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A MIXED METHODS EXPLORATION OF EFFECTIVE TUTORS AND TUTORING IN BLENDED LEARNING CONTEXTS

ANDREW RICHARD YOUDE

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

The University of Huddersfield

August 2013
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Abstract

This study explores the practices of higher education (HE) tutors in blended learning contexts. Their skills, qualities and competences, particularly emotional competences, are investigated. There is limited research into the personal qualities that students value in their tutors within blended learning contexts, and this study takes steps to address this gap. Students' perceptions of their tutors are explored focusing on those taking vocationally relevant part-time degrees. A mixed methods approach was adopted to conduct a detailed exploration of eight tutors’ practice in relation to blended learning with data gathered from four principal sources. The study used the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) to assess tutors’ emotional intelligence scores and results were compared to their learners’ perceptions of quality, assessed using an attitude survey. Interviews with tutors explored their approaches to delivery and considered factors that impacted on quality. Analysis of virtual learning environment content and communications provided insight into tutor online practice. The study proposes a conceptual framework for understanding the data generated in the form of a model of the observed tutor beliefs and practices. This represents an interpretation of effective practice in a particular cultural context and this framework may also be useful in understanding other instances of blended learning. The study concludes that tutor emotional competences are important in learner perceptions of quality, although the MSCEIT’s utility in identifying effective tutors is called into question. A number of recommendations for tutor training are provided together with factors for HE institutions to consider when delivering blended learning courses. In particular, the study indicates that integrating social constructivist approaches effectively is challenging for tutors using online media. The critical importance of developing tutor/learner relationships throughout courses is recognised as a key component of practice within blended learning.
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This thesis is dedicated to Abigail, my beautiful daughter.
# List of Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BERA</td>
<td>British Educational Research Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEQ</td>
<td>Course Experience Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMC</td>
<td>Computer Mediated Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Emotional Competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEI</td>
<td>Experiential Emotional Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE</td>
<td>Further Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communications Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ</td>
<td>Intelligence Quotient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSCEIT</td>
<td>Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOOC</td>
<td>Massive Open Online Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSS</td>
<td>National Student Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTQ</td>
<td>Online Tutoring Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGCE</td>
<td>Post-Graduate Certificate of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Part-Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLN</td>
<td>Personal Learning Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>R-SPQ</td>
<td>Revised Study Process Questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEI</td>
<td>Strategic Emotional Intelligence</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPQ</td>
<td>Study Process Questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>VLE</td>
<td>Virtual Learning Environment</td>
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Chapter 1  Introduction

1.1 Starting Points and Background to the Research Study

This study explores the practices of tutors in blended learning contexts and investigates skills, qualities and competences, particularly emotional competences, contributing to their effectiveness. The exploration includes analysis of learners’ perceptions of tutor effectiveness. Within this research study, emotional competence (EC) is defined as a learned capability based on emotional intelligence (EI) that leads to effective performance in blended learning contexts (see Chapter 2.2 for discussion). Blended learning typically involves significant online teaching, learning and support but includes some face-to-face contact (Garrison and Kanuka, 2004; De George-Walker and Keeffe, 2010). There is a growing amount of literature exploring the roles and competences that online tutors should possess, however, these are commonly practical in nature (for example: see, Barker, 2002; Aydin, 2005; Guasch, Alvarez, and Espasa, 2010; Abdous, 2011). A number of studies have researched desirable competences for effective online tutoring (for example: see, Goodyear et al., 2001; Klein et al., 2004) but, again, with limited consideration of personal qualities including emotional competences. Bawane and Spector (2009: 383) analysed 14 empirical studies that explored necessary roles and supporting competences for effective online tutors. This was undertaken to consider the priority and criticality of eight online tutor roles and related competences. Of all the studies included in Bawane and Spector’s research, only Salmon (2003: 55) included reference to tutor personal qualities and competences, but there was little empirical evidence provided for their inclusion. Overall, there is limited research into the personal qualities that learners value in their tutors within blended learning contexts. This study takes steps to address this gap.
This area of research is of particular interest to me as a former blended learning student, leader of a blended learning course, and manager of a division which has a number of such programmes. Each of these roles provided insight into practices within blended learning contexts and how tutors’ behaviours influenced student learning and motivation. As a Masters level student, I found it noticeable how one particular tutor could encourage and motivate learners in both e-mail communications and asynchronous discussion boards. Tutor comments picked up on feelings, both positive and negative, and responded accordingly and encouragingly. The tutor was equally motivational in traditional classroom settings, but so were other tutors who lectured on the course. The other tutors, however, did not transfer these skills into an online environment with e-mail and discussion board responses frequently curt, appearing not to appreciate the potential impact on the receiver. One tutor in particular would use quite inaccessible academic responses when learners were expressing genuine difficulty with the subject matter. This type of response was rarely given within traditional classroom settings.

The courses referred to above utilise a ‘day school’ model of delivery where students typically attend classes one day per month with the remaining time was spent studying independently, utilising resources held on the virtual learning environment (VLE). Communication with tutors is therefore less frequent than in traditional settings and, as a consequence, often more valuable for these learners. Electronic communications do not have the benefit of body language, tone of voice, and expression to aid receiver understanding with messages often taken literally. Attempts at humour and sarcasm can be misinterpreted and tutor competence in this area is important for a successful learner experience (Barker, 2002: 7).
Further stimulus for this research came from Salmon’s (2003: 53-56) view that emotional intelligence and the ability to influence others are important attributes, necessary when tutoring online. She particularly emphasised the importance of tutor self-awareness, interpersonal sensitivity and the ability to influence others. However, her opinion was not based on empirical evidence. Both Mortiboys (2005) and Corcoran and Tormey (2012a) argue that teacher training courses focus on pedagogy with a brief discussion of subject expertise, and that emotional intelligence should be considered when developing trainees. The notion of emotional intelligence and its role in teaching and learning is rarely considered in higher education (HE) and Mortiboys (2005) outlines two goals for its development in educational contexts:

- to be able to recognise and respond to the feelings of both yourself and your learners in the classroom, in order to make you both more effective in your respective roles;
- to encourage an emotional state in your learners that is conducive to learning. (Mortiboys, 2005: 8).

Whilst these goals refer to classroom-based teaching they are pertinent to blended learning environments, but are difficult to achieve given the limited face-to-face interaction the context affords. Mortiboys (2005) outlined numerous activities to develop teachers’ emotional competence in face-to-face settings which he felt would improve performance, however, they had limited relevance for online contexts. Lopes et al. (2004), in their study of emotion regulation and the quality of social interactions, found those with higher emotional intelligence report more positive interactions and relations with other people, on the face of it, valuable outcomes for teaching contexts. In her earlier work, Salmon (2002:
150) gave practical examples of how tutor emotional competences might be developed, such as the use of capital letters and emoticons, but again there was no evidence provided for the link between emotional competence and tutor quality. It is this aspect of blended learning tutoring that this study investigates.

There is currently no empirical evidence for the link between emotional competence and teaching effectiveness in blended learning contexts. Again, this study takes steps to address this. To bridge this gap in existing knowledge a mixed methods approach was adopted. Central to the quantitative strand of the research was the development and investigation of the following hypothesis:

- tutors exhibiting high levels of emotional competence are perceived as effective in blended learning environments by their learners.

Creswell (2014: 148-149) argues that hypotheses need to be advanced in mixed methods study to narrow and focus the purpose statement. The development of the hypothesis is considered throughout Chapter 2, which also argues that there is a lack of qualitative research regarding tutor EC in blended learning contexts. To address this gap in existing knowledge an idiographic (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) and inductive (Gibbs, 2002) approach is adopted to provide an in-depth analysis of complex human experiences (Castro et al., 2010: 343), in this case, the influence of EC on learner perceptions of tutor effectiveness. Further, I argue there is a lack of literature regarding effective practice in blended learning environments that focus on part-time (PT) learners, undertaking vocationally relevant degrees on a day school basis (see Chapter 4.4). Whilst the hypothesis posed is quite focussed, the exploration of effective practice in blended
learning environments needs to be detailed and multi-faceted given the complex and multi-dimensional nature of teaching (Stronge, 2002). This prompted an idiographic and inductive approach to complement the quantitative analysis, which resulted in general statements (Gibbs, 2002: 7) about effective practice in blended tutoring and the relevance and importance of tutor EC. This approach aligned with the chosen method of qualitative data analysis, template analysis (King, 2004) (see Chapter 6.5), which allows a selective approach when identifying themes that were most relevant to developing understanding of the tutors’ skills and qualities, and areas of good practice in blended tutoring.

Given the complex nature of the exploration outlined above, the research was focussed around the aims identified in Section 1.2 as opposed to formulating more specific research questions at the outset. Qualitative research questions vary in their explicitness (Bryman, 2012: 385) with Stake (2008: 126) drawing on Malinowski’s (1922/1984) work to argue that researchers often pose “foreshadowed problems”. In this study, such problems include the need for further understanding of EC and effectiveness in blended tutoring, further qualitative research in this area, and further understanding of effective tutoring in this context. These problems focus the themes (Stake, 2008: 141) to be explored, which are encompassed within the aims of this research study.

Tutoring in this research study is examined thoroughly including analysis of literature, interviews with relevant tutors, consideration of learner perceptions of quality, and analysis of online content and interaction. Learner feedback is significant in judgements of tutors and their approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. Learner perceptions of their achievement and the quality of tutoring received; and adopted approaches to study (Biggs, Kember and Leung, 2001); all form a picture of learner ‘success’. This data informed
judgements, together with the analysis of literature, tutor interviews and analysis of online content and communications, of what constitutes ‘effective’ tutor practice in this context. Further, a group of ECs are discerned from this research study, and these are considered as those competences contributing to the ‘effectiveness’ of tutors within blended learning environments. Defining terms such as ‘success’ and ‘effective’ is problematic, they cannot encompass all the factors impacting on such a complex and multi-dimensional area such as teaching. However, the definitions and supporting measures are broad and the wide perspective underpinning the analysis alleviates some of my concerns regarding the definitions given the complex area of investigation.

Although the objectives of this research study are specific, the implications of the results are potentially wide. Good teaching practices are generally context specific (Stronge, 2002) and this research provides a summary of effective practice and related influences within blended learning environments. Conclusions are drawn with the aim of enhancing the recruitment, selection, training and development of blended learning tutors, and encourage further thought and debate on its specialised nature. From the study’s findings, a model of the observed tutor beliefs and practices is proposed which is a conceptual framework for understanding the data. This framework suggests qualities and skills of effective tutors and provides a summary of effective tutoring in the context under investigation, which could support tutors, course leaders and managers in delivering successful blended learning programmes in similar contexts. Further, a group of emotional competences is proposed for blended learning tutors within HE contexts. The study also evaluates the utility of a prominent emotional intelligence test for identifying effective tutors in this context.
1.2 Aims of the Research Study

The principal aims of this research study are:

- to explore effective practice of tutors in blended learning environments;
- to investigate skills, qualities and competences, particularly emotional competences, contributing to the effectiveness of tutors within blended learning environments;
- to evaluate tutors’ skills, qualities and competences through analysis of learners’ perceptions;
- to propose a model of the observed tutor beliefs and practices in blended learning environments.

1.3 National and Local Context

My experiences as a student, tutor and manager were gained as part of courses aimed at part-time learners, undertaking vocationally relevant degrees whilst, usually, in full-time (FT) employment. Blended learning delivery models, adopting a day school approach, were used on each course. This research study focuses on this type of course to understand tutor qualities and practices that are effective in the eyes of these particular learners. In my experience, adult learners in this context tend to be motivated, but have often not studied in a formal educational environment for some time and can lack confidence. Literatures note the difficulties when tutoring these learners, particularly regarding the influence of daily events within their lives, together with the pressures and time constraints of work (Creanor 2002; Holley and Oliver, 2010). However, adult learners
tend to understand what they want to achieve from education and have clearer goals in mind (Richardson et al., 2003; Biesta, 2005).

The study is of relevance as PT learners in higher education account for around 31% of UK university students (HESA, 2013). Their growth in recent years is linked to the widening participation agenda, increased work-based courses and alternative delivery models (Beetham, 2012: 8), with learners choosing the PT option as they often require flexibility of study and many selecting HE for career-enhancing reasons by enrolling on vocationally relevant courses (Holley and Oliver, 2010). The current Government’s policies, following the Browne Review of HE funding and student finance, may continue to encourage PT learners into HE as loans are now available to fund study whereas previously students were responsible for the upfront payment of course fees (BIS, 2010).

The changing demographics of UK HE are bringing new challenges to lecturers and increasingly universities are developing delivery models to meet the needs of this group of learners (Beetham, 2012: 8). There is a greater use of online learning and tutoring together with an increasing number of blended learning delivery patterns. University tutors’ roles are changing to meet these challenges (Dykman and Davis, 2008: 159) and the adaption of their pedagogy to this context can be difficult as, in my experience, training is often sparse, which can result in negative teaching and learning experiences. As Wheeler notes, “the future success of blended learning will rely heavily on technology-mediated communication, but even more on the skills and knowledge of responsive tutors” (Wheeler, 2007: 116).
The research is based at a ‘post 1992’ university in the north of England which has approximately 550 full-time academic staff and 24,000 students. All the courses investigated as part of the research were located in the School of Education, and, therefore, focussed on this particular subject area.

The national and local context will have had an impact on this study and resultant conclusions. There is increased financial constraint at the University, as outlined in the Browne Review, together with the increased marketisation of HE with other providers, such as Further Education (FE) colleges, encouraged to deliver degrees (BIS, 2010). This is at a time when students increasingly want value for money (Beetham, 2012: 8). Although data collection for this study occurred between September 2010 and July 2011 whilst these policy changes were occurring, the University had already taken the strategic decision to explore other income streams beyond traditional FT undergraduate students. Academic staff were under pressure to increase research outputs and generate additional research income whilst improving performance across league tables. Traditional data figures (retention, achievement, attendance) and external indicators such as the National Student Survey (NSS) are carefully scrutinised with academic staff alert to poor performance. This can be summarised as performativity (Ball, 2003; Avis, 2005) or a target setting culture within which the University academic staff operate. Coupled with the pressure on public spending, this has increased stress in terms of job security and individual performance.

As indicated earlier, the courses under investigation adopt a day school model of delivery where learners typically attend classes one day per month with the remaining time spent studying independently, utilising resources held on the virtual learning environment (VLE).
Modules are usually a term in length (approximately three to four months) from the first day school until learners submit summative assessments. Tutors then have three weeks in which to mark the work and feedback. Each module, therefore, has two or three day schools with the overall course structure and delivery models developed by module tutors and course leaders in conjunction with course approval committees.

During a module, tutors have responsibility for teaching, assessment and monitoring learner progress. They are required to prepare suitable learning materials for both online contexts and day schools. Module syllabi and assessments, again, are developed by module tutors and course leaders in conjunction with course approval committees. This includes both summative assessments and one opportunity for learners to receive feedback on a piece of formative assessment per module. Beyond this, tutors have autonomy in a number of aspects of teaching and learning. Day school content and teaching methods are solely within the control of the tutor who can structure delivery as they choose. Any further learning activities within a module, including online learning, are designed by module tutors and used at their discretion.

Whilst there is an expectation that delivery is supported by online learning through the University’s VLE, there is no prescription around how this should be adopted. Therefore, tutors determine the opportunities and requirements for peer interaction within the formal confines of the module, for example, via discussion forums, wikis and online conferencing. This, however, can be influenced by tutors’ own skills and competences within online learning environments, with a potential for avoiding peer interaction if desired. Although this suggests a lack of scrutiny, modules are subject to both internal and external quality checks. Internally, as well as a culture of performativity described earlier, learners can
complete module evaluation forms and contribute to student panels to feedback about the quality of their learning experience. As part of the University’s quality assurance procedures (and in common with all UK HE universities), modules, and particularly students’ assignment work, are scrutinised by external examiners to ensure their standards are comparable with other HE institutions and that teaching, learning and assessment, through whatever media, are appropriate.

Within the School it is common for tutors to have a responsibilities beyond those associated with the teaching of a module. As indicated earlier, all have a responsibility to generate research outputs and additional income, and it is common for each tutor to have a course management role. These roles include course leader, admissions tutor, examinations tutor and personal tutor, as well as committee membership both within the School and the University. Tutors usually join the School following successful careers in related professions, commonly teaching, and, therefore, bring a wealth of experience and possess a range of transferable skills that enable them to be effective in the range of roles described above.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

Following a review of emotional competence and its possible measurement, a literature review was undertaken to explore research regarding good practice in blended tutoring. This was considered in the context of UK higher education for PT, vocationally relevant degree programmes. A mixed methodology was adopted with case studies of eight tutors’ approaches to blended learning being researched, with the study broadened to consider learner views and an analysis of supporting VLE content and interaction. Both qualitative and quantitative data were analysed to propose a model of the observed tutor beliefs and
practices, with further conclusions drawn from the research where appropriate. Within the University, courses are modular and it is usual for a module to be delivered by one tutor. This, as argued in Chapter 5, was an ideal unit of research and provided sufficient data to achieve the study’s aims (see Section 1.2).

The thesis is presented as follows.

Chapter 2 outlines the preliminary stages of the literature review and includes a discussion of the nature of emotional competence and its measurement. Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) Four Branch Model is outlined as a valid and reliable construct of emotional intelligence, and the use of the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) within this research study is justified.

Following this research into emotional competence, Chapters 3, 4 and 5 consider the skills, competences and attributes required to be an effective tutor in blended learning environments. I draw on literatures discussing distance, blended and online learning and consider additional qualities required of tutors to be effective in such environments. The chapters also consider other factors that can influence the success of blended tutoring such as learners’ approaches to study and the needs of adult learners.

The remainder of the thesis is devoted to the empirical research conducted. Chapter 6 presents a critical discussion of the methodological approach undertaken for the research. Chapter 7 reports the results of the pilot research, a case study of one tutor’s approach to the delivery of a module, and outlines resultant amendments to the research design. It also develops themes to explore as part of the full study.
Chapters 8, 9 and 10 report the results of the empirical research. Chapter 8 considers the quantitative analysis and explores factors that influence learner perceptions of effective blended tutoring and presents themes to investigate in the remaining chapters. Chapters 9 and 10 present the qualitative analysis of the case studies and examine emerging themes around the areas of effective blended tutoring and evaluate the skills and qualities of tutors whilst, again, considering learner perceptions of quality.

Chapter 11 evaluates the utility of the MSCEIT for identifying effective tutors in this context.

Chapters 12, 13 and 14 develop and justify the proposed Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices in blended learning contexts. Chapter 12 develops a group of emotional competences to support effective practice whilst, Chapter 13 proposes an Andragogical Model to support a module delivery that meets adult learner needs. Chapter 14 continues the Model’s development by considering effective teaching, learning and assessment in blended learning contexts and suggests examples of practice for tutors in similar environments. The Model is presented within this chapter.

Finally, in Chapter 15, conclusions are drawn concerning the results obtained, and the aims of the study are addressed. The chapter ends with some suggestions for further research.
Chapter 2  Exploration of Emotional Competence: Literature Review and Analysis

2.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter provides the conceptual background to the research study with a particular focus on emotional competence including definitions, constructs and measurement, together with consideration of their relevance to understanding the behaviour of tutors in blended learning contexts. Firstly, an outline of the initial research into the area is provided before the link between the constructs, Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Emotional Competence (EC), is established. The chapter notes the prominence of quantitative analysis when exploring EI in work contexts but a lack of qualitative analysis, particularly with regard to tutors in blended learning contexts. Following this discussion I present the hypothesis to be explored as part of the study. The chapter then outlines the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002) as a valid and reliable measure of Emotional Intelligence and I apply the underpinning definition and model (the Four-Branch Model of Emotional Intelligence) to blended tutoring contexts. Further, the analysis of the Four Branch Model provides a set of abilities, such as perceiving learners’ emotions, to support the exploration of tutor behaviour within the empirical chapters of this research study. As stated in the Introduction, there is no empirical research to link EC and teaching effectiveness in blended learning environments and I contextualise the MSCEIT, highlighting its strengths and weaknesses, for this context. Following this, emotional competences are considered with a discussion of trait-based EI constructs that are relevant for tutors operating in blended learning contexts, again, establishing a set of
tutor abilities to consider in the empirical chapters. Finally, a summary outlines the chapter’s influence on the research design and areas for further investigation within the empirical chapters.

The literature review for this research study continued throughout the data analysis and writing of the thesis. The selection criteria for the literature reviewed in this Chapter are broad as I wanted to explore the construct of EC from a number of perspectives. The criteria are predominantly topic based (Sharpe and Savin-Baden, 2007) with empirical research studies forming the majority of sources used. Some non-empirical sources were used where the author had made significant contributions to the particular research area. The criteria include sources that:

- measure EC/EI;
- explore EC/EI in work-contexts, particularly those with extensive interpersonal interaction;
- consider key definitions in this research study, such as, emotions, traits, feelings and behaviours.

### 2.2 Emotional Competence: Initial Literature Review

As stated in the introductory chapter, the stimulus for this research came from Salmon’s (2003) view that emotional intelligence and the ability to influence others are important attributes necessary when tutoring online. This suggests that being emotionally competent would be a valuable quality for tutors operating in blended learning environments (see Section 2.3 for a discussion of the link between EC and EI). This
section outlines the initial stages of my literature review to consider emotional competence and establishes its importance within work contexts, particularly those where interpersonal relationships, such as education, are common. The section further establishes emotional competence as a measurable construct, commonly analysed by quantitative methods, but also requiring greater qualitative analysis particularly in blended learning contexts. This research was significant in shaping the research design of this study.

From an initial scope of relevant literature, a quantitative approach to measuring EI was common with a wealth of sources using self-report or ability measures to undertake parametric analysis against a range of other qualities and traits. For example, a common trait under analysis was leadership (for example: see, Groves, McEnrue and Shen, 2006; Kerr et al., 2006), an area which is potentially relevant for tutoring in blended learning environments. The literature review revealed emotional intelligence as a measurable construct and this prompted a further search for a valid and reliable measure. Whilst it was thought that a measure of EI would be useful for this research, there was limited empirical evidence of its use and value in blended and online teaching contexts. The majority of the education-focussed empirical evidence exploring the construct was in relation to learners, not tutors (for example: see, Kingston, 2008 who researched EI and reasons for student drop-out, and Han and Johnson, 2012, who

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1 Parametric here assumes that the data sets have come from a type of probability distribution and makes inferences about the parameters of the distribution. Usually this analysis is based on the ‘normal distribution’, which requires four basic assumptions to be met for the test to be accurate: a normally distributed sampling distribution, homogeneity of variance, interval or ratio data, and independence (Field, 2013: 881).
explored the relationship between students’ emotional intelligence, social bond, and interactions in online learning).

Whilst the quantitative paradigm is dominant in EI research, qualitative approaches have significant value. Fineman (2004) argued for a greater use of qualitative research when exploring EI and stated that emotion could be researched without its measurement. He outlines a number of studies exploring emotions qualitatively and states "the understandings so produced are inherently less precise than the simplifications of measurement, but they are likely to be abundant in insight, plausibility and texture" (Fineman, 2004: 736). Recently, there has been research that explored EI qualitatively (for example: see, Cliffe, 2011; Smollan and Parry, 2011). Although these were not focussed on teachers, their approach provided a deeper analysis of appropriate EI competences in specific contexts.

This initial phase of the literature review helped shape this study’s research design with both qualitative and quantitative approaches being appropriate. A qualitative approach would allow deeper analysis of subjective issues around blended tutoring and could be used to highlight specific examples of a tutor’s skills, qualities and attributes, whilst also considering other influential factors of the student learning experience.

In teaching, success, to some extent, depends on the quality of relationships with managers, colleagues and learners, and research suggests that being emotionally intelligent would be beneficial. Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2010) found a significant positive relationship between English foreign language teachers’ EI and their
pedagogical success in language institutes. Anari (2012) found a significant positive relationship between teachers’ EI and both job satisfaction and organisational commitment. This discussion, together with Salmon’s view outlined in the Introduction, strengthens the need to explore emotional competence within tutors operating in blended learning environments and establishes the value of this construct in work contexts where inter-personal relationships are important. Individuals with high EI are more pleasant to be around generally (Mayer et al., 2008), and particularly for teachers (Brackett and Katulak, 2006). A study by Lopes et al. (2006) found MSCEIT scores of clerical workers were positively related to supervisor ratings of interpersonal skills, stress tolerance, and leadership potential. Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005) found executives with higher EI are more likely to achieve business outcomes and be considered effective leaders by subordinates. Caruso (1999) claims that managers with high EI can plan flexibly and adapt, motivate others and themselves, and have improved decision making skills (such as not reacting out of anger). Further, higher EI enables more creative thinking, such as the ability to see issues from multiple perspectives, and being effective in social environments. He identified the following characteristics of emotionally intelligent managers:

- are enjoyable to be with;
- good at influencing people;
- can build consensus;
- are believable and trusting;
- are empathic. (Caruso, 1999: 6).
The above qualities appear relevant when tutoring in blended learning contexts and are considered in the empirical chapters of this research.

From the analysis of EI in work contexts above it is clear that stakeholder perceptions are relevant when exploring organisational effectiveness (for example: see, Lopes et al., 2006). Within teaching contexts an important stakeholder view is learners, given their involvement in all aspects of the teaching, learning and assessment. Due to this, learner perceptions form an integral part of this study as their views enabled me to evaluate competences of tutors in blended learning. From this discussion, I propose a hypothesis to explore as part of this research study, tutors exhibiting high levels of emotional competence are perceived as effective in blended learning environments by their learners.

2.3 Emotional Competence: Background and Relevant Definitions

From the exploration of the literature into the construct of emotional competence, it appears a potentially valuable quality when tutoring in blended contexts. This section provides a brief background to the construct, emotional intelligence, and outlines its relationship with the construct, emotional competence. Some key definitions are established and are adopted throughout the thesis. Following a review of common measures of EI, 'ability' measures were the most relevant for this study with the MSCEIT being the preferred choice.

Daus and Ashkanasy (2005: 455) outline three streams of emotional intelligence constructs and their measures:
stream 1 is based on the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso ‘ability’ model of emotional intelligence and uses the MSCEIT as its measure;
stream 2 is also based on the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso ability model of emotional intelligence; however, uses either peer or self-report strategy as its measure;
stream 3 comprises a group of broader 'mixed' models that include dimensions or components not included in Mayer and Salovey's (1990: 189) original definition of emotional intelligence. These are commonly termed trait-based measures such as Goleman's (2001) Framework of Emotional Competences and Bar-On's (1997) Five-Dimensional Model.

Although other models have been developed, such as Trait EI (Perez, Petrides and Furnham, 2005), these streams are still largely evident, although, there is a greater focus on ‘ability’ models and ‘mixed’ models as overall descriptive categories (for example: see, Zeidner, Matthews and Roberts, 2009; Corcoran and Tormey, 2012b).

The 'abilities' model of emotional intelligence, as measured by the MSCEIT, is a “valid model of emotional intelligence" (Daus and Ashkanasy, 2005: 463), with a supported factor structure (Day and Carroll, 2004; Palmer et al., 2005; Corcoran and Tormey, 2012b), and acceptable levels of reliability (Brackett and Mayer, 2003; Lopes et al., 2003; Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2012). Although Maul has been critical of the MSCEIT regarding, for example, factor structure (Maul, 2011) and validity (Maul, 2012), he still regards it as the “flagship test of EI" (Maul, 2012: 394). In response to Maul’s criticisms, Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2012: 407) stated:
the argument for the MSCEIT’s overall validity is growing and arguably quite strong, notwithstanding the technical imperfections that are a part of any real-life form of measurement, and acknowledging that improvements in the MSCEIT and measurement in the area are desirable. (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2012: 407).

Although the term ‘emotional intelligence’ was popularised by Goleman (1996) in his book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*, the construct emotional intelligence\(^2\) was first proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1990). By 1997, Mayer and Salovey defined emotional intelligence as follows:

> Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and / or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. (Mayer and Salovey, 1997: 10).

As the MSCEIT is my preferred measure of EI for this research study, the Mayer and Salovey (1997) definition will be used when considering the measurement of emotional intelligence.

When I refer to Emotional intelligence and Emotional Competence throughout the thesis I consider them to be close constructs. Wakeman (2006: 72) argues that Mayer and Salovey’s definition of EI embodies “the distinction between EI and EC”, with emotional

\(^2\) The term emotional intelligence was first used in 1985 by Wayne Payne in his doctoral dissertation - "A study of emotion: developing emotional intelligence; self-integration; relating to fear, pain and desire (theory, structure of reality, problem-solving, contraction/expansion, tuning in/coming out/letting go)."
intelligence factors allowing the development of emotional competences. For example, the ability to perceive emotions in others would aid the development of EC in conflict management or empathy (Wakeman, 2006: 72). It is common for intelligence to be measured by tests of competence, Intelligence Quotient (IQ) being a relevant example. Goleman (2001: 1) similarly considers there to be a relationship between the two constructs when stating an emotional competence is “a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work”. Although Zeidner, Matthews and Roberts (2009: 11) are critical of Goleman’s link between EI and learning, they do acknowledge that higher EI increases “the capacity to acquire mental skills through learning”. Thus, the definition of emotional competence adopted for this research study is a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that leads to effective performance in blended learning environments.

To aid the empirical aspects of the research, clear definitions of EI and emotions are needed as well as for related areas such as feelings, behaviours and traits. Emotions are organised responses typically in reaction to an event, whereas traits (see stream 3 measures of EI) are characteristic or preferred ways of behaving such as extroversion or shyness (Mayer and Salovey, 1997: 8). The use of the word ‘organised’ is surprising as emotions would generally be considered more disorganised or random as implied in McCleod’s (2007: 171) definition, “an immediate, bodily response to a situation”. Mayer and Salovey’s definition of emotion refers to cognitive activities in response to an event and the adaptive nature of subsequent action, and this led to the cognitive underpinning of the definition of EI. Feelings are similar to emotions in that they are internal, embodied responses to events, however, a “feeling can be regarded as an ever-present
inner sensing that can be referred to at any moment” (McLeod, 2007: 173) and is typically multifaceted, whereas emotions can be identified individually. Behaviours are typical ways in which a person acts or conducts themself, especially towards others (McLeod, 2007: 189) and are closely related to individual traits. For example, a trait, such as being trusting, drives the typical behaviour when interacting with others. The consideration of emotions, feelings, behaviours and traits were instructive for the qualitative analysis of the empirical research (see chapters 9 and 10) and relevant traits for the context are explored along with broader EI constructs later in this chapter.

2.4 The Utility of the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) for Tutors in Blended Learning Contexts

Within this section, the choice of the MSCEIT as a measure of Emotional Intelligence is justified for this research study. The Four-Branch model, on which the MSCEIT is based, is then analysed and contextualised for blended learning and this provides a useful set of abilities to consider in the empirical aspects of the research. Finally, the section analyses the MSCEIT’s constituent tasks to further evaluate its utility for tutors in blended learning contexts.

An ability measure (the MSCEIT), which tests skills directly, was selected for this research to explore EI amongst academics in higher education (HE). From my experience, academics tend to deconstruct self-report tests rather than approach them at face value. Self-report measures require self-judgement and therefore do not explore intelligent reasoning about emotion or the enhancement of intelligence through the use of emotions and emotional knowledge (Mayer, et al., 2008: 519). Therefore, the validity
of using such approaches to measure intelligence is questionable. There is evidence to suggest self-report measures of EI correlate with measures of personality (Day and Carroll, 2004; Rosete and Ciarrochi, 2005) and, therefore, do not measure a distinct construct. Further, self-reporting tests can be subject to 'reporting bias' where respondents in a work context may want to be seen in a favourable light (Rosete and Ciarrochi, 2005), this being particularly pertinent for academics and any measure of 'intelligence'. Corcoran and Tormey (2012b: 751) used the MSCEIT in their study exploring emotionally intelligent pre-service teachers as the ability measure, they argue, strengthened the validity in relation to self-report and 360 degree evaluation mechanisms. Ability measures only slightly correlate with measures of personality, correlate modestly with intelligence, and harder for respondents to determine 'correct' answers (Rosete and Ciarrochi, 2005).

The term ‘ability’ implies something that can be improved, as opposed to personality traits (Groves and McClure, 2006: 19), and this aligns with Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) aim for their conception of EI to be considered an intelligence. If a tutor’s EI can be improved, this creates a potential opportunity for training should the construct be found to be valuable for practice in blended learning environments. Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts (2002: 228) state that the MSCEIT is the only measure of EI to satisfy the following criteria and therefore is considered a true intelligence:

- reflect performance (through the use of an ability-based measure) rather than perceived ways of behaving;
- correlate, but not too highly, with existing Intelligence Quotient measures;
• improve during childhood and middle adulthood;
• be predictive of emotion-related outcomes and general life satisfaction.

(Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts, 2002: 228).

More recent research has continued to confirm EI, as measured by the MSCEIT, is related to other IQ measures although not so closely as to make it redundant (Zeidner, Matthews and Roberts, 2009: 101; MacCann, 2010: 490). With the MSCEIT satisfying Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts’ (2002: 228) criteria, this strengthens its value in measuring the EI of tutors and indicates face validity. However, there is limited empirical research within blended learning environments to verify this view. Teaching and learning in any context is certainly an emotion-related process whether an individual lesson or tutorial, or something longer such as a unit of study or course. There is little empirical research that indicates that higher levels of EI in blended learning tutors would lead to predictive outcomes, such as better tutor/learner relationships. If this research study found that being emotionally competent was a valuable quality for tutors operating in blended learning environments, it is potentially beneficial to practice as it could improve with age and this suggests it can be developed.

The MSCEIT measures an individual’s perception, use, understanding and management of emotion (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002). It is based on the Mayer and Salovey Four-Branch Model of Emotional Intelligence (1997) and measures the following four abilities:

• Perceiving emotions (branch 1);
• Using emotions to facilitate thought (branch 2);
• Understanding emotions (branch 3);
• Managing emotions (branch 4).

Abilities associated for each branch are developed below and contextualised for blended learning. Mayer and Salovey (1997) describe four ‘boxes’ for each branch, with higher numbered boxes indicating higher emotional intelligence.

**Perceiving Emotions (branch 1)**

This branch indicates a person's ability “to perceive emotions in oneself and others, as well as in objects, art, music, and other stimuli” (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 7). The four ‘boxes’ are:

- Box 1 - tutor can accurately express own feelings;
- Box 2 - tutor can evaluate emotion in others or artwork et cetera;
- Box 3 - tutor can express feelings and express needs around these feelings;
- Box 4 - tutor is sensitive to false or manipulative expression.

Corcoran and Tormey (2012b: 751) argue that “the ability to perceive emotion in self and others has repeatedly been identified as important for teachers”. Tutors in blended learning use various media beyond face-to-face interactions through which they have to evaluate emotions in others whilst expressing their own. Many of these media are text-based such as e-mail, discussion forums and wikis, however, some are speech-based including the telephone, online conferencing and online presentational software.
Therefore, the ability of a tutor to appropriately express their own feelings and accurately perceive emotions in others appears important in both face-to-face and online contexts.

**Using Emotions to Facilitate Thought (branch 2)**

This branch indicates a person’s ability “to generate, use and feel emotion as necessary to communicate feelings” (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 7). The four ‘boxes’ are:

- Box 1 - tutor will complete a necessary job as they know it will affect their enjoyment of another activity if left;
- Box 2 - tutor can anticipate feelings which help their decision making, for example, should they criticise a learner?
- Box 3 - tutor allows shifting moods to give more possibilities when making decisions and affords more creative thinking;
- Box 4 - recognition that “different forms of work and different forms of reasoning (e.g. deductive/inductive) may be facilitated by different kinds of moods” (Mayer and Salovey, 1997: 13).

Emotionally intelligent blended tutors should recognise the influence of differing emotional states on learners’ cognitive processes (Corcoran and Tormey, 2012b: 751). On the face of it, it would be expected that tutors exhibiting these ECs would be perceived as more effective by learners. This could be achieved by tutors generating their own emotional state to be conducive to teaching whilst also encouraging the emotional state of learners, such as trust and anticipation, which is beneficial to the
tasks in hand, most commonly learning. Further, it would be expected that tutors recognise the creative ideas that can come from differing moods, both within themselves and their learners. For example, avoiding focussed discussions with an overjoyed student as very positive emotions frequently result in inductive, as opposed to, deductive reasoning (Brackett and Katulak, 2006).

**Understanding Emotions (branch 3)**

This branch indicates a person’s ability “to understand emotional information, how emotions combine and progress through relationship transitions, and to appreciate such emotional meanings” (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 7). The four ‘boxes’ are:

- Box 1 - tutor can recognise emotions and the differences between them, for example, joy and elation, anxiety and worry;
- Box 2 - tutor has an increased understanding of emotional meanings, for example, sadness from loss, fear from threat;
- Box 3 - tutor can recognise complex contradictory emotions, for example, awe as a combination of fear and surprise;
- Box 4 - tutor can reason about sequences of emotions in interpersonal relationships, for example, anger may lead to rage, and then guilt or satisfaction.

For tutors to understand emotion in themselves and their students it may be expected that they know what causes emotion and be able to describe a full range of emotions when considering their own and other's feelings (Brackett and Katulak, 2006). A confident student may not mind a tutor saying their answer was not correct, but others
may find this embarrassing and become anxious, both in face-to-face and online contexts. Further, it is expected that learners would value tutors' understanding of their emotions to motivate them, respond to varying points of view, and handle various group reactions (Caruso, 1999).

Managing Emotions (branch 4)

This branch indicates a person’s ability “to be open to feelings, and to modulate them in oneself and others so as to promote personal understanding and growth” (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 7). The four 'boxes' are:

- Box 1 - tutor stays open to feelings, both agreeable and disagreeable;
- Box 2 - tutor can separate emotion and behaviour, for example, a tutor who is angry can take a step back and be calm with learners, and then discuss the issue later with more calm confidents;
- Box 3 - tutor becomes “consistently reflective or meta-experience of mood and emotion” (Mayer and Salovey, 2007: 14), for example, this feeling of anger is influencing the approach to teaching.
- Box 4 - emotions are understood without exaggerating or minimising their importance.

The ability to manage and regulate emotions in oneself and others appears important for tutors (Corcoran and Tormey, 2012b: 751). Tutors who manage their own and learners’ emotions in a classroom can create a more open and effective learning environment with fewer distractions (Mortiboys, 2005; Brackett and Katulak, 2006), and
it is reasonable to assume the same would be true in online environments. It is anticipated that blended learning tutors, who can control their emotional reactions, are more accomplished at dealing with difficult conversations, such as, a learner who feels they deserve a higher mark for their coursework.

2.5 Analysis of the MSCEIT’s Constituent Tasks to Evaluate Their Utility in Measuring the Emotional Competence of Blended Learning Tutors

Following the analysis of the Four Branch model, to further explore the face validity of the MSCEIT for tutors in blended learning contexts, its constituent tasks were reviewed (see Table 2.1 for an overview of the MSCEIT’s structure). The MSCEIT measures an individual's overall EI and also scores their performance on the four branches of the model with each having two sets of underpinning tasks. The Perceiving branch consists of a Faces task and a Pictures task with respondents identifying emotions in each. There is relevance here for tutors as they will need to perceive emotions in faces but it will be valuable to get information on their ability with other media, in this case pictures. The Using branch consists of a Facilitation task which involves identifying which emotions are beneficial in five differing activities, and a Sensations task which requires emotions to be linked to differing sensations, for example, considering the emotion guilt and deciding its coldness (Mayer et al., 2003: 99). The Facilitation task appears particularly relevant for tutors given the range of activities learners undertake across a range of media. The Sensations task’s face validity is less apparent as tutors are unlikely to be required to link emotions to differing sensations, however, it does give a picture of the cognitive ability to generate emotions and therefore is relevant when considering EI as an intelligence. The Understanding emotions branch consists of a
Blends task, where respondents identify emotions that combine into other emotions such as malice being a combination of envy and aggression (Mayer et al., 2003: 99), and a Changes task where respondents identify variations in emotions over time such as anger often changes to sadness (Kerr et al., 2006: 269). Both of these tasks are relevant for tutors as they seek to understand how a learner’s emotions are interlinked and how they change over time. For example, it appears beneficial for tutors to understand a learner’s anger from receiving a poor mark and this may result in sadness in the near future. A tutor can then action support around this understanding as the learner works on the next piece of work. Finally, the Managing emotions branch consists of an Emotional Management task where respondents judge the actions required for effective emotional outcomes for individuals in certain scenarios, and the Emotional Relations task which is similar to the Emotional Management task but asks respondents to judge actions that are most effective management of another person’s feelings. This branch appears particularly important for tutors and is at the heart of generating a correct emotional state, in themselves and their learners, for effective learning to take place in both face-to-face and online environments.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Score</th>
<th>Two Areas of the MSCEIT</th>
<th>Four Branches of the MSCEIT</th>
<th>Task Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intelligence (EI)</td>
<td>Experiential Emotional Intelligence (EEI)</td>
<td>Perceiving Emotions</td>
<td>Faces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic Emotional Intelligence (SEI)</td>
<td>Using Emotions</td>
<td>Facilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sensations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding Emotions</td>
<td>Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Blends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Managing Emotions</td>
<td>Emotional Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional Relations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 - Structure of the MSCEIT (Adapted from Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso, 2002: 8).

The *Managing Emotions* branch raises an interesting contradiction as it more closely resembles a self-report rather than an ability measure of EI. This brings into question its face validity for assessing a tutor’s EI as part of this research study, as stated earlier, academics tend to deconstruct self-report tests rather than approach them at face value. In the *Emotional Management* task an example question considers what an individual may do to reduce their anger, however, the respondent is not angry at the time of completing the test and therefore may provide a preferred response. Similarly, the *Emotional Relations* task asks respondents how they would manage another person’s feelings in certain circumstances, but again, they have to imagine themselves in such a situation. However, given this limitation, the *Managing emotions* branch has relevance to this study (see Section 2.4) and some indication of competence forms part of the full empirical analysis.
The MSCEIT also generates two 'area' scores. Firstly, *Experiential Emotional Intelligence* (EEI), which combines the *Perceiving* and *Understanding* branches and is a measure of an individual's ability to "perceive emotional information, to relate it to other sensations such as colour and taste, and to use it to facilitate thought" (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 17). Secondly, *Strategic Emotional Intelligence* (SEI), which combines the *Using* and *Managing* branches and measures an individual's ability to "understand emotional information and use it strategically for planning and self-management" (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 17).

The MSCEIT provides scores for total EI, two areas and four branches. An actual score is provided for each aspect of the MSCEIT and these are further categorised (see Appendix 1) from *Consider Development* to *Significant Strength* to guide the interpretation of the ability level (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002). These scores allowed quantitative analysis with learners’ perceptions of their tutors.

To finally validate the MSCEIT’s face validity as a potential measure of tutor’s EI, I completed the test and it was used as part of the pilot research (see Chapter 7). As I had received positive feedback over a number of years as a tutor in blended learning contexts, an average to good score was anticipated (if the assumption that EI correlates with tutor effectiveness is justified). An above average score was achieved, however, as I had scrutinised the underpinning Four Branch Model and had studied the questions and the abilities they were testing. I was conscious of trying to work out the ‘correct’ answer. Consequently, the MSCEIT was used in the pilot stage of the research in order to further scrutinise its utility for assessing tutors and drove the sampling criteria to
include that tutors participating in this research study should not have previously undertaken the MSCEIT, or have a detailed knowledge of the Four Branch Model (see Chapter 6.4 for the sampling criteria).

The analysis of the Four-Branch model revealed a number of abilities that appear relevant to blended tutoring that are considered in the empirical chapters. Each of the abilities would be apparent in face-to-face and a variety of online media, the latter being particularly difficult given the lack of para-lingual and emotional cues in predominantly text-based environments (Gilmore and Warren, 2007: 581; Murphy et al., 2011: 410).

In summary, this research study explores tutors’ ability to identify, use, understand and manage emotions in relation to learners’ perceptions of their effectiveness. Whilst the MSCEIT is instructive in identifying these abilities in tutors, qualitative approaches would provide a more rounded picture and enrich the quality of the data by providing examples of practice that illustrate emotional competence within blended learning contexts. Although the MSCEIT and the Four-Branch Model have some limitations for measuring tutors’ EI, they still have utility and are a valid and reliable measure. The Sensations task may have limited face validity for tutors and the Managing Emotions branch may be difficult to accurately complete due to its ‘self-report’ nature, but the remaining tasks are relevant for this study. The MSCEIT is used as part of the research with a number of data collection methods from both the quantitative and qualitative methods to overcome the above two limitations.
2.6 Emotional Intelligence: Trait-Based Models and Their Utility for Tutors in Blended Learning Contexts

This section explores common trait-based models of EI and justifies their use within this research study. It establishes Goleman’s (2001) Framework of Emotional Competences as a useful template to evaluate competences for tutors in blended learning contexts. This analysis was instructive for the qualitative empirical research within this study.

Section 2.2 identified a number of traits, such as leadership and being empathic, that are associated with higher EI, and this section explores prominent trait-based models of EI. Whilst emotional competence may be important, other related traits may also be valuable when tutoring in blended contexts and, therefore, trait-based models are analysed here and used in the qualitative empirical analysis. As stated earlier, whilst the initial hypothesis of the research is tutors exhibiting high levels of emotional competence are perceived as effective in blended learning environments by their learners, there could be a number of related traits that are equally relevant and important for tutors. Two predominant trait-based models of EI, Goleman’s (2001) and Bar-On's (1997), were considered and their constituent clusters analysed for utility.

Emotional cues are difficult to identify in both interview transcripts and in online, text-based communications and this gave further weight to the exploration of emotionally competent traits in tutors. Gilmore and Warren (2007: 581) summarise the difficulties of identifying emotion in text-based environments when considering “the absence of the body, diminution of paralingual cues and removal of physical social-spatial indicators”,

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when tutoring online. Salmon’s (2002: 150) practical examples of expressing emotion in text, such as the use of correct punctuation, are helpful when analysing online communications. However, even with correct punctuation and appropriate emphases in interview transcripts, emotional cues are still difficult to identify. Due to this difficulty, emotional competences identified by means of trait-based models would strengthen the analysis of tutors.

Trait-based models of EI such as Goleman’s (2001) and Bar-On’s (1997) have proved more popular in the literature despite the research supporting Mayer and Salovey’s Four-Branch Model and its resultant measure (Day and Carroll, 2004). These models consist of a list of traits that are related to emotions and are different constructs of EI than those represented by ability models (Petrides and Furnham, 2003; Mayer et al., 2008; Zeidner, Matthews and Roberts, 2009). During the 1990s, three lines of research were established, Mayer and Salovey (1990), Goleman (1996) and Bar-On (1997) with Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts (2002: 175) highlighting these as "the major conceptualisations of EI appearing in the literature". More recently, Zeidner, Matthews and Roberts (2009) note Goleman’s and Bar-On’s Models as prominent ‘mixed’ EI constructs. Goleman outlined EI as non-cognitive in nature with both himself and Bar-On raising a number of non-cognitive traits that could be valuable in blended tutoring environments. Bar-On (1997: 14) characterises EI as "an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one’s ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures". Whilst ‘ability’ and ‘trait-based’ models are potentially measuring different constructs there is certainly overlap between them and a broader measure of EC may be more appropriate for the diverse array of skills.
and qualities required to tutor in blended learning environments (See Wakeman, 2009, for a discussion of the commonalities regarding the measureable components that form the basis of a range of EI tests). Wakeman (2006), as previously stated, outlines the links between EI and emotional competences arguing an emotionally intelligent individual would exhibit EC traits. Therefore there is utility in exploring both ability and trait-based models, particularly in qualitative aspects of the full empirical research.

Goleman's (2001) Framework of Emotional Competences and Bar-On's (1997) Five-Dimensional Model consist of a similar cluster of personality traits (Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts, 2002: 15). While Goleman's model is directed at organisational and workplace success, Bar-On's (1997) conceptualisation of EI has a greater focus on general life success. Both Goleman and Bar-On's later work has largely continued with this general divergence in focus. Goleman, building on his EI research, has explored social intelligence and its impact on leadership (Goleman and Boyatzis, 2008: 52) to suggest managers develop “a genuine interest in and talent for fostering positive feelings in the people whose cooperation and support you need”. Whereas, Bar-On (2010: 54) suggests EI is an integral part of positive psychology. He argues:

emotional intelligence has a significant impact on successful performance, happiness, well-being and the quest for a more meaningful life, which are important topics of study in the area of positive psychology. (Bar-On, 2010: 55).

Due to the overlap between the two models, Goleman's Framework was chosen to underpin the qualitative analysis of the skills, qualities and competences of tutors. This
decision was particularly pertinent with the Framework’s focus on organisational and workplace success. Goleman’s Framework and subsequent development into the Emotional Competence Inventory (Sala, 2002), with a revision into the Emotional Competence Inventory 2 in 2006 (Sharma, 2012), continues to be extensively used to research links between EI and a variety of dependent variables within business and leadership contexts (for example: see, Grimm and Cherniss, 2010; Araujo and Taylor, 2012).

Goleman’s (2001: 1) Framework of Competences (see Table 2.2) were derived from “internal research at hundreds of corporations and organisations as distinguishing outstanding performers”. This four-domain version was refined from the previous five-domain framework (Goleman, 1998) but still with the vision of EI as a theory of organisational effectiveness, therefore, being pertinent for tutors in higher education. This appeared appropriate for the University in which this research study is based with Chapter 1.3 describing a culture of target setting and performativity. The Framework outlines twenty competences\(^3\) in four clusters of general EI traits but under two main headings - Self (personal competence) and Other (social competence), with two clusters recognising and regulating competence.

\(^3\) This literature generally classifies Goleman’s model as ‘mixed’ or ‘trait-based’. However, Goleman used the term ‘competencies’ to outline the components of his model.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recognition</th>
<th>Self Personal Competence</th>
<th>Other Social Competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>Social Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Emotional self-awareness</td>
<td>• Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Accurate self-assessment</td>
<td>• Service orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-confidence</td>
<td>• Organisational awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation</td>
<td>Self-Management</td>
<td>Relationship Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-control</td>
<td>• Developing others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Trustworthiness</td>
<td>• Influence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Conscientiousness</td>
<td>• Communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Adaptability</td>
<td>• Conflict management</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Achievement drive</td>
<td>• Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Initiative</td>
<td>• Change catalyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Building bonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Teamwork &amp; Collaboration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 - Goleman’s Framework of Emotional Competences (Adapted from Goleman, 2001: 2).

It is not the intention of this research to critique Goleman’s Framework, rather to use it as a template to evaluate competences for tutors in blended learning contexts. The definitions of Goleman’s competences are broad, which provides a useful complement to the Four Branch Model, and they were adapted to the blended tutoring context (see Chapter 12).
2.7 Areas for Analysis in the Empirical Chapters of this Research Study

When considering tutoring in blended learning contexts, this chapter has raised a number of points for further analysis as part of this research related to both ability and trait-based models of EI. Emotionally competent abilities to explore in tutors include:

- the perception of emotions in a range of learning environments including online media;
- the use of emotion to generate an emotional state conducive to learning including the use of emotions in learner and tutor communications;
- the understanding of differing emotions including the sequencing of emotions in learners' communications, both face-to-face and online;
- the management of own and learner emotions, both individually and in groups.

A range of pertinent EI traits were outlined in the chapter which have potential utility for tutors in blended learning contexts. Studies highlighted factors that correlate with high EI including being empathic and stress tolerance. Goleman’s Framework of Emotional Competences illustrated a set of traits to support the analysis of effective tutors and tutoring in blended learning environments.

2.8 Summary of Factors that have Shaped the Design of this Research Study

This chapter has raised a number of factors that suggest a mixed methods approach drawing on both the quantitative and qualitative methods. The more established quantitative epistemological approach to understanding EI in various contexts was
highlighted as well as the need for further qualitative research in the area, particularly
with regard to tutors in blended learning contexts. Stakeholder views are important
when researching and understanding EI with Section 2.2 noting the value of learner
perceptions when exploring tutors. The chapter proposed a hypothesis to explore;
tutors exhibiting high levels of emotional competence are perceived as effective in
blended learning environments by their learners. Within this research study, effective
practice is evaluated in relation to analysis of literature, interviews with relevant tutors,
learner perceptions of quality, and analysis of online content and communications. The
MSCEIT and underpinning Four Branch Model have been refined with relevant
definitions amended to suit the context of blended learning. Whilst the MSCEIT
provides a robust measure of tutors’ EC, the use of a mixed methods approach helps
bridge its potential limitations. Further to this, other methods of research have utility
when evaluating the impact of a tutor’s EC, such as considering their views and those of
learners, and analysis of online communications. This is aided by Goleman’s
Framework of ECs which provides a template to evaluate competences for tutors in
blended learning contexts.

Whilst this chapter has suggested EC could support effective tutor practices, it is
potentially a small factor in a number of influences on the success of teaching and
learning. Further aspects of blended tutoring need to be explored to support a full
analysis of the modules investigated as part of this research study. The next two
chapters investigate what is meant by effective teaching and learning, and consider the
general competences, skills and qualities required of tutors to be successful facilitators
of blended learning within HE contexts.
Chapter 3     Effective Tutoring in a Blended Learning Context

3.1 Chapter Introduction

Whilst a substantial literature exists on the competences and attributes of effective teachers there has been little agreement on what they entail (Huntly, 2008; Devlin and Samarawickrema, 2010). This could indicate the complex, multi-dimensional nature of effective teaching; however, there is greater consensus in the notion of effective teaching being context specific with different competences required in each (Stronge, 2002: 64; Hodkinson and James, 2003: 401; Devlin and Samarawickrema, 2010: 118). Chapter 2 has argued that emotional competence (EC) is potentially a valuable quality for blended learning tutors to possess and this argument is developed here to consider effective teaching, learning, assessment and support in this context. Whilst there is a growing body of literature discussing effective practice in blended learning environments (for example: see MacDonald, 2006), there is little that specifically focuses on the day school model of delivery. The complexities of structuring, delivering, assessing and supporting learners through both face-to-face and online elements to ensure a coherent learning experience, requires further research. This chapter argues that blended delivery models sit between discourses of traditional teaching, learning and assessment, online learning and distance education. The chapter considers the pertinent elements of these discourses and presents a summary of effective practice for the day school model of delivery with particular attention to meeting the needs of adult learners, studying vocationally relevant programmes, part-time (PT), and at a distance. I note online literatures have paid little attention to learner feelings whilst studying at a
distance and this chapter argues their consideration within blended learning environments. The summary of effective tutoring is used to support the evaluation of tutor practices within this research study.

Firstly, the chapter presents a framework to evaluate the effectiveness of tutor's teaching, learning and assessment in blended learning contexts. The influence of tutors' epistemological beliefs is discussed and, I suggest, impacts on the approaches to their teaching. The chapter then outlines features of effective learner support within blended learning contexts which is strengthened, I argue, with reference to prominent theorisations in distance education. Finally, the chapter presents evidence to highlight the value of ‘tutor presence’ within blended learning contexts.

The selection criteria for the literature reviewed in this Chapter were again broad as I wanted to consider effective teaching, learning and assessment from a number of fields. Again, the criteria are predominantly topic based (Sharpe and Savin-Baden, 2007) with the sources including theorisations and largely empirical research studies. The criteria include sources that:

- discuss effective teaching, learning, assessment within higher education (HE) contexts;
- discuss effective support for learners studying within blended contexts.
3.2 Effective Teaching in Higher Education: Initial Literature Review

This section outlines the early stages of the literature review undertaken to develop an overview of effective teaching in HE. This provided the basis of a more detailed exploration of literatures that underpin the development of this chapter, and the next two chapters. They explore:

- effective teaching, learning, assessment and support in blended contexts (this Chapter);
- tutors’ personal qualities and skills which support effective teaching in blended learning contexts (Chapter 4);
- motivating the adult learner (Chapter 5).

In order to establish a broad list of competences necessary for successful tutoring in HE a scope of relevant literatures was undertaken which were mainly promoting good practice in traditional delivery patterns. These sources included Ellington (2000), Biggs (2003), Nicoll and Harrison (2003), Minton (2005), Carnell (2007), Kember and McNaught (2007), and Devlin and Samarawickrema, (2010), and they outlined key areas to explore both within the literature review chapters (Chapters 3, 4 and 5), and the full empirical analysis. The following competences and knowledge were discerned:

- an understanding of student learning and motivation;
- the use of effective teaching and learning methods;
- the use of effective assessment methods;
feedback on student work and monitoring their progress;
- reflection on practice;
- a commitment to continuing professional development;
- to be organised;
- the ability to work within available resources.

This chapter now considers the competences and knowledge required of tutors in blended contexts which includes the teaching, learning and assessment elements of the above list.

### 3.3 Effective Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Blended Learning Contexts

This section outlines a number of elements of effective practice in blended learning contexts but particularly focuses on the ‘alignment’ of teaching, learning and assessment. In order to evaluate effective practice, reference is made to Biggs’ Constructive Alignment Model (2003) in which all components of teaching and learning are congruent or aligned. Mayes and de Freitas (2004: 7) draw on Biggs’ Constructive Alignment Model (2003) when they present three broad theoretical perspectives to inform online and blended learning design. The perspectives have their origin in established education theory traditions (Mayes and de Freitas, 2004: 7), which further strengthen their value in evaluating blended learning contexts. The HE student learning context involves networks of users sharing content and tools (Siemens, 2005), and Web 2.0 technologies affording greater collaboration (Beetham and Oliver, 2010: 157) in both formal and informal computer mediated communications (CMCs). Effective teaching
within HE has been broadly understood as focussed on students and their learning (Devlin and Samarawickrema, 2010: 112) and both Biggs’ and Mayes and de Freitas’ recommendations are consistent with this view and relevant for the student context.

Biggs’ Model, together with Mayes and de Freitas’ developments for blended learning contexts are adopted within this research to evaluate tutors’ approaches. Constructivist learning theory underpins Biggs’ Model to indicate the level of understanding that is anticipated from the teaching experience. For example, is the aim for memorisation or analysis of a particular issue? Whatever the aim, it is important that learners construct their own understanding, and in their own way, for a teaching experience to be considered effective (Biggs, 2003: 27). Biggs (2003: 26) argues that when the following components are aligned, teaching is likely to be more effective:

- curriculum;
- teaching methods;
- assessment;
- climate teachers create with their interactions with students;
- institutional climate.

Should there be an imbalance between these components, this can lead to poor teaching and *Surface* approaches to study, where learners complete only the required activities in order to achieve desired outcomes (Biggs, Kember and Leung, 2001: 138). When all components are working towards a common goal, it is more likely that *Deep* approaches are adopted where learners use the highest level of learning activities
(Biggs, Kember and Leung, 2001: 138) (see Chapter 5.4 for a further discussion about Deep and Surface approaches to study). For example, lectures may not be the most appropriate way to encourage trainee teachers to see the value of small group work. A more suitable approach to achieve the session’s aims and encourage deeper approaches to study may be participation in group work activities with reflection on the experience afterwards (Biggs, 2003: 27).

Effective teaching must continue to evolve so it reflects and responds to the context in which the teaching and learning is occurring (Devlin and Samarawickrema, 2010: 111). As stated above, when aligned, teaching is likely to be more effective (Biggs, 2003: 26) and Mayes and de Freitas’ (2004: 7) perspectives suggest suitable approaches to online and blended learning contexts. Their three broad theoretical perspectives on learning are:

- The associationist/empiricist perspective (learning as activity);
- The constructivist perspective4 (learning as achieving understanding through individual or social approaches);
- The situative perspective (learning as social practice).

Mayes and de Freitas (2007: 20) state, “most implementations of e-learning will include blended elements that emphasise all three levels: learning as behaviour, learning as the construction of knowledge and meaning, and learning as social practice”, and this is

4 Mayes and de Freitas (2004) originally termed this the cognitive perspective but this has since been developed in the course of work in e-learning and pedagogy funded by Jisc.
expected in the modules investigated as part of this research. These perspectives are now outlined with discussion of their alignment, particularly with regard to teaching, learning and assessment.

The Associationist Perspective regards learning as acquiring competence with learners obtaining knowledge through building associations using different concepts with skills developed as a result of increasingly complex actions. The pedagogy aligning with this perspective includes consideration of competences, organised activities, progressive difficulties with clear goals and feedback, including repetition and Socratic dialogue (Laurillard, 2002: 87), with assessments requiring accurate reproduction of knowledge or skill. Given the vocational focus of the courses under investigation, this is not anticipated to be a holistic approach to module delivery. However, it could be adopted for certain elements of module delivery, such as the transmission of key information and knowledge.

The Constructivist Perspective has both an individual and social focus to allow learning as achieving understanding in individual and collaborative contexts (Beetham and Sharpe, 2007: 220). Fox (2001: 31) argues that it is important for tutors to realise students are always trying to make sense of their study in terms of what they already know. This is relevant for the learners in this research study who are trying to apply their learning to work practices, organisational issues and a turbulent external environment (Beetham, 2012: 8). The learners are professionals and bring a breadth of existing knowledge, understanding and experiences to the classroom (Fox, 2003: 29),
and this highlights the relevance of exploring constructivist learning theory for this research study.

The *Individual Constructivist Perspective* highlights the achievement of understanding through active discovery where learners construct new ideas by hypothesis testing. The pedagogy aligning with this perspective includes interactive environments for knowledge expansion, cognitive scaffolding, experimentation with the discovery of principles, adaptation of teaching to existing student understanding, and support for reflection, analysis and evaluation. Assessment strategies aligning with this perspective encourage experiential learning, experimental learning, problem-based learning, case-based learning and self-evaluation, and autonomy in learning. When evaluating tutor practices as part of this research study I consider this perspective primarily focuses on students generally learning independently from tutors and peers throughout modules. However, tutors provide support to learners, engage in dialogue regarding learning and assessment, but with limited peer interaction and collaboration occurring outside face-to-face contexts.

The *Social Constructivist Perspective* highlights the achievement of understanding through collaboration and dialogue. The pedagogy aligning with this perspective includes interactive and collaborative environments leading to conceptual development; support for reflection, peer review and evaluation; and experimentation with shared discovery. Assessments aligning with this perspective are common to the *Individual Constructivist Perspective*, however, include consideration of collaborative activities, participation, peer review and shared responsibility. When evaluating tutor practices as
part of this research study I consider this perspective includes a far greater focus on peer collaboration throughout teaching, learning and assessment, particularly outside face-to-face contexts and within online learning environments.

The *Situative Perspective* has grown in prominence within blended learning discourse to consider the social and cultural setting of the learning environment (Mayes and de Freitas, 2007: 18) with learning understood as developing practice in a particular community (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Situative learning extends social constructivist theory by emphasising the context being close or identical to the situation in which the learner practices - work-based learning, continuing professional development, and apprenticeships are common examples in educational practice. Relevant pedagogic approaches to support situative learning include participation in social practices of enquiry and learning; facilitation of the development of skills, identities and professional relationships; and dialogue to support the development of learning relationships. Appropriate assessment strategies aligning with the *Situative Perspective* include extending performance in a variety of contexts and the authenticity of practice. The vocational orientation of courses and modules under investigation promote the relevance of this perspective. Teaching will predominantly occur at day schools and within online environments but learning and assessment could exhibit *Situative Perspective* characteristics.

Fox (2003: 29) warns against adopting extreme statements about learning such as “all knowledge is socially constructed” and reminds us that individual and social approaches co-exist. During the analysis of tutor practices I am mindful of this and use these
categories as broad indicators of the overall approaches being adopted in relation to learner perceptions of their experience.

There are challenges to tutors when adopting all the above perspectives in their teaching, and this section now moves on to consider some of these, and in particular, the influence of competing demands of work and family on PT learners. These issues are considered, as with other emerging themes, when evaluating the modules as part of the empirical research.

Social constructivist approaches can be challenging to implement in blended learning contexts, given the limited face-to-face contact and the difficulties of collaborating through CMCs. Mason (2006: 131) considers collaborative learning as time consuming and inefficient, which is particularly relevant for adult learners studying at a distance. Learner participation can be challenging, given competing demands but this can be aided when communication media are asynchronous. Increased availability of CMCs including Web 2.0 technologies has seen a rise in social constructivist models of e-learning encouraging student participation and collaboration, such as, the Five-Stage Model (Salmon, 2003), and Networked Learning (Goodyear et al., 2004). However, such participation and collaboration requires demanding skills of the online tutor with regard to what Feenberg (1989; cited in Salmon, 2003: 42) termed ‘weaving’, which is the act of pulling the debate together, and can include summarising general themes, linking similar viewpoints, and relating personal experiences back to theories previously studied. Tutors developing a ‘sense of community’ amongst peers can overcome some of the challenges learners feel when studying online or at a distance, such as isolation.
(Bernard, et al., 2009; Brindley et al., 2009; Abdous, 2011). However, online collaboration can lead to limited, superficial discussions which can be grade-driven rather than purposeful collective inquiry (Ke, 2010), and can be challenging for tutors to facilitate.

Students learn from a variety of approaches (Kember and McNaught, 2007) and therefore the effective integration of individual and group learning would appear to be an essential quality for tutors within blended learning modules. The context affords tutors opportunity to build upon classroom pedagogy by consolidating and extending learning, peer collaboration and support through online media. The overall approach to delivery, learning and assessment is considered when evaluating tutor practices as part of this research study and coherence across face-to-face and online environments is important. To aid this, modules should be designed specifically for blended learning contexts to ensure an appropriate mix of approaches (MacDonald, 2006).

3.4 The Influence on Practice of Tutors’ Approaches to Teaching and Epistemological Beliefs

The previous section established the importance of a holistic approach to module teaching, learning and assessment. However, a tutor’s preferred approach to teaching and epistemological beliefs can influence their decisions. It is therefore important when evaluating blended learning modules to understand the choices made by tutors and to consider factors that influenced decisions. These are now discussed in relation to their impact on practice and student learning.
When researching relationships between conceptions of teaching, such as knowledge transmission and learning facilitation, and student approaches to study, Kember and Gow (1994: 69) found that university departments adopting learning-facilitation strategies (or student-centred learning strategies) established an environment that encouraged Deep approaches to study (see Chapter 5.4 for further discussion of learner approaches to study). Effective teaching in HE has been broadly understood as teaching that is oriented to and focussed on students and their learning (Devlin and Samarawickrema, 2010: 112; Kember and Ginns, 2012: 4). Kember (1997) found a high level of synergy between thirteen independent studies into academic conceptions of teaching and synthesised the research into two broad orientations - teacher centred/content-orientated and student-centred/learning-orientated. Under these two orientations, Kember (1997: 264) established five conceptions considered within a continuum, which are:

- teaching as imparting information;
- teaching as transmitting structured knowledge;
- teaching as an interaction between the teacher and student;
- teaching as facilitating understanding on the part of the student;
- teaching as bringing about conceptual change and intellectual development in the student.

The first two conceptions support passive learning on behalf of learners, which could be valuable at the first day school as some transmission of information may be used to establish clear goals, module structure and assessment requirements. Following this,
other student-centred approaches to teaching can be adopted throughout remaining face-to-face and online contexts. The orientations and conceptions are instructive for this research as they provide criteria to evaluate tutors’ approaches when delivering modules and the resultant influence on approaches to study adopted by learners.

Tutor epistemological beliefs, that is, beliefs relating to the nature of knowledge and learning, impact on the approach to teaching adopted (Kember, 1997 and 2007; Jones and Carter, 2006). For example, tutors favouring a knowledge transmission orientation, and believing this to be an effective approach to teaching, are more likely to adopt didactic methods both in face-to-face and online learning environments. Whereas, tutors with predominantly constructivist epistemological beliefs are more likely to engage learners in discussion, interaction, and problem-solving (Topcu, 2013: 233). Further, the sophistication of epistemological beliefs, whether a tutor believes knowledge is relatively simple or complex, influences whether tutor led or student-centred approaches to teaching are adopted (Kember, 1997, Marouchou, 2011). Such beliefs, and resultant teaching, could influence the approaches to study adopted by learners (Biggs, 2003). Further, Kang (2008: 496) highlights the slow development and changes of epistemological beliefs during initial teacher training programmes and this could be important for tutors who move from traditional to blended learning contexts, and inappropriate pedagogy may be introduced. Tutors’ preferred pedagogies may be hindered by, for example, reduced face-to-face contact and the limitations of available educational technologies. Discussing a related theme, Trigwell and Prosser (2004) considered the impact of tutor perceptions, and stated:
teachers who perceive that their teaching workload is appropriate, that
student characteristics are sufficiently homogenous and at an
appropriate academic level, that class sizes are not too large and that
they have some control over what is taught, are more likely to adopt a
conceptual change/student focused approach to teaching (Trigwell

The exploration of tutor epistemological beliefs and perceptions of factors influencing
teaching and learning, such as their workload throughout module delivery, are valuable
in understanding the approaches adopted and resultant impact on student learning.
Similarly, Hall (2002: 154) argued that tutors’ views regarding the pedagogy afforded by
information and communications technology (ICT) influenced their adoption and use,
again, a decision potentially influenced by epistemological beliefs and perceptions.

3.5 Effective Support for Adult Learners in Blended Learning Contexts

This section explores the importance of effective support strategies for adult learners
and highlights elements of good practice from relevant empirical research and
theorisations. Even though there is some face-to-face contact, blended learning
delivery needs to consider learners’ feelings when a significant proportion of their study
is at a distance. This is an area rarely considered in online learning discourses. This
section particularly focuses on engaging learners studying at a distance from a
university and includes guidance around aspects of teaching, learning and support that
can be beneficial. This, again, forms a base from which to evaluate modules in the
empirical research.
To support the adopted teaching, learning and assessment, the design and management of student support strategies, that are embedded within the programme structure, are needed (MacDonald and McAteer, 2003; MacDonald, 2006; Stubbs, Martin, and Endlar, 2006). Orton-Johnson (2009) stresses this point with regard to adult learners by advising they should be fully informed and supported when undertaking blended learning as students need clear aims, be able to see the relevance of their learning, and be supported in achieving their goals.

To further explore effective teaching, learning and student support in blended contexts, analysis of dominant discourses in distance and online education was instructive and facilitative during the analysis of modules. This was particularly apparent when evaluating constructivist approaches to learning and this section argues the importance of tutor/learner dialogue in blended learning contexts. Blended and online learning have the benefit of improved methods of communication media that afford easier peer collaboration and a number of models have emerged with a social constructivist flavour (see Section 3.3). These models, because of the enhanced peer collaboration opportunities, have lost some attention to learner feelings when studying at a distance. To effectively foster interpersonal relationships with learners, tutor emotional competence is required and this is an area where distance education theorisations are instructive.

When teaching with limited face-to-face contact, such as with the day school model of delivery, Moore’s (1997) Theory of Transactional Distance is significant as it considers the separation of tutors and learners and the effect on participants’ behaviour. Even
when there is some face-to-face contact, such feelings of separation can be just as apparent and inhibiting. As Moore outlines:

With separation there is a psychological and communication space to be crossed, a space of potential misunderstanding between inputs of instructor and those of the learner. It is this psychological and communications space that is the transactional distance (Moore, 1997: 22).

It is the psychological and communications space that blended tutors need to address by considering three teaching and learning variables that impact on the extent of the Transactional Distance; dialogue, structure and learner autonomy. In general, increased dialogue reduces the Transactional Distance, however, dialogue refers to more than just interactions between tutors, students and peers as it should be of value to each party. The quality of dialogue is more important than the quantity of interactions. Laurillard (2002: 73) concurred with Moore’s view by recommending a continuing iterative dialogue between tutor and student in e-learning contexts where learning goals are agreed and a discursive dialogue is promoted. Laurillard’s prescription is constructivist in foundation but with emphasis on the importance of feedback to aid the learner’s development. Brindley et al. (2009) further stressed the value of timely, high quality feedback in online learning environments, particularly formative, to enhance student learning. Important tutor skills are required to maintain the quality of the relationship and continue the dialogue. Such skills require emotional competence in relationship management. It is therefore important to explore the quality of dialogue between tutors and learners in both face-to-face and online environments to consider its role in supporting teaching, learning and assessment.
Tutors (at the University) can exert influence over the structure and content of their modules and encourage learner autonomy, particularly with regard to assessments. Moore (1997) refers to structure as:

> the rigidity or flexibility of the programme’s educational objectives, teaching strategies and evaluation methods. It describes the extent to which an educational programme can accommodate or be responsive to each learner’s individual needs. (Moore, 1997: 26).

Moore explains that *Transactional Distance* is lowered if the structure is more flexible, but there are tensions here with the needs of part-time students who are experiencing HE for the first time. Courses need to be flexible in terms of learning outcomes but have sufficient structure in their delivery for students with competing pressures from work and family life. As students have limited face-to-face contact with their tutors, some structure to their learning may help, for example, providing a spread of assessment deadlines throughout the academic year. This provides an interesting consideration for Moore’s final variable, learner autonomy, as Falloon (2011: 206) notes, too much structure can become an inconvenience to some and work against the reasons for choosing online learning. Moore (1997: 31) describes learner autonomy as:

> the extent to which in the teaching/learning relationship it is the learner rather than the teacher who determines the goals, the learning experiences, and the evaluation decisions of the learning programme. (Moore, 1997: 31).
Whilst this description implies the *Transactional Distance* is lowered if students are working with greater independence, my view of autonomy mirrored Shin’s (2002: 127) when she argues it is “to what extent a student is able to exert his/her decision-making power over tasks related to their learning”. Again, this view highlights tensions regarding the importance of a structured environment with clear goals, but learners having choice in learning such as assessments relevant to their work practices.

There have been a number of empirical studies to evaluate the status of Moore’s theory (for example: see, Bischoff et al., 1996; Chen, 2001) which generally outline its face validity as a framework to evaluate distance education. However, Gorsky and Caspi’s (2005) review of empirical literature argued that the basic tenets of Transactional Distance Theory were not supported by the research findings, and they stated it was reduced to a single proposition regarding dialogue. This, they considered, was tautologous. Goel, Zhang and Templeton (2012: 1123) argue that although the theory has been around for a number of years, it has high face validity but its empirical validity requires development. In addition, their empirical research found support for the influence of transactional distance factors on e-learning. Falloon (2011) agreed that Moore’s theory was relevant for the digital world, but warned of the influence of factors affecting dialogue and learner autonomy, such as, broadband speeds and learner technical competence. Moore (2013) notes the contemporary relevance of his theory when advising the use of existing knowledge of distance education practices when developing massive open online courses (MOOCs) to ensure the preparation of appropriate teaching materials and to facilitate dialogue.
Whilst Moore (1989) and Laurillard (2002) discussed learner interaction with the course content and tutors, Shin (2002), developed this discussion further with consideration of their interaction with peers and the institution. She proposes the construct of *Transactional Presence* “to be concerned with the degree to which a distance student perceives the availability of, and connectedness with, teachers, peer students and institution” (Shin, 2002: 132). Here, “availability” is presented as needs and desires of learners being able to be met on request. “Connectedness” refers to the learner’s belief or feeling that a reciprocal relationship exists with tutors, peers and the institution. The concept of *Transactional Presence* is particularly relevant for this research, as it describes the feelings I had when in contact with an effective tutor when studying a Masters Degree and this construct, although subjective, gets to the heart of learner feelings in distance learning contexts. I found my tutor motivating and this resulted in improved academic performance, which was supplemented with generally friendly and helpful university staff and fellow students on the course. Should learners feel unable to contact tutors, peers or the institution, their academic performance is likely to be negatively affected, or worse, they may become disengaged from the course and leave. Tutors can have a significant impact on learner perceptions of *Transactional Presence* whilst encouraging interaction with peers.

The *Connectedness* students feel to the institution is important for distance learners as they are far more reliant on outward facing technologies, such as online enrolment systems and library interfaces, with personal contact often unavailable if systems are experiencing technical difficulties or the user is unsure of their correct use. Individual module tutors’ influence over the *Transactional Presence* between learners and the
institution can be limited, but they are often the first contact and appropriate, timely advice when they are experiencing difficulties can help. Such help can be significant in learner perceptions of quality, particularly around notions of support.

The notion of tutor ‘availability’ provides some tensions if the literal definition is accepted. It requires tutors to be available and supportive of learners, whilst being mindful of their competing pressures and trying to develop capable, autonomous learners. Clear communication, adherence to standards and quality dialogue are essential to mitigate such competing pressures.

Research has highlighted learner benefits of tutor Transactional Presence or Tutor Presence, both in online and blended learning contexts, although various terms are used to discuss this notion. Sherratt (2008: 810) explored both tutors’ and students’ perceptions of the tutor in blended learning environments, and through a preliminary analysis, found that students valued ‘visibility’ by tutors, which, she argued, helped to maintain trust and, I argue, fosters a Transactional Presence. Learner success is strengthened by a strong consistent tutor presence in online learning environments with increased satisfaction emerging from the level of engagement with peers, tutors and content (LeBaron and McFadden, 2008; Ke, 2010).

3.6 Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has established a picture of effective teaching, learning, assessment and support in blended learning contexts, which are used to evaluate tutor practices on the modules under investigation. Blended modules need to be designed specifically for this
context with teaching, learning and assessment suitably \textit{aligned}. To support the evaluation of this, three different theoretical perspectives were highlighted, with associated pedagogy and assessment. These perspectives have been presented to support the analysis of modules for PT learners, studying vocationally relevant degrees, at a distance. Each module investigated as part of this study is likely to adopt elements of all three perspectives, but, potential barriers were highlighted, for example, with regard to social constructivist approaches for this type of learner. Both the importance of student support was established and the tutor's role in minimising the \textit{Transactional Distances} experienced and fostering a \textit{Transactional Presence}, with this discussion synthesising notions from both online learning and distance education discourses.

The chapter has raised a number of issues this research study needs to consider. These include:

- effective teaching, learning and assessment;
- effective learner support including online and at a distance;
- the influence of tutor's epistemological beliefs and perceptions on practice.

So far, the thesis has argued the importance of EC for tutors in blended learning environments, and presented a picture of effective teaching, learning, assessment and support. This chapter has alluded to various skills, qualities and competences, including emotional competences, which support the discussion of effective practice in blended learning environments. These are considered in greater detail throughout the next chapter.
Chapter 4  Tutor Competences and Skills Supporting Effective Teaching in Blended Learning Contexts

4.1 Chapter Introduction

Chapter 2 established the importance of tutor emotional competence (EC) as potentially valuable in blended learning contexts with Chapter 3 proposing a framework to evaluate teaching, learning, assessment and support. This chapter supplements the beneficial emotional competences outlined in Chapter 2 to consider a broader range of competences and skills required for tutors to be effective within higher education (HE). The study seeks to establish competences for tutors to be effective in blended learning environments with this including face-to-face and online elements. Consideration of good practice in both is necessary to provide a full evaluation. As stated in Chapter 1.1, there is little research into the personal qualities that successful blended learning tutors should possess and this chapter starts to address this. This is achieved, in part, by synthesising literatures from three relevant discourses; emotional intelligence (EI), online learning and distance education. This provides a number of qualities to explore in the empirical aspects of this research study.

Transactional Distance and Transactional Presence theories (see Chapter 3.5) outline subjective constructs that I experienced when studying at a distance. Generally, for tutors to appreciate the influence these constructs have on learners and their resultant behaviour requires a number of competences, particularly emotional. Tutors also require further skills and qualities to support effective practice and these are considered. The chapter addresses the following questions:
• what competences support effective tutoring in blended learning contexts?
• what is the value of professional development in blended learning contexts?
• what skills and competences are required for the effective use of the University’s available resources?

These questions informed the literature search criteria, with the sources including largely empirical research studies.

At the Chapter end, a summary of the literature review chapters’ key findings (Chapters 2, 3 and 4) regarding online and blended tutoring is presented. These findings are developed to outline specific issues to be examined as part of this research study.

4.2 Competences for Effective Tutoring in Blended Learning Contexts

This section builds on the previous chapters by considering competences that facilitate effective teaching, learning and support of students in blended learning contexts. Literatures supporting this section are drawn from blended and online learning discourses and contextualise the emotional competences outlined in Goleman’s Framework (see Chapter 2.6). The identified competences, both in this section and Chapter 2, are considered in the empirical sections of this research study to evaluate their impact on both teaching practices and learner perceptions of quality.
The management of interpersonal relationships, particularly with adults studying at a distance, is an important factor in effective teaching in blended learning contexts with good communication a necessary component (Bailey and Card, 2009: 154; Murphy et al., 2011: 410). Tutors need to consider body language, specialist vocabulary, language and culture (Armitage et al., 2003), however, the difficulty of this is enhanced in online environments and further emphasises the need for emotional competence in blended delivery models. In managing these relationships, tutors will be sensitive to the needs of adults and their particular circumstances (Creanor, 2002; Holly and Oliver, 2010), therefore, being empathic to their needs.

The learners undertaking the modules under investigation are mature, studying part-time (PT), and often have family commitments. Holmberg (1989: 163) argues that feelings of belonging are as integral to effective distance education as the dialogue around the subject under study. Further, when studying at a distance, Holmberg identifies empathy as central to teaching and learning between students and tutors (1989: 162). Empathy, and sensitivity to needs, have been found to be important in learner perceptions of quality in distance education (Murphy et al., 2011: 408).

In traditional settings workload is structured, in part, through teaching timetables but this is not afforded when considering online elements of delivery and tutors often structure their own delivery and support. This requires tutors to be more organised than in face-to-face settings and manage their workload with greater autonomy (Stubbs et al., 2006). University lecturers often have formal and informal leadership positions and contribute to research and scholarship of teaching and learning, and successful management of
“these contextual factors and the associated expectations is essential for effective university teaching” (Devlin and Samarawickrema, 2010: 120). Further, online tutoring and support has been found to generate higher workloads than similar programmes in traditional settings (Bolliger and Wasilik, 2009: 113; Duncan and Barnett, 2010: 259). However, learners value tutors who are organised and offer timely responses to queries (Murphy et al., 2011: 408). As Chapter 3 noted, tutor perceptions of workload influence approaches to teaching but, when it is their responsibility to manage, it becomes of greater importance in blended learning contexts that it is done effectively.

The competences of adaptability and flexibility are relevant when dealing with any form of information and communications technology (ICT) as, at times, technology does not work and this can adversely affect learners’ study (Bailey and Card, 2009: 155). In face-to-face contexts, tutors can quickly switch to an alternative teaching approach but this is not possible if there is reliance on technologies with learners at a distance. Alternative strategies have to be quickly found and communicated to learners and these can often be time consuming for tutors. Further, a valuable competence is problem solving (Bar-On, 2006: 16) which is strengthened through experience and reflection, suggesting these are beneficial when moving into blended contexts.

The consideration of workload resonates with a number of competences discussed within the chapter, such as adaptability and flexibility, as it allows scope for dialogue, visibility and empathic tutoring, particularly in online environments. Enthusiasm for the subject and teaching is generally considered an important personal quality when teaching adults (Armitage et al., 2003; Smith, 2004; Martinovic; 2009; Biggs and Tang,
and this, I argue, is enhanced when tutors are not feeling excessive pressures from competing demands.

### 4.3 Blended Learning Tutors: Professional Development and the Ability to Work within Available Resources

This section develops the discussion of competences to argue the importance of professional development for blended learning tutors, particularly with regard to the technical skills required to be successful in online environments. These issues support the evaluation of modules under investigation by raising factors that potentially influence their success. Tutors in all contexts have to work within the broad resource requirements provided by their institutions and this is particularly relevant to the online elements of blended learning. The online resources available to the tutors under investigation include the virtual learning environment (VLE), e-mail, word-processing software and web-authoring tools. The VLE and e-mail are important resources for blended learning tutors and effective practice in their use is discussed.

As tutors commonly move from face-to-face to blended contexts often with limited formal training or continuing professional development (CPD), finding effective pedagogy for the context is difficult. As a consequence, inexperienced tutors often adopt traditional practices in online environments (Kreber and Kanuka, 2006). A constraint for busy tutors is time which can restrict opportunities for reflection on action (Schön, 1987). Online elements of blended tutoring are commonly asynchronous, which can provide time for tutors to consider action or even consult with colleagues or a mentor regarding practice.
As universities adapt delivery patterns to meet the needs of PT students, tutors’ roles are changing to meet these challenges and the adaption of their pedagogy, through continuing professional development (CPD), is needed. CPD within face-to-face contexts is widely available and Bennett and Marsh (2002: 14) highlight the need for effective programmes of staff development and training to support online delivery. Through case study analysis of an online tutor training programme, Bennett and Marsh (2002: 18-19) state prospective tutors should be placed within practical contexts to develop new teaching and learning practices quickly. It is common practice for tutors proficient in traditional settings to be moved into online contexts, although it is advised that training continues beyond the pre-experience stage and be supplemented with available learning technologists and technical support (Bennett and Lockyer, 2004: 242; Davies and Fill, 2007: 825), and be developed by peer collaboration around appropriate pedagogy (Stickler and Hemple, 2007: 83; Carnell, 2007: 33). This research study considers the formal and informal training received by tutors and its impact on practice and the learner experience.

Barker (2002) advises that online tutors should undertake CPD to keep abreast of emerging technologies and he provides a useful summary of required technical skills, including effective use of e-mail and VLEs. Other educational technologies continuously emerge such as Web 2.0 in recent years (Conole and Alevizou, 2010). These include e-portfolios, blogs, wikis and social software and whilst CPD is advisable for their effective use, judgments made about tutor practices with each technology in this research study are based on the alignment of learning, teaching and assessment. It would be difficult to argue that technical skills are not important for tutors in blended
environments; however, these alone will not foster learning and motivate students to achieve when studying at a distance.

The VLE is a key resource for tutors and students and its effective use is important, particularly, to support teaching and learning. Weller (2007: 5) defines a VLE as ‘a software system that combines a number of different tools that are used systematically to deliver content online and facilitate the learning experience around that content’. VLEs are probably the most pervasive of all learning technologies in education (Becta, 2005), due partly to the number of tools they support which include discussion boards, a repository for learning resources (text-based and multimedia), e-mail, blogs and wikis. They will also include specific areas for conferences (both synchronous and asynchronous), class lists and learner homepages, assessment tools and grade books, and will allow file upload for assessed work. Used appropriately, VLEs can enable tutors to improve the learning experience for students by utilising communication and collaborative tools, lowering the Transactional Distance between participants, whilst supporting course administration (Bennett and Youde, 2010). However, VLEs have been criticised for supporting a content-focussed approach to learning (Weller 2007: 125; Dyke et al., 2007: 89), lend themselves to being a repository for lecture slides and word-processed handouts, and are often concomitant with Associationist approaches (see Chapter 3.5 for discussion of Associationist approaches). Nevertheless, as Weller (2007: 19) argues, it is also possible to design learning activities within VLEs that reflect other models of learning - for example, constructivist and problem-based learning.
For blended learning tutors, e-mail can foster learner motivation, promote dialogue at a distance, and support a range of pedagogies. E-mail facilitates the highest level of immediacy (Wheeler, 2007: 116) with the affordance of quick responses which, can be particularly motivating for learners studying at a distance (Smyth and Houghton, 2012), but requires careful management by tutors. Messages, if carefully considered and written, can facilitate the development of interpersonal relationships between tutors and learners and offer space where care and learning can mutually coexist (Doherty and Mayer, 2003: 599). Empathy can be shown towards learner difficulties, with the text-based media allowing a powerful motivating force where complimentary messages can be kept for future reference. The human element of the online tutor is important (Barker, 2002) and this extends to the skill required for effective e-mail use, which include the care required when composing messages and the value of them in expressing feelings and ideas (Grandgenett and Grandgenett, 2001). Zimmer and Alexander’s (1996 cited in Barker, 2002: 7) ideas of ‘netiquette’ were considered important to this research study which relates to the attributes an online tutor needs to conduct effective and socially acceptable online conversations. These skills extend through the other text-based CMCs and, I argue, are significant in lowering Transactional Distances.

4.4 Concluding Thoughts

Tutors play a significant part in determining the teaching, learning and assessment methods but a number of their personal qualities are important for a successful learning experience. The chapter has explored pertinent literatures to propose tutor qualities and skills for blended learning contexts, and these are investigated within this research
study. These mainly focussed on relationship management traits but also included self-management, such as being organised, adaptable, and enthusiastic. The empirical aspects of this research study consider influences outside the tutor's control, however, the ability to be flexible and adaptable appear important traits for the successful delivery of blended learning modules.

Reflective practice can support the transition to blended learning contexts and while appropriate CPD can be beneficial, tutors develop their pedagogy more effectively in actual teaching settings (Bennett and Marsh, 2002). Further, dialogue with experienced colleagues can aid tutor's development. A base level of technical skills is required for the online elements of delivery and these include pedagogically appropriate use of e-mail and the institution's VLE.

Table 4.1 provides a summary of key findings from the literature review chapters (Chapters 2, 3 and 4) regarding online and blended tutoring. Table 4.2 develops these issues to focus specifically on areas to examine as part of this research study, which are more closely aligned to the context of this investigation: part-time learners undertaking vocationally relevant degrees on a day school basis. Whilst there is overlap between some of the issues identified in the two tables, it is their investigation in this particular context that is unique to this research study. Further, these issues supported the development of the learner questionnaire and tutor interview schedule (see Chapter 6.4).
### A Summary of the Issues Raised in the Literature Review Chapters Regarding Online and Blended Tutoring

- There is a lack of literature regarding the emotional competence of blended learning tutors and its impact on practices. Further, there is limited research on teachers’ emotional competence and its impact on practices in general. There is limited qualitative research on teachers’ emotional competence and its impact on practices.

- There is a lack of literature regarding learner perceptions of blended tutors, particularly around notions of emotional competence and how this influenced learners’ perceptions of quality.

- There is a lack of literature regarding effective practice in blended learning environments that focus on part-time learners, undertaking vocationally relevant degrees on a day school basis.

- Aligned teaching, learning and assessment encourage deep approaches to study from students.

- Online and blended learning amplify the opportunities for peer interaction at a distance. However, social constructivist approaches to teaching and learning can be challenging in this context.

- Tutors’ epistemological beliefs and perceptions influence teaching practices, the approach to teaching adopted being a pertinent example. Differing tutor practices can influence learners’ approach to study.

- Communication, feedback, dialogue, a tutor ‘presence’, clear aims and goals, consistent standards are important in learner perceptions of quality and the development of interpersonal relationships.

- Consideration of learners’ feelings of separation is important for effective teaching at a distance.

- Learner choice over decisions about their learning and assessment can reduce their perceptions of the Transactional Distance.

- Tutor support is important for effective teaching and learning at a distance and in online
• Some tutor personal qualities including being empathic, flexible, adaptable and enthusiastic, are important for effective teaching and learning in online environments.
• The development of interpersonal relationships and effective communication methods are important aspects of teaching and learning in online environments.
• Tutors are able to work within their university’s available resources and have the necessary technical and pedagogic skills to do so effectively.
• CPD, development of pedagogy in actual settings, and dialogue with experienced colleagues are potentially important in tutor’s effectiveness.

Table 4.1 – A Summary of Issues Raised in the Literature Review Chapters Regarding Online and Blended Tutoring.

Table 4.2 focuses specifically on areas to be explored as part of this research study and indicates gaps in knowledge, whilst stating how these influenced the Approach and Methodology, including the methods of data collection (see Chapter 6). A complex and multi-faceted study has been presented, which facilitated the largely idiographic and inductive approach adopted in the qualitative analysis within this research study. The research aims were outlined in Chapter 1.2 and encompass the issues raised here.

<table>
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<th>Issues to be Explored in this Research Study</th>
<th>Links to Approach and Methodology, and Methods of Data Collection</th>
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<td>The relationships between emotional competence and various emotionally competent abilities and traits, and learner perceptions of quality. These include those identified in the analysis of The Four Branch Model and</td>
<td>This issue, in part, was researched quantitatively to explore the hypothesis posed - tutors exhibiting high levels of emotional competence are perceived as effective in blended learning environments by their learners. This was investigated by tutors completing the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test</td>
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| Goleman's Framework of Emotional Competences (see Chapter 2), and those identified when reviewing literatures discussing blended and online learning (see Chapter 4). | (MSCEIT) and the results compared to learner perceptions of quality, elicited through an attitude survey. 

This issue was also explored qualitatively using an idiographic and inductive approach. This was undertaken largely from analysis of tutor interviews but also from examining the VLE content of modules under investigation. This analysis was significant in the ultimate development of a group of emotional competences that support the effective blended tutoring of mature learners, studying part-time (PT), vocationally relevant degrees, which is detailed in Chapter 12. Further, it provided an alternative perspective on the hypothesis posed. |
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<td>Effective practice in teaching, learning, assessment and support, in learner perceptions of quality.</td>
<td>This issue was largely explored qualitatively using an idiographic and inductive approach with data elicited from tutor interviews and VLE content analysis. Throughout the analysis consideration was given to the <em>aligned</em> nature of teaching, learning and assessment and learner perceptions of quality, elicited through an attitude survey.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The exploration of other factors potentially influencing learner perceptions of quality, for example, VLE use, tutors’ technical skills, and tutors’ CPD.</td>
<td>This issue was explored quantitatively and qualitatively. Learner perceptions of quality were elicited, via an attitude survey, around effective teaching, effective feedback and concern for student learning, clear goals</td>
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and standards, appropriate workload, appropriate assessment, online tutoring skills, and tutors’ online emotional competence. This data supported the qualitative analysis as well.

The qualitative analysis adopted an idiographic and inductive approach with data elicited from tutor interviews and VLE content analysis.

From interviews with tutors, analysis of VLE content, and factors that emerged from the pilot study, I ascertained assessment measures regarding the qualities, skills and experience of the tutors (see Chapter 8.6 for an outline of this process), which allowed analysis and comparisons with the measures of effective tutoring elicited from the learner attitude survey.

Table 4.2 - Issues to be Explored in this Research Study with Links to the Adopted Approach and Methodology.

Whilst the hypothesis proposed appears relatively narrow, Table 4.2 provides an indication of its nuanced nature. At one level, tutors’ emotional competence can be measured by the MSCEIT and compared to learner perceptions of quality, which provides an indication of the value of EC as a construct within this context. However, the analysis of The Four Branch Model (see Chapter 2.4) revealed a range of abilities that could contribute to the effectiveness of blended tutors with a similar finding for the traits identified in Goleman’s Framework of Emotional Competences (see Chapter 2.6).
Chapters 2 and 4 revealed commonalities between the abilities and traits outlined in the above two models, and the personal qualities identified in the literature discussing effective blended and online learning, for example, tutor empathy. When exploring the hypothesis in this research study, the analysis, from both quantitative and qualitative approaches, included a range of abilities and traits to provide a detailed exploration of tutor emotional competence and learner perceptions of quality. This study explores the gaps in knowledge exposed within the literature review concerning the value of emotional competence for blended tutors in learner perceptions of quality within the context under investigation.

The thesis now moves on to consider adult learners and discusses tutor practices to motivate and encourage Deep approaches to study.
Chapter 5  Motivating the Adult Learner

5.1 Chapter Introduction

A key element in this research study is to explore tutors’ approaches to the delivery of modules specifically for learners studying vocationally relevant courses on a part-time (PT) basis. This included groups of learners who were returning to study and are frequently classified ‘mature’, with a significant number aged between 25 and 54. They have not experienced recent digital technologies within their schooling and the pedagogic affordances of computer mediated communications (CMCs). Prensky (2001) categorises these learners as ‘digital immigrants’ and this label provides a useful reminder of their background and their potential inexperience in the context under investigation. Further, PT study in blended learning contexts affords learners flexibility and autonomy to plan their own learning, however, this is challenging with competing pressures such as work and family life (Creanor, 2002; Smyth and Houghton, 2012). This chapter, therefore, explores effective practice in teaching adults and motivating them to be successful.

The chapter firstly evaluates the Andragogical Model and argues its value for this research study as a lens through which to analyse adult learning. I suggest the Model’s core principles are a little contradictory regarding the intrinsic motivation of adult learners and, therefore, outline pertinent extrinsic motivators tutors can adopt to aid module delivery. The chapter continues by arguing the importance of considering learner approaches to study when evaluating a tutor’s module delivery. Finally, factors
influencing learner’s approaches to study are outlined which support the empirical evaluation of the modules under investigation.

5.2 The Andragogical Model within Blended Learning Contexts

Knowles et al. (2011) claim the Andragogical Model and the six core principles on which it is based provides an insight into adult learning. These learners bring previous knowledge, viewpoints, and life experiences (Knowles et al., 2011) to face-to-face and online learning environments. It is important to apply flexibility when applying the Andragogical Model and the context of study drives the teaching and learning strategies to be adopted (Knowles, 1984: 418). This latter point was included by Knowles et al. (2011: 146) in their Andragogy in Practice model which included the six core principles, but included consideration of goals and purposes for learning and individual and situational differences, and these are evaluated in this research study. The Model recognises “the lack of homogeneity among learners and learning situations, and illustrates that the learning transaction is a multifaceted activity” (Knowles et al., 2011: 146). This stresses the model is not a set of strict criteria but a set of premises through which to consider adult learning.

Knowles’ notion of Andragogy has been one of the most widely cited concepts in adult education literatures (Kember, 2007; Jarvis, 2012). Knowles was part of the development of learning theory that brought learners’ experiences to the fore, although, he did not explore how adults actually learn, or discuss the nature of their experiences (Jarvis, 2012: 135). Andragogy is an ideal position on which adult learning should be based (Hartree, 1984), particularly in terms of developing students capable of self-
directed learning who are able to manage with limited tutor input (Kember, 2007: 89).
This is pertinent for this research study as the day school model of delivery offers less
face-to-face tutor/learner contact than traditional teaching approaches. However, for
effective learning, for both children and adults, tutors should respond to the different
experiences of their learners (Jarvis, 2012: 142). In the context under investigation,
learners’ work experiences are relevant.

The Model’s core principles are now analysed to further scrutinise their value in
evaluating adult learning within blended contexts. The Andragogical Model’s core
principles are:

- need to know: adults need to know why they are learning a topic before learning
  commences;
- learners’ self-concept: adults need to be responsible for their decisions on
  education;
- role of learners’ experiences: adults use experiences as the basis for learning
  activities;
- readiness to learn: adults are more interested in learning if there is an immediate
  relevance to work;
- orientation to learning: adult learning is problem-centred rather than content
  orientated;
- motivation to learn: adults’ most potent motivators are intrinsic.
The tutor can facilitate Andragogical learning, both in face-to-face and online environments, by adopting strategies within their modules to address the core principles. Adult learners need to know the reason for learning a topic is particularly relevant for this research as learners are studying vocationally relevant programmes. This core principle overlaps with readiness to learn as this type of self-directed learner, in general, wants to know the relevance of their study to their work context. Tutors can clearly articulate the relevance of modules and establish clear goals and purposes for learning, both in relation to the course and general work contexts, usually at the first day school, but also in online environments. Adults often want to be passive in the learning process (Knowles et al., 2011: 63) but treating adults in such a manner can cause tensions considering their need to be self-directing and Knowles et al. (2011: 63) referred to this as the learners’ self-concept. A significant number of learners surveyed in this research are non-traditional university entrants, who may not have experienced formal education since school and may feel more comfortable in passive learning environments. As Knowles et al. state:

as adult educators become aware of this problem, they make efforts to create learning experiences in which adults are helped to make the transition from dependent to self-directing learners. (Knowles et al., 2011: 65).

To address this, tutors can give appropriate consideration to academic skills and robust learner support mechanisms, however, these issues have to be addressed in both face-to-face and online environments. The structuring of such support and the encouragement of learners to utilise it can be a challenge for blended learning tutors.
(Smith, 2004: 31). Both formative and summative assessments provide an opportunity for tutors to consider the core principles, *the role of the learners’ experiences* and *orientation to learning*, by allowing students to contextualise their learning to ensure its relevance to the workplace. Assessment strategies could include case method, problem solving and peer support as a means of integrating learner experiences (Knowles et al., 2011: 64), and the use of such methods is explored within this research.

The core principles outlined above are largely fulfilled within the modules under investigation in this research study. Learners have chosen to study vocationally focussed degrees which allow the relevance of curricula to be apparent. Although tutors may be constrained by summative assessment requirements, they could allow learners to be responsible for choice of assessment, develop problem-centred tasks, and relate theory to practice. Further, formative assessment tasks can be utilised, in both face-to-face and online environments, which meet the needs of adult learners. The analysis of core principles has been instructive for this research study in highlighting important factors for adults, with appropriate assessment strategies, based on Andragogical principles, appearing important for encouraging self-directed learning.

### 5.3 The Adult Learner: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivators

An interesting consideration for this research is the Andragogical Model’s core principle, *motivation*, the notion that adults respond better to intrinsic motivators rather than extrinsic. This suggests the role of a tutor regarding motivation is not particularly important, but this view is too simplistic. This core principle appears a little contradictory to the other five, in that, if learners are intrinsically motivated then there is limited need
for the others. Biggs and Tang (2007: 34) support the notion of student intrinsic motivation by highlighting its importance for successful learning experiences but outline the important role tutors play in building fascination for the area of study. As some adult learners undertake study for instrumental purposes, such as to increase promotional opportunities, tutors need to incorporate extrinsic motivators into modules. Reference to Biggs and Tang (2007: 32) was instructive here. They posit two factors that make students want to learn a topic area, and tutors play a pivotal role in the achievement of both:

- the learner sees value in the area of study;
- the learner should expect success when undertaking activities within the module.

Tutors can aid learners in appreciating value in the area of study through strategies such as, linking theory to practice, building on previous learning, and allowing contextualisation of learning to the workplace. Tutors providing an appropriately structured knowledge base, with clear learning goals established, and building on previous learning experiences, can help learners see the value of study (Biggs and Tang, 2007: 25; Bailey and Card, 2009: 154). Further strategies include tutors providing something to stimulate learners’ interests and not have them passively receiving information, and questions should be posed to engage the learners, possibly through linking to work contexts (Knowles et al., 2011). In order for learners to ‘expect success’, formative assessment and tutor feedback can have powerful effects on learner’s belief that they can achieve (Biggs and Tang, 2007: 33; Murphy, et al., 2011: 408).
Whilst it is encouraging that, in general, adult learners enrolled on vocationally relevant courses would be intrinsically motivated, this section has highlighted the importance of extrinsic motivators in leading to successful blended learning experiences. Extrinsic motivators, such as building self-esteem (Maslow, 1968) by, for example, providing good quality feedback and an appropriately structured module (Ramsden, 1991), can influence learner perceptions of tutoring quality and adopted approaches to study.

5.4 Learners’ Approaches to Study

It would be incomplete to evaluate tutor practices on modules without also considering the influence of learners and their approaches to study. This section firstly outlines differing approaches to study and then considers how tutors in blended contexts can facilitate learners in adopting the most effective approaches. Other influences on student learning are then discussed which, again, were instructive in the empirical analysis of this research study.

Marton and Säljö (1976) identified predominant approaches to learning and outlined the notion of Deep and Surface learners which are influenced by the content, context and requirements of a specific task. Students adopting deeper approaches use the highest level of learning activities (Biggs, Kember and Leung, 2001: 138), such as wide reading and relating concepts to work environments, whereas those adopting surface approaches complete only the required activities in order to achieve desired outcomes. Biggs and Tang (2007: 24) eloquently outline the benefits for tutors when students adopt Deep approaches when they state “they automatically try to focus on underlying meanings, on main ideas, themes, principles, or successful applications”. Kember,
Leung, and McNaught (2008) develop these ideas by considering influencing factors. They state:

> the relational nature of approaches to learning imply that the curriculum design and the nature of the teaching and learning environment have some bearing on the learning approach the student adopts. (Kember, Leung, and McNaught, 2008: 45).

This suggests that identifying learners’ approach to study is a factor in understanding their evaluation of the module, but it may be difficult for tutors to influence within a relatively short, contained learning experience. Biggs and Tang (2007: 24) state that even with the best teaching some learners will adopt *Surface* approaches and also considering outside influences on adults, such as family and work pressures, it is necessary to account for the impact of approaches to study when evaluating the modules under investigation.

Having established the beneficial factors of students adopting *Deep* approaches to study, identification of other factors that influence student learning strategies supported a more rigorous evaluation of the modules under investigation. The structure of the learning environment, with clear goals and timely, constructive feedback has a significant influence on the student’s approach to study (Entwistle and Ramsden, 1983). Biggs and Tang (2007: 25) add to these points and associate the following tutor influences with the *Deep* approach, an appropriate motivational context, assessing for structure and not facts, and aligning teaching and learning methods to the intended
outcomes of the module. Further, Gibbs (1992: 9) articulates characteristics of teaching and learning environments which tend to encourage a *Surface* approach:

- a heavy student workload;
- an excessive amount of course material;
- a lack of opportunity to pursue subjects in depth;
- a lack of choice over subjects and the method of study;
- an anxiety provoking assessment system.

The nature of assessment and the resultant student workload are important factors in the approaches to study adopted by learners which coincide with the core principles of the Andragogical Model, particularly with regard to choice available within modules.

### 5.5 Concluding Thoughts

The chapter has analysed the Andragogical Model and argued its value for this research study as a lens through which to analyse adult learning within blended learning contexts. The Model's core principles are a little contradictory regarding the intrinsic motivation of adult learners and, therefore, pertinent extrinsic motivators have been outlined that are considered in the empirical analysis.

Common themes are emerging from the exploration of andragogy and approaches to study that promote actions tutors can take to encourage adoption of *Deep* approaches in learners. These were raised in the literatures reviewed but then contextualised within the chapter for blended learning contexts and provide an overview of effective tutors
and tutoring to meet adult learner needs. These themes and actions informed the
development of the research instruments used as part of this research and the analysis
of tutor practices during the modules under investigation.

A range of issues have been raised within this Chapter that are explored in the empirical
aspects of this research study. Pertinent themes and actions, I argue, can include, the
tutor provides a structured module for learners that encourage reflection on previous
experiences. Clear goals are outlined as the module commences establishing the
relevance of the subject area as well as the purpose and value of the study. As part of
this outline, tutors stimulate learner interest and build fascination for the subject area.
Learners’ approaches to study can be influenced by tutors, however, during the
operation of a module, this impact is questionable. Adult learners are frequently
intrinsically motivated in their study but can be undertaking courses for instrumental
reasons or be influenced by competing demands of their professions and family life.
Tutors have to manage learners’ competing pressures as well as their own as
academics. Assessment methods, both formative and summative, allow students to
contextualise learning within their work setting and integrate their experiences, but also
be manageable and allow a depth of analysis. The tutor has an important role in
providing extrinsic motivators to encourage their learners’ belief that they can be
successful with structured student support mechanisms and detailed, timely feedback
on assessments being integral to its achievement (see Chapter 3.5).
The Approach and Methodology chapter follows and includes the influences of the good practice identified from Chapters 2 to 5 on the methodological choices and research design.
Chapter 6  Approach and Methodology

6.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter outlines the influences on decisions relating to methodology, resultant data collection methods, and techniques for analysis. Chapter 2 raised a number of factors supporting a mixed methods approach drawing on both quantitative and qualitative approaches to fully explore tutors’ emotional competences (ECs). Decisions, such as the selection of the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) to measure tutors’ emotional competence, influenced the philosophical orientation of the study, methods of analysis, and subsequent understanding. This chapter firstly justifies the methodological approach adopted and then outlines the development of research instruments and methods of data analysis. Finally, the chapter outlines ethical practices adopted throughout the research.

In order to address the research aims (see Chapter 1.2), and to test the hypothesis (see Chapter 1.1), a mixed methods approach was adopted through multiple-case study analysis. A case in the research study consists of one module being taught by one tutor. The research evaluates eight modules and explores approaches to delivery; analysing tutors’ skills, qualities, emotional competences and pedagogical approaches; and comparing these to learner perceptions. Within each case study, a semi-structured interview was undertaken to elicit the tutor’s perceptions of module delivery. These were then compared to learner perceptions, collected by a questionnaire. The MSCEIT was used to measure each tutor’s emotional competence and then analysis was undertaken of computer mediated communication (CMC) contained within the virtual learning environment (VLE) used to support module delivery.
This research study included a significant pilot study. The results of this pilot, in terms of emerging findings and amendments to methods of data collection and analysis, are detailed in the next chapter. This chapter outlines influences on decisions relating to both the pilot study and the full empirical research. Although there were some changes as a result of the pilot study, a significant number of methodological decisions proved to be justified in its development.

### 6.2 Philosophical Orientations and Methodological Approach

I have extensive experience of blended learning as a student, tutor and manager, and the research aims to build on this knowledge. Although drawing on my own experience suggests a more qualitative approach, to explore the influence of EC on tutor effectiveness I needed:

- a measure of EC;
- a method of assessing learner perceptions of tutor effectiveness.

Both of these factors suggest a quantitative approach. As stated in Chapter 2.5, a qualitative approach would help address some of the MSCEIT’s limitations and provide examples of practice that illustrate tutor EC within blended learning contexts. These considerations informed the decision to adopt a mixed methods approach.

Mixed methods approaches have emerged as a ‘third paradigm’ of social research (Johnson, Omwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007; Denscombe, 2008) and combine qualitative and quantitative methods within the same research project (Robson, 2011). These
approaches have pragmatic underpinnings through the “ability to accommodate the existence of variations and inconsistencies within the approach” (Denscombe, 2008: 271), and the accommodation of researcher decisions (Johnson and Omwuegbuzie, 2004: 15). Chapter 2 noted the MSCEIT as a valid and reliable measure of emotional competence (EC) and this, together with the desire to elicit a broad representation of learner perceptions of their tutors (see Section 6.5), provided quantitative data for analysis within this study. Further, Chapter 2 highlighted the common quantitative approach to understanding EI, as well as the need for further qualitative research in the area, particularly with regard to blended learning tutors. This informed the decision to interview tutors and analyse their contributions within module VLEs.

This research study mirrors Creswell's (2003: 216) Sequential Explanatory Design for mixed method approaches as quantitative data is considered first (see Chapter 8), followed by a more extensive qualitative analysis. This allowed development of the analysis and building on initial findings (Denscombe, 2008: 272) as data from both approaches is interrogated and scrutinised together (see Chapters 9 and 10). De George-Walker and Keeffe (2010) adopted a mixed methods approach in their case study of blended learning design to aid triangulation, with tutor interviews being supported by an online learner survey. The mixed method approach strengthened this study as it allowed triangulation of research methods; the in-depth exploration of complex phenomena and situations, such as emotional competences and blended learning environments; and the explanation of findings as qualitative methods enrich quantitative findings (Bryman, 2012: 633-634).
To complement the quantitative analysis, a qualitative approach was appropriate to achieve the research aims and test the hypothesis, in part, as the study involves dealing with tutors and learners in specific contexts, namely a module of study on a university programme. The research examined tutor perspectives and learner views, and other evidence around the operation of a module. This inductive analysis (Gibbs, 2002: 7) resulted in general statements about effective practice in blended tutoring and the relevance and importance of tutor emotional competence. Such statements supported the development of a model of observed tutor beliefs and practices. Martinovic (2009: 170) adopted a qualitative approach when exploring expertise in online mathematics tutoring and drew on Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) views to justify the decision. They suggested that qualitative methods are preferable for exploring a little known phenomenon (for example, emotional competence and blended tutoring), gaining new perspectives on known phenomenon (for example, established good practice in blended tutoring), or gaining more in-depth information that may be difficult to express quantitatively (for example, exploring emotional competence in blended tutoring).

The qualitative aspect of the research encompasses two of Tesch’s (1990: 63) categories of qualitative research. Firstly, it aims to discover regularities by exploring the nature of successful tutoring in blended learning environments and the development of general statements of good practice. This statement seems to suggest a more positivist epistemological stance which is supported by the quantitative analysis, but, as Gibbs (2002: 10) highlights, the regularities “are based on the kinds of systems and functional relationships to be found in organisations and institutions”, namely, within this research, the relationships between tutors and students within blended learning environments. Secondly, the research “seeks to discern meaning” (Gibbs, 2002: 67) which Tesch (1990)
outlined was mainly unearthed through the analysis of text or actions. Tutors’ emotional competence was explored, in part, through the analysis of the module delivery and operation. From this, the research focussed on the emotional traits, activities and actions that tutors displayed which I judged to be supportive of the successful completion of modules whilst enhancing the learner experience.

6.3 Case Study Approach

A case study of one tutor and her delivery of a module were researched and analysed for the pilot study, with a further seven case studies for the full empirical research. Creswell (1998) outlines case studies as one of the five traditions of qualitative inquiry, although this is seen as a weaker method in social science (Yin, 2003: xiii) as generalisations cannot be made from single cases (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 219). Case studies allow idiographic exploration (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) in that they highlight unique elements of the individual phenomenon and this was instructive for this research as it considers the particular aspects, including emotional considerations, which make blended learning tutors successful. Bennett and Marsh (2002: 15) used case study methodology when researching a staff development and training programme for online tutors as it provided “an analysis of the effectiveness of individual components of a programme of training”. To overcome the difficulty of trying to generalise from a single case, a multiple-case design was adopted with a number of case studies undertaken. This allowed further quantitative analysis as data across cases was compared. Yin argues “the evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling” (2003: 46) which can lead to the development of a “rich theoretical framework” (2003: 47). Further, case studies can provide ‘exemplary knowledge’, that is “a particular representation given in context and understood in that context” (Thomas, 2011: 31), that may be used to inform practice. General statements
about a range of qualities and skills in blended learning environments underpin the proposed Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices. Thomas (2011: 33) notes that each researcher’s analysis will be different with case study research and it is the experience and knowledge the researcher has of the subject area that enables “the construction of the good case study, its critical reading and its use”. With a wealth of experience of blended learning as a teacher, manager and student, my opinion and analysis enriches the research process and results.

The literature review chapters highlighted the need for this research to explore a broad range of influences with the analysis of the tutor most important, but, with consideration of the whole blended learning experience. This consideration further supported the adoption of a case study approach. Mottram (2006) adopted a case study approach to review a module over time when exploring blended education and the transformation of teachers in UK HE, whilst Hughes (2007) analysed modules when researching blended learning to increase learner support and improve retention. Within the University, courses are modular and it is usual for a module to be delivered by one tutor. This was an appropriate unit of research as it provided a tutor’s view of their approach to a module which could be triangulated with learner perceptions and documentary evidence contained within the course VLE.

6.4 Research Design

This section details the research conduct and includes the process of sampling, methods of data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations.
The Sample

The study is located within my institution, a ‘post 1992’ university in the north of England. There were sufficient cases who met the non-probabilistic, purposive and convenience sampling attributes (Robson, 2011), given the number of tutors and learners engaged on blended learning modules over three campuses and numerous franchise sites. This choice was also convenient with limited obstacles from “gatekeepers”, and sources of information easier to access (Robson, 2011). Yin (2003: 47-48) advises against using a sampling logic in multiple-case studies as it could lead to a large number of potentially relevant variables and many important topics not being investigated, therefore, the sample attributes were relatively broad.

The particular characteristics being sought for the case studies were;

- the tutor delivered the module on a ‘day school’ basis, that is, where learners attend university for a small number of days (typically two or three), with remaining teaching conducted via CMCs;
- the learners were studying undergraduate or post-graduate courses on a part-time basis;
- the learners were studying qualifications relevant to their profession;
- the tutor had not previously completed the MSCEIT or have a detailed knowledge of the Four Branch Model;
- the tutor was an experienced teacher/lecturer (over five years) and had delivered at least three previous modules in blended learning contexts.
Eight tutors and their delivery of a module were chosen as case studies as this allowed a range of tutor characteristics to be explored and the possibility of inductive themes to develop. Yin (2003: 47) states that between six and ten multiple case studies would provide influential evidence, if they were all supporting the initial propositions. Conversely, if the cases were contradictory, the initial propositions would have to be revised and retested with further cases. The initial hypothesis of this research is that tutors exhibiting high levels of emotional competence are perceived as effective in blended learning environments by their learners, but, apart from this, the aims of the research were analysed inductively. The views of Strauss and Corbin (1998) were enlightening when deciding whether eight tutors and their delivery of a module was rich and sufficient. There were some tensions between maintaining the richness of case study data and having sufficient multiple cases to allow general statements to emerge around good practice in blended tutoring and the value of tutor emotional competence. Strauss and Corbin (1998: 136) discuss a category, such as a tutor’s technical skills with regard to educational technology, as being saturated “when no new information seems to emerge during coding”. However, they recognise that this is a matter of degree as further analysis would always produce more properties and dimensions but they conclude that saturation is a matter of “reaching the point in the research where collecting additional data seems counterproductive” (1998: 136) and further findings add little to the emerging themes. Following the data analysis of eight tutors and their respective modules, there was sufficient coverage of each area of exploration with rich and appropriate data. Similar sample sizes were adopted by: Matinovic (2009) when interviewing and analysing logs of five ‘expert’ Maths tutors; Gonzalez (2009) when interviewing seven experienced lecturers to study conceptions of, and approaches to, teaching online, and; Cliff (2011) when
researching seven female head teachers’ emotional intelligence through interviews and self-report questionnaires.

The sampling criteria and the multiple-case design allowed a range of tutor characteristics to be explored including teaching experience (both face-to-face and online), gender, age, education background, teaching styles, workload (both tutor and student), training, and expertise in the use of educational technology.

The sampling criteria (outlined earlier) for the tutors under investigation included experienced tutors/lecturers who have taught three blended or online learning modules. Robinia and Anderson (2010) argued that tutors should have taught three online courses to be self-efficacious in that context. All tutors had successful careers in educational or business contexts before moving to lecture in HE including a variety of management positions. Whilst in HE, they held management responsibilities on courses, with six leading degree programmes. Each had a recognised teaching qualification relevant to the context under investigation, with four having experience of delivering teacher training programmes. A summary table describing the respondents’ characteristics, both tutors and learners, can be found in Appendix 2.

**Methods of Data Collection**

This section justifies the choice and development of the tutor interview, learner questionnaire, and document analysis of VLE content. As outlined in Chapter 2, tutors also completed the MSCEIT to measure their emotional competence.
Development of the Tutor Interview

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken to elicit tutors' perceptions of module delivery whilst exploring a variety of influencing factors. Simons (2009) favours interviews as a method of data collection in case studies as they enable the researcher “to get to the core issues in the case more quickly and in greater depth, to probe motivations, to ask follow-up questions and to facilitate individuals telling their story” (2009: 43), with all these points pertinent to the aims of the research. Semi-structured interviews were the most suitable in achieving the research aims with the loose structure generated from significant issues derived from Chapters 2 to 5. Benefits of semi-structured interviews for this study included their value in flexible and multi-strategy designs; I had a list of topics to be covered but with the freedom of question sequence and control over the extent of focus on specific areas; and they are appropriate when the researcher is close to the study which is common in small scale research (Robson, 2011: 285). They are also beneficial for multiple-case designs as they allow scope for cross-case comparability (Bryman, 2008: 440). The literature review chapters revealed a range of factors that impact on the relative success of a blended learning module within HE. The list of factors has been summarised to give broad categories which formed the structure of the interview. The categories are:

- tutor background and experience which included their expertise with regard to educational technology and any specific training for tutoring in blended learning environments;
- tutor’s approach to teaching and assessing the module including; analysis of appropriate pedagogy for the context and learners, motivation of learners, and tutor emotional competences;
- resources used to support the operation of the module including appropriateness and reliability;
- tutor and learner workload during the module;
- tutor feedback about the learners studying the module including their overall impression of the group, achievement, and any issues that had an impact on the quality of the module.

The literature review chapters highlighted a number of emotional competences that appear to contribute to effective teaching. These informed the development of the interview questions and the construction of the template to aid analysis (see Section 6.6). To explore and develop unique features of the case studies, an active interviewing approach was adopted (King, 2004a: 13) that presented a range of questions that allowed tutors the opportunity to discuss emotional competences. This approach mirrored Cliffe (2011) who used interviews as part of a broader research design to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and educational leadership amongst female secondary school headteachers, which achieved a deep analysis of emotional competences in a variety of situations. The broad areas of questioning in this research included:

- how did you develop a rapport with the students?
- how did you motivate the students?

The interview also allowed opportunities to demonstrate strategies used to motivate and influence learners, again, to elicit responses about tutor emotional competence to compensate for the MSCEIT’s deficiencies (see Chapter 2.5).
Yin (2003) advises the use of pre-tests when developing case study research instruments before the pilot research commences. A pre-test was carried out on the interview schedule, which involved asking a colleague, a senior lecturer in e-learning, the questions and then discussing the scope of their responses. This resulted in some minor amendments being made to the interview schedule, such as an additional question about tutor perceptions of their learners, but demonstrated the interview would generate relevant data for the research aims. A copy of the final interview schedule can be found in Appendix 3.

**Development of the Learner Questionnaire**

Chapter 2 established the relevance of obtaining learner perceptions of tutors whilst Chapters 3, 4 and 5 underpinned the questionnaire design. The learner questionnaire included some personal factual questions and then three main sections which targeted:

- general opinion about the quality of tutoring and the module (Course Experience Questionnaire);
- consideration of learners’ approach to their studies (Revised Study Process Questionnaire);
- general opinion around the quality of online tutoring (Online Tutoring Questionnaire).

A questionnaire was chosen as the method of research to elicit learner perceptions of their tutor, thus allowing a broad range of opinion to be considered. Although interviews with students would have provided more in-depth data about the quality of tutoring displayed, a
limited number of learner views would not provide a representative overview of the skills and qualities of tutors. To obtain a more general view of the tutor, an attitude questionnaire was developed that allowed learners to express judgements, points of view and opinions about their tutors (Oppenheim, 1992). Oppenheim (1992: 200) argues, that as well as ease of construction, “Likert scales tend to perform very well when it comes to a reliable, rough ordering of people with regard to a particular attitude”. Likert scales allowed the researcher to divide learner opinion into broad groups with regard to their module and tutor, and make comparisons with other themes from the research. A copy of the learner questionnaire can be found in Appendix 4.

Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ)

To obtain general opinion about the quality of tutoring and the module in question, a modified version of the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) was used (Ramsden, 1991). The CEQ was designed as an indicator of teacher effectiveness on courses in HE institutions and draws on learners’ perceptions of teaching, curriculum and assessment. The CEQ was originally designed for courses with traditional approaches to teaching with a more regular tutor/learner contact than day school models of delivery. It has been modified to make it suitable for an individual tutor (see Kreber (2005) for a similar use of the CEQ) and a blended teaching model (see Richardson and Woodley (2001) and Richardson (2009) for a similar use of the CEQ in distance education). Kreber (2003) used a 23-item version of the CEQ in her study to explore the relationship between students’ course perception and approaches to study in undergraduate science courses. In North America, where Kreber’s study was based, a course was interpreted as “a semester-long seminar or lecture usually comprising thirty-six hours of class time and taught by one instructor” (Kreber, 2003: 62), therefore, similar to a module of study in UK
HE. Consequently, this version of the CEQ informed the development of this section of the questionnaire.

The scale items adopted for this research were largely the same as the original CEQ but adapted in line with Richardson and Woodley’s (2001), Kreber’s (2003) and Richardson’s (2009) studies, and were:

- Good Teaching: communication;
- Good Teaching: feedback on, and concern for, student learning;
- Clear Goals and Standards;
- Appropriate Workload;
- Appropriate Assessment.

These scale items summarise the discussion of effective blended tutors and tutoring provided in the literature review chapters. The Good Teaching scale items cover what the literature (for example: see, Laurillard, 2002; Brindley et al., 2009) outline as a ‘good teacher’, particularly as the statements cover both delivery and feedback on learners’ work, and Lizzio et al. (2002) found that the original CEQ factor Good Teaching significantly predicted student summative achievement. Kreber (2003) amended the original CEQ Good Teaching scale with two factors being categorised as Feedback on, and Concern for, Student Learning and Classroom Teaching, both of which have relevance for this research. Feedback on, and concern for, student learning provides data about the importance of feedback, which is a motivating aspect of tutoring in blended learning environments, and concern for learning, which relates to the emotional
competence of the tutor. For example, the statement “the tutor made a real effort to understand difficulties I might be having with my work” provides an indication of interpersonal relationships being developed. Kreber’s *Classroom Teaching* scale was adapted to the *Good Teaching Communication* scale to include statements about clear communication, motivational comments to improve work, and tutors making the subject interesting. Clear goals and standards, together with good teaching, were also found to have an impact on academic achievement (Wilson et al., 1997), therefore appropriate for this research. Appropriate student workload would appear to be a feature of good teaching particularly as a heavy student workload is associated with *Surface* approaches to learning (Entwistle and Ramsden, 1983; Gibbs, 1992). Whilst formative assessments are more likely to be under tutor control, summative assessments in HE are developed by module and course leaders in conjunction with course approval committees. Appropriate assessment naturally has the same consideration as appropriate student workload. However, learner perceptions of tutors are important in this research given the vocational nature of the courses under investigation and that assessments meet adult’s needs (Knowles et al., 2011). These areas were also included in tutor interviews, however, there is value in obtaining learners’ perceptions of appropriate student workload and appropriate assessment as the tutor’s handling of these aspects provided data on their qualities as a tutor.

*Revised Study Process Questionnaire* (*R-SPQ*)

Chapter 1.1 noted a factor to be used in judgements of modules is learners’ approach to study and, as part of the analysis, some indication of their commitment was considered. This included both learners’ approaches and motivation towards their study. Vermetten et al. (1999) found that the quality of teaching could impact on learners’ approach to studying
and it is assumed this would be similar for blended learning courses. However great the
tutor impact on approaches to study, it would be incomplete to judge their quality without
considering learner motivation and their approach to the module.

Biggs et al. (2001) Revised Study Process Questionnaire (R-SPQ) was chosen to evaluate
learners’ approaches and motivation towards their study. This questionnaire is appropriate
for learners in western universities, with acceptable validity and reliability (Leung, Ginns
and Kember, 2008; Stes, De Maeyer and Van Petegem, 2013). Zeegers (2002: 74) also
highlighted the reliability of the R-SPQ and gave reasons why he felt the original Study
Process Questionnaire (SPQ) needed revisiting. These mainly focussed on the changing
nature of HE in Australia and these factors (a more diverse student body, increased cost to
student, changes to content delivery and assessment due to funding cuts, increased use
of technology) are mirrored in the UK. These changes, plus the R-SPQ’s emphasis on
effective teaching (Biggs et al., 2001), make the instrument suitable for this study
particularly with regard to a changing student body (more part-time, mature students) and
the impact of technology on delivery and assessment.

The R-SPQ was designed for full-time courses with examinations as the main method of
assessment, therefore the questionnaire was amended to make it more suitable for adult
inventories like SPQ are often more sensitive when reworded for a particular subject. The
changes made include; references to ‘lecturers’ have been amended to ‘tutors’, references
to ‘exams’ have been amended to ‘assessment’, and ‘course outlines’ have been changed
to ‘course materials’.
Online Tutoring Questionnaire (OTQ)

For this section of the questionnaire, statements were developed from general themes formulated in the literature review chapters to explore learner perceptions of the quality of online tutoring received during the module. The themes identified are detailed below and split into two categories, broadly skills and ECs:

1. Online Tutoring Skills, including;
   - Developing an online community (Barker, 2002; Salmon, 2002; Bernard, et al., 2009);
   - Effective communication in online environments (Grandgenett and Grandgenett, 2001; Stronge, 2002; Armitage et al., 2003; Doherty and Mayer, 2003). There was some overlap between this point and developing an online community but it was felt that the skill and qualities to develop an online community went far beyond good communication skills. The ability to ‘weave’ being a good example;
   - Technical skills (Barker, 2002).

2. Online Emotional Competence (developed from Goleman’s (2001) Framework of Emotional Competences);
   - Self-Awareness;
   - Social Awareness;
   - Relationship Management.
The *Online Emotional Competence* section of the questionnaire did include a section exploring tutor’s *Self-Management*, however, statements were similar to those contained within the CEQ (conscientiousness for example). This was first felt to be a useful check for consistency of response, but questions exploring tutors’ communication in the CEQ and OTQ provided this reassurance.

Statements were developed for each category into an item pool as Oppenheim (1992: 150) recommends a multi-question or scaling approach when measuring attitude. The statements investigating tutors’ emotional competence were difficult to develop, particularly as there are a limited number of questionnaires that explore perceptions of emotional competence in others. The Dulewicz and Higgs (2000) Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire has two versions for evaluating managers with one self-completion and the other a 360 degree format. This was helpful in developing the style of statements and identifying aspects of emotional competence that can be perceived by others.

An item pool of statements was developed for the above categories with some being dropped following the pilot study when a check of internal-consistency of item analysis was undertaken (Oppenheim, 1992: 199).

**Pre-test and pilot testing of the learner questionnaire**

A pre-test of the learner questionnaire was carried out firstly by a colleague, a senior lecturer in e-learning at the university, and secondly, with a group of learners, both of which resulted in some amendments. The pre-test asked four recent graduates who were on a course that met the sampling criteria to complete the questionnaire. They were asked to think about a specific module I had delivered during their final year and to
highlight areas of ambiguity within the set statements. Their answers were monitored for consistency. The phrasing of a number of questions was amended to ensure they were appropriate for the learners under investigation. The colleague commented on the number of statements exploring communication and the length of the questionnaire, but from their responses I was confident the statements would elicit the required data and it should be trialed in the pilot study.

The pilot study aided the development of the learner questionnaire by reducing the number of statements and generating more reliable scales. Seven learners completed the questionnaire as part of the pilot study. Oppenheim states:

> Internal consistency method rests firmly on classical scaling theory. If the scale is expected to measure a single underlying continuum, then the items should have strong relationships both with that continuum and with each other. While we cannot observe the former, a scale will be internally consistent if the items correlate highly with each other - in which case they are also more likely to measure the same homogenous variable (Oppenheim, 1992: 160).

To measure the scale reliability of the learner questionnaire as a measurement instrument, Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient was used at both the pilot stage and the full empirical research to evaluate the degree of item homogeneity. Whist there is some discussion about an acceptable Chronbach Alpha value indicating scale reliability (for example: see, Field, 2005: 668), Kline (1999, cited in Field, 2005: 668) argues that when dealing with complex, psychological constructs, such as emotional competence, values around $\alpha = .7$ can be acceptable and this was used as a guide to the questionnaire’s development. (The actual Chronbach Alpha scores at the end of the pilot stage are listed in Appendix 5).
At the pilot stage, both the CEQ and R-SPQ did have some scales that resulted in unacceptable Chronbach Alpha scores ($\alpha < .7$) but, given their previous testing (for example: see, Kreber, 2003 and Zeegers, 2002) the statements were kept for the study but checked for reliability and validity once all the questionnaire data were analysed. CEQ scale *Appropriate Assessment* had an acceptable value ($\alpha = .706$) when the statement ‘the tutor asked me questions about facts’ was taken out. Both *Good Teaching* scale items, and the *Surface* scale on the R-SPQ, received concerning values ($\alpha < .7$) but, had acceptable values when individual statements were not included. It was therefore decided that the statements would remain within the questionnaire and re-tested once all the data for the study was collected.

The structure of the scales exploring the tutor’s online tutoring competences (the OTQ) was amended quite considerably during the pilot phase with the number of statements being reduced partly due to reliability issues ($\alpha < .7$), but also because of the questionnaire’s length. There were, however, a large number of statements about communication, particularly as it is included in the CEQ; therefore, two were removed. There were some inconsistencies and contradictory answers given to the *Self-Awareness* statements; and in particular the statements:

- I believe the tutor appeared to recognise his/her own feelings and moods, and accepted them;
- I feel the tutor appears to be so overwhelmed by their moods that they cannot function properly.
The first statement above was removed whilst the second remained in the questionnaire as it is a useful complement and consistency of response check to the statement ‘the tutor appeared to be in control of their feelings’.

Due to concerns about scale reliability, the OTQ was analysed in two sections as well as their constituent categories within both the pilot study and full empirical research. The combined Chronbach Alpha score for Online Emotional Competence was acceptable (\(\alpha = .774\)) showing strong scale reliability overall and suggests these factors are linked. The Online Tutoring Skills section of the questionnaire also received an acceptable value (\(\alpha = .903\)). Therefore, these scales were considered together and individually in the full empirical research. Following amendments to the statements used to form the OTQ, the overall questionnaire received an acceptable Chronbach Alpha score (\(\alpha = .867\)).

**Full Survey Testing of the Learner Questionnaire**

Following the full survey, scales were retested for reliability and found to be largely reliable. The research received 72 responses to the learner questionnaire across the eight module cases (64% response rate). Again, when dealing with complex, psychological constructs, such as emotional competence, Chronbach Alpha values around .7 can be acceptable (Kline, 1999, cited in Field, 2005: 668) and was used as a guide for the remainder of the research. (The actual Chronbach Alpha scores for the full survey are listed in Appendix 6).

The reliability score for the CEQ part of the learner questionnaire was acceptable (\(\alpha = .871\)) as were the scores for the scales Clear Goals, Good Teaching Communication, and Good Teaching Feedback. The CEQ scale Appropriate Assessment was again
problematic ($\alpha = .392$) and was removed from further quantitative analysis. *Appropriate Workload* did not achieve an acceptable level of reliability ($\alpha = .599$), however, due to CEQs extensive use in other empirical research, it was at a sufficient level to be used in further analysis. Both ‘appropriate assessment’ and ‘appropriate workload’ are factors that, potentially, are not under tutors’ direct control and, therefore, their Alpha scores were not detrimental to the overall success of the research.

The OTQ’s Chronbach Alpha scores indicated some problems with reliability of individual scale items ($\alpha < .7$) but, overall, a reliable score was found ($\alpha = .889$). Scales of the questionnaire were again grouped into two sections, *Online Tutoring Skills* (which included the previous scales: Electronic Communication, Development of an Online Community and Technical Skills) and an *Online Emotional Competence* scale (which included the previous scales: Self-Awareness; Social Awareness; Relationship Management). Each of these two scales had acceptable reliability scores ($\alpha = .819$ and $\alpha = .844$ respectively) and were used as part of the quantitative analysis in Chapter 8. Given the problems with scale reliability, only the two main categories were used in the full survey.

Validity and reliability of the CEQ and OTQ were further established by using scatterplots\(^5\) and correlation with a similar construct. In order to determine whether the scales had acceptable content, concurrent and construct validity, Oppenheim (1992: 162) recommends the use of external criteria. The CEQ scores were compared and correlated against the OTQ under the assumption that they are both measuring different aspects of effective blended tutoring. Also, measures of effective tutoring were compared with

\(^5\) A graph that plots values of one variable against the corresponding value of another variable (Field, 2013: 883).
learners’ perception of achievement on modules as, it was assumed, effective tutors would lead to learners being successful. Significant relationships were found between the CEQ and OTQ ($r = .786, p < .01$), and the CEQ and learner perception of their achievement ($T = .313, p < .01$) (see section 8.2 for a description of the statistical tests used within this research study). Field (2005: 113) advises the use of simple scatterplots to identify outliers and to make observations of two data sets. Figure 6.1 scatterplots the total mean tutor scores for the CEQ and OTQ.

*Figure 6-1 - A scatterplot to compare mean tutor CEQ scores with mean tutor OTQ scores for each learner respondent.*
From the scatterplot it is clear there is, as expected, a positive correlation between the mean tutor CEQ and OTQ scores indicating measurement of a related construct. There were no significant outliers. The similar responses to both sections of the learner questionnaire are interesting when considering the diversity of the survey statements. This may indicate that when learners are questioned regarding their tutor, their overall impression may influence their answer to a greater extent than the individual questions. However, even if this phenomenon was occurring, the questionnaire would still be eliciting learners’ perceptions of the quality of blended tutoring they had received and, therefore, appropriate for the full empirical analysis.

The R-SPQ achieved acceptable Chonbach Alpha scores (Deep $\alpha = .752$; Surface $\alpha = .725$), and, given its previous scrutiny for validity (for example: see, Biggs, Kember and Leung, 2001; Zeegers, 2002; Leung, Ginns and Kember, 2008; Stes, De Maeyer and Van Petegem, 2013), was used for the full empirical analysis.

Oppenheim (1992: 168) recommends a correlation procedure such as factor analysis to further purify the scales. However, Field (2005: 638) draws on a range of research to conclude the reliability of such analyses are weak with sample sizes below 100; therefore, factor analysis would not be suitable for a small-scale research project such as this.

**VLE Content Analysis**

Module VLE content produced by the individual tutors was analysed to further explore approaches to teaching and module assessment, with consideration of, for example, appropriate pedagogy for the context and learners; motivation of learners; tutor emotional competences; and the development a *Transactional Presence*. Bennett and Marsh (2003:
6) used a similar method “to compare the tutors’ personal perceptions with actual levels of awareness and online teaching skills,” with Ke (2010) undertaking virtual observations of online discussions and course documents to complement tutor interviews and learner surveys. This method strengthened the research by providing intra-case triangulation.

6.5 Methods of Data Analysis Adopted

Each data collection method is considered in turn.

Tutor Interview Analysis

Template analysis was chosen to analyse the tutor interview data given its value when comparing respondents’ views within a specific context and its suitability for anti-positivistic, idiographic research (King, 2004b). King (2004b: 256) argues that template analysis is not a single method or research itself, or a methodological position, but a series of techniques for the inductive analysis of textual, or in this case, interview data. The literature review chapters identified a range of issues for the interview to explore and these formed the basis of the a-priori codes identified for the first template. However, some flexibility was required in template development and subsequent analysis, particularly, in relation to emotional competence. Template analysis affords the exploration of broad themes but allowed amendments if new factors were emerging from the data and allowed opportunity to consider both Mayer and Salovey’s and Goleman’s models of emotional intelligence.

The first template had a mix of descriptive codes, such as tutor experience, and analytical codes, for example, tutor ability to work within available resources. The codes were
developed into a hierarchy to allow deeper levels of analysis but not too structured to prevent confusion in the organisation and interpretation of data (King, 2004b: 258).

From the analysis of tutor interviews, themes and factors underpinning module delivery were determined and compared to the other research instruments. A selective approach (King, 2004) was adopted which identified themes that were most relevant to develop an understanding of the tutors’ skills and qualities and areas of good practice in blended tutoring. These were then compared and analysed in relation to data from the learner questionnaire, VLE content and tutor MSCEIT scores. I was careful to explore relationships between themes beyond the linear structure of the template, such as tutor perceptions of online learning, which allowed analysis across various strands of the research.

The first stage of the multiple-case study analysis was to listen to each interview carefully. Notes were made about what appeared to be relevant themes worthy of further investigation; however, the real benefit of this process was to listen to the manner in which points were made. It was illuminating to note expressions of confidence, concern, anxiety and enthusiasm, and was particularly helpful when trying to analyse beneficial emotional competences for effective tutoring.

The interview transcripts were read with a few points noted about areas that were striking and this was repeated with margin notes made for potentially significant comments and observations (Bryman, 2008: 550). This led to the alteration of codes identified in the pilot study both in relation to emerging concepts, such as tutor self-efficacy, and issues identified in the literature review chapters, such as the motivations of adult learners. Other
more general theoretical themes emerged (Bryman, 2008: 550) particularly around desirable skills, qualities and traits of tutors. The interview transcripts were then reviewed in more detail and coded using the developing template (King, 2004b). Again, themes were noted as the coding process was undertaken and were analysed using a framework approach to thematic analysis (Bryman, 2008: 550) which involved tabulating emerging ideas against tutors (who were ranked in descending order of learner perceptions, measured by CEQ scores). Through this process, themes emerged that were important in all modules; important in those of tutors receiving the highest scores on the learner questionnaire; and those that were only observable in the tutors receiving lower scores. The final template is presented in Appendix 7 which highlights the code hierarchy utilised. The names of codes used and their descriptions can be found in Appendix 8.

**Analysis of the Module VLE Content**

The analysis of the VLE content used the template developed for the interview analysis when considering any tutor comment. Tutors made comments within the VLE, such as announcements, or within discussion and chat media, and these were analysed using the interview template, which allowed consideration of emotional competences in such media. The text also provided an insight to the quality of online pedagogy and support, such as weaving the discussion (Feenberg, 1989; cited in Salmon, 2003: 42) and timely responses to learners. Categorisations were also made regarding the online pedagogical approach adopted and the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment throughout modules (Mayes and de Freitas, 2004: 7). Analysis of assessment briefs, held within the VLE, was particularly useful in this regard and provided an outline of the module structure.
**Analysis of the Learner Questionnaire**

The learner questionnaire was analysed using descriptive statistics only during the pilot study. Results were compared to the other research instruments’ findings.

During the full empirical research, the learner questionnaire was analysed assuming the data was on an interval scale\(^6\) to allow parametric analysis. Two parts of the learner questionnaire were modified versions of other questionnaires, the CEQ (Ramsden, 1991) and R-SPQ (Biggs et al., 2001), both of which developed their scales with acceptable reliability with confirmatory factor analysis confirming the fit to their intended structures. Whilst there has been some debate about the nature of data generated by Likert scales (for example: see, Knapp, 1990), given the previous scrutiny of both the CEQ and R-SPQ, and their subsequent treatment in other research as interval scale data, (for example: see, Kreber, 2003; Richardson, 2005; Ginns and Ellis, 2007), they have been treated as such in this research. The OTQ has similarly been assumed to be a scale.

The main judgements of effective blended tutoring, and therefore the dependent (or outcome) variables, are:

- CEQ and subsections;
- OTQ and subsections;
- learner achievement.

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\(^6\) Data measured on a scale along the whole of which intervals are equal (Field, 2013: 877).
Statistical analysis was undertaken to explore associations between the dependent variables above, and a range of independent (or predictor) variables identified from literature review chapters, the pilot study, and preliminary interview analysis. Examples of independent variables included:

- the MSCEIT measure of the tutor’s emotional competence;
- the tutor’s teaching experience;
- the tutor’s technical skills;
- the tutor’s training relevant to blended learning contexts;
- the tutor’s workload.

To consider other factors that could potentially influence learners’ perceptions of effective tutors, the independent (or predictor) variables included:

- learners’ approaches to study;
- learners’ factual data including age and gender;
- learners’ HE experience;
- learners’ blended learning experience.

This research identified associations between the dependent and independent variables, however, caution is needed when considering association and causality. Causality refers to how particular sets of conditions lead to predictable outcomes (Oppenheim, 1992: 16). This point is pertinent for this research with the analysis exploring probabilistic relationships in which factors increase or decrease tendencies for particular outcomes,
namely factors influencing learners’ perceptions of effective blended tutoring. Although the use of the terms ‘dependent’ and ‘independent’ variables implies a causal relationship as independent variables are hypothesized to cause changes in dependent variables, judging causality between the identified variables is difficult and therefore these terms are used tentatively.

From interviews with tutors, analysis of VLE content, and factors that emerged from the pilot study, I ascertained assessment measures regarding the qualities, skills and experience of the tutors (see Chapter 8.6 for an outline of this process) which allowed analysis and comparisons with the measures of effective tutoring. Criteria were developed to provide ordinal scores\(^7\) about aspects of the tutor.

### 6.6 Ethics

The British Educational Research Association’s (BERA) Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011) informed the ethical considerations of this research particularly about participant consent. Each tutor who contributed was informed of the scope and aims of the research before signing participation consent forms (see Appendix 9). Tutors were informed both orally and in writing of their right to withdraw at any time and this was reconfirmed once the thesis was completed. No incentives were offered for participating in the research, identities have been anonymised (including the use of pseudonyms in the thesis), and data has been stored securely by either password or locked doors. Although learners anonymously completed the questionnaires, details of the

\(^7\) Ordinal scores indicate that things have occurred, such as tutors developing technical skills, and in what order they occurred – that some tutors were categorised with better technical skills. These scores say nothing about the differences between values (Field, 2013: 880).
research were provided both in writing, on the front of the questionnaire, and orally as I administered the instrument.

Aside from the above ethical considerations common to most educational research there were specific issues for this project. As this is ‘insider’ research (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007), there could be tensions between the dual roles of researcher and colleague, which was alleviated somewhat through reassurances of the purpose of the research and anonymity. My sensitivity in this area was highlighted when a change in the organisational structure in the School, where the research is based, raised an interesting ethical consideration. As a manager, none of the tutors who participated in the research were in my Division at the start. Due to the restructure, two participants were moved into my Division during the data analysis phase of the research, which, raised concerns that the research could potentially cause harm to the participants, in this case, professional harm (BERA, 2011: 7). Again, permissions were sought to continue their involvement in the research at this stage and also, as stated earlier, at the completion of the thesis. This event was a timely reminder about the need to remain vigilant to ethical issues throughout the whole period of educational research.

6.7 Chapter Conclusion

Although this is an extensive chapter, a number of the methodological and pragmatic decisions have been outlined. The following chapter analyses results from the pilot research; which was used to inform amendments to research instruments and methods of data analysis; and outlines emerging themes to explore in the full empirical analysis.
Chapter 7  The Pilot Study

7.1 Chapter Introduction

The pilot study was a case study of one tutor, who met the sampling criteria (see Chapter 6.4), and a group of seven learners, taught by her on a blended learning module. From the tutor interview, MSCEIT, learner questionnaire and VLE content, findings from the case study are considered and analysed in relation to theorisations of emotional competence and effective practice outlined in the literature review chapters. This chapter evaluates the appropriateness of research methods adopted in meeting the study’s aims and testing the hypothesis, whilst raising some preliminary findings to be further investigated in the full empirical analysis. The chapter provides a brief outline of the tutor’s background and moves on to discuss the findings of each research instrument in turn. General issues emerging from the pilot study are outlined with resultant amendments to the research design detailed at the chapter end.

7.2 Tutor Background

Claire (pseudonym) is female and 52 years old. She has lectured at the University for five years and, prior to this, had no experience of teaching in online and blended learning environments. She has, however, over twenty years’ experience in the post-compulsory sector with a variety of learners. Her current role is Senior Lecturer and Course Leader for a part-time (PT) Foundation Degree and an articulated BA (Hons) progression route. Previously, she was course leader for a range of vocational programmes at a sixth-form college, mainly teaching advanced level modules. She lectured at the college for 11 years and other roles included extensive personal tutoring
and teaching to a range of levels including pre-GCSE and foundation. Her first teaching experience was in a variety of further education (FE) colleges on a part-time basis teaching vocational work-related programmes and a PGCE (Post-Graduate Certificate in Education) was completed during this time. The shift from further education (FE) to higher education (HE) can create issues of professional identity and affect teacher actions as they adapt to a new culture (Burkill et al, 2008). Whilst these issues are relevant in the analysis of this pilot case, the focus is kept on teaching, learning and assessment; learner perceptions; and tutor’s emotional competence (EC) and its impact on practice.

Claire has not studied on blended or online programmes, however, her first degree appears beneficial for her current role. She studied part-time, over five years, to achieve her BA (Hons) degree whilst working as a childminder and, although the degree was not vocationally relevant to her work, it did provide an understanding of the difficulties of studying when in full-time employment. Whilst lecturing at the University, she achieved a part-time Masters degree, and this qualification was relevant to her role.

To measure Claire’s emotional competence, she completed the MSCEIT. Table 7.1 outlines the scores which are calculated as empirical percentiles, positioned on a normal curve with 100 being the average MSCEIT score (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 18). (See Appendix 1 for guidelines for interpreting MSCEIT Scores).
### Table 7.1 - Pilot tutor's scores achieved on the MSCEIT including total, area, branch and task scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MSCEIT Section</th>
<th>Scores Achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total MSCEIT EI Score</td>
<td>98 (Low Average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Area Score</td>
<td>100 (High Average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceiving Emotions Branch</td>
<td>109 (High Average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faces Task</td>
<td>104 (High Average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures Task</td>
<td>115 (Competent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Emotions Branch</td>
<td>84 (Consider Improvement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation Task</td>
<td>114 (Competent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensations Task</td>
<td>78 (Consider Improvement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Area Score</td>
<td>94 (Low Average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Emotions Branch</td>
<td>108 (High Average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes Task</td>
<td>97 (Low Average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blends Task</td>
<td>116 (Competent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Emotions Branch</td>
<td>82 (Consider Improvement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion Management Task</td>
<td>89 (Consider Improvement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Relations Task</td>
<td>81 (Consider Improvement)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Claire’s overall MSCEIT score was *Low Average* with *High Average*, bordering on competent, being received for the *Perceiving Emotions* and *Understanding Emotions* branches. The scores on *Using* and *Managing Emotions* fall into the *Consider*
Improvement category. According to the Four Branch Model (Mayer and Salovey, 1997), this suggests Claire is above average at “reading people” and understanding their emotions. However, she could choose suboptimal emotional solutions to problems. The Model implies she is adept at reading emotions, both in herself, and with regard to her learners, however, she is less adept at using her emotions or the emotions of others, to facilitate thought. She understands a range of emotions in herself and students, including what causes those emotions and can outline a range of emotions when describing how she and her learners may be feeling. She was categorised as Consider Improvement at managing emotions both of herself and in others.

When questioned about completing the test Claire outlined an interesting point about her state of mind at the time. She had two recent close family bereavements where she had to deal with funeral arrangements, and felt uncharacteristically unsympathetic in some of her answers.

7.3 Learner Questionnaire Feedback

Within the pilot study, preliminary analysis was carried out with descriptive statistics of Likert scale responses. Qualitative associations were made between results from the learner questionnaire and the other methods of data collection.

The learners were studying the honours level of a PT undergraduate degree with some success. The course was their first experience of higher education and blended learning. However, they had been taught by Claire on two previous modules so her approach was familiar. The group were all female with ages ranging from 25 to 54 and
they categorise themselves as either moderate or experienced users of basic educational technologies (e-mail, word processing, discussion boards and web-site navigation). The results of the questionnaire suggest they are motivated to succeed and achieving above their expectations. The learners, overall, indicated satisfaction with their achievement and, this suggests, found the module a positive learning experience.

**Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ)**

Claire received a high mean total CEQ score (see Table 7.2). Particularly high scores were achieved on *Good Teaching Communication, Clear Goals* and *Good Teaching Feedback* scales, with relatively insignificant standard deviations given the small sample size. Results suggest this was a well delivered module and learners were pleased with Claire’s input and the overall experience. On two scales where Claire received slightly lower mean scores, *Appropriate Assessment* and *Appropriate Workload*, were, to some extent, beyond her control (see Chapter 6.4 for a further discussion of this point).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Mean Score and (Std. Dev)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rating Scale 1 - 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Goals</td>
<td>4.29 (0.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Teaching Communication</td>
<td>4.62 (0.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Workload</td>
<td>3.64 (0.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Teaching Feedback</td>
<td>4.25 (0.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Assessment</td>
<td>3.57 (0.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEQ Total</td>
<td>4.10 (0.35)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 7.2 - Pilot tutor's CEQ scores (n = 7).*
Revised Study Process Questionnaire (R-SPQ)

The R-SPQ consists of five-item Likert scale questions with a score of 1 to 5 being attributed to statements with each respondent (n=7) receiving a score for both Deep and Surface approaches. Feedback indicated the group adopted Deep approaches to study (see Table 7.3) where students use the highest level of learning activities (Biggs, Kember and Leung, 2001: 138), such as wide reading and relating concepts to work environments. This complements the strong results achieved and their feelings of exceeding their expectations on the module outlined above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches to Study</th>
<th>Mean Score and (Std. Dev)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rating Scale 1 - 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep Approach</td>
<td>3.78 (0.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface Approach</td>
<td>1.33 (0.31)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.3 - Pilot tutor's R-SPQ scores (n = 7).

Online Tutoring Questionnaire (OTQ)

Learners’ perceptions of Claire’s online skills were high at total level (4.51) and across all scales (see Table 7.4). Results indicate a strong relationship had formed between learners and tutor with open communication apparent in online environments. The lowest mean score, albeit quite a high one, was for Developing an Online Community (3.86). This may have been affected by a number of factors including tutor experience; no summative requirement, only formative, to contribute to discussion boards; and opportunities for discussion at day schools. Although only basic educational technologies were used as part of the module (e-mail, VLE, discussion forums and
feedback utilising Microsoft Word’s track changes feature), Claire received a high

*Technical Skills* scale (4.57) result.

Learners clearly felt Claire communicated with them effectively in online environments and was in control of her emotions. High *Self-Awareness, Social Awareness* and *Relationship Management* scale scores indicate her learners felt she understood their needs and a relationship had developed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTQ Feedback</th>
<th>Mean Score and (Std. Dev)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OTQ Total</td>
<td>4.51 (0.44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing an Online Community</td>
<td>3.86 (1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Communication in Online Environments</td>
<td>4.36 (0.62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Skills</td>
<td>4.57 (0.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>4.57 (0.42)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social-Awareness</td>
<td>4.57 (0.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Management</td>
<td>4.78 (0.39)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 7.4 - Pilot tutor’s OTQ scores (n = 7).*

### 7.4 Tutor Interview

This section outlines a few notable strengths emerging from the interview whilst considering the data’s quality in relation to the research aims. Claire’s interview was revealing and went some way in explaining the successful nature of the learner experience whilst undertaking the module.
A facilitative teaching style was described as a general approach to module delivery but was adapted to circumstances and learner needs. Kember’s (1997) conceptions of teaching (see Chapter 5.4) were used to determine the predominant teaching style adopted during the module. Teaching as Facilitating Understanding on the Part of the Student was noted as the primary style which is located closer to ‘student centred/learning orientated’ approaches. These have been found to lead to higher quality or Deeper approaches to learning (Trigwell and Prosser, 2004) which mirrors learner feedback received on the Revised Study Process Questionnaire (R-SPQ). Claire stated “it’s about application of the knowledge really as far as the students are concerned”, an approach that offered more learner-centred activities and exercises that allow contextualisation of learning. Claire also felt that Teaching as Transmitting Structured Knowledge (Kember, 1997) could describe the start of the first day school to give an overview of the module, outline its key topics and concepts, and explain the assessment requirements. To summarise, Claire’s teaching style appears to be predominantly facilitative but adaptable depending on the stage of the module and learner needs.

Claire appeared effective in face-to-face environments and used day schools to guide, motivate, build relationships and monitor progress. She emphasised her desire to achieve learning objectives in face-to-face sessions, and her commitment to students, stating:

…being old fashioned about teaching, making sure you set objectives and achieving them in lessons, that they go away feeling that they’ve learnt something and knowing what to do with that information. If they go away feeling like that, then they generally go away motivated,
knowing they can get on with their assignment work. And also knowing you’re accessible if they have a problem in between day schools.

At day schools, she checks learners’ understanding with activities and questioning but also monitors body language and individual contributions and will speak to, or e-mail, any that cause concern. To illustrate, she stated:

*Generally being there and reading their body language in class, not contributing in any way I’ll usually pick up on that and deal with it later.*

Monitoring body language was raised twice by Claire in the interview and was revealing of relevant emotional competences including *Social Awareness* (Goleman, 2001) and *Perceiving* and *Managing Emotions* (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). Face-to-face sessions afforded motivational opportunities and provided a basis for learner support and proactive communication, but also potentially revealed a pre-judged preference for day school delivery models rather than purely online contexts:

*The day schools are important and that’s why blended is better than distance learning as you can set the tone at day schools. Make it accessible to them, encourage them to read for themselves, but also to engage with the learning environments so that they can develop, setting quite short task to do, not homework, but things they can do to stretch themselves, and just encouraging them and following it up with e-mails after day schools.*

Claire outlined robust mechanisms for learner support which displayed a number of emotional competences including relationship management skills, building trust, and being dependable but adaptable when necessary. She spoke with feeling when
discussing learner support and a key theme emerging was the focus of building
erelationships and trust. To illustrate, she outlined proactive communication via e-mail:

…just getting in touch with them and asking if they are alright, just
keeping in contact with them.

Support structures overarch day schools and online activities; for example, learners are
sent a plan of the day school prior to attending, and tutorials are available when
teaching is completed:

…if I've had someone who I've been communicating via e-mail with
and they are still not getting what I'm talking about I would much prefer
to have a face-to-face tutorial. At a distance that's not easy so I will
make myself available in mornings or evenings, I will be as
accommodating as possible.

In order for these support mechanisms to be utilised Claire stressed approachability as
a key aspect of achieving module success. An important factor within this module was
Claire had previously taught the learners and therefore they would be forthcoming in
seeking help if it had been received and been constructive in the past. It appears the
learners trust Claire and this may have developed by being conscientious and
adaptable in the past.

E-mail and discussion board support is provided between ‘day schools’, which is
primarily assessment focussed, however, Claire was proactive in monitoring learner
progress. Claire maintains channels of communication by regularly e-mailing learners,
individually and as a group, whilst the module was in progress. These messages
outline further ideas and issues around the subject area, but also encouraging learners to get in touch if they need support. She stated:

*I'm positive with them and encourage them and at the same time trying to keep them on track.*

Discussion boards were used to submit assignment plans with Claire providing comments and learners encouraged to provide peer feedback, however, this is only beneficial if they are actively seeking support. To overcome this problem, she monitors the progress of all learners by checking their last communication via e-mail or phone, with records kept of each. Also, VLE use is moderated, either whilst monitoring discussion forums or by checking tracking statistics.

Whilst Claire discussed a demanding and, at times, pressured workload, she felt it was manageable and effective planning skills were outlined. When planning her teaching workload she ensures that each week there is at least one day where she does not teach and specific time is allocated for learner support and monitoring online activities. She states:

*What I tend to do is allocate a certain amount of time in a week and I do that in September so that if the pressure starts I have a day when I'm not in a classroom and I prioritise the online stuff and I can focus and catch up with it.*

This is communicated to learners and may help to explain why she achieved such a high score on the CEQ scale, *Clear Goals and Standards*. Claire was mindful of other learner demands when planning and structuring the module, for example, she noted:
...also being aware of family times like Christmas and you structure their assignments around such events.

Again, this could explain the relatively high score achieved on the *Appropriate Workload* CEQ scale and may indicate empathic tutoring. This organised approach, and the ability to plan ahead, allowed Claire to maintain a level of learner support whilst undertaking other responsibilities.

Claire described empathy with learner needs and circumstances, in part derived from previous study. She had studied an Honours Degree, part-time, whilst working as a childminder. She remembered feelings of isolation and being removed from her peers while working from home. This statement was illuminating and gives a sense of Claire’s strength of feeling in this area:

> Definitely as I understand how easily it is to feel completely cut off and also, because at the time I was working from home, I didn't have support from anybody else. That made it worse really as I just assumed that everyone else in the class had a work role where they were getting paid, and had colleagues who understood what they were undertaking. I was a childminder at the time and just had nobody to share things with.

Claire outlined robust mechanisms for supporting learners throughout the module and she stated this was motivated by feelings of isolation and a lack of confidence felt as a part-time student. As a student, she believed peers were making better progress on the course, who generally worked in larger organisations, in roles relevant to the degree, and had work colleagues to discuss assignments and course related issues. To overcome these feelings, a study group was formed with four peers when she realised
they were having similar difficulties coping with the competing demands of work and part-time study. She felt the empathy displayed towards her learners, and their understanding that she had studied in similar circumstances, was motivating and a significant strength as a tutor.

Throughout the interview emotional competences were apparent in the examples of practice stated by Claire. These included *Perceiving* emotions in others and from each of Goleman’s (2001) four clusters of EI traits. Claire adapts her approach to suit learner feelings, with this statement being illustrative:

*I try to be light-hearted because quite often my students are stressed, they don’t have a lot of confidence and the kind of questions they put to me about not understanding, quite negative really. I try to turn that around and try to explain how well they are doing. I’m positive with them and I encourage them.*

The statement is revealing on a number of levels. Claire is actively trying to understand the emotions and feelings of learners and uses their questions to build confidence and self-esteem. The feeling with which she spoke embodied a confident person who had a positive approach to her tutoring. A conscious effort was made during the module to ensure e-mails were written in a less formal manner, however, she was mindful of how this was interpreted and careful with the use of humour and sarcasm. She stated:

*If something is written down like in an e-mail, it can sound quite formal. Face-to-face is so much easier to read people and to know whether they’re understanding, just by their body language and things. In an e-mail I’ve found that quite hard to get across. I’ve tried to be chatty in my e-mails to make it light hearted but you never know how someone is reading it and I’ve found that people were misunderstanding what I was saying and it led to a couple of hiccups and problems.*
Again, ECs were evident here including Self-Awareness, Self-Management (particularly Adaptability), Social Awareness (Service Orientation) and Relationship Management (Communication). This comment potentially revealed a pre-judged preference for face-to-face interaction.

Whilst Claire had received limited training relevant to blended tutoring pedagogy, with available support and relevant ECs, she appears to have adapted to the context. Further, her technical skills appear adequate for the role. The only formal training undertaken has been centred around e-mail folder and file management, however, support from more experienced colleagues has been actively sought in what could be described as a ‘peer coaching’ role. Self-Awareness and Self-Confidence were evident in Claire’s willingness to seek help:

...with Blackboard [the University VLE] it’s been a case of I try to do something and if I can’t I ask for help, it’s been trial and error. ...I just tend to think that if I’m struggling I’ll ask for help from technical support or academics.

Her willingness to seek help, plus the presence of technical support, has meant she has appeared competent in learners’ eyes. Upon joining the University, she immediately taught on blended programmes and she clearly followed Bennett and Marsh’s (2002) advice to be placed in context as quickly as possible to develop practical and pedagogic skills. The asynchronous nature of online tutoring allows tutors’ time to seek help from colleagues or technical support, and Claire was confident enough to do this. Although Claire’s technical skills could be considered basic, they appear satisfactory for this
module. Competent use is made of word processing software with the ‘track changes’ feature of Microsoft Word used for formative feedback on student assignments. She designs and moderates discussion boards and uses them to encourage peer interaction, support online activities, and manage some formative assessments. Whilst Claire does not have strong web authoring skills, preferring to upload word-processed activities onto the VLE, she has used basic software that converts word-processed documents to suitable web format. As previously stated, Claire demonstrated a good understanding of student tracking features contained within the course VLE and its value in monitoring learner behaviour.

7.5 Analysis of VLE Content

VLE content illustrated a structured but assessment focussed approach, and complemented feedback from the tutor interview and learner questionnaire. A welcoming announcement greeted the learners on each visit, stressing the importance of getting in touch if unsure. Additional learning materials were available and clearly structured with their relevance to module assessment outlined. Discussion boards were used for formative assessment where assignment proposals were uploaded with Claire commenting on their appropriateness and suitability for the module. Comments were appropriately structured, pulling out strengths of the proposals to start with, and then outlining areas for development with a closing comment that encouraged further communication with Claire. Although she encouraged peer communication between learners, little was evident and was largely phatic in nature. Whilst Claire is not demonstrating higher order e-tutoring skills such as weaving (Grandgenett and Grandgenett, 2001), a dialogue (Laurillard, 2002) was evident between the tutor and
learners. This corresponds with the questionnaire results, in particular around developing an online community, and from the tutor interview analysis. However, some of this dialogue was occurring via e-mail and there could be confusion by learners of the nature of an online community. One discussion board thread did provide evidence for some of Claire’s emotional competences when a student was having difficulty choosing a suitable topic for the assignment, and she sensed some confusion and anxiety. She responded with suggested areas for exploration but indicated she would telephone to discuss the issue further. This triangulated with comments made about the level of learner support provided during the tutor interview.

7.6 Discussion

This section draws together some preliminary findings from the pilot study. These are further considered in the full empirical research.

The pilot study analysis demonstrated to me an awareness of the potential for different interpretations of interview data. For example, the quote below is a further illustration of a caring tutor, committed to support, who demonstrated empathy to learner needs:

*The other thing is just being aware that they have other issues, such as family bereavements, they have all sorts of things. Making them aware of the systems in place to help them and also just having empathy with that and encouraging them to take extensions, and use the systems that are in place. They tend not to use student support services at all and sometimes that would be a good thing for them to do, but because they only come in occasionally, I tend to take on that role as well. I think it is just a case of being open to that really.*
Light, Cox and Calkins (2009: 1-2) discuss the competing pressures facing academic staff at universities including teaching, assessment, research, scholarship and administration. In view of such pressures, with Claire providing so much support, this could impact on other aspects of her role. However, my interpretations consider learner feedback and this influenced the discussion within this section. Universities will have differing priorities, particularly around teaching and research, and whilst Claire’s practices appeared appropriate in this context and in meeting the needs of her learners, this may not be perceived in the same way in other HE institutions.

Results from the pilot study indicated a potential contradiction. Learner feedback and the tutor interview suggest a number of emotional competences; however, only a Low Average MSCEIT score was achieved. Learners inferred an approachable tutor, who was in control of emotions and adept at relationship management. She was empathic to their needs and of the difficulties of being a part-time student, and described awareness of emotions, both her own as indicated when writing e-mails, and in learners when monitoring body language in class. These competences complement the High Average scores received on the Perceiving Emotions and Understanding Emotions branches of the Four-Branch Model. What is less clear is the Consider Improvement scores on the Using and Managing Emotions branches. The group were high achieving, Deep learners and, therefore, may require less emotional management than those struggling or adopting Surface approaches. Tutor empathy arose through a number of similarities with the student group, including studying a work-related qualification, part-time, with family commitments. The High Average score on the Understanding Emotion branch complements feedback and discussion about the tutor’s
empathic nature. However, the Consider Improvement score on the Using Emotions branch is problematic as this shows a weakness in the ability to generate feelings that others feel - an empathic trait. A heavy workload is managed without appearing to impact on the support given to learners. From the interview, it was apparent the tutor was aware of her strengths and weaknesses, was generally happy and content, and confident in her abilities as a tutor. She appeared to maintain good relationships with learners whilst being organised and adaptable, and was not afraid to seek help when she felt her skills were lacking.

Claire appeared approachable to learners and robust support mechanisms were evident together with examples of proactive monitoring. Such support mechanisms and the structured learning environment are important for part-time learners studying at a distance (see Chapter 3.5). She is experienced - particularly with regard to student support, willing to learn, pro-active in seeking help, and adopted a variety of approaches to teaching. It is reasonable to assume, however, the positive student feedback was derived, in part, from the developed relationship between the tutor and learners from previous modules.

A number of issues around good practice in blended tutoring were raised that are analysed in the remaining empirical chapters. Claire’s relationship with the learners appeared an important part of the module success but she was already known to them having previously taught the group. Learners were active in online environments but mainly communicating with the tutor. This suggests a dialogue between a learner and tutor is contributing to the module success and the high scores received on the learner
questionnaire. Formative assessments prompted learners to engage in online environments, particularly the discussion boards, but this case suggests they perceive limited value in communicating with peers in this environment. Various teaching styles were adopted at differing stages of the module, and these can be compared to further cases to develop a picture of appropriate methods for blended learning contexts.

7.7 Evaluation of the pilot study including resultant impact on the further research

This section evaluates the research instruments used as part of the pilot study and outlines resultant changes. Consideration was given to the quality of data generated including areas of omission and duplication.

MSCEIT

Whilst the test did not yield as high a tutor EC score as anticipated, it has raised some pertinent points for consideration. Chapter 2 outlined the hypothesis, tutors exhibiting high levels of emotional competence are perceived as effective in blended learning environments by their learners, and this was not apparent in this case. High Average scores in Perceiving and Understanding emotions together with Consider Improvement scores in Using Emotions and Managing Emotions were noteworthy. This emotional competence profile should be further investigated to evaluate its contribution to success in blended learning environments and to consider whether a broader mix of emotional skills and competences are associated with tutor effectiveness. When questioned about the MSCEIT, a point was raised about the tutor’s state of mind at the time due to family bereavements, making answers more negative than in normal circumstances. As a
result, tutor feedback about the MSCEIT’s completion was added to the interview schedule.

The MSCEIT has, however, allowed useful associations to be made with both the tutor’s feedback and the data from the learner questionnaire and therefore was used in the full empirical research.

**Tutor Interview**

This yielded a wealth of information which complemented the MSCEIT data and learner questionnaire results. As stated in Chapter 2.5, a qualitative approach would help address some of the MSCEIT’s limitations and provide examples of practice that illustrate tutor EC, and the interview was effective in generating such data. This covered all aspects of factors outlined in the literature review chapters regarding the skills and qualities required for effective blended tutoring. Strong aspects of the interview included the tutor’s background and experience, technical skills, training, and learner support mechanisms.

The main difficulty found with this research method was identifying and classifying emotionally intelligent competences, such as, when considering the following statement:

*I meet all my deadlines and if I say I’m going to do something I do it. I find out answers that I don’t know and I always get back to them.*

On first reading it appears as just the statement of a conscientious tutor, however, when considered in the context of the interview and the passion in the tutor’s voice at the
time, it was quite revealing of a number of emotional competences such as **Self-Awareness** (including **Self-Confidence**), **Self-Management** (including **Trustworthiness** and **Conscientiousness**), **Social Awareness** (including **Service Orientation**) and **Relationship Management** (including **Influence** and **Communication**) (Goleman, 2001). During the preliminary phases of analysis, Goleman’s Framework was identifying relevant emotional competences with greater clarity than Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) Four-Branch Model of Emotional Intelligence. To illustrate, the above quote potentially exhibits elements of two branches of the Four Branch Model, namely, the capacity to accurately **Perceive** emotions and the capacity to **Manage Emotions**. However, as the interview was after module completion, it took a more reflective nature with limited reference to emotion. This resulted in difficulty in accurately identifying emotional competences in relation to the Four Branch Model.

The tutor interview can be improved to elicit further discussion around emotional competences with further analysis in relation to Goleman’s (2001) Framework of Emotional Competences. Broader EI competences were elicited from the tutor, mainly from follow up questions, therefore some interesting data was revealed. To encourage further tutor discussion of emotion, questions about the tutor’s emotional state were added; were they, for example, calm or stressed throughout the module in online and face-to-face environments. Secondly, a question was added that explored relationship management, conflict, and other issues that arose during the module, including tutor management of these situations. Questions around student and tutor workload allowed consideration of **Self-Management** but not necessarily from an emotional point of view. The questions revealed an organised tutor, able to plan an effective teaching and
learning experience for her and the students. A useful follow up question, after discussing workload, would consider the tutor’s mood and stress management throughout the module and whether this was noticeable to learners or had an impact on the learning experience. This would enable easier associations with MSCEIT scores, particularly the *Managing Emotions* branch and other emotional competences.

Amendments were made to the template following the pilot and these continued to be made throughout the research. The final version of the template is presented in Appendix 7.

**Learner Questionnaire**

The learner questionnaire was useful in triangulating a number of aspects of the tutor interview but, due the low number of respondents in the pilot phase, was only analysed with descriptive statistics. The questionnaire was used in its present form for the main study but with amendments following the full analysis of scale reliability and validity (see Chapter 6.4).

**Analysis of the VLE Content**

This provided a valuable source of information that triangulated the findings of the tutor interview and learner questionnaire. The interview template had limited value in the analysis of the comments as they were largely descriptive with less reference to thoughts, feelings and emotions than the tutor interview. When analysing the VLE content during the full empirical analysis, greater prominence is given to the practice raised in the literature review chapters.
7.8 Emerging Issues to explore following the pilot study

This section highlights issues that have arisen from the pilot study that are investigated further in the full empirical study. These are:

- The utility of the MSCEIT in measuring EI for blended tutors. Emotional competence appears to be important as discussed in the analysis of the tutor interview and VLE content. The results of the MSCEIT indicated a Low Average total score. However, a number of emotionally intelligent competences were described during the delivery of the module, and worthy of further analysis;
- Tutor empathy. This was demonstrated by a number of factors including; tutor’s previous learning experiences, understanding the needs of learners; writing of computer mediated communications (CMCs); and learner perceptions of effective tutoring in blended environments;
- Tutor’s previous relationship with learners prior to module delivery;
- The impact of Deep learners and their demands of blended learning tutors, when, in this case, the learners are motivated and high achieving;
- The importance of robust learner support. This includes communication leading to the first day school; structure of learning between day schools; and support mechanisms in place to monitor progress;
- The tutor’s approach to day schools. The tutor used day schools to support and motivate, including monitoring body language and individual contributions, with follow up e-mails when necessary;
• The impact of a tutor’s teaching experience and skills. This includes analysis of teaching styles, the adaptability of approaches to teaching, extent of relevant training, technical skills, and previous teaching experience;

• The role of formative and summative assessment in encouraging the development of an online community and the value of a tutor/learner dialogue;

• The value of an online community to the learners investigated as part of this research study;

• The management of workload and competing pressures;

• The tutor’s willingness to actively seek help.

7.9 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the pilot research which has led to changes in methods of data collection and analysis adopted in the full empirical study. The chapter’s strength was the number of issues that emerged that can be explored during the remainder of the empirical analysis.

The pilot study gave me confidence in both the methodological approach and the methods of data collection adopted. It was clear they would elicit data of sufficient quantity and quality to address the study’s aims and hypothesis. Amendments were made to the interview schedule, which strengthened my confidence that sufficient data would be collected, particularly around notions of tutor emotional competence (see Section 7.7). Further, the pilot provided valuable feedback to aid the data analysis of tutor emotional competence, primarily from the interview data, but also the VLE content. This aspect of the pilot study was significant in the ultimate development of a group of
emotional competences that support the effective blended tutoring of mature learners, studying part-time (PT), vocationally relevant degrees, which is detailed in Chapter 12. Chapter 2 outlined a hypothesis to be tested, both qualitatively and quantitatively, and it was clear there was sufficient data to fully explore tutors’ EC and effectiveness in this context. Further, the interview generated rich data, which confirmed that an idiographic and inductive approach to the research was appropriate.

The pilot study was valuable to the research study’s conclusions as it allowed me to showcase the practices of Claire, who was the ‘best’ tutor under investigation as measured by learner feedback derived from the CEQ (see Chapter 8.3, Table 8.12 for a summary of tutor’s CEQ results). The approach of Claire influenced the development of The Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices, which is detailed in Chapter 14. Some of Claire’s practices would not have been highlighted if the findings of the pilot study had been integrated into the other data analysis chapters.

The next chapter commences the full empirical research with the quantitative analysis of dependent and independent variables.
8.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter outlines the quantitative findings of the research and explores a number of factors that influence learners’ perceptions of the effectiveness of specific blended tutors. The research instruments developed earlier, and refined in the pilot study (see Chapter 7.7), are now used with the full sample of tutors and learners. This section addresses the research aim:

- to evaluate tutors’ skills, qualities and competences through analysis of learners’ perceptions.

The analysis was carried out through comparison of learners’ perceptions of effective tutoring, measured by results of the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and Online Tutoring Questionnaire (OTQ), and a range of other factors that were potentially influential. Further, the chapter, in part, addresses the research aim:

- to investigate skills, qualities and competences, particularly emotional competences, contributing to the effectiveness of tutors within blended learning environments.

This was through analysis of the eight tutors’ results of the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) compared to results of the CEQ and OTQ (n = 72
learner responses). The analysis in relation to the above two aims provided quantitative evidence in support of the hypothesis, tutors exhibiting high levels of emotional competence are perceived as effective in blended learning environments by their learners. Further, the chapter seeks to identify associations between dependent and independent variables identified throughout the study.

Firstly, the chapter examines learners studying the modules under investigation by considering their approaches to study and other influential factors such as previous experiences of studying in higher education (HE). The chapter continues the analysis by exploring tutors’ emotional intelligence and results of the learner questionnaire, with significant findings outlined and discussed. The final stage of analysis involved exploration of other factors, such as tutors’ information technology (IT) proficiency, potentially influencing learner perceptions of effective tutoring. The chapter concludes with a summary of key findings and an outline of areas of further investigation in the remaining empirical chapters of the thesis.

**8.2 Analysis of the Learners Undertaking the Modules under Investigation**

As outlined in the Approach and Methodology Chapter (6.5) when discussing the design of the learner questionnaire, a factor to consider is students’ approach to study and, as part of the analysis, some indication of their motivation and commitment was investigated. Further, the pilot study highlighted *Deep* learners who were motivated to succeed. This was measured using a modified version of the Revised Study Process Questionnaire (R-SPQ) which classifies learners’ approach to study as *Deep* or *Surface*. The R-SPQ is most commonly used, as it was in this research, in its two-factor
form, namely *Deep* and *Surface* approaches; however, each factor has ‘motive’ and
‘strategy’ subcomponents (Biggs, Kember and Leung, 2001: 145). Biggs, Kember and
Leung, (2001: 135) stated *Deep Motive* approaches referred to a learner’s intrinsic
interest in the study and *Deep Strategy* approaches were identified where learners
maximised the meaning of their learning. Each of these subcomponents was a valuable
indicator of learners’ motivation and approach to study and, combined into the *Deep*
measure (as learners were found to adopt predominantly *Deep* approaches in this
research study), allowed a controlling variable when undertaking statistical analysis
between the dependent and independent variables under investigation.

To provide an overall picture of the learners’ approaches to study the results of the R-
SPQ are detailed in Table 8.1. The R-SPQ consists of five-item Likert scale questions
with a score of 1 to 5 being attributed to statements with each respondent (n = 72)
receiving a score for both *Deep* and *Surface* approaches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
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<td>.58</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 8.1 - Summary of learners’ approaches to study as measured by the R-SPQ (n = 72).*

Table 8.1 shows learners’ mean scores are significantly higher for *Deep* approaches,
indicating this is the most commonly adopted approach. This suggests these learners
understand what they want to achieve from education and have clear goals in mind
(Richardson et al., 2003; Biesta, 2005). Comparisons with other empirical studies using
the R-SPQ with university students revealed this research study’s findings were favourable (see Table 8.2) as higher mean scores were achieved for Deep approaches and lower for Surface.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Mean Deep Score</th>
<th>Mean Surface Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baeten, Dochy and Struyen (2008)</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gijbels, Segers and Struyf (2008)</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.38</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 8.2 - Comparisons with other empirical studies’ R-SPQ results.

Biggs, Kember and Leung, (2001: 138) argue that “the approaches that prevail tell us something of the quality of teaching environment” and, therefore, it is useful to examine learner scores by tutor, which are outlined in Table 8.3. Again, a score is given for both Deep and Surface approaches for each tutor in this instance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tutor</th>
<th>Approach to Study</th>
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<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
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<td>Deep</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surface</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>Deep</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surface</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>Deep</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surface</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>Deep</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surface</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Deep</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surface</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>Deep</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surface</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>Deep</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surface</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>Deep</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surface</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.3 - Summary of learners' approaches to study by individual tutor.

Each tutor's learners are adopting Deep approaches over Surface which indicates effective learning environments and suggests the adoption of higher level learning activities. Most tutors’ results mirrored overall mean scores, however, Daisy’s learners reported the lowest Deep score (mean = 3.02) and the second highest Surface score (mean = 2.07). Emily’s had the highest Surface score (mean = 2.23) and a below average Deep score (mean = 3.40). Tutors Ann, Bill, Claire, and George results for their learners were all higher than the group average for Deep approaches, and lower
for *Surface*. Further discussion of the significance of these scores is considered in the qualitative analysis (see Chapters 9 and 10).

Associations were explored between learners’ approaches to study, their perceptions of the module (as indicated by the CEQ), and their statements of achievement on the module (very disappointed to very good). For associations with the CEQ, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (*r*) was used as a measure of the linear relationship between two variables (Field, 2005). Non-parametric correlations\(^8\) were used to investigate the relationship between learner achievement and approaches to study with Kendall's tau coefficient (*τ*) chosen due to its value with "a small data set with a large number of tied ranks" (Field, 2005: 131). Field (2005: 126) outlines a probability value below .05 as being statistically meaningful (described as ‘statistically significant’ or ‘significant’ hereafter) and any value below this indicates genuine association. A probability value below .05 indicates there is a 95% chance of a relationship and is indicated by a * next to relevant values in subsequent tables. Following on from this, a probability value below .01 indicates there is a 99% chance of a relationship and is indicated by ** next to relevant values in subsequent tables. Each statistical test was “two-tailed”, relating to a non-directional hypothesis (Field, 2013: 885). This form of test was appropriate given the discussion in Chapter 6.5 regarding the caution adopted when considering association and causation between the research study’s dependent and independent variables. When exploring associations, these included both positive and negative, therefore “two-tailed” statistical tests were

\(^8\) A family of statistical procedures that do not rely on the restrictive assumptions of parametric tests, in particular, that the sampling distribution is normally distributed (Field, 2013: 880).
applicable. This includes the exploration of the proposed hypothesis, which suggests a positive relationship between tutor EC and learner perceptions of effectiveness, but is still analysed for both positive and negative associations. Table 8.4 illustrates the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R-SPQ Scores (n = 72)</th>
<th>r - Mean CEQ</th>
<th>Kendall’s tau_b - Learner Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deep approaches</td>
<td>.293*</td>
<td>.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface approaches</td>
<td>-.041</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: "p < .05, (2-tailed)

Table 8.4 - Associations between learners’ approaches to study and notions of effective tutoring.

Data analysis found the only statistically significant positive correlation ($r = .293, p < 0.5$) was between the mean score of the CEQ and Deep approaches to study. This suggests learners adopting Deep approaches to study perceive their tutors as better, as indicated by CEQ results. Following this finding Deep approaches were compared against CEQ subscales. The results are outlined in Table 8.5 and show significant positive relationships between Deep approaches to study and Clear Goals ($r = .248, p < 0.5$), Good Teaching Communication ($r = .342, p < 0.1$), and Good Teaching Feedback ($r = .320, p < 0.1$). These findings highlight the importance of learner approaches to study in their perceptions of tutors and further, tutors are, in general, setting effective learning environments as Deep approaches are predominant. Also, the CEQ scale items Clear Goals, Good Teaching Communication and Good Teaching Feedback are significant in Deep learners’ perceptions of effective blended tutoring and could be important tutor attributes that mature, part-time (PT) learners on vocationally relevant...
degree programmes value. These results are further considered in later sections of this chapter and in the qualitative analysis (see Chapters 9 and 10).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEQ Subscales (n = 72)</th>
<th>r - Mean Deep Approaches to Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEQ Clear Goals</td>
<td>.248*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEQ Good Teaching Communication</td>
<td>.342**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEQ Good Teaching Feedback</td>
<td>.320**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEQ Appropriate Workload</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes: *p < .05, **p < .01 (2-tailed)*

Table 8.5 - Correlation coefficients between Deep approaches to study and subscales of the CEQ.

No significant relationships were found between approaches to study and learner age and achievement on modules. Learners’ age tends to be positively correlated with Deep approaches to study (Biggs, 1987), however, this was not found in this study. The data collected on student achievement was crude as percentage scores were not available for all modules because three were only graded pass/fail.

Other learner influences on the modules are now explored and include their previous experience of study in HE, previous experience of blended and distance learning, and IT skills.

Correlation coefficients between the CEQ and OTQ, and learners’ previous experience of study in HE, are detailed in Table 8.6.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learner Questionnaire (n = 72)</th>
<th>r - Years of Study in HE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEQ Total</td>
<td>.264*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Goals</td>
<td>.323**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Teaching Communication</td>
<td>.203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Teaching Feedback</td>
<td>.259*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Workload</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Tutoring Questionnaire Total</td>
<td>.164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *p < .05, **p < .01 (2-tailed)

Table 8.6 - Correlation coefficients between CEQ and OTQ, and the learners' previous experience of study in HE.

The variable ‘Learner years of study in HE’ has a significant positive correlation with the total CEQ score ($r = .264, p < .05$). When analysed at scale level, significant positive correlations were found with Clear Goals ($r = .323, p < .01$) and Good Teaching Feedback ($r = .259, p < .05$). There is an association between learner years of study in HE and perceptions of effective blended tutoring as measured by the CEQ. The significant scale items suggest length of study in HE associates with Clear Goals and Good Teaching Feedback when considering the quality of the blended tutoring received. No significant correlations were found with the OTQ.

Learners' previous experience of online and distance education had no significant correlations with the CEQ or OTQ.

Learner IT competence was calculated from questionnaire feedback about proficiency at word processing, e-mail, discussion boards, synchronous communications and internet research. An average score was calculated and a rating applied from 1 (limited
competence) to 5 (competent). The ratings of IT competence were then compared to results of the CEQ and OTQ, and are detailed in Table 8.7. As there were a large number of tied ranks in the data, Kendall's tau coefficient (τ) was chosen for the correlations (Field, 2005: 131).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learner Questionnaire (n = 72)</th>
<th>Kendall's tau_b - Learner IT Competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEQ Total</td>
<td>.171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Goals</td>
<td>.202*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Teaching Communication</td>
<td>.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Teaching Feedback</td>
<td>.267**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Workload</td>
<td>-.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Tutoring Questionnaire Total</td>
<td>.318**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Tutoring Skills</td>
<td>.290**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Emotional Competence</td>
<td>.306**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *p < .05, **p < .01 (2-tailed)

Table 8.7 - Correlation coefficients between CEQ and OTQ, and a rating of learner IT competence.

Data analysis showed no significant correlation between learner IT competence and the CEQ total, but significant positive correlations with the Clear Goals (τ = .202, p < .05) and Good Teaching Feedback (τ = .267, p < .01) scales. These two scale items also had significant positive correlations with the number of years learners had studied in HE. Interestingly, significant positive correlations were found with the OTQ (τ = .318, p < .01) and its constituent scale items. This suggests the greater learners’ IT competence, the more they value tutors’ online pedagogy, or simply, they are potentially more engaged in the online activities of blended learning modules. This finding
suggests the importance of learners having a basic level of IT competence to aid success in blended learning contexts.

**Learner Achievement on the Modules**

As stated earlier in this Chapter, data collected on learner achievement was crude, as percentage scores was not available for all modules as three were graded pass/fail. Learners were asked to rate their module achievement on a five-point scale (very disappointed to very good) which provided an indication their general satisfaction. A summary of mean scores per tutor are detailed in Table 8.8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tutor</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 8.8 - Learners' Rating of Achievement on the Module by Tutor.*

The table highlights that learners were satisfied with their achievement. A mean of nearly four and standard deviation of less than one, suggests the majority of learners feel they have been successful on the modules.
Section Summary

This section has investigated a number of learner influences on the apparent module success and established they generally adopt Deep approaches to study. This has allowed a controlling variable when undertaking statistical analysis between dependent and independent variables under investigation as it was felt incomplete to evaluate a tutor’s module delivery without giving consideration to learner approaches to study. The Deep result also has significant positive correlations with the CEQ and three scale items most under the tutor’s control (Clear Goals, Good Teaching Communication and Good Teaching Feedback). Further, significant positive correlations have been found between Clear Goals and Good Teaching Feedback scales and the number of years learners have studied in HE and learner IT competence. Questionnaire results suggest that, overall, learners were satisfied with their achievement on modules. When tutors were asked to provide an overall impression of their groups there was a consensus around motivated learners, engaged in their study, and producing good quality work.

The learners under investigation, as well as being categorised as Deep learners, are mature, studying PT, vocationally relevant programmes. Their perceptions of effective tutoring are focussed around the Clear Goals and Good Teaching Feedback scales and these are potentially key requirements of this type of learner studying in blended contexts. Learners’ IT competence also had significant positive correlations with the OTQ and its constituent scale items, which could highlight the importance of having a basic level of IT skills in order to be successful in this context. Learners were happy with their achievement and were generally successful although this could be typical for similar cohorts. It is important to note, the learners under investigation were
progressing through their courses and had achieved on previous modules and been 'retained'. Arguably, it is likely that less able and unmotivated learners would have withdrawn leaving stronger cohorts contributing to this research study.

The chapter now investigates relationships between tutor emotional intelligence and notions of effective blended tutoring as measured by the CEQ and OTQ.

8.3 Preliminary Analysis of the Results of the MSCEIT, CEQ, and OTQ

This section conducts a preliminary analysis into the results of the MSCEIT, CEQ, OTQ and learner achievement using descriptive statistics to unearth any general trends within the data. Preliminary findings are discussed and identified for further quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Tutor’s MSCEIT Results

Table 8.9 gives each tutor’s MSCEIT results including total EI, area and branch scores. Although tutors’ results are scrutinised in Chapters 9 and 10, when cases are qualitatively analysed, an overview of the data yielded some interesting findings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tutor</th>
<th>Total EI</th>
<th>Experiential</th>
<th>Strategic</th>
<th>Perceiving</th>
<th>Using</th>
<th>Understanding</th>
<th>Managing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.9 - Tutor’s MSCEIT EI, Area and Branch Scores.

The tutors have, albeit slightly, below average EI against the general population, with this mirrored at area level and in three branches. Scores are calculated as empirical percentiles, positioned on a normal curve with 100 being the average MSCEIT score (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 18). Although the pilot study (see Chapter 7) discussed an emotionally competent tutor who received a *Low Average* MSCEIT result, higher scores were anticipated. Based on their current roles in HE, the tutors could be categorised as successful individuals, but received below average EI scores. Each tutor has worked in post-compulsory education for a number of years (see the sample criteria in Chapter 6.4) with only the *Understanding* branch receiving an above average mean score.

To further explore tutors’ EI, task level scores were examined. However, Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2002: 15) advise caution:
On some occasions, detailed, task-level results might provide valuable insight into very specific facets of the individual's functioning. Task scores must be interpreted with great caution, as they tend to be less reliable measures of emotional intelligence and subject to greater variation. (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 15).

Tutors' task level scores are detailed in Table 8.10 and revealed most were around 100, the average score, except the Perceiving branches' constituent tasks (Faces and Pictures). Most surprising, was the Faces task low score (87 - classified as 'consider improvement'). As tutors are experienced in face-to-face environments, the perception of emotions in faces would be a frequent activity and, as EI improves with age (Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts, 2002: 228), it was expected to be higher. The Perceiving branch score is compensated by the Competent score achieved on the Pictures task which identifies the tutor's ability to perceive emotions in art and the environment. This task could have utility in identifying successful tutors in blended learning environments given the difficulty of perceiving learners' emotions in online media.
Table 8.10 - Tutor’s MSCEIT Task Level Scores.

Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2002: 18) state that “the pattern of task scores may provide certain hypotheses regarding a respondent’s emotional skills, but such hypotheses must carefully be weighted and evaluated in light of additional data”. As a result, the preliminary findings above are explored quantitatively in this chapter and qualitatively in Chapters 9 and 10.

Table 8.11 details a further tutor score generated by the MSCEIT, namely Positive-Negative bias. The Positive-Negative bias score provides a “metric of an individual’s tendency to respond to the pictorial stimuli in the MSCEIT with positive or negative emotions” (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 15) and higher scores (> 100) indicate relatively positive responses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tutor</th>
<th>Positive-Negative Bias Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.11 - Tutors’ MSCEIT Positive-Negative Bias Scores.

Interestingly, all the scores were greater than 100 with the exception of Emily. The tutors could be considered successful individuals and higher EI scores were anticipated, however, their tendency towards positive perception of emotions could be beneficial in educational contexts. Bar-On’s Model of Emotional and Social Intelligence included an Optimism scale defined as “to be positive and look at the brighter side of life” (Bar-On, 2006: 21). Whilst this is a broader construct of EI, given the positive/negative focus on pictorial stimuli, there is overlap worthy of further exploration around the impact of positive interpretations of emotions and optimism within blended tutoring contexts. Tutors, who have an outlying score (> 120), may misread situations (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 15) and tutors Ann, Daisy and Harry are possibly overly positive when reading learners’ emotions.
Tutors’ Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) Results

The CEQ provided feedback on tutor effectiveness on the modules and measured learner perceptions of teaching, curriculum and assessment. Learners gave answers to five-point Likert scale questions with the results detailed in Table 8.12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tutor</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>CEQ Total</th>
<th>Clear Goals</th>
<th>Good Teaching Communication</th>
<th>Good Teaching Feedback</th>
<th>Appropriate Workload</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.06 (0.36)</td>
<td>4.29 (0.40)</td>
<td>4.50 (0.35)</td>
<td>4.25 (0.45)</td>
<td>3.71 (0.68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.86 (0.64)</td>
<td>3.96 (1.09)</td>
<td>4.33 (0.69)</td>
<td>3.93 (0.72)</td>
<td>3.89 (0.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.10 (0.35)</td>
<td>4.29 (0.57)</td>
<td>4.62 (0.36)</td>
<td>3.64 (0.35)</td>
<td>4.25 (0.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.23 (0.45)</td>
<td>3.69 (0.24)</td>
<td>3.58 (0.74)</td>
<td>2.87 (1.18)</td>
<td>2.94 (0.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.99 (0.26)</td>
<td>4.42 (0.28)</td>
<td>4.15 (0.44)</td>
<td>4.12 (0.44)</td>
<td>3.48 (0.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.43 (0.37)</td>
<td>3.45 (0.62)</td>
<td>4.00 (0.97)</td>
<td>3.30 (0.67)</td>
<td>2.90 (0.88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.55 (0.40)</td>
<td>3.59 (0.74)</td>
<td>4.31 (0.53)</td>
<td>3.68 (0.56)</td>
<td>2.99 (0.55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.42 (0.67)</td>
<td>3.42 (1.15)</td>
<td>3.55 (1.06)</td>
<td>3.13 (0.80)</td>
<td>3.46 (0.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.72 (0.53)</td>
<td>3.89 (0.83)</td>
<td>4.12 (0.79)</td>
<td>3.73 (0.77)</td>
<td>3.38 (0.63)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.12 - Tutor’s Course Experience Questionnaire Results - Mean and (Standard Deviation).

Preliminary analysis reveals generally high scores across scales indicating learners feel their tutors are effective. The CEQ total scores are high with relatively small standard deviations for a five point scale indicating a common perception from the groups of learners. Tutor interview and student questionnaire feedback suggests learners are achieving on modules and this corresponds with the generally high satisfaction outlined in the CEQ. The lowest mean scale score, Appropriate Workload, could be because tutors had less direct control over this during the operation of the module. Appropriate
workload may be generally problematic for part-time learners in full-time employment and the competing demands that these pressures give. The highest mean scale score received was *Good Teaching Communication*, an important factor for part-time learners in blended learning contexts and explored qualitatively in the remaining empirical chapters.

**Tutor's Online Tutoring Questionnaire Results**

The results of the Online Tutoring Questionnaire (OTQ) are detailed in Table 8.13 and show learners feel tutors are effective in the online aspects of modules. The standard deviations for the OTQ total were generally slightly higher than the CEQ indicating a more divergent view from learner groups. Tutor's skills in online environments were generally perceived as effective by learners, however, their emotional competences received a particularly high mean score which is contradictory to the below average results achieved on the MSCEIT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tutor</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>OTQ Total</th>
<th>Online Tutor Skills</th>
<th>Online Emotional Competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.41 (0.42)</td>
<td>4.11 (0.61)</td>
<td>4.60 (0.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.99 (0.65)</td>
<td>4.00 (0.58)</td>
<td>3.99 (0.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.51 (0.44)</td>
<td>4.26 (0.64)</td>
<td>4.68 (0.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.42 (0.73)</td>
<td>3.29 (0.58)</td>
<td>3.50 (0.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.12 (0.63)</td>
<td>3.74 (1.00)</td>
<td>4.38 (0.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.88 (0.67)</td>
<td>3.60 (0.65)</td>
<td>4.07 (0.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.91 (0.33)</td>
<td>3.50 (0.58)</td>
<td>4.20 (0.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.35 (0.69)</td>
<td>3.06 (0.70)</td>
<td>3.62 (0.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.93 (0.66)</td>
<td>3.63 (0.79)</td>
<td>4.12 (0.70)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There were some variations in the scores received by tutors, both on the CEQ and OTQ, which are explored later in this chapter and throughout the remaining chapters.

**Section Summary**

This section highlighted below average MSCEIT scores achieved by tutors, except the Understanding branch. This branch incorporates scores from the Blends task which proves significant in the next section. Tutors achieved a low score on the Faces task (87 - classified as ‘consider improvement’) which, again, proved to be significant in the next section. The highest average score was achieved on the Pictures task which, as was argued, has potentially utility for tutors particularly around online elements of delivery and identification of emotions in a variety of media. Overall, results of the preliminary analysis of the MSCEIT question its utility in the identification of effective blended learning tutors, however, further quantitative analysis is undertaken in the next section including the branch and task levels.

Learners feel tutors are effective in teaching, assessment and online aspects of modules, as indicated by the CEQ and OTQ. Two scale items received particularly high scores (> 4 on a five-point Likert scale): Good Teaching Communication, a valuable area for tutors in blended learning contexts, and Online Emotional Competence, which suggests learners are perceiving emotionally competent traits from tutors and further questions the MSCEIT’s utility in this context.
8.4 Exploration of Associations between Tutors’ MSCEIT Scores and Measures of an Effective Blended Learning Tutor

This section undertakes quantitative analysis to explore associations between tutors’ MSCEIT scores and measures used to identify their effectiveness. These measures were the CEQ and OTQ.

Firstly, mean scores from the CEQ (n = 72) and the MSCEIT were compared on a scatterplot (see Figure 8.1). Field (2005: 113) stresses the importance of examining general trends in data before any correlational analysis and the scatterplot is an ideal tool.

![Figure 8-1 - Tutor’s EI score compared against all learners’ CEQ scores.](image-url)
The scatterplot indicates only a slight positive relationship between data sets, again, suggesting limited utility of the MSCEIT in identifying effective blended learning tutors, however, other relevant factors are revealed. For two tutors, Ann and Claire, all plots are above the regression line\(^9\) and both had taught the learners on previous modules. Emily had a large number of plots above the regression line and she delivered learners’ induction to the course but had not previously taught the group. The exception to this was Daisy who, like Emily, had some teaching contact with the group before but had not delivered a whole module. Tutor Harry does not follow the slight positive relationship with three learners giving particularly low CEQ scores. Further qualitative analysis is required to unearth detail about this data.

Tutor’s EI scores were compared to average CEQ scores for all the learners undertaking their modules and this revealed an empty top, left quadrant (see Figure 8.2). This indicates that tutors within this research study getting lower relative EI scores, did not receive above average CEQ scores.

\(^9\) The regression lines within the scatterplots in this section represent the regression model of the relationships between two variables plotted. In each case, the regression model is a ‘simple regression’ where one variable is predicted from a single predictor variable (Field, 2013: 882).
Figure 8-2 - Tutor’s EI score compared against the average CEQ score for the learners undertaking their module.

Issues identified within this section worthy of further consideration were mirrored in a similar scatterplot (see Figure 8.3) that compared each tutor’s EI and the OTQ scores. The main difference was that a slight negative correlation was found between the two areas, again, to the point of indicating no relationship.
In order to further explore associations between EI and effective blended tutoring, correlation coefficients were used to analyse learner questionnaire scale items with different factor levels of the tutor’s EI scores. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient ($r$) was again used as a measure of the linear relationship (Field, 2005).

Firstly, different factor levels of tutor’s EI scores were compared with total mean scores for the CEQ and OTQ. Table 8.14 illustrates the results.
### Table 8.14 - Correlations of tutors’ EI scores against total mean scores for the CEQ and OTQ.

Data analysis found no statistically significant relationships between a tutor’s EI score and measures of effective tutoring. However, significant relationships were found at branch and task level, some surprising. *Perceiving* emotions branch scores displayed a positive correlation ($r = .243, p < .05$) with the CEQ’s total mean score. This indicates that tutors who are more adept at perceiving emotions are more effective in learners’
eyes. When exploring the *Perceiving* branch’s constituent tasks, only *Faces* had a significant positive correlation \( (r = .260, p < .05) \). This task involved identifying different emotions in faces of individuals and this ability could be contributing to learner perceptions of tutor quality. However, given tutors’ low mean score on the *Faces* task (see Section 8.3), it is difficult to argue this ability is essential for effective blended tutoring. *Understanding* emotions branch scores displayed a similar relationship \( (r = .255, p < .05) \), with this assessing a person’s ability to understand emotional information, how emotions combine and progress through relationship transitions, and reason with emotional knowledge. When constituent tasks were analysed, only *Blends* had a significant positive correlation \( (r = .333, p < .01) \) with this asking respondents to identify emotions that combine into other emotions. The *Sensations* task had a significant negative correlation \( (r = -.257, p < .05) \) with CEQ results. Face validity of this task for blended learning tutors was questioned in Chapter 2.5 due to its requirement to link emotions to sensations, and this negative correlation adds further weight to this view. The *Perceiving* and *Understanding* branches, and the significant relationships at task level, are considered in further detail in the remaining chapters of the thesis.

The two significant relationships at branch level were not mirrored in the OTQ with data analysis pointing towards a negative relationship between a tutor’s EI score and online tutoring ability (which was indicated in Figure 8.3 - scatterplot comparing EI and OTQ). Significant negative correlations were found between *Using* emotions \( (r = -.365, p < .01) \) and *Managing* emotions branches \( (r = -.294, p < .05) \) with the *Sensations* \( (r = -.477, p < .01) \) and *Emotional Relations* \( (r = -.307, p < .01) \) tasks driving these results. Whilst it is perfectly reasonable to understand a tutor’s EI has no effect on ability to tutor online it is
difficult to rationalise a negative relationship, even at branch level. However, at task level, the only significant positive correlation ($r = .305$, $p < .01$) was *Blends*. Following analysis of tutor interviews, it was clear there was a great amount of structured learning occurring outside face-to-face environments, but little online teaching. Computer mediated communication (CMC) mainly facilitated learner support, which could account for these surprising results. The *Blends* task, and its potential utility in identifying successful tutors in blended learning environments, was the only task having significant positive correlations with both the CEQ and OTQ.

Next, different scales of the CEQ and OTQ were compared with tutors’ total EI scores. Table 8.15 illustrates the results and shows that the only significant correlation was found between tutor’s EI and the CEQ’s *Appropriate Workload* scale ($r = .370$, $p < .01$). This was further explored at branch and task level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learner Questionnaire (n = 72)</th>
<th>$r$ - Tutor Total EI Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CEQ Scales</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Goals</td>
<td>.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Teaching Communication</td>
<td>-.190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Teaching Feedback</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Workload</td>
<td>.370**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OTQ Scales</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Tutoring Skills</td>
<td>.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Emotional Competence</td>
<td>-.145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$ (2-tailed)*

*Table 8.15 - Correlation coefficients between the different scales of the CEQ and OTQ, compared with the tutor’s total EI scores.*
Further data analysis revealed significant relationships at branch and task level with scale items of the CEQ, and particularly *Appropriate Workload* (see Appendix 10 for correlation coefficients). The *Perceiving* branch had a significant positive relationship with the *Appropriate Workload* scale \( (r = .346, p < .01) \) with the *Faces* task driving this result \( (r = .365, p < .01) \). *Appropriate Workload* also significantly, positively correlates with the *Understanding* branch \( (r = .377, p < .01) \), with the *Changes* task driving this result \( (r = .285, p < .05) \); and the *Managing Branch* \( (r = .251, p < .05) \), with the *Emotional Management* task driving this result \( (r = .347, p < .01) \). Further, although *Appropriate Workload* did not significantly, positively correlate with the *Using* branch, it did with the *Facilitation* task \( (r = .323, p < .01) \). A critical stance has been taken with the *Appropriate Workload* scale as it is not always under the immediate, direct control of tutors. However, the scale item requires further qualitative investigation given the number of branch and task level items having a significant correlation (see Chapter 9.9).

Tutors with certain EC abilities could perceive, facilitate, understand and manage learner emotions regarding workload issues. The *Blends* task had significant positive correlations with scale items *Clear Goals* \( (r = .365, p < .01) \) and *Good Teaching Feedback* \( (r = .327, p < .01) \). The *Using* Branch had significant negative correlations with the scale items *Good Teaching Communication* \( (r = -.344, p < .01) \) and *Good Teaching Feedback* \( (r = -.317, p < .01) \) which were again driven by the *Sensations* task. This task had significant negative correlations with the scale items *Good Teaching Communication* \( (r = -.396, p < .01) \) and *Good Teaching Feedback* \( (r = -.413, p < .01) \). Whilst considering Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2002: 15) advised interpreting task scores with “great caution”, the CEQ scale items *Clear Goals*, *Good Teaching*
Feedback and Appropriate Workload appear relevant for these learners whilst the Sensations task, again, has limited utility in the evaluation of blended learning tutors.

Further data analysis revealed significant relationships at branch and task level with scale items of the OTQ (see Appendix 11 for correlation coefficients). No significant relationships were found with the Faces task. Blends task had a significant positive relationship ($r = .305$, $p < .01$) with the mean OTQ score with significant positive relationships on both scale items (mean Online Tutor Skills: $r = .270$, $p < .05$; mean Online Emotional Competence: $r = .281$, $p < .05$). The Using branch, again, had a significant negative relationship ($r = -.365$, $p < .01$) with the mean OTQ score and on both scale items (mean Online Tutor Skills: $r = -.251$, $p < .05$; mean Online Emotional Competence: $r = -.391$, $p < .01$). This was driven by the Sensations task which had a significant negative relationship ($r = -.447$, $p < .01$) with the mean OTQ score and on both scale items (mean Online Tutor Skills: $r = -.323$, $p < .01$; mean Online Emotional Competence: $r = -.466$, $p < .01$). The Managing branch had a significant negative relationship ($r = -.294$, $p < .05$) with the mean OTQ score and on both scale items (mean Online Tutor Skills: $r = -.234$, $p < .05$; mean Online Emotional Competence: $r = -.291$, $p < .051$). These results were driven by the Emotional Relations task which had a significant negative relationship ($r = -.447$, $p < .01$) with the mean OTQ score and on both scale items (mean Online Tutor Skills: $r = -.284$, $p < .05$; mean Online Emotional Competence: $r = -.274$, $p < .05$). These findings reinforce the Blends task’s significance as an ability that correlates with measures of effective blended tutoring and interesting implications of negative correlations being found with the Using and Managing branches, and the Sensations and Emotional Relations tasks. The validity of the
Managing branch was questioned in Chapter 2 due to its self-report nature and the implications this has for academics and their tendency to deconstruct tests. This negative correlation adds further weight to the view.

No significant relationships were found between tutor age and gender, and the results of the MSCEIT, CEQ and OTQ.

**Correlational Analysis of Learner Statements of Achievement and Measures of an Effective Blended Learning Tutor**

Associations were explored between learner statements of achievement on the module (very disappointed to very good) and measures of effective tutoring, namely mean scores for the CEQ and OTQ. Non-parametric correlations were used with Kendall's tau coefficient again chosen due to its value with "a small data set with a large number of tied ranks" (Field, 2005: 131). Table 8.16 details the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learner Questionnaire (n = 72)</th>
<th>Kendall's tau_b - Learner Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEQ Total Mean Scores</td>
<td>.227*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEQ Clear Goals</td>
<td>.273**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEQ Good Teaching Communication</td>
<td>.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEQ Good Teaching Feedback</td>
<td>.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEQ Appropriate Workload</td>
<td>.257**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTQ Mean Scores</td>
<td>.078</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: "p < .05, **p < .01 (2-tailed)

Table 8.16 - Correlation coefficients between learner statements of achievement and mean CEQ and OTQ scores.
Data analysis found a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = .227$, $p < .05$) between learner achievement and mean CEQ scores. This, as expected, suggests as learner perceptions of achievement rise, their perceptions of the quality of tutoring received also rise to a significant degree. To further explore this relationship, learner achievement was correlated against CEQ scale items. Significant relationships were found between learner achievement and two scale times, *Clear Goals* ($r = .273$, $p < .01$) and *Appropriate Workload* ($r = .257$, $p < .01$). These are explored in remaining empirical chapters, particularly considering the learners are studying PT, vocationally relevant degree courses at a distance.

No significant correlation ($r = .078$) was found between learner achievement and mean OTQ scores nor with the two constituent scale items. This, again, could be due to the limited levels of online tutoring evident following the analysis of tutor interviews.

No significant relationships were found between learner statements of their achievement on the module and tutor’s total EI score or at branch and task level. This adds weight to the limited utility of the MSCEIT in identifying effective tutors as perceived by learners.

### 8.5 Analysis of Significant Correlations when Controlled for Learners' Approaches to Study

The previous section highlighted a number of statistically significant relationships between results of the MSCEIT and measures of effective blended tutoring. However, the influence of learner approaches to study needs to be considered. Two branches and three tasks of the MSCEIT had significant relationships with the CEQ and some of
its constituent scales (*Clear Goals*, *Good Teaching Feedback* and *Appropriate Workload*). Two branches and two tasks of the MSCEIT had significant relationships with the OTQ and its two scale items. Also, measures of learner achievement had significant correlations with the CEQ and two constituent scale items (*Clear Goals* and *Appropriate Workload*).

Partial correlations revealed the extensive influence of learner approaches to study on modules, with this being a key finding of this chapter. In order to obtain a controlling variable for learner approaches to study, which includes both motive and strategic subcomponents, results of the *Deep* scale were adopted. This was chosen as the learner group were predominantly *Deep* learners as classified by the R-SPQ. Partial correlations were calculated, which correlate two variables while effects of another variable, in this case learners’ approaches to study, are held constant (Field, 2005: 134). Each significant correlation outlined above, whether positive or negative, was found to be not statistically significant, when the effects of learners’ approaches to study were held constant. This crucial finding emphasises the influence of these learners, and their approaches to study, on the associations between the identified dependent and independent variables. The tutors’ approaches to meeting the needs of this type of learner, namely mature and studying PT, vocationally relevant courses are considered in detail in the remaining empirical chapters.

Whilst bearing in mind the influence of learner approaches to study, this section has raised important issues as well as outlining areas for further investigation. The MSCEIT’s utility is limited in identifying effective tutors, however, tasks *Faces* and
Blends have raised abilities that correlate with learner perceptions of tutors. CEQ scale items, Clear Goals and Good Teaching Feedback, positively correlated with MSCEIT tasks, mainly Faces and Blends, however, Good Teaching Communication had few significant relationships. Appropriate Workload positively correlated with the Total EI score and four tasks. Learner achievement correlated with the CEQ scale Clear Goals but had no significant correlations with the MSCEIT at any level. These aspects of the MSCEIT, CEQ and OTQ require further qualitative analysis in relation to blended learning contexts attracting these particular learners.

8.6 Exploration of other Factors Influencing Learners’ Perception of Effective Tutoring

From tutor interviews, the analysis of VLE content, and factors that emerged from the pilot study, assessment measures were ascertained regarding the qualities, skills and experience of the tutors which allowed analysis and comparisons with the measures of effective tutoring. Criteria were developed (see Appendix 12) to provide an ordinal score about the following aspects of each tutor to consider the extent of:

- tutors’ previous contact and relationship with the learner group prior to module commencement;
- online interaction during the module;
- tutors’ teaching experience within blended learning environments;
- tutors’ previous learning experiences within blended, online and/or distance learning environments;
- tutors’ technical skills;
• tutors’ training relevant to blended tutoring;
• tutors’ workload throughout the delivery of the module.

The assessment measures were mainly derived from the literature review chapters, which considered skills and qualities required to teach in HE in both face-to-face and blended/distance learning contexts, the extent of formal training being a pertinent example. However, some issues arose in the findings of the pilot study and from the quantitative analysis earlier in this Chapter. The extent of a tutor’s previous relationship with their learners relates to notions of reducing *Transactional Distances* (Moore, 1997) and the development of a *Transactional Presence* (Shin, 2002), and it further links with EC traits discussed in Chapters 2 and 4, such as relationship management and empathy. Pilot study analysis found previous relationships to be a factor in learner perceptions of quality. Also, comparisons of tutor MSCEIT scores and the CEQ revealed that previous relationships could be a significant factor. The extent of online interaction and notions of tutor presence were highlighted in Chapter 3 as important in successful blended teaching and learning from a number of sources, including the importance of an *Iterative Dialogue* between tutor and learner (Laurillard, 2002). Again, there are pertinent links to EC traits considered in Chapter 2 particularly those classified as *Self-Awareness* and *Social Awareness*. The pilot study findings also highlighted the positive effect online interaction had on the apparent module success. The extent of a tutor’s previous learning experiences in blended or online learning contexts explores notions of empathic tutoring (Holmberg, 1989; Murphy et al., 2011), which was highlighted in Chapter 4 and noted as a potentially important trait in the pilot study. Chapter 4 and the findings of the pilot study considered the technical skills required of
tutors in blended and online learning contexts. The extent of a tutor’s technical skills was explored both generally and in relation to the skills demonstrated on the module under investigation. Finally, the extent of a tutor’s workload during the module and its links with being organised, and encouraging Deep approaches to study were highlighted in Chapter 3 and the pilot study. A number of pertinent EI traits outlined in Chapter 2 such as flexibility, adaptability, service orientation and organisational awareness, and the importance of being organised (which was highlighted in Chapter 4), could be demonstrated through a tutor’s perception of workload and these were again apparent in pilot study findings.

External reliability and validity of the criteria were strengthened as each were scrutinised and evaluated by three Senior Lecturers within the University with expertise within the subject discipline. Minor amendments were made to one criterion as a result. “The extent of tutors’ previous contact and relationship with the learner group” was amended to give greater consideration to course management roles.

The assessment measures were compared to CEQ and OTQ results, and constituent scale items, with Kendall’s tau coefficient chosen again with its value analysing data with a number of tied ranks (Field, 2005: 131). Table 8.17 illustrates correlation coefficients for the assessment measures and total scores for the CEQ and OTQ with the scale items detailed in Appendix 13 and 14 respectively.
Tutor Assessment Measures | Kendall's tau_b - Mean CEQ | Kendall's tau_b - Mean OTQ
--- | --- | ---
Previous Relationship | .344** | .360**
Online Interaction | .218* | .153
Blended Teaching Experience | .215* | .070
Blended Learning Experience | -.099 | 0.46
Technical Skills Generally | -.188* | -.231*
Technical Skills Module | .130 | .026
Training | .082 | -.129
Workload | .198* | .249*

Notes: *p < .05, **p < .01 (2-tailed)

Table 8.17 - Correlation coefficients between tutor assessment measures and CEQ and OTQ scores.

Data analysis identified a statistically significant positive relationship ($\tau = .344$, $p < .01$; $\tau = .360$, $p < .01$) between the tutor’s previous relationship with learners and their perceptions of the blended tutoring they received as measured by the CEQ and OTQ. Tutors’ previous relationship with learners was highlighted in the pilot study and from analysis within this chapter (see Section 8.4) as a potentially important factor in learners’ perception of quality. This data confirms its significance and the CEQ scale items also having a significant positive relationship with this assessment measure were Clear Goals ($\tau = .355$, $p < .01$), Good Teaching Communication ($\tau = .205$, $p < .05$), and Good Teaching Feedback ($\tau = .382$, $p < .01$).

The extent of online interaction has a significant positive relationship with CEQ scores ($\tau = .218$, $p < .05$) with interesting findings at scale level. Clear Goals ($\tau = .280$, $p < .01$) and Good Teaching Feedback ($\tau = .224$, $p < .05$) were scale items with significant positive relationships, which suggests that, although online interaction was not
extensive, when it was occurring, it enhanced learners’ understanding of module outcomes and improved feedback quality. This assessment measure analyses the extent of online interaction undertaken but, as Chapter 3 argued, of greater importance is the quality of dialogue (Moore, 1997; Laurillard, 2002) and this is explored further through analysis of tutor interviews and VLE content.

The extent of tutor experience in blended/distance learning environments has a significant positive relationship with the total CEQ scores ($T = .215, p < .05$) and the scale item *Clear Goals* ($T = .236, p < .05$). These findings indicate, unsurprisingly, that tutors with more blended and distance learning experience are perceived as better by learners and this is underpinned with the setting of clear goals and outcomes on the module.

No significant relationships were found when analysing tutors’ technical skills on the module, however, significant negative relationships were found between a tutor’s general technical ability and measures of effective blended tutoring. A significant negative relationship ($T = -.188, p < .05$) was found with the CEQ and also the OTQ ($T = -.231, p < .05$). The two OTQ scale items were revealing not only because both had significant negative relationships (*Online Tutor Skills* $T = -.269, p < .01$; *Online EC* $T = -.191, p < .05$), but that *Online Tutor Skills* had a more significant negative relationship. Learners do not perceive more technically proficient tutors as effective, when measured by the CEQ and OTQ.
Tutor workload during the module had a significant positive relationship with results of the CEQ ($T = .198, p < .05$). This indicates that as tutors increasingly perceive their workload as manageable, learner perceptions of their module also rise. Analysis of the CEQ scale items revealed a significant positive correlation with Good Teaching Feedback ($T = .306, p < .01$) indicating that tutor workload was impacting on the level and quality of feedback to learners. This finding was similar to that found regarding online interaction, which also had an impact on learner feedback. Although online interaction and tutor workload are independent variables in the study a significant positive correlation was found between the two ($T = .536, p < .01$). Tutor workload also had a significant positive relationship with the OTQ ($T = .249, p < .05$) and with the scale item Online EC ($T = .291, p < .01$). This suggests learners perceive EI traits (Self-Awareness, Social Awareness and Relationship Management) less frequently from tutors who indicated workload issues.

**Section Summary**

This section has revealed a number of potentially important factors in the investigation of competences required for effective tutoring in blended learning environments. A tutor’s previous relationship with learners is important and is explored in the remainder of the thesis, with consideration of implications of an on-going relationship including such factors as improved dialogue, Transactional Presence and trust. With regard to tutors, other significant influencing factors include previous teaching experience in blended learning environments, technical skills and workload, with the latter two potentially impacting on Transactional Distance and Transactional Presence experienced by learners. Summarising the CEQ scale items, Clear Goals is a
significant factor when exploring blended tutoring qualities and is further considered in relation to adult learners on part-time, vocationally relevant courses. *Good Teaching Feedback* was also frequently significant in this context and influences learner perceptions. A tutor’s previous learning experiences revealed no significant relationships. This is particularly surprising as empathic tutoring was linked to past study in the pilot study analysis.

Again, partial correlations were calculated with effects of learners’ approaches to study held constant (Field, 2005: 134). Each significant correlation outlined above, whether positive or negative, was not statistically significant when effects of learners’ approaches to study were held constant. This, again, strengthens the need for further analysis of learners’ influence on blended learning modules when studying vocationally relevant HE qualifications.

### 8.7 Chapter Summary

This section provides a summary of the key issues raised within the chapter and outlines areas for further investigation.

The value of the MSCEIT in measuring EC for blended learning tutors proved to be problematic, however, there are some significant relationships at branch and task level. The tutors’ MSCEIT mean score was below average which is surprising for a successful group of experienced HE lecturers. The pilot study indicated a tutor with *High Average* competence at *Perceiving* emotions in others and this was considered a valuable ability. Ability to perceive emotions in others was found to be a significant factor when
comparing MSCEIT results with learner perceptions of effective tutoring, with the *Faces* task being most influential. Ability to recognise emotions in others does appear valuable for blended learning tutors but the *Faces* task is more suited for face-to-face interactions. However *Pictures*, which did not have significant relationships, is potentially more relevant for interactions within online media. Overall, tutors received the lowest mean score on *Faces*, which is surprising given their experience in traditional approaches to teaching. When examining overall mean scores at task level, tutors scored significantly higher on *Pictures* and with such ability in this area could be a reason for the generally successful learner achievement on modules. Ability to understand emotions in others was also found to be a significant factor when comparing MSCEIT results with learner perceptions of effective tutoring with the *Blends* task being most influential. Ability to understand how emotions combine into other emotions also appears to be valuable for blended learning tutors and relevant for the complex feelings that studying at a distance generates within learners. The significant negative relationships between the *Sensations* task and measures of effective tutoring are difficult to interpret as having such emotional cognitive ability would seem to be valuable; however, there appears limited utility in using this task’s results when identifying tutors likely to be successful.

The CEQ scale item *Appropriate Workload* positively correlated with mean MSCEIT scores and a number of branches and tasks. Whilst learner workload is not always under the immediate, direct control of tutors, those with certain EC abilities could perceive, facilitate, understand and manage learner emotions regarding such issues.
To summarise, the MSCEIT has limited utility in identifying effective blended learning tutors, however, the Faces and Blends task indicate abilities that could be valuable with the Pictures task being the strongest demonstrated in what were generally successful modules. The results of the Online Emotional Competence scale of the OTQ suggested that tutors were competent in this area and further qualitative analysis is required to determine relevant traits being demonstrated. This is to provide further evidence for the hypothesis, for which the quantitative analysis has provided inconclusive evidence when EC is measured by the MSCEIT.

A number of independent variables were identified as having a significant positive relationship with the CEQ and particularly the Clear Goals and Good Teaching Feedback scales. The tutor’s previous relationship with learners was the most significant factor and further qualitative analysis is required around this area and the reduction of Transactional Distances and the development of a Transactional Presence. Notions of Transactional Distance and Transactional Presence and tutors’ technical skills also require further analysis as a negative relationship was found between this and CEQ results. Other significant positive relationships found with CEQ scale items, particularly Clear Goals and Good Teaching Feedback, were tutor workload, extent of online interaction, and blended tutoring experience. There are interesting tensions to consider here however as, overall, there was limited online tutoring across the modules investigated with face-to-face sessions providing the majority of teaching. CMC mainly facilitated student support with learning outside day schools generally focussed on module assessments (see Chapter 9 for further discussion). Clear Goals and Good Teaching Feedback scales appear to be significant factors for adult learners on
vocationally relevant degrees in perceptions of effective blended learning tutors. Further, learners generally adopted Deep approaches to study and these CEQ scale items appear valuable for this type of motivated learner. Good Teaching Communication was an interesting scale as it received the highest average score of CEQ scale items when examining all tutors’ results; however, it had limited significant correlations with the MSCEIT and other independent variables, with Deep approaches to study the only significant relationship.

A crucial finding of this Chapter is the influence of learners’ approaches to study on the associations between the identified dependent and independent variables. When correlations were controlled for the influence of learners’ approaches to study, which includes measures of motive and strategic approaches, no statistically significant relationships were found. This chapter explored a number of factors that influence learners’ perceptions of the effectiveness of specific blended tutors. I anticipated that certain variables, such as tutors’ EC, would influence learner perceptions of quality to a statistically significant extent, even when considering approaches to study. However, these learners’ approaches to study need further exploration in relation to effective tutor practice in blended learning environments. This area is considered as part of the qualitative analysis in the next two chapters and, consequently, this research study proposes an Andragogical Model for effective blended learning to meet the needs of adult learners which is outlined in Chapter 13. Further, a number of factors are outlined to operationalise the Model, which can support practice for tutors and HE institutions. The analysis leading to the Model’s development highlighted a number of valuable tutor skills, qualities and competences that appear influential in meeting the needs of adult
learners in this context. Descriptive statistics from the student questionnaire indicated learners feel tutors were effective in teaching, assessment and online elements of courses. Both tutors and learners indicated that the modules were generally successful. The lack of statistically significant correlations also suggests that effective blended learning is complex and multi-dimensional in nature, which requires further exploration to unearth factors influencing these learners’ perceptions of quality. These issues are explored throughout the remaining chapters.

A wide range of independent variables has been identified and analysed, which illustrates the difficulties of finding statistically significant relationships when exploring complex and dynamic environments, such as delivery of a blended learning module. However, a range of influencing factors is apparent, and these are now explored qualitatively. The following chapter analyses the remaining modules with examination of tutor interviews and analysis of VLE content. The analysis is qualitative but further explores issues raised in the quantitative aspects of the research.
Chapter 9 Analysis of Tutor Interviews and VLE Content

9.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter analyses teaching, learning, assessment and tutor support within the modules under investigation. A range of themes emerging from the data are discussed, such as the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment, which emerged primarily from the review of analytical codes (King, 2004b). Data is drawn from the tutor interviews and virtual learning environment (VLE) content to address the hypothesis and following two research aims:

- to explore effective practice of tutors in blended learning environments;
- to investigate skills, qualities and competences, particularly emotional competences, contributing to the effectiveness of tutors within blended learning environments.

The analysis was conducted in the context of general module success (see Chapter 8.2 and 8.3 for related discussion), delivered by experienced tutors (see Chapter 6.4). Descriptions that were included in the proposed Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices (see Chapter 14) are evidenced throughout this and the next chapter. Chapter 14 synthesises all the emerging themes from this research study to justify the inclusion of descriptions into the proposed Model.
Themes are analysed both in relation to recognised good practice, outlined in the literature review chapters, and learner feedback, predominantly from the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ). From this analysis, a framework for understanding effective practice in blended tutoring is developed for mature learners, studying part-time (PT), vocationally relevant degrees. Further, the chapter identifies practices that both influence learner perceptions of quality, such as tutor communications before the first day school, and those that appear associated with their general success, such as available technical support.

On some occasions, within the findings chapters, I have used quotations more than once. This is because the quotation is worthy of deliberation from multiple perspectives. Whilst this might suggest a scarcity of data, this is not the case, rather the quote is so pertinent that it has value to evidence a range of ideas. Often a particular quote is used because it sums up succinctly the views expressed by a number of the tutors.

The themes are explored under the following headings:

- Approaches to teaching, learning and assessment;
- Structure of the learning environments;
- Tutors’ support of learners;
- The extent and quality of tutor/learner dialogue;
- Tutor and learner VLE use throughout modules;
- Tutor training to support teaching in blended learning contexts;
- Tutor practices to motivate learners;
• Extent and implications of learner workload;
• Other issues influencing module success.

9.2 Approaches to Teaching, Learning and Assessment

This section explores tutors’ approaches to teaching, learning and assessment throughout modules with analysis in relation to good practice identified in Chapter 3. It also explores learner perceptions. Mayes and de Freitas (2007: 20) propose that most occurrences of e-learning will have elements of “learning as behaviour, learning as the construction of knowledge and meaning, and learning as social practice” and this was apparent within modules. However, a significant theme that developed throughout the qualitative analysis is that where tutors’ module approach aligned with the Individual Constructivist Perspective, this resulted in higher CEQ scores. Whereas, tutors exhibiting a greater number of practices aligning with the Social Constructivist Perspective, received mixed CEQ scores. This section starts the justification of this finding, which is further developed throughout this and the next chapter. This research further discerned that on all modules, teaching, learning and assessment were congruent (Biggs, 2003), student-centred pedagogy being aligned with problem-based assessments and a number of the core principles of the Andragogical Model were evident (Knowles et al., 2011). Again, this finding is developed and justified throughout this and the next chapter.

Teaching styles adopted at day schools were varied, but tutors described aspects of ‘teaching as imparting information’, ‘teaching as transmitting structured knowledge’, ‘teaching as an interaction between the teacher and student’ and ‘teaching as facilitating
understanding on the part of the student’ (Kember, 1997). Daisy justified the variety of teaching and learning activities used at day schools when stating “so you are not doing the same kinds of things each day”, and this approach was common to all. This research study argues the importance of day schools and the face-to-face contact as integral to success in blended learning contexts. All tutors described practice across each teaching style at day schools, which is considered in this section, while self-efficaciousness in this context is discussed in the next chapter (see Chapter 10.7).

All tutors described taking a facilitative approach at day schools, developed around a range of student-centred activities, showing evidence of ‘teaching as facilitating understanding on the part of the student’ and ‘teaching as an interaction between the teacher and student’. Both individual and group activities were common to each module during day schools with tutors stressing student-centred approaches. George spoke about learners’ “active participation” at day schools with Bill’s comment also illustrative of a facilitative approach:

Very quickly I will get in to ‘what is action research’? We have a discussion about what it is, we agree the characteristics, and will then get into some social learning, group work, where they will identify with manipulatives.

How tutors positioned themselves in relation to their learners further pointed to a facilitative approach. Four tutors described themselves as ‘facilitators’ with two further emphasising support for learners in applying theory and recognised good practice to work contexts. For example, Frank preferred “a facilitative, exponential approach to
delivery which uses exercises and activities”. A further two tutors, Ann and Daisy, described their learners as the “experts” which, again, emphasised the role of facilitator.

These student-centred activities were supplemented with some instruction, including both ‘teaching as imparting information’ and ‘teaching as transmitting structured knowledge, where understanding of key information, theory and concepts was required. For her module ‘Education and the Law’, Ann outlined, “I do specific delivery on equal opportunities, the new equality bill to make sure they were up to speed on that”. Daisy stated, “I do tend to do a fair bit of input into areas that I think they need to know about”, when discussing her teaching of equality and diversity, with this including key legislation in the area. Both examples were illustrative of transmission of information and all tutors described some instruction of key module information such as submission dates and assessment requirements.

Day schools commonly included activities which aided assignment preparation, with this continuing outside day schools via computer mediated communications (CMCs) (see Table 9.1 for a summary of tutors’ interaction with learners via CMCs during their modules). Quantitative analysis (Chapter 8.6) revealed that the extent of online interaction positively correlated with CEQ scores indicating learners valued dialogue outside face-to-face environments. In all modules, learners had autonomy to direct their learning and focus on assignment work with tutors available for support. Ann and Claire, who received the highest CEQ scores, were (to quote Ann) “there on demand” to facilitate learners’ application and analysis within work contexts. Whilst being available to learners was common to all, other tutors tried to engage learners in a variety of online
activities but with limited success. The pilot study (Chapter 7) noted Claire using discussion boards to provide feedback on assignment plans. However, minimal peer interaction was occurring via this medium. Emily described regular synchronous web conferences which had predetermined topics to discuss. Whilst these were successful in engaging learners and allowing peer interaction, the tutor explained that more practical issues were discussed around assessment and use of wider university systems. She noted the use of such software was new to her and further work was required to appropriately structure sessions. Bill encouraged the use of wikis to allow collaboration with peers to validate assignment choices, but described limited learner engagement. Two other tutors, George and Harry, encouraged the submission of assignment plans on VLE discussion boards which, was generally carried out. However, there were minimal comments from peers, and VLE analysis revealed none from the tutors. From analysis of activities outside day schools, module assessments were the key driver of student learning with these undertaken independently from peers but with support from tutors. This is considered further throughout the remainder of this chapter.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tutor</th>
<th>Summary of tutors’ interaction with learners via CMCs during their modules</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>E-mail support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>E-mail support, wiki to validate learner assignment plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>E-mail support, learner assignment plans discussed on VLE discussion boards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>E-mail support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>E-mail support, online synchronous conferences, established a group on a social networking site to aid induction and learner socialisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>E-mail support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>E-mail support, learner assignment plans added to VLE discussion boards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>E-mail support, learner assignment plans added to VLE discussion boards.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.1 - Summary of tutors’ interaction with learners via CMCs during their modules.

Assessments undertaken by learners across the modules were rooted in a number of the core principles of the Andragogical Model (Knowles, Holton, and Swanson, 2011), as expected on vocationally orientated courses. High scores received on the CEQ scale *Clear Goals and Standards* (mean = 3.89) suggests learners knew what was expected and why they were studying a particular topic, with tutors indicating the relevance of activities at day schools. Bill was illustrative here of all tutors when outlining “what’s in it for me” to learners, as activities and assignments are introduced. Learners had choice over assignment focus, and all were related to practice within their organisations. Assignments were problem-based and generally case-method within learners’ organisations, with examples being action research, evaluation of a piece of legislation in context, and evaluation of leadership and management structures.

This research study argues that an important part of the general module success was the congruent nature of teaching, learning and assessment with the *Individual*
Constructivist Perspective the most appropriate for learners studying PT, vocationally relevant degrees at a distance. This section has taken steps to evidence this view. The Individual Constructivist Perspective highlights the achievement of active discovery where learners construct new ideas through hypothesis testing. This was apparent from the ‘facilitative’ teaching style adopted by all tutors at day schools but was further evidenced through the problem-based and case-method assessments adopted on the modules. The extent of learners working independently, particularly on module assessments, outside day schools, resonates with individual constructivism as they are student-centred, encouraging experimentation and application of theory to practice. This led to a predominant module approach of individual student-centred pedagogy aligned with problem-based learning and assessment. Further, available tutor support, with assessment focussed learner activities outside of day schools, were associated with module success. In addition, modules were structured. These factors are considered in the next three sections.

9.3 Structure of the Learning Environments

Chapter 3 argued that the support of learner’s application of knowledge to their work contexts is facilitated by a structured knowledge base (Biggs and Tang, 2007; 25). Further, a structured learning environment with clear goals and timely, constructive feedback has a significant impact on the adoption of Deep approaches to study (Entwistle and Ramsden, 1983). These factors are now considered within modules in relation to tutor and learner feedback.
Whilst a structured knowledge base was evident through day school activities and VLE content, it was difficult to evaluate its impact on practice and overall module success. As outlined in the previous section, all day schools included a range of learner-centred activities to develop understanding of key concepts and apply theory to practice. All module VLEs held relevant content, for example, Emily states “there are a lot of other resources on that module, the lecture materials, there’s some podcasts that I’ve created”, with Frank noting “that’s why it’s there [the VLE] for reference work that we’ve covered and I’ve used it for signposting other information to cover”. However, two tutors, Emily and George, described streamlining resources held on the VLE as a way of improving practice.

All modules were structured around assessment strategies and this appeared appropriate for the needs of adult learners undertaking vocationally relevant degrees. This was evidenced from tutor comments during the interviews and analysis of VLE content, particularly module assessment guides. The previous section stated that learners had choice over assignment focus, and all were related to practice within their organisations. These two factors led all tutors to teach key principles but then allow learner contextualisation, principally through module assessment requirements. Ann was illustrative here when stating “the problem with a topic such as ‘education and the law’, is, depending on where the students were, there is no way we could put everything on a VLE or teach it at day schools”, and this forced tutors into an assessment driven structure. Ann developed this point further when stating:

*When the day schools were finished one of the first things I would do is go through the assessment...... and say right what I would like you to*
do before the next time I see you....... I would really like to see your case studies so I can begin formative feedback.

Ann’s module assessment consisted of four small case studies about aspects of educational law and an evaluative report about the implications of legislation in learners’ organisations. Following the first day school, Ann instructed learners to complete case studies before the second day school, with work commencing on reports after that. This was a common approach to structure modules around assessment requirements and appears appropriate for learners who are likely to be managing the competing pressures of work and family life. This structure enabled the spread of workload across modules, but was strengthened with tutor feedback throughout the assessment process.

Assessment strategies structured the modules with each having supporting documents and opportunities for tutors to feedback on learner progress. Modules included extensive formative assessment that involved review of an assignment plan and feedback on parts of draft assignments. Dates were established for each aspect of assessment and were generally structured around day schools, assignment plans being submitted at the second day school for example. Bill explained how he integrated assignment plans within his module, which was a common approach across all tutors:

Then the second session, there will probably be an email sent to them on what we are going to concentrate on and what I want you to be doing and I might have some project proposals to return to them. The second session would be another practically based session - how you validate your work, writing reflectively, issues of data analysis.
Clear goals and standards were apparent in detailed assessment briefs and, in a number of cases, use of exemplar material. George noted the motivational value of plans and exemplar work:

…I also think what motivates them is having things like plans for assignments, certainly motivates them and makes them feel better about doing things. They also like the idea about having a past example so that certainly helps motivate them.

This again indicated a common approach from tutors regarding an assessment driven structuring of modules and the motivational effects that was felt to have (see Section 9.8 for further discussion of tutor practices to motivate learners). All tutors explained that assessment strategies were supported with timely and constructive feedback (see Section 9.4 for further discussion).

There was flexibility within all the modules’ structure, particularly with regard to the assessment, to enable student autonomy and be responsive to individual needs (Moore, 1997: 26; Knowles et al., 2011). Autonomy was further evidenced, as outlined in the previous section, during the assessment process as learners chose areas of assessment most relevant to their interests and role. Throughout the modules, tutors provided feedback on learner’s progress via the formative assessment strategies outlined, and were available to support further individual needs. High scores on the CEQ scale items Clear Goals and Standards (mean = 3.89) and Good Teaching Feedback on, and Concern for, Student Learning (mean = 3.73) were evidence of the structured learning environments underpinned by assessment and feedback.
Structuring modules by the assessment strategies allowed greater learner autonomy than a content driven approach, however, mechanisms were in place for tutors to support learners. Blended, PT courses need to be flexible in terms of meeting learning outcomes but have sufficient structure in their delivery for learners with competing pressures from work and family life. This was evident from all the modules, particularly around assessment, but was enhanced with learner support mechanisms which are discussed in more depth in the next section.

9.4 Tutors’ Support of Learners

The literature in Chapter 3.5 stated that in order to sustain the chosen teaching, learning and assessment, the design and management of effective student support strategies need to be embedded within the programme structure (McDonald and McAteer, 2003; Stubbs, Martin, and Endlar, 2006). Whilst the design was around assessment strategies, active management of support, predominantly facilitated by e-mail, was evident from tutor interviews.

Five tutors, receiving the higher CEQ scores, outlined similar proactive strategies to support and encourage learners in meeting the formative and summative assessment requirements of modules. Formative assessment processes were monitored closely with e-mail, phone calls or quick chats at day schools used to prompt learners and encourage dialogue. Emily’s module required completion of a number of ‘mini-projects’ and she outlined monitoring learners’ engagement and would “chase them up”, if they are not in touch, with Bill “chivvying people along if I haven’t received a project proposal”.

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Common across all modules was learner support through feedback on formative assessments. This commonly included feedback on assignment plans and draft reports with tutor Harry illustrative:

One of the things the students have to do is to put a summary of their assignment brief onto Blackboard which is a virtual learning environment. Quite often, instead of doing it straight onto Blackboard, they will send it through on email.

Therefore, even though Harry did not contribute to the VLE discussion boards and received one of the lowest CEQ scores, he was commenting on assignment plans facilitated by e-mail. All tutors emphasised commitment to supporting learners through assessments, which was exemplified through response times. Emily illustrated this when stating, 'the response times were really good this year, often in the morning that it arrived'. These learners appear to require a minimum level of support which involves timely and constructive feedback to formative assessments, however, tutors receiving higher CEQ scores were more proactive in communicating. This level of support was exemplified by Ann when stating:

I don’t know if I am soft but when I tutor with blended [learning] I do regularly send students emails and try to keep regular contact and I also make it very clear that it is their responsibility to actually contact me.

Whilst illustrating a high level of support this comment highlights expectations of tutor and learner roles set throughout the module and the value of e-mail in blended learning.
Student support mechanisms appeared most effective when facilitated by e-mail and not by other forms of computer mediated communications (CMCs) such as wikis and discussion boards. Whilst this may be expected given e-mail’s requirement of a personal response there appeared to be other factors influencing learner perceptions. The two tutors receiving the highest CEQ scores, Ann and Claire, both spoke enthusiastically about being available for learners, sending e-mails to check on progress and responding in a timely manner. This support was facilitated by e-mail, which provided immediacy and intimacy, which the two tutors found motivating for learners. Similar feedback was received from other tutors about the value of e-mail in prompting and encouraging learners, however, other communication media were less effective with both tutors and learners influencing this. One tutor established a wiki and two discussion boards for learners to showcase elements of practice and outline plans for assessment. These methods were included to elicit peer support and collaboration in the assessment process and allow peers to validate assignment plans. In each case, contributions were not part of the summative mark received for the module and limited learner engagement was evident. Further, on both discussion boards, George and Harry had not contributed or commented on individual plans or made general comments about submissions that could guide others. Although both tutors commented on learner’s assignment work via e-mail, they were ‘invisible’ in module discussion boards and both received below average CEQ scores.

This section again points to the importance (in the eyes of learners) of a simple structure, focussed around module assessment requirements, supported by active and available student support. Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores were more proactive in
engaging with learners, particularly around formative assessment requirements. Further, this section has raised the issue of tutor visibility to learners which is considered in the next section together with its impact on tutor/learner dialogue.

### 9.5 The Extent and Quality of Tutor/Learner Dialogue

Chapter 3 discussed how tutor ‘availability’ (Shin, 2002: 132) and ‘visibility’ (Sherratt, 2008: 810) are central to fostering a tutor/student dialogue, which, it was argued, is crucial for effective learning in higher education (HE) at a distance (Moore, 1997; Laurillard, 2002). The highest mean CEQ score achieved was on the *Good Teaching Communication* scale (4.12), which includes questions about clear communication, motivational comments to improve work, and tutors making the subject interesting. These areas suggest available and visible tutors who have engaged in dialogue with learners and this section explores this further. Again, tutors receiving higher CEQ scores were found to be more proactive in communicating with learners, appearing available and visible whilst opening opportunities for dialogue. Moore (1997: 22) argues that dialogue refers to more than just interactions between tutors, learners and peers as it should be of value to each party. Judgements about the quality of dialogue were problematic given the limited interaction within the VLE between tutors, learners and peers and, therefore, analysis is restricted to tutor feedback via the interviews.

Availability, visibility and dialogue were evident throughout the modules, again focussed around assessment. As noted in the previous section, five tutors were proactive in contacting learners, appearing available and visible, which acted as a prompt for dialogue. All tutors described responding to feedback on formative assessments in a
timely manner, again, allowing opportunity for dialogue. Further examples include Claire (as highlighted in the pilot study) creating space each week to be available for learners and manage the module’s online elements, with Emily providing web conferences at regular intervals. Ann, George and Daisy forwarded hyperlinks to access additional reading which, again, used e-mail as a means of promoting dialogue, thereby appearing ‘visible’ to learners. Within all modules, however, the extent of dialogue was driven by formative assessments, through learners discussing comments made. All tutors described limited discussions beyond formative assessments, for example, around module content, and, as outlined earlier, there was little dialogue evident in online environments.

Significant influences on the visibility of tutors were communications sent to learners before the first day school. Notably, the four tutors (Ann, Bill, Claire and Emily) who received the highest CEQ scores communicated with learners before the first day school, whereas, nothing was sent from the others. Examples of communications included, a detailed plan of the first day, copies of all materials to be used, and some reading to be discussed at the day school. One tutor, Emily, established a group on a social networking site and provided information about herself and the module with learners contributing images and brief biographies. Each of these measures offered an opportunity for dialogue and appeared to influence learner perceptions of availability and visibility.

The pilot study and the previous chapter (see Chapter 8.6) highlighted the importance of tutors’ previous relationships with learners, with this lowering Transactional Distances
(Moore, 1997). Previous relationships with learners appear to have a strong influence on the availability and visibility of tutors. Tutors receiving the three highest CEQ scores (Ann, Claire and Emily), each had management responsibilities on learners’ courses and two had taught earlier modules. It is reasonable to assume, learners knew these tutors were available, trust had emerged through positive exchanges and this led to a lowering of Transactional Distance.

Tutors with no previous contact with learner groups prior to the module outlined difficulties in getting to know them, with two detailing strategies, particularly at the first day school, to develop a rapport. George and Daisy highlighted the time pressured nature of blended learning as a barrier in developing relationships with learners. This also suggested a greater focus on content delivery at day schools rather than a more facilitative approach. George’s comment illustrated issues that could be preventing a dialogue to foster:

*I think in actual fact where I have struggled with blended learning provision is you have got the same amount of content that you need to do for the module but I have got two full days. I haven’t got enough time so I need to be more adept at communicating and getting them to do things themselves.*

However Frank, Harry and Daisy did discuss activities to get to know students. For example, Frank arranged learners into study groups and asked them to feedback their expectations from the module, these were then discussed with some adaption of content to meet their needs. Harry carried out an exercise to learn names as, he felt, it would encourage learners to get in touch if, “they are not a face, they are a name to me”.
This research argues that assessment strategies drove a good quality dialogue between tutors and some learners during the modules. Formative assessment procedures (plans and drafts) encouraged a dialogue if learners chose, with all tutors indicating a high uptake. This level of interaction, whilst limited to assessment, appears to be sufficient for these adult learners to achieve in blended learning contexts. Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores outlined a greater number of strategies to be 'available' and 'visible' to learners, which offered increased opportunities for dialogue. This was enhanced as these tutors were more proactive in contacting learners who potentially had become disengaged. In addition, tutors previous relationships with learners appeared to influence perceptions of quality.

The analysis continues with consideration of other factors influencing module success for these particular learners.

**9.6 Tutor and Learner VLE Use throughout Modules**

Tutor comments about the VLE were generally negative and it was mainly used as a repository of resources and to signpost further reading. Daisy commented:

> It’s clunky. When you have to do something it takes a while, even uploading stuff. It is not always in a format that is overly attractive, but given that it is what we work with, I try and do what I can with it. I think I could have done more.

With Emily also noting:
... it's easy to criticise, the thing that I really dislike about Blackboard [University VLE] is that you can't include student pictures effectively in it, so it will always feel like an impersonalised tool.

Each module held handouts and hyperlinks to relevant wider reading, with differing levels of structure apparent. These resources acted as a guide and starting point to learner research. As already discussed, tutors used web conferencing, wikis and discussion boards with limited success. Tutors commented that learners found the VLE slow and unattractive with some access problems. This, tutors advised, was generally felt as an excuse from learners to avoid VLE engagement. Emily used a social network at the start of the module to overcome these problems with Daisy and George reporting similar practice but on other courses. Two tutors, Emily and George, felt they had put too many resources on the VLE and it needed simplifying and re-structuring, again, pointing to a more streamlined approach to module delivery.

Positive comments about the VLE were only evident on one module when problems occurred and the repository of resources became useful. Frank's second day school was heavily disrupted by snow with over half of the learners unable to attend and, in the following days, learners accessed handouts from the day school and subsequently explored the additional resources. Upon looking at the VLE usage statistics he commented:

So the online became important and when I looked at the stats there had been a surge in the online materials. The online materials became quite important and the students did say they found it useful having the online delivery there. Also they got back to me with regard to tutorials and to catch up on the work that they'd missed as well. So, that was an issue when online helped.
Claire (see Chapter 7.4), like Frank, used the VLE’s tracking system to monitor learner engagement within the module. Whilst tutors were generally ambivalent to the VLE and its affordances, it did help support the education process when problems arose but did not, in general, appear to be central to students’ learning in the opinion of tutors.

9.7 Tutor Training to Support Teaching in Blended Learner Contexts

The tutors under investigation held teaching qualifications and Masters degrees, with four (Bill, George, Harry and Daisy) having extensive experience of teacher training. However, tutors had limited formal training for teaching in online learning contexts and interview responses focussed on technology-based continuing professional development (CPD) rather than programmes considering pedagogic issues. Ann’s comment was illustrative of all tutors when stating “no, none at all” when asked about formal training that was provided around pedagogical issues for the move to blended learning contexts. However, two tutors (Frank and Harry), had covered e-learning as part of their Masters qualifications. Although tutors discussed pedagogy at length during the interviews, a common response to formal training questions was to list training programmes that pragmatically taught technology use. George's comment was illustrative, “I have been on a few staff development things like the Blackboard [the University VLE], I went on that one. I also went on using your iPad or iPod”. However, all tutors had access to technological and pedagogical support for teaching in blended learning contexts.
The availability of informal\textsuperscript{10} coaches and mentors was a constant theme across tutors and appears important in descriptions of practice within blended learning environments. Three tutors (Emily, George and Harry) positioned themselves as mentors to less experienced staff, regarding both pedagogic and technical issues in blended learning contexts. Further, they adopted coaching roles to a range of staff on technological issues. All tutors described colleagues with whom they could discuss both pedagogical and technological practice. Harry neatly summarised these points when discussing training, mentoring and support:

\textit{I think just because my overall confidence and competence with IT, I tend to be a person that people come to for mentoring and support with IT. I have worked with the IT side of education for the last 14 years, so it is something that even without formal training, it is something I have a reputation for. But certainly I have got tutors from my Masters that I would talk to about various issues to do with technology. There are people from a formal team in teacher training that we do actually sit and talk about these things and support each other - that is on a very informal basis.}

The remaining tutors had colleagues in informal mentoring roles within their organisations, who could support when needed and coach technology issues in a pedagogic context. Claire’s comment was illustrative and demonstrated a culture of support within the organisation:

\textit{When it comes to the online stuff it's just literally been a case of using people around me who have done it before who know more about it, sharing their experiences, asking them for help, asking them to show me and it's really helped particularly in the previous office I was in, I could just ask for help and it was readily available.}

\textsuperscript{10} Informal here indicates coaches or mentors were not assigned by the University but established by tutors.
All tutors commented on a culture of support within their organisations with collaboration and sharing of good practice common.

A further common theme was the availability of technical support with all tutors indicating the technology supporting delivery of modules was robust throughout.

### 9.8 Tutor Practices to Motivate Learners

A number of motivational strategies were outlined by all tutors and these were valuable in developing a picture of effective practice, for these learners, in blended learning contexts. Common to all were motivational practices in face-to-face elements of courses, the use of assessment briefs, and tutors showing the value of modules through contextualisation of learning. Other motivational practices were described by tutors that appeared to enhance practice, but were not evident across all modules.

All tutors outlined motivational strategies in face-to-face elements of modules, the first day school being particularly important. Tutors spoke of their use of day schools to “set the tone” for the module, get them interested and engaged, and try and “win them over” with the aim of these approaches to keep learners motivated between day schools on to summative assessment submission. These actions were most apparent at the first day school with Harry summing up tutors’ opinions:

I think with the first day school, I am trying to get people thinking and excited about a subject and it’s almost more like a stage show for the day schools just to try to break down some barriers and get them thinking “I’ll go and have a play on Blackboard [University VLE], I’ll see if there is anything on there that he has mentioned and what we have just been chatting about”.
At day schools, all tutors most commonly adopted a facilitative approach and engaged learners in a range of student-centred activities (see Section 9.2). This was felt, by all tutors, to be a positive, motivational experience.

A common theme from tutors was to encourage learners to see the value of their study by contextualising their learning by, for example, applying theory to practice (Biggs and Tang, 2007: 32). Further, all tutors drew on learner experience and knowledge at day schools to show the value and relevance of modules, with Ann's comment illustrative:

> One other thing is getting them to realise how the subject matter relates to their everyday practice. That, after all, it is a foundation degree which is related to practice and by doing that and getting them to explore legislation within their own organisation and how it affects them…… but I think motivation isn’t always about fun it can be about how does this affect me and what problems might I have if I am not aware of this.

Bill added to this view when stating "I don’t want to do anything they don’t see value in, and so I think they need to understand, why am I doing this", which highlighted tutors' commitment to ensuring the relevance of taught elements.

VLE analysis revealed all tutors had detailed briefs to guide learners through assessment processes with some tutors using exemplar material. Bill, Emily and George raised modelling good practice with exemplar work and critiquing assignments as motivational strategies. Bill commented “we are looking at what good looks like when we are writing a piece of work".
Tutors outlined a range of other factors used to motivate learners, including tutor support, enthusiasm and empathy, and modelling good practice, however, although it was stressed they improved practice, they were not evident across all the eight modules researched. Tutor support was analysed earlier in this section with some being more proactive in contacting learners and encouraging a dialogue. Three tutors, (Ann, Claire and Frank), e-mailed learners if there had been no contact and outlined this strategy as important in motivating those potentially becoming disengaged. Two tutors, Ann and Daisy, highlighted the enthusiasm they showed towards their teaching with both feeling this positively impacted on learners. To illustrate this Daisy stated, "so you can tell this particular module I am really enthusiastic about and I think probably that shows as well if you are enthusiastic about something", with Ann adding, "I think if I am enthusiastic they are more likely to be" (tutor enthusiasm is discussed further in Chapter 10.7). As outlined in the pilot study, Claire was empathic to adult learners' needs and ensured they knew what was expected of them with regards to assessments.

9.9 Extent and Implications of Learners' Workload

The lowest overall CEQ scale score was Appropriate Workload (mean = 3.38) which explores the amount of work learners have to undertake, the time they are given to understand module concepts, and the pressure exerted to do well. However, this scale item positively correlated with a number of MSCEIT branches (Perceiving, Understanding and Managing) and tasks (Faces, Facilitation, Changes and Emotional Management) (see Chapter 8.4), potentially indicating important abilities when managing learner workloads. This issue is important to consider as Gibbs (1992: 9) argued heavy student workloads encouraged Surface approaches to study. Whilst the
Appropriate Workload score was still good and the learners under investigation generally adopted Deep approaches to study (see Chapter 8.2), tutors felt assessment requirements were demanding.

Ann’s comment was illustrative of tutor feelings about workload, which were rooted in understanding of learners’ circumstances, when stating:

There is always a problem with students, I know from personal experience. As it happens they were all women, all with families and most with full-time jobs, some with new babies and they are juggling twenty things at once.

This awareness of learner circumstances exhibited empathy and understanding of adult learner needs, two important factors in successful tutoring in this context. These are considered further in the next chapter.

Some patterns were noticeable when analysing the Appropriate Workload CEQ scores and tutor responses to questions in this area. Claire, who received the highest CEQ score, made amendments to submission dates to ease learner workload around Christmas. Emily, also receiving a high CEQ score, amended the module assessment strategy as learners "found doing the work within the word counts hard". There were differing factors influencing learner workloads on modules receiving lower scores on the scale item. George had not responded to previous feedback about assessment on the module and was aware of the need for change. It was difficult to understand why as the tutor was experienced and appeared confident, but there appeared to be limited self-
efficacy around module management. Daisy had different assessment elements due close together and the deadlines had not been sufficiently spread. She outlined:

There were only about three weeks between days and then they had their presentations a month later and then they had a week after that to get their final paper in.

This workload appears demanding for learners in full-time employment with competing pressures.

9.10 Other Issues Affecting the Success of Modules

Two themes were noticeable when analysing other issues that appeared to influence the CEQ scores received by tutors. Firstly, Frank’s module highlighted the resilience of learners when difficulties occur. The module had a disrupted start to the first day school when thirty learners arrived when only fifteen was expected. In addition, six learners were missed from an e-mail distribution list and were not informed of a date change to the first day school, and did not attend. Further, the second day school was disrupted by heavy snow with over half of learners unable to attend. Even with such considerable external influence, the module was successful with achievement and feedback on a module satisfaction survey being similar to previous years. The overall CEQ result (3.43) also indicated general satisfaction for the module. The tutor made additional support available through tutorials, both face-to-face and at a distance. However, the learners found different strategies to complete assignment work by drawing on the VLE resources and assessment guides more heavily. Chapter 8 highlighted learners’ influence on this research when stating each significant correlation was found to be
insignificant when effects of learners’ approaches to study were held constant. Learners’ influence on module success is further considered in Chapter 13.

The second theme to emerge was, rather unsurprisingly, that more problems arose for tutors receiving lower scores on the CEQ. Harry had issues that arose from having learners with differing information technology (IT) skills. For George, these included difficulties of managing learner expectations (as they had received high marks on previous modules), and negative student feedback as part of the assessment only required a discussion of theory. As outlined in Section 9.9, George had not amended the module from previous learner feedback. This suggests a lack of tutor self-efficacy, which is considered in greater depth in the next chapter.

9.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter has analysed a broad range of factors influencing module success. From this analysis, a picture of effective practice in blended tutoring is developing for mature learners, studying PT, vocationally relevant degrees. Further, practices have been identified that appear associated with generally successful modules in this context and those influencing learner perceptions of quality, indicating effective practice.

The nature of teaching, learning and assessment appears to be congruent with the Individual Constructivist Perspective, with evidence that this was an appropriate module approach in this context. A facilitative approach to teaching and student-centred learning were common, including problem-based assessments, linked to practice with learner autonomy over the area of study, all aligned with the Individual Constructivist
Perspective. This was enhanced by a strong commitment to learner support structured around the assessment processes, which made tutors 'visible' and 'available', thereby encouraging dialogue. Extensive formative assessment was integral to this process and tutors were committed to support and timely feedback. This overall approach, with timely feedback, appears to be the minimum required for successful learning experiences in this context.

All tutors described motivational strategies in face-to-face environments enhanced by a range of teaching styles to vary learner activities. Tutors related theory to practice and showed learners the value of topics being covered. Clear goals and standards were evident in assessment briefs and, for some tutors, through use of exemplar materials.

Other common factors associated with the apparent module success included tutors having colleagues to collaborate in the areas of educational technologies and pedagogy or available mentors and coaches if needed. The educational technology used on modules was robust and did not adversely affect the quality of the learning experience. Further, each tutor felt adequately supported by technical help if needed.

Qualitative data analysis in relation to tutor's CEQ scores raised some interesting findings around learner perceptions of quality. A simple module structure, focussed around assessment requirements and facilitated by e-mail, was associated with higher tutor CEQ scores. These tutors were more proactive in engaging with learners, particularly around formative assessment requirements. Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores discussed a greater number of proactive strategies to be 'available' and 'visible'
to learners which offered increased opportunities for dialogue. They were more likely to have taught the learners before or held a management role on the course and communicated before the first day school, encouraging a dialogue right at the start. Further, greater consideration of learner’s workload was apparent with empathy evident, as their circumstances were taken into consideration throughout modules. The prevalence and importance of e-mail in this model of delivery was noted, as it enhanced assessment and learner support, whilst being an important motivating tool beyond day schools.

Tutors receiving lower CEQ scores experienced more module problems, particularly around assessment. Particular issues included, close deadlines, being unresponsive to feedback, and having a number of online activities outside day schools with limited learner participation, and in two cases, tutor contributions.

Further themes of note that emerged from the qualitative analysis in this chapter included social constructivist pedagogy, VLE use, and learner resilience. Prominent discourses in online learning (Laurillard, 2002; Salmon, 2002) advocate social constructivist pedagogy and this was limited in formal module structures beyond day schools. Peer collaboration was evident within face-to-face contexts but only a tutor/learner dialogue was apparent in computer mediated environments. That is not to say valuable peer dialogue is not occurring given the rise of online social networking, but not within sight of tutors. Following on from this point, VLEs are being used as a repository of resources and to provide signposts to further reading, therefore, supporting the educational process but not student learning. Arguably, the VLE’s value was
apparent when learners could not attend day schools which demonstrated learner resilience when problems arose. A crucial finding of Chapter 8 was the influence of learners' characteristics undertaking the modules. When correlations were controlled for the influence of learners' approaches to study, no significant relationships were found. Frank's module was heavily disrupted, however, the module appeared successful with good achievement and feedback on a module satisfaction survey being similar to previous years.

This chapter has discussed a range of issues, such as the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment, which emerged primarily from the review of analytical codes. Evidence has been provided regarding the hypothesis, which is analysed further in Chapters 11 and 12. From the analysis of tutor interview data and the parallel coding utilised, themes emerged around tutor's perceptions, reflections and self-efficacy, that influenced module practices and learner perceptions of quality. The next chapter considers these themes.
Chapter 10  The Impact of Tutor Perceptions and Reflections on Practices

10.1 Chapter Introduction

The previous chapter discussed a range of issues emerging primarily from the review of analytical codes and this chapter develops these to consider themes generally emerging from the parallel coding (King, 2004b). Throughout the data analysis process influential themes arose around tutors’ perceptions and reflections of themselves, their teaching practices, and the modules under investigation. This chapter argues that such perceptions and reflections provide a valuable insight into the actions and motivations of tutors and help understand the differing scores received on learner questionnaires, and particularly, the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ). Tutor reflections in particular provided a holistic view of modules and practices, and allowed some synthesis of findings. Throughout the data analysis, tutor self-efficacy emerged as a theme and is considered in relation to key findings and learner perceptions. This research study presents a Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices which includes relevant tutor skills, qualities and competences. This chapter synthesises emerging themes, including those raised in the previous chapter, influencing learner perceptions of quality that ultimately contribute to the Model's development.

Template analysis (King, 2004b) affords the exploration of broad themes but allowed amendments if new factors were emerging from the data and, with parallel coding, allowed opportunity to consider tutor perceptions and reflections. Data analysis revealed that tutor perceptions and reflections were influencing practice with interview
transcripts being revisited to explore these broad themes. The following bullet points outline key section headings within the Chapter and represent a selective approach (King, 2004b) adopted to identify themes that were most relevant due to their influence on learner perceptions. The headings outline the chapter structure and are:

- Tutor Perceptions of Adult Learners;
- Tutor Perceptions of Blended and Online Learning;
- Tutors Perceptions of Educational Technologies;
- Tutor Perceptions of their Workload and its Impact on Practice;
- Tutor Reflections on Practice;
- Tutor Self Efficacy and Motivation.

10.2 Perceptions of Adult Learners

In this section, tutor perceptions of their learners are explored including their influence on practices within modules (developing the analysis in Chapter 9.9 - The Extent and Implications of Learner Workload). A number of similarities are discussed that appear to be associated with the general module success apparent on modules (see Chapters 8.2 and 8.3). However, there were notable differences during interview analysis with those tutors receiving higher CEQ scores outlining more specific strategies to meet the needs of adults with competing pressures.

Although there was support if needed (see Chapter 9.4), commonly tutors perceived their learners as disciplined and trusted them to study. Frank summarised tutors' perceptions of the disciplined nature of learners when stating:
...but something about them and their discipline about working on their own, and being able to do that, which has greatly helped this type of delivery be possible.

Harry’s statement also indicated available tutor support if needed, but a general trust in learners and their disciplined approaches to study:

So there are students that if they want the constant attention, they can get it. If they don’t want it, they don’t get it. I think, and hope, they are all mature enough to respond to that in the way that suits their learning needs best.

This finding resonates with the view of Knowles et al.’s (2011) that adults’ most potent motivators are intrinsic, and this is considered further in Chapter 13. In addition to perceiving learners as disciplined and motivated, tutors were aware of their competing demands. This could indicate a particular social construct of the ‘adult learner’ within the particular culture of the School in which the modules were based. Chapter 1.3 presented the local and national context in which this study was undertaken and discussed learners who had competing pressures of work and family life. Each of the tutors had studied whilst working, commonly Masters degrees, and this could have influenced their perceptions of the ‘adult learner’.

As outlined in Chapter 9.9, a common perception amongst all tutors was that learners were time pressured, with other competing demands, and a number of actions were taken in response, frequently demonstrating empathy. Timely management of assessment was most apparent with six tutors (excluding Daisy and George) describing measures taken to spread the burden of assessment across modules. This was
achieved through careful structuring of formative and summative deadlines, commonly around day schools (see Chapter 9.3). Further, tutors outlined their availability to support learners, particularly with regard to formative feedback, whilst being mindful of their competing external pressures. The following statements were illustrative:

...ultimately they are busy people with demanding workloads so hassling them doesn't feel quite right. So, I talk to the ones at day school who haven't submitted. (Emily).

I won't mither you. If I don't hear from you I'll ask how you are and might follow up with a phone call rather than an email sometimes. Because I know myself about the volume of email people receive. (Bill).

These statements indicate a commitment to support, whilst empathising with learners' demanding circumstances as professionals. Frank was similarly mindful and empathic of learners' needs and difficulties when stating "they're fitting it in with full-time job, full-time family commitments, and studying for what is, I suppose, a fairly intensive course as well".

Tutors receiving the higher CEQ scores gave learners space to learn by not including too many activities that may distract from individual constructivist pedagogy. These spaces for learning occurred at day schools, with time for reflection and action planning, but were more evident between day schools where learners could focus on assignment work. Bill justified this approach when stating "I want to be careful about how much I demand of them outside the class", with Ann and Claire clearly describing assessment driven approaches enhanced with proactive learner support (see Chapter 9.5).
Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores also outlined strategies to manage adults' needs or develop autonomous learners. Claire spoke of adjustments made to manage holiday periods where childcare issues could be apparent, whereas Emily was mindful of supporting learners whose objective was the achievement of the qualification and not to engage in a broader educational experience. This demonstrated empathy for learners' circumstances with Emily stating:

Well I suppose you know what you aim for is a positive regard for them as people, they are paying for these courses. They are putting themselves through a learning process that is personally, economically and professionally a challenge ... you want to convey to them the regard for them doing the course and the challenge of that ... ultimately some in the group just want the qualification and you've got to be mindful ... they are not there to make friends. They want the qualification.

Ann and Bill made a number of comments about encouraging autonomous learners whilst appreciating the importance of support for this to be achieved. Bill argued:

They have got to find their own way through the piece of work they have chosen to do and if I am saying I need you to be online for a synchronous group discussion on a particular day; I wonder what impact that has on their other progress?

Ann similarly stated:

...they shouldn't assume they can go to Blackboard [the University VLE] and everything they need will be there, ... because one of the key things about this is that the students need to be developed as autonomous learners.
She then went on to outline her feelings towards supporting learners when stating "adults need as much TLC [tender loving care] as the youngsters".

There was a point of note from George, who received one of the lower CEQ scores. He made no reference to the issues of adult learners throughout the interview with the only reference to encouraging learners to “leave work at the door” during day schools.

A common perception of tutors was that learners were disciplined and they trusted them to study whilst providing support with formative assessments. Further, a number of examples of empathic tutoring were demonstrated with these factors appearing associated with the general success of modules. Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores described creating more space for learning, particularly outside day schools, and discussed more specific strategies for meeting adult learner needs.

10.3 Perceptions of Blended and Online Learning

In this section, tutor perceptions of online and blended learning are explored with analysis of impact on module delivery. The pilot study (see Chapter 7.4) noted that Claire potentially had a pre-judged preference for day school delivery models rather than purely online contexts. Further, the analysis of tutors’ training revealed online pedagogy was not included and that it was limited to courses that pragmatically taught technology use (see Chapter 9.7). This allowed tutors to develop their own practices within blended learning contexts and this section provides evidence to indicate that their pedagogic beliefs and previous experiences of online learning were influencing the adopted approaches.
All tutors’ perceptions of purely online learning were negative and this was mainly rooted in previous negative learning experiences in this context. Each tutor had some experience as a student in a purely online or distance context. Most found the experience isolating and talked about feelings of disorientation. When studying, tutors outlined limited engagement with peers in online environments with reasons given including time, superficial discussions, contributions a “tick-box exercise”, and a lack of trust that would have developed in face-to-face meetings. Further, tutors found the online elements impersonal and lacking human contact. The implications of these perceptions on practice are considered throughout this section. However, it is interesting to note overlaps of these perceptions and tutor thoughts about limited peer collaboration within online elements of their modules.

Tutors described three broad reasons for the lack of engagement and peer collaboration within online environments, namely negative student experiences on previous modules; VLE access and user issues; and time for tutors to develop and manage online activities. Ann and George noted difficulties in encouraging engagement when this had not been required or encouraged in previous modules and reported learners’ feelings of frustration at the prescribed nature of collaboration. They stated:

*This is the last module of a three year programme, and they hadn’t engaged particularly well with discussions online and I don’t think that would have been a time to start with that. The results seem to speak for themselves which was interesting. When asked about the Blackboard [University VLE] element a lot of them said they didn’t like it, they were not comfortable with online. (Ann).*
...there is probably less blended learning goes on there for a number of reasons, some of which are down to me. But, a lot is down to the students on that because I have tried to, they seem very frustrated with the blended element of it. Like it is prescribed, you must comment on this on Blackboard, which I realise is worthwhile but it seems to frustrate them a little bit. (George).

Learners informed Emily and Harry that the VLE was “clunky”, slow and impersonal and that there were access issues. The access issues were often found to be user error when investigated with Harry noting “it’s just they haven’t got that confidence to give it a whirl or they’re looking in the wrong module”, but this point did overlap with the third issue of time, which was a concern for three tutors. The day school model was felt to be pressured with Harry feeling there was limited time to orientate learners around the VLE content and tools. He felt some learners had not developed effective use of the VLE in course inductions. This was a barrier to learning and a particular problem as his learners were still in the first year of study within HE. Further, Daisy and George, who received lower CEQ scores, felt they did not have sufficient time to effectively set up and manage pedagogically appropriate opportunities for online engagement and collaboration. Daisy commented:

_Ideally it would be great to start from the beginning knowing that you are developing something that is a blended learning programme rather than making it fit ... So there were a lot of those in-between activities I would like to do better._

_I think I could have done more. I have tried over the year, bits with different groups and now because I think it is a time issue as well, I don’t have time to change everything and also with having a few new modules to teach this year._
To review tutor perceptions of online learning further, their responses to questioning about the extent of engagement and collaboration provided insights. When tutors were questioned about strategies to motivate, support learning, build and maintain relationships, and encourage pedagogically appropriate learner collaboration in online environments, the most common response was to avoid the question. Tutors were generally confident in their approaches to teaching the modules. However, they provided limited responses about online pedagogy. There was no discernible pattern to answers in relation to learner feedback with those receiving higher CEQ scores giving limited responses and even resorting to saying “be available”, “point them in the right direction”, and “monitor online activities”. Generally tutors avoided the question by outlining their practice in face-to-face environments which was revealing of their confidence in purely online contexts. Tutors shifted the discussion to areas where they were comfortable, predominantly face-to-face teaching and learner support, as these appear closer to their pedagogic beliefs about effective practice. Issues of tutor efficacy are explored later (see Section 10.7 which further considers this finding), however, tutor perceptions were more positive towards the affordances of blended learning.

Although tutors were sceptical of blended learning and the day school model of delivery, they were generally more appreciative of the affordances offered, particularly for the type of learner investigated within this research study. Emily commented that “face-to-face trumps everything” and this summed up the sentiment of a group of lecturers more accustomed to traditional approaches to teaching. Daisy’s comment was also illustrative of tutor descriptions of practice:
We tended on the day schools to talk and discover, sort of deconstruct sometimes, concepts and issues that are good for discussion.

She continued to note the difficulties of peers discussing sensitive issues in online environments during her Equality and Diversity module, preferring these to occur at day schools. Tutors considered day schools offered increased opportunities which included richer social constructivist approaches, instruction and clarification of assessment requirements, motivational opportunities, and the development and maintenance of relationships. Bill and Ann also spoke about the time day school models provide, particularly for learner reflection. Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores were noticeably more positive about blended learning and the day school model of delivery, particularly focusing on the affordances of face-to-face elements and suitability for this type of learner. Comments included:

But what I noticed was this, that many of my students were seeing me every week and what I was doing was filling their time with my knowledge and what it seemed to me was, if they were busy part-time students, what they needed to happen is to free up to give them back some time and some choice about how they use that time. ... It seemed to me that a Saturday day school model was much better. (Bill).

You want them to feel like they want to participate by being positively motivated by the course and I think the day schools are quite critical in raising motivation. They do feel motivated particularly at the day schools. (Emily).

Tutors receiving lower CEQ scores made more negative comments particularly around the time available for face-to-face contact which indicated a greater sense of frustration towards this teaching model. Four tutors expressed concern about time, with Frank
commenting that this form of teaching allowed “delivery of the basics in the time available”, and this summed up perceptions. Frank developed this point:

So, for example, 10 years ago the delivery pattern was weekly, in class sessions over an academic year. 24 weeks of 2 hour classes in the evening. That got knocked back … and now it’s just two Saturdays.

An influencing factor here was that Frank and Daisy’s modules had previously been taught weekly and they felt this restricted their ability to deliver the module in the time allowed. Arguably, such feelings of frustration are likely to influence learners’ perceptions of the module if tutors are making reference, albeit subtly, to the time available for delivery. Other negative comments from these tutors centred on the limited time to form relationships and for group discussion. Again it was apparent that these feelings could be transmitted to learners, however, it was also possible that tutor perceptions could have a positive impact and underpin good practice within modules.

Four tutors’ perceptions of blended learning and the day school model of delivery appeared to influence key decisions taken in the operation of modules, and they received the higher CEQ scores. Two tutors, Ann and Claire, both had negative experiences whilst studying at a distance, particularly regarding the amount of support they received and the opportunities for dialogue with lecturers. Both, however, described being autonomous learners with Ann giving a number of examples, including:

The MA was just the three Saturdays and it all seemed to be different people. I did have one particular module on the MA which was the ICT module which I couldn’t attend and I just got on with the stuff and did it. Basically I did it on my own.
Both Ann and Claire’s modules were developed to focus around assessment, with tutors being proactive in promoting dialogue and being available for support. Emily felt face-to-face contact was the key element to successful blended learning and therefore developed activities that were carried out in online environments but initiated and concluded at day schools. She stated:

*I think the example of group work that happens between the day schools is quite effective - the selectivity online takes place following group discussions at day schools. Work is presented at the next day school.*

Further, synchronous web conferencing sessions were used to replicate, as far as possible, face-to-face delivery. Bill perceived the day school model of delivery as an opportunity to allow learners space to think; he comments, *“it gives them some time back”*. This space, he felt, was important for reflection and applying learning to work contexts and problems. To facilitate this, time was given at day schools for reflection and questioning with a focus on assignment work outside face-to-face sessions.

This section provides evidence that tutor influences on approaches to modules are shaped typically by previous experiences of online and blended learning. All tutors avoided online learning to a large extent and adopted practices with which they were more comfortable, namely face-to-face delivery, enhanced by learner support outside day schools. Arguably, tutors are not developing their pedagogy for online contexts and are transferring face-to-face practices to blended learning. Tutors’ pedagogical beliefs about effective teaching and learning appear to influence how this is operationalised. These influences included a focus on face-to-face delivery, learner support, space for
reflection, and social constructivist pedagogy. Differing responses were evident regarding online and blended learning and there were noticeable trends with CEQ feedback. Tutors receiving lower CEQ scores provided more examples of what could be characterised as a ‘blame’ response predominantly around time affordances but also about limited opportunities for social constructivist pedagogy (see Section 10.7 for further discussion). Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores outlined opportunities afforded by the delivery model including learner support, synchronous web conferencing to replicate face-to-face contact, and increased space for reflection and learning.

10.4 Tutors’ Perceptions of Educational Technologies

Analysis of tutor perceptions of educational technology firstly considered positive and negative comments around their impact on module delivery. It then continued to analyse perceptions of educational technology in relation to tutors’ overall approach to module delivery. Quantitative analysis (see Chapter 8.6) revealed a significant negative relationship between a tutor’s general technical ability and learner perceptions of quality as measured by the CEQ and the Online Tutoring Questionnaire (OTQ). However, all tutors reported confidence in the educational technologies that they used to support their module delivery.

All tutors were positive in their perceptions of educational technologies and expressed enthusiasm for their potential to enhance practice. Each tutor outlined a number of educational technologies utilised in their broader practice and competence and enthusiasm for their use appears important for success in this context. Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores were more purposeful in statements about the role of individual
technologies with Claire stating “online elements are all for nurturing” and Bill, “the wiki is used to validate work” being relevant examples. Statements such as these were helpful in aligning perceptions of technology to practice within modules.

Tutors’ perceptions and enthusiasm for educational technologies generally mirrored their approach, or preferred approach, to module delivery. Tutors (Ann, Claire and Frank), outlining a strong commitment to learner support, commented on the personal nature of e-mail and the care needed in construction. Tutors, who discussed a greater number of examples of social constructivist pedagogy (Bill, Daisy, and George) within their practices, were utilising or exploring the use of wikis, discussion boards and social networking software in the modules under investigation or in their broader practice. These findings highlight that perceptions and choice of educational technologies commonly mirror tutors’ adopted approaches to module delivery and their pedagogical beliefs.

10.5 Tutor Perceptions of their Workload and its Impact on Practice

Quantitative analysis (see Chapter 8.6) revealed tutors’ perception of a manageable workload positively correlated with CEQ scores. It was apparent that tutor workload was influencing learner perceptions of modules, however, all stated that any workload issues did not affect the overall learner experience. Further, tutors advised that they were happy with response times to queries and the return of formative and summative feedback. These factors appear relevant to the general module success given the high scores received via learner questionnaires and, in particular, the CEQ scale items Good Teaching Feedback and Good Teaching Communication (see Chapter 8.3).
Analysis of perceptions of workload and tutor’s CEQ scores revealed some patterns, but also some anomalies. Ann and Claire, receiving higher CEQ scores, made less reference to workload issues and outlined clearer approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. They described availability and active support, however, as this was most evident through e-mail and not the VLE, it was difficult to validate. Emily, who received one of the higher CEQ scores, did outline a number of workload issues including such comments as “feedback is so time consuming” and “Twitter saps energy”, but was adamant that she was available and response times were good. Further, comments were made about improvements to the module that could be made given enough time, nevertheless, she felt “it worked so there was no urgency”. This issue of improvements was raised by Daisy, Frank and George who, again, cited time and general module success as reasons for not initiating change. This highlights learners’ influence on module success as, although tutors are raising problems with practices, achievement appears to be unaffected (see Chapter 13 for further discussion). Tutors receiving the lower CEQ scores expressed greater frustrations with workload issues and identified more possible module improvements, time permitting. To illustrate, Harry found teaching both traditional face-to-face and blended learning courses concurrently to be problematic, and stated, “I have found it really difficult to balance both approaches at the same time”. George found formative feedback difficult:

*I always do it via comments and I always send it back. It is very time consuming to do that, so it is time consuming for sure, and it can impact on what you are doing.*
Frank cited time as the reason for not integrating an online social networking website into his module, which he felt would improve peer collaboration. He stated:

*I thought about setting up a Ning [a social networking website] and then I thought about the time it would take to set one up, maintain it and contribute to it.*

This research only considered tutor and learner perceptions, and did not compare the impact of actual workloads on practice, therefore, comments, outlined above, could be justified. Daisy, for example, worked part-time which could explain the relatively high number of comments made about workload. However, tutors’ feelings and frustrations around workload could potentially be influencing learner perceptions of module quality as indicated by the positive correlation with CEQ scores (see Chapter 8.6). If learners feel their tutor is busy, they may be discouraged from engaging in a dialogue. Consequently, tutor perceptions of workload appear a relevant consideration when exploring qualities for effective blended tutoring.

Analysis of tutor perceptions informed better understanding of the decisions and actions tutors undertook. To research the qualities and practices of tutors further, their reflective comments were examined.

### 10.6 Tutor Reflections on Practice

The previous chapter and the analysis of tutor perceptions above highlighted a number of individual factors that appear to have influenced learner perceptions as indicated by CEQ scores. This chapter now considers the reflective comments made by tutors throughout interviews around their practices, both generally, and on the modules
themselves. This allowed a more holistic view of approaches to modules and issues influencing outcomes.

Ann and Claire, who received the highest CEQ scores, were forthright and confident in their approach to the module with reflections focusing on the lack of support they had received when studying at a distance. In addition, both had considerable pastoral care experience in previous roles at colleges of further education (FE). Their reflections had resulted in an approach that was clear, structured, pragmatic, and student-centred with a strong emphasis on available support. Both outlined difficulties they had found whilst studying at a distance and their respective actions help understand their approach to module delivery. Claire, the pilot case, encouraged peer collaboration at day schools and in online environments and proactively supported learners. The second tutor, Ann, said that her solution to a lack of support was to “just get on with it”, a phrase used four times within the interview. She had worked largely in isolation as a student and used any available information to guide her through the course. Reflecting on this experience led her to include extensive support for assessment and be available to learners. The “just get on with it” approach was evident when describing the nature of support as it was focussed on developing autonomous learners with clear goals and standards.

When tutors were asked to consider improvements to practice during the modules two responses emerged, one surprising. Firstly, which has already been discussed, Emily and George felt there was too much content on the VLE which needed simplifying and given greater structure. Secondly, Ann, Bill and Harry felt they should be engaging learners more in online environments and encouraging greater dialogue and peer
collaboration. Ann described “guilt” as she felt there was not enough online pedagogy, which was surprising given the confidence demonstrated in her approach to module delivery. She had acknowledged the success of learners, was pleased with the quality of work received, and happy with module feedback. Ann’s view illustrated the challenge to tutors’ pedagogical beliefs provided by the day school model for those more accustomed to face-to-face delivery. The desire for greater online social constructivist pedagogy was even more surprising given the negative comments already outlined by tutors when they undertook online learning as students. These tutors appeared to feel guilt over the lack of social constructivist learning even though modules were generally successful and they had not engaged in such activities when studying either purely online or at a distance.

Three tutors’ reflections (Bill, Daisy and George) were focussed extensively on pedagogy but were potentially instructive regarding the differing CEQ scores received. Interestingly, the tutors were all from a teacher training background and each showed great concern for learning within a blended delivery model. Comments about the shift to blended learning included:

*When the decision was made for the BA to go onto a blended learning model, I was less driven to get all the stuff in place because I was still thinking what are the key principles and what do I want the students to have. I always start off with the pedagogy - what do I want to do and how can the technology enable me to do that.* (Bill)

*I suppose my ideas, because I was going into something I actually didn’t know very much about, I wanted to have some idea of how it’s going to work pedagogically.* (Daisy)
Because they are asking me to do it on the BA, blended learning, but it’s not blended learning, it really isn’t. You chuck them a bit of stuff before, they read it, sometimes they do some very intensive taught sessions and then that’s it and I want to be more adept in it myself. (George).

Bill, who received one of the higher CEQ scores, was more positive about pedagogy in this context and felt, as discussed in Section 9.3, that it afforded learners more time for reflection and understanding. Daisy and George, who received lower CEQ scores, reflected on a greater number of difficulties of teaching and learning in this context and noted improvements they would like to make. Daisy was the least experienced tutor under investigation and still adjusting her practice from face-to-face to blended learning contexts. Also, this was the first iteration of the module being taught on a day school basis and she reflected on the difficulties, particularly around time, of adjusting to a new delivery model. She commented:

I think the tensions are with the time and part of it is building your own knowledge as well and at the moment, I am at a level where there are a lot of new things to discover so it’s not like I know a lot already.

However, George had taught the module four times and had not made improvements that he felt were needed. He commented “it lends itself to a different assessment to be honest” and whilst workload was cited as the key reason behind this, there appeared to be self-efficacy issues, particularly around module management. Further comments suggested this, including “which maybe, in hindsight, would work better” and “some of that could be the way I am selling it”, when discussing improvements to practice.
Emily’s and Harry’s reflections centred on issues of workload and managing competing pressures of effective pedagogy and learner support in blended learning contexts with other demands placed on their time. The two tutors received differing CEQ scores with their levels of support probably significant. Whilst Emily, the tutor receiving the highest score, talked of the difficulties of competing pressures she was adamant that response times were quick, feedback was prompt, and was active in supporting learners between day schools. Harry, who received a lower score, was also adamant that workload issues did not impact on the student experience. However, he gave no examples of proactive support. This comment illustrates Harry’s reflections:

*I think the nature of these courses is people come in for the two days of each module and if they want to disappear for a month and just get on with their work, they can.*

His comment illustrates his trust in learners and hints that support is available if needed, but indicates a potential lack of proactive support.

The analysis of tutor perceptions and reflections has unearthed issues about tutor self-efficacy, both in face-to-face and blended learning contexts which are now considered in more depth.

**10.7 Tutor Self Efficacy and Motivation**

According to Bandura (1995: 2), self-efficacy is “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations”. Further, self-efficacy in tutors can improve performance as Bandura (1982: 196) continues, “strong self-efficaciousness intensifies and sustains the effort needed for
optimal performance, which is difficult to achieve if one is plagued by self-doubts”. From the analysis in previous sections it emerged that tutors had self-efficacy in the face-to-face elements of delivery but not the online elements. To aid a tutor’s success in delivering a module both self-efficacy and motivation appear important and, as a result, both were explored.

A common theme across tutors was the positive comments and enthusiasm shown about teaching in face-to-face contexts, indicating self-efficacy and, therefore, potentially a factor in the success of the modules. A flavour of the comments include:

- I think my teaching style is quite an enjoyable one. I enjoy it! (Ann);
- They do feel motivated, particularly at the day schools (Emily);
- You get them in a good mood and they’re excited to be there (Harry);
- I think I am lucky in the sense that when I get into the classroom all my other woes disappear for that short time, because first and foremost I see myself as a teacher and it’s what I enjoy doing. I enjoy being in the classroom (George).

The tutors were enthusiastic and believed in their capabilities at day schools to teach and motivate learners to succeed. With the majority of teaching occurring at day schools, tutors’ self-efficacy in this context appears an important aspect in the high CEQ scores received.

Tutors’ self-efficacy in online environments was generally limited, resulting in differing actions. Ann, Claire and Frank were confident in their answers that CMCs were used
for support, and not teaching and learning. Three tutors used either wikis or discussion boards with mixed success, and comments mirrored this when analysed for self-efficacy. George’s comment was illustrative (cited in Section 10.3), “there is probably less blended learning going on there for a number of reasons, some of which are down to me”. Daisy, however, made the most negative comments regarding her approach to the module which indicated limited self-efficacy. Daisy, who received the lowest CEQ score and is the least experienced tutor, showed limited self-efficacy with regard to both online and blended learning approaches. An early comment in the interview set the tone, “it might be more in terms of what I intended to do rather what I actually do”. Although she used an instructive approach to teaching key equality and diversity legislation (see Chapter 9.2), subsequent examples of teaching practice discussed were social constructivist in orientation, such as, “working in groups and bringing back the information together” (see Sections 10.3 and 10.6 for further examples). She found adjusting the module to blended learning difficult, in particular, with regard to the time for delivery and it was clear the approach did not align with her apparent social constructivist pedagogical beliefs. “I know that’s the way it has to be done so I have to make it work”, was a comment that illustrated tensions the approach was causing. This was further compounded with a number of negative comments about delivery in between day schools, which included “so there were a lot of those in-between activities that I would like to do better” (cited in Section 10.3). Daisy was confident in face-to-face contexts, however her limited self-efficacy in online contexts, and with blended learning approaches in general, could have had a negative influence on learner perceptions of quality during the module.
Harry provided an interesting perspective by showing high self-efficacy in all contexts, whilst receiving the second lowest CEQ score. He spoke confidently about supporting and coaching other tutors with regard to technology and pedagogy in online contexts. Bandura (1982: 196) argues that those who perceive themselves as highly self-efficacious feel they need to invest little effort in the achievement of outcomes. This could have been responsible, as he was not proactive in supporting learners and did not contribute to discussion boards.

All tutors were motivated to deliver successful modules and this was demonstrated through comments outlining the satisfaction of a number of needs, including self-esteem (Maslow, 1968). Social needs were satisfied as each tutor outlined a number of colleagues in supporting roles around them who they could collaborate with about pedagogy and technology. Self-esteem needs were more apparent as tutors outlined their determination to support learners, particularly with regard to timely feedback to queries and formative assessment. Harry summed up the general sentiment of tutors when detailing support even with a demanding workload:

…it didn’t have an impact on the student experience because I didn’t let it … you give them more formative support than a student you see every week.

The comments illustrate determination to support learners and demonstrate self-esteem.
10.8 Concluding Thoughts

This chapter highlighted the influence of tutor perceptions and reflections on practice. Factors associated with general module success have been identified, however, there are observable trends in the data in relation to tutor’s CEQ scores, with these influencing learner perceptions of quality. Factors associated with general success and good practice, and those influencing learner perceptions are summarised below and develop a picture of effective tutoring and tutors in this context.

Tutors commonly perceived learners as time-pressured and disciplined, and trusted them to study whilst providing support with formative assessments. They were mindful of learners’ competing pressures of work and other commitments with this potentially indicating a particular social construct of the ‘adult learner’ within the culture of the School. A number of examples of empathic tutoring and understanding of adult learner needs were demonstrated, with these factors appearing associated with general module success. Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores described creating more space for learning, particularly outside day schools, and discussed more specific strategies for meeting adult learner needs. These included managing workload around holiday periods, supporting instrumental approaches to modules, and developing autonomous learners.

All tutors had negative experiences of online learning when studying and these perceptions appeared to influence practice on modules and were helpful in understanding adopted approaches. Tutors adopted alternative approaches other than online pedagogy that aligned with pedagogical beliefs, namely face-to-face delivery.
enhanced with learner support. Interestingly, although tutors were generally confident in their approach to modules, a lack of online learning was perceived as bad practice by some, again aligning with adopted pedagogical approaches including elements of social constructivist learning.

Tutor perceptions of blended learning aligned with their perceptions of adult learners in that it created space for learning whilst enabling the balancing of learners’ work and family commitments. There were noticeable trends from learners’ CEQ feedback as tutors’ perceptions revealed interesting responses to delivery in blended learning contexts. Tutors receiving lower CEQ scores, on the whole, adopted a ‘blame’ response predominantly around time affordances but also about limited opportunities for social constructivist pedagogy. Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores outlined greater opportunities afforded by the delivery model, including, learner support, synchronous web conferencing to replicate face-to-face contact, and increased space for reflection and learning. This strongly suggests that tutors who perceive blended learning as an opportunity to enhance practice and meet adult learner needs, are considered more effective by their students.

The tutors’ use of educational technology appears associated with adopted approaches to module delivery and their pedagogical beliefs. Tutors favouring e-mail demonstrated a strong commitment to learner support, with wikis and discussion boards adopted by those who appeared to prefer a greater use of social constructivist pedagogies. All tutors were enthusiastic about educational technologies and outlined competent practice in their use. Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores were more specific about the
pedagogical affordances of particular technologies, wikis for peer validation of work, being a relevant example from the research. This suggests the choice of educational technologies should align with the overall module approach and be appropriate for adult learners with competing external pressures.

The previous chapter suggested teaching, learning and assessment aligning with the *Individual Constructivist Perspective* was an appropriate module approach in this context. A facilitative approach to teaching and student-centred learning was common, including problem-based assessments, and e-mail was the most suitable supporting educational technology. E-mail facilitates tutor/learner dialogue and active support, and, as an asynchronous communication, was suitable for those studying at a distance with competing pressures. The assertion that e-mail is the most appropriate in this context is strengthened by the lack of engagement in technologies supporting peer collaboration, such as wikis, as they did not *align* with this overall module approach.

Further findings relevant to the research include tutor perceptions of workload, module design, and the influence of positive perceptions. Tutors achieving higher CEQ scores perceived their workload as manageable and outlined clearer approaches to module delivery. Modules that were originally designed for blended learning contexts rated better than those adapted from weekly delivery models. Further, this influenced tutor perceptions, particularly around time for delivery, potentially shaping learners’ feedback on the module. Generally, tutors achieving higher CEQ scores were more positive about their modules, again, potentially influencing learners’ perceptions.
The findings in this chapter suggest, when recruiting blended learning tutors, or selecting tutors to deliver such modules, they should have self-efficacy in online, blended and face-to-face contexts whilst understanding the needs of learners. They should be motivated, evidenced through meeting self-esteem needs through, for example, a strong commitment to supporting and developing learners. Further, a clear approach to teaching, learning and assessment that is aligned to a blended learning design perspective, such as individual constructivism, is needed. Careful consideration should be given to tutors showing high self-efficacy as they may invest little effort in the achievement of outcomes.

The chapter has raised a number of factors that influence the success of blended learning modules and identified some relevant tutor competences. The remaining chapters now synthesise findings from the pilot study, and qualitative and quantitative analyses, to develop a picture of effective blended tutoring, and tutors, in this context. These consider the measurement of emotional intelligence (EI) and analysis of tutor emotional competences (ECs), the adult learner, and, finally, effective practice in blended learning contexts. From this, a Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices is developed to propose actions, qualities and skills that may lead to effective teaching, learning and assessment in similar contexts. The following chapter firstly evaluates the MSCEIT’s value in identifying effective blended learning tutors and supporting emotional competences.
Chapter 11 The MSCEIT's Value in Identifying Effective Blended Tutors

11.1 Chapter Introduction

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis has been carried out and, throughout the next four chapters, the thesis now develops a Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices in blended learning contexts. Chapter 1.1 outlined an initial hypothesis of the research; tutors exhibiting high levels of emotional competence (EC) are perceived as effective in blended learning environments by their learners. Tutors’ EC was measured by the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) and compared to learner perceptions of quality, elicited through the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and the Online Tutoring Questionnaire (OTQ). This research explores competences, particularly emotional competences, that contribute to the effectiveness of tutors within blended learning environments. The MSCEIT was, in part, used to identify these competences and this chapter argues that it has limited utility in identifying effective tutors. However, two tasks and the positive-negative bias measure did suggest interesting abilities that could influence learners’ perceptions of quality.

This chapter addresses the following research aims:

- to investigate skills, qualities and competences, particularly emotional competences, contributing to the effectiveness of tutors within blended learning environments;
to evaluate tutors’ skills, qualities and competences through analysis of learners’ perceptions.

11.2 Discussion of the MSCEIT’s Value in Identifying Effective Blended Tutors

A number of issues were apparent that question the MSCEIT’s utility in identifying effective tutors in blended learning contexts for mature learners studying vocationally relevant degrees (see Table 11.1 for an overview of the MSCEIT’s structure). Below average scores were achieved by tutors at total EI, strategic area and branch levels, (the Understanding Emotions branch being the only exception). Chapter 2 established the MSCEIT’s potential value in this research as it identified abilities that appear beneficial for blended learning tutors. Pilot study analysis highlighted a lecturer with a below average MSCEIT score but a number of emotionally intelligent competences were demonstrated. Higher MSCEIT average scores were anticipated from a group of experienced higher education (HE) lecturers who had established careers to date and this overall finding questions its validity in identifying successful tutors. In addition, limited correlations were found with learners’ perceptions of quality determined through the CEQ and OTQ. Whilst tutors were advised to answer questions on instinct they reported a desire to offer the ‘correct’ answer. The test’s length was raised as an issue with two tutors noting the frustration this caused at the latter stages when answering questions. Finally, Claire’s responses could have been influenced by her state of mind following two recent bereavements of close family members, resulting in more negative responses than in normal circumstances.

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11 Scores are calculated as empirical percentiles, positioned on a normal curve with 100 being the average MSCEIT score (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 18).
Table 11.1 - Structure of the MSCEIT. (Adapted from Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso, 2002: 8) (Table repeated from Chapter 2).

The MSCEIT’s overall and area scores are not highlighting desirable abilities of tutors in relation to learner perceptions of quality, however, some are being revealed at branch and task level. Each branch is now analysed to consider its value in identifying effective blended tutors.

The Perceiving branch, incorporating Faces and Pictures tasks, received varied mean tutor scores and significant positive correlations with the CEQ and some constituent scales. Further, Chapter 2 argued perceiving emotions in oneself and others as potentially valuable for tutors in blended learning environments. Perceiving emotions branch scores displayed a positive correlation ($r = .243, p < .05$) with the CEQ’s total mean score which indicates learners' view tutors who are more adept at perceiving
emotions as more effective. However, a *Low Average*\(^{12}\) (93) mean score was achieved by tutors on this branch. Further analysis at task level revealed *Faces* having a significant effect on the branch. Mean tutors’ scores revealed a *Competent* value (111) on *Pictures* but a *Consider Improvement* value on *Faces*. However, only *Faces* positively correlated with the CEQ. Tutors are experienced (see Chapter 6.4) and self-efficacious in face-to-face environments (see Chapter 10.7) and might be expected to have a greater ability at perceiving emotions in images of peoples’ faces. Significant positive correlations between the *Perceiving* branch and *Faces* task, with the CEQ, suggest ability to perceive emotions in faces is associated with learner views of tutor quality. However, given the low mean score achieved on this task, it may have utility in ranking tutors but should not be used in isolation when identifying successful tutors.

Although *Pictures* received a *Competent* mean score by tutors it did not correlate with the CEQ and OTQ. Seven tutors achieved above average scores on this task which tests ability at perceiving emotions in certain images or landscapes (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 20). This ability could be supporting the apparent module success as tutors are perceiving emotions through other media, predominantly text-based in this research. Further, ability to perceive emotions aids development of empathic competences (Wakeman, 2006: 72), which were noticeable in tutors receiving higher CEQ scores (as detailed in Chapter 10.2 when discussing tutor perceptions of adult learners). However, although the *Pictures* task indicates a potentially important ability for tutors, its lack of correlation with the CEQ and OTQ indicates other factors are influencing learner perceptions of quality.

\(^{12}\) An actual score is provided for each aspect of the MSCEIT and these are further categorised (see Appendix 1).
The *Using* branch, incorporating *Facilitation* and *Sensations* tasks, received average mean tutor scores but some significant negative correlations with constituent scales of the CEQ and OTQ. Significant correlations were:

- *Using* branch had a significant negative relationship with the OTQ ($r = -0.365$, $p < .01$);
- *Sensations* task had a significant negative relationship with the CEQ ($r = -0.257$, $p < .05$);
- *Sensations* task had a significant negative relationship with the OTQ ($r = -0.477$, $p < .01$);
- further significant negative correlations were found with *Clear Goals* and *Good Teaching Feedback*, and both OTQ scales.

Chapter 2 highlighted the *Facilitation* task's relevance for this research as the identification and use of appropriate and beneficial emotions facilitates the creation of effective learning environments, however, no significant correlations were found. Further, Chapter 2 outlined limited face validity of the *Sensations* task as tutors are unlikely to be required to link emotions to differing sensations. The task was included to provide a picture of the cognitive ability to generate emotions and, therefore, relevant when considering EI as an intelligence. Examining the descriptive data for *Sensations* revealed the two tutors receiving the lowest CEQ and OTQ scores getting high results on this task, with the opposite occurring for the tutor achieving the highest score. The
remaining five tutors received largely similar task scores and it was clear further qualitative analysis was needed to interrogate these correlations.

Qualitative analysis revealed relevant examples of tutors’ effectively ‘using’ emotions that diminish the Sensations task’s value in identifying effective blended tutors. A flavour of tutors’ effective use of emotions was described at day schools as tutors generated emotions to ‘set the tone’ for the module, get them interested and engaged, and try to ‘win them over’ with the aim of these approaches to keep learners motivated between day schools and on to the submission of summative assessments (see Chapter 9.8). Ann and Daisy felt their enthusiasm for the subject was an important motivational factor for learners on their modules (see Chapter 9.8). Emotions evident in tutors’ teaching were generally positive, however, some were negative around online elements of practice and workload. Emily, though, outlined effective use of negative emotions when stating:

\textit{that's why you worry when you're frustrated and tired and you have to manage your workload - sometimes you have to walk away so you're in the right mind to give the right feedback.}

Following qualitative analysis, it is difficult to rationalise strong negative correlations between the Sensations task and the CEQ and OTQ, and it has limited utility in identifying effective blended tutors. Qualitative evidence indicates tutors are using emotions to generate sessions intended to interest and motivate students in face-to-face environments.
Understanding branch, incorporating Changes and Blends tasks, received the highest branch mean score with Blends having significant positive correlations with constituent scales of the CEQ and OTQ. Chapter 2 highlighted the associated abilities as potentially important for blended tutors as Blends, identifies emotions that combine into other emotions such as malice being a combination of envy and aggression (Mayer et al., 2003: 99), and Changes identifies variations in emotions over time such as anger often changes to sadness (Kerr et al., 2006: 269). Ability in these areas allows a better understanding of learners’ emotions, their cause, and how these may change over time. This branch score was the highest, and only, in the High Average range with both task scores also located at this level. The Understanding branch had a significant positive relationship with the CEQ ($r = .255$, $p < .05$) and, when analysed at task level, Blends had a significant positive relationship with the CEQ ($r = .333$, $p < .01$) and OTQ ($r = .305$, $p < .01$). Further, significant positive correlations were found with Clear Goals and Good Teaching Feedback scales of the CEQ and both OTQ scales. It is clear that Blends is significant in identifying effective blended tutors and further analysis was needed to interrogate these results.

Chapter 2 argued the Understanding Branch and Blends task have utility in identifying effective tutors in blended learning environments as they highlight ability in motivating learners and developing relationships. Qualitative analysis revealed a number of tutor strategies to motivate learners particularly at day schools (see Chapter 9.8), which could indicate competence at understanding emotions in others. Correlations with Clear Goals and Good Teaching Feedback provide insight into these potentially valuable abilities. Clear Goals provides feedback around important motivating elements of adult
learning, the need to know why they are learning a topic (Knowles et al., 2011), and for learners to see value in their study (Biggs and Tang, 2007). Appropriate feedback, particularly formative, supports these elements of adult learning and, further, helps learners ‘expect success’ (Biggs and Tang, 2007). The Understanding branch indicates a person’s ability “to understand emotional information, how emotions combine and progress through relationship transitions” (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 7), and highlights the importance of tutors developing relationships with learners. As tutors develop relationships with learners, a better understanding of their emotions is understood and, in particular, how these will change over time. Chapter 2 noted a confident student may not mind a tutor saying their answer was not correct, but others may find this embarrassing and become anxious, and, over time, ability in this area will develop with regard to individual learners. Ability to understand emotions, and therefore respond appropriately to learners, can help build productive relationships and potentially impact on the quality of learner support provided. A tutor’s previous relationship with the learner group was found to influence CEQ scores (see Chapter 8.4) and a factor underpinning this could be tutors’ increased ability in understanding their students’ emotions.

Chapter 2 argued the utility of abilities outlined in the Managing emotions branch but was critical of its face validity as this section was self-report and not ability based. Tutors’ achieved Low Average scores at both branch and task levels with the only significant positive correlations found with the Appropriate Workload CEQ scale and the Managing Branch \( r = .251, \ p < .05 \), with the Emotional Management task driving this result \( r = .347, \ p < .01 \). However, significant negative correlations were found with the
Managing Branch and OTQ ($r = -.294$, $p < .05$) and the Emotional Relations task ($r = -.307$, $p < .01$). This branch is particularly important for blended tutors and is at the heart of generating a conducive emotional state, in themselves and their learners, for effective learning to take place (Mortiboys, 2005; Brackett and Katulak, 2006). However, given Low Average scores, few significant CEQ correlations, negative OTQ correlations, and concern about face validity for academics with tendencies for deconstructing tests, the branch’s utility in identifying effective blended tutors is limited.

The MSCEIT’s positive-negative bias scores identified seven tutors whose tendency was to respond to pictorial stimuli with positive emotions (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 15). Qualitative data analysis revealed tutors that were enthusiastic and motivational in face-to-face environments (see Chapter 9.8), with the most effective (as shown by the CEQ) positive about the affordances of blended learning and seeing opportunities to deliver effective practice (see Chapter 10.3). Further, this analysis revealed tutors were self-confident and self-efficacious in face-to-face environments and determined to support learners throughout modules. Chapter 4 highlighted the importance of enthusiasm for the subject and teaching as a vital personal quality when working with adults (Armitage et al., 2003; Smith, 2004; Martinovic; 2009; Biggs and Tang, 2011) and the positive-negative bias score could be identifying this trait. Bar-On (2006: 4) argues that being emotionally intelligent requires individuals to be optimistic, positive and self-motivated. The link between being generally positive in identifying emotions and these broader traits is questionable, however, qualitative analysis does suggest association. Further, caution must be taken when reading positive-negative values as overly positive values may indicate tutors are misreading situations, which
could be occurring with Harry. Confidence was displayed in his blended tutoring abilities (see Chapter 10.7) but he did not proactively support learners or contribute to online elements of modules, and received lower CEQ scores. The positive-negative bias score potentially identified an important trait for effective blended tutoring, however, other factors need to be considered to provide a broader picture of emotional competences associated with learner perceptions of quality.

11.3 Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has noted a number of limitations of the MSCEIT in identifying effective blended tutors although, Blends, Faces and positive-negative bias scores have potential utility. An ability measure of EI was chosen to alleviate academics’ tendency to deconstruct tests of intelligence, however, although advised to answer questions on instinct, tutors reported a desire to determine ‘correct’ answers. The pilot study (see Chapter 7) outlined the tutor’s responses could have been influenced by her state of mind following two recent bereavements of close family members, making answers more negative than in normal circumstances. Further, two tutors reported the questionnaire’s length an issue and, feelings of frustration caused by this, affected later stages of completion. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2002: 15) advised interpreting task scores with “great caution” and whilst there is potential utility in Blends and Faces in the identification of effective blended tutors, further support is required from the findings from broader EI constructs and identified good practice in blended tutoring outlined in the literature review chapters. Blends potentially provides a stronger indication of effective blended tutoring in learner’s eyes, whereas Faces’ value may lie in ranking tutors.
Table 4.2 stated an issue to be explored within this research study was the relationship between tutor EC (and various emotionally competent abilities and traits) and learner perceptions of quality. These abilities included those identified in the analysis of The Four Branch Model and were measured by the MSCEIT to support the quantitative analysis of the hypothesis. This analysis suggests that higher levels of tutor EC are not reflected in learner perceptions of effectiveness. However, although the MSCEIT classified tutors as below average emotional intelligence, a number of valuable emotional competences were evident from the interview analysis. The following chapter utilises Goleman’s (2001) trait-based Framework of Emotional Competences to broaden the analysis to propose competences for effective blended tutoring.
Chapter 12 Emotional Competences Associated with Effective Blended Tutoring

12.1 Chapter Introduction

This research proposes a Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices which is a conceptual framework for understanding the data. This framework may also be useful in understanding other instances of blended learning in similar contexts. Integral to this are tutor emotional competences (ECs) that lead to effective practice as perceived by learners. This chapter presents a group of emotional competences that support the effective blended tutoring of mature learners, studying part-time (PT), vocationally relevant degrees. Chapter 2 stated Mayer and Salovey's definition of emotional intelligence (EI) embodies “the distinction between EI and EC” (Wakeman, 2006: 72) with emotional intelligence abilities allowing development of emotional competences. For example, the ability to perceive emotions in others would aid the development of EC in conflict management or empathy (Wakeman, 2006: 72). The previous Chapter questioned the MSCEIT's utility in this context, however, through interview analysis, a number of emotional competences were apparent and significant. This chapter synthesises the findings of the literature review chapters, the pilot study, and other data analysis chapters to propose the group of emotional competences. These competences were identified from factors described in all modules, such as timely feedback on formative assessments, and are considered to be associated with an effective blended learning experience. In addition, competences have been identified from effective tutors, namely those receiving higher Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) scores, which appear to influence learner perceptions of quality. The identified
competences have been analysed in relation to Goleman’s (2001) Framework of Emotional Competences.

Goleman’s Framework includes a range of emotional competences categorised into four clusters: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management. Although there is theoretical significance in examining each cluster for emotional competence in that area (Goleman, 2001: 10), to be considered emotionally intelligent, individuals must exhibit proficiency across all areas (Goleman, 2001: 1). As Goleman summarises:

people exhibit these competencies in groupings, often across clusters, that allow competencies to support one another. Emotional competencies seem to operate most powerfully in synergistic groupings. (Goleman, 2001: 10).

In light of this, tutor emotional competences are considered in relation to each cluster in the first instance, followed by analysis for potential groupings. Further emotional competences evident are highlighted, which do not form part of Goleman’s Framework. Some of Goleman’s competences are rejected and, with the addition of further competences, the chapter suggests a new group required for effective tutoring in this context. Goleman’s definitions have been adapted to suit the context under investigation.

**12.2 Self-Awareness Cluster**

This cluster comprises three competences:
• Emotional Self-Awareness - tutors recognise own feelings and how they impact on performance;

• Accurate Self-Assessment - tutors are aware of their abilities and limitations, seek feedback and learn from mistakes, aware of areas of improvement, and work with others who can support improvement;

• Self-Confidence - a belief and self-assurance about tutor’s own abilities.

Common to all tutors was the competence Accurate Self-Assessment, however, varying levels of Self-Confidence were apparent, an area which mirrored the analysis of self-efficacy (see Chapter 10.7). The examples of competence in Emotional Self-Awareness provided an interesting comparison with results of tutors’ positive-negative bias scores achieved on the MSCEIT.

Tutors described examples that indicated competence at identifying their strengths and weaknesses with regard to practice on modules. Further, they were aware of areas of improvement particularly around online delivery. They would seek out and act on feedback and work with others to improve practice. Tutors appeared aware of strengths in face-to-face contexts outlining a number of positive aspects to practice, however, they were equally aware of limitations regarding online pedagogy (see Chapter 10.7). All tutors either collaborated with colleagues about educational technology and pedagogy or had informal mentors available if needed, and worked with others to improve their practice.
Tutors generally exhibited Self-Confidence, with the evidence justifying this statement mirroring that of self-efficacy, which Goleman (2001: 6) argued, was “a form of self-confidence”. Whilst Goleman’s comparison appears a little imprecise, analysis of tutors suggests similarities. All tutors described self-confidence in face-to-face environments with this appearing to be a factor in the generally high CEQ scores achieved. Three tutors (Ann, Claire and Frank) showed similar confidence whilst arguing online elements were focussed around student support. Emily and Bill, were more experimental in their pedagogy beyond day schools but, even despite limited success, were confident in their approaches. Two tutors exhibited a lack of self-confidence at times around differing areas, both receiving lower CEQ scores. George outlined problems with his module including online aspects and elements of assessment, but had not changed practice (see Chapter 10.7). Daisy displayed a lack of confidence in delivering the module on a day-school basis and also about online pedagogy (see Chapter 10.7).

Analysis of interview data for Emotional Self-Awareness provided an interesting similarity with results of tutor’s positive-negative bias MSCEIT scores (see Table 8.11). Commonly, emotions outlined were positive and were often related to enthusiasm for face-to-face teaching and the motivational effects this had on learners (see Chapter 10.7). Emily received the second highest MSCEIT score but was the only tutor to receive feedback that indicated she responded to pictorial stimuli with more negative emotions (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 15). Further, she described a number of negative emotions when referring to practice both generally and within the module under investigation. However, she shows emotionally intelligent competences by using these emotions to advise and inform practice (see Chapter 11.2). With regard to
Emotional Self-Awareness, it appears unimportant whether positive or negative emotions are exhibited as long as they are used to inform and improve practice. The importance of tutors’ enthusiasm in face-to-face contexts was outlined in Chapter 10.8, where it was suggested as influential in motivating learners and the generally high CEQ scores achieved on the modules. Thus, emotions leading to the trait enthusiasm are likely to be beneficial when interacting with learners.

12.3 Self-Management Cluster

This cluster comprises six competences:

- Self-control - the absence of distress and disruptive feelings;
- Trustworthiness - tutors letting others know own values and principles, intentions and feelings, and acting in ways consistent with them;
- Conscientiousness - tutors being careful, self-disciplined, and attending to responsibilities;
- Adaptability - tutors open to new information, let go of old assumptions and adapt practice;
- Achievement Drive - tutors having an optimistic striving to continually improve performance;
- Initiative - tutors act before being forced to by external events.

Competences common to all tutors were Conscientiousness and elements of Achievement Drive with those achieving the higher CEQ scores exhibiting greater Trustworthiness, Adaptability and Initiative. It was difficult to evaluate Self-Control as,
after the event, tutors outlined difficulties and resultant actions rationally, which may not have been a true reflection of events. Further self-management competences were evident beyond those included in Goleman’s Framework.

There were aspects of Achievement Drive, indicated by past experiences and commitment to supporting learners, however, tutors did not describe actions that could be considered “optimistically striving to continually improve performance” (Goleman, 2001: 7). Tutors were selected for this research as they were experienced teachers/lecturers. Chapter 8.3 described their background as generally successful individuals, in a range of contexts, holding management positions, having studied PT, vocational qualifications. These factors indicate a certain level of Achievement Drive. However, throughout the research, tutors were also managing competing objectives as lecturers and some were aware of weak practice but felt, overall, their modules were successful. Emily’s comment was illustrative:

So, I suppose, I could do with standing back and looking it afresh - I need another day in the week. But, it works, it's quite good so it stays as it is. It's not a problem.

Further, George outlined improvements identified to the assessment strategy, but, had not made the desired changes. Whilst these examples illustrate tutors were not continually striving to improve performance, the levels of support given by all tutors indicated Achievement Drive (see Chapter 9.4). Harry’s comment was illustrative when discussing workload issues, stating “it didn’t have an impact on the student experience because I didn’t let it”. The high levels of support may also be understood as conscientiousness.
Tutors’ conscientiousness was most apparent around formative and summative assessment, and their commitment to student support, however, there were further competences evident beyond Goleman’s definition. Each tutor highlighted quick turnaround of feedback and determination to achieve this even with competing pressures (see Chapter 10.7). Further, this determination was apparent when supporting learners and meeting individual needs which was particularly evident from Ann and Claire, who achieved the highest CEQ scores. Goleman’s definition of conscientiousness includes ‘being careful’ and ‘self-disciplined’ and these are extended in this research by the effective tutors to include ‘coping potential’, ‘organised’ with a strong ability to prioritise. In this context, coping potential refers to competence in focusing on key tasks and not being influenced by less important demands of the role. This competence is supported by organisation, the ability to plan work activities efficiently, and the ability to prioritise. Ann and Claire outlined commitment to learner support and kept the focus of efforts where their strengths lie. They did not spend a great deal of time learning differing educational technologies and focussed on their strengths of learner support. Emily also displayed elements of ‘coping potential’ when outlining supporting other colleagues; “there’s a danger that again it opens the flood gates to getting my own work done”. However, Emily was mindful of supporting learners and other key demands of her role. The motives behind tutor conscientiousness are unclear and could be influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Ann and Claire’s conscientiousness could be due to a lack of tutor support experienced when they were students or possibly their previous experiences in pastoral care roles (see Chapter 10.6). Alternatively, conscientiousness could be influenced by the culture
of performativity and target setting within which the University academic staff operate (see Chapter 1.3), with staff potentially fearful of weak quality indicators (National Student Survey (NSS) results, for example). Whatever the source, tutor conscientiousness could foster trust from learners and be a factor in the high CEQ scores generally received.

Tutors described practices indicating trustworthiness, however, there were a greater number of significant examples demonstrated by those achieving the higher CEQ scores. As previously stated, trustworthiness could have developed from tutor conscientiousness around assessment and learner support. Further, adherence to standards, as demonstrated by the high CEQ score on the Clear Goals and Standards scale, is evidence of trustworthiness. This was exemplified by tutors Ann and Bill who spoke passionately about developing autonomous learners and the actions taken to achieve this, whilst maintaining a dialogue to support the process (see Chapter 10.2). Quantitative (see Chapter 8.6) and qualitative analyses (see Chapter 9.5) highlighted the importance of tutors’ previous relationships with learners. Tutors receiving the three highest CEQ scores (Ann, Claire and Emily), each had course management responsibilities on learners’ courses and two had taught earlier modules. It is reasonable to assume, learners knew these tutors were available, and trust had emerged through positive exchanges.

The shift of practice from face-to-face to blended contexts allowed analysis and evaluation of tutor adaptability. Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores (Ann, Bill, Claire and Emily) appeared open to a new delivery model, let go of old assumptions, and
adapted their practice, therefore demonstrating competence in this area. These tutors outlined opportunities afforded by the delivery model with these including, learner support, synchronous web conferencing to replicate face-to-face contact, and increased space for reflection and learning. Whereas, others adopted a greater 'blame' response to changes primarily around time affordances (see Chapter 10.3). Some tutors demonstrated a number of short-term adaptations to practice, such as Emily and George using alternative VLEs, and there was close overlap evident with the competence, initiative.

A number of short-term examples of initiative were evident both from tutors’ past experiences and from analysis of the modules themselves, however, a longer term picture was hard to accurately determine. Two tutors showed initiative in their studies when experiencing a lack of support: Ann using all available information to “just get on with it” and Claire forming a study group with peers. Initiative was evident in Frank when the second day school was disrupted by snow (see Chapter 9.10). Learners were e-mailed all the day school materials, further resources were uploaded to the VLE, and tutorials arranged. The quality of student work was not affected and feedback received through module surveys indicated the tutor’s initiative had a positive impact. As the research focuses on short-term cases rather than being a longitudinal study, it was difficult to get a longer-term view of tutors taking initiative, however, it appeared a valuable competence when unforeseen problems arose.

12.4 Social Awareness Cluster

This cluster comprises three competences:
Empathy - tutors have an astute awareness of other’s emotions, concerns and needs;
Service Orientation - tutor’s ability to identify learner’s often unstated needs and concerns, and match them to HE provision;
Organisational Awareness - tutor’s ability to read currents of emotions and political realities in groups.

Empathy and Service Orientation were described, however, Organisational Awareness was not a competence apparent from the data and therefore of less value for tutors in blended learning contexts as it refers to “behind-the-scenes networking and coalition building that allows individuals to wield influence” (Goleman, 2001: 8). This competence would appear more valuable for management issues and potentially important in lecturers’ broader roles.

Whilst the analysis of tutors’ awareness of other’s emotions was difficult to interpret, largely due to the general lack of interaction in VLEs, there was awareness of learners’ concerns and needs, particularly as adults with competing pressures (see Chapter 10.2). Holmberg (1989: 162) stated empathy was central to effective distance education and this was integral to learner feelings of belonging, with this being a key emotional competence demonstrated by tutors. Tutors were empathic, with the most effective describing awareness of adult learners’ concerns and needs (Golemen, 2001). Needs were met with timely management of formative and summative assessments (see Chapter 9.4) with tutors aware of the external pressures learners face (see
Chapter 10.2). The most effective tutors created space for adult learning, focussed on assignment work outside of day schools, and were mindful of individual needs (see Chapter 9.3). Aligned with empathic tutoring were numerous examples of actions to meet needs whilst developing high achieving, autonomous learners (see Chapter 10.2). These actions may be understood as Service Orientation as tutors receiving higher CEQ scores were aware of learners’ often unstated needs. This was demonstrated through proactive measures to support learners whilst taking measures to provide space for learning within modules (see Chapter 9.4).

Whilst tutors were empathic and exhibited a service orientation, these competences were frequently demonstrated in actions which may be understood as relationship management.

12.5 Relationship Management Cluster

Goleman’s (2001) Relationship Management cluster is focussed on leadership roles and, therefore, not all of the competences are relevant when researching a tutor’s module delivery. Tutors are leading learners though and require a number of relevant competences to do this effectively, therefore, the use of this cluster has validity. This cluster comprises eight competences with the following five being most relevant for this research:

- Developing Others - tutors sense learners’ development needs and bolster their abilities;
- Influence - tutors handle and manage emotions effectively and are persuasive;
- Communication - tutors effectively give and take emotional information, deal with difficult issues straightforwardly, listen, and foster open communication;
- Conflict Management - tutors spot trouble as it is brewing and take steps to calm all involved;
- Leadership - tutors inspire others and arouse enthusiasm.

The three remaining competences, Change Catalyst, Building Bonds, and Collaboration and Teamwork, were not as evident as those above.

Tutors appeared adept at Relationship Management with the competence Communication significant. Whilst it was difficult to evaluate tutors' ability to 'give and take' emotional information they described fostering open communication and listening to learners. Chapter 9.5 highlighted the measures tutors used, particularly those achieving higher CEQ scores, to be 'available' and 'visible' to learners. These measures were particularly evident in relation to management of formative and summative assessments, but were also related to strategies for student support, which allowed a dialogue to foster. The highest CEQ score was achieved on the Good Teaching Communication scale (mean = 4.12) which includes questions about clear communication, motivational comments to improve work, and the tutor making the subject interesting. Motivational comments were evident in face-to-face contexts as tutors aimed to keep learners motivated between day schools and on to summative assessment submission (see Chapter 9.8). Further, tutors maintained interest by using learner-centred activities at day schools, adopting a facilitative teaching style throughout modules, and using problem-based assessments linked to work contexts (see Chapter
9.2). Clear goals and standards were apparent in detailed assessment briefs and, in some cases, use of exemplar material. Tutors outlined that assessment strategies were supported with timely and constructive feedback (see Chapter 9.4). These factors again highlight effective communication but may also be understood as Developing Others, Influence and Leadership.

Examples of tutors developing individual learners were not evident. However, I argue an emotionally competent and effective blended tutor should sense learner development needs and bolster abilities. Tutors developing learners would most likely occur during formative and summative assessments as feedback was provided on plans of assignments and draft work. The effectiveness of these processes were not known beyond the high mean score achieved on the Good Teaching Feedback CEQ scale (3.73), as individual examples did not emerge from the research. The research presents a conceptual framework that may help understanding of other instances of blended learning and developing learners and bolstering their abilities is integral to this, even without specific examples to support from this research.

Influence and, to some extent, leadership were demonstrated through assessment and support strategies but also through tutor practices to motivate learners (see Chapter 9.8). Tutors generally enthused learners at day schools, stated the value of their learning, drew on their experiences, discussed exemplar work, while some prompted those who had not been in touch. Further, Ann, Bill, Claire and Emily, appeared committed to student support and developing autonomous learners (see Chapter 10.6), actions that may be understood as the competence Influence.
Competence at conflict management would appear to be important, however, there were limited examples from the modules to make generalised comments. Quick actions taken by tutor Frank to deal with disrupted day schools potentially evidenced conflict management competence whilst building on abilities of adaptability and initiative, but further examples were limited.

**12.6 Emotional Competences Contributing to the Effectiveness of Tutors within Blended Learning Environments**

Analysis of individual clusters revealed a group of competences contributing to the effectiveness of tutors within the context under investigation (see Table 12.1). Further, competences across clusters could be supporting one another, for example, trustworthiness and conscientiousness require self-awareness, and this was evident amongst the most effective tutors. Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores appear to be exhibiting proficiency across all four clusters, indicating emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2001: 1). Goleman (2001: 10) argues that “emotional competences seem to operate most powerfully in synergistic groupings”, and this section considers possible synergies between competences. However, whilst this research study has argued that these competences are influencing learner perceptions of quality, there is insufficient evidence to conclude they are operating in synergistic groupings.
### Table 12.1 - A group of competences contributing to the effectiveness of tutors within the context under investigation. (Adapted from Goleman, 2001: 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recognition</th>
<th>Other Competence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Personal Competence</strong></td>
<td><strong>Social Competence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>Social Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Emotional self-awareness</td>
<td>- Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accurate self-assessment</td>
<td>- Service orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Self-confidence</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulation</th>
<th>Other Competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Management</strong></td>
<td><strong>Relationship Management</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Trustworthiness</td>
<td>- Developing others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Conscientiousness</td>
<td>- Influence</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Adaptability</td>
<td>- Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Organisation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Coping potential</td>
<td></td>
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<td>- Initiative</td>
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</table>

This research study argues emotionally competent blended tutors appear self-aware with a clear understanding of their abilities and limitations. They seek feedback and learn from mistakes and work with others to support improvement. This is strengthened by self-confidence regarding pedagogy in blended contexts, and in supporting mature learners studying part-time, vocational courses. Emotions, both positive and negative, are recognised with understanding of impact on performance, moreover, positive emotions are likely to be beneficial when interacting with learners.
Self-aware tutors appear more likely to be competent at self-management with trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, initiative and elements of achievement drive most relevant for blended learning contexts. Self-awareness of abilities and limitations, learning from mistakes, use of others, and self-confidence, could support and strengthen self-management competences. For example, self-confidence could support a tutor’s ability to be adaptable to new pedagogy and emerging educational technologies. Conscientiousness appears important in all aspects of a tutor’s role which can support and foster the competence, trustworthiness. Effective tutors in this research provided support whilst developing autonomous learners and described initiative when problems arose during module delivery. Further relevant self-management competences are coping potential and being organised and these are supported by the ability to prioritise. Competence in self-awareness and self-management appear to support tutors’ ‘social awareness’.

Empathy and Service Orientation appear necessary for effective blended tutors building on the competences of accurate self-awareness, self-confidence, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, achievement drive and initiative. Emotionally competent blended tutors appear to understand the emotions, concerns and needs of learners, some of which will be unstated. These competences need to be exhibited in relation to adult learners studying part-time, vocational degrees. However, more than understanding of needs is required and actions are needed that draw on relationship management competences.
Emotionally competent blended tutors appear to foster open communication, influence and develop learners, whilst inspiring others and arousing enthusiasm. Further, competence at conflict management would appear important, however, it was not evident in the modules under investigation. These competences are supported by the abilities outlined above from the self-awareness, self-management and social awareness clusters.

12.7 Concluding Thoughts

This Chapter has identified a group of competences contributing to the effectiveness of tutors, as measured by learner perceptions of quality, within the context under investigation. These competences were identified in Goleman’s Framework of Emotional Competences and literatures discussing online and blended tutoring, and supported the qualitative analysis of the hypothesis. This analysis indicates that there is a relationship between some tutor emotional competences and effectiveness in blended learning environments. These competences provide a basis for the development of a Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices which is a conceptual framework for understanding the data from this study. This is further considered throughout the next two chapters. These competences have been extracted from the analysis of eight modules and for some, a longer term view may be required before a valid, comprehensive framework of competences can be established. Emotional self-awareness, adaptability, initiative, conflict management and leadership competences require a longer term analysis to accurately determine their validity in this context.
This chapter has identified that Goleman’s Framework is valuable when considering a group of ECs for a broad range of business organisations and particularly leadership roles. The Framework has been developed within this chapter to outline ECs, with associated definitions, for effective tutoring in blended learning contexts. This could support the recruitment and selection of tutors and form part of further empirical research into this area, particularly across differing subject disciplines. This research study questions the value of some of Goleman’s competences, primarily those with a focus on leadership. Whilst blended tutors do lead learners in some respects, it is not as significant in their role with developing learning structures and providing effective support of greater importance. These require a specific group of competences with Goleman’s model developed to add further Self-Management competences. This is due, in part, to the greater autonomy over work practices the blended context affords over traditional teaching approaches.

The thesis now considers the adult learners under investigation within this research study to analyse tutor practices that meet their needs.
Chapter 13 The Adult Learner in Blended Contexts

13.1 Introduction

This chapter continues the development of the Model of Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices by proposing an Andragogical Model for effective blended learning to meet the needs of adult learners. Revised Study Process Questionnaire (R-SPQ) results revealed those under investigation were Deep learners, which indicates they were using the highest level of learning activities, such as wide reading and relating concepts to work environments (Biggs, Kember and Leung: 2001: 145). Surface approaches were less prominent, which suggest learners were completing only the required activities in order to achieve desired outcomes. A crucial finding from the quantitative analysis was the influence of these learners, namely mature and studying PT, vocationally relevant courses, and their approaches to study, on the associations between the identified dependent and independent variables. Chapter 8 revealed a number of significant correlations that outlined pertinent factors when determining effective tutors and tutoring, previous relationships with learners being an example. When correlations were controlled for the influence of learners’ approaches to study, no significant relationships were found. This chapter describes the key influence these learners had over the apparent success and, even when significant problems arose on a module, achievement and student feedback was similar to previous iterations (see Chapter 9.10).

The chapter moves on to argue that the predominant approaches to teaching, learning and assessment adopted by tutors were congruent with some of the Andragogical
Model’s six core principles (Knowles et al., 2011) due to the vocational nature of the courses investigated. The Andragogical Model provided a lens for the analysis and drove the development of the proposed Model for this context, which contains the same six core principles. This analysis was valuable as it provided a number of factors to operationalise the Model, which can support practice for tutors and HE institutions in similar contexts. Further, this analysis highlighted a number of tutor skills, qualities and competences that, I argue, were influential in meeting the needs of adult learners in this context.

This chapter discusses the following:

- the characteristics of the learners under investigation;
- the analysis of modules using the Andragogical Model’s six core principles;
- a proposed Andragogical Model for blended learning contexts.

**13.2 The Characteristics of the Learners under Investigation**

This section considers the particular learners in greater depth and explains why they are critical to the Model of Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices.

Quantitative and qualitative analyses revealed a number of factors which support the assertion that the learners under investigation, and the qualities and characteristics they possess, were influencing the general module success. Whilst it appears logical that learners would have the most significant influence on module success, this research...
study aimed to identify influential tutor skills, qualities and competences. These, it was felt, would still significantly correlate with learner perceptions of quality when approaches to study were controlled. However, no significant correlations were found. The general level of success exhibited on modules could be typical for this type of learner in similar contexts, but there were some correlations of note. *Deep* approaches to study did correlate with aspects of learner feedback (CEQ and OTQ) (see Chapter 8.2), indicating some tutor influence on the general module success.

Overall pass rates, whilst a crude measure of educational success, were found to be greater than 95% with some of the remaining 5% expected to complete in the near future. Learners were asked to rate their module achievement on a five-point scale (very disappointed to very good) and the resultant mean score was 3.83 indicating broad satisfaction with their results and academic development. The R-SPQ revealed scores for *Deep* approaches to study were significantly higher than for *Surface* (see Table 13.1). Further, these scores revealed this research study’s findings were favourable when compared with other empirical studies using the R-SPQ with university students (see Chapter 8.2). These findings indicate successful learners who were generally satisfied with their achievement on the modules.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deep Approaches</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface Approaches</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 13.1 - Summary of learners’ approaches to study as measured by the R-SPQ (n = 72) (Table repeated from Chapter 8).*
A crucial finding of this research was the effect on a number of significant correlations when the influence of learner’s approaches to study was held constant. Significant correlations were found between elements of the MSCEIT and learner feedback on tutor practices, and a number of assessment measures used to quantify influential qualities and skills. Each correlation was found to be insignificant when learner approaches to study were controlled. This indicates that one of the most important influences on module success was the learners themselves and their approaches to study.

The influence of learners was exemplified on Frank’s module when a number of disruptions occurred but module outcomes were similar to previous years. Qualitative analysis (see Chapter 9.10) outlined a range of problems that occurred on the module including administrative errors and a day school disrupted by snow. Even with such considerable external influence, the module was successful with achievement and feedback on a module satisfaction survey being similar to previous years. Frank did demonstrate a number of effective tutoring qualities and competences to support learners through the module. However, the learners found different strategies to complete assignment work by drawing on the VLE resources and assessment guides more heavily.

Approaches to study data analysis revealed some tutor influence on learner perceptions of quality. Deep approaches significantly correlated with the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and three of its constituent scale items, which indicates tutor influence. Approaches to study measures are mirroring CEQ results with Ann, Bill and Claire’s learners receiving high scores on the Deep scale. Daisy’s learners received the
lowest score with these findings understandably leading to a significant positive correlation between Deep approaches and the CEQ \((r = .293, p < 0.5)\). Also, significant positive relationships were found between Deep approaches to study and Clear Goals \((r = .248, p < 0.5)\), Good Teaching Communication \((r = .342, p < 0.1)\), and Good Teaching Feedback \((r = .320, p < 0.1)\) scales, three key measures of tutor effectiveness that indicate valuable aspects of delivery for these learners. Chapter 5 stated that Deep approaches are, in part, due to learners' intrinsic interest in study (Knowles et al., 2011) but also under tutors' influence particularly with regard to the structure of modules, clear goals, and feedback quality (Entwistle and Ramsden, 1983). Although these findings suggest tutor influence on learner's approaches to study, the extent of this over the period of a module is difficult to ascertain. Quantitative and qualitative analyses revealed a range of factors influencing learner perceptions of module quality but it is clear from the above discussion that approaches to study were an important aspect of the apparent general success.

Other significant learner characteristics were their previous experience within HE and general information technology (IT) competence. Chapter 8 outlined significant positive correlations with learner's previous HE experience and the CEQ, as well as the Clear Goals and Good Teaching Feedback scales. Learners with greater HE experience perceived their tutors as better and the scale items reveal aspects of delivery that are of value to those more experienced. Clear goals and standards with appropriate feedback and concern for learning, appear to be sufficient support for more experienced learners to be successful. Chapter 8 revealed no statistical relationships between learners' IT competence and the CEQ but did outline significant positive correlations with the Online
Tutoring Questionnaire (OTQ) and its constituent scale items. This suggests those learners with greater IT competence are more likely to value online pedagogy or will potentially engage further in these aspects of delivery. This finding reinforces the importance of learners having a basic level of IT competence to aid success in blended learning contexts.

This section has highlighted the influence of these learners on the general module success, however, there are other factors facilitating this, and these are now discussed.

**13.3 The Analysis of Modules Using the Andragogical Model’s Six Core Principles**

Chapter 5 outlined the Andragogical Model and confirmed it as means of providing insight into adult learning. The learners under investigation were classed as ‘mature’, as a significant number are aged between 25 and 54 and bring previous knowledge, viewpoints and life experiences to the blended learning context (Knowles et al., 2011). The Andragogical Model and six constituent core principles, provide a lens through which to evaluate the modules under investigation but also consider in greater depth the influence tutors are having in meeting learner needs. Further, other factors present within modules are considered that are suitable for these learners and their particular circumstances.

The six core principles of the Andragogical Model were largely fulfilled given the vocational nature of the programmes under investigation. The Model should be applied flexibly as the context of the study drives teaching and learning strategies (Knowles, 1984: 418), which suggests the core principles are not criteria to judge the effectiveness
of a learning situation, but a set of elements through which to view adult learning. Merriam and Caffarella (1999: 20) concur when stating “andragogy now appears to be situation-specific and not unique to adults”. Consequently, the core principles are used to explore effective adult learning in blended learning environments, which encompass face-to-face, online and distance contexts.

The core principles are addressed in turn to consider their strengths and limitations for the blended learning context under investigation. In the next section, factors are presented to demonstrate how blended learning tutors could operationalise each core principle. These factors are provided to potentially guide blended learning practitioners, within similar contexts to this research study, in meeting the needs of adult learners. Tutors’ skills, qualities and competences are considered where appropriate to evaluate their influence in addressing the Andragogical Model’s core principles.

**Need to know: adults need to know why they are learning a topic before learning commences**

This core principle was addressed by tutors but was facilitated through the vocational nature of learners’ courses. The immediate relevance of some topics would have been apparent to learners as they were linked to work roles, however, tutors facilitated this process by, for example, connecting theory to practice. Throughout modules, learners appeared to know what was expected, which was enhanced with the predominant facilitative teaching style and support when required. The CEQ scale item *Clear Goals and Standards* received a high mean score (3.89) indicating learners knew what was expected. Qualitative analysis revealed some instruction of key module information at day schools such as submission dates and assessment requirements as well as key
subject knowledge in the area of study (see Chapter 9.2). All day schools included a range of learner-centred activities to develop understanding of key concepts and apply theory to practice, with tutors encouraging learners to see the value of their study by contextualising their learning (see Chapter 9.8). To summarise, tutors related theory to practice and showed learners the value of topics being covered in order to address this key aspect of meeting these adult learner needs.

**Learners’ self-concept: adults need to be responsible for their decisions on education**

Chapter 5 highlighted the difficulty of learners moving into HE given previous educational experiences. Many of these learners were studying in HE for the first time and may have had perceptions of education rooted in their experiences at school. They may have been more comfortable in passive learning environments but this would be challenged by an adult’s desire to be self-directing (Knowles et al., 2011: 63). This challenge may have been enhanced as the learning context under investigation was markedly different from school experiences as, for example, courses had vocational relevance, there was application to work contexts and, importantly, there was a change in delivery model. Further, adults often have competing pressures as they balance study with work and family life. The move into such a different learning context has to be managed by tutors to meet adult learner needs and requires a number of skills, qualities and competences that were exhibited across modules but particularly by those achieving higher CEQ scores.

All the modules investigated allowed aspects of learner self-direction with pertinent overlaps with learner autonomy (Moore, 1997), but with appropriate structure and
support around. Learners had choice over the focus of module assessment, evaluating the implications of an aspect of law on their own institutions being a relevant example. Further, learners studied independently outside day schools, predominantly on assessment requirements, with this highlighting their responsibility for decisions on learning (see Chapter 9.2). To support this, modules were structured around assessment requirements and, with the predominance of asynchronous communication, allowed learners to manage competing pressures (see Chapter 9.3). Feedback was valued by learners (as indicated by the high *Good Teaching Feedback* CEQ scale score, 3.73) with tutor support available throughout modules and, if used effectively, would support the development of student-centred learning.

Meeting adult learners’ *self-concept* is potentially demanding for tutors in blended learning contexts but a range of skills, qualities and competences appear important in meeting this principle. Tutors achieving higher CEQ scores were more proactive in supporting learners and created space for learning on modules (see Chapter 9.4). They were empathic to adult learner needs with some describing strategies to encourage autonomous learning (see Chapter 10.2). These skills and qualities were supported with relevant *Self-Management* and *Relationship Management* emotional competences, for example, *Conscientiousness* in supporting learners with effective *Communication* (see Chapter 12).

To summarise, there was evidence of learner self-direction across modules and this appeared particularly important on vocational courses for those with competing pressures. This was facilitated by an assessment driven structure with available tutor
support. Importantly though, the achievement of this principle is aided by a number of tutor skills, qualities and competences.

**Role of learners’ experiences: adults use experiences as the basis for learning activities**

Tutors engaged in a number of practices to integrate learner experiences into module teaching, learning and assessment, however, there were potential improvements in addressing this principle. Tutors used a variety of teaching and learning methods at day schools which included group work activities. Individual learner experiences were also used throughout modules as there was choice over assessment focus with application to work contexts and roles (see Chapter 9.2). Knowles et al. (2011: 65) argue adult educators should “try to discover ways to help adults examine their habits and biases and open their minds to new approaches”, which tutors did with the examples cited above. However, increased peer collaboration could encourage learners to overcome habits and biases in their work roles and be open to new approaches. All tutors adopted a facilitative teaching style with Ann and Daisy describing their learners as “the experts”, which suggests there is value in peer collaboration when studying vocationally relevant courses. However, such peer collaboration was limited across formal module computer mediated communications (CMCs), but this did not prevent the general module success evident or learner satisfaction with their experience. This suggests this andragogical principle is important but more could be done to encourage the sharing of learner experiences within online contexts.
Readiness to learn: adults are more interested in learning if there is an immediate relevance to work

This principle was strongly addressed with the nature of teaching, learning and assessment common to all modules under investigation (see Chapter 9.2). Modules generally mirrored the Individual Constructivist Perspective with active discovery in work contexts a common approach across modules. Assessments were problem-based and generally case-method within learners’ organisations, with action research a relevant example. Further, learners had choice over assessment focus, which could be linked to their own interests and role.

Orientation to learning: adult learning is problem-centred rather than content orientated

Again, this principle was strongly addressed with the nature of teaching, learning and assessment common to all modules under investigation (see Chapter 9.2). As outlined above, assessments were problem-based and generally case-method within learners’ organisations.

Motivation to learn: adults’ most potent motivators are intrinsic

This section outlines examples to illustrate learners’ intrinsic motivation to study but argues there are other important extrinsic motivators that influenced their perceptions of module quality. Tough (1979) notes that intrinsic motivators can be blocked by barriers such as negative self-concept as a student and time constraints. Such barriers can be lowered by tutors but require certain skills, qualities and competences to be actioned effectively. Further, Chapter 5 noted that some learners undertake study for instrumental purposes, such as to increase promotional opportunities, with this described by Emily as an issue encountered on her module. This, and the effect of
tutors, indicates influencing extrinsic motivators, which are considered within this section.

Learners predominantly adopted Deep over Surface approaches to study indicating some intrinsic motivation (see Chapter 8.2). Tutor interviews outlined a consensus opinion of learners being motivated, engaged in their study, and producing good quality work (see Chapter 10.2). Frank's module provided a clear example of learners' intrinsic motivation when achievement was comparable to previous years even though the module was heavily disrupted. This module also highlighted a number of tutor skills, qualities and competences that appeared to enhance the learners' experience.

Biggs and Tang (2007: 32) argued that learners seeing value in the area of study and expecting success were key factors for tutors to encourage learning, and these points highlighted issues relevant to all modules. The discussions above regarding the andragogical principles; need to know, role of learners’ experiences, and readiness to learn, demonstrate that learners saw value in studying these modules. Learners 'expecting success' was evidenced through formative assessment procedures across modules (see Chapter 9.3). Each module outlined detailed formative assessments that included feedback on assignment plans and drafts with tutors indicating high uptake across modules. This was supplemented with assessment briefs and, in some cases, exemplar work. This feedback is likely to have reassured learners that they could 'expect success' on modules whilst helping to contextualise learning in practice.
Biggs and Tang (2007: 34) further highlighted the importance of tutors building fascination for the subject area as an extrinsic motivator of learners and this was apparent across all modules (see Chapter 9.8). Tutors described strategies at day schools to motivate learners for the module duration, including adopting a variety of learning activities. This was enhanced, in some cases, with enthusiasm for the subject area and a general commitment to supporting learners through the assessment process.

A number of tutor extrinsic motivators were apparent throughout modules, evidenced through differing CEQ scores, which indicated important skills, qualities and competences. Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores were, for example, more likely to have engaged in greater online interactions, be more experienced in blended learning contexts, were more proactive in learner support, communicated with groups prior to the first day school, created more space for learning, and raised less concerns over their workload. These actions required a number of tutor skills and qualities and exhibited a range of emotional competences, such as *Self-Awareness* and *Self-Management*, which were outlined in the group presented in Chapter 12.

**13.4 A proposed Andragogical Model for Blended Learning Contexts**

Chapter 5.2 highlighted the flexible application of the Andragogical Model and value in noting strengths and weaknesses in specific contexts. This has allowed the proposal of an Andragogical Model to meet the needs of adult learners studying part-time, vocationally relevant degrees at a distance. The vocational nature of the courses was significant in highlighting the similarities with practices evident on the modules with
Knowles et al.’s (2011) Model. Consequently, this research study’s proposed Anragogical Model maintains the six core principles but with a development to motivation to learn to include extrinsic motivators. In addition, factors are provided for each principle to potentially operationalise the Model for blended learning practitioners within similar contexts. These factors are outlined under each core principle in Table 13.2 and then summarised to provide a list to ensure learner needs are met (see Appendix 15). The factors were predominantly constructivist in orientation and were significant in the development of the proposed Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices (see Chapter 14.6).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core principle</th>
<th>Key operational factors for blended learning contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Need to know   | - Tutors outlined key module information and key topics at day schools with supporting documentation available, such as assessment briefs;  
- Tutors adopted the *Individual Constructivist Perspective* across the whole module with student-centred learning encouraging experimentation and application of theory to practice;  
- Tutors adopted a ‘facilitative’ teaching style;  
- Day schools included a range of student-centred activities to develop understanding of key concepts and apply theory to practice;  
- Tutors provided a structured learning environment with modules structured around assessment requirements. |
| Learners’ self-concept | - Tutors provided a structured learning environment with modules structured around assessment requirements;  
- Learners had choice over focus of module assessment;  
- Learners studied independently outside day schools, mainly on module assessments;  
- Tutors adopted strategies to foster student-centred learning including appropriate feedback on progress;  
- Tutors had relevant *Self-Management* and *Relationship Management* emotional competences to effectively address this principle. |
| Role of learners’ experiences | - Tutors adopted a variety of teaching and learning methods at day schools, including group work, student-centred learning and application of theory to practice;  
- Learners had choice over focus of module assessment with application to work contexts and roles. |
<p>| Readiness to learn | - Tutors adopted the <em>Individual Constructivist Perspective</em> across the whole module with student-centred learning encouraging experimentation and application of theory to practice; |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation to learning</th>
<th>Tutors adopted the <em>Individual Constructivist Perspective</em> across the whole module with student-centred learning encouraging experimentation and application of theory to practice;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessments were problem-based within learners’ organisations;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learners had choice over focus of module assessment with application to work contexts and roles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation to learn</th>
<th>Tutors were aware that learners generally exhibit intrinsic motivation;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tutors outlined the value of their modules in relation to learners’ work context, roles and practices;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tutors provided appropriate feedback to enhance learners’ belief of success and demonstrated commitment to support;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tutors showed enthusiasm for the subject area and adopted strategies at day schools to motivate learners for the module duration;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tutors adopted strategies to motivate learners at a distance, which included interacting online and communicating proactively;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tutors required relevant emotional competences to effectively address this principle.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 13.2 - An Andragogical Model for these learners studying in blended learning contexts with factors provided to operationalise the six core principles.*

### 13.5 Chapter Conclusion

A proposed Andragogical Model for the context has been presented to support a module delivery that meets these particular learner needs. This chapter has emphasised the impact these learners had over the general module success but
highlighted areas where tutors influenced their perceptions of quality. The proposed Andragogical Model forms part of the Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices. The following chapter develops a broad picture of skills, qualities and attributes required of tutors in this context. This picture is developed alongside effective teaching, learning and assessment for these adult learners.
Chapter 14 The Effective Blended Learning Tutor

14.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter develops and presents a Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices, which is a conceptual framework for understanding the data within this research study. This framework suggests qualities and skills of effective tutors and provides a summary of effective tutoring in the context under investigation, which could support tutors, course leaders and managers in delivering successful blended learning programmes in similar contexts. The Model is developed in the context of teaching mature learners studying part-time (PT), vocationally relevant degrees at a distance.

Chapter 12 presented a group of emotional competences (ECs) contributing to the effectiveness of tutors within blended learning environments, with Chapter 13 developing an Andragogical Model for this context, both of which form part of the Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices. The main features of the Model include three dimensions:

- Constructivism;
- Care/Nurture;
- Instrumentality.

The Dimensions presented represent higher order ‘concepts’, with each Dimension detailing ‘lower level’ factors, which are provided to operationalise the three broad conceptual areas.
In this chapter, themes identified in literature review chapters, pilot study findings, and quantitative and qualitative data analyses are synthesised. Further, the discussion considers discourses in blended tutoring, distance education, adult learning, and emotional competences to demonstrate congruence in relation to tutors’ beliefs and practice. The themes are analysed to develop a framework of effective practice by drawing out key findings from this research study and considering how they can be operationalised by tutors and higher education (HE) institutions. Some findings were identified from all the modules and it will be argued that they are associated with a successful blended learning experience. Further factors have been identified from effective tutors, namely those receiving higher Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) scores, which influenced learner perceptions of quality. The discussion is in the context of general learner success on the modules under investigation (see Chapter 8.2 and 8.3). The chapter is structured as follows to discuss:

- effective teaching, learning, assessment and support in blended contexts (Section 14.2);
- prominent theorisations in distance education, which support the assertion that modules were successful and appropriate for adult learners (Section 14.3);
- tutors’ training and ability to work within available resources, and their impact on practice (Section 14.4);
- reflections and perceptions of effective blended learning tutors within this context, and their impact on practice (Section 14.5);
- the Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices in blended learning contexts (Section 14.6);
the operationalisation of the Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices (Section 14.7).

14.2 Effective Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Blended Learning Contexts

This research study has found a number of factors that suggest effective practice within this context. Tutors appeared competent in face-to-face environments and utilised a variety of teaching and learning methods at day schools. Teaching, learning and assessment were generally aligned following the Individual Constructivist Perspective (Mayes and de Freitas, 2004: 7) with a facilitative teaching style adopted as an overall approach to module delivery. To complement this style, learning outside day schools was focussed on module assessment tasks with these linked to practice and were case method or problem-based. Effective tutors were proactive in providing learner support, which opened opportunities for dialogue. This section argues the importance of the above for effective teaching, learning and assessment in this context with these findings forming the basis of the Model of Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices.

All tutors described effective practice in face-to-face contexts and appeared self-confident and self-efficacious in this environment (see Chapter 10.7). Tutors adopted a variety of teaching styles including transmission of knowledge and module information, and individual and social constructivist approaches, which allowed alignment of theory to practice and peer collaboration. Further, the day schools provided a structure for learners until the next face-to-face session or the summative assessment deadline (see Chapter 9.3).
‘Teaching as facilitating understanding on the part of the student’ (Kember, 1997: 264) was identified (see Chapter 9.2) as the teaching style adopted by tutors as an overall module approach, which appears appropriate for the context. This style complements the courses under investigation as they were related to learner’s professional practice. This aligns with Kember and Gow’s (1994: 69) finding that university departments adopting learning-facilitation strategies (or student-centred learning strategies) established an environment that encouraged Deep approaches to study, which was found in this research.

A feature of all modules was the aligned nature of teaching, learning and assessment (Biggs, 2003) with the Individual Constructivist Perspective common throughout (see Chapter 9.11). This perspective is congruent with the predominant approach to teaching adopted, ‘teaching as facilitating understanding’, as tutors guided learners through active discovery and construction of new ideas through hypothesis testing within work contexts. At day schools, although a range of pedagogies were adopted, learners were encouraged to apply theory to practice, which included a number of student-centred activities. Some of these were assessment focussed and continued outside day schools. Assessments allowed problem and case-based learning, and opportunities for autonomy, reflection, analysis and evaluation within work contexts (see Chapter 13).

Modules structured around assessment aligned with the Individual Constructivist Perspective and, importantly, appeared appropriate for part-time learners with conflicting personal circumstances (see Chapter 9.3). High CEQ scores on scale items
Clear Goals and Standards (mean = 3.89) and Good Teaching Feedback on, and Concern for, Student Learning (mean = 3.73) were evidence of structured learning environments supported by timely assessment and learner feedback. Further, modules included extensive formative assessment, which helped structure the modules for learners. Clear goals and standards were apparent in detailed assessment briefs, some exemplar material, with dates set for both formative and summative aspects, commonly structured around day schools. This level of structure appears appropriate for part-time, mature learners managing the influence of daily events, together with pressures and time constraints of work. Further, structuring modules around assessment provided a simpler path for learners, and tutors receiving higher CEQ scores adopted this approach.

Learners' peer support and collaboration occurred mainly at day schools with tutors having limited success in encouraging this interaction within formal online communication media. This key consideration of Social Constructivist Perspectives was occurring at day schools as tutors outlined a number of group work activities and opportunities for learners to share experiences. Online strategies to encourage peer interaction included synchronous conferencing, wikis and discussion boards to showcase elements of practice and outline plans for assessment, with tutors and virtual learning environment (VLE) analysis identifying limited learner engagement. Whilst peer collaboration was challenging in online environments, some tutors expressed guilt at the lack of interaction, even though it was occurring at day schools and the modules were generally successful. When questioned about improvements to practice, a common theme emerged around encouraging greater peer-collaboration in online
environments, even from tutors confident in their approach and receiving above average CEQ scores.

A feature of all modules was tutor availability to support learners, which centred on assessment strategies and allowed opportunity for dialogue (see Chapter 9 for discussion). However, tutors adopting more proactive support positively influenced learner perceptions of quality, indicating effective practice. Chapter 3 established tutor/learner dialogue as a key element in blended learning (Moore, 1997; Laurillard, 2002) with high mean scores received on the CEQ’s Good Teaching Communication scale (4.12) indicative of this occurring. Quantitative analysis highlighted the impact of online interaction in learner perceptions of quality, and this strengthens the importance of effective support and dialogue (see Chapter 8.6). Formative and summative assessments prompted both tutors and learners to communicate, with tutorial support available for those falling behind or missing day schools. All tutors described commitment to timely responses to communications, however, those receiving higher CEQ scores were more proactive in engaging learners. This was particularly noticeable with four tutors communicating with learners before the first day school, which opened opportunities for dialogue before the module commenced. These tutors were exhibiting what may be understood as Communication and Relationship Management competences (see Chapter 12.5) by opening opportunities for dialogue. In addition, formative assessment procedures (plans and drafts) encouraged a dialogue, if learners chose, with tutors indicating high uptake. This, coupled with availability and ready learner support, indicates a dialogue was occurring, particularly for those tutors
achieving higher CEQ scores. This indicates a tutor/learner dialogue within formal module communication media is sufficient for successful outcomes.

To summarise, a feature of all the modules was the aligned nature of teaching, learning and assessment following the Individual Constructivist Perspective. This is discussed further throughout this chapter and was important in the development of the Model of Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices’ Constructivism Dimension (see Section 14.6). Formative and summative assessments provided the basis of a simple module structure and effective support mechanisms, which further allowed a tutor/learner dialogue. In addition, assessments mirrored some core principles of the Andragogical Model but with some limitations of sharing learner experiences, as there was little evidence of peer collaboration within formal module structures (see Chapter 13.3). Effective practice was reinforced by a number of Self-Management and Relationship Management competences and these appeared significant in lowering the Transactional Distance between tutors and learners, which is discussed in the next section.

**14.3 Analysis of Distance Education Theorisations**

This section synthesises distance education theorisations to consider the quality of experience for these learners. It evaluates the modules under investigation to establish their suitability for adult learners studying predominantly at a distance and argues there was effective practice across modules, which supported the general success. This section argues that all modules demonstrated important features of Transactional Distance Theory (Moore, 1997), and Transactional Presence (Shin, 2002), with some congruence with core principles of the Andragogical Model (Knowles et al., 2011),
indicating effective practice for part-time, adult learners studying at a distance. In demonstrating important features of these theorisations, a number of Social Awareness and Relationship Management emotional competences were evident, which contribute to the Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices.

Dialogue, structure and learner autonomy are the key variables (Moore, 1997) necessary to reduce Transactional Distance between tutors and learners and they were demonstrated in all modules. As outlined in the previous section, and appropriate for these learners, modules were structured around assessment strategies. However, Moore (1997: 26) refers to structure as “the rigidity or flexibility of the programme’s educational objectives, teaching strategies and evaluation methods”, and there appeared sufficient flexibility for learners, who could tailor modules to their vocational context and adopt preferred approaches to study. The modules could accommodate learner’s individual needs (Moore, 1997: 26) particularly with regard to choice of assessment, which indicates learner autonomy. Moore (1997: 31) describes learner autonomy as:

the extent to which in the teaching/learning relationship it is the learner rather than the teacher who determines the goals, the learning experiences, and the evaluation decisions of the learning programme. (Moore, 1997: 31).

Further, learners determined assessment goals as they had choice of topic and were largely responsible for learning experiences, given the limited face-to-face teaching afforded by the day school model. This responsibility could have fostered constructivist
approaches to learning by the achievement of understanding through active discovery where learners construct new ideas. Revised Study Process Questionnaire (R-SPQ) results (see Chapter 8.2) noted Deep learners who are motivated to succeed, which further indicates learner autonomy. The presence of key features of Transactional Distance Theory suggests learners are also experiencing elements of a Transactional Presence (Shin, 2002) whilst undertaking modules.

A Transactional Presence was apparent between some learners and tutors with this indicating effective practice in supporting distance learning. Shin (2002: 132) proposed the construct of Transactional Presence “to be concerned with the degree to which a distance student perceives the availability of, and connectedness with, teachers, peer students and institution”. Tutors emphasised the role of the first day school in forming relationships if they had not previously taught learners. The extent of tutor support, the high CEQ Good Teaching Communication scale score, contact prior to first day school, extent of dialogue, and ‘visibility’ of some tutors, were key factors that indicate a Transactional Presence between some tutors and learners. This suggests some tutors were ‘available’ to meet the needs and desires of learners, who also felt ‘connected’ as a reciprocal relationship existed. Chapter 8 identified the most significant positive relationship with the CEQ was tutor’s previous relationships with learners, which suggests a developing Transactional Presence. Further, analysis of the Four Branch Model’s Understanding branch (see Chapter 11.2) emphasised the importance of tutor/learner relationships developing over time in understanding the impact of external events on individual’s emotional responses. The development of a tutor/learner Transactional Presence indicates a number of Social Awareness and Relationship
Management emotional competences were demonstrated by tutors receiving higher CEQ scores. As relationships develop, learners are more likely to perceive tutors as ‘available’ and that a ‘connection’ exists.

The discussion of Transactional Distance Theory and the Transactional Presence construct within this section has revealed congruence with the Andragogical Model. Learners’ self-concept, which refers to adults’ need to be responsible for their decisions in education, provides an interesting consideration in relation to Moore’s (1997) concepts, structure and learner autonomy. Modules were sufficiently structured to support mature, PT learners managing the influence of daily events, together with pressures and time constraints of work (Creanor, 2002; Smyth and Houghton, 2012), however, choice of assessment topic and responsibility for learning experiences, given the limited face-to-face teaching, allowed decisions on their education to be made. These factors appear similar to the role of learners’ experiences and readiness to learn core principles, as adults are more interested in learning if there is an immediate relevance to work, which further suggests overlap with Moore’s concept of learner autonomy.

A number of issues raised here contribute to the development of the Model of Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices. An important consideration for the Constructivism Dimension is that learners determine their assessment goals, as they have choice of topic, and they are largely responsible for their learning experiences. The importance of previous relationships with learners added to the Care/Nurture Dimension, a factor to operationalise being that courses are structured to accommodate tutors teaching at
multiple points of delivery. Further Care/Nurture factors were signalled from this discussion and are considered throughout this chapter, including the proactive measures some tutors undertook to communicate with learners and being ‘visible’ throughout the module.

To summarise, within the modules a lowering of Transactional Distance was occurring and a Transactional Presence was apparent between learners and tutors. A number of factors contributed to this including demonstration of Social Awareness and Relationship Management emotional competences, with tutor’s previous relationships with learners being particularly significant. In addition, the analysis of modules in relation to distance education theory has revealed synergies with some core principles of the Andragogical Model. Holmberg (1989: 163) considered that feelings of belonging are integral to effective distance education and the lowering of tutor/learner Transactional Distance is indicative of this occurring. A number of tutor skills, qualities and competences are required for this to occur, which are now considered.

14.4 Evaluation of Tutors’ Training and Ability to Work within Available Resources, and their Impact on Practice

This section synthesises a range of issues identified in Chapter 4 that influenced module quality and learner perceptions of tutors. Tutor training and continuing professional development (CPD), both formal and informal, are considered and technical skills, VLE and e-mail use are evaluated within this context. These abilities are discussed in relation to tutors’ perceptions of their workload and other emotional competences exhibited. Throughout this section, synergies with prominent
theorisations in distance education and important ECs are highlighted, and contribute to the Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices.

Tutors received no formal training from the institution when moving to blended learning delivery programmes, which may have resulted in the limited online interactions evident within module VLEs (see Chapter 10.3). They were potentially transferring face-to-face practices to blended learning, but a range of support mechanisms appeared to aid tutors’ transition to this context. Harry and Frank had undertaken blended and online teaching practice as part of study for higher degrees, however, Ann and Claire, who received the highest CEQ scores, had received no pedagogy related training relevant to the context, only technology-based CPD. Claire demonstrated what may be understood as Accurate Self-Assessment as she acknowledged limitations in practice with Self-Confidence shown to seek help when needed, and developed an assessment driven module reinforced with robust learner support. Tutors generally appeared proactive in seeking support, which may have been facilitated by the common use of asynchronous communications throughout modules. This allowed time to consult colleagues if any issues arose. All tutors outlined colleagues with whom they discussed issues of pedagogy and technology. A culture of support and sharing of good practice existed (see Chapter 9.7), which included robust technical support.

This research study has found that tutors require minimal technical skills to be effective in blended learning contexts and meeting the needs of adult learners studying vocationally related degrees. Chapter 8 identified a significant negative relationship between technical skills and CEQ results ($\bar{T} = -.188$, $p < .05$). Learners do not perceive
more technically proficient tutors as effective as measured by the CEQ and there are implications here with regard to *Transactional Distance*. A worrying consideration is that more technically proficient tutors could be letting technology carry out aspects of teaching, leaving learners feeling somewhat isolated. However, as discussed earlier (see Chapter 10.8), tutors’ use of educational technology mirrored preferred approaches to teaching, with those tutors who adopted a simple structure, focussed around assessment and support, achieving generally higher CEQ scores. Tutors require only minimal technical skills to be perceived as effective by learners and this could be as little as pedagogically appropriate use of e-mail, word-processing software, and the VLE, with this further emphasising a simple approach to module structure. What appears more important is alignment of educational technologies with a tutor’s adopted pedagogical approach that, in addition, meets the requirements of adult learners studying vocationally related degrees.

The VLE aided the educational process throughout modules but did not appear to support learning. VLEs have been criticised for supporting a content-driven approach (Weller 2007: 125; Dyke et al., 2007: 89) and this was observed within modules as they were predominantly used as a repository of resources. Varying levels of structure were apparent and mixed success observable with embedded collaborative tools. Emily’s use of synchronous web conferences engaged learners, but discussions drifted from predetermined topics to more practical issues around assessment and wider university systems. A Wiki and discussion boards were used to allow peer collaboration and validation of assignment plans, but there was limited learner and, in two cases, tutor engagement. Only two tutors used VLE learner tracking tools to monitor engagement,
with Claire’s use mirroring her commitment to student support, and this being an example of technology use aligned to pedagogical beliefs.

Tutors and learners\textsuperscript{13} stated that the VLE was slow, unattractive with access problems, however, its value was apparent when problems arose. Emily used social software as the module commenced to overcome these problems. Emily and George felt there was too much content on module VLEs, which needed to be simplified and given a stronger structure. This further supports the need for a simple module approach with a structured learning environment that is appropriate for these adult learners. However, when Frank's second day school was heavily disrupted by snow, VLE use significantly increased as learners accessed handouts and additional uploaded resources. This finding has implications for practice and highlights the importance of well-structured VLEs, containing valuable resources for learners studying at a distance. It provides a basis for learners to commence reading around module syllabi and a 'safety net' when problems arise.

E-mail use was prevalent throughout modules as it facilitated assessment and learner support whilst being an important motivating tool for some tutors beyond day schools. Tutors outlining a strong commitment to student support (Ann and Claire) commented on the personal nature of e-mail and its value in motivating and encouraging learners. Modules were generally structured around assessment with e-mail frequently used to support formative processes. The high mean \textit{Good Teaching Communication} score (4.12) indicates the value of e-mail within blended learning delivery models allowing an

\begin{flushleft}\textsuperscript{13} Learner views in this area were discerned from tutors during interviews and not from the learner questionnaire.\end{flushleft}
immediacy of response, with all tutors confirming commitment to learner support. E-mail allowed tutors to be ‘visible’ to learners, for example, Ann and Daisy forwarding hyperlinks to additional reading, also Ann and Claire sending messages to check on progress. E-mail use, particularly by Ann and Claire, appeared to highlight care and learning could coexist (Doherty and Mayer, 2003: 599) and a number of tutor ECs, particularly Social Awareness and Relationship Management.

Blended learning places additional requirements on tutor’s Self-Management competences and it was interesting to note that perceptions of workload appeared to influence module success. The delivery model affords greater autonomy over workloads (Stubbs et al., 2006), as online elements are not usually timetabled, thus allowing greater tutor control over practice. Trigwell and Prosser (2004: 419) argued tutors perceiving an appropriate workload are more likely to adopt student-centred approaches to teaching. Each tutor generally adopted this approach but some described greater attention to learner support and dialogue, which may be understood as Conscientiousness and Trustworthiness. Chapter 8 found tutors’ perceptions of workload, measured from interview analysis, positively correlated with the CEQ ($\tau = .198$, $p < .05$) and the Online Tutoring Questionnaire (OTQ) ($\tau = .249$, $p < .05$). This meant greater perceived workload resulted in reduced learner perceptions of quality with interesting findings at CEQ scale level. Tutor workload also positively correlated with Good Teaching Feedback on, and Concern for, Student Learning ($\tau = .306$, $p < .01$), which suggests this was affected when competing pressures mounted. Further, this pattern mirrors the findings about online interaction and could indicate that tutors who perceived their workload as high, contributed less in online environments (see
Chapter 8.6). This could have impacted on feedback to learners, and suggests issues of *Coping Potential* and *Organisation*. Tutors were adamant that workload issues did not affect practice and their overall commitment to learner support validates this assertion. The research only considered tutor perceptions and could not compare and evaluate actual workloads being undertaken and their impact on practice. Tutors’ workloads could have been quite different. Nevertheless, tutors perceiving their workload as high could transmit this to learners, thus affecting their view of module quality.

This section has identified a number of skills, qualities and perceptions that support effective blended tutoring and align with the emotional competences outlined in Chapter 12. These have provided a number of ‘lower level’ factors for the operationalisation of the Model of Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices, particularly for the Constructivism and Instrumentality Dimensions. Formal training for blended learning contexts is not essential, however, informal support, such as colleagues with whom to discuss pedagogy and effective use of educational technologies, appears important. Informal support is strengthened with additional time afforded by asynchronous CMCs and a culture of support and sharing of good practice, but tutors require *Accurate Self-Awareness* and *Self-Confidence* in seeking help. Tutors require minimal technical skills, with alignment of educational technologies to adopted pedagogical approaches being of greater significance, an aspect considered further in next section. Necessary skills for effective tutoring include developing a structured learning environment within a VLE and appropriate e-mail use to support and motivate learners. Tutors making fewer references to workload issues were perceived as better by learners and interacted more
in online environments therefore, potentially, provided better feedback. All tutors were adamant that workload did not impact on module quality, which appears significant in the general overall success. However, those perceiving workload as high could transmit these feelings to learners, thus influencing perceptions of quality.

**14.5 Consideration of Tutor Perceptions and Reflections for Effective Blended Tutoring**

This section considers findings from Chapter 10 about tutor reflections, self-efficacy and perceptions, and analyses key qualities in relation to emotional competences and effective practice in blended learning environments. Chapter 4 highlighted personal qualities, such as enthusiasm (Smith, 2004: 34), that would aid tutors in blended learning contexts. Through interview analysis, a number of personal qualities emerged from exploring tutor perceptions and their impact on practice. This section considers qualities that should be sought when recruiting tutors or selecting staff to move into blended learning contexts. Tutor self-efficacy is further considered in relation to effective practice in blended learning contexts. Considerable overlap emerged between Goleman's (2001) Framework of Emotional Competences and the personal qualities outlined in Chapter 4, suggesting some synergy between trait-based EC theorisations and blended tutoring discourses. This analysis helped discern qualities that support effective tutors and tutoring in this context, which informed the development of the Model of Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices.

Tutor perceptions of online learning influenced module practice with learners also appearing reluctant to engage in this medium. Previous negative experiences of online learning influenced perceptions with tutors finding the context isolating and
disorientating. Tutors moved practice to areas where they were more comfortable, relevant examples including additional learner support and greater emphasis on face-to-face pedagogy. Limited self-efficacy was indicated when tutors avoided interview questions about online pedagogy, citing user issues and time to manage online learning as influencing factors. Tutor perceptions and learner resistance resulted in limited online, peer, social constructivist learning.

Tutor reflections and past-experiences that resulted in a simple, assessment-focussed module structure generally received higher CEQ scores and suggest effective practice. Kember (1997: 270) highlighted the influence of tutor’s epistemological beliefs and the impact this has on adopted teaching approaches, and this could have been apparent when examining reflections. Ann and Claire’s reflections focussed on a lack of support received when studying, which resulted in a clear, structured, pragmatic and student-centred approach to module delivery. This approach was rooted in a facilitative teaching approach that aligned with the Individual Constructivist Perspective. Three tutors’ reflections focussed on effective pedagogy in blended learning contexts, all from teacher training backgrounds, with Bill emphasising the space for learning and reflection the delivery model affords. This approach led, again, to an assessment focussed module, aligned with the Individual Constructivist Perspective, with learners given time and space for reflection, with Bill receiving an above average CEQ score.

Tutors’ perceptions of blended learning appeared to influence CEQ scores and demonstrated a quality that supports effective practice in this context. Emily felt “face-to-face trumps everything” and this was a common perception of tutors and linked to
previous discussions of self-efficacy in this context. Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores were more positive in discussions about the opportunities blended learning afforded, particularly about face-to-face elements and the value for these learners but, also, time for learner reflection. Bill's positive approach to the affordances of blended learning (outlined in the paragraph above) was in contrast to Daisy and George's, who also reflected on effective pedagogy but raised a greater number of difficulties and improvements they would like to make. Daisy found moving to a blended learning delivery model problematic, primarily because of the challenges of introducing social constructivist pedagogy. The module had previously been delivered on a traditional face-to-face model and had not been specifically designed for blended learning contexts. This influenced Daisy's reflections around a lack of time available for her preferred approach to pedagogy. Time and workload were George's reasons for difficulties experienced with his module but, despite this being the module's fourth iteration, no changes had been made to improve practice. Self-efficacy issues were apparent here, particularly around module management, as self-confidence was not demonstrated in making necessary changes to improve practice.

Self-efficacy was apparent in tutors' descriptions of face-to-face teaching, however, those receiving higher CEQ scores demonstrated greater self-efficacy in their overall approach to module delivery. Chapter 10 highlighted the importance of self-efficacy for tutors and its potential to improve performance. This was evident at day schools as tutors believed in their capabilities to teach and motivate learners in this context. However, tutors receiving higher CEQ scores appeared similarly self-efficacious about their overall approach to teaching, learning, assessment and support throughout the
module. Ann and Claire were confident in their approach based on active student support with Bill similarly so about creating space for learning and reflection. Emily outlined difficulties of competing pressures but was adamant that response times were quick, feedback was prompt, and was proactive in supporting learners between day schools.

The case of Harry, who outlined high self-efficacy in all contexts but received relatively low CEQ scores, highlighted the value of triangulating research methods within this research and the limitations of interviews alone in identifying effective tutors. Harry outlined confidence in his approach in face-to-face contexts when stating "you get them in a good mood and they're excited to be there", and also his commitment to learner support when workload was discussed, "it didn't have an impact on the student experience because I didn't let it". Chapter 10.7 argues those who perceive themselves as highly self-efficacious feel they need to invest little effort in the achievement of outcomes (Bandura, 1982: 196), and this could have been apparent as he did not contribute to discussion boards regarding assessment plans. Further, Harry received a high positive-negative value MSCEIT score (see Chapter 8.3), which may indicate some misreading of situations. Harry spoke convincingly at interview regarding practice, however, only when VLE contributions were examined was the lack of engagement in online environments apparent. This research aims to establish factors to enable the recruitment or redeployment of effective tutors in blended learning contexts, and the analysis of Harry has been potentially revealing about the limitations of interviews in supporting this process.
All tutors expressed enthusiasm about the affordances of educational technologies (see Chapter 10.4) but their choice mirrored adopted approaches to module delivery and pedagogical beliefs. Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores (Ann and Claire) described a strong commitment to student support with e-mail being used outside day schools to facilitate communication. Generally, Bill, George and Daisy favoured a greater use of social constructivist pedagogies and this influenced online practice as a wiki and social networking software were incorporated, however, they received mixed CEQ scores.

A further quality of note was tutor experience in blended learning contexts. Data analysis in Chapter 8 found a significant positive relationship between tutor blended learning experience and CEQ results ($T = .215$, $p < .05$), which suggests tutors develop in practice.

To summarise, this section highlighted the importance of reflections that lead to a simple module structure that aligns with the *Individual Constructivist Perspective*, again, promoting the Constructivism Dimension of the Model of Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices. Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores were self-efficacious in their approach to teaching, learning and assessment throughout the whole module. However, care needs to be taken to identify those who perceive themselves as highly self-efficacious, particularly when recruiting or redeploying tutors to deliver blended learning modules. Tutor perceptions had an influence over module practice and those with generally positive perceptions were perceived as better by learners. These tutors were more positive about the affordances of blended learning particularly in meeting adult learner needs. It appears beneficial for tutors to be experienced in blended learning contexts.
The Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices

Chapter 4.4 identified the issues to be explored within this research study, which included effective practice in teaching, learning, assessment and learner support, as well as considering other issues that influence learner perceptions of quality in the context under investigation. Stronge (2002: 64) stated that “teaching effectiveness draws on a multitude of skills and attributes in different combinations and in different contexts to produce the results that define effectiveness”, and this was certainly apparent in this research as a complex, multi-dimensional nature of effective teaching emerged in blended learning contexts. However, a clear conceptualisation of effective practice is proposed, which is supported by a summary of tutor qualities and competences. This chapter now develops the Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices in the context under investigation (see Figure 14.1). The Model has three dimensions, which include higher order ‘concepts’ - constructivism, care/nurture and instrumentality, together with ‘lower level’ factors (see Section 14.7), which are provided to operationalise the three broad conceptual areas. The first dimension, Constructivism, represents students’ learning as achieving understanding. The second dimension, Care/Nurture, represents the support, and nature of that support, provided by tutors for learners. The third dimension, Instrumentality, represents other factors beyond constructivism and care/nurture that contribute to the effectiveness of tutors within blended learning contexts. The Model is a conceptual framework for understanding the data generated from the practices of eight tutors and their approach to delivery of a module within a HE institution (see Chapter 1.3). This represents an interpretation of effective practice in a particular cultural context and this framework may be useful in understanding other instances of blended learning in similar contexts. The Model
suggests qualities and skills of effective tutors and provides a summary of effective tutoring in the context under investigation, which could support tutors, course leaders and managers in delivering successful blended learning programmes.

![Figure 14-1 - A Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices.](image)

The Model is supported by the group of ECs described in Chapter 12 and assumes effective tutors possess these competences. These ECs predominantly support the Care/Nurture Dimension, such as the example of tutors being committed to learner support, but also aspects of Instrumentality, such as tutors manage competing pressures and are organised. The Model is further supported by the proposed Andragogical Model (see Chapter 13) for blended learning contexts and the factors it contained to operationalise its core principles. These factors predominantly support the Constructivism Dimension but also elements of Care/Nurture. Elements of practice that
informed the Model’s development are now discussed with the lower level factors summarised in the next section.

14.7 The Operationalisation of the Model of Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices

This research study proposes a Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices to meet the needs of adult learners studying part-time, vocationally relevant degrees at a distance. As outlined in Section 14.6, the Model includes three dimensions (see Figure 14.1) detailing higher order ‘concepts’ and this section now presents ‘lower level’ factors, which are provided to potentially guide blended learning practitioners, course leaders and university departments in similar contexts. These factors help operationalise the three broad conceptual areas of effective blended tutors and tutoring, namely constructivism, care/nurture and instrumentality.

The Model firstly proposes factors present across all modules that were associated with their general success. This research study argues that these factors do not all have to be present for a successful blended learning experience but are certainly associated with effective practice. Some factors could be missing, but particularly with these intrinsically motivated learners, the modules would still be generally considered successful. For example, the Model highlights robust technical support as a factor associated with general success as all tutors mentioned this was apparent when delivering modules. However, as there were no issues with technical support on the modules under investigation, it is difficult to confidently state it is essential for successful module outcomes. Frank’s module, heavily disrupted by external events, still had learners achieving and generally happy with their learning experience. Secondly, the
Model proposes factors influencing learner perceptions of quality established from this research study. These factors are highlighted from effective tutors, namely those receiving higher CEQ scores, and indicate practices that if not present or exhibited, would influence learner perceptions of quality.

For ease of presentation, the lower level factors are outlined in three tables that describe:

- Constructivism (Table 14.1);
- Care/Nurture (Table 14.2);
- Instrumentality (Table 14.3).

Below each is a brief discussion and rationale of the dimension’s content.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors associated with effective practice</th>
<th>Factors influencing learner perceptions of quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The <em>Individual Constructivist Perspective</em> was the predominant approach to module teaching, learning and assessment;</td>
<td>• Tutors developed strategies to manage adult's needs such as consideration of spread of assessment deadlines;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A facilitative teaching style was the predominant approach;</td>
<td>• Tutors promoted a simple module structure focussed around assessment that creates more 'space' for learning;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assessments were problem-based;</td>
<td>• Tutors were clear of the purpose of adopted educational technologies, which align with desired learning activities and outcomes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tutors related theory to practice whilst demonstrating to learners the relevance of topics covered;</td>
<td>• Tutors’ pedagogical beliefs aligned with the <em>Individual Constructivist Perspective</em>;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learner support was structured around module assessment requirements including formative assessments;</td>
<td>• Tutors perceived blended learning as an opportunity for learners;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assessments were developed to encourage tutor ‘availability’ and ‘visibility’ and were the basis of tutor/learner dialogue;</td>
<td>• Tutors displayed self-efficacy in all teaching and learning environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clear goals and standards were evident to learners such as detailed assessment briefs and exemplar work;</td>
<td>• Tutors appropriately structured module VLEs with resources and access to further reading to act as a 'safety net' for learners;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tutors displayed self-efficacy in face-to-face environments and in providing learner support.</td>
<td>• Tutors developed strategies to manage adult's needs such as consideration of spread of assessment deadlines;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14.1 - Constructivism Dimension’s lower level factors.

There are similarities with some of Constructivism’s lower level factors with the other Dimensions. Teaching, learning and assessment factors were firmly rooted in constructivism with the support strategies helping provide a structured learning environment. This support prompted tutor/learner dialogue with further guidance provided by an appropriately structured VLE, assessment briefs and exemplar work. The VLE, which can act as a ‘safety net’ should learners experience difficulties, could sit in the Care/Nurture Dimension, however, the structured support it can provide suggested a greater congruence with constructivism. Further, tutors’ use of educational technologies, pedagogical beliefs, and perceptions of blended learning as an opportunity, could sit within Instrumentality, but all support constructivist approaches to learning if adopted together.
Factors associated with effective practice

- Tutors were committed to learner support;
- Tutors motivated and encouraged learners in face-to-face environments;
- Tutors were empathic to adult learner needs and mindful of their competing pressures;
- Tutors were enthusiastic about their subject, face-to-face delivery, and learner support.

Factors influencing learner perceptions of quality

- Tutors provided proactive and not reactive learner support;
- Tutors provided proactive and not reactive communications such as communication before the first day school;
- Tutors taught learners at multiple points during courses when practical, thereby encouraging relationships to develop.

Table 14.2 - Care/Nurture Dimension’s lower level factors.

There are similarities with some of Care/Nurture’s lower level factors with the other Dimensions, particularly around notions of communication and support. Providing proactive communications and support encouraged constructivist approaches to learning, however, the thought and planning required to undertake these actions suggest a greater congruence with Care/Nurture. Tutors’ adopting these strategies undertook extra activities to engage with and support learners, which demonstrated a commitment beyond what could be described as effective constructivist teaching. This commitment influenced the decision to add these factors to the Care/Nurture Dimension.
All the factors in the Care/Nurture Dimension are strengthened if tutors possess the group of ECs described in Chapter 12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 14.3</th>
<th>Instrumentality - factors associated with, and influencing, learner perceptions of quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Factors associated with effective practice | • Tutors had colleagues to collaborate with and discuss effective pedagogy in blended learning contexts;  
• Tutors had available mentors or coaches to discuss effective use of educational technologies in blended learning contexts;  
• Tutors’ departments had a ‘culture of support’;  
• Tutors effectively used e-mail;  
• Educational technologies were robust;  
• There was available technical support;  
• Tutors had a minimum basic level of IT skills. |
| Factors influencing learner perceptions of quality | • Tutors managed competing pressures and were organised;  
• Tutors solved problems as they occur and displayed initiative;  
• Tutors had blended learning experience or developed in practice;  
• Tutors with high IT technical skills negatively influenced learner perceptions of quality. |

There are similarities with some of Instrumentality’s lower level factors with the other Dimensions, such as the effective use of e-mail, but there are tensions around notions of tutor collaboration and cultures of support. These factors suggest the development of practice within communities (Lave and Wenger, 1991), which are constructivist in orientation. However, as these factors were not directly related to the teaching and learning within modules, they have been located in the Instrumentality Dimension.
Further, and somewhat light-heartedly, tutor collaborations around effective practice could lead to behaviourist orientations being adopted throughout the modules, which would conflict with the predominant constructivist approaches. Again, some of these factors, such as tutors solving problems as they occur, are strengthened if tutors possess the group of ECs described in Chapter 12.

### 14.8 Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has synthesised themes identified in literature review chapters, pilot study findings, and quantitative and qualitative data analyses to present a Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices. The Model requires further research to broaden the empirical base and needs further research both within similar university schools and across a range of subject disciplines to enhance its construct validity. The findings may have differed if a broader mix of disciplines was included in the study.

The following chapter summarises the ideas raised in the thesis.
Chapter 15 Conclusion

15.1 Introduction

This research study has investigated tutor practices in blended learning environments and their relationships with emotional competence (EC) and learner perceptions of quality. This was of particular interest given my previous experience of blended learning as a Masters student and my role as a tutor and manager of courses in this context. There was previously no empirical evidence for a link between emotional competence, and teaching effectiveness in blended learning contexts. This study has addressed this in a specific blended learning context. To bridge this gap in existing knowledge a mixed methods approach was adopted and central to the research was the investigation of the following hypothesis:

- tutors exhibiting high levels of emotional competence are perceived as effective in blended learning environments by their learners.

The findings presented add to a growing body of literature around effective blended tutoring by focusing on the context of adult learners studying part-time (PT), vocationally relevant degrees, through a day school model of delivery. The research sought to explore the following 'gaps in knowledge' within the context under investigation:

- The relationships between emotional competence and learner perceptions of quality;
- Effective practice in teaching, learning, assessment and support, in learner perceptions of quality;
- The exploration of other factors potentially influencing learner perceptions of quality.

The research study's aims were:

- to explore effective practice of tutors in blended learning environments;
- to investigate skills, qualities and competences, particularly emotional competences, contributing to the effectiveness of tutors within blended learning environments;
- to evaluate tutors’ skills, qualities and competences through analysis of learners’ perceptions;
- to propose a model of the observed tutor beliefs and practices in blended learning environments.

The study is of relevance within a UK higher education (HE) context as the number of PT learners remain high and this situation could continue with the current Government’s policy to allow these students access to course fee loans (The Browne Report, 2010). Within UK HE, there is a greater use of online learning and tutoring together with an increasing number of blended learning delivery patterns with tutors having to adjust to this context and amend pedagogical approaches (MacDonald, 2006).
The research study was based at a ‘post 1992’ university and all the courses investigated as part of the research were located in the School of Education. Through the analysis of eight tutors and their approach to delivering a blended learning module, the findings propose a Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices (see Chapter 14.6). The Model is a conceptual framework for understanding the data generated from this research study and represents an interpretation of effective practice in a particular cultural context (see Chapter 1.3). This framework may be useful in understanding other instances of blended learning in similar contexts and can be considered when recruiting tutors, redeploying existing lecturers to this context, and selecting relevant training and development. Further, the Model includes considerations for HE institutions offering blended learning courses for these particular learners.

The proposed Model synthesises discussions of effective teaching, learning and assessment in blended learning with tutor emotional competences that align with learner perceptions of quality. This is supported by a detailed consideration of adult learner needs, again within this specific context, and an area of potential value to university courses targeting this particular audience. This research study questions the utility of the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) in identifying effective tutors for this context, with a number of factors supporting this assertion. Further, a number of other important findings in the study advance thinking of effective tutor practice in blended learning environments within this context.

This chapter firstly summarises the Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices and then highlights other key findings. Limitations of the research study are discussed
before the chapter considers areas of further research that could develop and enhance this study.

15.2 The Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices

A significant finding of this research study is that effective blended practice for these learners demonstrated aligned teaching, learning and assessment predominantly based on tutors adopting an *Individual Constructivist Perspective* (Mayes and de Freitas, 2004: 7). Tutors’ predominant approach to teaching mirrored ‘teaching as facilitating understanding’ (Kember, 1997: 264), which this study argues was appropriate and a factor in the *Deep* approaches to study adopted by learners throughout modules. Such teaching, learning and assessment was enhanced with particular tutor skills, qualities and competences, and other factors, that were associated with and influenced learner perceptions of quality. Further, tutors’ pedagogy and assessment exhibited significant congruence with the Andragogical Model (Knowles et al., 2011), which resulted in the proposal of an Andragogical Model to describe their practices and beliefs associated with learner perceptions of effectiveness. The research study proposes a development to Knowles et al.’s Andragogical Model regarding the *motivation to learn* core principle to include extrinsic motivators relevant for adult learners studying PT, vocationally relevant degrees, at a distance. These broad points form the basis of the Model of Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices for this context.

The Model is comprised of three areas (see Chapter 14.6). There is overlap between these areas as the research study found synergies between prominent discourses in
effective blended tutoring, distance education, theorisations of emotional competence, and theorisations of adult learning. The areas are:

- a conceptualisation of effective tutors and tutoring in blended learning contexts consisting of three dimensions, which include higher order ‘concepts’, with ‘lower level’ factors for the Model's operationalisation;
- a group of emotional competences contributing to the effectiveness of tutors within blended learning environments;
- a model of andragogy to describe tutor practices and beliefs, again, including a number of factors for its operationalisation to meet adult learner needs within this context.

The Model suggests qualities and skills of effective tutors and provides a summary of effective tutoring in the context under investigation, which could support lecturers, course leaders and managers in delivering successful blended learning programmes. The Model could:

- assist tutors’ teaching, assessment and learner support by, for example, structuring support around module assessment requirements;
- support the recruitment and selection of tutors for this context by highlighting the importance of, for example, pedagogical beliefs aligning with the Individual Constructivist Perspective, specific ECs, and self-efficacy in blended learning contexts;
• support tutors’ training needs analyses by, for example, highlighting and exploring unexamined assumptions, and considering effective e-mail and VLE use;
• support course leaders in the development of blended learning programmes to, for example, provide a course structure that encourages tutor/learner relationships to foster, and ensure there are a mix of assessment strategies appropriate for adults studying vocationally relevant degrees;
• support university managers to ensure there is, for example, robust educational technology with available technical support, and a culture of sharing and support amongst academic staff.

The above list is presented to indicate the relative importance in terms of a contribution to knowledge in relation to effective tutors and tutoring in blended learning contexts. The points give a flavour of both contributions to knowledge and implications for practice, with the Model providing evidence of both. For example, there is a contribution to knowledge noted about importance of pedagogical beliefs mirroring the Individual Constructivist Perspective, with implications for staff development and training highlighted regarding teaching, learning and assessment including exploring tutors’ unexamined assumptions and meeting learners’ needs. Further, the proposed group of ECs also provided evidence for the hypothesis as, through qualitative analysis, tutors exhibiting these competences were perceived as effective by their learners.

The research study identified a number of factors that influenced learner perceptions of quality, and these are incorporated into the Model. The Model firstly proposes factors
present across all modules that were associated with their general success (as indicated by the generally high scores learners gave tutors via questionnaire responses; learners generally adopting *Deep* approaches to study, and learners indicating satisfaction with their achievement). This research study argues that these factors do not all have to be present for a successful blended learning experience, but they are associated with effective practice. The Model secondly proposes factors influencing learner perceptions of quality determined from this research study.

Each section of the Model is now outlined together with discussion of its contribution to knowledge and influence on practice within blended learning contexts.

**A Conceptualisation of Effective Tutors and Tutoring in Blended Learning Contexts**

This section of the Model is comprised of three dimensions, which include higher order ‘concepts’, with ‘lower level’ factors to guide their operationalisation (see Chapter 14.6). The implications for practice described below are derived from the conceptual framework, which, as stated above, may be useful in understanding other instances of blended learning in similar contexts. The dimensions are:

- Constructivism;
- Care/Nurture;
- Instrumentality.

The first dimension, Constructivism, represents students’ learning as achieving understanding. The second dimension, Care/Nurture, represents the support, and
nature of that support, provided by tutors for learners. The third dimension, Instrumentality, represents other factors beyond Constructivism and Care/Nurture that contribute to the effectiveness of tutors within blended learning contexts. For each Dimension, this section now moves on to describe their ‘lower’ level factors, followed by a discussion of contributions to existing knowledge and the implications for practice.

**Constructivism Dimension – ‘Lower Level’ Factors**

The Constructivism Dimensions’ lower level factors that are associated with effective practice included the adoption by tutors of an *Individual Constructivist Perspective* as the predominant approach to module delivery. This was supported by a facilitative teaching style where tutors related theory to practice whilst demonstrating to learners the value of topics covered. Further, tutors were effective in face-to-face environments providing a mixture of pedagogies, clear goals and standards, whilst motivating and fostering interpersonal relationships. Assessments provided the basis for module structure, which is important for learners with competing pressures, and enhanced with effective support, thus opening dialogic channels. Learner support was structured around module assessment requirements, promoting tutor ‘visibility’ and ‘availability’. To guide learners through modules, clear goals and standards were, again, provided by tutors, such as assessment briefs and exemplar work. Learners had access to an appropriately structured virtual learning environment (VLE) which signposted reading and further research, and acted as a 'safety net' for those unable to attend day schools. Finally, tutors displayed self-efficacy in face-to-face environments and in providing learner support.
A number of Constructivism aspects were found to influence learner perceptions of quality, thus indicating effective practice and providing further factors for this Dimension’s operationalisation. Blended learning modules, favoured by learners, had a simple approach to teaching, learning and assessment that focussed on formative and summative tasks whilst tutors developed strategies to manage adult learner needs, such as, the spread of deadlines. Tutors’ pedagogical beliefs aligned with the Individual Constructivist Perspective as those with primarily social constructivist pedagogical beliefs were not as effective in learners’ eyes. This research study found that effective tutors generally perceived blended learning as an opportunity for these learners, such as, being appropriate for those with competing pressures or providing more ‘space’ for learning. Tutors generally had clear understanding of the purpose of adopted educational technologies, which aligned with desired learning activities and outcomes, e-mail primarily used for learner support being a relevant example. Finally, tutors displayed self-efficacy in all teaching and learning environments in blended contexts.

**Constructivism Dimension – Discussion**

Online learning enables increased opportunities for peer interaction and the adoption of social constructivist approaches beyond face-to-face settings. This has seen the development of popular social constructivist models of e-learning that encourage student participation and collaboration, such as, the Five-Stage Model (Salmon, 2003), and Networked Learning (Goodyear et al., 2004). Mayes and de Freitas (2004: 7) drew on Biggs’ Constructive Alignment Model (2003) to present three broad theoretical perspectives to inform online and blended learning design. This included the Constructivist Perspective which highlights the achievement of understanding through
active discovery where learners construct new ideas by hypothesis testing. The *Constructivist Perspective* has both an individual and social focus to allow learning as achieving understanding in individual and collaborative contexts (Beetham and Sharpe, 2007: 220), with these helpful in the analysis of tutor practices on the modules under investigation. As part of this research study I considered the *Individual Constructivist Perspective* to focus on students generally learning independently from tutors and peers throughout modules. However, tutors provided support to learners, engaged in dialogue regarding learning and assessment, but with limited peer interaction and collaboration occurring outside face-to-face contexts. Whereas, the *Social Constructivist Perspective* included a far greater focus on peer collaboration throughout teaching, learning and assessment, particularly outside face-to-face contexts and within online learning environments. Chapter 3 noted some benefits of social constructivist approaches within collaborative environments, including conceptual development; support for reflection, peer review and evaluation; and experimentation with shared discovery (Beetham and Sharpe, 2007: 220). However, although social constructivist approaches were utilised at day schools within face-to-face settings, they were limited in online environments to a tutor/learner dialogue, predominantly via e-mail.

Tutor attempts at peer online social constructivist approaches were largely unsuccessful within the modules under investigation. Some tutors did not attempt any, with activities outside day schools centred on support and individual assessments and the data indicated that learners agreed with Mason (2006: 131) who argued collaborative learning was time consuming and inefficient. It is not clear whether learners were not engaging because of tutor issues, such as limited self-efficacy in this context or not
being formally trained, or there were other influencing factors. It is reasonable to assume that some learners would want to engage in online, peer, social constructivist learning, however, others are likely to be undertaking study for instrumental reasons and, coupled with competing pressures, are unwilling to engage. As Falloon (2011: 206) notes, too much structure can become an inconvenience to some and work against the reasons for choosing online learning.

It appears that forcing participation in the online confines of a module is problematic and, given the rise of Web 2.0 technologies, learners should be encouraged to develop their own communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) and draw on their own personal learning networks (PLNs) (Wheeler, 2012). The rise of Web 2.0 technologies, social networking media and easy access to content on the internet (such as through open educational resources) has supported a democratisation of learning (Wheeler, 2012) where students have increased opportunities for self-directed learning, including social constructivist approaches. This could be within their university module or course group, via Facebook for example, or through the students’ own personal learning networks (Wheeler, 2012), possibly linked to their work contexts. For example, a school business manager could request help and engage in dialogue on a microblogging forum (such as Twitter) with a group in the same work role, and receive feedback about a piece of research for a university assignment. This democratisation of learning and the rise of Web 2.0 technologies align with this research study’s findings regarding the value of adopting an individual constructivist approach within the formal confines of a module. Forced contributions to module online environments could conflict with learners’ desire to engage with their own PLN and be self-directing in their study (Knowles et al., 2011).
This research study, therefore, advances knowledge within this context by providing empirical evidence for the value of adopting an individual constructivist approach within the formal confines of a module but with a number of supporting factors to ensure learners, with competing pressures, have a successful learning experience. These factors include effective learner support mechanisms, clear goals and standards, tutors’ pedagogical beliefs aligning with the Individual Constructivist Perspective, and tutor self-efficacy in all teaching and learning environments within blended contexts.

Qualitative analysis revealed tutor perceptions of online learning were overwhelmingly negative, with each having previous frustrating experiences in this context as learners. The research study’s sampling criteria targeted experienced teachers, which resulted in an age profile of tutors who could be classified as digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001), who were possibly not accustomed to technology-enhanced learning. The learners under investigation were generally happy with their tutors and modules (see Chapter 8.2 and 8.3) and a significant number were aged between 25 and 54 and, therefore, could also be classified as digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001), who may also have limited previous exposure to technology enhanced learning. Their negative perceptions of online learning could complement those of their tutors and indicate that, although there was limited social constructivist learning, learners were generally happy with their experience on modules. This research study argues a tutor/learner dialogue was sufficient for success in the formal confines of a module. However, it is likely valuable peer support and sharing of learner experiences was occurring though personal learning networks within social networking media.
Tutors’ reluctance to engage in online learning potentially mirrored learners’ reluctance as both groups could be categorised as digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001). As social networking platforms are becoming pervasive, a similar study to this could have different findings in the medium to long term. Whether the benefits of online social constructivist approaches within the formal confines of a module outweigh adults’ competing demands whilst undertaking PT degree courses remains to be seen.

**Care/Nurture Dimension – ‘Lower Level’ Factors**

The Care/Nurture Dimensions’ lower level factors that are associated with effective practice include tutors were enthusiastic about their subject, face-to-face delivery, and learner support. Further, tutors generally motivated and encouraged in face-to-face environments. Building on factors from the Constructivism Dimension, tutors were empathic to adult learner needs, mindful of their competing pressures and committed to their support.

Care/Nurture factors found to influence learner perceptions of quality, thus indicating effective practice, were primarily regarding proactive communications and course structure. Tutors utilised proactive and not reactive communications to learners, such as, communications before the first day school. Where possible, courses should be structured to allow tutor/learner relationships to develop. As relationships develop, learners are more likely to perceive tutors as ‘available’ and a ‘connection’ exists indicating a lowering of *Transactional Distance* (Moore, 1997) and the enhancement of aspects of *Transactional Presence* (Shin, 2002).
Care/Nurture Dimension – Discussion

The Model helps to explain the value of tutors encouraging individual constructivist approaches to learning within the formal confines of the module. However, this was found to be enhanced with proactive and effective tutor support mechanisms and the Care/Nurture Dimension is central to this occurring. The Model’s Constructivism Dimension proposes a structure for support mechanisms and strategies to encourage dialogue but, in the study, these were enhanced by, for example, tutors motivating learners, being empathic to their needs, being enthusiastic, and proactive in their communications. These qualities and abilities are central to the gap in knowledge around practice in blended learning environments within the context under investigation and help operationalise the proposed group of emotional competences contributing to the effectiveness of tutors (see Chapter 12). For example, proactive tutor communications were found to enhance learner perceptions of quality suggesting Self-Management and Social Awareness emotional competences, including conscientiousness, organisation, empathy and service orientation (the ability to meet learners’ often unstated needs).

Instrumentality Dimension – ‘Lower Level’ Factors

Instrumentality factors that are associated with learner perceptions of quality within the study included tutors having informal support from colleagues, either to discuss pedagogy and educational technologies, or having informal coaches or mentors. Further, a culture of support and sharing of good practice was apparent in the School, which facilitated tutors’ professional development. This research study found that tutors require only minimal information technology (IT) technical skills to be perceived as
effective by learners and this could be as little as pedagogically appropriate use of e-mail, word-processing software, and the VLE, with this further emphasising a simple approach to module structure. Effective use of E-mail was found to be important in this context to promote dialogue whilst motivating and supporting adult learners. Further, educational technologies were robust with technical support available.

A number of Instrumentality aspects were found to influence learner perceptions of quality, thus indicating effective practice and providing factors for this Dimension’s operationalisation. The most effective tutors managed competing pressures and were organised. Tutor perceptions of workload influenced learner feedback of quality with a potential contributing factor being that blended learning contexts require greater autonomy over management of online teaching and support. Tutors making fewer references to workload were, in the eyes of learners, more effective in giving feedback and interacting within online environments. These tutors described solving problems as they occurred and displayed initiative and were more experienced in blended learning contexts. Finally, this research study found learners do not perceive more technically proficient tutors as effective, with a worrying consideration being that they could be letting technology carry out aspects of teaching, leaving learners feeling somewhat isolated. This suggests HE institutions should not assume tutors with high technical skills will be perceived as effective by learners. Of greater importance than technical skills is the use of appropriate technologies that align with the Individual Constructivist Perspective, teaching as facilitating understanding, and active learner support. However, tutors should be self-aware of limitations and self-confident to seek support when needed.
Instrumentality Dimension – Discussion

This research study highlighted a gap in current knowledge relating to the influence of other factors, beyond teaching, learning and assessment, potentially influencing learner perceptions of quality. The Instrumentality Dimension encompasses some of these factors whilst suggesting practices university departments could adopt to support the delivery of successful blended learning programmes. Such practices include effective tutor training, robust technology and available technical support, encouraging experience in blended learning contexts, and developing a ‘culture of support’ amongst academic staff regarding pedagogically appropriate educational technology use. This final point links to notions of practice development within communities (Lave and Wenger, 1991), thereby sharing and developing the expertise contained within university departments.

Such teaching, learning and assessment outlined as part of the Model’s three Dimensions is enhanced with particular tutor skills, qualities and competences that are associated with, and influence, learner perceptions of quality.

A Group of Emotional Competences Contributing to the Effectiveness of Tutors within Blended Learning Environments

Over recent years a number of e-learning models and frameworks have been developed that assert or evaluate effective practice within online and blended contexts. Examples include Communities of Inquiry (Garrison et al., 2000), the Five-Stage Model (Salmon, 2003), Networked Learning (Goodyear et al., 2004), and the E-learning Ladder (Moule, 2007). Such models and frameworks prescribe what tutors should do within online and blended environments but, crucially, do not consider the qualities and
skills that underpin the suggested actions and activities. Chapter 4.4 highlighted the following gaps in existing knowledge:

- there is a lack of literature regarding blended learning tutors’ emotional competence and its impact on practices;
- there is limited research on teachers’ emotional competence and its impact on practices in general;
- there is limited qualitative research on teachers’ emotional competence and its impact on practices.

This led to the exploration of the relationships between tutors’ emotional competence and learner perceptions of quality through both qualitative and quantitative analysis. This research study has presented a group of ECs that contribute to effective practice within blended learning environments for these learners (see Chapter 12.6). This develops thinking in this area as such a group has not been promoted to embrace the delivery model’s demands, which requires effective face-to-face and online interaction whilst meeting the needs of these learners. This group of ECs also provided evidence for the hypothesis as qualitative data analysis indicated that tutors exhibiting these competences were perceived as effective by their learners. The quantitative analysis found no such relationship. The Constructivism Dimension of the Model noted a number of supporting factors that appeared to influence learner perceptions of effectiveness, however, because of the multifaceted nature of such a complex area as a module, a potential quantitative relationship may have been masked that the qualitative analysis revealed.
The identified competences have been developed in relation to Goleman’s (2001) Framework of Emotional Competences. This Framework includes a range of emotional competences categorised into four clusters: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management. To be considered emotionally intelligent, individuals must exhibit proficiency across all areas (Goleman, 2001: 1), which was apparent from the tutors perceived as more effective by their learners. Further emotional competences evident are included, which do not form part of Goleman’s Framework.

While Goleman’s Framework is directed at organisational and workplace success, as the constituent competences (see Table 2.2) were “identified in internal research at hundreds of corporations and organisations as distinguishing outstanding performers” (Goleman, 2001: 1), this research study proposes competences for a blended learning context. This study rejects the value of some of Goleman’s competences, particularly from the Relationship Management cluster, which had a greater focus on leadership. Whilst blended tutors do lead learners in some respects, it is not as significant in their role as Goleman’s participants, with this study recommending a greater focus around developing learning structures and providing support. These roles require a specific group of competences with Goleman’s Framework developed to add further Self-Management competences due to the greater autonomy over work practices afforded in blended learning contexts. Chapter 4.2 noted that within online elements of delivery, tutors often structure their own delivery and support. This requires tutors to be more organised than in face-to-face settings and manage their workload with greater
autonomy (Stubbs et al., 2006), and this was found to be important within this study. Consequently, organisation, trustworthiness and conscientiousness competences were included in the Model. Further, Beetham (2012: 8) highlighted the current educational context and noted the increased number of alternative work-based courses and alternative delivery models. Coupled with advances in education technologies, such Web 2.0, teaching in this context requires tutors who are adaptable. Again, a significant finding of this study was the importance of the Self-Management competence adaptability, which was evident as the most effective tutors appeared to be open to new delivery models and willing to let go of old assumptions.

In addition to the importance of Self-Management ECs for blended learning tutors, a number of others appeared significant in learner perceptions of quality. The importance of tutors knowing their strengths and weaknesses whilst having the self-confidence to seek support when needed was noted. Understanding learner needs and requirements was similarly important along with effective communication to motivate and encourage mature learners studying PT, vocationally related degrees at a distance.

The developments of Goleman’s Model for tutors operating in blended learning contexts, such as the additional self-management competences, were instrumental in addressing the identified gap in knowledge regarding the value of ECs in learner perceptions of quality.
A Model of Andragogy to Meet Adult Learner Needs in Blended Learning Contexts

This research study suggests effective tutors understand and take steps to meet adult learner needs, particularly with regard to support and assessment (see Chapter 13). Learners were perceived as disciplined and were trusted to learn, with this a potential social construct of the ‘adult learner’ by the tutors within the School (see Chapter 10.2). Module assessments were generally spread to accommodate learners’ other commitments and conscientious feedback was provided to formative tasks. The most effective tutors took greater steps to meet learner needs by creating more space for learning and providing additional support whilst opening channels for dialogue. However, a key finding emerged from this study around the characteristics of the learners under investigation, and their influence on modules. Quantitative analysis (see Chapter 8) revealed a number of significant correlations promoting relevant factors when determining effective tutors and tutoring; previous relationships with learners being an example. When these correlations were controlled for the influence of learners’ approaches to study, no significant relationships were found. This finding raised the significance of learner influence over module outcomes and prompted the development of an Andragogical Model for this specific context (see Chapter 13.4).

The Andragogical Model (Knowles et al., 2011) and six constituent core principles provided a lens through which to evaluate the modules under investigation, but also consider in greater depth the influence tutors are having in meeting learners’ needs. This evaluation resulted in the proposal of an Andragogical Model to describe tutors’ practices and beliefs associated with learner perceptions of effectiveness. The proposal
included factors to operationalise the Model to meet these particular learners’ needs, which could be of value to blended learning tutors, course leaders and university departments in similar contexts. Knowles et al.’s, (2011) core principles were largely met due to the vocational nature of the courses investigated and, as a consequence, have been maintained in the proposed Model. However, the research study advocates a development to Knowles et al.’s Andragogical Model regarding the motivation to learn core principle to include extrinsic motivators, as tutors’ motivational practices were found to influence learner perceptions of quality. These practices included outlining the value of modules in relation to learners’ work contexts, roles and practices; appropriate feedback to enhance learners’ belief of success; a commitment to learner support; enthusiasm for the subject area; communicating proactively, and motivational strategies at day schools.

This analysis in relation to the Andragogical Model also strengthened the Constructivism Dimension of the proposed Model of Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices as a number of the factors overlap this Dimension’s lower level factors. There are similarities between these two aspects of the Model, however, the proposed Andragogical Model provides a useful guide for tutors teaching in this context and encourages adult learner needs to be met.

This concludes the outline of the Model of Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices. The chapter now considers other significant findings emerging from the research.
15.3 Other Key Findings

A number of other important findings emerged from this research study that advance thinking of effective tutor practice in blended learning environments within this context. There are some overlaps with points raised as part of the proposed Model above, however, the issues are of significance and worthy of further discussion regarding their influence on practice.

The MSCEIT’s Value in Identifying Effective Blended Learning Tutors

The research study aimed “to investigate skills, qualities and competences, particularly emotional competences, contributing to the effectiveness of tutors within blended learning environments”. This aim contributed to the development of the hypothesis, tutors exhibiting high levels of emotional competence are perceived as effective in blended learning environments by their learners. To investigate and measure tutor’s emotional competence the MSCEIT (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002) was selected, with Chapter 2 establishing it as a valid and reliable measure of emotional intelligence (EI). The test is an ability-based measure, which was argued to be appropriate when investigating university academics who have a tendency to deconstruct tests, particularly inventories exploring aspects of intelligence. Further, an ability test was chosen over self-report inventories, as they are harder to determine ‘correct’ answers (Rosete and Ciarrochi, 2005). It was anticipated the MSCEIT would develop understanding of EI and EC, and their influence on learner perceptions of quality in blended learning contexts.
This research study questions the MSCEIT’s utility in identifying effective tutors for this context with a number of factors supporting this assertion. Across the eight tutors low average scores were achieved at total EI, strategic area and branch levels (the Understanding Emotions branch being the only exception). Higher average MSCEIT scores were anticipated from a group of experienced HE lecturers who had established careers to date within contexts where interpersonal relationships are important, and this overall finding questions its validity in identifying effective tutors. In addition, limited correlations were found with learner’s perceptions of quality determined through the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and Online Tutoring Questionnaire (OTQ). Although tutors were advised to answer the MSCEIT’s questions on instinct they reported a desire to offer the ‘correct’ answer. The test’s length was raised as an issue with two tutors noting the frustration this caused at the latter stages when answering questions. Finally, one tutor’s responses could have been influenced by her state of mind following two recent bereavements of close family members, resulting in more negative responses than in normal circumstances.

Although the MSCEIT had limited value in identifying emotionally competent and effective blended tutors, some aspects of the test could have utility. Blends and Faces tasks, and positive-negative bias scores, could support the identification of effective blended tutors. Blends potentially providing a stronger indication of effective blended tutoring in learner’s eyes (this task evaluates respondents’ ability to identify emotions that combine into other emotions), whereas Faces’ potential value may lie in ranking tutors (this task evaluates respondents’ ability in identifying emotions in faces). Positive-negative bias scores identified seven tutors whose tendency was to respond to
pictorial stimuli with positive emotions (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002: 15). Qualitative data analysis revealed tutors were enthusiastic and motivational in face-to-face environments with the most effective (as shown by the CEQ) positive about the affordances of blended learning. Positive-negative bias scores could be revealing a valuable quality that could link to the trait enthusiasm, which was found to be associated with the general success evident on modules. Recording and listening to tutor interviews was significant in revealing the enthusiasm which supported discussions of certain elements of practice. All tutors described enthusiasm about face-to-face practice, which linked to self-efficaciousness and Self-Confidence, appear important in blended learning contexts. Further, tutors described commitment to learner support, particularly around response times to queries and assessments. Although Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2002: 15) advised interpreting task scores with “great caution” aspects of Blends and Faces tasks, and positive-negative bias scores, could be developed to form part of selection strategies when recruiting new tutors or selecting existing staff to move into blended learning contexts.

A further consideration when selecting tutors is how they use their emotions whilst in practice, whether they are positive or negative. One tutor, whose tendency was to respond to pictorial stimuli with negative emotions, made effective use of negative emotions to influence practice. She managed emotions to ensure she dealt with aspects of practice, such as marking, when “you’re in the right mind”. This was supported by the prevalence of asynchronous delivery evident during modules, which allowed tutors time to respond. Although enthusiasm was not shown towards aspects of practice, workload issues were managed by being emotionally aware, thus not
influencing learner perceptions. Generally, the eight tutors were found to make effective use of emotions to influence practice, particularly in face-to-face environments. However, the use of negative emotions can also positively influence practice and the effective use of emotions appears an important competence for blended learning tutors.

Overall, when using the MSCEIT to measure tutors’ EC, this research study notes that the hypothesis was not evidenced quantitatively as there were limited correlations with learner perceptions of effectiveness. The negative finding that the MSCEIT appears unhelpful in this context is a significant contribution to knowledge regarding tutor EC and effectiveness. Further, other significant findings included Blends and Faces tasks’ potential value, the positive-negative bias scores and links to the trait enthusiasm, and the importance of effective use of emotions when tutoring in blended learning environments. However, the quantitative analysis of the hypothesis may have been masked by variations in other important factors occurring within the modules under investigation, which the qualitative analysis revealed (see Chapter 12).

**Importance of Tutor/Learner Relationships**

This research study highlights the importance of tutors’ previous relationships with learners, with this appearing to lower *Transactional Distances* (Moore, 1997). Quantitative analysis revealed this as the most significant factor in learners’ perceptions of quality (see Chapter 8.6). Previous relationships with learners appear to have a strong influence on the ‘availability’ and ‘visibility’ of tutors. The three most effective tutors identified had course management responsibilities on learners’ courses and two had taught earlier modules. It is reasonable to assume, learners knew these tutors
were available and trust had emerged through positive exchanges, with a lowering of
*Transactional Distance* occurring.

A tutor’s previous relationship with the learner group was found to influence CEQ scores
and a factor underpinning this could be tutors’ increased ability in understanding their
students’ emotions. As stated earlier, the *Blends* task of the MSCEIT is potentially
providing an indication of effective blended tutoring in learners’ eyes and this task
identifies emotions that combine into other emotions. As tutors develop relationships
with learners, a better understanding of their emotions may be understood and, in
particular, how these will change over time. Ability to understand emotions, and
therefore respond appropriately to learners, can help build productive relationships and
potentially impact on the quality of learner support provided.

HE institutions should consider this finding when delivering such courses and
encourage structures that allow tutor/learner relationships to develop.

**Synergies of Theorisations and Prominent Learning Discourses**

A key finding from this research study is the synergies identified between four relevant
discourses relevant to teaching adults through blended learning delivery models. The
Model of the Observed Tutor Beliefs and Practices highlighted overlaps between good
practice described in prominent online learning discourses, theorisations of Emotional
Intelligence and Emotional Competence (largely through analysis of Goleman’s
Framework but also the Four-Branch Model of EI underpinning the MSCEIT),
theorisations of adult learning (the Andragogical Model), and prominent theorisations in
distance education. These areas have been married together, and provide an element of theoretical triangulation (Denzin, 1970) to form the Model and help strengthen its validity in developing effective provision in blended learning contexts.

Areas of Tutor Training and Development

This research study aimed to make recommendations for tutor training in blended learning contexts and has raised a number of relevant areas for HE institutions to focus. Training should incorporate certain elements of the Model where it could influence tutor practice. With regards to teaching, learning and assessment, training could focus on areas such as outlining the fundamental principles of the Individual Constructivist Perspective, facilitative teaching styles and problem-based assessments. Further, training should ensure a basic level of tutor IT skills including the ability to provide an appropriately structured VLE. Effective e-mail use was argued to be significant in supporting learners at a distance and training should be provided to ensure care and attention in construction and to develop strategies in its use to motivate and encourage. Social Awareness and Relationship Management emotional competences are required for effective e-mail use and these may be difficult to train effectively.

Other areas of the Model also present difficulties when considering tutor training and development, and consequently require selection of staff with those particular qualities and skills. Qualities such as being empathic to adult learner needs, perceiving blended learning as an opportunity, self-efficacy and relevant teaching experience are difficult to train effectively. Goleman (2001: 1) states an emotional competence is “a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at
work”. The use of the term ‘learned’ is interesting as it suggests an ability that can be improved. Chapter 2 defined traits as a characteristic way of behaving and these formed the basis of Goleman’s (2001) Framework of Emotional Competences. Emotional competences outlined from this research study, such as self-confidence, adaptability, organisation and communication, are traits that take a long time to develop, often beyond the scope of university training. Selection methods will have to be used, possibly behavioural interview techniques (Lynn, 2008), to determine tutors with the mix of qualities and competences to be effective in this context.

The findings of this research study indicate tutor perceptions, previous experiences and pedagogical beliefs are all influencing practice and, consequently, should be considered when recruiting for this context. Tutor perceptions of online learning were overwhelmingly negative, influenced by previous educational experiences and a lack of exposure to technology enhanced learning, both of which affected module practice. Tutors with predominantly social constructivist pedagogical beliefs may struggle to adapt their practice and require greater training and development. Further, tutors with negative perceptions about the affordances of blended learning, generally received lower CEQ scores.

Tutor perceptions are potentially being transmitted to learners and influencing their feedback about module quality. Tutors receiving lower CEQ scores generally outlined a greater number of problems with modules and workload issues, with these potentially affecting learner views. Should tutors outline problems or workload issues, albeit subtly, learners are likely to be influenced and their perceptions of quality affected.
A particular strength of the methodology revealed an important consideration when recruiting potential tutors for blended learning contexts. Interview analysis identified one tutor as highly self-efficacious as he spoke confidently about practice in both face-to-face and online contexts. However, he received the second lowest CEQ score indicating some issues with regard to learner perceptions of quality. VLE analysis revealed no tutor contributions to discussion boards where learners had uploaded assessment plans. Although the tutor did describe responding to learner e-mails about plans, the CEQ scores and the lack of VLE contributions did highlight the difficulties of accurately gauging practice from traditional interviews alone.

This research study argues that tutors whose preferred pedagogical approach that aligns with the Individual Constructivist Perspective should be selected to deliver in this context. It further argues that tutors with primarily social constructivist pedagogical beliefs may struggle to adapt their practice and require greater training and development. Training may be unable to influence such deeply engrained beliefs and, consequently, recruitment and selection should focus on tutors favouring individual constructivist approaches.

**Modified Versions of Questionnaires for Blended Learning Contexts**

This research study utilised modified versions of the CEQ (Ramsden, 1991) and the Revised Study Process Questionnaire (R-SPQ) (Biggs et al., 2001) (see Appendix 4). Both demonstrated acceptable reliability ($\alpha > .7$) at both questionnaire and constituent scale level, and these could be adopted for further research in similar contexts.
The CEQ (Ramsden, 1991) was used to obtain general opinion about the quality of tutoring on the modules under investigation. The CEQ was modified to make it suitable for an individual tutor and a blended teaching model, with the following scale items demonstrating acceptable reliability results:

- Good Teaching: communication;
- Good Teaching: feedback on, and concern for, student learning;
- Clear Goals and Standards;
- Appropriate Workload.

Biggs et al. (2001) R-SPQ was used to evaluate learners’ approaches and motivation towards their study. It was originally designed for full-time courses with examinations as the main method of assessment, therefore the questionnaire was amended to make it more suitable for adult learners on blended learning courses. The changes made included references to ‘lecturers’ were amended to ‘tutors’; references to ‘exams’ were amended to ‘assessment’; and ‘course outlines’ were changed to ‘course materials’.

The R-SPQ is most commonly used, as it was in this research, in its two-factor form, namely *Deep* and *Surface* approaches, with both scales achieving acceptable reliability results.
15.4 Limitations of this Research Study

When researching complex, multi-dimensional phenomena, such as effective tutoring in blended learning contexts, it is difficult to fully consider all influences and therefore limitations can occur. The possible limitations of this research study are now outlined.

As yet, the proposed Model is based at a single HE institution and needs further research to explore its construct validity. This study was based in a school of education and all modules investigated were from this subject area. Chapter 1.3 provided an overview of the local context and described tutors’ typical roles, responsibilities and experiences, as well as a culture of performativity (Ball, 2003; Avis, 2005) in which staff operate. The findings may have differed if a broader mix of disciplines was included in the study and further research is needed across a range of subject areas and HE institutions.

The MSCEIT was adopted as part of this research study as a valid and reliable measure of EI and EC, therefore, with its resulting limited utility in this context, it did affect my understanding of why some tutors are motivational and encouraging in online media. The qualitative analysis within this study presented a group of emotional competences contributing to the effectiveness of tutors within blended learning environments, which provided some support to Salmon’s (2003: 53) view that emotional intelligence (EI) and the ability to influence others are important attributes when tutoring online. However, there is still further research required to provide a firm empirical base to Salmon's view and to satisfy my desire of understanding why some tutors can motivate and encourage
in online media. Understanding of this was affected by the lack of online communication found in module VLEs.

To further investigate tutor practices and emotional competences when interacting with learners, access to e-mails exchanged during modules would have been revealing. These would have allowed a more detailed analysis of textual data, which was lacking when minimal tutor contributions were found in module VLEs. E-mails could have provided clues to a tutor’s emotional state at the time of delivery and consideration could have been given to appropriateness of response. As interviews were conducted after module completion there was less emotion evident and they were more reflective in content. However, e-mail analysis would have been challenging and there could be access issues. Tutors would not necessarily keep all communications to investigate and may reveal only complimentary examples if asked to select a sample. If tutors knew in advance that e-mails were to be reviewed it would influence their construction. Sight of tutor e-mails would have presented an ethical dilemma as they may be responding to learner issues, possibly of a personal nature, and therefore relevant permissions would be required for their use.

The Online Tutoring Questionnaire (OTQ) was difficult to develop and its results were not extensively used in formulating the Model. The OTQ was designed to explore learner perceptions of the quality of online tutoring received during modules, but, its use was influenced by the lack of online interaction found. The reliability of scale items was found to be an issue during the pilot study with questions needing to be amended as a result. Following the full survey, the OTQ’s Chronbach Alpha scores indicated some
problems with reliability of individual scale items, but, overall, a reliable score was obtained. Scales of the questionnaire were then grouped into two sections, ‘online tutoring skills’ and ‘online emotional intelligence’, which again achieved reliable scores. On reflection, the OTQ was possibly being answered in line with the respondent's overall impression of the tutor, which Kerr et al. (2006: 271) found in their study of emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness of supervisors. They found a high degree of homogeneity using the Chronbach Alpha measure, and consider the overall impression of the supervisor had a greater effect on answers than the content of questions. The OTQ’s development highlighted the challenge of producing questionnaires with reliable scale items.

Validity and reliability of the CEQ and OTQ were established, in part, by using scatterplots and correlation with a similar construct (see Chapter 6.4). The CEQ scores were compared and correlated against the OTQ under the assumption that they were both measuring different aspects of effective blended tutoring. The correlation identified between the CEQ and OTQ scores could have been influenced by the learners’ ‘impression’ of the tutor (as noted in Kerr et al.’s study) and may have led to a spurious correlation.

This research study has identified ECs for tutors in blended learning contexts, but are these also just as important for face-to-face teaching as well? Kleine et al. (2004) found online instructor competences were similar to those required in face-to-face contexts, however, Bawane and Spector (2009: 383) outlined the significance and demonstration of those competences may vary according to context. This was found for blended
learning contexts in this research study as the significance and demonstration of the group of competences were outlined in Chapter 12. Further, the ECs identified appear to take on greater importance in blended learning contexts due to a lack of face-to-face contact, less contact generally, and “the absence of the body, diminution of paralinguial cues and removal of physical social-spatial indicators” (Gilmore and Warren, 2007: 581). Therefore, each tutor/learner interaction takes on greater significance. To illustrate, one rushed tutor e-mail that is curt and dismissive could dent a learner's confidence and may discourage further communications. The written word can have a greater impact on learners, both positive and negative, given its permanence. Therefore, the group of ECs identified in this research is significant in blended learning contexts and are necessary to meet the needs of these learners.

15.5 Areas of Further Enquiry

This research study has presented a complex, multi-dimensional Model of effective tutors and tutoring and adopted a broad perspective on a range of topics. Each could be further interrogated to evaluate potential value. This Chapter has already alluded to some areas of further enquiry outlined within this section.

Potentially, qualitative analysis of learner perceptions of tutors and modules would reveal other factors influencing quality. The understanding of learner approaches to modules could be explored alongside the influences of tutor practices. This research study considered that tutor perceptions are potentially being transmitted to learners, thus influencing their feedback about module quality. Tutors receiving lower CEQ scores generally outlined a greater number of problems with modules and workload
issues, and these potentially affected learner views. If tutors outline problems or workload issues learners are likely to be influenced with their perceptions of quality affected. Further qualitative analysis comparing tutor and learner perceptions would provide insight into this potential phenomenon.

As outlined above, further research is required to provide a firm empirical base to Salmon’s (2003: 53) view that emotional intelligence (EI) and the ability to influence others are important attributes when tutoring online. The potential of Blends and Faces task scores as well as positive-negative bias results need further comparisons with learner perceptions of quality to determine their value in identifying important tutor competences. Alternative measures of EC might provide more robust data, however, a more detailed qualitative exploration of tutor practices might also reveal greater insight. Document analysis of all electronic communications, recordings of synchronous communications, and observations of face-to-face teaching could be used to reveal understanding of tutor emotional competence in practice.

This research study has identified various skills, qualities and competences, and tutor perceptions that appear important when selecting tutors for blended learning contexts. It would be useful to explore recruitment and, in particular, selection techniques to identify these tutors, particularly as the research noted one tutor’s high self-efficacy and the difficulties this caused of accurately gauging practice from traditional interviews alone.
15.6 In Summary

This research has investigated a complex and multifaceted area, namely a module on a blended learning programme. In exploring tutors and tutoring in this context, a summary of effective practice is provided. The conclusions enhance the recruitment, selection, training and development of blended learning tutors, and encourage further thought and debate in this specific context. Further, practices are highlighted that support tutors, course leaders and university departments when delivering blended learning courses in similar contexts. In particular, the research study advances knowledge in this area by three specific contributions:

- Empirical evidence that aligning tutor’s pedagogy and assessment within blended learning modules to the Individual Constructivist Perspective may enhance learner perceptions of quality. This perspective focuses on students generally learning independently from tutors and peers, which is contrary to a number of popular models and frameworks that encourage social constructivist approaches in blended learning environments.

- The development of a group of ECs contributing to the effectiveness of tutors within blended learning environments. Over recent years a number of e-learning models and frameworks have been developed that assert or evaluate effective practice within online and blended contexts. Such models and frameworks prescribe what tutors should do within online and blended environments but, crucially, do not consider the qualities and skills that underpin the suggested actions and activities. This study has taken steps to address this in a specific blended learning context.
• Through qualitative analysis, a positive relationship was established for the study's proposed hypothesis, tutors exhibiting high levels of emotional competence are perceived as effective in blended learning environments by their learners. However, through quantitative analysis, the hypothesis was not evidenced as there were limited correlations with learner perceptions of effectiveness, with the MSCEIT appearing unhelpful in this context.

Finally, although the focus of the study was effective tutoring and tutors, an important part of the research was considering learner perceptions. The modules investigated target ‘mature’ learners studying vocationally relevant qualifications. They study whilst managing the competing pressures of work and family life, but bring experiences and viewpoints from their work contexts, understand what they want to achieve from education and have clearer goals in mind (Richardson et al., 2003; Biesta, 2005). This research study has highlighted some of the qualities they possess, such as intrinsic motivation, which are important in successful learning experiences. This is not to say universities, course leaders and module tutors cannot amend practices to help them improve academically. In my experience, adult learners have often not studied in a formal educational environment for some time and can lack confidence. Certain tutor skills, qualities and competences, as well as appropriate teaching, learning, assessment and support, can enhance learners’ experiences. This research study has taken steps to address these two important areas within blended learning environments.
References


### Emotional Intelligent Quotient (EIQ) Range

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<th>EIQ Range</th>
<th>Qualitative Range</th>
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<td>69 or less</td>
<td>Consider Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>70 – 89</td>
<td>Consider Improvement</td>
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<td>90 – 99</td>
<td>Low Average Score</td>
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<td>130 or more</td>
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### Appendix 2 – A Summary Table of Respondents’ Characteristics, both Tutors and Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tutor</th>
<th>Tutor and Learner Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Ann** | - Female and 61 years old.  
- Current role: Senior Lecturer and Course Leader for a MA Education programme. Lectures on a variety of HE courses at both a large FE College and within the University.  
- Background: Worked from 1993 in the FE College teaching GNVQ Business Studies. She spent nearly 10 years in the Business Department teaching from level two up to degree level, including Business Studies and various secretarial courses. She then moved to the Education Department, teaching a range of related courses.  
- Qualifications: MA Professional Development, CertEd, BA (Hons), currently undertaking an EdD in Education Leadership.  
- Learners: 6 Learners, all female, studying the intermediate level of BA (Hons) Education and Training. Studying an Education and the Law module. |
| **Bill** | - Male and 47 years old.  
- Current role: Senior Lecturer in Post Compulsory Education. He has course management responsibilities (BA Education and Training). Lectures on a variety of courses within the School of Education.  
- Background: He started teaching in 1986 as a part-time lecturer in Leisure and Tourism at a general further education college. He then worked at a number of FE colleges in a variety of teaching and management roles. In 2003, he became a staff development manager for two years before moving into teacher |
| Claire | • Female and 52 years old.  
• Current role: Senior Lecturer and Course Leader for a part-time Foundation Degree and an articulated BA (Hons) progression route. Lectures on a variety of courses within the School of Education.  
• Background: Over twenty years’ experience in the post-compulsory sector with a variety of learners. Previously, she was course leader for a range of vocational programmes at a sixth-form college. Roles included extensive personal tutoring and teaching to a range of levels including pre-GCSE and foundation.  
• Qualifications: MA Education, PGCE, BA (Hons).  
• Learners: 7 Learners, all female, studying the honours level of BA (Hons) Educational Administration. Studying a Leadership and Management in Education module. |
| --- | --- |
| Daisy | • Female and 50 years old.  
• Current role: Part-time Senior Lecturer in Education. She has course management responsibilities (BA Education and Professional Development). Lectures on a variety of courses within the School of Education.  
• Background: She has 15 years of experience teaching Dance Studies and BTEC Performing Arts, as well as professional |
training courses. Following a break she worked in student services at the University mostly with students with dyspraxia and mental health issues. She completed her BA (Hons) within the School and then began lecturing on the BA Education and Professional Development whilst completing her MA.

- Qualifications: MA Professional Development, PGCE, BA (Hons).
- Learners: 4 Learners, all female, studying the intermediate level of FdA Learning Support. Studying an Equality and Diversity module.

### Emily

- Female and 48 years old.
- Current role: Senior Lecturer and Course Leader for a part-time MSc. Lectures on a variety of courses within the School of Education.
- Background: She started teaching in 1986 in a women's training project. She moved into HE in 1990 lecturing in Engineering and Women's Access Provision. She then undertook some lecturing in Media Technology. In 2000, she moved to another University to support distance provision. She came to the University in 2003.
- Qualifications: MSc Engineering, CertEd, BA (Hons), currently undertaking an EdD.
- Learners: 15 Learners, 9 female/6 male, studying the MSc Multimedia and Education. Studying an Introduction to E-learning module.

### Frank

- Male and 43 years old.
- Current role: Senior Lecturer in Education and Training and Course Leader for a part-time Certificate. Lectures on a variety of courses within the School of Education.
- **Background:** He has 13 years teaching experience. Firstly teaching software applications for a consultancy company. After two years he moved to the University working for the Commercial Activities Division teaching software applications and doing external consultancy work. He then started lecturing in the School of Education on education and training related programmes, commonly teaching coaching, mentoring, groupwork and counselling.

- **Qualifications:** MA Education, CertEd, BA (Hons), Diploma in Counselling.

- **Learners:** 5 Learners, all female, studying the honours level of BA (Hons) Education Management and Administration. Studying a People and Teams in Education module.

---

**George**

- **Male and 39 years old.**

- **Current role:** Senior Lecturer in Education with course management responsibilities. Lectures on a variety of courses within the School of Education.

- **Background:** He has 12 years of experience in the post-compulsory sector with a variety of learners. He started teaching the long-term unemployed and then moved to a large FE College as an IT facilitator. He then started teaching in the Department of Business including marketing and general business courses from NVQ, GNVQ, up to HND. He then started lecturing on teacher education programmes and other HNDs. Six years ago he moved to the University to lecture on teacher education programmes.

- **Qualifications:** MSc Marketing, PGCE, BA (Hons), currently undertaking an EdD.

- **Learners:** 14 Learners, 11 female/3 male, studying the
intermediate level of BA (Hons) Education and Training.
Studying a Marketing and Educational Organisations module.

| Harry         | Male and 35 years old.  
|              | Current role: Senior Lecturer in Early Years with course management responsibilities (BA Early Years). Lectures on a variety of courses within the School of Education.  
|              | Background: He has been teaching for 14 years in total, 7 years of those at a large FE College teaching a variety of FE and HE courses in public services, business and management, and teacher education. Since moving to the University he has lectured on a mixture of teacher training, education and training, and, more recently, early years programmes.  
|              | Qualifications: MSc Multimedia and Education, CertEd, BA (Hons), currently undertaking an EdD.  
|              | Learners: 14 Learners, All female, studying the foundation level of BA (Hons) Early Years. Studying an Effective Communications module. |
Appendix 3 - Interview Schedule

1) Introduction

Make the following points clearly:

- Introduce myself;
- Explain that the tutor can withdraw from the interview at any time;
- Explain the format and estimated time the interview will take;
- Outline the purpose of the research being undertaken;
- All data will only be used towards Ed/D thesis;
- Explain the tutor's name is not required;
- Ask tutor to complete the participation consent form;
- Check if a voice recorder can be used;
- Explain that the tutor can switch off the voice recorder at any time;
- If a voice recorder is not appropriate, can notes be taken?
- Ask the interviewee if there are any questions before the interview starts;
- Remind the tutor that their answers are for the group of students under investigation.

2) Interview

Section A - Experience
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Question</th>
<th>Notes/Follow up questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your job title and current role?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What qualifications do you have?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you outline your teaching experience?</td>
<td>Number of years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Different settings/learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What experience do you have teaching on blended delivery courses?</td>
<td>Number of years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extent of online delivery and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of previous blended learning modules delivered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you studied a course that had a blended or online delivery mode?</td>
<td>What format did it entail?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How did you find studying via that delivery model?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How has this experienced impacted on your teaching on blended courses?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you use the following technologies in your modules?</td>
<td>Are they used for delivery, interaction, support, assessment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any other technologies used? How are they used?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Word processing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- E-mail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Asynchronous conferences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Chat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Web-authoring tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- VLE management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What training have you undertaken to support your role as a tutor in blended and online environments?</td>
<td>Have you had any informal training?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have you had a mentor to support you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you have colleagues who discuss online</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
teaching with?
Looking for any peer support network, 
buddying, mentor, or sitting next to Nellie 
type training.

Section B – Approach to teaching, learning and assessment during the 
module

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Question</th>
<th>Notes/Follow up questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looking at the five teaching style descriptors, judge which were adopted whilst teaching the module.</td>
<td>Hand out Kember’s conceptions of teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did you adopt the approaches you did?</td>
<td>Did the approach change throughout the module?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Were there any events that led to a different style being adopted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you approach the teaching during the module?</td>
<td>Consider both f2f and online teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did the students learn during the module?</td>
<td>Consider both f2f and online learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How were the students assessed?</td>
<td>What was the rationale behind this choice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formative assessment strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What strategies did you use to encourage student learning within online environments?</td>
<td>How did you engage with the students in online environments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How did you encourage communication via these mediums?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How did you motivate the students?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Were there any techniques that you adopted in online environments to motivate the students?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **How did you develop a rapport with students?** | **How did you maintain these relationships?**  
Any examples? |
| **What student support mechanisms were in place during the module?** | **Were they used? Who by? Were they effective?** |
| **How were you during the delivery of the module? How did this change?** | **Was there any difference in times when you were online or face-to-face?**  
Prompts maybe - Calm/stressed at times? |
| **Can you give examples of any situations that had to be dealt with during the module – with regard to students? How were they dealt with?** | **Prompts maybe – conflict management, high flying student, student with unrealistic expectations.** |
| **Can you give examples of good practice in blended tutoring that you adopted as part of this module?** | **Can you give examples of bad practice in blended tutoring that you adopted as part of this module?** |

**Section C - Resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Main Question</strong></th>
<th><strong>Notes/Follow up questions</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Which resources were used to support the online aspects of the course? | Were they appropriate?  
Were they reliable?  
What were the strengths and weaknesses of these resources? |
### Section D - Workload

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Main Question</strong></th>
<th><strong>Notes/Follow up questions</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What was your workload like whilst you were delivering the module?</td>
<td>Did you have enough time to support the students? How did this make you feel? Any impact on the student experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student workload, was it appropriate, was it within the tutor’s control etc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section E – Tutor feedback on students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Main Question</strong></th>
<th><strong>Notes/Follow up questions</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall impression of the group</td>
<td>How well did students do on the module?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were they engaged in the module?</td>
<td>Were they interested, motivated? Were they deep/surface learners?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any issues that had an impact on the module?</td>
<td>How did you manage the issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prompt maybe – technical problems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3) Conclusion

- Ask about viewing the VLE, confirm it’s still OK;
- Thoughts about the MSCEIT;
- Ask the interviewee if they have anything to add;
- Thank the interviewee;
- Ask the interviewee if they have any questions.
Appendix 4 - Learner Questionnaire

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. The questionnaire’s main purpose is to elicit your perceptions of your tutor and the module that you have studied. The research is being undertaken as part of a doctoral thesis, which aims to explore the construct of emotional competence in relation to blended tutoring with adult learners in higher education.

All information is CONFIDENTIAL; it will remain ANONYMOUS and will only be used as part of this study. Your tutor will not see your answers.

Section 1

Q1 Are you? Male □ Female □
    Tick one

Q2 Please indicate your age by ticking the appropriate box below.
    Tick one

18/24 □
25/34 □
35/44 □
45/54 □
55/65 □

Q3 Please indicate how long (in years) you have studied in higher education?

Tick one

1/2 □
3/4 □
Q4 Please rate your expertise in using the following technologies:
(Circle the relevant answer next to each technology)

Word Processing - Beginner Moderate Experienced
E-mail - Beginner Moderate Experienced
Discussion Boards - Beginner Moderate Experienced
Chat - Beginner Moderate Experienced
Internet Research - Beginner Moderate Experienced

Q5 Please outline any previous experience of online or distance learning you have undertaken?

Q6 Please indicate on the scale how well do you feel you did on the tutor’s module? Please explain your answer.

1. Very disappointed
2. Disappointed
3. Average
4. Good
5. Very Good
Section 2

In answering this section of the questionnaire, please think about the individual tutor and the module they have taught you.

The questions relate to general aspects of the tutoring, assessment, and feedback you have received whilst undertaking the module.

Please circle the relevant number next to each question. The numbers alongside each question represent the following response:

1 — strongly disagree
2 — disagree
3 — neither agree or disagree
4 — agree
5 — strongly agree.

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>It was easy to know the standard of work expected in this module</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The tutor of this module motivated me to do my best work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The workload in this module was too heavy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I usually had a clear idea of where I was going and what was expected of me in this module</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The tutor put a lot of time into commenting on my work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>To do well in this module all you really needed was to rework the course notes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The tutor seemed more interested in assessing learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
outcomes than what I had understood

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>It was often hard to discover what was expected of me in this module</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I was generally given enough time to understand things I had to understand</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The tutor made a real effort to understand difficulties I might be having with my work</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Feedback on my work was usually given only in the form of marks or grades</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The tutor normally gave me feedback on how I was doing</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The tutor was extremely good at explaining things</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The tutor worked hard on making the subject interesting</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>There was a lot of pressure on me to do well in this module</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The sheer volume of work to get through in this module was too heavy</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The tutor made it clear right from the start what they expected from students</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you would like to add comment or clarify any answers please do so here:
Section 3

In answering this section of the questionnaire, again please think about the individual tutor and the module they have taught you.

The questions relate to general aspects of ONLINE TUTORING and your perceptions about the tutor within electronic environments. For example, think about communications via e-mail or within the VLE when considering your answer.

Please circle the relevant number next to each question. The numbers alongside each question stand for the following response:

1 — strongly disagree
2 — disagree
3 — neither agree or disagree
4 — agree
5 — strongly agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The tutor explained things clearly in electronic formats</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The tutor encouraged online discussion around the module content</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I feel the tutor did not appear comfortable using educational technology</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The tutor made a quick and positive impact at the start of the module</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The tutor developed an online community amongst the students</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The tutor appeared to be in control of their feelings in</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I believe the tutor didn’t understand the difficulties of</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>studying part-time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I feel the tutor was approachable</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Within electronic environments, the tutor responded to</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>queries in an appropriate manner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I believe if I ask the tutor to help me, they will do so</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>willingly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I believe the tutor understood how I was feeling when</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>communicating in electronic formats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I feel the tutor appears to be so overwhelmed by their</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>moods that they cannot function properly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I believe the tutor finds it difficult to establish a rapport</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with students in electronic formats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The tutor empathised when I had difficulties</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The tutor made effective use of the virtual learning</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you would like to add comment or clarify any answers please do so here:
Section 4

This section of the questionnaire has a number of questions about your attitudes towards your studies and your usual way of studying.

There is no right way of studying. It depends on what suits your own style and the course you are studying. It is accordingly important that you answer each question as honestly as you can. If you think your answer to a question would depend on the subject being studied, give the answer that would apply to the modules delivered by the tutor being researched.

Please circle the relevant letter next to each question. The letters alongside each number represent the following response.

A — this item is never or only rarely true of me
B — this item is sometimes true of me
C — this item is true of me about half the time
D — this item is frequently true of me
E — this item is always or almost always true of me

Please choose the one most appropriate response to each question. Choose the letter that best fits your immediate reaction. Do not spend a long time on each item: your first reaction is probably the best one. Please answer each item.

Do not worry about projecting a good image. Your answers are CONFIDENTIAL.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I find that at times studying gives me a feeling of deep personal satisfaction</td>
<td>A B C D E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I find that I have to do enough work on a topic so that I can form my own conclusions before I am satisfied</td>
<td>A B C D E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>My aim is to pass the course while doing as little work as possible</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I only study seriously what’s given out in class or in the module notes</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I feel that virtually any topic can be highly interesting once I get into it</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I find most new topics interesting and often spend extra time trying to obtain more information about them</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I do not find my course very interesting so I keep my work to the minimum</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I include things in my assignments that I do not fully understand</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I find that studying academic topics can at times be as exciting as a good novel or movie</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I test myself on important topics until I understand them completely</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I find I can get by in most assessments by including key topics rather than trying to understand them</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I generally restrict my study to what is specifically set as I think it is unnecessary to do anything extra</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I work hard at my studies because I find the material</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I spend a lot of my free time finding out more about interesting topics which have been discussed in the module</td>
<td>A B C D E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I find it is not helpful to study topics in depth. It confuses and wastes time, when all you need is a passing acquaintance with topics</td>
<td>A B C D E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I believe that tutors shouldn’t expect students to spend significant amounts of time studying material everyone knows won’t be assessed</td>
<td>A B C D E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I usually come to my tutor with questions in mind that I want answering</td>
<td>A B C D E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I make a point of looking at most of the suggested readings that go with the course notes</td>
<td>A B C D E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I see no point in learning material which is not likely to be assessed</td>
<td>A B C D E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>My approach was to do as little work as possible in order to pass the module</td>
<td>A B C D E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for completing this questionnaire and your participation in this research.
### Appendix 5 - Chronbach Alpha scores following the pilot study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section of the Questionnaire</th>
<th>Chronbach Alpha Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEQ</td>
<td>0.852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Goals</td>
<td>0.926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Teaching Communication</td>
<td>0.437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Workload</td>
<td>0.825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Teaching Feedback</td>
<td>0.358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Assessment</td>
<td>0.706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTQ</td>
<td>0.867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Communication</td>
<td>0.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of an Online Community</td>
<td>0.944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Skills</td>
<td>0.706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Management</td>
<td>0.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>0.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-Awareness</td>
<td>0.839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Tutoring Skills</td>
<td>0.903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Emotional Competence</td>
<td>0.774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-SPQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep Learning</td>
<td>0.706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface Learning</td>
<td>0.598</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6 - Chronbach Alpha scores following the full survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section of the Questionnaire</th>
<th>Chronbach Alpha Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEQ</td>
<td>0.871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Goals</td>
<td>0.839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Teaching Communication</td>
<td>0.748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Workload</td>
<td>0.599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Teaching Feedback</td>
<td>0.714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Assessment</td>
<td>0.392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTQ</td>
<td>0.889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Communication</td>
<td>0.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of an Online Community</td>
<td>0.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Skills</td>
<td>0.473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Management</td>
<td>0.361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>0.710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-Awareness</td>
<td>0.596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Tutor Skills Categories Combined</td>
<td>0.819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intelligence Categories Combined</td>
<td>0.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-SPQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep Learning</td>
<td>0.752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface Learning</td>
<td>0.725</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix 7 - The Final Template

The table below outlines the final template used for the qualitative analysis and indicates the hierarchical code structure utilised.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Name</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approach to Teaching and Learning During the Module</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course or Student Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Approach to teaching the module</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Strategies to Encourage Student Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies to Encourage Student Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Work Within Available Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Understanding of Student Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Methods and Issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback on Student Work &amp; Monitor Progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of Appropriate Teaching &amp; Learning Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability &amp; Visibility (Dialogue)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with Peers &amp; Wider Organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured Learning Environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Be Organised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication before first day school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events between day schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did tutors refer to students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positioning of tutor in relation to students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor’s Thoughts About Student Feedback on Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor’s Views</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogically Appropriate Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching at day schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor Emotional Competence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Mood Scale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor Emotions Whilst Delivering the Module</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor Experience and Competence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection on Practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Previous Work Experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; Scholarship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Educational Technologies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor Feedback on Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues Impacting on Module</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Impression of Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors’ Previous Relationships with Learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor self-efficacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors’ Perceptions of Adult Learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors’ perceptions of day school model of delivery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors’ perceptions of online delivery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors’ responses to online questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors showing trust in students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did tutors consider bad practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did tutors consider good practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Workload Issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor Workload Issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 8 - Code Names and Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Name</th>
<th>Code Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Work Within Available Resources</td>
<td>Observations of tutor’s ability to work within the resources available to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Understanding of Student Learning</td>
<td>Comments made by tutors about the process of student learning whilst studying the module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Methods and Issues</td>
<td>Any comment about the assessment on the modules, both formative and summative, including consideration of effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability &amp; Visibility (Dialogue)</td>
<td>Any comment made by the tutor about being available and visible to students, thereby encouraging interaction and dialogue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Goals</td>
<td>Any comment where the tutor outlines clear goals and targets whilst the students are undertaking the module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication before first day school</td>
<td>Extracts outlining communication, interaction before students attend the first day school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Issues</td>
<td>Any comments about communication during the module. Some overlap with other nodes but kept in to get an overall feel of the communication throughout the module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course or Student Management</td>
<td>Comments around the management of the module and students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events between day schools</td>
<td>Extracts about any activity (teaching, learning and assessment) between the day schools and after the final day school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback on Student Work &amp; Monitor Progress</td>
<td>Any comment about how tutors feedback to students and monitored their progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Any formal training undertaken specifically for teaching in blended and online environments. Any formal systems of support such as mentor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Approach to</td>
<td>General node for any comment about teaching, learning and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching the module assessment</td>
<td>It is designed so I can quickly read down and get an overview of the approach. Comments in this node appear in other more specific nodes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Mood Scale</td>
<td>Include here any comments where the tutor is expressing positive or negative emotion, for example, happiness, optimism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did tutors refer to students</td>
<td>Extracts about how tutors referred to their students, such as able, weak etc. When tutors just say students, don't include as was by far the most common term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>Any informal mentoring, coaching, buddying to support the tutors in the delivery of blended modules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with Peers &amp; Wider Organisation</td>
<td>Any comments made by the tutors about student interaction with peers and student engaging with the wider university functions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues Impacting on Module</td>
<td>Any issues impacting on the module delivery. May overlap with other nodes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Strategies to Encourage Student Learning</td>
<td>Any strategy or action that tutors outline to motivate or enthuse their learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Impression of Group</td>
<td>Any comments where the tutor discusses their student group undertaking the module. Any general comments about their ability, motivation, engagement etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogically Appropriate Resources</td>
<td>Any comment where the tutor outlines the educational value of the resources available to them and used as part of the module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positioning of tutor in relation to students</td>
<td>How did the tutor position themself in relation to students, expert or facilitator, for example?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Learning</td>
<td>Any comments about tutors’ previous learning experiences, particularly those in blended, online, distance contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>Tutor’s qualifications and any comments about their impact on their delivery of blended modules.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Reflection on Practice                       | Any comments where tutors are reflecting on their practice both...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Node</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Management</td>
<td>Any tutor comments about handling, maintaining and developing relationships, primarily with students, but also with other relevant stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliable</td>
<td>Any comments about the reliability of resources, particularly educational technology, used during the module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Management</td>
<td>Any comments where tutors discussed their self-management including - self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, achievement drive, initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>Any tutor comment about emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment (potentially difficult to judge), self-confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Awareness</td>
<td>Any comments about social awareness, primarily empathy, but also service orientation &amp; organisational awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured Learning Environment</td>
<td>Any tutor comments about the structure of the module including the day schools, online resources and assessment. Again some overlap with other node but useful to have an overview of the structure in one place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Motivation</td>
<td>Any comment by tutors about the motivation of their students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Support</td>
<td>Any tutor comments about the student support provided during the module. Again some overlap with other nodes but useful to have an overview of the support provided in one place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Workload Issues</td>
<td>Any comments about students’ workload during the module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Knowledge</td>
<td>Any extracts where tutors are commenting about their subject knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Previous Work Experience</td>
<td>Comments referring to tutors previous teaching experience. Broadened out to include other work experience as some tutors had come from responsible roles in other careers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching at day schools</td>
<td>Any tutor comments about teaching at day schools. Review this node as could be being covered by others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Style</td>
<td>Extracts of comments about the teaching style adopted - content to student centred - in face-to-face, online and assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Support</td>
<td>Any comments about the technical support available during the module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Be Organised</td>
<td>Any tutor comment describing being organised or examples of disorganisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor Emotions Whilst Delivering the Module</td>
<td>Any comments where emotions are expressed (Sad Mad Glad Fear). There's overlap with general mood scale - review these points together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor self-efficacy</td>
<td>Any extracts where the tutor comments on how well or badly they performed in any area. To build a picture of their self-confidence and belief and how this could have been perceived by the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor Workload Issues</td>
<td>Any comments about tutors' workload during the module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors' Perceptions of Adult Learners</td>
<td>Any extracts where the tutors make comments or observations about the students and their particular needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors' perceptions of day school model of delivery</td>
<td>Any extracts where the tutors make comments or observations about the day school model of delivery. Affordances and limitations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors' Previous Relationships with Learners</td>
<td>Any extracts where tutors outline contact with learners prior to the commencement of the module under investigation. This includes teaching and course management activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors' responses to online questions</td>
<td>Any extracts where the tutors make comments or observations about the online model of delivery. Affordances and limitations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors showing trust in students</td>
<td>Any extracts where tutors discuss trusting students to be independent learners. Also, comments where tutors don't trust students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor's Thoughts About Student Feedback on</td>
<td>Include any comment where the tutors outline what the students felt about the resources used as part of the module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Educational Technologies</td>
<td>Any comments about tutors’ use of educational technologies both on the module and generally. To give a picture of their proficiency with technologies. Will be overlap with other nodes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did tutors consider bad practice</td>
<td>Any comments where tutors generally outline what they consider to be bad practice in blended environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did tutors consider good practice</td>
<td>Any comments where tutors generally outline what they consider to be good practice in blended environments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 9 - Participant Consent Form

Dear

Firstly, I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in my Ed.D research. The research I wish to undertake will happen (date) subject to your availability. I will contact you shortly about booking a time that is suitable to you.

Research Topic. The research I am undertaking is entitled:

A mixed methods exploration of effective tutors and tutoring in blended learning contexts.

I made contact with you because you are an experienced HE tutor both in face-to-face and blended learning contexts. After a preliminary conversation, you fulfil my sample criteria and thus have been approached to take part. I am using a mixed methods approach in my research to explore your approach to the delivery of a blended learning module.

Research Requirements

The research will require the following from you:

- An interview of up to an hour;
• To complete the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test;
• For your students to complete a questionnaire exploring their perceptions of the module;
• Sight of materials used as part of the module contained within the module VLE (following discussions within the interview).

Ethical Considerations

You will need to be aware of the following:

• You will remain anonymous throughout the research and thesis;
• No names will be used to ensure your identity and others are protected in the final document and any subsequent notes taken;
• The department and institution in which you work will not be mentioned in the final document or in any subsequent notes taken;
• The final piece will be submitted as part of Ed.D Thesis;
• The data and final document may be used to provide information for further publications such as conference presentations and journal articles;
• The data and subsequent analysis will be available for you to view and comment on should you wish;
• All data will be stored in a private locked cabinet and computer folder that will not be accessible to others except the Researcher;
• You can withdraw from the research at any time;
• There is no funding associated to this study.
Consent

Your contribution to this research is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged in any way to participate, if you require any further details please contact me.

Contact details:

- Telephone: 01484 478252
- E-mail: a.youde@hud.ac.uk

If you are satisfied that you understand the information and are happy to take part in this project please put a tick in the box aligned to each sentence and print and sign in the box below.

☐ I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this research.

☐ I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without giving any reason.

☐ I give permission for my words to be quoted (by use of pseudonym).

☐ I understand that the information collected will be kept in the secure conditions for a period of 5 years at the University of Huddersfield.
☐ I understand that no other person other than the researcher will have access to the information.

☐ I understand that my identity will be protected by use of a pseudonym in the report and that no written information that could lead to my being identified will be used in the report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of the Participant:</th>
<th>Signature of the Researcher:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>……………………………………</td>
<td>……………………………………</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Print:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print:</th>
<th>Print:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>……………………………………</td>
<td>……………………………………</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>……………………………………</td>
<td>……………………………………</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One copy to be retained by the Participant / one signed and sent to the Researcher.
**Appendix 10 - Correlation coefficients between branch and task MSCEIT scores, and the CEQ scale items (n = 72)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Clear Goals</th>
<th>Good Teaching Communication</th>
<th>Good Teaching Feedback</th>
<th>Appropriate Workload</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceiving</td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>-.067</td>
<td>.176</td>
<td>.346**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using</td>
<td>-.148</td>
<td>-.344**</td>
<td>-.317**</td>
<td>.210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.194</td>
<td>.377**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing</td>
<td>-.057</td>
<td>-.284*</td>
<td>-.193</td>
<td>.251*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faces</td>
<td>.228</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>.179</td>
<td>.365**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>-.109</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>-.163</td>
<td>-.061</td>
<td>.323**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensations</td>
<td>-.188</td>
<td>-.396**</td>
<td>-.413**</td>
<td>.119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes</td>
<td>-.139</td>
<td>-.101</td>
<td>-.113</td>
<td>.285*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blends</td>
<td>.365**</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>.327**</td>
<td>.120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Management</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td>-.159</td>
<td>-.108</td>
<td>.347**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Relations</td>
<td>-.047</td>
<td>-.300*</td>
<td>-.191</td>
<td>.167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *p < .05, **p < .01 (2-tailed)
### Appendix 11 - Correlation coefficients between branch and task MSCEIT scores, and the OTQ scale items (n = 72)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Online Tutor Skills</th>
<th>Mean Online EI Competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceiving</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using</td>
<td>-.251*</td>
<td>-.391**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>.192</td>
<td>.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing</td>
<td>-.234*</td>
<td>-.291*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faces</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>-.135</td>
<td>-.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation</td>
<td>-.014</td>
<td>-.148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensations</td>
<td>-.323**</td>
<td>-.466**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes</td>
<td>-.056</td>
<td>-.226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blends</td>
<td>.270*</td>
<td>.281*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Management</td>
<td>-.052</td>
<td>-.215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Relations</td>
<td>-.284*</td>
<td>-.274*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *p < .05, **p < .01 (2-tailed)
Appendix 12 - Ordinal Categories of Factors Influencing Students’ Perception of Effective Tutoring

The extent of tutors' previous contact and relationship with the learner group prior to module commencement;

1. No contact with student group prior to the first day school;
2. Some introductory contact with student group prior to the first day school;
3. A management role on the students’ course which lead to interaction with the group;
4. The tutor had previously taught the student group for a significant proportion of a module;
5. The tutor had previously taught the student group and had a management role on the students’ course, which lead to interaction with the group.

The extent of online interaction during the module;

1. No online tutoring apparent;
2. The tutor responded to student questions in online media;
3. The tutor engaged in a dialogue with students;
4. The tutor encouraged and supported online collaboration between students in online environments;
5. The tutor developed a ‘sense of community’ in online environments.

The extent of tutors' teaching experience within blended learning environments;
1. Three to five previous modules delivered through blended learning;
2. Six to eight previous modules delivered through blended learning;
3. Nine to eleven previous modules delivered through blended learning;
4. Eleven to thirteen previous modules delivered through blended learning;
5. Over thirteen previous modules delivered through blended learning.

The extent of tutors' previous learning experiences within blended, online and/or distance learning environments;

1. No previous experience of blended, online and/or distance learning as a student;
2. Some experience of continuing professional development via online and/or distance learning as a student (up to 10 days learning);
3. Moderate experience of academic learning via online and/or distance learning as a student (up to 50 days learning);
4. Detailed experience of academic learning via online and/or distance learning as a student (up to 100 days learning);
5. Extensive experience of academic learning via online and/or distance learning as a student (over 100 days learning);

The extent of tutors' technical skills;

1. No previous experience in the use of computers;
2. User experience of simple applications, such as word processing and e-mail;
3. User experience of basic educational technologies, such as the standard use of a VLE;
4. User experience of Web 2 technologies, such as, wikis;
5. Extensive experience of a range of educational technologies including the training of other tutors in their use.

The extent of tutors' training relevant to blended tutoring;

1. No specific training received;
2. Informal mentoring and coaching generally available;
3. Limited formal training, such as the basic use of educational technology, and informal mentoring and coaching available;
4. Formal training relevant to blended tutoring, such as developing an online community, and informal mentoring and coaching available;
5. Formal training relevant to blended tutoring, such as developing an online community and a formal system of mentoring and coaching in operation.

The extent of tutors' workload throughout the delivery of the module;

1. Tutor practices were hampered due to workload pressures;
2. Frequently, tutor practices were hampered due to workload pressures;
3. Some tutor practices were hampered during the module due to workload pressures;
4. On limited occasions, tutor practices were hampered due to workload pressures;
5. Tutor practices were not hampered due to workload pressures.
## Appendix 13 - Correlation coefficients between tutor assessment measures and the CEQ scale items (n = 72)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEQ Scales</th>
<th>Clear Goals and Standards</th>
<th>Good Teaching Communication</th>
<th>Good Teaching Feedback</th>
<th>Appropriate Workload</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous Relationships</td>
<td>.335**</td>
<td>.205*</td>
<td>.382**</td>
<td>.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of Online Interaction</td>
<td>.280**</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.224*</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience in Blended</td>
<td>.236*</td>
<td>-.018</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td>.183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Experience in Blended</td>
<td>-.147</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>-.053</td>
<td>-.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Technical Skills</td>
<td>-.143</td>
<td>-.177</td>
<td>-.237*</td>
<td>-.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module Technical Skills</td>
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<td>-.045</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor Training</td>
<td>.147</td>
<td>-.165</td>
<td>-.054</td>
<td>.225*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor Workload</td>
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<td>.170</td>
<td>.306**</td>
<td>-.133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *p < .05, **p < .01 (2-tailed)
Appendix 14 - Correlation coefficients between tutor assessment measures and the OTQ scale items \((n = 72)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTQ Scales</th>
<th>Online Tutor Skills</th>
<th>Online EI Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous Relationships</td>
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<td>.286*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of Online Interaction</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td>.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience in Blended</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Experience in Blended</td>
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<td>.122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Technical Skills</td>
<td>-.269**</td>
<td>-.191*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module Technical Skills</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>-.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor Training</td>
<td>-.111</td>
<td>-.081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor Workload</td>
<td>.175</td>
<td>.291**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *\(p < .05\), **\(p < .01\) (2-tailed)
Appendix 15 - Key actions that are required to meet adult learner needs studying in blended learning contexts

- Tutors outlined key module information and key topics at day schools with supporting documentation available, such as assessment briefs;
- Tutors adopted the Individual Constructivist Perspective across the whole module with student-centred learning encouraging experimentation and application of theory to practice;
- Tutors adopted a ‘facilitative’ teaching style;
- Tutors adopted a variety of teaching and learning methods at day schools, including group work, student-centred learning and application of theory to practice;
- Learners had choice over focus of module assessment with application to work contexts and roles;
- Day schools included a range of student-centred activities to develop understanding of key concepts and apply theory to practice;
- Tutors provided a structured learning environment with modules structured around assessment requirements;
- Learners had choice over focus of module assessment;
- Learners studied independently outside day schools, mainly on module assessments;
- Tutors adopted strategies to foster student-centred learning including appropriate feedback on progress;
- Assessments were problem-based within learners’ organisations;
- Tutors were aware that learners generally exhibit intrinsic motivation;
- Tutors outlined the value of their modules in relation to learners’ work context, roles and practices;
- Tutors provided appropriate feedback to enhance learners’ belief of success and demonstrated commitment to support;
- Tutors showed enthusiasm for the subject area and adopted strategies at day schools to motivate learners for the module duration;
• Tutors adopted strategies to motivate learners at a distance, which included interacting online and communicating proactively.