**ELLIE HILL**

Hi. My name’s Ellie, Ellie Hill and I’m Senior Lecturer here. I work for the Department for Education Inclusion, which I’m very proud of working with the team and the students I spend my time with. I’m also a student as I’m studying for my PhD so I’ve got both sides to tell you about today both being a lecturer and a tutor and conducting tutorials and being a student and therefore I’m a tutee with the staff here at the university that I work alongside as a PhD student. So, what is it about tutorials that we pride ourselves on? Well, here at our university we conduct individual one-to-one tutorials and we also conduct group tutorials and they have different purposes so I’ll tell you a little bit about those now.

So the individual tutorial can be for a student who wants to discuss an aspect of an assignment, so we call these module tutorials. So, a student will come along and will come prepared with some questions, some queries, perhaps even a starting point to the assignment they’ve been working on and we guide them through, coaching them through ideas that they’ve come up with and helping them move forward with their thinking. Now, ideally that would be in an office or sometimes in a coffee shop or sometimes outside if it’s a really nice day. We arrange that time and we have that time just one-to-one with the two of us. What we attempt to do is to meet the needs of the individual student in that time. Some students like to record that meeting; in fact, I’m one of those. When I’m in a tutorial where I’m a tutee, not the tutor, I really like to be recording so that I can go back over the conversation afterwards. I find that really really helps me. I can then take notes at leisure and be a real active listener during the tutorial.

Now, with the students, they like to be taking notes through working through. They will have their notebook with them and they’ll be jotting down answers to questions they’ve pre-prepared or jotting down ideas I’ve said. As an experienced tutor, I take their lead and note where they’re stopping and thinking and pausing and then I’m able to give them some space. It’s really important we don’t fill all the time of the tutorial with us talking. It’s very much the student leading the conversation.

Other students – they don’t come with something pre-prepared but as you say things that are relevant to them, they clarify that with you and then they might jot that into their phones. They might make a voice note on their phone. So there are a lot of different ways that we make this as accessible as possible during a one-to-one tutorial.

Now, we also conduct these online and these have been really useful. So we use different online platforms to do our online tutorials. Those can be great, because not only can you video and audio record those but you can also draw down a transcript afterwards so you can get some basic idea, with some funny words put in there, that don’t usually match exactly what you meant, but it gives you an idea of what the conversation was.

I found that actually students quite like the online tutorials because, you know, geographically they don’t have to come in to university for that. Also, our students can be based anywhere in the country so that means they can feel they can come and work with us if they’re not local to the area. It’s time efficient because you can be working on something one minute and then, five minutes later, you’re in a tutorial with your tutor. So, we’re really flexible in working in those different ways.

One thing I found is that some of our students who have autism prefer not to have their camera on at those times. They find it’s more demanding on them to have the visual eye control of being online and trying to listen at the same time. We’re completely flexible. We will work with whatever works for the student.

Now we also do group tutorials and these can be really great if there’s a group assignment that needs to be undertaken for example. Let’s say we have a project and we have four members of a group and everyone’s got to take on one topic between them and choose which aspects of that they’d like to go and research and find out about and bring back for their final presentation. Many of our students are very skilled at doing this and they have all different approaches and ways of networking and negotiating that time but it can be really helpful with the tutor to start that ball rolling, to set up an action plan and to decide upon roles for different members of the group. So, in group tutorials we’d be sitting round a table, like I am today, and you would be facilitating, as a tutor, the conversation between the four people. Now, what’s important there is to think about, you know, is everybody as extrovert as each other? Will everybody want to volunteer as much? You’re there to actually guide and draw in all the contributions from people. Perhaps to facilitate some group note-taking with a large sheet of paper in the middle of the table so that everybody has their opportunity to say their piece. What’s really important at the end of the group tutorial is that everyone goes away knowing what it is they need to do next. So, you’re steering the student group into organisational skills, and these are great transferable and employable skills as well, for team projects they might do in the future.

We do undertake a lot of tutorials because we feel that’s the way to really meet the needs of individual students and groups. We also meet students for personal tutorials where we talk about the direction they want to go in their career, any issues and challenges they’ve got at the moment, and not just specifically about one assignment. That’s when you really get to know somebody because you’re spending that time one-to-one. That can either be face to face in person or it can be online. We also offer phone tutorials as well. Really, it’s having that little chunk of time when it’s just about you and your tutor is really actively listening to what it is that you’re wanting from that procedure.

So, there are lots of benefits in taking part in tutorials whether it’s as part of a group or individually. If you want to refer to our SCALE website, you’ll find lots of other hints and tips to support you.