



The Importance of Tutors in Student Life

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Abstract: *This article is a small research on the role of tutors in the University, the role of students in their lives and their spiritual and spiritual development. The main purpose is to identify the main activities of tutors at the University. Existing research, predominantly with lecturers, highlights that these relationships have academic and affective dimensions. Studies demonstrate good increase student motivation, engagement, and learning. The current study adds a student voice to this topic, focussing on their views of tutoring staff, who undertake much of the face-to-face teaching in universities.*

Keywords: *University, tutors, students, academic and affective, tutoring, method of educational, student voice, study*

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INTRODUCTION:

A look at the history of the tutoring profession. Tutoring began as an informal and unstructured method of educational assistance, dating back to periods in Ancient Greece. Methods of tutoring only began to become more structured after the 20th century through focus and specialization in the training of tutors, application of tutoring, and evaluation of tutors. Tutoring officially began in universities in the 1700s. Classes consisted of a tutor and 1 or 2 students meeting regularly. The tutor would guide their learning and check if they are ready for university exams. Fun fact: Tutors would also be seen as a parental figure!

Teacher-student relationships are an important influence on the student experience at university. The students identified four characteristics of a 'good' tutor: helpful, caring, likeable, and hands-on. Students talked about multiple benefits of having a good tutor including increased help-seeking, studying harder, more interest in class, and improved wellbeing and belonging. The importance of the tutor role is underestimated and institutions would do well to better support these valuable staff.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: The analysis resulted in two overarching themes each with subthemes: qualities of good tutors and benefits of good tutors. A third theme, communication both ways, was less dominant but captured an important aspect of the tutor-student relationship. Qualities of good tutors Four sub-themes identified the qualities that students consistently associated with good tutors: helpful, caring, approachable, and hands-on. "Super helpful" The most commonly mentioned positive tutor characteristic was helpful, focussing on the level of academic support tutors provided. Students perceived tutors as helpful when they did things such as noticed a student was failing, reached out to offer help, provided useful information and effective teaching, and gave in-depth answers to questions or requests for feedback. Felix, for example, described the

staff in general as “super helpful” and when asked to explain what he meant by that he provided several examples: “Teaching the content well enough for me to understand, assisting me if I have questions or queries, being quick to respond toe-mails if I’ve got a problem with an assessment, that sort of thing”. As well as commenting on the specific tutor qualities of helpful and caring, students talked about whether they liked their tutors, describing them with a variety of positive adjectives such as friendly, approachable, patient, relaxed, and lovely. A commonly mentioned desirable quality was enthusiasm –for teaching and for the course content as student explains: “My criminology tute is my favourite class because I can just tell the tutor absolutely loves his job and what he teaches”. Student attributed her not liking a particular tutor to the tutor’s age and lack of enthusiasm: “I just kind of gave up on that subject. Just because I have never liked English and I don’t like my teacher very much. I don’t know. She’s just old and not very enthusiastic”. The impact on motivation that this demonstrates is discussed in the next section. While some characteristics are potentially universally valued, such as enthusiasm or approachability, different students also value different things. Student for instance stressed that a sense of humour was important to him:

“Being funny helps a lot for me, and I feel I can relate to someone a lot more if they’re more humorous than serious”. On the other hand emphasised respect as particularly important to him: “I’m a good student, I will do what I have todo, but I will do better if the teacher actually treats me with respect, as another person, as a student, as someone who wants to learn”.

Closely related to the impact tutors have on student engagement and learning is the impact on student motivation. As discussed, students spend more time and effort if they like their tutor and enjoy class.

DISCUSSION: In addition, some students talked about how a good tutor, one they felt cared about them and their success, motivated them to want to do better: “A good tutor is going to make me strive, for doing well and giving them what they’re after “Just having that support and having a tutor care about your learning really motivates you to do well The power of the teacher-student relationship.” “Study more “The tutor, their teaching style, and the relationship students had with them directly influenced the students’ engagement with their learning. This was particularly the case with behavioural engagement: when they had a good tutor, students were more likely to come to class, put more time and effort into their studies, and found it easier to ask for help. In the following quote, student talks about how it is the enthusiasm of the tutor that makes her want to study harder: Their engagement and passion for the subject encourages me to want to go home and study more. Because if they’re boring as, I’m going to be like ‘Oh okay, it mustn’t be that important’. If it’s not important to you, then why is it important to me, kind of thing. Personally, I’m more keen to do something if my tutor or lecturer is more passionate about it. Help seeking is an important aspect of behavioural engagement and having tutors with the positive qualities described above made it easier for students to seek help: “The tutorial person needs to be friendly enough so that you would be able to ask her question”

RESULTS: This in-depth qualitative study of students explored how students perceive their tutors. The findings show that for these students, tutors play a critical role in the students ’engagement and therefore their success. They feel they work harder, are more motivated, feel better, and learn more.

The characteristics of good tutors identified included helpfulness and hands-on teaching relating to the academic dimension, and caring and approachability relating to the affective dimension. The findings on the perceived benefits of good tutors can also be divided into academic and affective. For instance, increased behavioral engagement including help seeking is an academic outcome, while increased belonging and well-being are affective outcomes.

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