CHAPTER 2

FACE-TO-FACE TUTORING

In this second chapter, we will look at the academic role of tutors in an open and distance learning (ODL) institution such as OUM, and the skills that will help you become an effective tutor. To some extent, the knowledge and experience that is necessary for effective tutoring in ODL contexts, is common to all educational contexts. However, there are some features of the OUM teaching-learning context that may be new or unfamiliar to you.

In this chapter, we will look at your responsibilities as an OUM tutor and also the various aspects that you need to attend to in order to conduct your tutorials effectively. We hope that the discussion of the various features of tutoring at OUM in this chapter will be useful in helping you understand your role as a tutor at OUM.

OBJECTIVES

After you have read this chapter, you should be able to:

- identify the OUM tutor’s four key areas of responsibility during tutorials;
- summarise the aspects that you need to attend to in order to conduct effective tutorials;
- list the knowledge and skills that you need to acquire to be an effective OUM tutor; and,
- list the steps on how to facilitate effective F2F tutorial sessions.
2.1 FACE-TO-FACE TUTORIALS

Face-to-face interactions between tutor and learners are an essential component of OUM’s Interactive Learning System and take place during tutorials.

As in other ODL contexts, opportunities for these face-to-face interactions at OUM are limited and it is therefore essential that you make the most effective use of them. You must plan the tutorials so that your time with the students is used to maximum effect.

2.2 THE OUM TUTORIAL STRUCTURE

As shown in Figures 2.1 and 2.2, OUM academic semesters have either a 3-tutorial or a 5-tutorial structure. Both tutorial structures have a total of ten contact hours per course. In the 5-tutorial structure, each tutorial is 2 hours long and in the 3-tutorial structure, each tutorial is of 3 hours and 20 minutes duration. While the key activities in both tutorial structures are similar, the time allocations for these activities vary. You need to take note of these differences to effectively plan your lessons.

A number of critical tasks must be completed during the ten contact hours that comprise the face-to-face tutorials in one semester. Apart from the primary task of providing instruction related to the course content, you also have to administer two tests and provide guidance to the learners to complete the course assignment.

The range of activities that you are required to carry out in the tutorials is shown in Figures 2.1 and 2.2. It must be emphasized that the activities and timings are meant to be used as a guide in the detailed planning that you must do before a tutorial. Remember that detailed and meticulous planning for the tutorials is critical for delivering effective tutorials.
### May – July Semester

#### Tutorial 1
- (3 hrs 20 mins)
  1. Introduction to Course
  2. Learning Outcomes
  3. The Online Forum
  4. Assessment Requirements
  5. Discussion on Assignment
  6. Unit 1

#### Tutorial 2
- (3 hrs 20 mins)
  1. Unit 1 and 2
  2. Test 1
  3. Discussion of Issues and Questions from the Online Forum
  4. Discussion on Assignment

#### Tutorial 3
- (3 hrs 20 mins)
  1. Feedback on Test 1
  2. Discussion on Online Forum
  3. Unit 2 and 3
  4. Discussion on Assignment
  5. Test 2
  6. Preparation for Final Examination

#### Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.00 am – 8.30 am</td>
<td>- Introduction to Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Learning Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.30 am – 9.00 am</td>
<td>- Expectations for Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Detailed Discussion on Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00 am – 10.00 am</td>
<td>- Lecture and class discussion of issues from Unit 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00 am – 10.30 am</td>
<td>- Group Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30 am – 11.00 am</td>
<td>- Question &amp; Answer Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00 am – 11.20 am</td>
<td>- Establishing Guidelines for the Online Forum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.1: Suggested schedule for a 3 - tutorial semester**
### September-December and January-April Semesters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tutorial 1</th>
<th>8.00 am - 8.30 am</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2 hrs)</td>
<td>- Introduction to Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Introduction to Course</td>
<td>- Learning Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>8.30 am – 8.50 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Discussion on Assignment</td>
<td>- Expectations for Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Discussion on Online Forum</td>
<td>- Detailed Discussion on Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Unit 1</td>
<td>8.50 am – 9.10 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Unit 1 and 2</td>
<td>- Lecture and class discussion of issues from Unit 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Overview of Tests</td>
<td>9.10 am – 9.30 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Discussion on Online Forum</td>
<td>- Group Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Discussion on Assignment</td>
<td>9.30 am – 9.45 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Test 1</td>
<td>- Question &amp; Answer Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Discussion on Online Forum</td>
<td>9.45 am – 10.00 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Unit 2</td>
<td>- Establishing Guidelines for the Online Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Discussion on Assignment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Feedback on Test 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Discussion on Online Forum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Unit 2 and 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>iv. Test 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>v. Discussion on Assignment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Feedback on Test 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii. Discussion on Online Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>iii. Unit 3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>iv. Preparation for Examination</td>
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</table>

Figure 2.2: Suggested schedule for a 5 - tutorial semester
2.3 THE TUTOR’S RESPONSIBILITIES

As an OUM tutor, you have four main areas of responsibility. The key to being a good tutor is to understand these responsibilities and to work towards discharging them effectively during the face-to-face tutorials.

A tutor’s four key responsibilities are as follows.

(i) Providing Content Input
(ii) Discussing the Course Assignment
(iii) Administering Tests and Quizzes
(iv) Assisting with Learners’ Study Plans

Each area of responsibility is discussed in detail in the following sections.

2.3.1 Providing Content Input

Your first area of responsibility - providing content input - requires that you provide academic instruction and coaching to your learners. This includes explaining and elaborating content and concepts that are fundamental to the course.

This will often be done through a mini-lecture. Where appropriate, you can also get the learners to work in small groups. To provide effective content input, you must be very familiar with:

(i) the content of the course module;
(ii) the responses (questions, doubts, etc.) of your learners in the interactive online forum; as well as
(iii) your prior experience in teaching similar content in other settings.
All this will determine the topics and concepts that you will treat in the tutorial. You may also need to develop supplementary resources and materials for your learners to develop specific skills.

### 2.3.2 Discussing the Course Assignment

Learners at OUM are required to complete an assignment for each of their courses.

Your **second area** of responsibility in the tutorials is to provide guidance and support to the learners in completing their assignments. You can do this by:

(i) clarifying assignment tasks and options for them.

(ii) suggesting print as well as online resources that learners can reference when working on their assignments.

(iii) providing on-going feedback on selected sections of a student’s assignment.

(iv) giving the learners adequate notice about submission deadlines.

It is important that you monitor and provide constructive feedback on learners’ progress in order to ensure that they successfully complete their assignments.

### 2.3.3 Administering Tests

Your **third area** of responsibility is administering tests. Together, the course assignment and tests make up the formative assessment of each course. First, you have to administer these tests during the tutorial. For this, you must give learners timely notice of test dates so that they have adequate preparation time. Second, you must also grade the tests before their next tutorial so that you can provide appropriate feedback to the learners in that
tutorial. Finally, it is important that you maintain accurate records of each learner’s work for eventual submission to the appropriate department.

2.3.4 Assisting with Learners’ Study Plans

Your **fourth area** of responsibility is to foster learners’ ability to develop their personal self-study plans. Self-managed learning is an essential aspect of the ODL experience at OUM. You play a critical academic facilitation role in assisting learners to formulate their study plans for self-managed learning.

You have to assist learners in determining the core content areas that they should focus on in the print module for self-study. You should also be able to offer guidance on the print and online digital learning resources that they can refer to as well as supplementary resources that they can use.

An important part of your responsibility is to motivate your learners to be active participants in the learning process so that they are able to achieve the learning outcomes that have been determined for the course.
2.4 CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE TUTORIALS

To carry out your responsibilities more effectively, you would be required to attend to a number of responsibilities. These are:

(i) providing overview of course
(ii) planning learning
(iii) guiding learning
(iv) conducting learner-centred teaching
   (a) group work
   (b) problem-based learning
   (c) self-directed learning
(v) exercising flexibility
(vi) providing feedback
(vii) motivating learners
(viii) maintaining records

These aspects of face-to-face tutorials are discussed in detail in the section below.

2.4.1 Planning Learning

The time available for face-to-face interaction in the tutorials is limited. You have to make optimal use of this limited available time by careful selection and planning of the activities that you will incorporate into a tutorial. Thinking about and planning how you will guide discussions with your learners, as well as collating information about additional resources that they can use will help to enhance the effectiveness of your tutorials.

A tutorial will typically consist of four to six activities that can be carried out in the two or three hours that are available. It is important that you select activities that
offer learners a variety of relevant and efficacious learning experiences.

Activities that engage learners in interactive endeavour will enable them to develop a range of skills and competencies that are consistent with the course objectives.

2.4.2 The First Tutorial

The first tutorial is a very important one as it sets the tone and pace for the course. In the first tutorial, you need to provide an overview of the course content and of the learning strategies that will be used to assist learners in achieving the learning outcomes that have been set for the course.

During the first tutorial, learners need to be informed about:

(i) the assignment and the tests that have to be completed over the next few tutorials.
(ii) the key events in the course schedule, including test dates and deadlines for submission of the assignment.
(iii) your expectations of learner participation in the interactive online forum.

It is also useful to obtain learners’ contact numbers and email addresses to facilitate communicating with them and you are encouraged to provide your own telephone number.

2.4.3 Guiding Learning

The face-to-face interaction in the tutorials offers you the opportunity of guiding learning by helping learners to
clarify course materials and to understand and apply content. How is this possible?

You can do this by providing clear and comprehensive explanations and elaborations of content and concepts during the tutorials. Use simple and clear language to enable you to do this more effectively. You should also encourage learners to consider looking at critical issues and concepts in new and different ways. Supporting learners in their efforts to link ideas and concepts to their occupational contexts will help them to better evaluate and comprehend these ideas and concepts. You can also assist learners in developing a better understanding of ideas and concepts by suggesting additional and alternative print as well as online resources.

Finally, to prevent tutorials from appearing to be a patchwork of disjointed activities, it is important that you assist learners in making connections between the various learning activities so that they understand how the pieces of learning relate to each other and to the broader course objectives.

2.4.4 Conducting learner-centred Teaching

Learner-centered teaching practices focus on providing learners with active learning opportunities. *Active learning* implies that learners are doing things and also thinking about the things they are doing.

Instead of merely accumulating facts, learner-centred teaching encourages learners to construct knowledge by creating relationships to existing knowledge, and to apply this knowledge. In an active learning environment, learners engage in reading, discussion and writing in order to develop the higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation.
Learner-centred teaching emphasizes learner initiative and autonomy in order to promote ownership of, and responsibility for, their own learning. You can foster a learner-centred environment in your tutorials by:

(i) providing activities and tasks that encourage learners to clarify, interpret, and share ideas and concepts;

(ii) providing activities and tasks that allow learners to develop personal understanding of content by applying knowledge and concepts to complete a task or solve a problem;

(iii) providing opportunities for learners to become active participants in the learning; and,

(iv) assuming the role of a mentor and coach who guides and facilitates learning as opposed to the role of a disseminator of knowledge through lectures.

The three important elements of a learner-centred teaching approach are as follows.

(a) Group Work

(b) Problem-based Learning

(c) Self-directed Learning

Each of these elements is discussed in detail below.
(a) **Group work**

In group work or cooperative and collaborative learning, learners are required to work together on academic tasks. Learners are given opportunities to articulate, clarify and shape ideas as well as to integrate these ideas with practice in work-related, professional contexts.

Group work or cooperative and collaborative learning activities facilitate the development of analysis and problem solving skills as well as communication and interpersonal skills.

An effective group work activity has the following characteristics.

(i) Group work is centred round a challenging **task** that is suitable for a few people to work together.

(ii) The task or activity requires the **cooperation** and **collaboration** of all members of the group for successful completion.

(iii) The group is small enough in **size** to require direct interaction among all the group members.

(iv) **Completion** of the task enables group members to construct knowledge.

In an ODL context such as that of OUM, group work activities have the added advantage of enabling learners to share their ideas and concerns with their peers. This also helps to reduce the sense of isolation that ODL learners sometimes experience.
(b) Problem-based learning

Problem-based learning is intended to assist learners in developing their critical and analytical skills while constructing knowledge for themselves. This is accomplished through the task which takes the form of a problem that the learners are required to resolve.

The tutor poses real-world problems that allow learners to apply the knowledge and ideas encountered in the classroom to solve real problems.

Keep the following in mind when devising a problem for your learners.

(i) Identify a problem that is consistent with the desired learning outcomes and is suited to the learners.

(ii) Formulate the task so that solution of the problem requires learners to integrate new knowledge and ideas with previous knowledge and experience.

(iii) Ensure that solution of the problem promotes the development of the higher order thinking skills.

(iv) Ensure that the problem is connected to the context of the learners’ world so that it presents authentic opportunities for knowledge construction and application.

(c) Self-directed Learning

In self-directed learning, learners take the initiative to diagnose their learning needs, formulate learning goals, identify resources for learning, select and implement learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes.
At OUM, we believe that all of these processes can be made more efficient if the tutor assists the learners. How do you, as a tutor, facilitate self-directed learning among your learners?

Here are some ways in which you can facilitate self-directed learning among your learners.

(i) Work with your learners to identify their learning needs. Talk to the learners to help them identify those areas of the course content that they need to work on. You will be better able to help the learner zero in on the more critical concepts and ideas that require additional work if you are familiar with the course content.

(ii) Once you have helped the learner identify the areas that need to be worked on, help him to prioritize these needs.

(iii) Encourage the learner to set objectives that can be achieved in several ways. Work with the learner to determine the indicators of successful performance in the learning project. If appropriate, provide examples of previously acceptable work.

(iv) Then, work with the learner to identify the starting point for taking on a learning project. A learning project is any task or activity that the learner engages in to help him construct new knowledge. Work with the learner to identify strategies that can be used to successful tackle the task or activity.

(v) Help match resources to the needs of learners. Foster learner independence by helping learners learn how to locate resources on their own.
(vi) Help learners develop positive attitudes and feelings of independence relative to learning. Create an atmosphere of openness and trust to promote better performance.

The key to making self-directed learning a success is to view it as a partnership between yourself and the learners. You should view your role as that of a manager of learning rather than an information provider.

As a manager of learning, you need to guide and assist the learner in acquiring the learning skills that will enable him to become a successful and independent learner.

2.4.5 Exercising Flexibility

The necessity for careful planning of the activities that you intend to carry out with your learners in a tutorial has been emphasised in this chapter. However, you have to be able to exercise a fair degree of flexibility in implementing these activities in the tutorial.

You must be able to adjust the timings as well as the sequence of these activities in response to the needs of your learners. You may have to put aside an activity that you have prepared or even carry out an activity that you will need to develop ‘on the fly’. This flexibility will enable you to better fulfill the learning needs of your learners.
2.4.6 Providing Feedback

It is very important that you provide effective feedback to the learners during the tutorials. Effective feedback motivates learners by indicating to them those content areas that they have mastered as well as by identifying the gaps in their understanding and performance that require further work.

Providing effective feedback begins with establishing and communicating to the learners the expected performance levels for the course as well as for specific tasks. You can then evaluate learner performance against these shared expectations and identify their strengths and weaknesses. Having identified the content areas that require additional work, you can then work out with the learners the strategies that they can use to address the gaps in their understanding and performance.

2.4.7 Motivating Learners

It is important that you encourage and motivate your learners during the tutorials. This is particularly important in the distance learning context at OUM. ODL learners arguably encounter more problems and challenges than do students in conventional academic settings and therefore require more positive interventions from their tutors.

It is important that you work out strategies with your learners that allow them to cope with the problems and challenges that they encounter.

It is also important that you develop and maintain a positive ambiance in your tutorials and incorporate encouraging messages in your interaction with your learners. Motivation and encouragement are critical to sustaining learner commitment to the learning process, especially in an ODL context.
2.4.8 Maintaining Records

It is very important that you maintain accurate and up-to-date records of learners’ progress on tests and assignments. To do this, you must be aware of administrative procedures and deadlines that affect the learners. You should update marks and grades regularly and also ensure that all documentation relating to the submission of assignments by your learners is in order. You also have to maintain records relating to learners’ attendance at tutorials. You must ensure that this information relating to learner progress and attendance is relayed to the appropriate departments at the times specified.

2.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the OUM tutor’s four key areas of responsibility have been detailed. The aspects that you need to attend to in order to deliver effective tutorials have also been described. Working towards developing these skills and strategies will enable you to facilitate face-to-face tutorials that are beneficial to your learners.