

Tasks, Functions and Basic Activities of an Online Tutor

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Abstract

Today in education, highly qualified personnel of a new generation are in demand, ready to make independent, responsible decisions, ensure the formation of the competence of responsible choice, are able to create a program for personal development of studying, build their educational trajectory, taking into account individual characteristics, as well as provide pedagogical support and online support for students in the process of mastering new material and achieving personal results. The training of such a specialist is a very actual pedagogical issue. This is due to many reasons that arise both in the educational process (the demand for training with special educational needs) and in society (restrictions related to the pandemic). An online tutor can become such a specialist, whose competencies will become an additional competitive advantage in these conditions. In this regard, the understanding of the essence, definition of tasks, functions and main areas of activity of the online tutor deserves close attention.

Keywords ¹

Education, tutor, online-tutor, online learning, online space, tasks, functions and activities of an online-tutor.

1. Introduction

The development of students' abilities during the transition stages of life: changing the educational organization, choosing a further stage of training, problems with mastering the educational program, uncertainty in their plans and actions, loss of motivation to learn requires an individual approach and various methods for building a learning trajectory. In addition, there are special categories of people who, for whatever reason, cannot study stationarily. These reasons include restrictions on health, social phobia, living or temporarily staying away from educational centers. A special approach to learning is required for people with attention deficit disorder. In this regard, the reformed educational environment needs a new specialist who is able to individualize the educational process, develop an educational program, taking into account individual characteristics, form the competence of responsible choice, provide online support and control in the process of mastering new material and personal development [1; 2; 3]. Such a specialist can be an online tutor, whose activities consist of teaching, consulting, training, coaching and mentoring.

2. Purpose and objectives of the research

In recent psychological and pedagogical research, the authors, along with the concept "online tutor", use the concepts of "personal tutor in online learning", "tutor in online learning", "tutor in distance education", "electronic tutoring". To comprehend the essence of the concept of "online

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tutor", to accurately determine its place and role in the educational process, let us highlight the purpose of our research: identifying the tasks, functions and main activities of an online-tutor.

To achieve this goal, the following tasks were set:

- to clarify the essence of the concept of "online tutor";
- to define the purpose and activities of the online tutor;
- to realize decomposition of goals into tasks;
- to highlight the functions of an online tutor and compare them with the tasks of an online tutor in relation to student.

3. Literature review

Analysis of literary sources shows [3; 4] that the emergence of tutoring dates back to the middle Ages, where the nature of the requirements imposed on University students made it necessary to master the primary skill as self-education, which contributes to the search and study of the necessary knowledge. These requirements were imposed exclusively on exams, while the student independently chose the path to achieve the knowledge necessary for obtaining a degree. At this stage, a new form of University mentoring has emerged – tutoring. The tutor performed the function of supporting the process of self-education, helping to identify inclinations to certain disciplines.

Our analysis of the etymology of the concepts "tutor" and "online tutor" used in modern pedagogical practices revealed the following.

The origin of the term "tutor" is multifaceted, as is its meaning. Etymologically, it goes back to the English "tutor" – "tutor, tutor", old French "tuteur" – "guardian" and originates from the Latin "tueor" – to protect, take care.

In the dictionary interpretation, "tutor" is presented as a teacher who provides additional assistance to the student, taking into account his personality, as well as responsible for his training [5].

In some cases, the scientific literature (S. A. Schennikov, A. G. Teslinov, A. G. Chernyavskaya) interprets the concept of "tutor" as a teacher-consultant-specialist in the field of education and self-education [6].

In the works of other authors (T.M. Kovaleva, E.I. Kobyscha, S.Yu. Popova (Smolik), A.A. Terov, M.Yu. Cheredilina) it is noted that "a tutor is a teacher who works, directly relying on the principle of individualization, accompanying the construction of each student of his own individual educational program" [7, C. 236].

According to N.V. Pilipchevskaya [8], a tutor is a teacher who owns a variety of functions, depending on the scope of his activity.

N.V. Rybalkina [9] distinguishes a tutor from a teacher who knows the path and leads along it. She thought that the tutor knows how to find this path. The tutor helps the student to independently plan educational activities.

Foreign researchers [10; 11] believe that a tutor can act as a tutor or teaching assistant; student tutor; online tutor and facilitator.

The concept of "online tutor" refers to online learning, carried out through an application, in which the student and the teacher can communicate through common tools: chats, whiteboards, web conferencing, teleconferencing and other specialized tools that facilitate the process of transferring information [12; 13].

"Electronic tutoring is, in the understanding of colleagues from Western universities, live tutor support for the student studying remotely and/or using electronic learning tools and network services and resources" [14].

According to M. Yu. Cheredilina [15], an online tutor is a specialist who studies the interests and needs of the student and creates an environment for his development.

4. Methodology

The methodological and theoretical basis of the research are:

- system analysis and a systematic approach;

- various aspects of vocational education and professional training of students;
- patterns and principles of the professional development of an individual;
- the main provisions of personality-oriented, activity-based and axiological approaches;
- didactic and methodological approaches to the use of information, and communication technologies in the learning process, etc.

To solve the set tasks, the following research methods were used in the work:

1. Analysis (when working with literature, programs, standards, textbooks and teaching aids);
2. Methods of comparison, generalization and analogy (when identifying similarities and differences in the purpose of a tutor, online tutor and teacher);
3. The method of abstraction (when excluding from consideration when performing research insignificant functional and content characteristics of the concept under consideration and the ability to focus on its most significant properties);
4. Methods of induction of deduction (with the theoretical substantiation of the conclusions obtained by induction, which turn them into reliable knowledge).

5. Results

In our understanding, an online tutor is a competent teacher-mentor, consultant in online learning, who owns innovative technologies, organizes and provides online support in the process of education and self-education. He does not teach certain subjects, do not impose his own point of view, but accompany the student in the learning environment. He makes sure that the student does not lose their educational motivation and understand what they want to get out of training and classes in general. In other words, an online tutor is a communication bridge between students and an educational organization [13].

The essence of the work of an online tutor is to adapt training individually to the student. It should take into account what the student already knows, how well he has learned it, what he does not know, control the successful acquisition of new knowledge, as well as the personal interests and goals of the student.

The online tutor does not point out the student exactly what to do. He only motivates his to solve the problem on their own, creates an atmosphere of openness and trust. A very important point: an online tutor must have absolute faith in their student and their ability to achieve success, otherwise the student will feel it, and all the work will be wasted. The responsibility for all actions and the end result lies with the student, and the online tutor will simply support and help find the right ways.

The purpose of the online tutor is to provide network support to the student in the process of implementing an individual educational program, the formation of self-education and self-development skill, as well as increasing the efficiency of educational activities using information and communication technologies [4]. Decomposition of the goal made it possible to identify the following tasks (table 1):

Table 1

Tasks of the online tutor

Task	Actions of an online tutor
1. To implement goal-setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identification and setting of goals and objectives of the subjects of activity at certain stages of training; • prediction of educational outcomes.
2. To conduct monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing contact with the student, removing the barrier; • determination of the goal and objectives of joint activities; • determination of the level of knowledge of the student; • identification of the individual characteristics of the student.

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| 3. To encourage motivation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identification of the student's educational motives and interests; • setting problematic tasks for the student; • inclusion of the studying in active work; • identification of difficulties that arise for the student in the course of educational activities. |
| 4. To plan options for upcoming activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planning of educational programs and individual educational routes; • creating an environment with additional resources for planning and implementing an individual educational program; • explanation of the principles of working in the educational environment. |
| 5. To coordinate (to organize, to manage), individual educational work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collective discussion of the organization of the student's personal work; • teaching the student to make a conscious independent choice based on his personal interests; • counseling a student at all stages of the educational process; • interpretation and explanation of mistakes. |
| 6. To control learning outcomes using different methods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitoring the effectiveness of individual educational program implementation; • control of the dynamics of change from class to class. |
| 7. To use reflective practice in the educational process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conducting diagnostics of the initial and current level of knowledge; • organization of reflection the student's own activities; • teaching students to analyze their successes and mistakes. |
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Organizing support for students, an online tutor carries out various activities:

- motivating students to independently master the educational material, correcting their actions, participating in the discussion, finding ways and methods to include them in work - teacher-mentor;
- organization of individual and individualized educational work, control and assistance in the process of achieving the educational goal-organizer;
- creating an appropriate intellectual and emotional environment, an atmosphere of psychological support that promotes individual educational interests, mutual understanding and consensus – facilitator;
- consulting for achieving stated goals and personal growth, active training aimed at developing competencies, designing and implementing individual educational strategies and programs-consulting, coaching, training.

Let's analyze the tutor's functions and select from them those that are characteristic of an online tutor.

According to N.V. Pilipchevskaya [8], the functions of a tutor should include:

- informational and analytical support of specific stages of educational activities;
- development and implementation of an individual educational program;
- diagnostics of the student's educational needs, opportunities, and prospects;
- consultations on educational issues, development and implementation of individual educational programs;
- reflection;

- trainings for self-management, self-regulation of the emotional and volitional sphere and self-recovery of the individual.

E. S. Gladkaya and Z. I. Tyumaseva [16] believe that a tutor should perform the following interrelated functions: diagnostic, managerial, educational, and reflexive.

T. M. Kovaleva [17] identifies managerial, diagnostic, goal-setting, motivational, communicative, control-reflexive and methodological functions.

According to V. P. Sergeeva [18], the tutor's functions include diagnostic, design and organizational, implementation (support for self-determination in the educational space, solutions to emerging difficulties and problems, control and correction of educational activities), analytical, and reflexive.

N. S. Serdyukova, E. V. Posokhina, and L. V. Serykh [19] think that the tutor's functions should include managerial, methodological, diagnostic, planning, goal-setting, motivational, communicative, control, and reflection.

Without claiming to be an exhaustive review of the entire set of definitions of tutor functions that have developed to date, in the course of the study, we identified those that are acceptable for an online tutor-goal – setting, diagnostic, motivational, organizational and managerial, and control-reflexive functions.

The highlighted functions shown in table 2 compare well with the tasks of an online tutor in relation to students.

Table 2

Correspondence of tasks and functions of an online tutor in relation to students

Task	Actions of an online tutor
1. To implement goal-setting	Goal-settings
2. To conduct monitoring	Diagnostic
3. To encourage motivation	Motivational
4. To plan options for upcoming activities	Organizational and management
5. To coordinate (to organize, to manage) individual educational work	
6. To control learning outcomes using different methods	Control and reflexive
7. To use reflexive practice in the educational process	

Discussion

We characterize each of the above functions in order to find out and clarify the features and peculiarities of the online tutor's activity (table 3).

Table 3

Functions and activities of an online tutor

Function	Description of function	Activities of online tutor
1. Goal-setting	Substantiation and promotion of goals, determining ways to achieve them, designing the expected result.	Creating conditions for the internal motivation of the student for an active position, the emergence of incentives: to learn, to find, to prove.
2. Diagnostic	Real assessment of students' educational abilities.	Collecting of data on the plans and intentions of students, their interests, inclinations, motives, strengths and weaknesses, readiness for social and professional self-determination.

3. Motivational	Creating and maintaining the involvement of students in the learning process.	Stimulating learning motivation through various interactive learning methods
4. Organizational and management	Purposeful ordering of actions of online tutors and students in accordance with a given learning paradigm.	Development of an individual educational program. Scheduling a plan for the implementation of an individual educational program by a student. Training in working with educational literature and information technologies. Realization of online support during the implementation of an individual educational program. Managing the sequence and time of training.
5. Control and reflexive	Control and correction of educational activities of students. Formulation of the results obtained, redefining the goals of future activities	Monitoring the educational and practical activities of students. Assessment of the quality of completed tasks and tests. Organization of reflexive activity of students for the purpose of analyzing the results of educational and practical activities and its correction.

The table shows that the activity of an online tutor is quite extensive and is located at the junction of several areas, which allows him to Express himself from different sides. First of all, an online tutor needs knowledge of pedagogy (various pedagogical techniques and methods aimed at motivating students), information and communication technologies, and psychology (social, age, clinical, and sports).

6. Conclusion

The results of the research allow to note that an online tutor differs from a teacher in that he knows the specifics of online education and understands it, is able to provide qualified assistance in the process of obtaining and mastering new knowledge, is able to coordinate and control the process of online learning [20].

A distinctive feature of the work of an online tutor is its movement into the online space. An online tutor sets up the student in a positive way, so that they can independently improve the effectiveness of their activities.

The variety of functions and tasks of an online tutor in education, as well as the specifics of its activities, make it necessary to provide special additional educating for such specialists.

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