Peer Tutor Advice/Guidelines

You will be a peer tutor working with students who are learning English, most of whom have recently arrived in this country.

You, in effect, will be working with Mr. Ferlazzo as a “co-teacher.” You can have a huge impact on helping students in class improve their lives, and you can develop important teaching skills that can benefit you personally and professionally in the future. Being able to list “peer tutor” on a job or college application can also benefit you.

You will NOT be a typical “Teaching Assistant” (TA). You will not be filing papers or running errands.

You will TEACH.

It’s not an exaggeration to say that most - though not all - students over the years have loved doing this work. If you decide, however, that peer tutoring is not for you, just let Mr. Ferlazzo know and he’ll arrange for you to be moved to a different class.

Here are some things to keep in mind as you work as a peer tutor:

1. Relationships are everything! Get to know students you will be working with. Take time periodically to learn about their lives, interests, goals, and concerns. Ask them to show images on their phone to you of their families, friends, and of their home country. If you feel comfortable doing so, share your images, too. If you speak their home language, iit will be easy to have these types of conversations. If you don’t, using Google Translate, a bilingual dictionary, or pantomiming works, too.
2. You’ll be working with some students individually and some students in small groups. We’ll have to see how it goes, but you will likely be working regularly with the same students. Here are some activities you’ll be doing with them:

Having them read a paper or online book to you, where you can be encouraging and help them with pronunciation and comprehension.

Practice conversations. We have a conversation “cheat sheet” with many typical questions and answers that you can role-play.

Teach and practice academic vocabulary. We’ll be learning higher-level words used in school work and putting them into sentences.

Helping students complete work in the textbook. Remember, you are *teaching*, not just giving answers. When students write down answers, ask them to explain why they think that’s the answer.

Helping students write sentences - either about pictures or about text. If they write something that might not be correct, try first pointing to the error with your finger, and asking them to think about why that’s wrong. This way, they have an opportunity to fix it without your giving them the answer.

Using flashcards with students. We have lots of boxes filled with images on one side and the word describing it on the other.

Playing games, including the many English-learning board games we have in the cabinets.

1. Try to keep track of your students’ strengths and challenges, and look for opportunities to build on their strengths and help them with their weaknesses - where do they need more practice, for example. There will be plenty of times when you can decide what you and your student(s) want to work on.
2. Help Mr. Ferlazzo be a better teacher by offering him feedback on what seems to be working and not working in class, and sharing ideas you have for activities.