# Table of Contents

**Section I: General Peer Mentor Responsibilities and Information**
- Sample Fall Syllabus ........................................ 4
- General Contractual Responsibilities .......... 9
- Discussing Your Peer Mentoring Experiences: Keeping a Log ............. 12
- Semester Wrap-Up ............................................. 13
- What it Means to be a Mentor ................. 14
- Skills for Effective Mentors ................. 15
- Confidentiality and Ethics .................... 17
- Common Issues for Students ................. 18
- Challenges You May Encounter ............. 20

**Section II: The Peer Mentors’ Guide to Peer Mentoring**
*The information contained in this section was supplied exclusively by First-Year Experience Peer Mentors.*
- Being a Peer Mentor ................................. 22
- Skills Used as a Peer Mentor .................. 23
- Classroom Experiences ......................... 25
- Connecting with Your Students ............. 28
- Excursions .............................................. 30
- Your Instructor and You ......................... 32
- Handling Stress ....................................... 33
- Peer Mentor Experiences: The Good and the Bad ................. 34
- Ice Breakers ......................................... 37

**Section III: Important Information**
- FYE/FYR 314 Contacts .......................... 43
- Student Resources ................................. 44
Section I
General Peer Mentor Responsibilities and Information
EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

FYR 314: Peer Mentor Seminar

Dates: Alternate Mondays beginning Sept. 8
Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Location: Goddard 100,220

Chris Drewry, Assistant Director, Academic Services Center — Academic Component (FYI 100)
Office: J. Eugene Smith Library Room 109A (1st Floor Advising Center)
Phone: (860) 465-5196
Email: drewryc@easternct.edu

Office hours may vary. Feel free to stop by, but if you want to make sure I’m there, call or send an email.
Within the context of this course, you will be trained as a First-Year Experience Peer Mentor. In a classroom/seminar setting, you will develop skills in leadership, student development, academic development, and community building. Additionally, you will be followed as these skills are applied in your First-Year Experience's FYI 100 course.

**Required Reading**

“A Guide For Peer Mentors: Fall 2014”

“Tips for presenting” (will be handed out in class)

**Course Requirements**

1. **Attendance, preparation, and participation**: This class will be a very hands-on and active learning environment. Attendance and participation in class discussions and activities are crucial to your success in this course.

2. **Keeping a Log**

   **New Peer Mentors**: You will keep a log of all of your mentoring activities. Refer to page 12 in the Peer Mentor Manual for details regarding keeping this log and handing it in electronically.

   **Returning Peer Mentors**: A detailed log will not be required for all the classes. Alternatively, you will submit a brief accounting of your classroom activities. This would include such things as speakers, what you did, field trips, walking tours, etc. This can simply be a list. If something very interesting happened in your class, you can give a brief written account of it. Refer to page 12 in the Peer Mentor manual for details about handing it in electronically.

   *Note: The last entry in each log will be from the last FYI 100 class you attended prior to the submission date. Thus, some logs will have more entries than others. You can submit your log any time between the last entry date and the submission date. No logs will be accepted after the submission date.*

**Submission Dates for Logs**:

- **Log 1**: Monday, 9/15
- **Log 2**: Monday, 9/29
- **Log 3**: Monday, 10/13
- **Log 4**: Monday, 10/27
- **Log 5**: Monday, 11/10
- **Log 6**: Final log and Semester Summary, last day of class (12/1)

3. **Semester Summary**: This is due on the same date as your final log. Write about your experience as a peer mentor. It should be no longer than two pages, double-spaced. There are two things I would like you to incorporate into this summary. Do you believe you have made a difference in the lives of your mentees? What have you gained from being a peer mentor?
4. **Desire to learn and have an open mind:** Peer mentors are expected to grow and develop through this leadership process. Honest self-assessment will be an integral part of the course. Oral discussions of your log entries will be the cornerstone of your learning experience. Peer mentors are expected to approach their work with an open mind and to be respectful of others.

5. **Final Assignment:** To be Determined

Additional details will be made available over the course of the term.

**Evaluation**

**FYI 100 Instructor Input:** Determines 35% of your total grade

**FYI 314 Instructor Input:** Determines 65% of your total grade. Grades will essentially be based on your class participation, log entries, semester assignments, and attendance.

The 65% of the total grade will be based over the following percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage/Points</th>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Specific Evaluation Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 25%               | Participation and attendance. | 5%: Module discussion  
10%: Attendance  
10%: Participation |
| 25%               | Logs.               | 15%: Overall quality  
10%: Final reflection |
| 15%               | Final Assignment.   | 15%: Overall quality |

Your final grade will be determined by combining your FYI 100 instructor’s input with your FYR 314 instructors’ evaluation to come up with a final percentage. Grades will be assigned as shown in the table below. A range includes “−” and “+” grades where appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A range</td>
<td>90 – 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B range</td>
<td>80 – 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C range</td>
<td>70 – 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D range</td>
<td>60 – 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F range</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Class Schedule
All Classes begin in Goddard 100 on Mondays, at 7 PM and end at 9 PM
Note: The class will “randomly” be split for peer mentor log discussions.

September 8: First Class Meeting: Overview and Communication
   Introduction and Power Point Presentation
   Keys to Communication Training

   Assignments for next class meeting:
   Review all Power Point Presentations.
   Read Tips on Presenting and post one personal tip for presenting on the discussion board.
   Prepare your first log and include an analysis of a communication style you have used as a peer mentor after the communication training. (Due: Monday, September 15th)

September 22: Second Class Meeting: Leadership and Tips on Presenting
   Introduction
   Leadership discussion and activity
   Discussion of peer mentor logs

   Assignments for next class meeting:
   Prepare your second log and include an analysis of the ways in which you have been acting as a leader as a peer mentor (Due: September 29th).

October 6: Third Class Meeting: Conflict Resolution
   Introduction
   Conflict Resolution role playing.
   Discussion of peer mentor logs.

   Assignments for next class meeting:
   Write your third log and include an example of a conflict you have had to help resolve as a peer mentor (Due: October 13th)

October 20: Fourth Class Meeting: Advising and Registration
   Advising, Registration, and LAC Discussion
   Discussion of peer mentor logs

   Assignments for next class meeting:
   Prepare your fourth log (Due: October 27th)
November 3: Fifth Class Meeting
To be determined
Discussion of peer mentor logs

Assignments for next class meeting
Prepare your fifth log (Due: November 10th)

November 17: Sixth Class Meeting
To be determined
Log discussion.

Assignments for next class meeting:
Prepare your final log and Semester Summary (Due: December 1st)
Complete the final assignment (Due: December 1st)

December 1: Final Class Meeting and semester wrap up (see page 12): Johnson Community Room on the second floor of the Library
Final Log and Semester Summary Due
Final Assignment Due on Friday, December 5th.

Note: If a meeting day must be cancelled for some reason (e.g., snow), we will meet on the next possible open Monday evening. During the latter half of the semester, our discussions on your own experiences in the classroom will occupy more of our classroom time. You should also expect to engage in “additional discussions” as new issues develop during the course of the semester.
Peer Mentor Policies and Responsibilities – General Information.

Peer mentors will receive an hourly wage for participating in the spring training session (see below). All peer mentors must be enrolled in FYR 314 Peer Mentor Seminar. You should not register for FYR 314 on your own. All peer mentors will be registered “administratively” by the program director.

All Peer Mentors Accepted into the First-Year Experience Must Agree to AND Participate in the Following:

1. Attend a three-hour peer mentor training session on Saturday, April 25, 2015 from 9 AM to 12 AM in the Library’s Johnson Room.
2. Contact your FYI 100 faculty member before the end of the Spring semester. Arrange for a meeting at which will confer with your FYI 100 faculty member in selecting a mutually agreeable time for you to attend your FYI 100 class.
3. Enroll in the two-credit FYR 314 Peer Mentor Seminar, a course that has two components, coursework and your performance as an FYI 100 peer mentor. The coursework component will meet every other Monday evening from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. during the Fall semester. You will not schedule anything during the Fall 2015 semester on Mondays during this class time.

This course is designed to continue to provide you with the peer mentoring skills required to help new students become proficient in using the academic and support resources of the university. Topics such as critical thinking, academic honesty, facilitating class discussions, leadership skills, navigating the campus and local community, making use of library resources, and promoting a culture of mutual respect in and out of the classroom will be the core of the mentoring course. This class will offer peer mentors a forum to discuss and assess their individual successes and problems as mentors. Assignments may include the following:

- Assigned readings followed by classroom discussion
- Reflective essays to be created throughout the semester as a way to record experiences, mentoring, teaching, and working with instructors
- An end of the semester project
- New and returning peer mentors may be assigned tasks/projects based on experience
The other FYR 314 course component is based on your performance as a mentor.

4. You will have a weekly planning meeting with your FYI 100 faculty member.
5. FYI 100 is a 3-credit course and will generally meet more than once a week. You will meet with your FYI 100 class for one continuous 50-minute period each week.
6. You will meet with your students at least twice during the semester outside of the classroom. This will require active organization.
7. You will attend at least two outside of class activities. It is expected that you will accompany your class on a field trip if one is taken.
8. You will involve your class in campus cultural activities. You will encourage your students to join clubs and involve themselves in various campus activities such as University Hour and the Arts and Lecture series presentations.
9. You will uphold all the rules and regulations of the University, including academic integrity, in order to serve as a role model for your first-year students.
10. You will maintain strict confidentiality about information shared between you and your students.
11. You will work as a team with your FYI 100 and FYR 314 instructors, mentees and fellow mentors. You will respect and consider the opinions of all team members.
12. You will maintain the relationship of mentor to all your mentees.
13. You will give PowerPoint presentations to your FYI 100 class on a variety of topics such as registration, advising, time management, etc. You will give a quiz for each PowerPoint presentation.  
14. Your FYR 314 instructor in consultation with your FYI 100 course instructor will determine your grade for FYR 314.
At each FYR 314 meeting, a varying amount of time will be spent discussing everyone’s peer mentoring experiences. To get the most out of these discussions, you must be prepared. To be prepared for class, you are required to keep a log of your experiences.

**New Peer Mentors**

You will be keeping written computer logs of your experiences as a peer mentor. This will include your FYI 100 and FYR 314 classroom experiences as well as any personal dealings with your peers.

**Returning Peer Mentors**

A detailed log will not be required. Alternatively, you will submit a brief accounting of your classroom activities. This would include such things as speakers, what you did, field trips, walking tours, etc. This can simply be a list. Additionally, if something very interesting happened in your class, you can give a brief written account of it.

**For All Peer Mentors**

Bring an up-to-date printout of your log covering the preceding two-week period to each FYR 314 class. These will be used as a basis for our classroom discussions.

Each set of log entries will be submitted electronically on Blackboard as a Word document. The mechanism for submitting all assignments will be given to you at a future time. There will be a total of 6 submissions during the course of the semester. Be sure to check your most recent syllabus for those due dates. So that each log page is consistent, please follow these guidelines in writing your log entries:

- Use Times New Roman font
- 12 pt font size
- Double spaced
- One inch margins
- Use the following header at the top of each page:
  
  Your Name
  
  FYI 100ADVR Instructor’s Name
  
  Log Covering: mm/dd/yy to mm/dd/yy
  
  __ Page of __ Pages

Ideally, you would record your classroom experiences and your thoughts about those experiences. Feel free to discuss your interactions with your FYI 100 and FYR 314 instructors if you feel comfortable in doing so. Your log should also discuss interactions you’ve had with your students as a class and individually. For individual interactions, you would never identify a student by name. You can refer to them as student A, B, C etc. Since your interactions with a given student could last for several weeks, be consistent in your student reference designations. For your own purposes, you may want to keep a version of your log that actually has the names of the students with whom you have interacted. This will help you keep track of what you had discussed with them. There is no particular length for the logs. Write as much as you think is necessary to tell your story.
The FYI 100 course concludes at the end of the Fall semester with a pizza party and an awards ceremony. Here are some of the things you will be doing at our last meeting:

- Receiving awards to honor your participation.
- Providing a personal reflection on your peer mentor experience.
- Having a group photo taken.
As Peer Mentors in the First-Year Experience you have the unique opportunity to potentially change someone’s life. As you may recall the transition from high school to college was not without its bumps and challenges. Some of you may have had someone there to help you and others maybe not.

Peer Mentors assist First-Year Experience faculty within their course and serve as advocates for the needs, interests, and rights of first-year students. The mentors will be involved in aspects of FYI 100 course instruction including syllabus planning, facilitating class discussions, and spending out-of-class time with students.

The peer mentor role can include organizing social events, helping students connect with student groups on campus and explaining academic advisement and registration procedures.

“Every kid needs a mentor. Everybody needs a mentor.”
~ Donovan Bailey
Many skills are vital for mentors to develop in order to perform and serve their students effectively. Overall, your job is to help your mentees make the transition from high school life to college life. In some cases you will deal with issues related to academics, but as your relationship grows with your students, they may come to you with issues of a more personal nature. These issues will often have an impact on their success as a student. The most important thing to remember in any situation is that you’re not a counselor. Know your limits. Sometimes the best way you can help others is by referring them to someone else with more experience. (e.g., your FYI 100 instructor, Chris Drewry)

**Keys to Success**

- Ask open-ended questions
- Attend and respond to both content and feeling
- Let the student solve the problem
- Refer to/use your resources
- Try self-disclosure if possible
- Have Fun
- Be Positive

**Ask open-ended questions**
Any question that elicits a “yes/no” answer won’t be as helpful as a “what, when, how, who” question. “Why” questions seem like they would get more information, but keep in mind that they can sometimes imply criticism and cause defensiveness (i.e., “Well, why didn’t you go to all the study sessions?”).

**Attend and respond to both content and feeling**
Often there are two things going on at once – there is an issue, and the person has some kind of feeling or reaction to that issue. You need to attend to and respond to both. Consider this: “I’m so mad about my Chem test!” What is the content? (Performance on the Chem test) What is the feeling? (Anger) It’s important to attend to both. Remember that issues presented to you could have some underlying themes and might even be symptoms of a larger problem.

**Let the student solve the problem**
It’s easy to want to try to solve things for people, but that’s not really as helpful as it might seem. Usually, the student knows the answer or knows how to solve the problem but just needs someone to ask the right questions and encourage their processing.

**Refer to/use your resources**
You are not a trained counselor. Don’t expect yourself to be. But know your resources (Counselors, RA’s, your FYI 100 and FYR 314 instructors, the Academic Advising Center, the student’s academic advisor, etc.) and help people make use of those individuals and services. It’s OK to say, “I don’t know,” as long as you get the information for the person.
Try self-disclosure if possible
Tell the student about your own experience. This is useful as long as it’s helpful to the person and not just a story. “I was in a similar situation and I did this which helped,” vs. “I was in that situation, too, and it sucked and no one helped me and blah, blah, blah.” How helpful was that? Not at all!

Have fun together
The opportunity to have fun is one of the great benefits of being a mentor. Having fun and sharing it with peers carry great weight and a meaning beyond a simple recreational outlet. It’s a chance to “blow off steam,” to relax or to try something new.

Be Positive
People who feel negatively about themselves tend to live down to their own self-image. Subsequently negativity tends to be contagious and your mood has the potential to affect an entire group of people. It is important to positive, supportive and approachable. Offer frequent expressions of direct confidence. Be encouraging even when talking about potentially troublesome topics and offer concrete assistance.

Communication Skills (will also be covered in FYR 314 class)

Listening: Fully participate in a conversation by being an active listener and utilizing some simple counseling skills such as reflecting, encouraging and asking questions. Be aware of how your body language can affect a conversation.

Observing: Be aware of how the student is presenting the message or ideas through body language and unspoken words.

Communicating: Be very clear in your presentation of facts and opinions.

De-centering: Try to understand what the student is saying, not by how you hear it, but in how they are approaching and thinking about what they are saying. Communicate with them in ways they will understand.

Personal Skills

Availability: Even if a student does not need to seek you out, they see you as being a helpful mentor when you are present and available to them. Let them know how they can reach you in case they need you in any way. Please provide your students with your email address.

Seeking: Seek students out, especially at the beginning of the year. Students are less likely to seek you out initially, so waiting for them to come to you may be wasted time. Set a precise day and time when you want the entire class to get together with you. Remember, this is something you agreed to do when you signed the Peer Mentor Contract (page 9).

Being an example: Students will observe you closely. Your role is one of responsibility. Make good decisions in what you say and how you act when you’re interacting with them. Be a friend but also remember that you are a role model.

Online Communication: Feel free to use any social media with which you are comfortable.
Confidentiality Considerations for the Peer Mentor

There must be a mutual understanding between the peer mentor and student that conversations are protected between the two of them. A bond of trust is formed when a student comes to share something with you. It is important that you give them your attention and ensure them, if possible, that what they tell you is kept in confidence.

Information shared between a mentor and student cannot always be confidential, however. In some specific instances, maintaining that bond of trust means that you need to share information with others. If a student discusses with you a situation that could result in self-harm or harm to others, it is your responsibility to report that information immediately to the appropriate persons. If the student has a condition that is beyond your ability to assist with (serious neurosis, alcohol, drug problems or depression), it is in the student’s best interest that you share that information as well.

**People with whom you can share information:**
- Your FYI 100 and FYR 314 Instructors

**People with whom you cannot share information:**
- Parents (because of privacy laws you should refer parents to the Coordinator of the First-Year Program)
- Significant others
- Friends and relatives
- Roommates
- Counselors, physicians, faculty other than those mentioned above (Note: Obviously, these are all people who might help the student. But, it will be up to your FYI 100 and/or FYR 314 instructors to provide information to these people about a student in your class)

Ethical Considerations for the Peer Mentor

As you perform your duties as a peer mentor, it is critical to understand and practice ethical behaviors. One reason you were selected for this position was because you possess the ability to establish strong rapport with students. The interpersonal skills that made you a prime candidate for the position can also place you in challenging situations. As you serve in your role, it is important to adhere to some guiding principles of the helping profession.

- Peer mentors will respect the autonomy and individual dignity of the students they serve.
- Peer mentors will avoid acting beyond the scope of the service for which they were selected and trained and not attempt to offer professional services requiring more extensive qualifications and training.
- Consult with your FYI 100 or FYR 314 instructors when you face a situation that makes you uncomfortable or when you experience a conflict or dilemma.
Many new students have similar adjustment challenges when they come to college. While everyone transitions differently to the new environment, there are some situations that are relatively common. Below are listed some issues you may encounter. Some may be beyond your abilities to offer definitive help. Should this ever be the case, refer the student to your FYI 100 instructor.

When assisting students with these issues, be sure that you utilize the resources available to you. Sometimes the most important pieces of information you can provide are the names/locations of others who are trained to assist students with these concerns.

### Personal challenges
- Moving to a new environment
- Leaving family
- Living with a roommate
- Meeting new people
- Doing new things
- Making personal decisions everyday

### Academic
- Scheduling/registering for classes
- Changing majors
- Grading policies/procedures
- Interacting with instructors
- What to do about missed classes or late assignments
- Questions about classes and what instructors to take, upcoming projects, class work, writing essays, and what to expect from instructors
- How to study / Test taking

### Other Issues
- Facing new peer pressures
- Intellectual/Academic challenges
- Speaking up in class
- Communicating with professors
- Developing semester course schedules
- Seeking academic assistance when problems arise
- Balancing academics and social life
- Dealing with stress
- Connecting with a new friendship group
- Managing conflict situations
- Choosing or changing a major
- Deciding on participation in internships and other work experiences
Time management is one of the adjustment issues with which first-year students are confronted when they come to college.

As a mentor, you will provide the most beneficial advice to your mentees in explaining how you handled the task of balancing all of your activities. A few steps to make time management simple include:

- **Set priorities** along with major goals that need to be accomplished within the next month, the next few weeks and the very near future.

- **Keep a log** of how you currently spend your time. This helps you identify time wasted, time that may be better used in other ways, etc.

- **Set priorities** along with major goals that need to be accomplished within the next month, the next few weeks and the very near future.

- **Keep a log** of how you currently spend your time. This helps you identify time wasted, time that may be better used in other ways, etc.

- **Keep a schedule** that lists activities that are going to occur each week (classes, work, meetings, tests, dues dates, etc.).

- **Make a list of assignments** due for each week and post it on your desk, near your computer or somewhere else prominent so you’ll see it many times during a day. Check things off as they are completed.

- **Get organized** so you can easily find supplies and resources when you need them. You should address the issue of time management throughout the semester.

### Troubleshooting Issues

There will be times when the students will come to you soliciting assistance for a number of issues. The following are just a few common issues and some suggested actions that you can take.

**Roommate Issues:** Before saying anything else, ask the student if they’ve discussed their problems/issues with their roommate. This is where the communication needs to be. If they haven’t, encourage them to do so. Suggest that they see their RA if the issue cannot be resolved.

**Academic Issues:** If a student is having academic problems, feel free to talk to them about what they’re going through and assist them in seeking assistance. If they need help with a particular course, advise them to first see the instructor. For tutoring, they can go to the Academic Services Center. Your role as a peer mentor does not include tutoring. Of course, if it is in a subject area in which you feel comfortable, it is not “against the rules” to offer academic help.

“A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself.”

~ Oprah Winfrey
There is no “standard” method that addresses all of the challenges you may encounter as a peer mentor. You must use your best judgment. During each FYR 314, time will always be allotted to discuss the challenges that you’re facing in your role as a mentor. If you are new to the Peer Mentor Program, you will find that the experienced peer mentors are one of your best sources for information and guidance. Listed below are just a few of things that you may face as potential challenges this semester.

**Challenges You May Encounter**

**Motivating/Encouraging**
- Getting students excited about school/activities
- Students not wanting to participate in planned activities
- Trying to make everyone happy
- Dealing with apathy
- Students not meeting expectations

**Role Perceptions**
- Being viewed as a teacher or parent
- Not being viewed as a peer
- Students wanting you to solve their problems
- Not being seen as an authority figure

**Time Issues**
- Getting students to show up for meetings
- Working with multiple schedules when trying to plan events
- Finding time to build relationships
- Balancing your own needs and activities with mentoring

**Miscellaneous Issues**
- Giving advice without personal morals/values getting in the way
- Confrontation issues
- Possible language barriers
- Breaking the ice
- Getting everyone involved
- Not being able to answer certain questions
- Not giving too much advice but empowering the student
- Reaching out to those who need assistance

“It’s wonderful to work with someone with mentor status.”
~ Madeleine Peyroux
Section II
The Peer Mentors’ Guide to Peer Mentoring
“Experience is the best teacher.”
*Quote is from the “Widow Bedott Papers” (1856) by Frances M. Whitcher

Please Note: Some of the suggestions given by the peer mentors in this section involve spending your own money on your students. We do not encourage you to do this.

*Interesting Note: Julius Caesar recorded the earliest version of this proverb, “Experience is the teacher of all things,” in “De Bello Civilli” (c. 52 BC)
Being a Peer Mentor

Good reasons to become a peer mentor
1. Meet new people.
2. Desire to help first-year students succeed and survive academically and socially on campus and helping them transition and feel more comfortable. (You have learned from your experiences, now teach them)
3. You want to help others and give back to the Eastern community.
4. You have ideas for the improvement of the FYE.
5. You were part of the FYP/FYE as an incoming student and feel it’s a valuable resource for new students.
6. To get experience giving lectures and helping to facilitate a course.
7. You wish to exercise and gain leadership skills.
8. You hope to meet new people including the first year students as well as the other peer mentors.
9. Gain a sense of responsibility and organization.
10. Get to positively impact freshmen’s college experience.
11. You can see what it would be like to be a teacher.
12. Contribute to ECSU’s campus.
13. Spread your knowledge and tips on how to succeed.

Bad reasons to become a peer mentor
1. Because it’s “something that looks good” on your resume.
2. To form friendships and nothing more. (Fill them in on where the best parties are on campus, where to get alcohol, etc.)
3. Just because you have the GPA
4. To feel in charge/power.
5. You feel obligated. This should be something fun not an obligation!
6. Pressure from friends, family or faculty members.
7. Because you need extra money and credits.
8. If you have a busy schedule, or know you feel overwhelmed when there’s a lot to do.
9. You’re hopeful that you will have a superior role over the first year students on campus.
10. Because your friends are doing it.
11. Just because you can.
12. To get “in” with a professor and/or to benefit yourself.

“If a man is to shed the light of the sun upon other men, he must first of all have it within himself.”
Romain Rolland
Skills Used as a Peer Mentor

Most useful skills: Peer Mentor

Applying skills within the classroom
1. Acting as a role model for students
2. Presenting important information
3. Showing students ways to get involved on campus
4. Providing students information about ways to develop their personal leadership abilities.
5. Prepare to deal with worst case scenario class
6. Critical thinking – assess your class, make suggestions to the professor
7. Creativity in lesson plans

Applying skills outside the classroom
1. Helping students get involved on campus
2. Acting as a role model for students
3. Meeting with students outside of class
4. Taking an interest in students' lives outside of class.
5. Being easily accessible to address any questions, comments or concerns that may arise.
6. Be familiar with the resources Eastern has to offer—if you can’t answer a question, find out where to direct the student to someone who can.
7. Be able to cope with rejection—just because the students are in your class does not mean they will want to attend your events.

1. Mature
2. Outgoing
3. Public Speaking
4. Social skills
5. Organizational skills
6. Event planning
7. Confidence
8. Determination
9. Clarity
10. Wisdom
11. Honesty
12. Reliable
13. Openness
14. Availability
15. Intuition
16. Trustworthiness
17. Responsible
18. Resourceful
19. Good listener
20. Creative thinking
21. Approachable/Personable
22. Respect for students, objectivity
23. Patience
24. Respect
25. Enthusiastic, energetic
26. Ability to relate to your students
27. Leadership
28. Time management
Things you can do to hone your skills

1. **During the Summer**
   - Collaborate with old and new peer mentors
   - Meet your professor
   - Plan future meetings with your professor and stay in contact
   - Familiarize yourself with campus and Willimantic community. (The resources)
   - Help with the syllabus. (Have your input be heard)
   - Know what will be going on and what you’ll need to prepare for in the coming semester
   - Brainstorm ways to reach out to students & how to involve them on campus
   - Surf the internet and read some of the literature on First-Year Experience
   - Brainstorm ideas about the upcoming year
   - Ask other mentors for help when you can—They have experienced a lot so turn to them for help.
   - If you believe in yourself and come into the year with a good mindset, you will be prepared.
   - Turn to the people that you consider a mentor and talk to them about what they have done.

2. **During the Semester**
   - Give lectures, organize trips, have individual meetings with students
   - Keep constant contact
   - Meet with your professor at least once a week. Go over lesson plans for class periods you’ll be in charge of. Utilize the advice and experience they have to share.
   - Always be up-to-date with the syllabus
   - Know yourself and run with your creativity
   - Talk in front of the class as much as possible – especially if you’re uncomfortable with it and want to become a better public speaker – this is an opportune setting to practice.
   - Practice time management well to make sure that you leave enough time to do the best job you can as a peer mentor.
   - Remember that you have something to offer to your students.
   - Talk to your students about what they’re getting from the class; take this into consideration to help shape future classes to be more effective.
   - You’ll learn/develop most of it as you go
   - Ask for feedback from students and professors
   - Talk with other peer mentors
   - Attend workshops that pertain to leadership, public speaking, teaching, etc. skills
   - Practice speaking in front of others
   - Apply for other leadership positions
   - During the semester it is important to confidently practice being professional and trying to serve as a leader in the classroom.
   - Talk to the FYI/FYE instructors if you need help. That is what they are there for!

“Leaders aren’t born, they are made. And they are made just like anything else, through hard work. And that’s the price we’ll have to pay to achieve that goal, or any goal.”

-Vince Lombardi
Classroom Experiences

Regular class interactions
1. Attend all of your classes, stay involved.
2. Try to get to know at least one thing about each student.
3. You will lecture during some classes.
4. Try to pick interesting speakers, if speakers are used.
5. Try to talk to the students at the beginning of class on a personal level. (Catching up about academics, social life, etc.)
6. Assist professors in running class. Pipe up when it’s necessary and/or relevant.
7. Take role, give announcements, encourage students to be involved on campus by suggesting activities and mentioning upcoming events.
8. Ask your professor if you can have 5-10 minutes with the students at the end of each class just to talk to them about anything they want to go over.
9. Hold open-ended discussions with the students and ask open-ended questions.
10. Tell the students about events that are occurring on campus (Weekly event announcements) and add your own comments on subjects that the professor talks about.
11. The students tend to have a lot of questions and love to hear about your college experiences. Answer truthfully, but don’t put yourself in an awkward situation.

“Tell Me and I forget.
Teach me and I remember.
Involve me and I learn.”
-Benjamin Franklin

Lecturing Experiences
1. Always pre-plan.
2. Talk/communicate with your professor.
3. Be knowledgeable in the topics you are presenting.
4. Respect the students’ intelligence.
5. Make a lesson plan and go over it with your professors. Constructive criticism can be very helpful.
6. Practice giving the lesson ahead of time by yourself so that when you give it in the classroom it will come more naturally.
7. Incorporate active learning, get the students involved somehow, find ways to incorporate their ideas or appeal to their interests, if possible.
8. Chill. It isn’t the end of the world if you stutter over a word, or if the conversation gets off track. Gently recover and guide attention back to the matter at hand. Try not to stress yourself out too much.
9. The more lecturing you do, the easier it will get.
10. Be ready for interruptions.
11. Prepare for silence and low participation.
12. Act confident even if you’re not.
13. Prepare handouts for the class to refer to during and after your lecture.
14. Make it interesting.
15. Ask yourself if the lesson would keep your attention.
16. Get good, beneficial feedback from the instructors.
17. When preparing for a lecture, you want to have a clear goal in mind of what you want your students to learn from it.
18. Keep your cool. The instructor will be in the classroom too if you run into difficulties.
19. Make sure you leave time for questions. These are freshmen who have no idea what college can be like.
Getting your students to attend on-campus activities

1. Pick fun and interesting activities students would enjoy.
2. Learn what your students are interested in and offer a variety of events or activities.
3. Go with them to events – have them find you, or meet you somewhere and walk to the event with you.
4. Invite them to the ones that you will be attending.
5. Tell them where they can get free stuff at events.
6. Share personal experiences about events that you have attended in the past.
7. Be encouraging, you don’t have to sugar-coat anything, but it’s okay to play up events you think they might benefit from.
8. Send email reminders or make announcements in class.
9. As an assignment, have the student find one event they think will be interesting to attend during the semester, have them tell you why (you can use this to recommend other events and to get students aware of what events Eastern offers)
10. There is only so much you can do about getting students to attend campus activities, do not stress yourself out.
11. You can make things mandatory, but people will still not attend.
12. Threaten to take attendance.
13. The extra credit offer works. Just make sure you ask the instructor.
14. Be persistent in asking the students. Also, make the activity seem worth it to them.
15. Ask the instructor before the semester starts to see if you can make it so the students have to attend a certain number of on campus events.

Use of incentives

1. Always get instructor permission before you utilize incentives.
2. You can give prizes for participation, involvement in campus activities, etc. (Ask your FYI 100 and FYR 314 instructors about fund availability).
3. Extra credit, a pass to skip a night’s homework, candy or a similar reward may be helpful.
4. Pizza party/Free breakfast
5. Sometimes incentives work and sometimes they do not.
6. Students usually understand why you use incentives so they could backfire.
7. Do not use them too much because they may be taken advantage of.
Positive class interactions

- Getting to know the students
- Having students ask a lot of questions makes you feel good as a peer mentor. It’s validation that you are helping them out and doing your job.
- Students who really listen, take advantage of something you offered (when they attend activities outside of class, for example)
- Class discussions can be really fun; it’s interesting to hear the different points of view of the students.
- During each class the students get to know and trust you more and more which is a really good feeling.
- The “ah-ha!” look when the light bulb has turned on for students
- Sharing a sense of community
- Having the students participate in the lectures that you lead
- Being able to encourage students to participate in your lecture or the professor’s
- Being able to add comments to what the teacher says and be able to answer student questions.
- The students approaching you after class to talk about the class.
- The students coming to you without you having to pull it out of them is one of the greatest feelings because then you know that you are a role model.

Negative class interactions

- When students talk about very personal conversations (parties, getting drunk)
- Falling asleep (clearly not interested)
- Negative attitudes to speakers, professor, peer mentor
- Do not let them walk all over you, respect is necessary
- Hard to engage students, and sometimes feels like you’re not being heard
- Perhaps professor will forget to include you or not know how to use a peer mentor to the best advantage of the class
- Sometimes students might not take your role seriously so you really need to make that clear in the beginning as to what exactly your role is
- Or professor overrides your presentation and/or comments
- Poor attendance
- Poor participation
- Disrespect during a presentation
- Interruptions
- The students not willing to meet outside of class either in a group or individually.
- The students are not willing to do all of the assignments for the FYI class and make that very well known.

“I think kids should have a mentor and a role model, but that they shouldn't take one person’s opinion to be what we call final assessment or judgment about how life is supposed to be.”
~ Sean Paul
Connecting With Your Students

**Things you can do outside the classroom**

1. Plan events outside of the classroom. This is a chance for the students to see you other than at the front of the classroom.
2. Email to keep in touch, more comfortable than telephone.
3. FYR contact list
4. Say hello when you pass them, know their names.
5. Attend activities that you may not have planned. You may see a few students also attending them.
6. Individual meetings with students to get feedback or to touch base
7. Plan to go to an on campus event together like a sporting event or show
8. Organize meetings – hold study groups, or have a “homework party.” Treat your students to donuts and coffee and have a little social, etc.
9. Have lunch with them at the dining hall
10. Be persistent by telling your students that you are there to help them by sharing what you have learned through your experiences in college.

**Things you can do in the classroom**

1. Try to get about ten minutes of time in front of the class each week to communicate with your students
2. Without the professor, the last 10 minutes of the period may be difficult. The students will not want to pay attention, get out early, etc.
3. Constantly remind them that you were once in the same position.
4. Remind them you are there for them to ask questions/advice.
5. Ask a ton of questions to encourage them a great deal to talk.
6. Interactive/active learning
7. Insert anecdotal stories
8. Become part of the class when doing activities/listening to a speaker. (remind them you are also a student)
9. Ask questions of the speaker as well. This will get the students engaged.
10. Take time to check in with the students. See if they’re willing to talk in a classroom setting.
11. Anticipate what events and resources might be of interest to them, or that they might find beneficial.
12. Make sure there’s time for the students to ask questions about lecture/presentation material or general questions about the university.
13. Take attendance to learn their names.
14. Lead discussions.
15. Share personal experiences.

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

-Bernard Shaw
(Nobel Prize Winner)
What worked?

1. Announcements during class time
2. Emails (actually responded)
3. Facebook (groups, events, messaging, etc.—actually received them)
4. Outside of the classroom activities (for those who actually attended)
5. Individual meetings helped in getting to know the students personally, and learning something about them.
6. Study groups really worked both in getting to know them and getting them to trust you and respect your position more. (Note: Mentors are not required to do study groups. They are neither encouraged nor discouraged as a way to connect with your students.)
7. Stopping to chat on campus
8. If you see the students outside of the classroom, it is good to talk to them and not just blow by them because they know who you are.
9. Learning names
10. Sharing personal experiences
11. You need to show interest in the students’ personal and academic lives, but don’t be so pressing as to make them feel uncomfortable.
12. Just be yourself, the students don’t need a super student as a Peer Mentor – they need someone like you!
13. If you still have trouble making connections, have the students meet you outside of class and just talk to them person to person, not necessarily Peer Mentor to student.

What didn’t work?

1. Activities outside of class that are lectures or speeches. These do not give you the chance to talk with your students.
2. Some on-campus events because everyone has different schedules and not everyone could meet.
3. Offering to attend events with them if there are not incentives
4. Being too nosey when it comes to the students’ lives.
5. Do not try to be someone you are not. There are people that will like you for being you.
Field Trip Pointers
1. Be energetic, get the students excited to go
2. Pick a location that may be relevant to their cluster material
3. Go places that are interesting and fun.
4. Go to places where you can interact with the students
5. Make sure everyone stays at destination, explain the importance and seriousness of the trip (they are expected to be there, not to be taken casually)
6. Remind students about the trip (multiple times)
7. Make sure students know if they have to bring anything
8. Carefully consider assignments attached to field trips: What is the purpose of the trip? Will the assignment add to or subtract from this purpose?
9. Start planning early
10. Doesn’t need to be completely focused on academics
11. Make sure you do not plan anything too big because there is a limited budget.

Excursions

Interesting places to go nearby
1. On campus “mini-trips” to learn about different services on campus
2. Willimantic Main Street Café
3. Willimantic Food CO-OP
4. Academic Services Center
5. Akus Gallery
6. Intercultural Center
7. Willimantic Mill Tour
8. Women’s Center
9. Thread Factory
10. Museums
11. Plays
12. UCONN Dairy Bar
13. The Covenant Soup Kitchen
   220 Valley Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-1643
14. The Windham Arts Collaborative
   866 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 450-1794
15. The Windham Theatre Guild
   779 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-2245
16. 3rd Thursday Street Festival
   Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Every third Thursday, May-September
17. The Capital Theater
   896 Main Street Willimantic, CT

13. The Covenant Soup Kitchen
   220 Valley Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-1643
14. The Windham Arts Collaborative
   866 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 450-1794
15. The Windham Theatre Guild
   779 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-2245
16. 3rd Thursday Street Festival
   Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Every third Thursday, May-September
17. The Capital Theater
   896 Main Street Willimantic, CT

13. The Covenant Soup Kitchen
   220 Valley Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-1643
14. The Windham Arts Collaborative
   866 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 450-1794
15. The Windham Theatre Guild
   779 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-2245
16. 3rd Thursday Street Festival
   Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Every third Thursday, May-September
17. The Capital Theater
   896 Main Street Willimantic, CT

13. The Covenant Soup Kitchen
   220 Valley Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-1643
14. The Windham Arts Collaborative
   866 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 450-1794
15. The Windham Theatre Guild
   779 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-2245
16. 3rd Thursday Street Festival
   Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Every third Thursday, May-September
17. The Capital Theater
   896 Main Street Willimantic, CT

13. The Covenant Soup Kitchen
   220 Valley Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-1643
14. The Windham Arts Collaborative
   866 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 450-1794
15. The Windham Theatre Guild
   779 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-2245
16. 3rd Thursday Street Festival
   Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Every third Thursday, May-September
17. The Capital Theater
   896 Main Street Willimantic, CT

13. The Covenant Soup Kitchen
   220 Valley Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-1643
14. The Windham Arts Collaborative
   866 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 450-1794
15. The Windham Theatre Guild
   779 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-2245
16. 3rd Thursday Street Festival
   Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Every third Thursday, May-September
17. The Capital Theater
   896 Main Street Willimantic, CT

13. The Covenant Soup Kitchen
   220 Valley Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-1643
14. The Windham Arts Collaborative
   866 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 450-1794
15. The Windham Theatre Guild
   779 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-2245
16. 3rd Thursday Street Festival
   Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Every third Thursday, May-September
17. The Capital Theater
   896 Main Street Willimantic, CT

13. The Covenant Soup Kitchen
   220 Valley Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-1643
14. The Windham Arts Collaborative
   866 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 450-1794
15. The Windham Theatre Guild
   779 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-2245
16. 3rd Thursday Street Festival
   Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Every third Thursday, May-September
17. The Capital Theater
   896 Main Street Willimantic, CT

13. The Covenant Soup Kitchen
   220 Valley Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-1643
14. The Windham Arts Collaborative
   866 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 450-1794
15. The Windham Theatre Guild
   779 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-2245
16. 3rd Thursday Street Festival
   Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Every third Thursday, May-September
17. The Capital Theater
   896 Main Street Willimantic, CT

13. The Covenant Soup Kitchen
   220 Valley Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-1643
14. The Windham Arts Collaborative
   866 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 450-1794
15. The Windham Theatre Guild
   779 Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Phone: (860) 423-2245
16. 3rd Thursday Street Festival
   Main Street Willimantic, CT
   Every third Thursday, May-September
17. The Capital Theater
   896 Main Street Willimantic, CT
What worked?

- “Mini” field trips around the Willimantic community – you are able to learn the Willimantic community, erase the negative stigma, and will not lose their attention as easily.
- Great time to connect with students.
- Trip related to students’ interests and the cluster classes.
- Giving the students time to mingle on their own and explore together helps them to form bonds within the cluster, strengthening the learning community.
- Share transportation, go with another cluster.
- Trips with some down time
- A chance for students to get food if the trip was too long
- Coach buses for long rides
- Movies for the ride

What didn’t work?

- Assignments don’t always go over well/aren’t as effective as hoped. So again, carefully consider what work you give your students related to these trips.
- Telling the students that it’s not mandatory and not stressing that they go.
- Extremely academic based trips
- Having the students pay a lot for the trip
- Assigning lengthy assignments pertaining to the trip
Your Instructor and You

Meeting with you FYI 100 Instructor

- Meet regularly (weekly) to keep up-to-date with the professor. Even if it’s just for 15 minutes; these meetings can be extraordinarily helpful. Continue to politely bring them up if you find your instructor overlooking that aspect of the contract.
- Be productive and set goals.
- Frequent contact and updates by email
- Let them know when you are available, give them your contact information
- Have a plan, be on the same page
- Communication is key
- Respect each other and ideas
- Meeting also will help form a stronger friendship/bond/professional relationship.
- Use this time to voice what you’ve noticed about the students/class, to make suggestions or to voice concerns
- Always go over your lesson plan if you have to teach the class that week, this way your professor can give you constructive criticism
- Make sure you’re heard
- Be assertive but polite
- Make suggestions in a positive way
- Offer the students’ perspective
- Be available to meet at different times to accommodate their schedules when needed

Conflicts between Peer Mentors and a Professor

It can be difficult to work with a professor as both a student and a mentor. It is important for the professor to work with you and help you, and to help you meet your requirements as a peer mentor, without making you go too far beyond them. In conflicts between a mentor and their professor, you should:

1. Try e-mailing your professor or meeting with them before or after class to discuss the problem you are having with class.
2. Make sure you present the situation about how you feel about the situation, rather than accusing them of something. They may not realize they are going against the requirements of a peer mentor.
3. If the professor is not cooperative to meet with you, e-mail Dr. Levin to discuss the problem.

“Team work makes the dream work.”

-Sarah
Handling Stress

Types of stress you may encounter

- Not having enough time
- Classroom management
- Balancing school, family, a job, social life
- Feeling guilty about not doing enough for the students
- Time management (Procrastination stress, waiting to the last minute, etc.)
- End of the semester stress (Papers are due and final exams are approaching, etc)
- When students do not show up to your programs
- Overloading yourself (involved in too many activities, helping your students too much, need your own time)
- Academic stress (Staying on top of your own school work while still functioning as a peer mentor)
- Personal stress (Relationships, family-related, emotional, etc.)
- Work stress (If you have to balance a job, being a student and be a peer mentor all at once)
- Stress due to concerns for students who don’t seem to be thriving too well in college, or non-responsiveness/disinterest from students can be disheartening.
- Not knowing what to do with certain situations students may present to you
- Feeling too available to others and not available enough to yourself

How to help yourself deal with stress

1. Attack the schoolwork before it can accumulate. Do not procrastinate.
2. Be organized and prioritize
3. Invest in a day-by-day planner. Plot times for each thing into your schedule (social and academic). You will be well aware of assignments and not worrying about what’s coming next or finishing on time.
4. Always make time for something you enjoy, do something for yourself leave campus, go for a walk.
5. Create a plan and stick by it until the end
6. Find time to spend with friends and family
7. Make Checklists. Crossing things off equals a wonderful feeling of accomplishment
8. Talk to others about how you feel and how they handle their stress; share ideas
9. Don’t commit to too many things. Figure out what’s important to you, and make sure you have time to participate in the things you want to. It’s okay to say no
10. Learn to say NO when someone asks something of you but you already have a full plate.
11. Take time to just relax with yourself
12. Exercise
13. Spend time with friends
14. Meditate
15. Take a look at the big picture
16. Make a plan but be ready for things to change
17. Take naps but not too many!

“The fibers of all things have their tension and are strained like the strings of an instrument.”
- Henry David Thoreau
### Peer Mentor Experiences

#### Good Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I would have to rate my peer mentor experience as very high. Not only did I enjoy working with the students, but I enjoyed learning several new things about myself. I also learned several life skills that I can take with me that will make me a better person in the end. Because I enjoyed this experience so much, I have decided to return next year and become a peer mentor.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I feel that being a peer mentor did a lot for my self-esteem. In the beginning, I was shy at giving presentations and talking in front of a group of people. By the end of the semester, I became more comfortable with myself and my abilities as a leader. … This semester I was much happier because of the professor/peer mentor relationship I developed. My professor and I worked well together and he made me feel very important in the entire freshman mentor process.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I feel like I have grown a lot as a peer mentor and that peer mentoring has taught me how to present things better and more professionally, as well as how to converse (or deal with) different people. I feel almost older as if I have aged with experience. It feels very good. I am excited to return for another year of peer mentoring and hope I can further this learning experience for one more year before I graduate.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I was able to find the best way to approach the class when speaking so that they would listen to what I was saying and so that they would take the class seriously. From this class I also learned that it is okay to not always know the right answers and that there are many resources at Eastern that can help me find the answer. … I learned a lot from this experience because I found that it is not always easy to motivate students to do what they are supposed to do. Instead of just giving up I had to try a few different ways, such as offer an incentive, to encourage my students to participate.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Peer mentoring was extremely different from my experience as a peer mentor last year. Primarily, I believe that this year is true because I am more comfortable and confident in front of the classroom. Whereas last year I was nervous about my leadership position and overplanned in order to make sure everything was perfect (which inevitably it would not be), this year I was relaxed about my leadership position and was more flexible with my planning. … Due to this more relaxed state, I found myself enjoying my classes more. I was not nervous about attending the class and having to present; I was not anxious to stand in front of a classroom of 25 students.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“This semester was a great experience for me as a student, mentor, and future educator. I learned valuable lessons in how to treat certain situations in a classroom as well as how to set the type of environment and atmosphere most conducive to learning. … I was paired with a very knowledgeable and personable professor who allowed me to accomplish my duties to the fullest extent that the program allowed. He allowed me to help design the syllabus and to team-teach the class. … I have become so much more aware of and comfortable in my position as a peer mentor since the beginning of the semester and will always be grateful for that through my career.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“This experience has given me the chance to practice public speaking about topics that I have a lot of knowledge and feel comfortable talking about. … Being a leader in this program has given me the chance to show my responsibility and organization skills, which has made me aware of how strong I am at these two skills in particular. … Overall, being a peer mentor has given me the ability to work with a professor as well as other students and teach them what I know. … This opportunity to be a peer mentor has truly changed my life for the better.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I love when my students ask questions in class and email me because I know I’m making their lives less stressful. I also feel that I am becoming a role model and resource to them on campus. One of my students meets with me a couple times a week for help and I know she appreciates it because I’m always dependable and there for her.”

“As a mentor I have gained a lot of knowledge about how to handle myself in a mentor situation. I always have to make sure to make myself available for questions and never to intimidate them. ... This year the dynamic was good because my teacher made me an essential part of all classroom discussions where I was able to share my own experiences as well which made my students see that I was just like them freshman year.”

“Looking back on this semester as a peer mentor I really enjoyed the experience of being able to help students and give them the knowledge they need to get the most out of their first semester at college and help them transition into their own college experience for the better. ... This experience made me realize and helped me confirm for the rest of my life I want to be able to make a difference in students’ lives and continue my path on getting my teaching certification. Without this experience I would be waiting until my senior year to figure out if all the schooling was worth it; but now I know it is.”

“During my first semester as a peer mentor, I sometimes questioned whether students truly appreciated me for taking the time to relay information that would help them settle into the ECSU community. Or if they only saw me as a spoon-feeder of “dry” information. It really made my day when a number of students stayed after class to walk up to me and thank me for mentoring them through their first semester.”

### How to have a good experience

- Communicate often and effectively with your professor
- If a student comes to you with a personal issue, be supportive and help as best you can
- Give a positive impression from the moment your first meet your students.
- Send weekly emails your students to keep an open communication between you and your students.
- Be enthusiastic when telling students about an outside event to encourage them to come.

“‘If we are strong, our strength will speak for itself. If we are weak, words will be no help.’

- John Fitzgerald Kennedy
“My experience with my class this year was not as positive as last year. The group of students that I worked with this year were very quiet and frankly, just did not care. ... When I would give presentations they were never engaged and never really asked questions. This was discouraging to me because I felt as though I was doing something wrong. ... Throughout the semester, my communication with the professor was not very good. I take partial blame for that because it was just assumed that both of us knew what was going on and we were just going to go ahead and do it. ... Overall, I would say this semester was challenging. I did not find myself as excited as I was last year.”

“I’ve had moments where I was crunched for time and getting stressed while other moments I lost interest or didn’t feel much need to be around. ... The semester started off slow. I had some difficulties with communication with my professor. ... I felt that being in the classroom was a waste of time because it looked as though no one cared about what I had to say. They didn’t care what I said in class or in emails; at least that’s how they portrayed themselves to me. I felt as if I didn’t make any impact on my students.”

“When the semester started with peer mentoring, I was a little concerned that it was going to be really terrible. ... The professor had a tendency to get under my skin with certain issues such as changing the syllabus without telling me or putting me on the spot when I had nothing prepared to present or making me look bad in front of the class. ... When I was able to present that information I had prepared, it always went really well; the professor would seem surprised.”

“During my first session going over a learning module, I had a student complete a phone call. As I was speaking, I could see this particular student with their head tilted and their hand up to their left ear. I looked away... So I went back To my lecture... the situation was handled properly, but the fact that a student thought my presentation was that awful to answer a phone call in class was very discouraging.”

“My least favorite thing about peer mentoring was my relationship with my professor. She did not seem to understand my role in the classroom. It seemed as though we were working separately rather than working together.”

“A bad time would be when I have tried to get them to meet me outside of class and many of them just do not show up. It is also hard to get the students to actually take the learning modules seriously, and see that we are actually trying to help them.”

“I offered all of the students assistance in anytime or any situation that they may have been in. I provided them with my phone number so that they could text or call me with questions. One day I received a phone call from a student asking if I could drive her to somewhere in Connecticut... this made me feel extremely uncomfortable and when I said no I tried to be explicit in the fact that I was mostly intended to be a support for school-related activities. This was a very awkward situation.”

**How to avoid a bad experience:**

- Have open communication with your professor and talk with them about anything you feel is an issue in order to resolve it. Do not be afraid to approach them.
- Make your role as a peer mentor known on the first day, you are there to help them with anything school related. It is not your responsibility to give them rides.
- Talk to Dr. Levin about any experiences that you can not resolve with your professor
- Find different ways to talk to your students to get them engaged in your lessons
I never did that! Version A
The students sit in a circle. Give each of them 10 or 15 jellybeans or pennies. In turn, each student tells something they have never done. Anyone who has done it gives the speaker one of his or her jellybeans or pennies. After going around the circle twice, the person with the most jellybeans or pennies wins. For example: I have never traveled outside the USA. I have never eaten sushi. I have never played a violin.

I never did that! Version B
If no jelly beans/pennies are available there is a simple version where chairs are used instead. The participants start out by sitting in a circle on the floor/ground and one person is elected to sit in the middle. The middle man will start out by saying “I have never…” (Drank, smoked, traveled to Europe, etc.) Anyone who also has never done this thing will get up and sit in an empty chair. From the remaining people on the ground a new middle man is elected and the process starts over. Keep going until everyone has had a chance to be in the middle.

Famous pairs
Write the names of famous/celebrity pairs and couples onto pieces of paper and then tape them to the students' backs. Make sure participants can’t see each others’ backs. They have to find the student that completes their pair by asking each other yes and no questions. For example: Student A has Britney Spears taped to her back she has to find the person with Kevin Federline on his back by asking their peers yes/no questions about the couple.

Interviews
Each student interviews the student seated next to him or her for five minutes and then introduces the student to the group. Give out a list of interview questions or let the students be creative in their interviews.

Name Game
People sit in a circle. First person starts by saying their name. The second person repeats the first person’s name and then says their own name. The third person repeats the names of the first and second person and then says their own, and so on until the final person in the group repeats the names of everyone in the entire group.

Human Lines
Have the participants line up according to some criteria. It could be according to where their names fall in the alphabet, where they’re from, or height. Have each person introduce the person on their left to the whole group. Allow two minutes for the participants to gather information before starting the introductions.

Truth, Truth, Lie
Have everyone say 3 facts about themselves, only 1 of the facts should actually be a lie. Have the group try to figure out which one is the lie.
Frisbee Anyone?
Have a Frisbee at the meeting. Throw it around the room and have people that catch it answer a question or tell about themselves to the others in the group. Once that person is finished, throw the Frisbee to someone else in the group.

People to People
Everyone is directed to pair off (an odd number is needed) until there is one person left standing in the middle of the group. The person who does not have a pair then calls out directions for the partners such as nose to nose, finger to forehead, ankle to shoulder, etc. (body parts to body parts.) The partners will do whatever the person in the middle calls out (similar to Simon Says). The person in the middle gives between one to five directions and then calls out, "People to People!" and everyone grabs a new partner, including the person in the middle, so you are left with a new person in the middle. The game continues. This game needs to be played in a large area or outside.

Name tag Game
Introduce yourself to another person in the group and after conversing two minutes, exchange nametags. Then share the information about your partner with another member in the organization.

Treasure Hunt
Hand out a form to each attendee which has a list of things to find on it. (This form is provided below) The participants are to go around the group “hunting” for the people who have the characteristics on the list. There cannot be more than one person in each box. Discuss the activity when complete.

Beach Ball Questions
Get a large inflatable beach ball and use a permanent fine or medium point marker to write any or all of the questions in the “Conversation Starter” section on it. This will take quite some time, but you can do it some night in front of the television. The resulting tool is an "icebreaker ball" that you can use for years to come. You can use it in a large group and throw it around. The person who catches it has to answer the question touching their left thumb. They then say their name, answer the question and throw it to someone else. You may also make up your own questions. The ones listed are merely suggestions.

Catch Me If You Can
Players should be paired up. All players divide into two lines (facing in) shoulder to shoulder, with partners facing each other. Participants should be given approximately 30 seconds to look at their partners, taking in all details about the individual. The leader then instructs the two lines to turn and face away from the center. One or both lines has 15-20 seconds to change something about their appearance (i.e. change a watch to different wrist, unbutton a button, remove a belt, etc.). The change must be discrete, but visible to the partner. The players again turn in to face each other and have 30 seconds to discover the physical changes that have been made. Players get to interact with each other and have fun!

Comic Strip Chaos
Each participant takes a turn at picking a comic frame out of the large container. After the entire group has each chosen one, the participants begin to search for others with the same comic strip sequence. After the participants have found everyone in their group, they must arrange themselves so that the sequence of frames is in chronological order to form the comic strip correctly. Upon completion of sequence, the newly formed group sits down together. Great game to break large group into smaller
groups.

**Make A Date**

give each participant a paper plate. Have them draw the face of a clock on their plate with a line next to each number (no digitals!). Then have participants walk around a find a “date” for each hour, writing their name by the hour. The catch is no one can make a “date” with more than one person per hour. After everyone has made their dates, speed up time and allow 1-3 minutes for each hour. The facilitator then asks a question for discussion on each date. The pairs will have a chance to get to know one another.

**Solemn And Silent**

The instructor explains that this exercise will take self control. Members pair back to back. On the count of three, everyone must face their partner, look each other in the eyes, and then try to remain solemn and serious. No speaking! The first to smile or laugh must sit down. All who remain standing then take a new partner and the activity continues until only one person has not smiled or laughed. (Second round of playing can involve two teams competing to outlast each other.) If you get a pair at the end who are both keeping a straight face, the rest of the group can act as hecklers to disrupt them.

**conversation starter ideas**

As a mentor, you should be in constant communication with the students with whom you are working. Many times you will have specific reasons to approach them in conversation. Other times, you may need a “starter,” especially if the student is shy and not likely to approach you. The following are some ideas to use to start up conversations with students in your community:

1. Introduce yourself as the peer mentor and let the student know what your role is and how you’ll be available to them throughout the year.
2. What classes outside of the FYP are you taking? What is your major? What are the professors you have in these classes? (Maybe you’ve had some of the same ones.)
3. Are you going to be involved in any groups /sports on campus? (Learn about their interests so you can continue to ask them questions or pass on information related to the subjects they like.)
4. What was the last film you saw at the movie theatre?
5. What is your favorite TV show?
6. What did you have for breakfast?
7. What is your middle name?
8. What is your favorite food?
9. What foods do you dislike?
10. What is your favorite CD/music?
11. What kind of car do you drive?
12. Favorite item of clothing?
13. If you could go anywhere for vacation where would it be and why?
14. Favorite kind of potato chips?
15. Favorite ice cream?
16. What characteristics do you admire?
17. What is your favorite time of day?
18. What was your most memorable birthday?
19. Where were born?
20. Favorite sports?
21. Coke or Pepsi?
22. Do you have any pets?
23. If you won $1 million what would you do with it?

**facilitation strategies**
Peer mentors are expected to facilitate a variety of interactions – from community building/social events to study groups to classroom activities. Below are some strategies that you can use to facilitate different types of situations.

**Go ‘rounds**
Ask the group a question or to share some specific information. Go around the room. If someone needs to pass, allow that but then come back to them. This is a great way to get folks talking and involved right away and allows them to know that their active participation is desired and expected.

**Ideas Gallery**
This is an alternate way of brainstorming. Put newsprint on the wall with categories of information you’d like the group to think about. Ask them to move from one paper to the next, read what’s on the paper, and add their own thoughts. This activity gets them moving (a change of pace from typical brainstorming) and suggests an expectation that everyone contribute. This also allows those who are more introverted to have a comfortable way of contributing.

**Sentence Stems**
Create a list of open ended questions and number them. Cut the questions and place them in an envelope. Divide students into small groups of 3-5. One student should select a question from the envelope and respond. The goal is to promote dialogue so the group should be encouraged to ask questions or share additional insights where appropriate. Rotate the envelope until each student has had an opportunity to respond or until the questions have been exhausted.

**Reflection/Sharing/Turn To Your Partner (TTYP)**
Asking people to do some personal reflection gives them a chance to think; again, this is especially helpful for those who process in writing better than out loud. “Turn To Your Partner” gives them a chance to share their thoughts and process a bit further whatever it is they’ve been asked to consider. This approach gives the introverts an opportunity to approach the topic in a way that might best suit them initially (through writing) and the extroverts a chance to approach it out loud, which might be their preference.

**Case Study**
Using a “story” that has no-to-low stakes for the students allows them to practice making decisions. This might be especially useful for mentors who teach or assist in teaching.

**Mind Maps**
Mind mapping is a technique for noting information or explaining a process or concept. When using the mind mapping technique, you would display information graphically as opposed to the traditional method of sentences and words arranged on a page. To promote interaction and dialogue it is sometimes helpful to have students develop mind maps as a group and then explain to others in the class why they chose certain symbols and icons. Graphic representations of concepts can then be displayed around the room. Mind Map Resource:
http://www.peterussell.com/mindmaps/mindmap.html
continuum activities
These activities ask students to take a stand and place themselves on a continuum between extremes on various issues. Continuums can be used for such topics as values clarification, working together, transition issues, ethical issues, group work, leadership, and getting acquainted. It’s best to establish ground rules before starting and ensure that everyone doesn’t have to explain/defend his/her position on the continuum, although those who wish to share why they’ve placed themselves in a certain spot on the continuum will be invited to do so.

Inside Outside Circles/ or Double Circle (You can use this activity as an icebreaker as well.)
Have a large group number off by two’s (1, 2, 1, 2 etc.) Have 1’s form a circle, surrounding the 2’s. Have the 2’s form a circle inside the 1’s, facing the 1’s. As the facilitator, you will begin asking one question to the group, to be answered by each “pair.” Give the pairs approximately 1 minute to share their answers.

Scavanger Hunt Worksheet.

Find Someone Who...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Has the same name as yours</th>
<th>Has a birthday the same month as yours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the same age as you</td>
<td>Knocks a foreign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is wearing a red shirt</td>
<td>Does Not like chocolate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likes Chinese food</td>
<td>Has traveled to Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has 2 brothers or sisters</td>
<td>Has blue eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not have a middle name</td>
<td>Works part-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drives a Ford</td>
<td>Has a I-Phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lives in the same town as you do</td>
<td>Has a MAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows all 7 dwarfs</td>
<td>Likes the color purple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section III
Important Information
Listed here are some resources for you to utilize in your mentor position:

First Year Experience website
http://www.easternct.edu/firstyearexperience/

FYI 100 website
http://www.easternct.edu/firstyear/academic-component

Main University Line
(860) 465-5000

Helpful phone numbers:

Professor David Pellegrini
Coordinator of First Year Introduction
Professor of Theatre
(860) 465-5583
pelligrinid@easternct.edu

Chris Drewry
Instructor of FYR 314
Assistant Director, Academic Services Center
(860) 465-5196
drewryc@easternct.edu

Teaching Assistant
Erin Strickland
stricklande@my.easternct.edu
### Student Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Services Center</strong></td>
<td>(860) 465-4272</td>
<td><a href="http://www.easternct.edu/asc/">http://www.easternct.edu/asc/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility Services</strong></td>
<td>(860) 465-0189</td>
<td><a href="http://www.easternct.edu/accessability/">http://www.easternct.edu/accessability/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advising Center</strong></td>
<td>(860) 465-4526</td>
<td><a href="mailto:advise@easternct.edu">advise@easternct.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.easternct.edu/advising/">http://www.easternct.edu/advising/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Card Services</strong></td>
<td><a href="https://expresscard.easternct.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp">https://expresscard.easternct.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Center for Internships and Career</strong></td>
<td>(860) 465-4559</td>
<td><a href="mailto:careers@easternct.edu">careers@easternct.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.easternct.edu/career/">http://www.easternct.edu/career/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Counseling and Psychological Services</strong></td>
<td>(860) 465-0181</td>
<td><a href="http://nutmeg.easternct.edu/counseling/">http://nutmeg.easternct.edu/counseling/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECSU Calendars</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.easternct.edu/ecsu/calendars.html">http://www.easternct.edu/ecsu/calendars.html</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial Aid</strong></td>
<td>(860) 465-5205</td>
<td><a href="mailto:financialaid@easternct.edu">financialaid@easternct.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.easternct.edu/finaid/">http://www.easternct.edu/finaid/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Services</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.dineoncampus.com/easternct/">http://www.dineoncampus.com/easternct/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Services</strong></td>
<td>185 Birch Street</td>
<td>Willimantic, CT 06226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(860) 465-5263</td>
<td><a href="http://www.easternct.edu/health/">http://www.easternct.edu/health/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td>860-465-5297</td>
<td><a href="mailto:housing@easternct.edu">housing@easternct.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.easternct.edu/housing/">http://www.easternct.edu/housing/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intercultural Center</strong></td>
<td>(860) 465-5749</td>
<td><a href="http://nutmeg.easternct.edu/interculturalcenter/">http://nutmeg.easternct.edu/interculturalcenter/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Library</strong></td>
<td>Toll Free 1-877-587-8693</td>
<td>Circulation (860) 465-4506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.easternct.edu/health/">http://www.easternct.edu/health/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAC Center</strong></td>
<td>(860) 465-0383</td>
<td><a href="http://www.easternct.edu/mathematics/MAC_webpage.html">http://www.easternct.edu/mathematics/MAC_webpage.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main University Line</strong></td>
<td>(860) 465-5000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Activities/Clubs</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.easternct.edu/studentactivities/clubs_orgs/club_index.htm">http://www.easternct.edu/studentactivities/clubs_orgs/club_index.htm</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Employment</strong></td>
<td><a href="https://www.ecsujobs.org">https://www.ecsujobs.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tips on Avoiding Plagiarism</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://easternct.libguides.com/content.php?pid=206269&amp;sid=1725264#5821512">http://easternct.libguides.com/content.php?pid=206269&amp;sid=1725264#5821512</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tutoring Services</strong></td>
<td>860-465-5198</td>
<td><a href="http://www.easternct.edu/asc/tutoringcenter/schedule.html">http://www.easternct.edu/asc/tutoringcenter/schedule.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Police</strong></td>
<td>(860) 465-5310</td>
<td><a href="http://www.easternct.edu/police/">http://www.easternct.edu/police/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women’s Center</strong></td>
<td>(860) 465-4313</td>
<td><a href="http://www.easternct.edu/womenscenter/">http://www.easternct.edu/womenscenter/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes