6PQs for Tutoring

When you meet with a tutee it is important to be able to use questioning to engage your student in the learning process. One method for this is to use the 6PQs, or six questions that can help you work with a student from start to finish. In between each question it will be helpful for both you and your tutee if you paraphrase the information you’ve learned to ensure you both understand each other.

Preface

These questions begin the conversation and are usually a way for you and your tutee to get to know each other better and build rapport.

What’s your name?
Where are you from?
What classes are you in?
What can I help you with?
What are you having trouble with?

Paraphrase what you have heard

Pace

These questions will help you learn what the student already understands. More specifically what they need help with, and they will give you the information you need to set the pace of your meeting with the student. This will be very helpful because it will enable you to learn more about what information a student understands and what they will need more assistance with. This will save you from repeating topics the student already knows or skipping over something they don’t.

Tell me what you know about ______
Explain ________ as best as you can
Does _________ sound familiar to you?
Have you worked on _________ in class yet?

Paraphrase what you have heard

Probe

Now you can begin to dig deeper into what the student knows. These questions will help the student explain their knowledge to you and provide you an opportunity to help them connect concepts and ideas.

Why?
What makes you think so?
Can you tell me more about that?
Can you give me an example?

Paraphrase what you have heard

Prod

These questions begin to help the tutee make new connections and speculate. These are questions to get the student to create their own knowledge based on what you have already reviewed together.

If you had to guess, what would you say?
I understand you might not know the answer, but what do you think it could be?
What’s your instinct?
What do you feel like the answer is?
Why could that be true?

*Paraphrase what you have heard if the answer is correct. If it is incorrect, paraphrase previous information and try to encourage more discoveries.*

**Prompt**
This is a hint in the form of a question. If the student is still struggling to find the correct information these questions help guide them step by step.
- The average between 3 and 5 is 4. How did I get that?
- What’s the first step in the process? The second? The third?
- Would it be __________ or __________?
- You told me earlier that ___________. So how would ____________?

*Paraphrase what you have heard*

**Process**
Be sure to include time for processing! After a student has reached the correct information these questions allow the student to solidify their understanding and reinforce the information they have learned. These will also help them make connections to new information.
- How do you see this concept fitting into the entire course?
- Now that you understand this concept, how would you compare it to another concept?
- So now, can you tell me everything you know about __________?
- What is another example of this concept?
- Can you talk me through what we just did?

**Keep in Mind**
- There may be times where you don’t use all of these steps in this exact order. A student may discover the answer at any step, but always be sure to end with Processing questions.
- There may also be times where questioning won’t work and you will need to explain concepts to students. Try to put your explanations in question form so you are still actively engaging your student in learning the concepts.
- Don’t forget to paraphrase after each step! This will help ensure you and your tutee are on the same page.