
Helping with Homework

Concentrate on how to read directions.

Show your mentee how to break multi-step directions into segments. Many times students do not do well on homework assignments simply because they do not understand the directions.

Think about the process as well as the product.

The product is the finished homework. The process is how the answers or solutions were derived. For as many times as seems appropriate, ask the students how they came up with the right answers. This will help reinforce the process they used. If the students got the answer wrong, ask them to explain their reasoning, then offer a positive alternative by saying, "I understand what you were thinking. Let's try looking at it another way."

Find out the teacher's policy on homework.

Some teachers think of homework as an opportunity for independent practice and then look at students' mistakes to see if further instruction is necessary. Be clear about the teacher's use of homework and whether or not you should correct your student's work.

Avoid doing the work for your mentee.

Sometimes this might be a real temptation. It is certainly a good idea to demonstrate how to solve problems or work together with your learners to understand key concepts. However, completing the assignment independently will not only help the students learn, but they will feel a sense of pride in doing the work on their own.

Remember: When students take a test in class, you will not be there to help.

E/M/H