Bibliography

Tutorial Teaching


A discussion of the tutorial which explores different conceptions students might have about its purpose. The article includes a good overview of the tutorial (p.632-3). The data about student perceptions is gathered by interviewing students across all subjects of study. The paper contends that the ideas students' have about the tutorial may affect their ability to benefit from this form of teaching. It is worth considering reading this article as part of a pair with Ashwin (2006).


This article explores the tutorial from the accounts of academics, using the same research approach as the 2005 article on students’ experiences. The academics interviewed are drawn from across all divisions in the University. The article can be used to collect ideas on teaching methods and activities to try in a tutorial, as well as for thinking about approaches to teaching more generally. It is worth considering reading this article as part of a pair with Ashwin (2005).


A very entertaining read and an insight into the development of the tutorial in the mid nineteenth century. The main point is that the tutorial is a relatively recent development, and it developed informally because teaching of the time was insufficient for students’ needs. The main account is Vol 6 pp150-153, and Vol 7 p133-135.


This article is not directly about the Oxford tutorial, but does explore one to one teaching. It focuses on the interactions between tutor and tutee and uses a mechanics case study to explore exactly what contributes to learning. The approach is psychological and the style of the article is likely to appeal to readers who like detailed and scientific approaches.


Lee Shulman’s concept of signature pedagogies in the professions has captured the imagination of many researchers and educators. In higher education, the concept has been extended to teaching in particular disciplines, and it is here argued that the concept of signature pedagogy can be usefully extended to the Oxford tutorial. Some of the specific aspects of the
tutorial system, and the habits of teaching and learning that tutors and students develop are described; and some of the limitations of the term ‘signature pedagogy’ for this case are also identified. The term ‘powerful pedagogy’ is proposed as a useful extension of ‘signature pedagogy’, to identify ambivalent features of influential teaching systems.


This article explores how tutors lead discussions in first year maths tutorials. It is a close and detailed reading which should be of considerable interest to those in Maths and allied subject areas. It suggests that the process of discussing approaches to teaching and observing tutorials helps to refine teacher approaches to the tutorial.


The author was Senior Tutor of St John’s College. The book gives an overview of the historical background of the tutorial, an articulation of what a tutorial is in practice, a review of what this means in theory, and speculates on the future for the tutorial. Although now a little out of date (and notably Moore seems unaware of the existence of female students!), there are some helpful passages about the pedagogy of the tutorial, for example p.19. The ‘theory’ chapter also provides a jargon-free discussion of educational ideas which might particularly appeal to readers from the humanities as the frame of reference includes Rousseau, Montaigne, and Pascal.


A series of essays written by Oxford scholars from a variety of disciplines. Very accessible.


The main focus of the article is explaining where political science features in the curricula of the honour schools in the 1890s, as political science is not a school in its own right. The author is writing for a US audience. The essay is primarily of historical interest, particularly for those who would like a reminder that at this time there were only seven honour schools available (no English or Modern Languages for example). It also gives an insight into the reasons for some of the terminology still in use today, for example the difference between ‘moderations’ and ‘prelims’.


Rouverol reviews the British education system in the 1950s and compares it to the US system. There is a good summary of the Oxbridge tutorial system of the 1950s, its effects on other teaching practices (e.g. lecturing) and the perceived benefits for students. Rouverol believes the entire UK education system to be vastly superior to the US system!

This article gives a historic overview of the development of the tutorial, situates it in the structure of the University and also in more recent UK higher education policy developments. The article doesn’t tell you how to teach a tutorial, but it does indicate some of the philosophy behind the tutorial and typical activities that this has involved. It also underlines the extent to which the tutorial has always been a flexible model, open to use as the tutor sees fit.


The focus of this article is on exploring the thesis that students’ concepts of their learning can be tested by questionnaire. The context for this research is that of tutorial teaching in Oxford (154 students from one college are tested in this study). The research paradigm used is that of deep/surface learning (see the articles by Ashwin) and the statistical analysis in the article may make it particularly appealing to some readers.
Unpublished papers, masters theses, projects

Archer, I et al. (2006). *Students’ experiences of the formative assessment of essays in history and archaeology at Oxford*. A research and development project funded by the Subject Centre for History, Classics and Archaeology.  

This work is focused on formative feedback on essays, and therefore by extension on the tutorial which is the usual setting for essay feedback. Although it is concerned only with History and Archaeology, its findings may be of interest more widely, particularly in the Humanities and Social Sciences divisions.

(http://www.teaglefoundation.org/teagle/media/library/documents/resources/20090206_beck.pdf)

This paper focuses on the benefits of a one-to-one tutorial setting. The paper is written for a US audience, but derives in part from a study of the Oxford tutorial. The author seeks to construct a measure for outcomes from tutorials through psychological traits.

(http://www.leejones.tk/teaching/beck.doc)

A discursive essay that rehearses many of the typical arguments proposed as to why the tutorial might be an effective pedagogical method. Beck brings together ideas expressed in Palfreyman (2001), Ashwin (2005), and so on. It focuses on tutorials in the Humanities and may be useful to those new to teaching tutorials in this area.

(http://www.lawrence.edu/fast/beckr/pdfs/OxfordTutorial_7_05_06.pdf)

A discursive piece which attempts a form of ethnography of the tutorial, but one based primarily on analysis of written accounts (largely from Palfreyman 2001) rather than observation.

(http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/R000222688/read)

A very interesting project focused on first year maths teaching. However, most of the writing in this copy is focused on the design of the research, and there are very few results presented. The most relevant section for analysis of the tutorial setting is the last one.


A conference paper which presents the last section of Hegedus et al (1999) to an educational audience. This paper might be of interest to mathematics teachers, but may not present sufficient data to really interest an audience interested in maths teaching. The main point is that in a teaching setting, the teacher frequently moves from a subject-based question (how is this
problem solved?) to a pedagogical one (how can I help students to solve this problem?) and that therefore teaching requires some expertise in both fields.

(http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/dldisplay.do?vid=OXVU1&docid=oxfaleph013217794)

An account of observing several Classics tutorials. This is quite an informal piece which would mainly be of interest to those teaching Classics. The strongest part is Appendix 2 (1-12), which gives a solid overview of the tutorial system.

(http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/coi)

A policy document which contains some useful factual information about tutorial expectations at Oxford, particularly with regard to how many tutorials undergraduates usually have, and how many hours of preparation they typically complete.

(http://issuu.com/ousu/docs/ug_teaching_review_report_2010)

Highly recommended. The appendices are particularly useful as they contain summaries of the student experience of teaching in each division.

(http://bit.ly/1DuLoy9)

The stated purpose of this paper is to introduce new tutors to the tutorial. However this paper contains relatively little focus on the tutorial setting itself, and its implicit aim is to introduce tutors to some key concepts in the educational literature about higher education. Part II of the paper is a summary of deep/surface learning; Kolb’s learning cycle; Perry’s work on intellectual development. Might appeal to those who are familiar with the tutorial setting, but want to develop their approaches to tutorial teaching.

(http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/dldisplay.do?vid=OXVU1&docid=oxfaleph015772349)

This is an internal Oxford report for the work that Trigwell and Ashwin undertook on Oxford students’ perceptions of their learning environment. It extensively uses the concept of deep/surface learning. Much of the material was subsequently used in the published articles which are shorter and more focused. However, some of the quantitative data in this report may be of interest to readers and some of the positive accounts of tutorials from students (p.39) are particularly striking.