

# What is the role of a tutor in the lifelong learning sector? essay sample

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1) When considering the role of the tutor in the Lifelong Learning Sector (LLS), it is necessary to understand the context or environment in which that role exists. The Lifelong Learning Sector comprises students from many backgrounds and age ranges, with diverse goals and expectations. They are described as being engaged in the personal or professional “ on-going, voluntary and self-motivated” pursuit of knowledge (Department of Education and Science, 2000). They may be looking to gain new job skills, enhance their present qualifications, or pursue an extracurricular interest. When one considers there are more students enrolled in Further Education than there are in universities, and that one in every five adults is engaged in learning, Sage (2008 p. 4) the impact the LLS has in enhancing the “ social inclusion...personal development [and] employability” (Commission of the European Communities, 2006) for the wider community comes into sharp focus. The role of the tutor within that sector becomes pivotal to the success of those learners. Teachers in the Lifelong Learning Sector are one of the first and most inspiring resources a student may encounter.

They have the ability to make the classroom experience a success or failure for every student they teach. Teachers are the main resource of a very large context of services offered by the LLS, and their primary role is to ensure that “ learning is taking place” Gravells (2012, p. 5). Learning however, won't take place just because one wishes it; the opportunity for learning must be created by the teacher. This happens when the teacher is knowledgeable and proficient in the subject they teach, when they have the desire to pass on information and skills sets to others, and when they gain satisfaction from helping others achieve educational goals. Only then, will

they be able to serve the needs of the learners by “teaching in a way that addresses those needs, engages the student fully, motivates them to learn more, and by enabling the development and progression of all students”, (Gravells, 2012). In order for the tutor to ensure that useful, engaging, and motivational learning is happening, the tutor will take on sub-roles within their main role of teaching. They will be assessors, (in order to identify learning needs and progression of students); they will become researchers of subject material, lesson designers and planners, (to facilitate learning and achieve educational goals); and they will be record-keepers and evaluators, (for attendance, lessons and assessment).

They will need to be proficient public speakers (as they deliver their class content effectively, catering to students’ various learning styles), and they will need to be diplomats, (as they show sensitivity and respect to the diverse participants in their classroom). They will at times take on the role of coach, (as they motivate students), and sometimes as mentor, (when they advise students on an action plan). They will need to be excellent communicators and networkers, (as they interact with other instructors, departments and disciplines within the college) and satisfactory time-keepers, (by following class schedules and working to deadlines). Uniquely, the tutor will be a type of architect, one who creates a community within the classroom, (by building a setting that encourages, empowers and inspires learners).

In addition to the main role and the numerous sub-roles performed on a daily basis, the tutor will need to understand their responsibilities and establish

boundaries within the wider context of teaching. The responsibilities and boundaries relate more to the professional conduct of a teacher; how one interacts and performs outside of the actual act of teaching. Responsibilities include maintaining a high standard in one's work and behaviour, keeping qualifications and working subject knowledge current, and complying with college policies and legislative standards. Boundaries help to maintain professional relationships (between tutor-learner and between tutor-colleagues) and they establish ' a duty of care' in respect to communication (human and technological). As tutors meet the demands of their role, helping learners transform educational goals into achievements, they too become a part of that transformation and success.

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