Notes of Tutor Forum Group Meeting Thursday 12th January 2023.

1. **Course Description**

Use of language in the course description is crucial in clarifying how the class will be delivered and what class members will expect. Looking at what other tutors say about their courses can be very helpful. Using key words can provide a more accurate picture of what to expect.

Some examples were:

'mutual self help' implies working together, whereas 'self help implies' working alone.
'explore together' implies more shared discussion rather than the word 'learn'.
'class discussion' could only be effective if the group was relatively small

2. **Contacting people before the course starts etc.**

- This is not practical for large groups, but some tutors do this with their smaller groups - up to 12 people(?).

- This is necessary for some practical classes eg Art - and provides the opportunity for class members (especially new ones) to respond and contact the tutor with any queries.

- If tutors use first names it makes it more informal.

- Name tags can be useful for at least the first few sessions - it helps the tutor as well as making it easier for class members to get to know each other. This can be voluntary, as some may not want to do it. Noted that Zoom meetings do this automatically which helps.

- For small groups - get class members to introduce themselves and explain their interest in the class and what they are hoping for.

3. **Encouraging socialising both during and out of class time**

- Smaller groups lend themselves to this rather than larger lecture type classes - though note that many people used to socialise after the Wednesday lectures and this was an important element and attraction for many people. Zoom has reduced this option.

- Also noted the difficulties of managing individuals who tend to dominate and encouraging those who seem to want to keep quiet or feel intimidated.

4. **Some general points**

- It has to be recognised that not everyone wants to socialise and a lecture format with maybe a few questions at the end is what they are envisaging. There is nothing wrong with that!

- In order to prevent groups becoming too cliquey, it is a good idea to get some new people in, so that it does not become intimidating for any new members. Tutors can have some discretion to do this if vacancies occur and there is a waiting list otherwise we hope that the algorithm for working out members' choices allows for this in terms of allocating first choices.