

Roles and responsibilities in lifelong learning

[Profession](#), [Teacher](#)



The roles and responsibilities of a teacher within in the lifelong learning sector have been shaped and developed by a range of factors. From cultural changes, greater understanding of learning styles and the laws which govern the education community as a whole. In this essay I will cover some of roles and responsibilities of a teacher and the relationships between teachers and the the various stakeholders in the LLS. I hope to illustrate the complex network of relationships between the individual and the professional bodies in this sector.

Teach ti:tʃ/

Verb 1. impart knowledge to or instruct (someone) as to how to do something.

The definition above doesn't take into account the context of the information transaction itself. Teachers today are governed by a series of legislation, regulatory requirements and codes of practice which together underpin the professional boundaries which educators should operate within.

The broad range of a teacher's responsibilities begins with basic tasks such as recording attendance or complying with disciplinary procedures to understanding the complex needs of their learners. Every teacher is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of the learners in the classroom. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is the legislation which underpins a teacher's duty of care to their students. Beyond the physical safety of a learner a teacher must also ensure they meet professional standards and observe the rules and guidance of awarding bodies.

Equality & diversity in teaching is provided for by the Equality Act 2010 which covers nine protected characteristics. It is the responsibility of the teacher to promote and uphold the principles of fairness and inclusivity in the classroom. Disability is one of these protected characteristics; a teacher is required to make reasonable adjustments for learners with disabilities based on the impairment. e. g a reader for a blind learner or written materials for a deaf learner. Furthermore where this is not practical or unavailable a teacher should locate additional support.

My experience within the lifelong learning sector is very limited however I have adopted the role of a teacher whilst working in the youth employment sector - I coordinate the local authorities' apprenticeship programme - and part of the role has required me to run sessions for young people searching for employment. I would facilitate workshops at the Jobcentre Plus - It was my role to arrange for a suitable learning environment and select an appropriate venue, and ensure handouts and resources are available for all participants.

In my experience working within recruitment for a local authority the principles of equality and inclusivity are built into our processes ensuring all stakeholders are free from discrimination and exclusion. I would adapt my approach in the workshops by broadening the case studies used to reflect the cultural profile of the workshop participants.

It is hugely important to detect and cater for differing learner needs. Dunn and Dunn, 1993 say matching teaching technique with learning styles

significantly improves learning outcomes. The process of identifying learning styles and modifying of teaching techniques is known as differentiation.

‘ Differentiation is..... the process of identifying, with each learner, the most effective strategies for achieving agreed targets’. 1 (Weston 1992)

The JCP sessions are stand-alone and in this context I am unable to understand prior to the session the individual learner needs. It was my responsibility to carefully plan the content of the workshop and the activities it contained to suit a variety of learner needs. To improve the sessions I could include powerpoint presentations, discuss the programme and set-up role play activities to cover the visual, audio & kinaesthetic learning styles. (VAK)

To improve the JCP group’s engagement I would usually arrange for an existing apprentice to join the workshop to offer an insider perspective and act as a livecase study which the young people can identify with. The apprentice can relate to the group with and this proves the most productive part of the session and is intended to elicit deep learning.

‘ Deep learning is fundamentally concerned with the creation of knowledge, which the learner is able to relate to their own experience and use to understand new experiences and contexts.’

John West Bernhams, Understand Learning - Page 8 (Article)

This inclusive approach is shown to improve motivation, and has always improved the value of the workshop and enhanced the session.

There are many types of teaching role each with their own characteristics. From specialised teachers which tend to have particular knowledge and skill to trainers who use techniques to deliver information for a particular task. In the future I hope to adopt a different role; I plan to act as a mentor to an apprentice. My role will be to provide guidance and support to an individual based on their needs. Mentoring is a 1-2-1 relationship which can mean I will either challenge or champion the mentee depending on the situation. In acting as a mentor I must observe my employers procedures and policies which may affect the frequency of the session or the protocols I should follow if difficulties arise.

As I mentioned in the introduction a teacher is not just the conduit for learning - They are almost always part of a larger organisation. It was the responsibility of the teacher to adopt and implement their organisation's policies. A class teacher forms part of a chain and will report to year leaders a headteacher, Governing body, local authority to the Department of Education. The Department of Education is the governing body responsible for the oversight of education in England.

Teachers and the organisations they work within must meet professional standards. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) is the non-ministerial government department which reports directly to parliament. Its remit is to inspect and regulate education and training for learners of all ages and for inspecting and regulating those services which care for children and young people. From performance to

safeguarding, as a teacher it would be my responsibility to be scrutinised by Ofsted and ensure my activities meet the agreed standards.

Like most professional fields there are boundaries which must be observed by teachers. These can range from the syllabus, timescales, resources, awarding bodies to government policies. Each of these factors may have layers of external contributing factors which influence them in turn. Ofqual, who regulate qualifications, examinations and assessments in England (<http://ofqual.gov.uk>), came to prominence last summer over GCSE re-grading decisions. Although it did not directly impact on teachers it illustrates the interaction between two stakeholders in the sector. An awarding body will have clear codes of practice which must be adhered to, in order to allow for accurate quality assurance and standardisation on results.

It is important for teachers to understand where professional boundaries lie. For example in some cases where an individual learner's needs require the assistance of expert help it must be sought. Attempting to support the learner without seeking expert advice may have a negative effect on the individual as well as others. Often a teacher's role is to signpost learners to the best resources. In a school context this may mean directing someone to a more specialised teacher in the organisation or an external support like a Local Authority service.

Keeping abreast of the support available is an important part of navigating these boundaries. Joining a professional association such as the Institute for Learning or researching best practice using the Excellence Gateway are recommended ways to keep up good practice polished and fresh. The

government publish Teacher Standards. These standards set the minimum requirements for teachers' practice and conduct. They are devised by educators and are in part there to ensure positive learning environment is sustained.

It is particularly important in the lifelong learning sector to foster a supportive and safe learning environment. For instance adult students may have had a negative experience of education so it is essential that from day one ground rules are agreed upon and the teacher plans activities that will allow students to build relationships. " without ground rules, disruption may occur and affect the learning of your group" Gravels. A, (PTLLS 2008 pg 7)

An effective way of promoting consensus in ground rules and compliance is giving the learners the opportunity to devise the rulebook themselves. In this model a teacher's role is to facilitate the decision-making process and respect the outcome. By contributing as a group they each take ownership of their individual responsibility to follow the rules. In handing over this decision-making process the teacher will begin to build a trusting relationship with the learners are more likely to follow the rules they have devised over rules they are forced to adopt

The techniques and activities used by a teacher can help to build respect and promote appropriate behaviour in class. The use of pair work, and small group activities can help to forge relationships and engender respect amongst the learners. A great ice breaker activity which includes the entire group can be an effective way to begin this process. A teacher would set the task and ensure everyone is included.

I've talked about some examples of the roles and responsibilities of teachers with the lifelong learning sector, but in reality these are limited to what I've described. Beyond the walls of the classroom there are a multitude of organisations, professional bodies and resources which exist to develop and support Teachers. Each of them play a role in providing the appropriate checks and balances needed to ensure a healthy, evolving sector.