



The Student experience

The tutor experience

Emma

I was more nervous about talking to my tutor on the phone than I was starting the course, only because it's quite invasive isn't it like. Having a chat with somebody that you're not really ever going to meet.

Wilma

My tutor was a wonderful lady. She was most encouraging, and it was really a pleasure to discuss things with her.

Saiqa

I thought well I don't know this person. What's she going to be like? What's she going to say? What am I going to say to her? What's she going to think of me?

Neil

My tutor sent me a letter with all her details on and contact times. Basically through the week was fine. On a weekend, not so because she had a family life as well.

Nicola

So I sent her an email giving her a quick who I am and what I am doing, and everything. And she rung me up and she was just the most really nice woman.

Yvonne

And we got on like a house on fire. He was just such a lovely chap, and so encouraging. He was just always positive.

Paul

We organised between ourselves that she would ring me on a Friday afternoon around two o'clock.

Wilma

And on the dot of nine thirty my tutor rang. Each time it was wonderful.

Wagdi

I was checking my email because I had my laptop with me and found a message from my tutor saying 'I've been trying to call you, are you out? Let's arrange another time'. And picked up the phone and realised that my book had pressed against the phone and it was switched on. So all the time that my tutor was trying to contact me, the phone was engaged. So that was the very first time that I was meant to talk to my tutor which was a bit of a situation, but we got over it, and I called her straight back and said and apologised for it. But she was fine.

Emma

I'm twenty eight years old. I work as a classroom assistant at a deaf school. I've worked there for three years and the children that I work with they're deaf, but they also have additional needs.

Emma (*signing and talking to pupil*)

...making bouncy castles, yes...

Yes. I really enjoy my job. It's full time, it's thirty two hours a week.

I'm really happy that I've done this course. It's something that I've always wanted to do. It sounds really silly but because I hadn't studied for six years, I never felt like this at school, but I was really excited because it's given me an opportunity to go on to my nurse training.

I live at home with my partner, his son George who's ten, and his daughter Alice, who's sixteen. And then there's my daughter Emily.

I study here. I've got a computer desk there. It's really good. It folds out. I study mainly like when my children aren't around. I just set myself a time say between nine and half ten and I try not to go over that.

Screen Ident: Talking to your Tutor

Neil

I found at first uneasy on the telephone at first and I didn't think tutorials on the phone would be a success.

Saiqa

This is not going to be right for me because how am I going to learn off the phone? How is she going to be able to tell me? How am I going to understand, when I can't see her?

Wagdi

I found it useful to write questions out. So have questions pre-prepared so I can make use of my time but it's very much about making sure that I was in the living room, sitting at a table so I could spread my course work out.

Judith

I knew when he was going to call. I made all my notes, anything I wanted to ask or tell him, I prepared in advance, in the timing that I had allotted to that particular thing and once he called I was completely ready.

Nicola

My first phone call was actually quite nerve wracking. I didn't know anything about her, and I didn't know I was talking to, but she really put me at ease.

John

If I get a problem I ring her up, and I say to her 'I can't do this because of this'. And she will try and put it to me in basic English that I can understand and we get on quite well.

Paul

You've got to ask and ask again, until you get it right. Once you've got it right, you'll never have to ask again and don't be worried if there's a little bit of a silence on either side. Sometimes a little bit of a break it makes you think.

Mike

I think my impression of sort of teachers and tutors probably is still, was still ingrained from when I was previously at school so it was nice to be able to perhaps deal with her more on an adult level if you like.

Judith

The relationship with my tutor was more one of equals, two people sharing the same interest.

Wilma

There was no judgmental questions. It was all helpful.

Wagdi (*talking to work colleague*)

I just want to talk to you because I'm going away on holiday...

Wagdi

I've been working at Tesco's for about nineteen years and currently I'm the Resource Manager and basically what that means is I'm in charge of recruitment.

Wagdi (*talking to work colleague*)

..so what I want you to do is to recruit those people, so interview them, screen them...

Wagdi

So I get to meet all the new people, which is good fun.

I've wanted to go back to studying for quite a while and I've always been interested in psychology. A friend of mine suggested the Open University to me so I looked up on their internet and found an 'Openings' course was exactly what I needed.

What I found is that I needed to be quite structured routine. I made sure that I spent at least an hour after work so it would be the first thing that I did when I got home. Strangely enough this room isn't used a great deal. It tends to be left unused. So it's a very quiet environment.

I enjoy walking around London, pottering around London finding new buildings. And I like taking photographs. The sort of thing I used to enjoy when I was younger and it's something I'm getting back into. I find it helps me relax.

Wagdi (*talking to friend*)

What are you up to this week then?

I'm going to the drinks party on Friday night...

Wagdi

I personally believe it's been a learning experience to me, and it's something that I'm pleased that I've done.

Wagdi (*talking to friend*)

Oh yeah, it's the thing Simon's organising, but I can't attend because I'm in Leeds

Wagdi

It's helped me change as a person. It's made me more confident and more outgoing. And in the future I know that even though things are daunting, you do get through them and there are people that are out there to support you and that's kind of what the Openings course is all about.

Screen ident: Feedback on your Assignments

Saiqa

When we got the first assignment back, you know every day at the letter box. I thought is it coming through now, is it coming through. But it was a lot of excitement and nervousness, thinking how I've done. Have I messed up?

Mark

Obviously when you started doing your assignments, you look at them as like little exams. But they're not. And you send them off and you get feedback off your tutor. And if they're good remarks you feel great. If they're not so good remarks, well it's just something, you just pick yourself up and try and follow the examples they give you.

Yvonne

When I, you know, got the feedback, he rang me to make sure that I wasn't too disappointed. And I wasn't going to be disheartened by it.

Neil

If I had concerns about an essay or I thought my idea was right, then she wouldn't just say 'No, it's this way'. We'd have had a discussion about it.

Yvonne

He often asked for my opinion and was very encouraging about what I thought.

Mark

On the first assignment or the first question, it was.. I didn't understand it. I just didn't understand what they were asking me but she sort of like re-worded the question for me, and she sort of pointed me in the right direction and it suddenly clicked.

Paul

The first assignment was the most difficult and that actually took me much longer than I anticipated. Although I knew all the answers, it was how to set the work out. How to lay it out.

Wagdi

She was very good at telling me that the assignment was more about practicing the skills that you need to write an essay, making sure that you come into a word count, and you capture certain ideas.

Paul

The actual things that you learn about aren't always as important as the methods of actually putting the work down and I found this, it took me one or two tutorials to really establish why we were actually doing them, but it's a method.

Saiqa

When I actually got the assignments back, I was very pleased with the results. Obviously I had, my tutor had given me some pointers where I'd gone wrong with references and things like that. But the actual assignment, she found, you know, she wrote that she was very pleased with reading it, and it was a really good assignment. And that was, that gave me a lot of confidence again.

Yvonne

Always felt good about the tutorials. Always came away feeling more confident, more positive about how I was going. And I don't know if he was on the other end of the line thinking 'Oh my God, this stupid woman'. But he never made me feel like that. And always encouraged me and always reassured me that I wasn't the only one making these silly mistakes.

Judith

He gave me better feedback than I thought I would get there and that quite surprised me really. And then when he did give the negative part of it, it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. It was constructive criticism. He didn't criticise, you know 'you did this wrong, and therefore you're a rubbish student'. But he did it very constructively and said 'perhaps you should focus more this way, rather than the, and do it well'.

Neil

To get the best out of a tutorial is be prepared. You know when your next tutorial is. Make sure it's an appropriate time that best suits you. Make sure you've done any work that was agreed at your last tutorial, so that you're up to date. Any concerns maybe jot them down, so that you don't forget things. And have a two way conversation how your study is going. If you're having any problems or you disagree with anything that's been said, have a discussion about it.

Wilma

She made me feel as if I was as clever as she was. And quite honestly, she was a doctor.