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# The tutor in eLearning: tasks and skills required

***The tutor is an indispensable figure for any online course and plays a crucial role in the learning experience of the trainees. Let's find out why.***

Compared to traditional classroom training, eLearning courses require a **different approach to teaching** and interaction with learners. In distance learning, in fact, learning is mediated by technology and this, in some cases, can lead the **learner** to feel lonely and unmotivated.

In this context, the role of the **tutor** is crucial. Born as a classroom figure, as a link between students and teachers who do not have a continuous presence in the classroom, in online courses (where interaction with learners is less immediate) the figure of the tutor becomes indispensable.

Like the teacher, the tutor plays a fundamental role in the teaching process because he or she plays a key role in **preventing students from dropping out**. The tutor is in fact the one who offers his or her support and accompanies the learner until the end of the course, stimulating interest and motivation.

In this article, we will see what the main tasks of the tutor are and what skills he/she needs to have in order to carry out his/her role successfully.

## Main tasks of the tutor in eLearning

Depending on the type of course, user and context, the tutor can be assigned very different tasks. In some cases, he or she follows the student throughout the course: from the use of the contents to technical support and supervision and evaluation. In others, his role is limited to only one of these aspects.

Below are the main tasks generally assigned to the **tutor of an eLearning course**:

- **Content facilitator**, when he or she intervenes as an expert on the subject and provides support in the learning process;
- **Cognitive Process Facilitator**, when he or she supports reflection on activities, learned notions and learning strategies;
- **Moderator**, when he manages discussions and group work (mostly in courses with a collaborative approach where learning takes place also and above all through comparison between students);
- **Evaluator**, when providing feedback on activities carried out;
- **Technician**, when he offers support on the use of the platform and the tools made available;
- **Administrator**, when managing the course, enrolments and records.

## Tutor eLearning: what skills do you need?

The skills required to the tutor of an eLearning course can be multiple and vary depending on the tasks assigned to it. As we have seen, the tutor can in fact have both teaching and disciplinary functions, as well as organizational and management functions.

The skills required of the tutor can however be classified in three main areas:

- **Technical skills**, i.e. the ability to use the tools provided, to offer support to students on the use of the platform;
- **Facilitating skills**, i.e. methodological and psychological skills, aimed at bringing out the students' knowledge and helping them to achieve their teaching objectives in a more involving way, making the most of their contribution;
- **Managerial skills**, i.e. the ability to monitor students' progress by providing personalized feedback and defining times and methods, as well as managing group dynamics.

# The role of the tutor in the design of an online course

So far we have analysed the centrality of the tutor in the relationship with the learners. But what is his role with respect to teachers and course designers? And what kind of knowledge should he have with respect to the subject matter?

Also from this point of view, the role of the tutor can take on various facets: he or she may have a direct role in the **creation of the course**, or he or she may not know the authors of the course at all and deal exclusively with **student assistance**.

In both cases, the contribution it can make to teachers and designers should not be underestimated. He is a crucial link between the creators of the course and the students' learning outcomes. This means that no one knows as well as he does how the course is perceived by the user and what the elements on which to intervene to improve the **learning experience** are.

For this purpose, the tutor could be an excellent test user of online courses. On the one hand to directly experiment with tools and themes that will confront the students, on the other hand to offer his contribution in the evaluation of the structure of the training course and the tools made available to the users.

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