



Knowledge to lead

■ Considerations for E-Tutoring

Role of the E-Tutor

The e-tutor should provide some initial guidance to the learners and provide information on resources and procedures to be followed and also he/she should be doing some initial assessment in terms of classifying the participants' knowledge to determine whether they should be enrolling in that course.

Then throughout the course the e-tutor should continue to provide guidance and respond to all queries the learners might have and consistently provide information. He/she should correct any misconceptions that might be visible or challenges as soon as possible and advise the learner on solutions and next steps.

The e-tutor should also create learning activities, monitor task achievement and performance and review the learning whilst serving as a moderator for online discussions. He/she should be contributing with knowledge and insight, taking into account the contributions made by the learners and reinforcing the relevant ones, refocusing the discussions if needed whilst providing fresh starting points and summarizing the information.

Another task is related with the administration and management of the course, in terms of keeping records where learner's activity and progress is documented, organizing enrollments, arranging learners into groups and managing times of activities.

If necessary, the e-tutor might need to update and help to design as well as evaluate, adapt and modify the course.

Key Competencies

The e-tutor should be knowledgeable on the subject matter and be a good motivator providing learners with "positive" support and "positive" encouragement, creating in this way a friendly environment. This environment will allow the learners to feel safe and facilitate successful on-line learning. Moreover the e-tutor should understand the technology being used and its limitations.



unitar

United Nations Institute for Training and Research



The e-tutor should also be able to communicate with the learners in a clear and concise way, using empathy and non-patronising language. He/she should also be able to better perceive and interpret online behaviors and should also stay informed of developments on the topic. The e-tutor should be approachable and visible, explicit and collaborative in order to allow for good communication for instance, pro-active, technically capable and credible.

Challenges

Even though the flexibility of working online might attract some e-tutors, for others this might take some time to get used to.

Another considerable issue is that of technology and some e-tutors might feel they need to develop their IT skills further in order to feel confident in working with what might be new systems and processes. For instance, the e-tutor might need to get a better understanding of how a VLE may be used to enhance student learning and achievement or even how to manage the complexities of online communications. Also the e-tutor might need to do some planning and preparation upfront to ensure all the necessary materials are made available for online access.

Another issue that might interfere with the e-tutor is that of the impersonal nature of the online communications and managing the interactions with learners and motivating students. The e-tutor might need an adaptation period for these perceived challenges.



unitar

United Nations Institute for Training and Research