

The Role of the Learning Coach

A Guide to Best Practice

- One-to-one tutorials are a way of building up students' confidence in their academic ability. The Learning Coach becomes more aware of the difficulties particular students may face.
- The Learning Coach is better able to address the pastoral needs of each individual student.

What are the possible disadvantages of one-to-one tutorials?

- Lack of rapport between student and learning coach.
- Individual tutorials must take into account time constraints and the implications on manpower/finance.

Guidelines for one-to-one tutorials

- Ensure that the students understand the purpose of the one-to-one tutorial.
- Consider how you communicate with the students. Give them time to think and respond. Listen to what they are saying. It may be useful to paraphrase back to them.
- Start out with easy questions you know the students will have little or no trouble answering.
- Agree some ground rules with the students so that they know what they can expect of you as their Learning Coach and what you expect of them.
- Be clear at the end of the tutorial on any future action that needs to be taken by you and/or the student.
- Look out for students failing to cope. Pick up on cues. Is the reason they are failing to cope related to distressing individual circumstances, disability or a medical condition, unrecognised dyslexia, being in an unfamiliar setting?
- The Learning Coach should respond to any needs that are raised by students between their tutorials. Students will need to know that they are entitled to a discussion at their request if they have any cause for concern, i.e. an 'open door' system.
- The Learning Coach must establish an atmosphere of trust.
- The Learning Coach must be on time for the tutorial.

GROUP TUTORIALS

What are the advantages of group tutorials?

- Some issues can be addressed more effectively in a group tutorial than in one to one. In the group, individuals can motivate each other and, in the process, develop self-confidence and self-esteem.



Examples of issues that can be addressed in a group tutorial include:

- Standards of conduct, attendance and punctuality
- Development of study skills, including developing a range of learning styles
- Time management
- Revision technique
- Examination technique

What are the possible disadvantages of group tutorials?

- Some students may not feel confident in speaking in front of others.
- Difficulty of accommodating different learning styles.

What types of questioning can the Learning Coach use?

1. Closed questions

Such questions require a yes or no answer or, the questioner might expect a specific answer and not accept any alternatives e.g. *Have you completed your individual investigation?*

2. Open questions

This type of question is intended to discover what the student is thinking e.g. *What areas would you be interested in investigating and why?*

3. Testing questions

These questions are used to test knowledge and understanding about something which the student is expected to know. Using this type of question enables the questioner to assess the student's knowledge and understanding e.g. *You say you're interested in global warming so what do you know about it?*

4. Teaching questions

This type of question is used to encourage students to reason, to think and to justify their responses e.g. *What opportunities do you think there would be to complete key skills?*

As far as the WBQ is concerned open questions are particularly effective when guiding students with their individual investigation or a number of other key skills/folios.

Many thanks to Ms Emma Laidlaw, Lead Learning Coach at St Cyres School

The role of the Learning Coach is crucial to the success of the Welsh Baccalaureate (WBQ). A Learning Coach should help individuals solve their own problems through listening, reflecting and asking questions. The goal is for students to become independent and therefore lifelong learners and the Learning Coach is the resource they use to support themselves. The WBQ is committed to placing students at the centre of the learning process and they are entitled to high quality support.



What are the WBQ requirements?

All students must have a 25 -30 minute one-to-one tutorial with their Personal Tutor (Learning Coach) at least once every half term. Individual students may need more than this.

What are the qualities a Learning Coach should have?

- Able to motivate
- Supportive
- Approachable
- Non-judgmental
- Good Listener
- Sense of Humour
- Patient
- Committed
- Respectful
- Caring
- Warm
- Good communication skills

What are the general responsibilities of a Learning Coach?

For each student, the Learning Coach should ensure that the student is:

- encouraged to have a broad and balanced programme
- given an opportunity to discuss the learning opportunities or programmes that are appropriate to them
- helped with the prioritisation of their goals and setting of targets
- supported when they are addressing weaknesses, and helped to recognise and celebrate success, which will help improve their self-esteem
- referred to specialist support when necessary
- helped to prioritise actions through personal reviews, and to set targets
- helped to develop an individual action plan
- supported in developing and acquiring portfolio evidence for the key skills

- helped to co-ordinate, map, track and review their progress and achievements, so that the Learning Coach can respond to their short and long-term needs.
- informed about the facilities and opportunities available to them to develop their personal learning styles
- aware of the requirements of the WBQ, and of the implications for their personal programme

ONE TO ONE TUTORIALS

What are the advantages of one-to-one tutorials?

- The priority is to deal with students as individuals. Students all have different needs, so the support and guidance that they receive from their Learning Coach must be as individual as they are.



| KEY SKILL/FOLIO | How could the Learning Coach help? |
|--|---|
| Personal and Social Education (P.S.E.) ----- Wales, Europe and the World (W.E.W) | Discuss a range of opportunities enabling the students to meet the requirements of the specification. Advise the student to keep a diary record of their engagement with a relevant PSE/WEW issue. |
| Community Participation | Discuss the areas of interest the students have and what is available as a possible project. Advise the students on the possible timescale for the project and contact details. |
| Individual Investigation | Discuss possible topic areas with students, phrasing of question, identify sources of information and discuss structure e.g. use of internet, texts, specialist advice/support, how to evaluate and reach a conclusion. |
| Language Module | Discuss with students how they can improve their language skills, the requirements of the module and the need to keep a diary record. |
| Communication | Help the students identify subject areas that will help them fulfil the requirements of the folio and the types of evidence they will require e.g. discussion, presentation from a subject, synthesis of documents and extended writing |
| Problem Solving | Highlight subject areas that will help the students fulfil this skill. Discuss the problem with the students and the options available to them. It may be necessary to guide the students to think about the possible strengths and weaknesses of these options and agree with them the final option. Students may need assistance in structuring their main plan and identifying appropriate evidence. |

| KEY SKILL/FOLIO | How could the Learning Coach help? |
|--------------------------|--|
| I.C.T. | Help the students identify an I.C.T. task and discuss the process/stages involved and the evidence needed for this skill e.g. a PowerPoint presentation and Excel charts. |
| I.O.L.P. | Help the students identify areas for development and decide targets for improvement e.g. research skills, presentation skills, data-handling, PowerPoint etc. The students should be guided to areas of support such as: internet, texts, specialist advice etc. Give the students advice on the types of evidence required for the folio e.g. handouts from workshops attended and notes from websites visited. |
| Working With Others | Encourage the students to get together with others and choose a suitable group project/task. Set realistic targets for the students in planning, doing and evaluating the project/task. Give the students advice on the types of evidence they will require e.g. minutes of meetings, emails, letters, posters, photos etc |
| Application of Number | Help the students identify an application of number task and discuss the process/stages involved and evidence required for the folio e.g. advise students on need for a scale drawing and reading information from graph. |
| Work – related Education | Discuss with students the possible options for work experience and the enterprise activity. |

