**Optional Module 6 – Reflection Essay**

Individual tutoring

How would you **characterize and compare** the three situations shown in the case-video? What are the challenges in these situations that our learning assistant Mike is struggling with?

In the first part of video many things are transparent. For example, the tutor does not seem interested in guiding, only instructing. He also sets the mood for the discussion by not smiling. This is important, and as mentioned in the research paper, the role of emotions is crucial when tutoring. A third important issue is that the tutor does not serve questions that are in line with conversational turn management as the questions does not make room for discussions, hence, the tutor is highly directive. The questions are also phrased in a way that make it difficult for the student to show that he does not know what the tutor just went through. “Do you understand this” is never a good way to check if the student knows what the tutor just went through. Hence, an illusion of knowledge transfer is created and an illusion of feedback accuracy is present.

In the second part of the video the tutor is what most people would recognize as a better tutor. Mike smiles at the start and sets the tone of the conversation already there. He also utilizes Socratic tutoring by asking questions and use the power of silence to his advantage as the student is mostly talking. By asking the right type of questions such as “Do you know how to proceed from here” he forces the student to talk and to create a plan for himself. It becomes very clear that Mike acts as a learning assistant and not an instructor when he lets the student try to make the change when he explains the subjects. All in all, a good example of reciprocal learning and how it serves as a good way to tutor students.

In the third part of the video the student is more challenging. The student expects Mike to act as a person that will just tell him the answer. That is not the job of a student assistant. It is also Mike’s fault as he creates an illusion of grounding by not being tough enough on getting the student to understand what we are dealing with. This is an example of how some type of help might not be the best for all students. As the student refrains from talking about the subject he might possibly know less than he says he does, and by Mike not grabbing the problem by the root he ends up with a student that probably has more questions than he did before he came to Mike.

When comparing the three it becomes apparent that not all teaching methods are for everyone. In the second part of the video, asking socratic questions worked great, however, in the third part of the video the same approach did not lead to the same result. It is a mutual understanding, and it is important that both parts act accordingly. However, it starts with the student assistant. He is even more responsible for detecting the problems that lie beneath and for setting the mood of the conversation.