacrificed for these thy small daily choices! You let gallons of water lost while you soap or you brush your teeth? A shower of a quarter of an hour consumes 150 liters of water, one of only 5 minutes 50. You forget the light on as you get ready? Turn off the lights when you do not need them, you save energy. The car: why not take public means of transport or even move your stiffed legs, seen that Terni suffocates under car exhaust gases (about 70 cars per 100 inhabitants) and fine particles? And so on, there are thousands of small everyday actions that can help save a piece of

land. **Do not be afraid to bring yourself as a promoter of change:** remember that plastic bags were removed from the action of a woman who, disgusted after watching a documentary where you could see the agony of a fish suffocated by a plastic bag, returned to her home in England, raised her country against their use, followed within a year by the entire United Kingdom, then by the entire Europe, including us! To stay within the local environment, **one of our students, Martha, with the support of Terni USP, in 2009 promoted the activation of the project Eco schools' net in schools, which has so far allowed the separate collection of 20,471 Kg of paper, 2,701 pounds of plastic and 1,909 pounds of glass and aluminum!**

More: 1 in 4 young between 15 and 29 years in Europe die from alcohol, the first risk factor for disability, premature mortality and chronic illness in young people. For what? For being the center of attention in the peer group, making new friends, conquering the opposite sex, overcoming insecurity, boredom, inability to be original and funny! Same thing for the smoke: it is trendy at first, then you cannot control it anymore, and down, another form of slavery! What about food: the majority of students plunges on machines which provide generous and fattening junk intoxicants based on palm oil (Palm Oil: two little pieces of news: second in the world use by millions of tons -43 year -present in all snacks and sweets, generically referred to as vegetable oil. It is one of the "new monsters" that help to destroy the planet, to create plantations of coconut trees 2.8 billion of rainforest a year are



PEER2PEER TUTORING

burned, with the emission of huge amounts of carbon dioxide, the destruction of the ecosystem and the elimination of many rare species of animals). Why not stop consuming these products? Read labels carefully and take them off the shopping list! It is the consumer that makes the market! The companies just want to know what you like to consume and will adapt quickly to new trends. If you do not want to find yourself in that 25% of boys (1 in 4!) who then kill themselves on diets or enter the tunnel of anorexia and binge eating, throw away chips, snacks, sodas and various appetizers, do 15 minutes of morning exercise, move your little legs more and consume a healthy diet of fruits, vegetables, wholemeal carbohydrates and protein! Easy, isn't it? Why not try? You become more beautiful, less yellow, more sports and healthy looking; last, but not least, the brain runs better and faster!














All this is summed up in a list of dos and donts.
Why don't you help us enrich it with your ideas?
















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Social skills and fairness

DOs

-  Establish a relationship of solidarity, support each other", "defend him/her from abuse," help, encourage
-  Praise the shy and insecure, highlighting his skills in some areas ("come on, you can make it" "you are strong")
-  See positive aspects of your mates you usually do not take into account
-  Say positive things about others' behavior(I am pleased when someone points out my positive characteristics!
-  Change the "point of view": "put oneself in the shoes" and try to understand what others can feel
-  Join all classmates, not only some
-  Activate forms of tutoring (invite a friend in trouble with homework, help him/her prepare for a test
-  Keep your views respecting those of others, speaking one at a time: watch the television talk shows, do not they look all crazy? They think that talking together helps to understand what is said?
-  Acknowledge one's strengths but also one's limits. And then, when you became big pushing another, what have you got?
-  Stay calm, say your opinion and maintain it with ease
-  Act independently, pull out your personality: I don't like to drink, why should I do it just to be accepted in the group? I do not like to go around and scream in the street, break or destroy things just to show how courageous I am! Nice courage, this!
-  Negotiate effective solutions in conflicts with peers and teachers
-  Respect the school's facilities, they are also yours, if you spoil them, you will have an ugly and sad school!

DONTs

-  Attack others and take their things with the force, (Would I like it if I were stolen my phone? Would I be happy if I had my pencease always destroyed?)
-  Tease classmates for their physical or behavioral difficulties (Would I love if they did it to me?)
-  Highlight downsides (Would I like it if one said in front of all difficulties or defects that I may not have?)
-  Consider only their point of view: there are no others! (Would I like it if people did it to me?)
-  Aggregate only welcome companions, isolating the others (Would I like it if people ignored me?)
-  think only of myself and my profit, hold me tight and do not give my notes to anyone
-  Stop the others preventing them share their ideas (try to start saying something and fail for two, three, four times to speak! Is it pleasant?)
-  Devaluate others and their ideas using expressions like: "You do not understand anything" "you shut up
-  Boast continuously (how boring it is to hear someone who knows all!)
-  Keep calm for a little (and then say that teachers "go out of their mind"!)
-  passively suffer the influence of others (such as "do they throw themselves into the river and can not swim? I'm doing it, too so I may be accepted "
-  cause conflicts between classmates and teachers ("I put in a bad light Tizio to put me out" ... what a nice person I am!)
-  spoil toilets, throw litter and more on the floor, throw paper and cigarette ends on the school yard pavement ...

10 GOOD REASONS FOR BECOMING A TUTOR

I belong to a group in which there are unwritten rules: if you do this you are ok, otherwise you're not worth anything. Like: we make a party, what party is it if you do not drink? If you do not drink you have no fun. After all, I do not like so much drinking, that is, there and then I'm fine, but then I do not know that I say, I bubble myself out, I vomit. It almost makes me feel sick! Yet, I do it not to be cut off, because I feel in the group. I do not like it, I wish we could have fun in a different way, but I do not know how (Luca, 15 years old).

In my school life I have suffered behaviors I did not like by my schoolfellows and it made me sick, had an impact on my personality, making me fearful and mistrustful. Why is it necessary to assert their own personality at the expense of another? What right do you have to hurt me? (Francesca, 15 years)

In my school life I have been bullied and teased by my companions and I have been wounded and weakened: I see that a few people who have had the same thing do it in turn to others as a sort of revenge for what they had to endure. I do not want to, I understand that, if you do so, things always get worse. (Mark, 14 years old)

I would like my class to be like a group of friends who share wins and losses, good times and bad ones. Now we're all together, when the school will end it will be difficult even to meet for a pizza every now and then, I will miss them. My brother could not wait to get out of school. Now he regrets it. Why not think to continue to stay together even after? True friendships are resistant to everything! (Leonardo, 17 years old)

The school is also mine: if it is ugly and dirty, I do not like it. (Cynthia, 16 years old)

Smoking is prohibited by law: here at school, tired of the tricks that the students use to smoke they invented everything, but nothing: there are the usual ones who believe themselves clever and thanks to them we have to ask for the key each time you go to the toilet return it the exit! (Simone, 18 years)

I do not smoke, I go to the toilet and I suffocate from the smell; but why should I suffer that? (Loretta, 15 years old)

I smoke, I go into the bathroom and suffocating from the smell, even though I do not bother. But I think, and that to which it bothers who thinks? And must undergo enough, does not seem right. Especially small ones, is even worse. (Katia, 17 years old)

Would you like to add another reason to the list? Communicate your thoughts with other guys?
Throw them down as you like and take them to the group.
We need them to grow up!

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Write to us: go to the website, among the menus on the right click on
TUTORS 'BLOG
Or, send your message to:
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