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BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN FACE-TO-FACE AND ONLINE TEACHING: A CASE STUDY EXPLORING TUTORS' EARLY EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING ONLINE IN A UK UNIVERSITY 2009-2012

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Abstract

This thesis explores the early experiences of online teaching of a group of tutors employed by a UK post-1992 University, to tutor a group of students in an online module. Using qualitative case study methodology, and drawing on the theories of Communities of Practice, Learning Cultures and Community of Inquiry, this research reveals that for most of the case-study tutors, teaching online was very different from their normal teaching practice, and some of these tutors were very anxious about the changes. Most of the tutors spoke about teaching online in terms of a deficit model, seeing it as deficient in relation to face-to-face teaching, and often tried to replicate face-to-face teaching practices online. The majority of tutors reported that the aspects they valued about teaching were missing from the online environment, such as non-verbal communication and the dynamics of a live classroom situation. Issues for the case-study tutors included building relationships with students online, time management and workload, and factors relating to role and identity. The research also reveals the importance of peer support in the transition to online teaching, and the value of tutors having experience of being an online student themselves. In addition, the study identifies the strengths and limitations of Communities of Practice and the other theoretical models used when applying them to tutors' early experiences of teaching online.

Table of Contents

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List of Tables

List of Figures

Dedications and Acknowledgements

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List of Abbreviations

BERA – British Educational Research Association

Cert Ed – Certificate in Education

CMC – Computer Mediated Communication

CoI – Community of Inquiry

CoP – Communities of Practice

CPCET - Consortium for Post Compulsory Education and Training

CPD – Continuing Professional Development

DfES - Department for Education and Skills

F2F – Face-to-Face

FE – Further Education

HE – Higher Education

HEFCE - Higher Education Funding Council for England

HEI(s) – Higher Education Institution(s)

ICT – Information and Communication Technology

LMS – Learning Management System

NVC – Non-Verbal Communication

OfSTED - Office for Standards in Education

PCET - Post Compulsory Education and Training

PD – Professional Development

PGCE – Postgraduate (or Professional Graduate) Certificate of Education

RQn – Research Question (where n=the number of the research question)

UK – United Kingdom

US(A) – United States (of America)

VLE – Virtual Learning Environment

VS – Virtual Schooling

Glossary of Terms

Blended teaching/learning: where there is a combination of face-to-face and online teaching delivery methods.

Distance Learning: where the students and tutors are separated geographically. Communication will generally be done online but could take place by phone, and written communication sent via post.

eLearning/e-learning: broad description of learning involving technology, ranging from self-directed learning packages to using technology in face-to-face teaching, blended learning or online learning.

Online teaching/learning: in this context this refers to wholly online teaching contexts where the tutors and students usually do not meet face-to-face. Often defined as when at least 80% of the teaching delivery is done online.

Tutor: member of academic teaching staff in HE or FE. The term tutor in this study is interchangeable with *teacher* or *academic,* and often referred to as *faculty* in the USA.

Web 2.0: refers to web-based tools like blogs and wikis, where people can create content, and comment on content. Sometimes referred to as the read/write web (as opposed to the read-only web).

Chapter 1 – Introduction

There is currently a technological revolution taking place in Higher Education, unprecedented and above all disruptive. (Garrison & Anderson, 2003, p.i)

The statement above, similar to many claims in the late 1990s and early 2000s (for example Schrum, 1998; Oliver, 1999; Palloff & Pratt, 2000; Spector, 2001), predicted a transformation of pedagogical approaches as a result of the potential of technologies and particularly Web 2.0 tools infiltrating the teaching and learning process. These predictions were made over a decade ago, and yet there has been little evidence of this widespread elearning explosion (Luo, 2011). Many Higher Education (HE) tutors are still teaching predominantly in a traditional way. As Collis & Moonen (2008) explain, "the potential for pedagogical innovation through the affordances of technology is not (much) reflected in institutional practice" (p.96). Dykman & Davis (2008b) concur: "while opportunities to utilize online facilities for teaching and learning have been available for years, universities have too often shown a reluctance to engage in the development and use of these technologies" (p.157). Although there are pockets of innovative teaching in most institutions, there has been little widespread uptake and "despite substantial recent institutional investment in trying to exploit such technologies in learning there is little sign that education has changed in any fundamental way at the level of teacher practice" (Falconer & Littlejohn, 2007, pp.41-42). More recently, Baran et al. (2011) suggest that "while educators and organizations around the world are becoming more involved in online learning, the growth in faculty involvement and acceptance has been modest, accompanied with limited change in online pedagogies" (p.422).

This research study explores why tutors are reluctant to change their teaching approaches and in particular embrace online teaching. The study uses the experiences of a group of tutors new to online teaching in an attempt to illuminate the issues and concerns they have about this unfamiliar environment. It draws on a combination of three complementary theories to frame the discussion and help understand the experience of the tutors: Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice derived from Situated Learning Theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991); Garrison et al.'s (2001) Community of Inquiry; and the notion of learning cultures (James & Biesta, 2007). In addition it uses specific concepts and models developed to theorise elearning for example Salmon's (2000) five-stage model.

Aim of the Study and Research Questions

The main aim of this study was to explore the experiences of the transition from face-to-face teaching to online teaching, of a group of tutors who had recently been introduced to the online teaching environment, to illuminate tutors' challenges, anxieties and perceptions of difference. The findings should also offer suggestions of how new online tutors could be developed and supported. These findings may be adapted to other contexts, or taken together with the findings from other case studies, to offer HEIs guidance on how to improve their support and professional development of staff about to teach online. The aim of the study is addressed via the research questions below:

The main research question for this study was: *What were the experiences and perceptions of the transition from face-to-face to online teaching of a group of tutors, who had been recently introduced to an online teaching environment?*

This exploration was conducted by the consideration of the following research sub-questions:
  - o   RQ1: What did the tutors perceive as the main differences between teaching face-to-face and teaching online?
  - o   RQ2: Did the tutors think that a different teaching approach or pedagogical strategy was needed online, and if so in what ways?
  - o   RQ3: Did the tutors perceive their role to be different online? If so, how?
  - o   RQ4: What did the tutors feel were the main challenges to teaching online?
  - o   RQ5: What helped support the tutors with this transition?

Definition of Terms

Teaching online can be defined in different ways. For the purpose of this study, teaching online is defined as the facilitation of a group of students taking part in a wholly online course, as defined by Cuellar (2002):

> *An online course is defined as one that is taken through a Web-based learning platform using interactive teaching strategies. This involves no face-to-face interaction with classroom time, with students doing course work at a place and time convenient to the student. (p.5)*

Alternative definitions of online teaching include blended modes where a mix of face-to-face teaching and online teaching occurs; creating self-directed learning materials for students to work through at their own pace; distance learning with some form of online

communication; or use of technologies to supplement a predominantly face-to-face delivered course. Some authors define an online course as one where at least 80% of the course is delivered online (for example Simonson et al., 2009; Parietti & Turi, 2011). The focus of this study is on wholly online courses where tutors and students do not meet face-to-face.

Background

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are extending their traditional campus based, fully face-to-face delivery modes to cater for the demands of the diverse range of students that now have access to HE courses (Cuellar, 2002; Dykman & Davis, 2008a; Hislop, 2009). This is partly in response to the widening participation agenda and increasing HE student numbers, partly due to universities wanting to diversify their income stream to open up new markets, and partly because the affordances of technology allows them to move away from the face-to-face mode of delivery (Dykman & Davis, 2008a). This is not just happening in the UK: "while traditional residential enrolments in the US are virtually stagnant, the number of online, non-traditional students is exploding" (Reinhart, 2008, p.13). In addition in countries such as Australia where students are clustered over large geographical areas, universities often offer courses in dual mode, where students attending campus and studying online are taught together (King, 2010). The ability of being able to educate a large number of students who are dispersed over a large geographical area is also increasing the demand for online courses in developing nations such as those in Africa, (see for example Ramos et al., 2011).

Reinforcing these trends is the increasing use of technology across learning and teaching. Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010) argue that digital technologies should be considered the normal tools of the trade for tutors in a similar way that technology is used in other areas of society. They propose that "teachers' mindsets must change to include the idea that 'teaching is not effective without the appropriate use of information and communication technologies (ICT) resources to facilitate student learning'" (p.255). However this is not happening. Many tutors are reluctant to incorporate technology in their teaching for a number of reasons, including lack of relevant knowledge, low self-efficacy, existing belief systems and constraints in the context in which they work (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010). Tutors adopting online teaching often have to rethink their teaching approach and also their role in the teaching and learning process,

particularly those tutors who take a more instructional content-driven approach to teaching as Ragan (2009) explains:

often instructors teach in the face-to-face setting the way they were taught. That is they use similar instruction strategies as instructors as they engaged in as learners. (…). So many instructors end up repeating the same mistakes as their professors. Now overlay the new dynamics of the online classroom. What we know about teaching in the classroom good or bad may not translate online with somewhat complicated technologies, new social orders and media-rich resources. (p.5)

For these tutors, moving to online teaching may represent a paradigm shift. They have to learn new skills, and redefine their role to become more of a facilitator of the learning process, potentially giving up some of the power and control which they have built up over the years, and becoming accustomed to a new way of teaching: "the rapid growth of online distance education worldwide has prompted the need to revise delivery structure and re-think pedagogical practices that were once appropriate" (Beldarrain, 2006, p.140).

Change of any sort is usually difficult to achieve and particularly when it involves challenging the way in which tutors perceive their role and identity (Bayne, 2010; Saltmarsh & Sutherland-Smith, 2010). Many HEIs appear to expect tutors to make the transition easily, but in fact it is not straightforward and a common mistake is that some tutors try to replicate their face-to-face teaching methods online, rather than taking a more appropriate approach. Rovai (2004) explains "it would be a serious mistake to take a course delivered in a traditional classroom setting and use it, without change, in an online program" (p.84), Bennett & Lockyer (2004) agree, "adapting student centred approaches to the online environment has required the development of new skills and changes to teaching practices" (p.231). Furthermore institutional procedures, policies and infrastructure frequently do not support the differences in online teaching, as Davis & Fill (2007) explain: "university teachers often find it difficult to adopt new online techniques, in part because institutional practices are still geared to support more traditional approaches" (p.817). Examples of this include workload still being measured in face-to-face contact hours, job titles (lecturers), enrolment and validation processes still wedded to traditional campus-based teaching, and lecture theatres still being designed into new campus building projects.

If some tutors are reluctant to engage with online teaching and learning, is it essential for them to do so? Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010) suggest that as teachers strive to keep up with content knowledge, they must also keep up with pedagogic strategies and the tools of their trade. It is also likely that most tutors will have to engage with

teaching online within their career (Keramidas et al., 2007), so it is necessary for HEIs to take a more proactive approach to recognise this and find ways to prepare their staff, (Dykman & Davis, 2008a).

Several authors in the field report that there is insufficient knowledge about online teaching, for example Gonzalez (2009) suggests that there has been relatively little research on teaching in distance and online education settings. Selwyn & Grant (2009) argue that the research on the use of technologies in teaching is struggling to keep pace with their rapid evolvement, that much of the work in this area focuses on possibilities and hopes, and very little relatively little research provides empirically grounded accounts of what is happening. Empirical studies into teaching online include Robina & Anderson's (2010) study on teacher efficacy in online teaching. They found that training courses and workshops provided the verbal persuasion to improve efficacy and that working with experienced colleagues and/or mentors improved efficacy. However they found that the most powerful element on improving efficacy in online teaching was learning by actually doing it. Another study by Compton et al. (2010) on pre-service teachers' attitudes to online teaching, found that some of the common misconceptions and anxieties of tutors included career threat, viability of online teaching and reduced interaction. However most research studies focus on the use of specific technologies and/or online teaching by those who are enthusiastic about technology and its role and potential in education (Hixton et al., 2012). This study aims to address the gap in the literature which focuses on the experiences of tutors who are not classed as learning technology enthusiasts and who have not have chosen to teach online. Hixton et al.'s (2012) empirical study identified that this group of tutors which they term the *reluctant majority*, do in fact have different support needs for teaching online to those who are the innovators and the enthusiasts, thus there is the need for studies such as this one to identify what these particular support needs are.

Context of the Case Study Module

The module that forms the basis of this case study is part of an Initial Teacher Training for Further Education (FE) course at a post 1992 University in England. The module is called *Teaching a Specialist Subject*, and is the only module of the course that is taught online. The remainder of the delivery is by face-to-face methods in HE in FE Centres. The module is taught by both full-time staff in HE and FE-based staff employed by the University on a part time basis for this work. Therefore as many of the participant tutors

and most of the trainees were from the FE sector, it is appropriate to discuss the learning culture and context in which they work and how it links with professionalism. In addition the theoretical framework for this study, the theories of Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998), Situated Learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and learning cultures (James & Biesta, 2007) place a great deal of importance on context.

Firstly in terms of entry into the profession of FE teaching, Gleeson & James (2007) found that often FE practitioners entered the profession with no formal teaching qualifications or training but also that "many never envisaged 'professional' careers, let alone in teaching and some had 'slipped' into the role through a range of unforeseen and unplanned events" (p.454). Gleeson et al. (2005) found the same, "the transition into FE is not a smooth one. It often coincides with lifestyle changes, career breaks, redundancy, divorce and relocation" (p.450). This was also confirmed in the interviews with FE tutors in my research. The path *into* FE teaching can also be messy, often starting with a few part-time hours and temporary contracts and slowly moving towards full-time permanent contracts. The FE sector therefore made up of a diverse group of tutors, which Gleeson & James (2007) suggest is "an important and distinctive feature of the learning culture that often goes unrecognised" (p.454). In addition, the FE sector offers an extremely diverse range of qualifications, and because of this "it is quite common to find practitioners working outside their field of expertise (…), teaching a unit or module in an area they feel is beyond their field of expertise but also feeling they cannot or should not refuse to do so" (Gleeson & James, 2007, p.455). Because of this, Gleeson & James found some people in their study felt devalued and a loss of professional identity and status. Simmons & Thompson (2007) agree, reporting that FE teachers are facing longer hours, a relatively decline in pay, less professional autonomy and managers' increased control of their work. Gleeson & James (2007) concluded that:

> *Overall what was normally the case added up to a depressing picture. Many tutors felt bound to an externally monitored cycle of recruitment, retention, and certification linked to college funding, remuneration and quality measurement, that has changed little over time. (p.458)*

As a result, many FE tutors have little time to think about their pedagogic practice let alone explore the affordances of emerging technologies.

In 2003 the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) issued a report which emphasised the importance of subject specialist pedagogy and how it may be more supported in teacher training courses (DfES, 2003). A follow up report the same year by the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) recommended that HEIs and other awarding bodies gave much more attention to developing trainees' subject specific pedagogy (Fisher & Webb, 2006). The subjects taught in the FE sector however are

diverse as discussed above, and the DfES recognised that it would not always be possible for a trainee to be taught by an expert in their particular subject from their own institution. Many FE tutors frequently teach across broad curriculum areas and regularly teach subjects they would consider outside their realms of expertise, (Gleeson et al., 2005). In recognition of this, the DfES recommended that where possible partnerships across educational establishments could be formed to provide this support and also that trainees could have access to resources online.

The module that forms the basis of this study consists of groups of students from different colleges arranged into subject specialist groups, and tutors both from the FE and HE sectors were recruited to teach these groups. The students were in-service trainee-teachers most of whom taught in the FE sector, and were based at about 30 educational institutions across the North of England which were part of the Consortium for Post Compulsory Education and Training (CPCET).

There were criticisms of the subject-specialist approach, for example Lucas (2007) had concerns about concentrating on the subject specialist aspect of FE teaching, claiming that FE teachers have a much wider role than just on the development of their subject specialism, arguing that they "have increasingly been required to have more than simply a narrow knowledge about delivering a specialism in a classroom" (p.97). Lucas (2007) also criticises the current teacher training initiatives for ignoring the fact that work based learning in FE is a very complex and individual experience, arguing that "it takes no account of learning as a process of development in 'communities of practice', disregards the multi-specialist dimensions of professional practice in FE and marginalizes the importance of professional knowledge" (p.103). However despite these concerns, the emphasis on subject-specialist pedagogy remains (Fisher & Webb, 2006), and it is this module within a specific course that this research study is based on.

The Participants

In terms of data collection methods, this study uses a combination of interviews with 17 online tutors, survey responses from 40 online tutors and a small amount of data from various documents. The group of tutors that formed the basis of this study were recruited to become online tutors for over 1000 in-service teacher trainees. From the 64 tutors in the 2010/11 cohort, 25 were from the HE sector and the rest based in FE (32) or HE in FE (7). The tutors were predominantly experienced face-to-face teachers, some with teacher education experience, but most had little or no experience of teaching

online. Each tutor had a group of between 10 and 15 trainee-teachers who were studying part-time for either an in-service Cert Ed or PGCE, organised into groups related to their subject specialism. The trainees also attended a local HE in FE Centre for the remainder of their modules, delivered face-to-face. The online module in addition to focusing on subject specialist pedagogy had the advantage of giving the trainees exposure to and experience of an online teaching and learning environment, and further developing their digital skills. The tutors had a face-to-face induction session to introduce them to the online environment, including an explanation of the Blackboard VLE, and the practical exercises they would be using with their trainees. This research was conducted during the second and third cohort of the module running in this online format.

In the module, the trainees worked towards the writing of a conference paper which focussed on teaching their subject specialism, which they presented to their subject group at the end of the module once all the assessment had been completed. This took place in a face-to-face conference, and was the only time the group met face-to-face. It was an extremely structured approach to make sure the large number of students across the different centres received an equivalent experience. This principle of 'one voice' was particularly emphasised to the tutors, as the trainees from different specialist groups met frequently face-to-face whilst attending classes for their other modules, so experiences would inevitably be compared and contrasted. This process of having to follow a series of activities not designed by themselves in a time-frame which was structured, and working through a process in a specific way which was highly visible, was quite different from any other teaching situation that most of the tutors had experienced before.

This research focuses on the experience of these tutors but in particular is interested in the challenges and anxieties that many tutors face and how we can use a deep understanding of this aspect to support staff in the future who are starting to teach online. Baran et al. (2011) reiterate the requirement for research in this area "this growing interest in online education challenges higher education institutions as well to rethink their cultural, academic, organizational, and pedagogical structures in adapting to a new culture of teaching and learning" (p.421).

Although this research focuses on a specific case study in one context, the transferability of the findings is expected to be relatively high due to the fact that many of the challenges to becoming an online teacher are generic across varying institutions and subject areas. The study involves participants from a cross section of different discipline

areas, experience and teaching backgrounds. Although the context of the case study is quite specific and the aim is not to generalise from it, it does not follow that the research findings will be limited to this context, but in fact they could illuminate other contexts and situations (Thomas, 2010). This is discussed in more detail in the Methodology and Conclusion chapters.

Overview of the Thesis

This rest of this thesis is organised in the following way: Chapter 2 focuses on a review of the literature relating to the concepts and models of elearning. Chapter 3 explores the methodology and theoretical perspectives of this research. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the data collection methods and data analysis methods used in this study. Chapters 6 to 11 are the finding chapters organised into themes, and Chapter 12 concludes the thesis, summarising the main findings and identifying the contribution to knowledge.

Chapter 2 – Concepts and Models of eLearning

This chapter explores the elearning literature and more specifically literature relating to online teaching, with the more fundamental concepts being discussed in the next chapter. Appropriate literature will also be included throughout the thesis. Due to the abundance of research available in the area of technology enhanced learning, elearning, and online teaching and learning it was necessary to narrow the review down and be transparent about its scope. The scope is laid out in Table 2.1 below which identifies the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The table and approach is adapted from Sharpe & Savin-Baden (2007). Alternatives to this approach would have been a traditional literature review or a systematic literature review. The traditional literature review, sometimes referred to as the narrative approach, aims to summarise and synthesise the literature in a particular field. Its drawback is that its scope is frequently not clearly defined as Cronin et al. (2008) describe, "it is typically selective in the material it uses, although the criteria for selecting specific sources for review are not always apparent to the reader" (p.38). The systematic literature review involves narrowing down the field of literature by setting down clear criteria, similar to that below, but is extremely structured, comprehensive and rigorous in nature, and attempts to provide an exhaustive list of literature from a particular field. As Cronin et al. (2008) suggest "while traditional reviews attempt to summarize results of a number of studies, systematic reviews use explicit and rigorous criteria to identify, critically evaluate and synthesize all the literature on a particular topic" (p.38). A systematic method of literature review was rejected for this study as that would not be practical to conduct a comprehensive and rigorous review of all the literature due to the abundance of literature available. The approach taken below offers a practical method of reviewing the literature with setting guidelines and criteria to focus the review without it being too restrictive. The approach was to select sufficient literature from within the scope below to illuminate the key themes relevant to the research questions rather than provide an exhaustive review of literature in this field. Four general areas were focussed on for the literature review as outlined in the table below:

Criteria	Include	Exclude
Topic	Focus search on four main areas: o affordances of teaching and learning online; o differences identified between teaching face-to-face and online; o challenges facing tutors new to teaching online; o models of elearning practice.	Most studies on the student experience of learning online unless inferences about tutors' approach and management of the course can be made.

Location	Mainly UK but extended to those countries with similar education systems and stages of development of technology to the UK.	Countries where the student population/level of technology/HE system not comparable to UK.
Level	Higher Education/ Further Education if related to online education.	Primary and Secondary education.
Date	From 2000. Although this may seem a long time in terms of technological development, a main focus of my arguments is that pedagogically not much has changed since 2000 despite the technological advances and research on it (see Introduction Chapter for further discussion).	Pre-2000 – as technology advances rapidly most studies pre-2000 would not be deemed relevant to current developments.
Focus	Early experiences; making the change from face-to-face teaching; what tutors perceive as the differences between face-to-face and online learning; challenges and anxieties facing academic staff in connection with online teaching.

Use of blended learning in scope as long as online teaching replaces a significant proportion of the face-to-face teaching and is not supplementary.

Constructions of learning and the relationship with pedagogy. | Where tutors are only using technology to supplement face-to-face teaching.

Literature that primarily relates to course design unless extremely relevant to topic.

Where technology is only used to support face-to-face teaching in the classroom like interactive whiteboards and PowerPoint. |
| Design | Using a qualitative design; use of interviews, focus groups; case study; mixed method studies. | Purely quantitative studies with surveys and predominantly statistical methods. |

Table 2.1 – Scope of the Literature Review

This chapter is divided into four main sections as identified in the table above. It will start by reviewing what the literature tells us about the affordances of using technology for teaching online, as a rationale for why we should be concerned about tutors being supported in their use of technology and in online teaching. Then it will move on to discuss the literature in respect to real and perceived differences between teaching online and teaching face-to face. Next, the literature relating to challenges facing academic staff when teaching online for the first time will be explored, and finally, models of elearning practice will be discussed.

Affordances of Online Teaching and Learning

One of the major advantages of online learning is the flexibility it affords, as it allows the student to be able to study at a time and place that suit them (Vrasidas & McIsaac, 2000), and contribute when the ideas come to them rather than when the timetable dictates. In addition learning is not restricted to the classroom; it can take place whenever and wherever each student decides, and discussions are able to continue outside formal class time (Suler, 2004a). In a similar way it is flexible for tutors as they can engage with the students when and where they choose, and are less bound by a strict timetable for course activities.

The asynchronous nature also allows for reflective practice, allowing students the time to reflect on ideas and revisit when required (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004) and as many times as needed which Simpson (2006) reports as having the advantage of freeing "the self-conscious student of any embarrassment over not following the proceedings initially, and it empowers them to pause and repeat the proceedings at will" (p.528). Students therefore have the opportunity to continue to review the materials until they have grasped the topic in hand rather than when the class ends, (see also Wilson & Weiser, 2001; Shim et al., 2007). Wang (2008) found that online discussions have the advantages of promoting students' critical thinking and knowledge construction. Maor (2008) agrees, suggesting that the literature demonstrates that it is possible to achieve higher order thinking in asynchronous learning environments. Garrison & Kanuka (2004) concur: "participants can confront questionable ideas and faculty thinking in more objective and reflective ways than might be possible in a face-to-face context" (p.99).

Wheeler et al. (2008) found that students using wikis to do a collaborative task, reported that it improved writing skills, and that it helped develop higher order skills. Suler (2004a) suggests that online discussions help develop writing skills and are advantageous for those whose first language is not the one spoken. Beldarrain (2006) reports that blogs allow students to practise their writing skills, Tekinarslan (2008) found the same: "students reflected that writing in a blog environment contributed to their writing skills in terms of organisation, paraphrasing and referencing" (p.408). Wheeler et al. (2008) suggest that students review their writing more if they have a perceived audience, which in turn helps them to improve.

Online learning creates peer learning opportunities which would be more difficult to achieve in face-to-face situations. Technologies such as blogs and wikis allow students to share easily, and comment on each other's work (Churchill, 2009). This enables students

to learn how others approach a task; in addition they are able to review the work of others and see the feedback they received (Churchill, 2009). Loch & Reushle (2008) terms this the 'visibility of discourse' claiming that this "sets electronic learning environments apart from other settings and provides an excellent opportunity for formal vicarious learning where participants in the learning process can 'watch' others learn" (p.565). Tutors can use this to their advantage and model good practice in activities to provide the students with example contributions, and demonstrate how to comment and give useful feedback on other's work. This also shows the students that the tutor is actively engaging with the course contributions and is an indicator of online presence (see later discussion on this).

Technologies such as wikis allow students to contribute content, rather than just consume content which the tutor has provided, which helps them engage more with the learning process (Wheeler et al., 2008). This idea of 'students as producers' has contributed to the increasing doubt over the traditional lecture method of teaching (Stephenson et al., 2008), in addition, more collaborative teaching methods create better experience for students as they actively engage with the content rather than be passive recipients of information (Roettger et al., 2007) . This links to the constructivist view of learning discussed further in Chapter 3.

The online learning environment can be more democratic, for example, Loch & Reushle (2008) claim that in the online environment, the learners have equal opportunities to contribute to discussions, so not only the loudest or most confident students speak up, and it allows all students to contribute to a discussion. They term this the "democratisation of participation" (p.565). Suler (2004b), Welker & Berardino (2005), Meyers (2008) and Ragan (2009) concur, suggesting that the online environment gives a voice to those less likely to contribute in live class situations and provides a more equitable learning experience than face-to-face classrooms. Schweizer et al. (2003) see the online learning environment as more democratic in that "participants meet in an environment in which the social status of the individuals is less distinctly discernible" (p.214). Steinman (2007) states that online courses can harness the experience of students more and that "online educators who acknowledge the worth and power of their students can dismantle hierarchical relationships" (p.49).

In an online environment, students frequently open up more and risk stating comments that they may not say in a classroom environment (Gilmore & Warren, 2007). Suler (2004a) terms this the *Disinhibition Effect*: "people say and do things in cyberspace that they wouldn't ordinarily say or do in the real world. Without having to deal with a face-

to-face encounter, they become more uninhibited, express themselves more openly" (p.399). Students tend to be more honest and more freely describe experiences relating to their learning when online (Meyers, 2008), and some students are more willing to open up and debate with their tutor than they would be in a face-to-face environment (Suler, 2004b).

Online teaching and learning allows for collaboration and for students to participate in social networks and communities of practice. Beldarrain (2006) suggests that the emergence of social networking software "has added a new dimension to online learning" (p.140). Students can learn informally from engagement in online social networks which connects them to a much wider learning community than they would be exposed to otherwise.

Mobile technologies allow students to access learning at the point of need, for example, podcasts allow students to "study without being tethered to their computers" (Read, 2005, p.3). Students are also able to capture photos and information whilst on the move with mobile technologies, again extending the learning outside the classroom and making it more meaningful and authentic (Lefoe et al., 2009). Herrington et al. (2009) argue that mobile technologies allow tutors to utilise pedagogies such as authentic learning and action learning, which are strategies which more resemble real-world problems that students are likely to get involved with in the workplace in the future.

Online teaching can have the benefit of providing the tutor a *window into learning,* which is an opportunity to view the learning process rather than just the end product (Jones & Cooke, 2006; Falconer & Littlejohn, 2007). Technologies provide tutors with the opportunity to view the learning progressing which gives them a chance to step in and guide students if they are not on task, and an insight into how students learn and the roles they are taking in a group project. Jones & Cooke (2006) suggest that "observation of this process enabled tutors to intervene to adapt the teaching and learning environment in a timely manner" (p.271). Blogs have the advantage over paper-based reflective journals in that they are date and time stamped (Sauer et al., 2005; Wheeler 2009; Yang, 2009), so the students cannot just write all the entries at the end of the task. The tutor is able to check on student learning progress and identify any issues early on in the course (Churchill, 2009; Wheeler, 2009).

There is also an opportunity for tutors to review their own and others' teaching practice and learn from it. Read (2005) suggests that podcasts make lecturers review and therefore identify areas for improvement in their own teaching: "I've learned a lot just

from listening to my own podcasts, (…) they are really great for self-critique – if you've got the guts to listen" (p.7).

The literature reports that teaching online presents tutors with an opportunity to rethink their teaching practice (Hislop, 2009; Abdous, 2011). Kreber & Kanuka (2006) suggest that online teaching and learning "has enormous potential to transform the dominant practice of teaching with texts and talk to more reflective and interactive learning activities" (p.123). As tutors prepare their courses for online delivery, they are forced into thinking about what activities will help the students to learn because it shifts the emphasis to what activities students do, as Renes & Strange (2011) suggest: "technology provides us with a great opportunity to modify our approaches to teaching and learning in beneficial ways" (p.211). Kreber & Kanuka (2006) assert that online teaching enables "the discovery of new kinds of pedagogical practices - such as engaging students in inquiry-based learning" (p.123). Cuellar (2002) argues that many tutors will automatically move from a more didactic teaching style to a facilitative approach when teaching online.

There are also criticisms and disadvantages of online teaching and learning as well as challenges to tutors (discussed later in this chapter). A disadvantage to students of having the time and place independence and not meeting regularly with the tutor and peers, is potential feelings of isolation (Steinman, 2007). Students miss the face-to-face time to build social presence and community (Welker & Berardino, 2005; Price et al., 2007). For the tutor, misunderstandings can often be picked up quickly in a live face-to-face class (Dykman & Davis, 2008c) and collaborative group work can be easier to engage students with in a live classroom situation.

The affordance of all students being able to contribute to a discussion or blog has the disadvantage to the tutor of it taking both time and skill in terms of reading and moderating the volume of potential contributions (Bernath & Rubin, 2001; Barker, 2002). In addition, it could be argued that the online environment could favour students who are more able to express themselves in writing over those who are more verbally competent, and the permanency of online entries could be a potential deterrent to students contributing. In a similar way, some tutors may also be anxious and feel exposed about the permanency and opportunity to see how they have managed or taught a course (Ham & Davey, 2005).

Some tutors may be reluctant to allow students to create content as they may be concerned with the quality and accuracy of student contributions compared with those

selected by subject experts (Evans, 2006). Tutors also need to know how to use these tools effectively to engage students and take advantage of the peer learning and collaborative benefits mentioned above (Falconer & Littlejohn, 2007; Collis & Moonen, 2008).

The affordance that students open up more online could have a negative effect: if students feel braver online and therefore do not observe normal etiquette and say negative comments that perhaps they would not dare to say to someone in a face-to-face situation (Suler, 2004b). This could cause an issue for tutors in moderating such discussions and learning how to deal with a negative situation.

The literature suggests that the online teaching environment lends itself to more constructivist way of teaching (Bangert, 2004). How tutors react to this may depend on their current teaching philosophy. Tutors that use a more constructivist teaching style may adapt to online teaching more easily (Conrad, 2004), however, others may find this challenging, if the methods they use in the face-to-face environment are quite different, they may find it difficult to adjust (Burd & Buchanan, 2004).

Differences between Face-to-face and Online Teaching

This second section of this literature review examines the literature relating to real and perceived differences between online and face-to-face teaching, and is discussed in more detail under the following sub-sections:
- o Differences in relation to pedagogy
- o Differences in relation to a tutor's role and identity
- o Differences in relation to building relationships with students online

Differences in Relation to Pedagogy

Palloff & Pratt (2007) claim that the changes academic staff are facing are significant and "encompass the development of new skill sets for teaching and the need to rethink pedagogy, redefine learning objectives, re-evaluate assessment, and redefine faculty work roles and culture" (p.4). The literature suggests that although different pedagogical approaches are needed for online teaching from those used in face-to-face teaching, this is not always recognised (Gabriel & Kaufield, 2008). Rovai (2004) agrees that distance education courses are often taught replicating face-to-face practices, but argues that

"this practice ignores fundamental differences between traditional classroom instruction and distance education. Distance education calls for special instructional design methods" (p.83). Kreber & Kanuka (2006) warn that:

> *when instructors try to replicate their lecture methods in the online classroom by merely placing their lecture notes on websites, it becomes painfully visible that the students' experience in the course involves little, if any, interaction and communication between and among the teacher and other students. (p.123)*

Creanor (2002) comments that the current move toward technology enhanced learning "places university and college lecturers under enormous pressure to gain expertise not only in emerging new media, but also in innovative pedagogical approaches which their use dictates" (p.57). Gilmore & Warren (2007) noted a change in the communication patterns when teaching online "a shift from verbal to written 'speech', attendant absence of paralinguistic cues and the removal of the traditional socio-spatial indicators that tell us how to behave and feel in a classroom" (p.592). This could have an effect on those tutors who do not cope well with change, and are unsure how to respond to this new situation. They may have to take part in professional development activities to update their knowledge and skills in this area.

The literature recommends professional development for potential online tutors (Salmon, 2000; Barker, 2002; Bennett & March, 2002). Ragan (2009) advises that training is required for tutors arguing that "although we assume that faculty know something of the face-to-face learning setting, we cannot assume that knowledge translates to the online classroom" (p.4). Salmon et al. (2008) report that many tutors concentrate on issues relating to teaching and learning in their own discipline and subject areas rather than of pedagogic development: "academics work within the dominant discourse about teaching in their discipline and may be antipathetic to staff development, advice or theory or research which is not discipline based" (p.96). Creanor (2002) recommends that staff development related to effective online tutoring skills needs to be given a higher priority in HEIs.

Differences in Relation to a Tutor's Role and Identity

In the literature, the role of the tutor is usually reported to be different in the online environment compared to that of face-to-face teaching, with the tutor frequently being referred to as the *moderator* or *facilitator of learning*, or as a *partner* in the learning process. Ragan (2009) suggests that "the online classroom presents a significant shift in the understanding of roles and responsibilities on part of both the instructor and the student" (p.7). Students are offered more opportunities for peer teaching online as

Beldarrain (2006) explains: "students may take on the role of the instructor by sharing expertise, presenting sections of the course content, and using file-sharing capabilities to share documents with the instructors or peers" (p.145). However, Gilbert et al. (2007) report that this can cause its own challenges if students are also uncomfortable with the change in the tutors' roles to what they are used to: "students are very unsure about the tutor's role in elearning. Their expectations are unformed, but are shaped by previous experiences of face-to-face teaching. Many are seeking greater input from and interaction with the tutor" (p.570). There is a shift of responsibility online from teacher to student, as students have to be more self-directed and motivated to learn online. As Holly et al. (2008) explain "teachers' support and guidance are fundamental, but learners' own intrinsic motivation is paramount" (p.256). Holly et al. (2008) identify two roles of the online tutor: mediators and pioneers, and advise "as a pioneer, the faculty must give up control over learning, abandon the banking concept, and allow the learner to take the lead" (p.256). The banking concept referred to here is the notion that students are seen as receptacles ready to be 'filled' with knowledge from the narratives of teachers (Freire, 1993).

Henderson & Bradey (2008) carried out a longitudinal study on five tutors working in different professional areas and focussed on issues in connection with their professional identity, and found that "identity shapes lecturers' engagement with teaching technologies, pedagogical strategies, as well as privileging certain narratives" (p.85). They argue that a tutor "continually negotiates and maintains multiple identities where each represents a fundamental understanding of the world and can sometimes be at odds with one-another" (p.85). Talay-Ongan (2004) reflects on her own identity as an online tutor, saying she was content with keeping up to date with her subject content but "felt no urgency to explore pedagogy" (p.58). Her philosophy was that "the process of teaching and my identity as an academic/university teacher were securely wrapped in the fact that I knew more than my students did" (p.58). With the experience of teaching online she found that has now moved on considerably in her thinking and the online teaching created an opportunity for her to rethink their pedagogic strategies. In her case, her identity was originally based on her subject knowledge rather than her pedagogic knowledge. Issues relating to the identity of online tutors are discussed further in Chapter 3 on methodology, and also in Chapter 7 on role and identity.

Differences in Relation to Building Relationships with Students

The literature discusses tutors perceiving that they do not build up the same level of interpersonal relationships with students online compared to the face-to-face

environment. Nicol et al. (2003) state that online discussions vary from face-to-face ones in that the familiar social cues are absent, so there is no body language to interpret. Gilmore & Warren (2007) conducted a study into the emotional aspects of online teaching, finding that the communication affordances in the online environment were different from traditional classroom teaching:

> *the absence of the body, diminution of paralingual cues and removal of physical socio-spatial indicators – force a renegotiation of the 'feeling rules' that govern traditional classroom settings which in turn contributes to a more emotional suffused teaching experience for online tutors. (p.581)*

Moore (1993) claims that students' perception of distance from their tutor and peers is more important than any real geographical separation. The notion of transactional distance originates from Moore (1993) and is defined as "the subjective measure of perceived distance between elements residing in cyberspace" (Steinman, 2007, p.46). Steinman (2007) found that "students' perceptions of online courses can be negative if they experience large transactional distance with the instructor and with other students and can influence whether a student will stay in or drop out of a class" (p.46). An empirical study undertaken by Shin (2003) revealed that students' sense of peer transactional presence was significantly related to course satisfaction and persistence, and that tutor transactional presence was found to be related to student-perceived learning achievement. Joo et al. (2011) in an empirical study of 709 online students at a Korean University found that cognitive presence was a highly related to social presence, and therefore recommended that "the online learning environment should incorporate learner centered discussions and team-based learning strategies so that learners perceive a high level of social presence" (p.1661).

Challenges Facing Tutors Teaching Online

Tutors are Expected to Know How to Teach Online

The literature suggests that the online teaching environment is different from face-to-face teaching and many tutors are unprepared for the changes as Savery (2005) explains: the "online classroom can be a scary place for students and instructors who are unfamiliar with the environment" (p.143). Gabriel & Kaufield (2008) concur suggesting that "instructors in colleges and universities worldwide are now asked to develop and deliver online courses with minimum time for preparation and reflection" (p.311). LeBaron & McFadden (2008) agree suggesting that "instructors are challenged to

transform career-long practice, suddenly and without warning" (p.143) and Gilmore & Warren (2007) advise that "online teaching and learning is novel and largely uncharted territory for both tutors and learners" (p.595). One of the challenges that many tutors face therefore is that online teaching may be surprisingly difficult: "researchers have shown that new instructional approaches are necessary to enable technology integration (…) because the use of technology does not automatically impact on faculty members' overall approach to teaching" (Ooms et al., 2008, p.112). Bennett & March (2002) contend that "the challenges facing tutors embarking on online teaching cannot be underestimated" (p.15) and found in their study that "the move from a traditional classroom focus to a virtual e-classroom represented a significant departure for all" (p.16). Ragan (2009) sums up the issues facing many tutors new to online teaching:

> the asynchronous online classroom has little or no similarity to the classroom experience. There may be no 'class schedule' no meeting room or physical location, and, certainly in the asynchronous classroom, no defined timeframe for operation. Even the dynamics between the teacher and student is challenged because online we can all appear to 'be equal'. Other than a vague sense of responsibility to 'teach the course', the instructor has little definition of these new and often ill-defined operating parameters. The course instructor is left on their own to figure out what constitutes a successful learning experience. (p.4)

Many tutors required to teach online have not had the experience of being online students, so do not have the background of online learning from which to draw (Bennett & Marsh, 2002). Compton et al. (2010) also found: "participants who did not have any prior online experiences appeared to rely on their personal experiences as students within a traditional classroom to formulate their preconceptions of interactions in a VS [Virtual Schooling] setting" (p.46). In addition Lofstrom & Nevgi (2007) observe that "particularly for novices, no script tells users how to conduct themselves in a virtual environment, such as there is in the traditional class" (p.314).

One of the challenges for many tutors is the lack of understanding of how to effectively teach using technologies. As Collis & Moonen (2008) explain "the pedagogies, supported by new technologies, that could lead to innovation are not enough known to instructors, not enough valued, and are perceived by instructors as too difficult to implement in practice" (p.96). Segers (2002, quoted in Slevin 2008) reports that "ways of dealing with these challenges are constrained by a poor understanding of the opportunities and risk involved in e-learning" (p.116).

Anxiety for Tutors

Lofstrom & Nevgi (2007) report that the teacher's role changes in the virtual environment, which has a knock-on effect of changing pedagogical activities and approaches. Barker (2002) suggests one possible difficulty for some tutors new to online teaching is 'information overload', such as coping with the amounts of discussion board messages or blog posts to read. In face-to-face teaching, the tutor is in control over how much material from students they have to review or feedback on as face-to-face classes are time limited, whereas asynchronous discussion boards are available 24 hours a day, so could lead to many contributions to read and moderate. This could be difficult to manage for some tutors not familiar with those methods of communication as Bernath & Rubin (2001) claim: "the sheer volume of online activity can be overwhelming to both the teacher and the student" (p.221).

The time demands on many tutors to learn new skills and methods of working including re-designing courses for online use, is not to be underestimated. It is a barrier for many tutors who have conflicting priorities, and especially those who are less inclined to teach online. Barker (2002) commented that being an online tutor "is far more time consuming that conventional face-to-face teaching" (p.11). However, Bailey & Card (2009) claimed that although many tutors perceive that it takes longer to teach online, "interestingly studies that compared the amount of time instructors spent teaching online and teaching in the classroom found there was no difference" (p.153). Lofstrom & Nevgi (2007) found that their "institutional leaders identified monetary resources, and lack of time, competence and teacher support as the major obstacles in the path towards web-based learning" (p.317). Bailey & Card (2009) claim that "instructors often perceive that taking on pedagogical and social roles requires more time and creates more stress. The expectation of being constantly online and interacting with students can lead to burnout" (p.153). One of the problems relating to time is that there are no clear parameters of when to start and stop compared to face-to-face teaching, as Ragan (2009) explains:

> *one of the most challenging aspects of designing an online classroom is working without the confines of time and location. Although this may have great initial appeal to both learner and instructor, the reality of this lack of operating parameters becomes quickly evident. (p.9)*

One of the anxieties for tutors in online teaching is the perception that they may be replaced by technology. As Compton et al. (2010) report: "early reflections indicated a widely held misconception that computers would present the curriculum and automate grading of quizzes and tests, resulting in the elimination of teacher positions" (p.42). Ragan (2009) discusses the misconception that online courses teach themselves: "some

educators expressed concern that the online classes could be 'self taught' and reduce the need for the instructor" (p.6).

Tutors' attitudes to the use of technology in teaching and learning are a major factor in how comfortable they feel with teaching online. Gilbert & Kelly (2005) carried out a study focussing on the gap between institutions acquiring technology and tutors adopting it. They found tutors generally fell into two groups which they described using the metaphors of the *Frontier* and the *Frontline*. With the Frontier group "the adoption of ICT is seen as an exploration and the discourse used related to the relative *desire for adoption* of ICT" (p.110, emphasis theirs). With the Frontline group "the view of ICT adoption centres on attack and defence and the discourse relates to the differences in the perceived ease of adoption" (p.110). In other words those tutors who felt comfortable with ICT in teaching and learning had to see a pedagogic value to using the technology, whereas those less comfortable will be convinced to use something providing it is easy and intuitive to use. Gilbert & Kelly's (2005) study recommended that if academic technology champions were to be used, "then selecting such champions from the Frontiers groups is likely to be more effective than choosing champions from the Frontline group" (p.119). They also found that there was no one single culture in the organisation, in fact there were several sub-cultures, so when people referred to the institution needing a culture change, they recommended identifying the sub-cultures and working with each one according to their appropriate needs.

Student Expectations of Response Time and Delivery Methods

The concern over student expectations have been particularly heightened with the advent of and subsequent large increase in student tuition fees in the UK HE sector (Littlemore, 2011). Students, because they are paying increased fees, can see themselves more as consumers and as such demand what they consider to be *value for money* (Barnes & Tynan, 2007). Ferreira (2012) reports that despite the range of online communication tools available, many students continue to value face-to-face interaction with their tutors. Welker & Berardino (2005) claim that "professors must be more aware of the student as an educated consumer. They know a good course when they see one" (p.49).

Students' expectations of a quality educational experience may not be aligned with the views of tutors and/or institutions, so may need to be managed. As Collis & Moonen (2008) explain, "barriers related to mismatches with local culture and expectations related to what constitutes 'quality' performance by both instructors and students are

particularly important" (p.96). Students often expect a more instructor led experience than they get in the online environment, especially if they have only ever experienced face-to-face teaching. In a survey of postgraduate students, Winter et al. (2010) found that two-thirds of their participants said they would prefer a face-to-face learning experience over an online course. Many course designers recognise this and create blended courses to optimise the benefits of both modes of delivery. Welker & Berardino (2005) concur, claiming the demand for blended learning courses, "originates in the need to accommodate learners who seek 'in-person' versus a fully online learning experience whilst desiring maximum flexibility and convenience" (p.35).

Students may be resistant to their tutors incorporating Web 2.0 technologies into the course as it require students to have a more participatory role, as Collis & Moonen (2008) explain "such changes in pedagogy may not fit the expectations of the students, and thus may not be positively valued by them" (p.97). Collis et al. (2001) found that "some students do not, in fact, want to become more active and co-responsible for the course. Some may protest saying that it is the instructor's job to 'teach them' " (p.238). They continue to report that "the higher-order skills and maturity needed to assume more personal responsibility for learning need to be developed via a processes of scaffolding and monitoring by instructors over many courses and years" (p.238). Lofstrom & Nevgi (2007) agree suggesting that "studying in a web-based environment may presuppose a significant degree of student independence and tolerance for ambiguity and stress" (p.314). They found that many tutors reported time management as an issue for students but notably, the students did not perceive that as an issue, the greatest challenges reported by the students were issues relating to usability as well as isolation and loneliness.

Many students entering HE expect their tutors to use technology in their teaching. HE students are frequently referred to as 'digital natives' (Prensky, 2001), being seen as digitally literate. However, this is a contested idea, and many students use technology in their social lives, but do not automatically possess the skills and confidence in using technologies for learning. Winter et al. (2010) suggest that "there is undoubtedly a wide range in ability in the current student population, particularly when it comes to using technology for learning (as opposed to social) purposes" (p.72). Many mature students may not have the basics in terms of digital skills that the younger cohorts of students take for granted, and most students will need support with how to use technologies for learning. However, this is not a reason for academic staff not to embrace technology in their teaching, as Baran et al. (2011) report:

> *With the vast adoption of emerging technologies in everyday life at an increasingly participatory and social level, it has become inevitable for teachers to re-examine their beliefs and assumptions towards the new culture of learning and teaching. (p.425)*

Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010) agree, arguing that "it is no longer appropriate to suggest that teachers' low-level uses of technology are adequate to meet the needs of the 21st century learner" (p.257).

The Absence of Non-Verbal Communication

> *This ostensible absence of the body occurs as technologically mediated transactions radically reconfigure spatiotemporal proximity. (Dall'Alba & Barnacle, 2005, p.720)*

The absence of face-to-face contact and therefore non-verbal communication (NVC) is a huge challenge facing many tutors when teaching online in a number of ways. If the course is predominantly asynchronous then it relies on text-based communication. Online communication can easily be misinterpreted because it lacks the tutor's skills to 'soften' the message (Gilmore & Warren, 2007).

Welker & Berardino (2005) found that some students did not like the lack of social interaction online, explaining that the students in their study reported "reduced camaraderie with peers; reduced face-to-face exposure with the professor; reduced class to teacher interaction; and reduced number of team building activities" (p.46). It is possible that some of these effects could have been minimised if the course had been designed to promote more social interaction. Price et al. (2007) compared face-to-face and online tutoring for two different groups of students taking the same distance learning course, and found that the students receiving online tuition reported a less positive experience than those receiving the face-to-face tuition. This they attributed more to the fact that students valued the face-to-face contact rather than the online tuition being any poorer: "tuition was seen not only as an academic activity but also as a highly valued pastoral activity" (p.1). Price et al. (2007) concluded that "to make online tuition successful both tutors and students need training in how to communicate online in the absence of paralinguistic cues" (p.1). A limitation to their study is that no synchronous methods were used for the online tuition, only discussion boards and email, so little social interaction may have actually been built into the course.

How students perceive interaction can be an issue in the online teaching and learning environment. Compton et al. (2010) report that "there also appeared to be a disparity in the way participants viewed interaction. Responses showed that some participants

accepted only face-to-face interaction in traditional classrooms as interaction" (p.46). Online asynchronous discussion was not viewed by the participants in their study as genuine interaction, and even synchronous activity like video-conferencing was not seen as interaction due to the spatial separation. The participants in Compton et al.'s (2010) study had the preconception that for courses that mainly or totally used asynchronous communication, their tutors would not provide timely feedback: "they viewed the teacher's immediate feedback as crucial and did not believe that VS [virtual schooling] could provide that type of feedback" (p.47).

Shin (2003) used the construct of 'Transactional Presence', claiming that perceived interaction between tutor and student was more important than physical presence. Shin (2003) defines transactional presence as "the degree to which a distance student perceives the availability of and connectedness with, people within his/her educational setting" (p.71). The availability element relates to what is needed on request including the responsiveness of the tutor, whereas the connectedness element relates to perceiving that a relationship exists between the student and other parties including peers, tutors and the institution. A previous study carried out by the same author concluded that the construct of transactional presence "can be a significant predictor of distant student achievement, satisfaction and achievement" (Shin, 2002, p.133). Similar to Shin's notion of Transactional Presence, Savery (2005) relates the notions of visibility of the tutor to social presence suggesting that:

> *Visibility is closely linked with the concept of social presence (…). Social presence is the degree of feeling, perception and reaction of being connected to another intellectual entity and in the context of an online learning environment, social presence impacts online interaction. (p.143)*

Dykman & Davis (2008c) also emphasised the importance of the tutor being visible:

> *If students perceive that a faculty member is not engaging in an online course, they will be much less likely to engage themselves. Nothing is more destructive to online student motivation than a faculty member who is not interacting with them. Without significant human contact, students may seek to get by with the least amount of effort possible, and their learning and the quality of the online course will suffer accordingly. (p.288)*

It is possible for students to learn without this tutor engagement, for example Clifton & Mann (2011) recommend using YouTube as resource for students to use both in class and in distance learning. They do warn that "the depth of learning will depend on the extent to which the student can analyse the video data given and make sense of it in relation to the context of their learning" (p.312). Students could learn without a great deal of tutor involvement but they would need to be very motivated to do so (Law et al., 2010).

Issues to do with Institutional and Individual Change

> *Failing to make the best use of the new opportunities is not a realistic option. Universities, like other enterprises, now live in a competitive environment. (Barnes & Tynan, 2007, p.192)*

HEIs tend to be quite slow to adapt to change, with teaching methods, policies, procedures and administration revolving around face-to-face teaching methods (Barnes & Tynan, 2007; Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010). Abdous (2011) suggests that "the lack of clarity about processes, procedures and policies associated with online teaching has often been a source of confusion and mismatched expectations for both faculty and students" (p.61). The face-to-face lecture still remains the dominant method of teaching (Barnes & Tynan, 2007) and most functions of academic life centre around the lecture including job titles, rooming, and work allocation, making it difficult to break free from this traditional way of thinking. Salter (2003) claims that "while few academics would claim to follow this model [information-transmission model], the reality may not match the rhetoric. The traditional lecture which is neither interactive nor adaptive is still widely used" (p.138).

The literature reports that institutions need to provide training, support and reward for many tutors engaging with technologies and trying to improve pedagogic practice. Frequently this is lacking: "a supposed benefit of learning technologies is their potential for providing access to a wealth of knowledge and tools for students to interact with the knowledge, the teacher and their peers. Yet teachers receive little guidance on how to use these tools to best effect" (Falconer & Littlejohn, 2007, p.42). Cuellar (2002) recommends that release time for tutors is vital to recognise the time and effort needed to learn the new skills and adapt their teaching material, reporting that:

> *Some colleges give release time while the course is being developed; others give the release time the first semester the course is being taught. Unfortunately, some colleges give no release time. Faculty may spend at least double the amount of time they would if teaching the same course in a traditional classroom setting. (p.10)*

Orr et al. (2009) state that the success of online teaching is "closely tied to the ability of the institution to overcome barriers faculty members face in creating and teaching online courses" (p.258). The barriers they refer to include reward and time, organisational change, and technical expertise, support and infrastructure. Lofstrom & Nevgi (2007) stress that it is vital for department heads to support their tutors in online teaching: "continued commitment on the part of department heads is obviously critical in the

development of web-based teaching. High levels of commitment are necessary in order to maintain high pedagogical and technological support levels" (p.322).

One of the issues in connection with institutional change is that in HE lecturers have a high degree of autonomy (Hughes & Oliver, 2010). Part of the concept of 'Academic Freedom' means tutors decide on their own teaching strategies (Aarrevaara, 2010), so it is difficult to enforce any particular changes on them which they are not in favour of (Gilbert & Kelly, 2005). Stagg-Peterson & Slotta (2009) found that "many instructors who were asked to teach an online course did so tentatively, as teaching online added new challenges while sacrificing the direct personal exchanges that are so important to teaching" (p.120).

Models of eLearning Practice

Models of elearning practice and online teaching have been developed to assist tutors with the transition to online teaching and with the design of online courses. It is appropriate to include a brief discussion of the main ones below. Most models of online learning claim to take a constructivist approach (Bangert, 2004), see Chapter 3 for more discussion on this.

Salmon's Five-Stage Model

Probably the most well known model of online teaching practice is Salmon's (2000) Five-Stage model, (Fig 2.1), in which there are progressive steps of engagement for students learning in an online environment. Hawkridge (2003) suggests that Salmon's five-stage model combines the best of face-to-face mentoring with the best of what new technology enables us to do and claims that the model "is grounded in constructivist learning theory as well as practical experience" (Hawkridge, 2003, p.22). Moule (2007) supports this view: "this constructivist model of e-moderating provides a framework with clear progressive stages that can support the design and facilitation of online courses" (p.38).
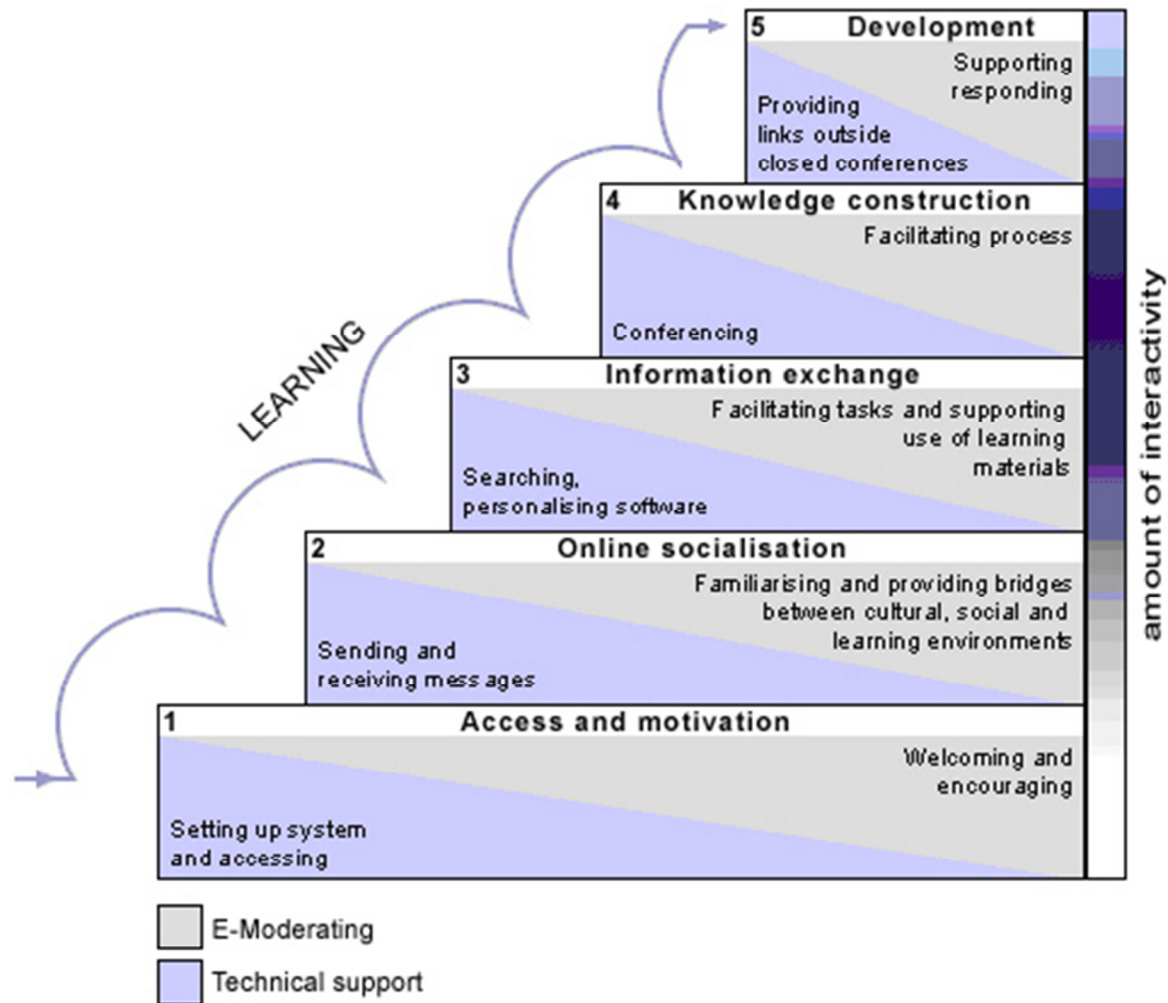
Figure 2.1: Salmon's Five-stage Model
Image source: Salmon (2000) p.29

Slevin (2008) criticises Salmon's e-tivities claiming that "e-moderation and the use of e-tivities may perpetuate the very conditions that limit our chances of dealing successfully with the challenges posed by e-learning" (p.124). Slevin (2008) also claims that "Salmon's work on e-tivities and e-moderation is weak on leadership for whole institutions seeking to accommodate these fundamental changes and to direct themselves towards e-learning excellence" (p.124) and suggests that the Salmon model does not look at the affordances of other technologies such as Web 2.0 tools and virtual immersive worlds. However, more recent work by Salmon has attempted to address this last point, (see Salmon et al., 2010).

Other critics of the Salmon model include Moule (2007) who although appearing to support the model (see above), also criticises Salmon's model saying "the five stage model may not be the panacea it appears and alternative methods of e-learning cannot

be ignored" (p.37). Moule (2007) goes on to argue that Salmon has ignored the range of learning theories offered, claiming that not all learning occurs as part of a community. She also has concerns "that the model is dominating discourse in learning technologies, being seen as a template for the design of all online teaching and learning environment regardless of the context" (p.39). Moule (2007) continues to argue that "through slavishly applying the model as a rigid course, any opportunities to develop flexibility and reflexivity are lost" (p.39). Moule also claims that the Salmon model is not adaptable to take advantage of blended learning courses where face-to-face sessions are mixed with online learning/teaching sessions.

Although the Salmon model does not address all contexts, it does offer the novice online tutor a starting point and a framework to consider the necessary stages involved in teaching online. It can be adapted to suit different contexts, and there have not been many rival models that have been so widely accepted and acknowledged (Hawkridge, 2003).

Community of Inquiry Model

Garrison et al. (2000) developed the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework for evaluating online learning environments built on constructivist principles as Garrison & Arbaugh (2007) explain: "the genesis of this framework can be found in the work of Dewey and is consistent with constructivist approaches to learning in higher education" (p.158). The framework identifies three key elements: cognitive presence; teaching presence and social presence. Cognitive presence is "the extent to which learners are able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse in a critical community of inquiry" (Garrison et al., 2000, p.11). Social presence is defined as "the ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project themselves socially and emotionally as 'real' people (i.e. their full personality) through the medium of communication being used" (Garrison et al., 2000, p.94). This notion of social presence links with the idea of transactional presence (Moore, 1993; Steinman, 2007), discussed earlier in this chapter. Finally teaching presence is the "design, facilitation and cognitive and social processes for the purposes of realising personally meaningful and educational worthwhile learning outcomes" (Anderson et al., 2001, p.5). Garrison et al. (2000) argue that all three must be present to create meaningful learning outcomes.

Community of Inquiry
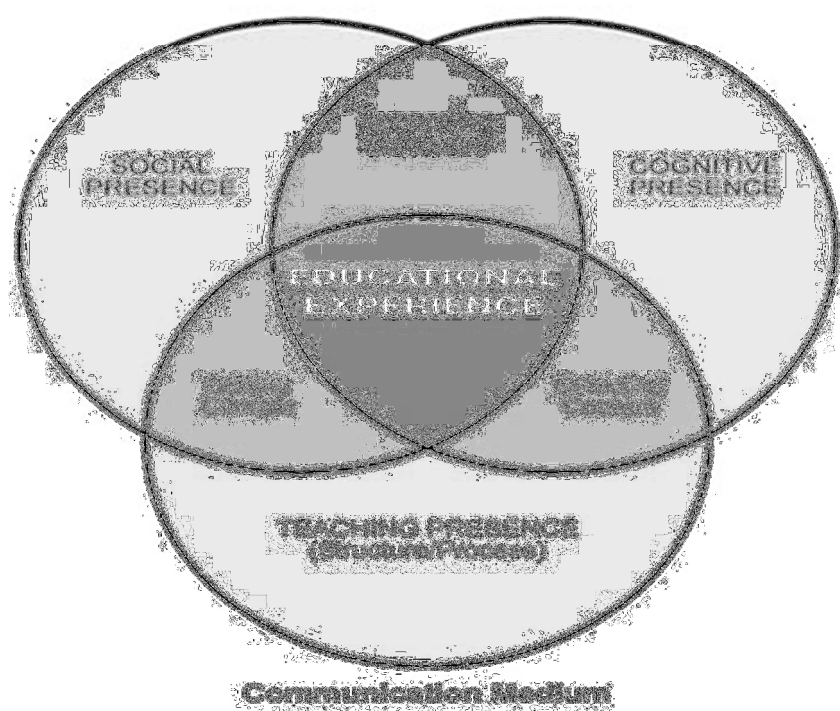
Figure 2.2 Community of Inquiry model
Image Source: Garrison & Anderson (2003), p.28

With the CoI framework (Fig 2.2), it is accepted that both social and content-related interactions are essential in online learning environments (Garrison et al., 2000). These interactions "by themselves are not sufficient to ensure effective online learning. These interactions need to have clearly defined parameters and be focused in a specific direction, hence the need for teaching presence" (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007, p.163). So the role of teaching presence is to guide and facilitate these interactions to ensure students are developing in the right direction. Garrison & Arbaugh (2007) claim that the consensus in recent literature is that "teaching presence is a significant determinant of student satisfaction, perceived learning, and sense of community" (p.163).

One of the most important current challenges in online learning is creating the perception of presence amongst the disparate learners and their tutors (Garrison et al., 2000; Garrison & Anderson, 2003; Jezegou, 2010). There are various models that try to offer a way of evidencing/measuring this presence, and Jezegou (2010) claims that "the community of inquiry in elearning model set out by Garrison & Anderson (2003) is certainly the most advanced to date" (p.1). However, Jezegou (2010) goes on to criticise the CoI model by claiming that the theoretical foundations are not well developed. She argues that the philosophical perspective of the model aligns itself with pragmatism, which she claims is not a well known or understood perspective, particularly in some

countries, and this makes it difficult for people to put the framework into practice. Jezegou (2010) also criticises the framework by asserting that the conceptual framework is not clear, claiming that although the framework is reported to be based on a constructivist and socio-constructivist perspective, evidence of this is not sufficiently explicit.

Garrison & Anderson (2003) offer a table of categories and indicators to evaluate the idea of presence (Table 2.2 below). Jezegou (2010) criticises these indicators, claiming that the three elements are sometimes difficult to separate: "their boundaries are unclear and the indicators that concern them often juxtapose each other" (p.3).

ELEMENTS	CATEGORIES	INDICATORS (examples only)
Social Presence	Open Communication Group Cohesion Affective Expression	Risk-free expression Encourage collaboration Emoticons
Cognitive Presence	Triggering Event Exploration Integration Resolution	Sense of puzzlement Information exchange Connecting ideas Apply new ideas
Teaching Presence	Design & Organization Facilitating Discourse Direct Instruction	Setting curriculum & methods Sharing personal meaning Focusing discussion

Table 2.2 Categories and Indicators for the CoI Model
Source: Garrison & Arbaugh (2007), p.159

A final criticism of the CoI framework made by Jezegou (2010) is that it is only aimed at being used with asynchronous online learning courses, like those which use discussion forums and email, and that many online learning environments have synchronous activities as well, and these also need to be evaluated. Although she is correct, many online courses are based on only asynchronous tools (Kear et al,. 2012). It does mean that the framework will need to be examined and extended in the future to include synchronous tools like webinar software and instant messaging tools though, as these are likely to be used more frequently.

Gorsky & Blau (2009) used the Garrison et al. (2000) model to compare the interactions on a forum ran by two online tutors, one who had received particularly favourable student evaluation results and one who had received extremely poor evaluation results. Gorsky & Blau (2009) tested out five hypotheses based on the model as follows: That in a forum held by a highly rated instructor as opposed to a forum led by an instructor held in low esteem, the following would occur:

- o Active and passive participation would be significantly higher
- o Social presence would be significantly higher
- o Teaching presence would be significantly higher
- o Cognitive presence would be significantly higher
- o Instructor response time would be significantly shorter

(Gorsky & Blau, 2009, p.9)

They found that all their hypotheses except the fourth one were clearly supported. For the unsupported hypothesis, further analysis found that there were reasonable explanations for the relative lack of cognitive presence found in both forums. The explanations included the fact that the course was rated as non-difficult, claiming that students are more likely to engage in debate when there are conceptual complexities to work through. In addition the forum was not compulsory so it was reported that the students seemed to have studied on their own.

There have been several other empirical studies that have used the CoI framework, many of them just focusing on one of the elements of presence. For example, Shea et al. (2010) looked at the concept of teaching presence in relation to quantitative content analysis research carried out on online contributions by instructors. They found that the research under-represented the effort by productive online tutors. Kupczynski et al. (2010) explored student perceptions of the impact of the teaching presence on their success in an online course. They determined the teaching presence indicators which are considered by students as most critical to the success of an online course (too many to identify here). Ke (2010) undertook a mixed method case study looking at all three elements of presence in an online course for adults. His study indicated the design and teaching elements that are crucial prerequisites for a successful online higher educational experience for adult students. Arbaugh & Hwang (2006) conducted a study into teaching presence in a MBA course to put the validity of the construct of teaching presence to the test. Their results suggested that the CoI framework is valid for studying online management education.

Garrison & Arbaugh (2007), reporting on research using the CoI framework, claimed that most studies using this framework have usually just involved looking in depth at one of

the three elements of presence, rather than taking all three together, so that "both the quantity of research and our understanding of each presence have progressed at different rates" (p.159). Of the three elements, the role of social presence in online courses has been most extensively researched (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007) and "recent research on the role of student group cohesiveness and interaction on team effectiveness in online graduate management education suggests a strong relationship between social presence and learning outcomes" (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007, p.159). They reported that collaborative activities led to learners having greater opportunity for building social presence and "a greater sense of online community, which also tends to improve the socio-emotional climate in online courses" (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007, p.159). Berger et al. (2011) in an empirical study, found significant correlation between socio-emotional factors and academic achievement. Those factors included social integration, a sense of belonging and self-esteem. Beuchot & Bullen (2005) claimed the notion of interpersonality was closely related to the CoI notion of social presence. In their empirical study, they found that "cultivating interpersonality online leads to increased participation and expands the depth of discussion, thus facilitating online collective knowledge building" (p.67).

Other Models

Moule (2007) proposed a new conceptual model called the *e-learning ladder* which "was conceived as part of research exploring whether the essential characteristics of Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998) develop in higher education online learning environments" (pp.39-40). The e-learning ladder acknowledged a range of learning approaches, starting with the bottom rung of the ladder which was instructivist learning and moving up through several levels (rungs) to the top which was constructivist learning. The ladder also has sides, which represent the support that students need to access the rungs but these are the same no matter which rung a tutor is on. The model also looks quite linear, but Moule (2007) suggests that "although presented hierarchically in a ladder structure, it is intended that the rungs should be viewed as presenting flexible pedagogies which inter-link" (p.41). It is unclear how the stages are interlinked, and exactly how the model should be used. It also appears to suggest certain types of technologies and not others, so it is unclear where some Web 2.0 and mobile technologies would fit in. Moule (2007) concludes by challenging the premise that elearning should be developed based on constructivist principles but that there are "opportunities for elearning to support instructivist approaches, blended learning, and classroom supported delivery" (p.47).

Bonk & Zhang (2006) introduced the R2D2 model, which was read, reflect, display and do, which was a method of designing and delivery online/distance learning. The model attempts to address the diverse learning preferences of online learners of varied ages and technical ability. Bonk & Zhang (2006) claim their model is practical and easy to use and "is designed to help online instructors integrate various learning activities with appropriate technologies for effective online learning" (p.250). However, much of their model appears to revolve around learning styles, which has more recently been discredited as a theory (Ivie, 2009; Riener & Willingham, 2010; Rohrer & Pashler, 2012) because people learn in complex and diverse ways, so cannot easily be sorted into categories of learning styles. It is also important for students to develop the areas they are less comfortable with, for example developing their writing style or presentation skills, as in the workplace, they are unlikely to have a choice of formats for individual tasks.

Bailey & Card (2009) carried out a phenomenological study of some experienced online tutors to identify what these tutors perceived to be effective pedagogic practice in the online teaching environment. They proposed eight principles of effective practice: (1) Fostering relationships including being empathetic and having a desire to help students; (2) Engagement such as providing discussion spaces and use of email to support students; (3) Timeliness such as frequently checking emails and online contributions; (4) Communication including timely responses, letting students know when you as the tutor are not around for a while, and being aware of use of language in text communication with the absence of non-verbal cues; (5) Organisation such as all materials ready, and schedules and deadlines clearly laid out; (6) Technology, tutors being efficient and using the appropriate technologies; (7) Flexibility to adapt as technologies are not perfect, so having patience is important; and finally (8) High expectations, setting high expectations for students and making them clear (Bailey & Card, 2009, p.154). This study will be exploring some of these issues with new online tutors to see what their challenges are and their perceptions of difference between face-to-face and online pedagogic practice.

Chapter 3 – Methodology and Theoretical Perspectives

This chapter discusses the theoretical perspectives, philosophical underpinnings and methodology used in this research study. The methodology defines how a researcher will go about studying any phenomenon (Silverman, 2005), and is central to the research process in identifying the approaches, theoretical underpinnings, and theories framing the research. There are three broad types of research study (Yin, 2003): exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. *Exploratory* research is used where it is not known what answers will result, exploring phenomenon and asking new questions. *Descriptive* research usually describes a phenomenon in depth. Hammersley (1992) states that ethnography places great emphasis on description, and that it is vital to understand the context of what is being reported and to gain an understanding of how people live in the community being studied. *Explanatory* research seeks an explanation of a situation or problem, this type is frequently used in education to investigate processes (Noor, 2008). There are contrasting views on how educational research should be undertaken and the philosophical backgrounds that underpin the research as Pring (2000) explains: "educational practice is a complicated phenomenon. Different sorts of question require different sorts of research. Researchers should be eclectic in their search for truth" (p.33). This research study is an exploratory one as it uses case study methodology to attempt to achieve a better understanding of tutors' early experiences of online teaching.

King & Horrocks (2010) state that "ontology, epistemology and methodology and methods are all connected and cannot be viewed in isolation" (p.10). Therefore to more fully explain the methodology used in this study, the ontological and epistemological underpinnings will be discussed first, and then the theoretical perspective and the theories used to frame this research in addition to exploring theories of learning. The following two chapters will then discuss the corresponding data collection methods and data analysis.

Ontological and Epistemological Considerations

The ontological and epistemological standpoints adopted by the researcher shape the whole research process. Clough & Nutbrown (2002) define ontology as "a theory of what exists and how it exists" and epistemology as "a related theory of how we come to know these things" (p.30). There are two opposing ontological traditions, one with an ontology of being and the other with an ontology of becoming (Gray, 2004). The two ontological

positions are often described as realist and relativist. King & Horrocks (2010) suggest that "a realist ontology subscribes to the view that the real world is out there and exists independently from us" (p.9). The natural sciences are founded on this ontology, and experimental and quantitative research studies usually subscribe to this view. In contrast, relativist ontology posits much more complexity and subjectivity in the world, as King & Horrocks (2010) explain: "*relativist* ontology rejects such direct explanations, maintaining that the world is far more unstructured and diverse" (p.9). This study is undertaken from the *relativist* ontology standpoint which works from the principle that a social reality is constructed by the individual in society, rather than existing externally to the knower. Qualitative research aligns well with this relativist ontology as King & Horrocks (2010) suggest: "generally speaking quantitative research subscribes to a realist ontology with qualitative research having its foundations in more critical realist or relativist approaches" (p.10). This research study is interested in how individuals interpret the world in which they live, and therefore a subjective ontological viewpoint is more appropriate rather than viewing things objectively. King & Horrocks (2010) report that from a relativist ontology standpoint "our understandings and experiences are relative to our specific cultural and social frames of reference, being open to a range of interpretations" (p.9). As context is specific to case study research, a relativist standpoint is deemed appropriate for this research study: "research studies built upon the relativist epistemology (…) often involve rich descriptions of the context, learner behaviours and opinions" (Luo, 2011, p.4).

Ontological perspectives and epistemological perspectives are frequently entwined as Crotty (2003) explains: "ontological issues and epistemological positions tend to emerge together (…) to talk of the construction of meaning is to talk of the construction of meaningful reality" (p.10). Crotty (2003) proposes that because of this, writers regularly have difficulty in distinguishing between ontological and epistemological issues. King & Horrocks (2010) claim that "*epistemology*, how we know what we know, a means of establishing what counts as knowledge, is central in any methodological approach" (p.8). In terms of epistemology there are two main opposing positions of knowledge, realism and constructivism, although King & Horrocks (2010) define a third epistemological position: 'contextual'.

Realism works from the position that the picture of the world that scientific research paints for us is a true and accurate one (Gray, 2004). The objects of research exist and act independently of the observer, and can be systematically analysed. Knowledge is considered to be advanced through the building of theory (Gray, 2004). The role of the researcher from the realist epistemological position is that of being objective and

detached from the data (King & Horrocks, 2010). This standpoint has been extensively critiqued in the literature particularly by those subscribing to a constructivist epistemology (Scott, 2000). The opposing view is of constructivism which proposes that knowledge has to be internalised, it has to be internally constructed by the individual. According to constructivism, there is no one truth to be found, instead "meaning is not out there waiting to be discovered; rather it is brought into being in the process of social exchange" (King & Horrocks, 2010, p.22). With constructivism, knowledge is seen to be co-produced by the researcher and researched. Reflexivity is a key factor in constructivist epistemology; both personal and epistemological reflexivity are seen to be important (King & Horrocks, 2010). Reflexivity is a process in which the researcher reflects on both their assumptions about the world, but also on their own beliefs and experiences which could affect the way they conduct the research study, (discussed later in this chapter).

Constructivism can refer to both a theory of learning (discussed later in this chapter) and also a model for constructing knowledge through research (as discussed in this section). Thorpe (2002) suggests that constructivism may be the most commonly recognised social position within elearning research and currently dominates the field. Oliver et al. (2007) concur: "most constructivists however share an interest in the role of technology for developing knowledge" (p.27). The role of language is important with the constructivist epistemological position: "the belief that language is referential, merely representing reality 'out there' is overwhelmingly brought into question within this relativist approach" (King & Horrocks, 2010, p.21). Both the constructivist and realist positions have their advocates, who claim the opposing standpoint is flawed, as Chouliaraki (2002) explains: "constructionists accuse realists of essentialism, of insisting on the illusion of some pure existence, whereas realists accuse constructionists of idealism, of the illusion that all existence is contingent on language and signification" (p.83).

The third position suggested by King & Horrocks (2010) is that of contextualism. This position advocates that everything that is experienced is affected by a range of contextual factors, and that facts cannot be separated from the context: "the context of a historical, cultural and social milieu is integral to how we live, experience and understand our lives" (King & Horrocks, 2010, pp.19-20). The role of the researcher from this position is different, and the influence and viewpoint of the researcher is not seen as a potential bias. The researcher would make clear their positions and views (King & Horrocks, 2010). There is an alternative third position to consider that lies between the two extremes of realism and constructivism, and that is referred to as 'neo-

realism' (Hammersley, 2008), 'subtle-realism' (Hammersley, 1992) or 'post-positivism' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This position proposes that the world is knowable, that there are phenomenan independent about our claims about them, but that there can be multiple valid and non-contradictory accounts and explanations of the same phenomenan. So we cannot know the world from a single absolute perspective.

In this study a constructivist standpoint was adopted, and the importance of context is also acknowledged. The constructivist standpoint is appropriate as it accepts that there are multiple realities though which individuals make sense of the world. In this case the individual tutors will all experience the transition to online teaching differently depending on a variety of factors. Stake (1995) claimed that the constructivist position in relation to case study research "encourages providing readers with good raw material for their own generalizing" (p.102). This study does recognise the importance of context though, accepting that the same tutors may have experienced the transition to online teaching differently if the context was different, for example if they were teaching one of their more familiar face-to-face courses online, or if they were based in another organisation.

Interpretivism

The theoretical perspective is connected with the ontological and epistemological position adopted. Crotty (2003) describes the theoretical perspective as "the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria" (p.3). This research study adopts an interpretive approach. King & Horrocks (2010) suggest that interpretivism "perceives experience and understanding as seldom straightforward; people participate in indeterminate lifeworlds, often attaching different interpretations and meanings to seemingly similar 'facts' and events" (p.11). Interpretivism is usually seen as being opposed to scientific research, Sandberg (2005) suggests that "the strong growth of interpretive approaches mainly stems from a dissatisfaction with the methods and procedures for producing scientific knowledge within positivistic research" (p.41).

An alternative to the interpretative approach is positivism which claims that social reality exists externally to the researcher and can be observed directly. Pring (2004) argues that the recent history of educational research has been dominated by the apparent conflict between the positivist and interpretivist traditions. Positivism conceptualises reality as what can be directly accessible to the senses (Gray, 2004). Oliver et al. (2007)

state that with positivism "humans are postulated as rational individuals whose behaviour can be predicted" (p.25). This study rejects this viewpoint, instead assuming that human behaviour cannot be predicted, as each tutor's experience of online teaching is different based on a number of complex factors. Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) argue that "the term 'positivism' has become little more than a term of abuse among social scientists, and as a result its meaning has become obscured" (p.5). Positivism places a great deal of emphasis on what can be measured or directly observed, however what we do cannot be always be understood by behaviours that can be observed (Pring, 2004). As much of social science is concerned with people and how they experience phenomenan, which acknowledges subjectivity, positivism is not deemed appropriate.

Naturalism was developed by ethnographers as an alternative approach to positivism. Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) suggest that "naturalism proposes that, as far as possible, the social world should be studied in its natural state undisturbed by the researcher" (p.7). This leads to data collection methods such as observation and documentary analysis rather than experiments and formal interviews which are deemed as artificial. However Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) also suggest there are similarities between positivism and naturalism: "despite their differences, positivism and naturalism share much in common. They each appeal to the model of natural science albeit in different ways. As a result, both are committed to trying to understand social phenomena as objects existing independent of the researcher" (p.10). They also suggest that "it is argued that what both positivism and naturalism fail to take into account is the fact that social researchers are part of the social world they study" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.14).

Cohen et al. (2007) describe an interpretative research approach as having several specific characteristics and these are discussed next in terms of how they fit with this study. First, each interpretative research study is *individual;* this research project focuses on a specific case study involving individual tutors and their unique experiences of teaching online. The second characteristic is that the interpretative approach focuses on *small scale research;* this study is small-scale; based on one particular case and does not attempt to generalise to larger populations. Thirdly, interpretative research involves *human actions continuously recreating social life;* this study is about the human actions of the case-study tutors and how they position themselves in terms of their role and perceptions of online teaching. Teaching is a social activity and involves complex relationship formations. The fourth characteristic of the interpretative approach, according to Cohen et al. (2007), is that studies are normally *non-statistical;* although a survey was done initially in this particular study, this was predominantly to explore and

provide insight into the population of the case-study tutors and demographic information, and involved many open ended questions. This study is predominantly qualitative in nature using semi-structured interviews as the main data collection instrument. The fifth characteristic of the interpretative approach is *subjectivity;* this study recognises that each person will have a particular subjective view of online teaching, depending on their experience, preconceptions, individual personality traits and former involvement with teaching both online and face-to-face. Cohen et al. (2007) report that *personal involvement of the researcher* is normally a characteristic of the interpretative approach. In this study, I as the researcher am involved in the case study through my role within the University which served as the context for the study, as a learning technology advisor, in addition to having been one of the online tutors myself, so can offer some participant insight to the study. The next characteristic of the interpretative approach is *investigating the taken-for granted;* this research study aims to get beneath the accepted reasons for many tutors not engaging with online teaching (for example use of the technology) and seeing what deeper reasons there may be, for example possible issues with role, control and pedagogic approach. Finally Cohen et al. (2007) report that interpretative research is normally of *practical interest;* this study aims to uncover the challenges and anxieties facing the tutors teaching online for the first time, in an attempt to offer practical suggestions on how HEIs could support tutors making the transition in the future.

Reflexivity

King (2004b) defines reflexivity as "the recognition that the involvement of the researcher as an active participant in the research process shapes the nature of the process and the knowledge produced through it" (p.20). The concept of reflexivity acknowledges that researchers will be affected by their situation and this will have an effect on how the research is undertaken, as Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) explain:

> *what this represents is the rejection of the idea that social research is, or can be, carried out in some autonomous realm, that is insulated from the wider society and from the biography of the researcher, in such a way that its findings can be unaffected by social processes and personal characteristics. (p.15)*

In addition, reflexivity is about making changes as the research progresses, as Scott (1997) suggests: "the researcher finds things during the course of the research that they did not know. Reflexive practices are therefore considered essential" (p.156).

Symon & Cassell (2004) suggest that one aspect of reflexivity is about "recognising the influence of our disciplinary background on the knowledge we produce" (p.6). It is

therefore necessary to firstly be upfront and honest about the researcher's position and context in relation to the research topic, and be clear in the methodology to try and show that the research has been carried out in a systematic way to avoid potential bias. I am an advocate of educational technology and it is my role to promote learning technologies and support staff in their use, so my enthusiasm for this area both helped decide on the focus for this thesis, and will have gone some way in shaping the research. I am committed to collaborative and social learning, which influenced my choice of theoretical perspectives in terms of using the CoP and CoI frameworks, and the focus on the social presence and building relationships online, in addition to exploring the importance of peer support. However, I am also extremely aware of the concerns that staff have in adopting technologies into their teaching practices and the associated anxieties that this can cause for them. I undertook this research partly to inform my practice, so I can better support staff in engaging with technologies and better understand the challenges they face in the transition to online teaching. I am also interested in teaching and learning more generally, and providing students with an engaging educational experience.

As researcher, I locate my work within a constructivist paradigm. I acknowledge that there are multiple realities through which individuals make sense of the world, and I construct my reality from my standpoint and experiences. This has influenced my adoption of a relativist ontological approach and constructivist epistemological position for this study. Although my standpoint will have influenced my research perspectives, methodological approach and research focus, I have tried to not allow it to affect the responses or way the findings are reported. Steps taken to reduce or eliminate bias included reassuring all the interview participants that their responses were confidential and I would not be judging them in any way, to encourage openness. In addition the quotations included in the thesis to illustrate particular points were selected to be representative of the case-study tutors as a group.

Reflexivity also is concerned with reflection on the research process as it happens and noting when ideas arose, or slight deviations to the intended path occurred (Watt, 2007). Methods of reflection include keeping a research diary or notes (Watt, 2007). For this study I wrote memos of ideas and thought processes as they arose, which helped articulate the ideas as well as promoting deeper thoughts. These memos were imported into Nvivo and revisited during the analysis stage of the research process.

Case Study Methodology

This research has adopted a case study methodology in an attempt to generate understanding of a particular situation and context in depth. Simons (2009) describes a case study as "a study of the singular, the particular, the unique" (p.2). Yin (2003) describes a case study as an empirical inquiry that "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context" (p.13). In this study, the transition to online teaching is a contemporary issue that many HE teachers are encountering, and this issue is being explored in the real life context of the Teaching a Specialist Subject module.

Hartley (2004) describes case study research as having "a long history and an optimistic future" (p.332). Case study research in the field of education research dates back to the 1960s and 1970s when alternatives to objective models and systems analysis were being sought (Simons, 2009). 'Case study' was originally used as a more generic name for qualitative research to provide an alternative to statistical methods (Platt, 2007). Methods that took participants' perspectives into consideration were required, and case studies were one such method that gained popularity, and now "case study is widely accepted as a research approach for evaluating complex educational innovations in specific context (…) and social and educational phenomenan in general" (Simons, 2009, p.13).

The literature appears to be divided on whether a case study is a methodology, a method or an approach or strategy (Simons, 2009). Platt (2007) concurs, "Case Study is a term that has been used in a variety of different ways, not all of them clear and some of them mutually inconsistent" (p.100). Yin (2003) reports that the case study "is not a data collection tactic or a design feature alone, but a comprehensive research strategy" (p.13). Hartley (2004) agrees, writing that "there is growing confidence in the case study as a rigorous research strategy in its own right" (p.323). For this study I am adopting the term Case Study as a methodology, with the methods being the individual data collection techniques such as interviews. Luo (2011) argues that one strength of case study is its subjective reflection, it therefore is appropriate to the relativist ontological standpoint of this study which accepts that the world is subjective and complex. The transition to online teaching is not a straightforward process (Bennett & Marsh, 2002; Bawane & Spector, 2009) and will be perceived differently by each individual tutor. The constructivist epistemological position this study has adopted is also appropriate to case study research due to the acceptance that knowledge is internally constructed by an individual. In addition, the study is not looking to provide one truth, but rather accepts that each individual tutor's experience of teaching online is likely to

be different depending on a range of factors. These include previous experience of using technology and teaching philosophy in addition to expectations and preconceived ideas of what it may entail. Case study research can be used with a variety of research projects, but particularly lends itself to qualitative interpretive studies like this one. Merriam (1998) concurs, suggesting that although case studies can be used for quantitative research studies, in the field of education they are more likely to be qualitative studies. The case study approach is very appropriate to this interpretive study due to the subjective and contextual factors and the individual, small-scale non-statistical elements.

Stake (1995) categorises cases studies into three types: intrinsic; instrumental and collective. He describes an intrinsic case study as one where the case is of much interest itself and claims that "the purpose of case study is not to represent the world, but to represent the case (…) the utility of case research to practitioners and policy makers is in its extension of experience" (Stake, 1994, p.245). Willig (2008) reports that "cases for intrinsic case studies can be said to be pre-specified in the sense that their intrinsic interest pre-exists the research" (p.77). An instrumental case study is chosen when the findings may throw light onto other situations. Here, the research question identifies a phenomenon first, and then cases are chosen which may illuminate that phenomenon (Stake, 1995; Willig, 2008). The third type, collective case studies, is where a collection of case studies is examined to find commonalities. Stake (1995) claims that his different categories of case study warrant different approaches. This study is not a collective one, as it is a single case study. It can be argued that single case studies can have the properties of both intrinsic and instrumental types of case study, as what is of interest to one person is subjective, and a case study that is interesting itself in terms of its peculiarities, could still throw light onto other situations. For example in this study, some of the contextual factors are particular to the case, but some of the findings relating to how the participant tutors engage with the online teaching could be useful in other contexts. Gray (2004) defines types of case studies in a different way: they can be single or multiple case studies and embedded or not embedded. Willig (2008) claims that single case studies are "either of intrinsic value to the researcher or they provide an opportunity to test the applicability of existing theories to real-world data" (p.78). Multiple case studies allow researchers to generate new theories, and a comparative analysis of several different case studies can be undertaken. This study under Gray's classification is a 'single case: embedded'. It is a single case, being the tutors' experiences of teaching the online module. The multiple units of analysis are the perspective of many of the online tutors via survey; in-depth perspective of some of the online tutors via semi-structured interviews; and the analysis of selected documents.

The 'case' in case study research can be a variety of things, as Simons (2009) explains "the case could be a person, a classroom, an institution, a programme, a policy, a system" (p.4). Noor (2008) notes that: "in explaining what a case is, Yin suggests that the term refers to an event, an entity, an individual or even a unit of analysis. It is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence" (p.1602). Willig (2008) warns that it can be difficult to establish the boundaries of the case study and its terms of reference. The 'case' in this instance is the experiences of the group of tutors involved in the Specialist Subject Module and the system in which the tutors were embedded (as explained in more detail in Chapter 1). The peculiarities of this module in terms of the large number of students in the cohort, most of tutors being new to the online environment, the design and delivery decisions being made centrally, and the importance of providing an equivalent student experience, made this research appropriate for case study methodology. Willig (2008) suggests that "it is important to remember that case studies are of necessity partial accounts of a person in a situation; they can never capture the individual in his or her entirety" (p.80). This study does not claim or attempt to capture all aspects of the participants of study, focusing on elements that relate to online teaching and factors which have shaped their experience and conceptions of teaching and technology to date which may have a bearing on this phenomenon.

Willig (2008) reports that, although a case can be a variety of things, and case study research can be extremely diverse, the majority of case studies have the following five characteristics in common: Firstly, they have an idiographic perspective, so they are looking at the particular rather than the general. The contrasting approach is one of a nomothetic perspective which tends to look for generalisations in human behaviour, this study does not attempt to do that. The second characteristic of case studies is that they seek to pay particular attention to contextual data, and take a holistic approach rather than seeing the data as separate from its context. The third characteristic of case study research is that of triangulation: "case studies integrate information from diverse sources to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation" (Willig, 2008, p.75). The fourth characteristic of case studies is that they have a temporal element, they focus on processes over a period of time, and frequently involve change. The change in this case study is the new online environment that the tutors find themselves in, which is unfamiliar territory for most of them. The final characteristic Willig (2008) identifies, is that case studies are concerned with theory and theory generation, in addition, "case studies can also be used to test existing theories or to clarify or extend such theories" (p.75).

Willig (2008) states that one of the limitations of case study research is that "there is a lack of clarity in relation to what does and does not constitute case study research" (p.85). Case study research is used in a variety of circumstances, the main point of agreement in the literature is that conversational or discourse analysis does not lend itself well to case study methodology (Willig, 2008). Criticisms of case study research include its lack of generalisability (Noor, 2008), although, as Brown (2008) explains "the scope of the case study is bounded and the findings can rarely be generalized, but the case study can provide rich and significant insights into events and behaviours" (p.9). Bryman (1989) concurs: "case studies should be evaluated in terms of the adequacy of theoretical inferences that can be generated. The aim is not to infer findings from a sample to a population but to engender patterns and linkages of theoretical importance" (p.173). Luo (2011) suggests that "the contextual focus and subjective reflection should be considered as the unique value and strength of case study" (p.9).

Thomas (2010) defends case study research arguing that although case study does not offer generalisations, it offers something far better than that: "the potential of case study may be realised in developing something rather more nuanced than generalised knowledge – in what I call exemplary knowledge" (p.1). Thomas (2010) explains this exemplary knowledge as "examples *viewed and heard* in the context of another's experience (another's horizon) but *used* in the context of one's own (where the horizon changes)" (p.11). He claims this exemplary knowledge is legitimised by phronesis rather than theory. Phronesis is practical wisdom or prudence and is concerned with particulars, so for example it could be about how to act and behave in a particular situation. Thomas (2010) observes that "teachers are reflective practitioners developing and using phronesis" (p.10). He argues that case study can lead to knowledge particular to that specific case, but can be used in another situation with adaptations relating to that specific context, and especially used by those who are by nature reflective practitioners. So case study research leads to knowledge that is particular to and understood in that context, "however it is interpretable only in the context of one's own experience – in the context, in other words of one' phronesis, rather than one's theory" (Thomas, 2010, p.11). This perspective on the type of knowledge gained by case study research is the one adopted by this research study, as this study focuses on the experience of the participant tutors as reflective practitioners, of a change in the context of their teaching, which possibly forces them to reflect on the pedagogic approach in their teaching, and examines their relationship with the potential of using technologies in the learning and teaching environment. The exemplary knowledge and findings produced from this study can be interpreted by others in light of their experience and used and adapted to the context in which they are situated.

Silverman (2005) allays the criticism of case studies being trivial or unimportant by claiming that what is considered as important is frequently governed by what is fashionable at that particular time and that "trivial cases may, through good analysis, turn out to have far reaching implications" (p.125). Other criticisms of the case study method include the fact that the intense exposure to study of the case biases the findings and makes them personal and subjective (Nisbet & Watt, 1982). Simons (2009) notes the concerns around the subjectivity of the researcher in case study research but suggests that "the subjectivity of the researcher is inevitable part of the frame. It is not seen as a problem but rather, appropriately monitored and disciplined, as essential in interpreting and understanding the case" (p.24).

Hartley (2004) considers theory to be central to case study research: "a case study, therefore, cannot be defined through its research methods. Rather, it has to be defined in terms of its theoretical orientation" (p.324). This supports Yin's (2003) point above that case study research is about the methodological approach rather than specific data collection methods. Hartley (2004) emphasises the importance of theory:

> the value of theory is key. Although a case study may begin with only rudimentary theory or a primitive framework, the researcher needs to develop theoretical frameworks during the course of the research which inform and make sense of the data and which can be systematically examined during the case study for plausibility. (p.324)

The strengths of case study include the fact that it enables the researcher to gain a holistic view of a certain phenomenon (Gummesson, 1991) and can provide a fuller picture due to the fact that several sources of evidence were used. Simons (2009) proposes that case study research has the potential for the participants to engage with the research process, and also "provides an opportunity for the researcher to take a self-reflexive approach to understanding the case and themselves" (p.23). Nisbet & Watt (1982) state that one of the strengths of case study research is that the research is more easily understood than other types of research and therefore appeals to a wider audience, and that the reports are usually written in plain language. Simons (2009) concurs, stating that:

> case studies written in accessible language, including vignettes and cameos of the people in the case, direct observation of events, incidents and settings, allow audiences of case study reports to vicariously experience what was observed and utilise their tacit knowledge in understanding its significance. (p.23)

Nisbet & Watt (1982) claim that case studies are strongly based in reality, and capture unique features which could be lost in larger-scale studies. They frequently provide

insight into and possibly interpretation of other similar situations and cases. Simons (2009) describes case study methodology as being "useful for exploring and understanding the process and dynamics of change" (p.23). Hartley (2004) summarises case study research writing: "despite the daunting responsibilities, case study research can be engaging, rewarding, stimulating and intellectually challenging. There are likely to be surprises and sense-making right through the case study right up to the last page of writing" (p.332).

In summary, as this research is concerned with tutors' individual experiences of the online teaching environment, it adopts a relativist approach which sees reality as complex and subjective. It sees meaning as constructed by the individual so is appropriate for a qualitative interpretative research study such as this one, as each person's past teaching and learning experiences and preconceptions about teaching and technology will influence their approach and thoughts to how they teach online. In line with this, this study adopts a constructivist epistemological standpoint. It sees meaning as being internalised by an individual and not existing externally awaiting to be discovered and assumes multiple versions of reality. With constructivism, a case study provides the raw material for people to make their own meanings from it, and relies on the participants' view of the situation being studied (Creswell, 2003).

Theoretical Framework

Hartley (2004) emphasises the importance of having a theoretical framework to guide case study research, suggesting that "without a theoretical framework, a case study may produce fascinating details about life in a particular organisation but without any wider significance" (p.324). The theoretical framework for this study is mainly drawn from three conceptualisations: Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice (CoP), deriving from Situated Learning Theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991); the notion of learning cultures (James & Biesta, 2007); and the Community of Inquiry Framework (Garrison et al., 2000). In addition, Bourdieu's (1986) notions of capital, in particular social capital and cultural capital, and his concepts of *field* and *habitus* will be drawn on where appropriate to further the discussion around learning cultures and CoPs.

The above theories and concepts provide complementary perspectives as each are connected with community, context and learning from other people. However they differ in various ways which is useful for offering alternative explanations of phenomena. For

example the CoP theory neglects self-interest and inequalities in power, status and resources, whereas Bourdieu's use of capital suggests that people may use knowledge and social relations for their own gain. The theories used therefore combine well but are individually nuanced to provide further insight. Each one of these theories in turn will now be discussed in more detail.

Situated Learning Theory

Situated Learning Theory is concerned with learning in context, active participation and engagement, and recognises the importance of collaboration. It developed the concept of 'legitimate peripheral participation' which put simply, is the novice participating in a community and by active engagement and seeing how experts participate, learning whilst taking part, and gradually moving towards being an expert, similar to an apprenticeship. Dyke et al. (2007) describe the approach of Situated Learning Theory as being collaborative learning, reciprocal teaching and vicarious learning. They claim situated learning is characterised by viewing knowledge as a matter of competences in particular situations, and participation and active engagement in the pursuit of this. Dyke et al. (2007) suggest that with situated learning there is a shift from focus on the individual and information to an emphasis on social learning and collaboration. Social learning rather than individual learning also links to learning cultures, discussed below. It is therefore an appropriate framework for discussing online learning as this allows people to form networks and communities of learners and experts, and opens up the possibilities of different types of communities to develop. This theory adopts a social constructivist approach whereby people learn by constructing knowledge and then using discussion/collaboration to clarify and consolidate their learning. Situated Learning Theory was considered to be a useful theory to explore in this study, as the case-study tutors are learning this new skill of teaching online in context. This study acknowledges that there are certain skills, both technical and pedagogical, to be developed in order to become an expert online tutor, so explores how the participant tutors adapt to this new environment.

Communities of Practice

The CoP theory, derived from Situated Learning Theory, is attributed to Etienne Wenger (1998), and is a social theory of learning where learning by collaboration and discussion is central. The theory is derived from the premise that learning is made up of four main components: community, identity, meaning and practice. CoP considers that "learning is

an integral part of our everyday lives. It is part of our participation in communities and organisations" (Wenger, 1998, p.8). Hodkinson & Hodkinson (2004b) observe that from the CoP perspective "learning is understood to be a ubiquitous process, often subconsciously undertaken, for example through normal working practices. Any separation between the person learning and the context in which they learn is artificial" (pp.167-168). Henderson & Bradey (2008) agree claiming that "from a community of practice perspective, learning should be viewed holistically where a person, firmly situated in a social and cultural environment, increasingly takes part in communities of practice" (p.86). The CoP theory therefore is congruent with the case study approach due to the significance of context in both.

The CoP and Situated Learning theories are closely related. Ryberg & Christiansen (2008) report that learning takes place by initially lurking or legitimate peripheral participation and then "if staying in contact with the environment, the student or participant will gradually become more skilled, and gradually closer to the centre of the community performing the activity" (p.209). The process of acquiring knowledge is seen as a social one from this perspective, and knowledge is learned through the participation within the community or group and through the adoption of shared practices (Denscome, 2008).

The notion of CoP lends itself well to the online teaching and learning contexts, as Moule (2007) suggests: "an increasing number of studies are applying Wenger's (1998) theory to online learning contexts as interest in constructivist approaches to e-learning develops" (p.40). Avis & Fisher (2006) also report on the suitability of CoP to adult learning and CPD activity "engagement in communities of practice has increasingly come to be seen as an important aspect of adult learning and continuous professional development" (p.141). Both these elements apply to this research context, suggesting that CoP is being an appropriate theory to frame this study.

Wenger (1998) places great importance on *identity* within the CoP framework, defining an identity as "a layering of events of participation and reification by which our experience and its social interpretation inform each other" (p.151). Wenger (1998) argues that "issues of identity are an integral aspect of a social theory of learning, and are thus inseparable from issues of practice, community and meaning" (p.145). Henderson (2006) concurs, suggesting that to become a member of a CoP, an individual needs to invest their identity and practices in the core activities and values of that community. Hung & Der-Thanq (2001) report that "identity formation takes place from the appropriation of the beliefs, values and skills required in a practice, - seen through

the 'lens' of a particular practice" (p.4), which in this study is the online teaching practice. Identities are not static and are constantly changing and being re-negotiated. They can develop in different ways in different CoP and situations: "situativity leads to the development of values, habits and identities and skills that are relevant to and supported by that community" (Oliver et al., 2007, p.145). Wenger (1998) suggests that building an identity involves negotiating meanings from our participation in social practices and communities. In this case study, the practice of teaching has changed from the familiar, in terms of face-to-face teaching, to the unfamiliar environment of online teaching, so tutors may find themselves renegotiating their professional identities as a result.

Part of Lave & Wenger's (1991) notions of identity and learning by participation in social practices is the idea of *learning as becoming*. By this they mean that you change as part of your participation in the social practices of that culture and become part of the community of practice: "learning thus implies becoming a different person with respect to the possibilities enabled by these systems of relations. To ignore this aspect of learning is to overlook the fact that learning involves the construction of identities" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.53). Colley et al. (2003) suggest that "immersion in the social, cultural and emotional aspects of work are not merely factors that influence learning, but are central to it. Becoming is a crucial part of this process" (p.474). McNally et al. (2009) apply the concept of *learning as becoming* to new teachers:

> the newcomers into teaching are joining a community of practice but this
> transition involves, as Wenger (1998) argues, a relationship between learning
> and identity in which a sense of identity is integral to the individual's feeling of
> belonging. The learning is transformative and is a process of becoming a new
> person or, in this case, a teacher. (p.328)

The CoP notion does have its limitations and criticisms. Cox (2005) in a comparative study about CoP, suggests that one of its limitations is that usage of the term CoP is very diverse:

> Sometimes it is a conceptual lens through which to examine the situated social
> construction of meaning. At other times it is used to refer to a virtual community
> or informal group sponsored by an organisation to facilitate knowledge sharing
> or learning. (p.527)

Cox (2005) claims that whilst there is some common ground amongst the seminal texts on CoP, there are also some clear differences in their basic concepts: "these works share some important common ground: in particular their view of meaning as locally and socially constructed and in placing identity as central to learning. Yet the most distinctive concepts of each are often absent in the others" (p.527).

Other criticisms of CoP include the contention that it gives practical knowledge a higher status than theoretical knowledge, as Denscombe (2008) explains:

> the emphasis on situated learning has caused some commentators to worry about the way communities of practice might elevate practice-based knowledge above more theoretical and abstract forms of knowledge. Hammersley (2005), for example voices such a concern over educational research. (p.277)

In terms of a response to these limitations of the CoP theory, the above criticisms appear to be levelled at the knowledge created and shared by the community of practice being the only or dominant form of knowledge, rather than just a description of how knowledge is created and shared by people experiencing something new. In this context this was the participant tutors' experiences of teaching online which presented them with issues they have not previously encountered. The theory of CoP was therefore deemed appropriate to this context, taken together with the notion of Learning Cultures, explored in more detail next. In terms of CoPs being interpreted differently by different authors, it is not unusual for authors to have various interpretations of theories, as long as these interpretations are made clear. This study uses the definitions of CoPs as defined above by Lave & Wenger (1998).

Learning Cultures

James & Biesta (2007) argue that when considering theories of learning it is also important to consider learning cultures. They define learning cultures as "the social practices in which people learn" (p.xiii), and acknowledge that learning cultures are "complex and multifaceted entities" (p.4). Ferreira (2012) concurs with the significance of learning cultures, arguing that academic culture is a vital factor relating to the adoption of technology in HEIs: "unless we consider academic culture we cannot fully capture the relationship of technologies to education" (p.4). James & Biesta (2007) argue that learning does not take place in the learners' or teachers' minds but is something which happens through participation in social practices, which are also features of both CoP and Situated Learning theories. However they also warn that there are no "simple rules for action or recipes for effective teaching" (p.20), which is why research into effective practices within any teaching and learning environment is complex. James & Biesta (2007) argue that to improve teaching and learning, it is necessary to change the learning culture, but acknowledge this is not a straightforward task "one might be able to influence some of the factors that shape a particular learning

culture, but many factors are either beyond the control of those directly involved (…) or because they are difficult to control anyway" (p.4).

It is people who create learning cultures, which "exist through the actions, dispositions and interpretations of the participants. They exist through interaction and communication and are (re)produced by individuals just as much as individuals are (re)produced by the learning cultures" (p.4). In terms of the impact an individual can have on a specific learning culture, James & Biesta (2007) argue that this "depends upon a combination of their position within that culture, their disposition towards that culture, and the various types of capital (social, cultural and economic) that they possess" (p.30). They continue to suggest that the impact an individual has in a particular culture mainly comes from their actions and presence within that culture. So the presence of certain types of people makes that culture what it is. Individuals have influence on a learning culture just as learning cultures have influence on the individuals that are part of it (James & Biesta, 2007). This links with social presence in the CoI framework, discussed in Chapter 2, which is about projecting your personality into the learning community, and feeling like you are communicating with real people, and having an influence on that learning community.

In order to fully understand the concept of learning cultures, it is necessary to briefly explore Bourdieu's (1996) notions of *field*, *habitus* and *capital*, and in particular ideas relating to both social and cultural capital. Bourdieu's notion of *field* is "a defined social space in which there is inequality but also mutual dependency" (James & Biesta, 2007, p.25). Bourdieu tended to talk about macro-level fields like the field of education, but here we are using it at a more micro-level by restricting it to the specific teaching environment in which the participating tutors are based. Thompson (2011) suggests that: "the field may not be singular, but a set of intersecting fields, so that a position may be exposed to conflicting and hierarchically arranged forces" (p.17). So in this case the *field* under study is the Specialist Subject module, but that is located in a wider *field* of a teacher training course, which itself is based in the wider *field* of the institution etc. There can be different pressures and forces from any of the nested *field*s which can have an impact on the more micro-level *field*. The idea of *field* is a social rather than physical space, which has its own rules, practices and hierarchy. In terms of *habitus*, Sweetman (2009) claims that: "habitus refers to our overall orientation to or way of being in the world; our predisposed ways of thinking, acting and moving in and through the social environment that encompasses posture, demeanour, outlook, expectations and tastes" (p.493). *Habitus* is the set of socially learned skills, ways of acting and operating in the social environment that Bourdieu (1977) suggests are "beyond the grasp of

consciousness, and hence cannot be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation, cannot even be made explicit" (p.94). Collet (2009) suggests that the notion of *habitus* stems from the idea of tacit knowledge, which claims that "all knowledge is developed through an indwelling process" (p.420). *Habitus* operates in relation to *field*, with each *field* having its own unique set of dispositions in which "in which more or less specific norms, values, rules, and interests apply" (Sweetman, 2009, p.494). In terms of the relationship between *field* and *habitus,* Orr (2009) states that "Bourdieu describes how people adapt to the structures and relationships they find around them, internalising rules which they may be unaware of and which may never have been formally constituted" (p.44). In this study the tutors' *habitus* has been formed from participation in social practices within the face-to-face learning culture.

Bourdieu defines three types of capital: social, cultural and economic. Economic capital is not considered directly relevant to this study so has been excluded from the discussion, but the ideas of social and cultural capital were considered to be potential useful tools for providing insights into how the case-study tutors respond to the change in their normal working practices. Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as:

> the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. (pp.248–249)

Bourdieu presents the idea of social capital to support a conflict model in which the social capital gained in a particular context is used to further one's interest, giving an individual power in that given situation. Ihlen (2005) on the other hand claims that social capital "tends to be used to describe the resources of a community and the degree of shared values and trust within it" (p.492), but argues that the roots of the term from Bourdieu on power and social capital are frequently overlooked. He insists: "for Bourdieu, social capital is seen as one of several resources that actors use to pursue their interests and to position themselves" (p.492). This study will explore the idea of social capital in relation to the participants to see how it was used, as a resource, community building commodity or more for personal gain.

According to Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital can exist in three forms: *embodied*, long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; *objectified*, cultural goods like books, instruments; and *institutionalized*, which confers specific properties on the cultural capital which it guarantees. In the first of these, the embodied state, cultural capital is a

skill or competence that cannot be separated from its owner (Weininger & Lareau, 2007). Cultural capital can be acquired by being immersed in a particular culture and observing and learning the cultural norms and practices of that context. In this case study, the context the tutors are immersed in is that of the HE or FE teaching sector dominated by face-to-face teaching practices and norms and discourse surrounding face-to-face teaching practices. The tutors are likely to have gained cultural capital from their experience of being in this teaching sector, as well as from a wider context in terms of their education, qualifications and broader knowledge.

In conclusion, this study therefore uses the combination of CoP, Situated Learning theories and learning cultures with the addition of the CoI framework and Bourdieu's concepts of social and cultural capital to try to understand the experiences of the participant tutors, who were new to the online teaching environment. The theories are complementary but each offers some unique perspective to potentially illuminate particular themes. The individual chapter themes will use a combination of these theories as appropriate and relevant to the discussion, so each theory is not necessarily considered by every theme. It is not unusual to combine these particular theories, for example Hodkinson & Hodkinson (2004b) used Bourdieu's (1996) ideas of capital, *habitus* and *field* to broaden the scope of Lave & Wenger's (1991) theorising on CoP, and found the two approaches consistent with each other "Bourdieu's work makes clear the relational nature of workplace learning, linking with Lave & Wenger's claim that theirs is a theory of social practice" (p.180).

Learning Theory

As this study adopts the constructivist standpoint, it follows that in analysing learning, the research is guided by corresponding constructivist education theory which was developed in the 1970s. This derived from the works of Piaget (1953), and variations and adaptations followed by Bruner (1966), Vygotsky (1978) and Papert (1980). Constructivist learning theory is a "philosophy of learning based on the premise that knowledge is constructed by the individual through his or her interactions with the environment" (Rovai, 2004, p.80). Neo (2005) claims that constructivism is an appropriate theory for educators and becoming the dominant educational theory:

> *In the context of modern educational theory, learning is moving away from the traditional behavorist perspective where students are passive rote-learners to a modern constructivist-based paradigm, where students are active learners involved in their own learning process. (p.5)*

The constructivist approach is consistent with the paradigm shift that Barr & Tagg (1995) discuss in their influential book chapter 'From Teaching to Learning'. They report that HEIs are moving away from the provision of information to a position of producing learning, as they explain diagrammatically in Table 3.1 below:

The Instruction Paradigm	The Learning Paradigm
Mission and Purposes	
• Provide/deliver instruction • Transfer knowledge from faculty to students • Offer courses and programs • Improve the quality of instruction • Achieve access for diverse students	• Produce learning • Elicit student discovery and construction of knowledge • Create powerful learning environments • Improve the quality of learning • Achieve success for diverse students
Criteria for Success	
• Inputs, resources • Quality of entering students • Curriculum development, expansion • Quantity and quality of resources • Enrolment, revenue growth • Quality of faculty, instruction	• Learning and student-success outcomes • Quality of exiting students • Learning technologies development, expansion • Quantity and quality of outcomes • Aggregate learning growth, efficiency • Quality of students' learning
Teaching/Learning Structures	
• Atomistic; parts prior to whole • Time held constant, learning varies • 50-minute lecture, 3-unit course • Classes start/end at same time • One teacher, one classroom • Independent disciplines, departments • Covering material • End-of-course assessment • Grading within classes by instructors • Private assessment • Degree equals accumulated credit hours	• Holistic; whole prior to parts • Learning held constant, time varies • Learning environments • Environment ready when student is • Whatever learning experience works • Cross discipline/department collaboration • Specified learning results • Pre/during/post assessments • External evaluation of learning • Public assessment • Degree equals demonstrated knowledge and skills

Table 3.1 Teaching and Learning Paradigms, Adapted from Barr & Tagg (1995), p.16

A brief exploration of educational theory is relevant for this study as it is likely to affect how an individual tutor approaches teaching and how they understand learning. Holly et al. (2008) state that "the most effective and appropriate underlying pedagogical rationale for online learning amongst adults is social constructivism" (p.254). If a tutor

favours a more instructional approach, they can find that this does not lend itself well to online teaching, and may find the transition more challenging, as Holly et al. (2008) explain: "the online environment may cause some discomfort for the educator used to more traditional teaching environments" (p.257). It also could be more challenging for certain subject disciplines, particularly science or applied-science based subjects. Holly et al. (2008) found this an issue when trying to engage some nursing tutors in online teaching: "herein lies the major challenge: application of a constructivist theoretical framework to an objectivist discipline" (p.255). A tutor's perception of how learners acquire knowledge and skills comes into question here and will directly affect how they approach their teaching, as Neo (2005) explains:

> The learning approach is structured in a constructivist learning perspective, in which students are actively engaged in seeking knowledge and information in their learning process in small groups. This is unlike the traditional directed instruction method, where the teacher basically controls the instructional process and is regarded as the source of expert knowledge, which is delivered to students through classroom lectures while students listen obediently. In this traditional mode of learning, the focus is on content, and learners rely on their teacher for information and knowledge and play little part in their learning process. Hence, the learning mode tends to be passive. (Neo, 2005, p.5)

Learning Metaphors

In addition to theories of learning, various metaphors are used in the literature to understand the learning process. This discussion is relevant to this study as it likely to impact they way in which both tutor teach (i.e. impacts how they perceived students learn) and how they themselves learn new skills and knowledge. Sfard (1998) suggests two metaphors for learning, these being the *Acquisition Metaphor* and the *Participation Metaphor*, and warns that it is dangerous to align closely with just one, "too great a devotion to one particular metaphor, can lead to theoretical distortions, and to undesirable practices" (p.4). Sfard (1998) argues that research into learning is going through a major upheaval: "the field is in a state of perturbation, with prospects of a new equilibrium not yet in sight" (p.4). The *acquisition* metaphor is based on the idea that knowledge can be acquired and accumulated, leading to certain language being used in connection with learning "the language of 'knowledge acquisition' and 'concept development' makes us think about the human mind as a container to be filled with certain materials and about the learner becoming an owner of these materials" (p.5). Collis et al. (2001) suggest that with the acquisition model "what is to be learned is generally pre-determined. Frequently the extent to which the learner has learned is measured by a written test, often with pre-determined right answers" (p.229).

Sfard (1998) observes that even though the acquisition metaphor is firmly entrenched in our thinking and language relating to learning, it appears to have recently been overtaken by a new metaphor for learning, namely the *Participation Metaphor*. Newer books and titles of research papers now refer to learning but not to 'knowledge' or 'concepts': "the terms that imply the existence of some permanent entities, have been replaced by the noun 'knowing' which indicates action" (p.6). The concept of participation implies that there is no end date to learning, and learning activities are described in connection with the context in which they are situated. The learner "should be viewed as a person interested in participation rather than in accumulating private possessions" (p.6). Collis et al. (2001) claim that with the participation model, in contrast to the acquisition model, "interactions that the learners contribute to may serve to change the knowledge base of the community, even as they participate in it" (p.229). Learning is seen as becoming part of a community, learning its 'language' and participating in its particular norms. This is a feature of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and Wenger's (1998) CoP as discussed earlier. Collis et al. (2001) agree with Sfard's (1998) view that it is not a straight choice between the two models/metaphors, but to get the balance between the two right, depending on what is appropriate for the context: "both models are needed in higher education and professional training; what needs to be found is the balance between them in each particular learning setting" (Collis et al., 2001, p.229). Koschmann (1994) criticises the acquisition and participation dichotomy suggesting it is too extreme, and claims that a *transaction* metaphor exists which contains elements and combines both acquisition and participation. Hager (2004) questions whether the two metaphors cover all views of learning: "an obvious question is whether Sfard's two metaphors exhaust the possibilities, or whether there are other significant learning metaphors that view learning as a process" (p.13).

Edwards (2006) undertakes a critical reflection of the 'and' in the phrase 'teaching and learning', to examine what bond glues the two terms together. He suggests different interpretations, one being that people assume that if teachers 'teach' then students 'learn' so that there is some sort of automatic process, similar to the acquisition metaphor above. Edwards suggested that this interpretation is actually "an outmoded way of thinking about pedagogic practices, possibly reading into the comment a view that teaching is active and learning is passive, and teachers are not responsible for learning" (p.122). Edwards (2006) claims that "there is no one-to-one relationship between teaching and learning" (p.123), and there is frequently a time lag between the teaching and any subsequent learning. Edwards (2006) examines the discourse of teaching and learning, proposing that terms like the 'delivery' of courses suggest that

there is no separation between the teaching activities and learning happening. He advocates that "we need to engage in a different discursive trajectory by reframing our starting points, putting pedagogy back in the picture" (p.126).

In contrast to Edwards (2006), Hager (2004) takes a critical look at the concept of learning, and suggests that "although learning is still widely treated as an unproblematic concept in educational writing, there is growing evidence that increasingly its meaning is contested" (p.4). Hager (2004) argues that not only do theorists vary widely in their definition or conceptions of learning, but that HEIs, who should know about the practicalities of learning, are lacking in their understanding. Brabazon (cited in Hager, 2004) proposes that these "experts on learning have confused technology with teaching and tools with learning" (p.4). Hager (2004) particularly examines learning in the workplace and makes the point that although learning in education carries positive connotations, in the workplace, being a learner suggests somehow that skills or knowledge are lacking, and the sooner they are declared proficient and shake off the 'learner' label, the better. Hager (2004) discusses the learning-as-product metaphor, claiming it is still dominant despite research on learning proving that it is quite outdated. One of the criticisms of the learning-as-product view is that for it to be accepted implies that learning has to be stable over time. However Hager (2004) claims that the emerging view of learning is now more accepting of the opposing view of learning-as-process: "various recent developments in educational thought have brought the notion of learning as a process into new prominence" (p.11). He mentions the work of Lave & Wenger (1991) as part of this new thinking as they see learning as a process and put emphasis on the social and contextual factors. Hager (2004) reports learning-as-process as being beneficial in that learning is seen as desirable, as an ongoing process, but also that life-long learning is a usual and normal thing for people. Learning as process also allows for the notion of tacit knowledge, when the knowledge is usually gained by experience and difficult to explain to another person.

Chapter 4 – Data Collection Methods

Clough & Nutbrown (2002) describe methods as being "some of the ingredients of research, whilst methodology provides the reasons for using a particular research recipe" (p.22). The first phase of this research consisted of a review of the literature in the field, identifying the affordances of technologies in teaching, the differences and challenges of teaching online, and the models used to develop online teaching strategies. The scope of and findings of the literature review are discussed in Chapter 2.

The second stage was the primary data collection phase, which consisted of the following: First, a survey of the case-study tutors to identify the challenges they faced in the transition to online teaching and to explore their thoughts and experiences. The results from this survey provided useful information to assist in deciding which issues to further explore in the interviews. The survey also offered an insight into the background of the case-study tutors. Secondly, initial exploratory interviews with a small sample of the case-study tutors to pilot the interview questions and explore initial responses. Following this I expected to take time to reflect on the questions and responses, how they tied in with both the original research questions and how they aligned with the research methodology and then re-enter the field with sharpened ideas and clarified questions. Thirdly, interviews with the main sample of the case-study tutors. This was the main source of data for this study. The interviews explored the tutors' experiences of adapting to teaching online, and what they considered to be the benefits and advantages of online teaching. The interviews also explored their anxieties and challenges of teaching online, and the tutors' teaching philosophy. Finally, data collected from documents related to the online tutors (information, newsletters and training guides) as well as the interactions on the Blackboard VLE of a few of the participant tutors. This involved exploring their online activities, like the discussion boards and blogging tasks as well as the feedback given to trainees on their submitted work. This provided a more holistic view of the case as is appropriate for case-study research.

The collection of data from different techniques and viewpoints is a common feature of the case study approach, as Noor (2008) explains "combining multiple techniques for eliciting data in case study research actually strengthens and confirms results" (p.1602). Yin (1994) suggests that in case studies the validity of the data is usually confirmed by using multiple sources of data. Hartley (2004) concurs:

> *many case study researchers in their pursuit of the delicate and intrinsic interaction and processes occurring within organisations, will use a combination of methods, partly because complex phenomena may be best approached*

through several methods, and partly deliberately to triangulate data and theory (and thereby improve validity). (p.324)

Each of the data collection methods will now be discussed in more detail.

Initial Survey

Advantages and Limitations of Surveys

The advantages of surveys include that data can be collected from a reasonably large number of respondents quite quickly especially when compared to other data collection methods like interviews or observations (Sheehan & Hoy, 2004). Surveys are useful for collecting factual demographic data (Cohen et al., 2011) and in this study were used as a method of gaining insight into the population to be later invited to interview. Other advantages include that surveys are usually quick for participants to complete, they can be completed anonymously, and if online the results can be automatically summarised (Sheehan & Hoy, 2004).

The limitations of surveys include that it is difficult to capture complex views in a few questions (Glover & Bush, 2005), and a respondent may reply differently depending on contextual factors like how tired or stressed they feel at the time (Cohen et al., 2011). People can also misread the question or misinterpret what the question is really asking (Moser & Kalton, 2004). Without the researcher present to clarify anything unclear, the respondent has to guess some of the intended meanings (Moser & Kalton, 2004; Cohen et al., 2011). In addition people may complete surveys quickly, not really thinking carefully about the response or reflecting on their answers, so limited in-depth qualitative data can be gained, even with open ended questions. If the surveys are anonymous, people are less likely to worry about the responses they give, as they cannot be identified.

In response to these limitations, the survey was piloted to check for any misunderstandings that may arise without the researcher there to clear them up, to help address that limitation. In addition, the questions were written in clear plain English to try and avoid any potential ambiguities. Many open-ended questions were included for participants to expand on or explain their answers which helped with them being able to provide more detailed answers than a multiple choice question may offer, but also for more in-depth data to be provided, which could be later analysed alongside the interview data. In terms of the anonymous nature of surveys, although the limitation is that

respondents may take slightly less care over responses, the advantage is that participants are more likely to be honest if the survey is anonymous.

Survey responses can be quantified, but this in itself can be unreliable, as Pring (2000) explains:

> it is as though all the answers added together are of the same logical kind. But, if the same mark on the paper represents different understandings, then they should not be added together as though they mean the same thing. (p.38)

In this study an online survey was used. Online surveys have the advantages of being able to be sent to people over a wide geographical area via email, and not incurring paper, printing or postage costs. In this study the tutors were geographically dispersed over the north of England, so an online survey was a practical and convenient method of data collection. Online surveys can also speed up the data analysis as they can be imported into statistical packages easily for computer-based analysis, and for results to be summarised. Sheehan & Hoy (2004) report that using web-based survey the interviewer does not come into direct contact with the respondent which means "survey responses will be free from errors caused by interviewers resulting in cleaner data" (p.106).

Although this research study is predominantly qualitative in nature, it was considered appropriate to begin the data collection with a survey of the tutors who would be later invited to participate in the interviews. Many of the questions were quantitative in nature, to find out more about the population and provide some summary and group statistics. Quite a few of the questions, however, were more qualitative in nature. These were included to get an initial amount of qualitative data which could later be analysed alongside the interview data to provide some breadth of response, but also these questions were intended to help frame the interview questions. The responses were expected to give an insight into how tutors perceived online teaching which would potentially assist with the identification of questions for the interviews. The survey was anonymous, to encourage open and honest responses, and it was emphasised that all responses were confidential and that no attempt would be made to identify individuals.

Pilot Study

The survey was piloted with six people, three of whom were online tutors. The other three people were academic colleagues who could proof-read and check for general readability, formatting and so on. All of the pilot study participants were briefed on the

aims of the research and then asked to complete the survey and report back on a number of issues:

- o Any questions that were not clear in their meaning or ambiguous
- o Any questions they thought were leading or biased in any way
- o Any questions that they thought should not be included for any reason
- o Any questions they thought were missing or should be included
- o Any comments on the structure/format/length of the survey
- o Any questions that were optional that should be compulsory or vice versa
- o Making sure all options/combination of answers had been considered for multiple choice questions
- o Any spelling mistakes, grammatical or punctuation errors
- o Any other or general comments they wanted to make

Amendments Following Pilot Study

Minor changes were made to the survey following the pilot study, some of the wording was changed in light of the feedback, and a question regarding the Salmon (2000) model was removed due to the fact that the respondents to the pilot survey did not appear aware of the model or that they were teaching using a design based on that model.

The amended survey was then sent to all online tutors employed in the academic year 2009/2010, and two reminders were sent out at later dates. There were 61 tutors in the cohort that year, and 40 responses were received, representing response rate of 66%. The survey questions can be found in Appendix A, and the summarised results of the survey is in Appendix B.

Semi-structured Interviews

The main data collection method for this study was the interview as King & Horrocks (2010) suggests is common in qualitative research. Although an interview is often described as a directed conversation, Charmaz (2006) claims that "the interviewer's questions ask the participant to describe and reflect upon his or her experiences in ways that seldom occur in everyday life" (p.25). Interviews were appropriate for this case study as they allow individuals to respond to the questions without feeling either intimidated or influenced by others which may happen in a group interview or focus group situation, and to stop the cross-contamination of ideas and allow individuals to

feel free to express their opinions without being judged by others. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) claim that "the qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" (p.1). The semi-structured interview was appropriate for this study as these types of interviews allow some basic structure to the questions, so answers can be compared but also allow the flexibility of being able to follow up specific issues of interest that emerge during the interview (Arksey & Knight, 1999). Noor (2008) agrees, suggesting that semi-structured interviews offer "sufficient flexibility to approach different respondents differently while still covering the same areas of data collection" (p.1604). For this study, an interpretive case study approach was appropriate, so semi-structured interviews were considered a suitable data collection method for this approach: "subjective data are an integral part of the case. It is through analysis and interpretation of how people think, feel and act that many of the insights and understanding of the case are gained" (Simons, 2009, p.4).

Limitations to semi-structured interviews include the fact that people may tell the researcher what they want to hear or what they think the appropriate answer should be, rather than a truly honest response. Merriam (1988) agrees, claiming that with interview responses "there is the possibility that information has been distorted or exaggerated" (p.84). Diefenbach (2009) suggests that "if an interviewee does not want to say what he or she really thinks then there is only little chance to convince him or her otherwise" (p.882). Interviewees give their own account of a situation, which may be different from another person's, especially if that person is coming from another perspective, such as a tutor and student giving an account of a teaching and learning situation. Charmaz (2006) states that "whether participants recount their concerns without interruption, or researchers request specific information, the result is a construct, or reconstruction of reality" (p.27). Arksey & Knight (1999) concur, warning that "since what people claim to think, feel or do does not necessarily align well with their actions, it is important to be clear that interviews get at what people say, however sincerely, rather than what they do" (p.15). Furthermore, people sometimes offer a favourable account of themselves and blame factors beyond their control (for example in this case possibly the technology) rather than admit to shortcomings. Methods to eliminate this include making the interviewee feel at ease, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and asking questions in different ways to check for consistency of response. Diefenbach (2009) agrees this will lead to better quality data. For example, the question: *What advice would you give to a tutor new to online teaching?* was intended to illuminate what participants found challenging about teaching online but the way the question was worded takes the emphasis away from it being about them. I also attempted to probe a little more deeply

than the original response given to each question recognising that people do not reflect deeply immediately until prompted to do so. Silverman (2005) claims that the data from interviews can be seen as artificial as the researcher has to create a situation, which would not occur naturally. To help minimise this limitation, this study therefore explored and analysed some of the documents and interactions between tutors and students to achieve a more complete picture.

The themes explored in the interviews with tutors were:
- o What the tutors considered to be the main differences between face-to-face and online teaching.
- o What were the tutors' anxieties about starting teaching online? And what challenges did they face?
- o How the tutors perceived their role in teaching, and did they consider this was different in the online environment?
- o Did the tutors generally think that it was possible to build good tutor/student relationships online?
- o Issues around autonomy and control: did the tutors like the structured approach? Would they have liked more autonomy?

The full interview schedule can be found in Appendix C.

How the Interview Participants were Selected:

There were 17 interview participants in total, which was considered to be an appropriate sample size for a small-scale qualitative case study. Gonzalez (2009) agrees, suggesting that sample sizes of under 20 participants are common in the literature. Kember & Kwan's (2000) research on approaches to teaching used a sample of seventeen lecturers. Roberts' (2003) research on teaching using the web had a sample of seven. The participants in my study were selected by a variety of methods. Firstly, an email was sent to all the tutors involved in the Specialist Subject module explaining my research and asking for volunteers who were willing to be interviewed. The request was repeated twice at later dates, and I found more than half of my participants in this way. I was aware that I was more likely to get people volunteering for interview who were more comfortable with online teaching and confident in themselves as teachers, so following this I did some purposive recruiting by contacting one of the module leaders, and asking them to recommend tutors who they thought would be suitable candidate for interview but were possibly less confident in the online teaching environment, and these people were emailed individually inviting them to take part. I also used a small amount of convenience sampling by contacting tutors I knew as colleagues to take part in the

interviews. The advantage of using convenience sampling is that the participants are more likely to agree, and be at ease talking to the researcher in the interview, so it is a practical way to gain interview participants. The disadvantage is the participants may not want to be negative about the topic under research, knowing that it is of interest to the researcher. In this case, this limitation was minimised by firstly inviting all the online tutors teaching that module to be interviewed, (rather than just contacting those I knew professionally), and secondly asking the module leaders to recommend some individual tutors to be invited to interview. In addition, the survey also offered any of the module tutors the opportunity to offer an opinion of their experience of teaching online anonymously.

Conducting the Interviews

The interviews lasted about an hour, and were recorded using a digital recorder for later transcription. The initial questions were partly ice-breakers, to attempt to get the interviewee comfortable, and giving them an opportunity to talk about something familiar: their teaching background and experience to date. Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree (2006) support this approach suggesting that "the first question should be broad and open ended, should reflect the nature of the research and be non-threatening" (p.316). I tried to stay neutral and unbiased and attempted to let the interviewee talk as much as possible without me interjecting, though I frequently made comments of agreement, and positive gestures such as nodding and smiling to make them feel comfortable with what they were saying. I offered the interview candidates the choice of being interviewed face-to-face, by phone or by Skype, as some of the tutors were not local. Most tutors chose the face-to-face option. The phone and Skype interviews tended to be slightly shorter due to less small talk and non-verbal communication, but I did not find that people opened up more in one format than another.

Modifications Following First Set of Interviews and Rethinking Methodology

After carrying out the first five interviews, the questions were revisited to evaluate whether they were appropriate and the responses were helping to answer the research questions. This was also an opportune time to revisit the research methodology to see if anything needed changing or realigning. Amending the interview questions during the course of qualitative research is common, as King & Horrocks (2010) explain "not only is it permissible to change your guide in the course of your study, it is generally advisable"

(p.37), they go on to say "any insights you get in the process of carrying out your first few interviews should inform subsequent ones" (pp.37-38).

The main change made to the interview schedule was inserting a question about what the participants thought was their role as a tutor, as after the first few interviews this appeared to be a significant factor in how people viewed and responded to the online teaching. This question opened up further questions about the participant's teaching philosophy and pedagogical viewpoint. Another question was inserted about building relationships with students, as this also was a significant theme occurring in the first few interviews.

A short period of time was taken out from the data collection process to review the methodology and data collection methods. The methodological approach was clarified but the result of this had only minimal effect on the actual interview questions. As part of this review, a mapping of interview questions onto the research questions exercise was completed, to ensure that appropriate questions were being asked, this mapping can be found in Appendix D.

Document Analysis

In addition to the main data collection methods outlined above, documentary analysis on the tutor documentation and the interactions between some tutors and their trainees was carried out by examining the induction materials, newsletters, the discussion boards and assessment feedback given to trainees, to explore whether the data could be strengthened. The documentation was used to support and verify or challenge the other data sources, which is common in qualitative research. As Bryman (1989) explains: "although they are widely employed by qualitative researchers, documents are rarely used on their own. In most cases documents are used to provide additional data and to check on the findings deriving from other sources of data" (p.151). Documents in qualitative research are different from other sources of data, Miller & Alvarado (2005) suggest that "for qualitative researchers, documents are distinctive in one respect: unlike interviews and observational episodes, documents exist before the researcher seeks to use them as data" (p.349). Noor (2008) agrees "documentary evidence acts as a method to cross validate information gathered from interview and observation, given that sometimes what people say may be different from what people do" (p.1604). This method of triangulation is also consistent with a case-study approach "qualitative case

study values multiple perspectives of stakeholders and participants, observation in natural occurring circumstances and interpretation in context" (Simons, 2009, p.4). Bryman (1989) suggests that analysing documents can bring a range of benefits to the qualitative research study, "they can provide information on issues that cannot readily be addressed through other methods; they can check the validity of information deriving from other methods; and they can contribute a different level of analysis from other methods" (p.150). Miller & Alvarado (2005) agree, stating that "documents can be used as important resources for data triangulation, to increase the comprehensiveness and validity of any single study" (p.348).

Limitations to using documents as sources of data include the fact that documents are usually written for specific purposes, so the researcher may have to interpret them without knowing the full situational factors involved, which could lead to misinterpretation, as Hodder (2004) explains "once transformed into a written text, the gap between the 'author' and the 'reader' widens, and the possibility of multiple misinterpretation increases. The text can say many different things in different contexts" (p.394). Miller & Alvarado (2005) concur: "by using documents, a researcher is placed at some distance from real people, so that human action and thought are interpreted through representations of reality" (p.348). In response to these limitations, first the documents in this study were only used as a supplementary data collection method to the more 'human' data from interviews and surveys. Secondly, I had access to the authors of the majority of the documents analysed, so was able to discuss with them any issues or questions I had about them. The documents were used primarily to provide a more complete and holistic picture of the context of the case-study module and experience of the tutors.

Three types of documents were analysed in this study:
- o The induction documentation given to the tutors at the start of the training.
- o The regular newsletters sent from the module leaders to the case-study tutors.
- o Interactions between four tutors and their students on the VLE.

These documents were chosen mainly because they were expected to provide insight into the issues that the online tutors as a group were experiencing. The first two were easy to obtain, the final one much more difficult as consent was needed from both the tutors involved and their group of students. The induction documentation represented the views of the module leaders on what online tutors needed to know. Much of this was practical information about groups, dates and deadlines but some contained information and advice pertinent to the online tutors. I considered the newsletters to be of interest

as often these were sent out in response to frequently asked questions and issues raised by the tutors. The Blackboard sites were considered a useful cross check of what was said in the interviews to evidence and triangulate the data. An email was sent to all tutors teaching the module, asking them to volunteer for their Blackboard site to be used as part of the research. Unfortunately, this did not receive much response, so was repeated, still with few responses. The four tutors who did agree to this were sent an email requesting consent from their students. This would have been a very useful way of comparing what the participant tutors said in the interviews with the practices they actually did engage with, but due to the very low number of tutors who were prepared to give me permission to access to their sites, this data was very limited so could not be used to full effect.

Ethics

Merriam (1988) claims that "every researcher wants to contribute knowledge that is believable and trustworthy" (p.183). Ethical issues pervade the whole process of research (Cohen et al., 2011). This research followed the BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011). Merriam (1988) suggests that "in a qualitative case study, ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge at two points: during the collection of data and in the dissemination of findings" (p.179). In terms of the first of these, data collection, permission was sought from the tutors and students involved to use the data. All interview participants were informed of the aims and objectives of the research and written consent was collected to include their anonymised responses, a copy of the consent form can found in Appendix E. All data has been, and will continue to be, treated confidentially and anonymity respected. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the research at any time. In addition, their interview transcripts, the completed thesis, and any publications or papers that arise from this research will be made available and shared with participants if requested.

The cost-benefit ratio is a central ethical dilemma in social research (Cohen et al., 2011): the potential benefit of any research study must be considered against the personal costs to the participants. This study was thought to be of low cost to the participants, but one of the ethical considerations in this context was that many of the interviewees were colleagues working at the same HEI, and may have been concerned about exposing any weaknesses to me. To help alleviate this I asked them to be honest and open about their experiences at the start of the interviews, reiterating that anything

they said would be kept confidential, an approach supported by Simons (2009). In addition, all quotations were anonymised, ensuring that the wording or phrases used would not help identify the participants in any way. Following the interviews, the recording device was switched off, and the participant was asked if they were happy with everything they had said or if there were any specific parts they did not want transcribing and used in the research.

There were unlikely to be any power differentials operating in this context, as most of the people interviewed would have been on equivalent or higher grades than me, and none of the participants worked in the same department as me within the University, so were not considered close colleagues. Some participants may have been aware of my learning technology role which may have had affected their responses. These participants were reassured that they would not being judged in any way, so encouraged to be open and honest.

Another area where ethical considerations are important is in the analysis of data as Merriam (1988) reports "since the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection, data have been filtered through his or her particular theoretical position and biases" (p.182). The analysis of data and presentation of findings for this study has been presented to represent the case-study tutors' perceptions as accurately as possible but acknowledging that in qualitative research the researcher is central to the research, so that it is impossible to claim that it is totally without bias; it should be recognised that subjectivities are inherent.

Chapter 5 - Data Analysis

Cohen et al. (2007) state that "qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data; in short making sense of data in terms of participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities" (p.461). The analysis of data is an important element in research, and there are various approaches that can be taken as Cohen et al. (2007) explain: "there is no one single or correct way to analyse or present qualitative data; how one does it should abide by the issue of fitness for purpose" (p.461). The analysis of data requires examining the data in detail and looking for themes, commonalities and irregularities to try to make sense of what is presented "analysis consists of segmenting the data and reassembling them with the aim of transforming data into findings" (Boeije, 2010, p.94).

The data from the survey was in two parts, quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative data was collected to offer some demographic data to provide a more holistic picture of the tutors and some contextual information. This data was also really useful to help inform the interview questions, which were the main form of data collection. The results of the summarised quantitative data from the survey are in Appendix B. The data from the open ended qualitative survey questions was imported into Nvivo and coded and analysed alongside the interview data as explained below, and quotes from both the interviews and this qualitative survey data are used together to illustrate the points made through the findings chapters. The documents analysed were also imported into Nvivo and coded and analysed alongside the other data, however as explained in Chapter 4, this was very limited, so did not have much impact on the findings of the study or used to illustrate the points made. The main body of data was obtained from the semi-structured interviews and the process of analysing that data is described next.

Transcribing

The recorded interviews in this study were fully transcribed. Kvale & Brinkman (2009) stress the importance of the quality of the transcription process: "rather than being a simple clerical task, transcription is a interpretive qualitative process where the differences between oral speech and written texts give rise to a series of practical and principle issues" (p.177). Kvale & Brinkman (2009) describe the process from live interview to transcription as being two abstractions, each where interpretations are made and other aspects are lost. The first of these is from the live synchronous interview

experience, to an audio recording, which loses the body language like postures and gestures, and then secondly "the transcriptions of the interview conversation to a written form involves a second abstraction, where the tone of the voice, the intonations and the breathing is lost" (p.178). Arksey & Knight (1999) claim that a transcript is only one interpretation of an interview, suggesting that "decisions are made about the way speech is represented, and there are invariable guesses about what was said" (p.141). Words can be misheard or left out having the result of changing the meaning of what was originally discussed. Willig (2008) agrees stating that "all types of transcription constitute a form of translation of the spoken word into something else. An interview transcript can never be a mirror image of the interview" (p.27). Kvale & Brinkman (2009) report that nuances like irony can be lost in the transcription process, and if not documented this could then be completely misinterpreted. It is for this reason, that I as the researcher and interviewer carried out all transcription myself, despite it being a time-consuming process. In this way any non-verbal behaviour could be documented, like a wry smile, a frown during a pause for thought, as this all added to the richness of the data. Kvale & Brinkman (2009) suggest that researcher transcription has the added advantage of reliving the interview: "to some extent, they will have the social and emotional aspects of the interview situation present or reawakened during transcription, and will have already started the analysis of the meaning of what was said" (p.180). Willig (2008) warns that during transcription "it is important to reflect on the meaning and experience of the interview for both the interviewer and the interviewee, and to take care not to assume that the interviewee's words are simple and direct reflections of their thoughts and feelings" (p.23).

First Stage of Analysis

Once the interviews had been transcribed, the first stage of analysis was to summarise the interviews. This consisted of writing a summary paragraph on the person's background including teaching history, teaching approach and any general feelings toward the online delivery that I noticed from what they said, or how they spoke about it. Following this I read through each interview carefully and picked out key points that they made. Finally I then noted at the bottom of the summary anything I thought pertinent, for example if they were particularly positive or negative about the online format. Doing this for each interview was useful in getting closer to the data as well as starting to extract some initial key themes. Once the summaries were complete, I used template analysis to decide on the coding scheme and systematically code the full transcriptions and other documents. This approach is described next.

Template Analysis

Template analysis originated in the US in the 1990s but has more recently gained creditability in health related research in the UK (Waring & Wainwright, 2008). Template analysis is an approach to analysing qualitative data, and can be used with different methodological approaches: "the essence of template analysis is that the researcher produces a list of codes ('template') representing themes identified in their textual data" (King, 2004a, p.256). It is a technique of analysis that lies between top-down approaches like the matrix coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and bottom-up approaches similar to those used in grounded theory or phenomenological enquiry. The approach allows the researcher to have *a priori,* a list of possible or expected themes for codes. It takes a common sense approach to coding with the researcher starting with their best guess of what the codes/themes may be. Bazeley (2009) agrees stating that "there is no problem with a priori categories or themes as long as they are recognised and declared as such, and they are actually supported in the data; the analyst can still retain flexibility and be open to the presence of finer nuances or different emphases in the data" (p.9).

King (2004a) claims that it is important to select the right amount of initial codes:

> *the danger with starting with too many predefined codes is that the initial template may blinker analysis, preventing you from considering data which conflict with your assumptions. At the other extreme, starting with too sparse a set of codes can leave you lacking in any clear direction and feeling overwhelmed by the mass of rich, complex data. (p.259)*

The original codes are then modified as the researcher progresses through the data: "in qualitative template analysis, the initial template is applied in order to analyse the text through the process of coding, but is itself revised in the light of ongoing analysis" (King 2004a, p.259). So defining the template and carrying out the analysis are not separate discrete tasks but rather an ongoing and evolving process. When the initial template is applied, there will be themes that do not fit into the template structure, and the template then has to be revised, "in the course of this, inadequacies in the initial template will be revealed, requiring changes of various kinds. It is through these that the template develops into its final form" (King, 2004a, p.261).

Template analysis emphasises a hierarchical structure to coding, so has nested or sub-themes to each code, and recommends that researchers do not have a specific number of levels of sub-code but rather as many as they see necessary. This allows the researcher to explore areas they consider less relevant to their research questions at one level but the themes pertinent to their research questions at a much deeper level, so allows flexibility in approach.

King (2004a) reports that template analysis is most commonly used in qualitative research studies to analyse interview data where there have been typically between 10 and 20 hour-long interviews, so it was appropriate for this study, as there were 17 interviews of about an hour's duration. King (2004a) reports that "template analysis works particularly well when the aim is to compare the perspectives of different groups of staff within a specific context" (p.257), again which makes it appropriate for this study.

Coding

King (2004a) defines a code as "a label attached to a section of text to index it as relating to a theme or issue in the data which the researcher has identified as important to his or her to interpretation" (p.257). Boeije (2010) writes "when coding, the researcher distinguishes themes or categories in the research data and names them by attributing a code" (p.95). Arksey & Knight (1999) suggest that researchers do not code each interview one by one, but rather in batches to speed up the process, maintain consistency and give them the opportunity to see relationships between codes and this approach was taken in this study. Boeije (2010) recommends that researchers do not just take the face value of what is said, but look at what is meant, or what each bit of data is an example of, and its relationship to any particular theory that is guiding the research. Gilbert & Kelly (2005) however warn that "the very routiness and everydayness of investigating a familiar setting makes it difficult to see what might be unusual and what is important" (p.113), so it is important to be open minded during data analysis. Gibbs (2004) recommends using computer text searches to minimise human error in finding appropriate sections of text for particular codes.

Template analysis also supports overlapping codes, so one piece of text can be coded into two or more categories of codes if appropriate, King (2004a) terms this as *parallel coding*. Codes can apply to small phrases or several paragraphs of text. There is a distinction between descriptive coding and interpretive coding (King, 2009). Descriptive coding is describing what was said without making any interpretations. Interpretive codes read between the lines so go a step further in attempting to describe the underlying meaning rather than just describing the words that were said. Bazeley (2009) warns that "description alone is not sufficient. The data must be challenged, extended, supported, and linked in order to reveal their full value" (p.8). King (2009) states that with template analysis there is not a clear distinction between the two types of coding,

claiming that even deciding on the descriptive code involves some degree of interpretation, and similarly the interpretive codes involve some description. King (2009) warns about interpreting without justification or without realising that you are interpreting rather than just describing. Strauss & Corbin (2008) offer a different classification of codes, distinguishing between three types of codes, open coding, axial coding and selective coding. They describe open coding as the process of "breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data" (p.61). It is done at the start of research with no real ideas or thoughts of what may be important or of value. Axial coding is the second stage of coding in grounded theory and involves building relationships between the codes, and "the appreciation of concepts in terms of their dynamic interrelationships" (Goulding, 2005, p.297). Finally selective coding is used to "refine conceptual constructs that can help explain whatever interaction occurs between the descriptive categories" (Urquhart et al., 2010, p.366).

With template analysis, once the first template has been used with a sub-set of the data, it needs to be developed and revised. King (2004a) identifies several ways of revising the template: firstly insertion of a new code, "where the researcher identifies an issue in the text of relevance to the research question, but not covered by an existing code" (p.261). Secondly deleting an existing code that was originally defined but found to be no longer needed, or overlapped considerably with another code. Thirdly, changing scope, "where the researcher finds that a code is either too narrowly defined or too broadly defined to be useful, the code will need to be redefined at a lower or higher level" (p.262). Fourthly, changing higher-order classification, so that a code that is a sub-category of one higher-order code is moved to be a sub-category of another higher-order category as it appears to fit better.

At some point a researcher has to decide that their template is final, and this can be a difficult decision. King (2004a) advises that a researcher stops when all sections of the text that are relevant to the research questions have been coded and the researcher has read through and thoroughly checked the coding of all text at least twice. It is common however that most of the text will have been looked at with respect to the coding three or four times before the researcher is likely to be comfortable that their template is complete. The final coding template for this study is in Appendix F.

Using Computer Software for Data Analysis

Kvale & Brinkman (2009) claim that computer software programs can facilitate the analysis of interview transcripts. They do warn though, that they are no magic wand and

that "the task and the responsibility of the interpretation however remains with the researcher" (p.198). King (2004a) concurs "software can only aid in organising and examining the data, and cannot by itself make any judgement; however computerisation enables the researcher to work efficiently with complex coding schemes and large amount of text, facilitating depth and sophistication of analysis" (pp.263-264). Kvale & Brinkman (2009) suggest that "with the aid of code-and-retrieve programs, the coded passages can be retrieved and inspected over again, with options of recoding and of combining codes" (p.199). Arksey & Knight (1999) agree, stating that "flexible software packages have speeded up this process and contain sophisticated tools to help the analyst to keep track of the categories and see the relationship between them" (p.162). Boeije (2010) claims one of the advantages to using computer software for data analysis is that codes can be listed or organised in several different ways.

In this research study, the computer software Nvivo was used to assist with the data analysis process. Nvivo is qualitative analysis software built by researchers, which has been developed for the complex and diverse ways that qualitative researchers work (Bazeley, 2007). Nvivo is designed so you can learn the software as you use it, so prevents a great deal of up-front training (Richards, 1999). King (2004a) claims that in addition to being able to do standard functions of analysis software like complex search and retrieval of codes and data, "Nvivo also has powerful tools to aid the researcher in examining possible relationships between themes" (p.263). The use of Nvivo is also considered to be extremely appropriate to template analysis as King (2004a) explains "the central role of the template structure in template analysis makes it an approach which is particularly well-suited to computer-assisted analysis" (p.266).

Interpreting the Data

Arksey & Knight (1999) stress the importance of the interpretation process suggesting it is a process "that inevitably pervades the whole research process from conception to reporting" (p.169). On the other hand, King (2004a) advises "the template and coding derived from it are only a means to the end of interpreting the texts, helping the researcher to produce an account which does as much justice as possible to the richness of the data within the constraints of a formal report, paper or dissertation" (p.266). Kvale & Brinkman (2009) agree that the craft of interpretation lies with the researcher, "there are no standard methods, no *via regia*, to arrive at the meaning of what is said in an interview. Rather, such understanding is based on the experience and the

craftsmanship of the researcher" (p.192). Willig (2008) emphasises to go deeper than just what was said "the researcher should try and understand what the interviewee meant by what he or she said, irrespective of how they chose to say it" (p.24).

The defining and revising of codes and the template are all interpretive processes, "in the analysis phase of the research process, data are sorted, named, categorised and connected, and all these actions entail interpretation" (Boeije, 2010, p.94). With template analysis it is perfectly acceptable to concentrate on just certain parts of the template and not try and explain them all (King, 2009). The researcher has to focus on the themes that attempt to throw light onto their research questions. It is necessary to provide a justification of why certain themes have been selected to focus on and others have not been used. Other findings may be interesting but fall outside the scope of the research project, this can be recognised and these ideas recommended for further research. Hartley (2004) emphasises that with case study analysis "the detective work is undertaken not only to understand the particular features of the cases but also to draw out an analysis which may be applicable on a wider basis" (p.324).

In terms of trying to make meaning from the coding phase, Hartley (2004) suggest that "case study theory-building tends, generally (but not exclusively), to be inductive. The opportunity to explore issues in depth and in context, means that theory development can occur through the systematic piecing together of detailed evidence to generate (or replicate) theories of broader interest" (p.324). Bazeley (2009) warns not just to describe the themes to come out of the data, "writers of journal articles often simply identify and discuss four or five 'themes' as their analysis of the qualitative data in the study, with no attempt to link those themes into a more comprehensive model of what they have found" (p.6). Bazeley (2009) however does not dismiss the identification of themes altogether but only as a first step, and then it should be taken much further:

> *Effective reporting, however, requires you having used data, and the ideas generated from the data, to build an argument that establishes the point or points you wish to make. Strength of analysis will be recognised even by those who may work differently, while descriptive reporting is likely to be unconvincing even to those familiar with qualitative methods. (p.6)*

Introduction to the Findings Chapters

The next six chapters explore the research findings. Table 5.1 below maps the research sub-questions onto the findings chapters. In some cases there is a chapter directly related to a sub-question and in other cases the discussion is covered by more than one chapter.

Research Sub-Questions	Findings Chapter which discusses this:
RQ1: What did the tutors perceive as the main differences between teaching face-to-face and teaching online?	Chapter 6: Pedagogic Approach (also discussed in Chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10 as each of the challenges relates to a perceived difference)
RQ2: Did the tutors think that a different teaching approach or pedagogical strategy was needed online? And if so in what ways?	Chapter 6: Pedagogical Approach (also see Chapter 7 as role and identity issues relate to pedagogical strategies).
RQ3: Did the tutors perceive their role to be different online? If so, how?	Chapter 7: Role and Identity
RQ4: What the tutors felt were the main challenges facing them when teaching online?	Chapter 8: Building Relationships online Chapter 9: Communication with students online Chapter 10: Time and Workload Issues
RQ5: What helped support the tutors in this transition?	Chapter 11: Peer Support Chapter 6: Having been an online student

Table 5.1: Mapping Research Questions onto Finding Chapters

Identifying Quotations

Where direct quotations from the participant tutors have been included in the findings chapters to illustrate specific points, they have been anonymised but given a notation to indicate the gender of the person (F=female; M=male), a code to represent where the quotation was from, either from the interviews (I) or the survey (S) and numbered so that each participant has a unique number so that quotations from the same person could be identified. So for example, IF5 is a female interview participant number 5 and SM4 is a male survey respondent number 4. The title of each findings chapter contains the chapter number and description of the theme it relates to, and then contains a quote directly from one of the online tutors to sum up the tutors' general perception about that issue. Where the terms 'few' and 'many' have been used, 'few' tutors typically refers to 3 or less and 'many' normally refers to over half the participant tutors.

Chapter 6 - Pedagogic Approach: *wading through thick grass, climbing through wet sand*

This first findings chapter sets the scene by firstly discussing tutors' perceptions of the main differences between online and face-to-face teaching, and secondly focusing on the differences they identified relating to pedagogic approach. Differences the case-study tutors identified other than those relating to pedagogical approach will be discussed in subsequent chapters. This chapter helps address three of the research questions: RQ1, relating to the perception of difference between face-to-face and online teaching; RQ2, about the differences in pedagogic approach; and RQ5, concerning factors which helped support tutors with the transition to online teaching. The analysis of the data for this chapter will be framed by the concepts of learning cultures, situated learning and constructivist learning theories. The data analysis revealed various sub-themes to the participant tutors' perceptions of difference, listed here and discussed in detail below:

- o The online tutors' perceptions of *how* different the two modes of delivery were.
- o The ways in which tutors discussed the differences in teaching online: for example, in a positive or negative way and whether they reported teaching online was easier or more difficult than face-to-face teaching.
- o What the online tutors considered to be the main differences between the two modes of delivery.
- o Differences in pedagogic approach.

This chapter will explore how the participant tutors perceived online teaching compared to face-to-face teaching, and any anxieties they reported. It will identify factors which should be taken into consideration when preparing tutors to teach online, to ease the transition and manage their potential anxieties.

The notion of Learning Cultures (James & Biesta, 2007), first introduced in Chapter 3, is used to frame the discussion of the participant tutors' perception of differences between teaching face-to-face and teaching online. The premise of learning cultures is that learning takes place through participation in social practices, and that the context and normative social practices associated with that culture dominate the interactions within that culture. The normative practices in the FE learning culture rely on face-to-face teaching and interactions with students. The FE (including HE in FE) teaching sector, in which many of the tutors in this study are based, has a distinctive learning culture, very different from that of HE. For example, the tutors in FE have predominantly entered the profession from professional practice rather than a purely academic route, so are generally expert in the content and skills of their subject area (Gleeson & James, 2007), but have learned how to teach through participation in teaching practices and observing

the practice of more experienced teachers (see discussion on the FE context in Chapter 1). These practices have been based in face-to-face teaching and interactions, so many tutors who were just beginning to teach online found their surroundings unfamiliar as they had no prior experience of this new context. As Holly et al. (2008) suggest, "the online environment may cause some discomfort for the educator used to more traditional teaching environments" (p.257). Tutors can find themselves in a situation where the experienced face-to-face tutors they have learned from previously have no experience of teaching online either. The notion of Situated Learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), also introduced in Chapter 3 complements learning cultures in framing the discussion on the differences between face-to-face and online teaching. This theory proposes that learning is context specific and novices learn from those more experienced, who in turn have learned their trade or profession by participating in the social practices of that learning context. Situated Learning theory has been widely used to conceptualise work based learning. Kim & Hannafin (2008) for example, use situated learning theory to conceptualise and provide a framework for trainee teacher development, and Thiry & Laursen (2011) used it to examine the role of student-advisor interactions in apprenticing undergraduate researchers "particularly in terms of acculturating students to the norms, values, and professional practice of science" (p.771).

Constructivist learning theories are also useful to help illuminate the experiences of the participant tutors new to the online teaching environment, and were also introduced in Chapter 3. They are based on the principle that learners take an active role in learning and construct knowledge through taking part in learning activities. In this context it is slightly different as the tutors are actively learning by doing (i.e. as teachers), rather than just taking part in learning activities. They are taking on the role of online tutor, even though they are relative novices, and the training and support offered scaffolds their learning process, so they are learning in a supportive but constructivist way. A tutor's approach to teaching and learning also impacts on their experience of online teaching. If their understanding is aligned with an instructivist approach, then they may find the transition to online teaching much greater. As Burd & Buchanan (2004) explain: "teachers whose mode is primarily expert and formal authority may have difficulty adapting their styles to an online environment" (p.408). Conrad (2004) in her study with new online tutors also found that "whilst able to articulate their respective migrations from traditional lecturing formats to more facilitative formats, the instructors I spoke to were predominantly content driven" (p.38). In contrast, many tutors who adopt a more constructivist approach to their teaching may find the shift to online teaching less of a transformation, as most online learning courses are built on these principles, as Underhill (2006) suggests: "the pedagogy of constructivism and in particular socio-constructivism

is underpinning much of the online learning and teaching developments currently being developed" (p.165). The module in this study was built following these principles, with the activities developed using the Salmon (2000) five-stage model (see Chapter 2). The CoI framework from Garrison et al. (2000) was also built on constructivist principles and suggests that in order for learning outcomes to be met successfully, an online learning environment must have three types of presence: cognitive presence, social presence and teaching presence (defined in Chapter 2). Of particular relevance to this chapter is the notion of teaching presence, which is to guide and facilitate the activities to ensure students are developing. Garrison & Arbaugh (2007) claim that "teaching presence is a significant determinant of student satisfaction, perceived learning, and sense of community" (p.163). These notions of presence will be used in the discussion in this theme where appropriate.

The data in this study will now be discussed, first in summary and then using the theories explained above. In this study the tutors' perceptions of differences between teaching face-to-face and teaching online was an important issue to explore, so was included as a question in both in the survey and the interviews. One limitation of the surveys and interviews is that many tutors may have written/said the first thing they thought of in terms of differences, and whilst this provides an interesting insight into what immediately came to mind, with more time to reflect the tutors may have offered alternative and more thought through responses. However, issues relating to the differences between the two modes of teaching were also revealed in the participant tutors' responses to other questions, such as the challenges they thought academic staff faced, or the advice they would give to someone teaching online. In this way, the perceived differences between the two modes of teaching were further explored and this helped to minimise the limitation mentioned above. The themes emerging from the data analysis are discussed in turn below.

Tutors' Perceptions of the Differences between Online and Face-to-face Teaching

The starting point for the analysis was to explore the online tutors' perception of difference between teaching face-to-face and teaching online. There was a diverse range of responses to this from those who thought there were no differences except the mode of delivery, to those who thought it was a completely different experience and felt challenged and unprepared for it. The majority of tutors did think it was very different:

The lack of face-to-face contact makes it totally different (SF16).

I was then floored by a whole new classroom etiquette that I didn't know how to deal with (IF3).

But not every tutor agreed:

it wasn't that different, I am sorry, that is probably not what you want to hear. It wasn't that different really (IF8).

Palloff & Pratt (2007) claim that the transition to online teaching may be challenging for some tutors: "successful online teaching is a process of taking our very best practices in the classroom and bringing them into a new, and for some faculty, untried arena. In this arena, however, the practices may not look the same" (pp.5-6). The learning culture which most of the case-study tutors have been involved with throughout their professional life to date had now changed, and for many of them, teaching online was extremely different from any teaching they had previously done. Gilmore & Warren (2007) also reported that "online teaching and learning is novel and largely uncharted territory for both tutors and learners" (p.595) and Salmon (2000) agrees, writing "the territories that academics and teachers thought were their own have altered and adapted" (p.9). There were several references in the data to this 'unknown' environment, including:

I think it was this total unknown, just launching into the unknown (IF3).

Well it is that unknown isn't it? Where anyone doing something for the first time. It is that unknown and you always think that everyone else knows how to do it and you don't, you are the dinosaur (IF11).

Mainly apprehension of the unknown, however once it began there was excellent support from the co-ordinators therefore the anxieties disappeared (SF9).

This new environment invoked anxieties reported by the case-study tutors which are probably typical of most people facing a new situation: fear of the unknown, and concerns about whether they were doing it right. Conrad (2004) concurs: "moving from traditional face-to-face teaching to teaching online can be a precarious process for instructors" (p.31). The language that the case-study tutors used indicated that this was a 'scary' unknown rather than an exciting one:

How I would cope. I lacked confidence (SF7).

Fear of getting it wrong (SF25).

My experience of this type of teaching is limited. I feel uneasy about the lack of face-to-face contact and lack confidence in my own ICT skills (SF16).

Bayne (2010) agrees: "in working online as teachers and learners, we are working in 'destabilized' classrooms, engaging in spaces and practices which are disquieting, disorientation, strange, anxiety-inducing, uncanny" (p.6). Donnelly & Turbitt (2009) suggest that the "challenge for tutors using elearning is to understand the environment and enable students to take advantage of the myriad of opportunities which it affords in order to support and enhance the learning experience of a diverse student population" (p.21).

Did the Tutors Find Teaching Online a Positive Experience?

After being immersed in a face-to-face learning culture, the participant tutors saw the online teaching as unfamiliar territory and this resulted in many tutors discussing their online teaching experience in negative terms:

> *I don't like it. I find it very anonymous, and I don't feel that I have that, this sounds awful but I don't feel the same loyalty to those students as I would do if they were here (IF7).*

> *I don't like it. We are progressing steadily backwards (SM10).*

> *I don't think I would do it through choice because it is not really my preferred way to work, I much prefer to work with people in the classroom (IF11).*

This could suggest that the tutors did not have enough experience yet of teaching online to have built up strategies to deal with working in this new context, and that teaching online had removed them from their preferred practice of face-to-face teaching. Morris et al. (2005) report that this is not uncommon: "the research literature also acknowledges a steep learning curve for novice [online] instructors" (p.66). It also may reflect the limitations of the online teaching environment, as it is less personal when face-to-face meetings are not involved.

The deficit model of discussing online teaching was prevalent with some tutors saying that teaching online was definitely second rate to face-to-face teaching and many tutors expressed their preference to teach face-to-face:

> *my personal ethos around teaching is very much about interpersonal relationships and face-to-face can't be taken out of that altogether. I don't see you can, (…). I think the rest of it is pretty much second rate (IF7).*

> *I would always prefer to work face-to-face (IM1).*

> *Made me more determined to do face-to-face (SM10).*

Others talked about the aspects of face-to-face teaching which are difficult to replicate online:

> *I quite miss that student contact that you get day-to-day (IM1).*

> *No proper interaction with students - it is too impersonal and detached (SM4).*

The issues around building relationships with students online and establishing a teaching presence are discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

Challenges of Transitioning to an Unfamiliar Learning Environment

The negative comments were also evident in the way that many participants reported that that they found it more difficult to teach online compared to face-to-face. This may be due to the fact that it is something new to them, it removes them from the familiarity of their usual role and they are forced to engage with technology. The notion of learning cultures (James & Biesta, 2007) is useful here, as most of the participants have been immersed in the face-to-face learning culture both as students, as trainees and as developing teachers. The culture in which they have learnt to operate successfully as professionals had been dominated by face-to-face discourse and practice, this has suddenly changed, leaving the participant tutors with a new online teaching culture they cannot yet relate to, or have not had any prior exposure to. There is now unfamiliarity in their professional practice which they are likely to feel uneasy with and anxious about. The tutors gave various reasons for teaching online being more difficult, but it is possible that an underlying reason is because it is a significant departure from the culture they feel comfortable with and have been immersed in to date. Donnelly & Turbitt (2009) concur: "for teaching staff this means not only getting to grips with the technological implementation, the pedagogical paradigm shift from classroom based provision to on-line facilitation is a further significant challenge" (p.19). Conrad (2004), in her study of novice online tutors, found that "clearly the 'letting go' of old paradigms had not been achieved by these instructors" (p.42). Many of the reasons the tutors in my study gave for online teaching being more difficult related to the fact that they missed the face-to-face contact with students, with comments such as:

> *It's a very impersonal method and students often feel unsupported. It is also more difficult to remember students' names and their work without having a face to connect them (SF23).*

This again is evidence that the participant tutors are trying to translate their face-to-face teaching practices and then finding that they either do not work or are less effective online. Conrad (2004) found the same in her study where "in-depth interviews with the instructors showed that they had very little knowledge of the new medium they were entering and relied heavily on their face-to-face experiences and their own pedagogy" (p.31).

However, not every tutor was negative about teaching online and some enjoyed the experience saying it provided them with an opportunity for professional development:

> *I'd say overall it has been as positive experience and I am glad to have had the opportunity (IM5).*

> *I have enjoyed the experience (SF25).*

> *Sense of pride in doing a good job. Very rewarding when I hear my students say (face-to-face at the conference) how well they feel they have been supported (SM13).*

In addition, there were also a few comments relating to teaching online being easier in some ways, these mostly related to either being able to fit it around other commitments, or to a perception that they needed to provide less pastoral care to students when teaching online, as evidenced by these comments:

> *I can do it anytime anywhere. It is absolutely fantastic being flexible (IF4).*

> *Well you don't get tears on your shoulders do you? (IF11).*

> *You do not have to manage behaviour as such (SF1).*

> *It is easier than face-to-face teaching (SF14).*

It was important to note that the responses saying it was easier or better in any way to face-to-face teaching were few and far between, and the majority of the participant tutors reported that they found it more difficult and expressed a strong preference for face-to-face teaching.

Tutors' Experience of Being an Online Student

Not many of the tutors in this study had previous experience of being an online student themselves. Reisman (2006) reported that in his study most of the tutors were older than 25, "so had little exposure to online learning as students, and they are consequently not that comfortable with online teaching technologies" (p.64). In the traditional face-to-face teaching environment, tutors bring all their experience as a teacher but also draw on their good and bad experiences of being a student. Bennett & Marsh (2002) concur, explaining why this is problematical:

> *This presents a particular challenge for prospective online tutors who, unlike trainee/pre-service teachers being trained for traditional classroom contexts, do not have a lifetime of experience of online learning to draw on, no well of latent known information upon which to conceptualize the challenges that lie ahead. As a result, they can only imagine how online teaching will compare with their experience in classroom settings, how they will be able to apply their own individual teaching styles to the new context. (p.19)*

The evidence from the interviews indicates that the participant tutors who have had experience as an online student have a much better appreciation of what online learners need and therefore are more likely to be effective and confident online tutors, whereas the tutors who had no experience of being an online student had no direct experience on which to draw. This first tutor reflects on her change in thinking since becoming an online student herself:

> last year I didn't understand their importance for students, who were online, because being the tutor I thought I could just manage or facilitate that, if you like, but I think it is quite important for students to get involved (IF4).

Two other tutors reflected on the impact of being an online student:

> being the student, the online student, that has significantly changed the way I teach (…) I think it was transformative being an online student (IF3).

> but it was useful because it made me think about how do you interact with people you are not going to meet at all (IF5).

What Types of Things Did the Tutors Consider to be Different?

The main differences the case-study tutors reported fell into the following sub-themes:

- o   Differences relating to pedagogic approach: discussed below in this chapter.
- o   Differences relating to the tutor's role and identity – discussed in Chapter 7.
- o   Differences in building relationships with students – discussed in Chapter 8.
- o   Differences relating to communicating online – discussed in Chapter 9.
- o   Differences due to time management and workload – discussed in Chapter 10.

Differences in Pedagogic Approach

The first main difference to be discussed and the most common difference mentioned by the tutors was issues relating to pedagogic approach. On the whole, they felt that teaching strategies and approaches were different online, and Baran et al. (2011) concur suggesting that online teaching requires its own pedagogies developing. The participant tutors had to adopt different strategies because they had no option but to teach online via the use of technology, which was uncomfortable for some, and they were not sure how to adapt their face-to-face teaching practices. Salmon (2000) explains that "millions of words have been written about the technology and its potential, but not much about what the teachers and learners actually do online" (p.12). In addition, the tutors felt their pedagogic approaches to teaching online were different because they naturally

compared the affordances to those of face-to-face teaching and missed aspects like the dynamics of face-to-face situations. Garrison & Anderson (2003) agree "its [e-learning] power is in its capability to connect people in personal and public ways. (…). This unprecedented capability is fundamentally changing cognitive and pedagogic approaches to teaching and learning" (p.23). Typical comments from the case-study tutors were negative, focussing on the aspects from face-to-face teaching that were not easy to transfer online including:

> I don't find it very exciting. I find it quite formulaic, I think it loses a lot of the personality of teaching and, loses the depth and the detail (IF7).

> I feel that some of the personal interaction is lost and the additional, criteria based discussions, do not happen the same way online. Because of this the networking becomes less powerful and the team mentality does not occur (SM15).

In addition, the perception that online teaching was less personal than teaching face-to-face was frequently reported by the online tutors:

> It's a very impersonal method and students often feel unsupported. It is also more difficult to remember students' names and their work without having a face to connect them (SF23).

> Not as interactive and personal (SM4).

The case-study tutors had not yet developed strategies on how to build relationships online and develop that personal connection, so felt this was not achievable online. In the CoI framework (Garrison et al., 2000), teaching presence is one of the essential elements in an online learning environment. This involves the facilitation of the activities and interactions to help the students develop. An essential part of this is facilitating the other two types of presence: social and cognitive. The case-study tutors were not finding the online teaching very interactive or personal, this could be because that they had not developed these aspects of presence enough to engage the students more. However it can be much more difficult to build relationships and social presence online than face-to-face and get students interacting and engaging with each other, so this could also point to a limitation of the online teaching environment.

Most of the participant tutors expressed a strong preference for face-to-face teaching. They did see the practical benefits of teaching online such as joining students from different geographical locations and online teaching being flexible, however, most of the tutors did not identify any pedagogic benefits of online teaching and saw it as inferior to face-to-face teaching. For example one tutor when asked about the advantages of online teaching mentioned it bringing people being geographically separated together, but then struggled to think of any other advantages:

I don't know if I am being really thick but I really can't think of anything (IF8).

This was not an untypical response. Morris & Finnegan (2009) also found this in their study making a distinction between new and experienced online tutors. Conrad (2004) in a study of tutors' reflections of teaching online for the first time reports that the tutors' "overall concerns were content-oriented" (p.42) and that "they revealed very little awareness of collaborative learning, of learners' social presence or of the role of community in online learning environments" (p.31). This relates to the *social presence* as one of the essential elements of the CoI framework. Tutors did not appear aware that they needed to be more proactive in facilitating the building of this presence, which they assumed – and probably rightly so - automatically happened in a face-to-face context.

In addition, most of the tutors interviewed paused for a long time before replying when asked about the advantages of online teaching, but were extremely voluble about the disadvantages. Worthy of note, is that many of the tutors who had trouble thinking of advantages to teaching online, later mentioned some in subsequent questions not specifically relating to that point. Examples of this included:

> *I know a lot of my students email me with things that they wouldn't put their hand up to ask, because they think it is a silly question (IF5).*

> *More reticent learners who are unlikely to speak up in class sometimes feel liberated in online environments, they will be more vocal (IF10).*

> *I almost prefer email over face-to-face, I can give a better, considered, I can edit and also provide more information by email than I can face-to-face (IF3).*

Dynamics of Face-to-face Teaching

One of the common factors about the participant tutors not liking online teaching related to missing the dynamics of a face-to-face teaching situation. Many of the comments concerned the dynamics of spontaneous conversation, the 'magic of people's presence' and the chance to debate issues in a face-to-face situation. Most of the tutors talked about their enjoyment of the live synchronous teaching situation, so found the lack of dynamics and the general asynchronous nature of the online course lacking in spontaneity. They judged online teaching to be inferior because of this, similar to what Ham & Davey (2005) report:

> *traditional face-to-face group dynamics still tended to be the yardstick by which the value of the teaching–learning experience was judged, and online pedagogies were by many valued only in proportion to how well they seemed to*

> reproduce or simulate an equivalent face-to-face experience, rather than as a
> qualitatively different form in itself. (p.260)

Typical comments from the tutors in my study included:

> I like to have a joke and make learning fun, and I think the danger is with these
> environments, is that they can be very dry and bringing that fun element, that
> creative element, a spontaneous element in, is quite difficult sometimes (IM1).

> the 'magic of people's presence' (…) when people get together in a room
> something happens that doesn't happen when you are online (IF10).

> but the heated debate that would spontaneously happen in the classroom, there
> is something really special about that (IF8).

Some of the online tutors liked to go with the flow of a face-to-face situation and enjoyed reacting spontaneously to the live teaching situation whereas online it needs to be more structured. Online teaching was perceived to be less spontaneous:

> I think it is this sense of winging it isn't it? That you think oh yes I can just do it
> and it will come off the top of my head and probably after 20 years it probably
> does (IF3).

> I think the danger in the online stuff is that it helps that kind of linear, sequential
> approach (IM3).

The tutors may not really have been 'winging it' and as spontaneous as they may think, as in reality they are drawing on their years of experience of face-to-face teaching, whereas they do not have that yet with teaching online. However it was difficult to challenge that in the interview situation. A limitation of interviews is that the researcher mainly elicits only the views and perspectives of the interviewees and it is possible that combining this with observations would have yielded different illuminating perspectives. Unfortunately this was not possible due to the time constraints of the study and observing practice involves other limitations, for example if the tutors were aware of being observed, this could also have changed their behaviour. Most teachers through experience have developed strategies of how to teach and interact with students in the face-to-face learning culture and have yet to develop similar strategies of how to engage students and interact with them online.

Though they appeared to discuss missing the dynamics of face-to-face teaching, the online tutors predominantly did not appear to attempt to create any community building online to help build the social presence.

> I probably hardly did it, pulling a few threads together and move onto something
> else, I didn't have time to do that, I just didn't at all, I had all on marking these
> scripts online (IF11).

> I didn't go on any of the activities, I assumed the students did them or didn't. I
> didn't do any of those (IF8).

Conrad (2004) found the same in her study of novice online teachers "it is a striking finding of this study that the instructor-participants did not address in any depth their efforts to create community" (p.40). This may be because the dynamics are built more naturally in the face-to-face environment.

Chapter Conclusions and Suggestions for Practice

One of the main conclusions to be drawn from the findings of this chapter, is that whatever the reality of the situation, most of the case-study tutors perceived teaching online to be extremely different in nature from face-to-face teaching, and felt unconfident with this unknown environment. In addition, most of the participant tutors reported not liking and/or not enjoying teaching online, as it represented a real change to their normal practices and where they perceived their professional expertise lies. They were therefore anxious about their performance and how they would be perceived by their peers and students. The tutors in this context were quite negative in their discussions about teaching online and were constantly referring to face-to-face teaching being superior and their preferred way to operate. This view was also found by Renes & Strange (2011) "there are those who believe true learning can only take place in a classroom with the instructor as the center of knowledge" (p.210). The tutors in this study found little benefit to online teaching other than practicalities, generally not citing any pedagogic affordances referred to in the literature in Chapter 2. They focussed completely on the aspects of face-to-face teaching which were difficult to translate online like the spontaneity of face-to-face interactions, and made constant references to trying to adapt their face-to-face practices online. The tutors were not really aware of how to build social and teaching presence in the online learning culture, and blamed the environment for these elements being missing.

The significance of these findings and suggestions for practice arising out of this case study are first for HEIs to provide the development and support to make sure potential online tutors know what to expect, so it is less unknown and 'scary'. Steps should be taken to minimise this feeling of unknown which was constantly being referred to by the online tutors. It is important not to underestimate the anxieties that tutors may have, and to try and provide the support mechanisms to ease this transition in terms of prior development and ongoing support. Secondly, to highlight that different pedagogic practices may be required online, which means explaining to new online tutors that their existing face-to-face practices may not work as effectively online, and to explore with

them the types of pedagogic practices that do work effectively online. In particular they needed support in being proactive in building social and teaching presence, which they recognised were missing but assumed that the environment did not lend itself to. The tutors need to be shown ways in which they can help students build relationships in the online learning environment (discussed further in Chapter 8). Thirdly, to make clear to tutors that online teaching does not replicate the affordances of face-to-face teaching, but instead has different advantages which can be exploited and to emphasise the potential benefits it may bring. Fourthly, to take into consideration that many tutors are bound to feel insecure about the change in practice as they may feel inexperienced and unconfident, steps need to be taken to minimise any potential anxieties. Some may feel they are in the role of novice again, which could cause them to feel uncomfortable. The final suggestion arising from this chapter is for tutors to take part in an online course as a student prior to teaching online, as this would give them valuable experience of the students' perspective. The University of Ulster did this via an e-tutoring course for tutors, a course found useful for the practical skills and knowledge gained "whilst simultaneously availing of an invaluable opportunity to experience an online course from a student's perspective" (Donnelly & Turbitt, 2009, p.19).

Chapter 7 - Role and Identity: *why have you used the word 'teaching'?*

This chapter focuses on the second main difference identified by the participant tutors between teaching online and teaching face-to-face, namely issues relating to the notions of role and identity. These issues were a recurring theme in the data from the interviews and survey. Although role and identity are different concepts, they are intertwined as the roles that the tutors adopt relate to the identity they are enacting, and the roles they perceive they are undertaking help create the tutors' identities. This chapter will therefore first discuss the notions of role and identity separately, but conclude by drawing the discussion together at the end. Both role and identity are complex concepts, as people can play multiple roles and have multifaceted identities, and neither are static, as they change over time and are constantly being renegotiated. Because of these complexities, this chapter is narrowing down the focus to issues raised by either the tutors in this study or in connection with literature relating to the role and identity of the new online tutor. This chapter helps address three of the research questions: RQ3, relating to the tutor's role in online teaching; RQ1, the perception of difference between the two modes of delivery, and RQ2, issues relating to pedagogical approach. The chapter will explore the differences the case-study tutors found in teaching online compared to teaching face-to-face in relation to role and identity, with a view to making suggestions for any necessary support or development needs relating to these concepts when preparing tutors for teaching online. Online tutor role and identity have been defined and discussed in Chapter 2.

Role of the Online Tutor

This section will explore the role of the online tutor and start with a brief summary of related literature, which was introduced in Chapter 2. Baran et al. (2011) claim that "teachers, who are at the centre of this increasing demand and pressure to teach online, are being challenged to rethink their underlying assumptions about teaching and learning, and the roles they take as educators" (p.421). This suggests that new roles need to be developed for online teaching, Salmon (2000) agrees writing that "online learning calls for the training and development of new kinds of online teachers (…) to carry out roles not yet widely understood" (p.12). Easton (2003) concurs "the role of the online instructor is ambiguous and largely untested" (p.87). Baran et al. (2011) suggest that roles currently used in face-to-face teaching can be taken into the online classroom

but extra roles are also needed, "the affordances and limitations of the new learning setting require teachers to adapt to new roles for creating effective and meaningful learning experiences" (p.425). Easton (2003) agrees, suggesting that "the lines distinguishing the role of the traditional classroom instructor from the instructor online are blurry. Although limited by lack of visual cues, the role of the [online] instructor is nonetheless quite rich" (p.90).

The literature identifies various types of role adopted by online tutors, as Abdous (2011) reports: "numerous studies have attempted to define and clarify the roles and competencies associated with online teaching" (p.61). Berge (1995) defines four main roles for the online tutor: pedagogical, social, managerial and technological. Hootstein (2002) proposes a similar model to that of Berge (1995) suggesting that an "e-learning facilitator wears four pairs of shoes – acting as instructor, social director, program manager and technical assistant" (p.1). Goodyear et al. (2001) created a model of competencies which was based on eight roles that online teaching might encompass: process facilitator, advisor-counsellor, assessor, researcher, content facilitator, technologist, designer and manager-administrator. Coppola (2002) identifies three roles of the online tutor: cognitive role; affective role and managerial role. Morris et al. (2005) in their study found that the online instructors "perceived three primary roles in the online environment: course customization, course facilitation, and grading and assessment" (p.70). More recently Lewin (2011) expanded Berge's list of roles, identifying what he termed the '11 crucial roles' of the online tutor: tech guy, designer, authority figure, facilitator, guide, subject matter expert, assessor, mentor, cheerleader and co-learner. Whether an individual online tutor takes on all these roles depends on the context, which is discussed next in terms of my study.

For the online tutors in my study, not all the roles identified above fell within their remit. Due to the large scale provision, many of the design and management aspects were carried out by the course co-ordinators, and technical support issues could be referred to central technology staff. The course design and learning activities were fully prepared by the course co-ordinators and scheduled to be released to students at the appropriate time. The online tutors in this module therefore did not have to take on most of the managerial, administrative or technical roles. Examining the various roles described by the literature above, and discounting the roles falling outside their remit, the primary roles of the online tutors in the context of this case study are: *pedagogical,* in terms of facilitating learning activities; *assessor* in terms of providing feedback to submitted work; *social,* in terms of creating community and encouraging discussion and group

cohesion; and a limited *managerial* role in terms of handling extension requests, answering general queries, or referring students to the appropriate help.

When analysing the data relating to role, no comments by the case-study tutors related to a managerial role probably as this role predominantly fell outside the remit of the online tutors as explained above, so this aspect has been excluded from the discussion. In addition, only one of the tutors in this study articulated what could be labelled as a social role in the interviews and survey responses. The majority of comments were related to the first two roles, pedagogic and assessing. This resonates with what Conrad (2004) found in her study "an important related observation concerns this study's respondents' lack of awareness of or demonstrated interest in the social role of instructors when engaged in online teaching" (p.39). This is notable but as the social aspects are covered in much more detail in the discussion in Chapter 8 on building relationships with students, it is not being covered here. Therefore the discussion in the remainder of this section will concentrate on the pedagogical and assessor roles.

Pedagogical Role

In the literature there appears to be widespread acceptance that the key pedagogical role, of an online tutors is as facilitator. Easton (2003), for example writes that facilitation is an essential element of online teaching, and Dykman & Davis (2008a) propose that "the guide-side approach does fit well with teaching online" (p.12). Morris et al. (2005) suggest that "many authors define the primary faculty role online as one of facilitator or moderator, and many publications deal with how to be an effective facilitator or moderator" (p.67), a classic example of this being Salmon's (2000) *e-moderating* book (from which the five-stage model discussed in Chapter 2 derives). Bailey & Card (2009) note that teaching online requires different skills:

> *the teacher who wants to become a facilitator of learning requires a different set of pedagogical skills that focus on helping students collaborate with each other in order to develop personal understanding of course content, linking students to learning resources, and encouraging student initiative. (p.153)*

The findings from this study support the above literature as the case-study tutors frequently referred to their role in teaching online as being more of a facilitative one rather than as expert or leader. Typical comments included:

> *I do see it as a facilitator role, I see it really as a signposting and being able to work with the students to get the best out of the knowledge that they have. It's just facilitating (IF3).*

> *my role was not as much as a teacher as such but more as a supporter (IF6).*

It is the usual mentor, coach, facilitator type of role (IM2).

This is not unexpected, as there was no substantive content delivery in this module, so it did require more of a facilitative role. If tutors were used to delivering content in the face-to-face classroom, then the online teaching is likely to represent a shift in the perception of their teaching role. Richardson & Swan (2003) suggest that in online teaching "the role of the instructor can be altered to become more akin to a facilitator than a lecturer" (p.69). Particularly notable was that many of the tutors did not perceive this facilitatory role as part of teaching role. By facilitating learning rather than delivering content, many of the case-study tutors did not think they were teaching. This relates to the individual tutor's view of teaching and learning, if they subscribe to the acquisition metaphor for learning then not providing the students with content would feel like they are not fulfilling their teaching role. In contrast however, if a tutor subscribed to the participation metaphor for learning, they would expect facilitation to be a large part of their teaching role. Typical comments from the case-study tutors included:

> *I don't feel there is any teaching going on really at all (IF7).*

> *I don't feel as though I am teaching them. I don't think you can teach online (IF9).*

> *Why have you used the word 'teaching' throughout this questionnaire? (SM5).*

This suggests how the participant tutors view their teaching role in the face-to-face teaching situation. The evidence leans towards the online tutors' perception of teaching as mainly content delivery, and because the activities in this module are already prepared, there is no need to actually 'teach' it, Ragan (2009) terms this "the misimpression that the online class teaches itself" (p.6). One explanation for this is that the tutors did not know how to encourage the students to engage with the tasks, as evidenced here from these two tutors:

> *I don't actually teach it, the expectation is that they will explore that and find that out for themselves (IM2).*

> *I didn't go on any of the activities, I assumed the students did them or didn't. I didn't do any of those. To be honest I didn't do those activities and I didn't contribute to that discussion board (IF8).*

Alternatively this could point to a limitation of the online teaching environment in that fostering student engagement is more difficult online.

The term *facilitating* in the literature and books on online teaching, means motivating students, writing encouraging comments, keeping discussions on track, weaving and summarising threads of conversation, and building up community (see Salmon, 2000; Palloff & Pratt, 2007). In my study, the term 'facilitator' originated from most case-study

tutors, but there appeared to be differing perceptions of what they actually meant by this term. Some of the tutors perceived it as moderating discussions and encouraging students to engage, but many appeared to view it as more of an observer role, being only on the sidelines and allowing students to discover and learn for themselves and only stepping in if really needed. Morris et al. (2005) also found this in their study:

> although almost every instructor claimed to be a facilitator in the online course, the frequency and type of participation online varied dramatically. Clearly, the instructors held different opinions about what it means to facilitate and what the responsibilities are in the facilitation of discussion in this environment. (p.75)

Many of the case-study tutors perceived teaching online as a *lesser* role than teaching face-to-face, more on the sidelines of the teaching and learning process, possibly having less power, being less of an expert:

> I think it is more of a limited role. You are definitely mentoring and definitely providing information, support and guidance, but you don't build the same close relationship than you would do if you were face-to-face, it's limited in that sense (IF1).

> It's less of a role than face-to-face (SF6).

This suggests that they consider their role to be less central to the teaching and learning process, so feel peripheral, possibly less important, and maybe perceive that they have been sidelined to some extent. Morris et al. (2005) found the same:

> Some of the novices spoke of how the courses 'practically teach themselves'; consequently, they saw only a limited role for the instructor in the online environment. Clearly, the novices did not envision the multiple instructional roles carried out by the more experienced instructors. (p.78)

This was also a finding in my study in that the participant tutors only mentioned roles to do with teaching (or not), facilitating and assessing and did not report any wider roles including social or managerial.

The Assessor Role

The second main role that the case-study tutors identified was that of assessor. The majority of the tutors in this study, when asked about perceptions of their role in this context referred to their role as an assessor, frequently saying they were assessing *rather than* teaching. Again this relates to how the tutors perceive teaching and learning in general, typical comments included:

> in this case I felt I wasn't teaching, I felt I was assessing (IM2).

> well in this particular case, it is much more marking than it is tuition (IF2).

> so it is much in the assessor role than the teacher role (IF9).

The participant tutors were extremely clear about this part of their role, probably due to the assessment tasks being very similar to those in face-to-face teaching. Although the marking was carried out electronically which may have been new to some of the tutors, the feedback they gave was an aspect they felt experienced and comfortable with, so in contrast to the other online tutor roles, the assessment role more resembled their usual teaching practice which they felt comfortable with. Morris et al. (2005) also found the assessor role the one that the tutors in their study most clearly identified with. It was also notable that as with facilitation, the tutors in this study did not view assessment as part of the teaching role; instead they perceived that assessment was disconnected from teaching, making a distinction between the two:

> it is not really about teaching it is about assessment (IM2).

> No teaching involved just marking (SF19).

> The Sp[ecialist] Conference is less teaching online as assessing online (SF14).

The learning activities in the module in this study were structured around assessment tasks; therefore it is understandable that the online teaching in this context was perceived by the tutors as assessment-heavy. However, the assessment tasks were part of the teaching approach as each task was designed to be developmental. If the tutors decided to work strategically, doing the minimum work necessary for this module, then all they would have done is assess work, so this explains why some of the case-study tutors perceived that their entire online teaching role was assessing. Aydin (2005) found a similar result in his study, where tutors prioritised assessment over other tasks such as facilitating discussion. Other explanations for prioritising assessment relate to time and workload issues, discussed further in Chapter 10, or views on teaching and learning, discussed in Chapter 6. In face-to-face teaching, it is not easy to avoid the discussion or taking an active part in the learning process, as tutors are timetabled to attend classes. With this online module, the development was already done, so the participant tutors could if they wanted, avoid doing anything more than assessing. It was not as obvious if they did not join in the online discussions or other online learning activities.

So to summarise the participant tutors' perceptions of their online teaching roles, they clearly articulated their role as an assessor, and they agreed that their teaching role was more of a facilitator than leader, expert or content provider. There appeared to be variable views of what facilitating learning in an online environment actually encompassed. There was widespread belief that the roles of assessor and facilitator were separate from teaching. The way the case-study tutors appeared to view teaching was obviously in the traditional content-providing, lecturing way and as they were not using these methods in the online module, they thought they were not teaching. Because the

case-study tutors' experience of online teaching did not fit their view of face-to-face teaching and the role that they perceive a face-to-face teacher should encompass, they talked about online teaching in a deficit way, with negative phrases like 'not teaching', 'lesser role' 'no teaching involved' being commonplace. The fact that most of the tutors did not get fully involved in the online learning activities did make it a lesser role and possibly inexperience meant they did not know how.

Most notable in terms of the tutors' perception of role, was that they did not identify a social role or role of building the community and taking steps to actively engage students in the learning activities, although most of the participants identified their role as a facilitator, they did not extend this definition to these social, community building activities. Instead they perceived the facilitation role more as a being on the sidelines, ready to step in if needed but not taking an active part in leading or moderating activities or in building relationships and community. The tutors not perceiving a social role may be due to the fact that this role is more naturally occurring in face-to-face teaching, and so the task falls less to the tutor in that respect. In the online teaching environment, the social aspects are more limited and possibly there is more emphasis on the tutor to facilitate these.

Identity and the Online Tutor

This section moves on to focus on the concept of identity, and more specifically the professional identity of HE/FE tutors in relation to teaching online. First the notion of tutors' professional identity will be revisited from the literature, before relating it to the data in this study. Henderson & Bradey (2008) state that:

> *'Lecturer identity' refers to the complex personal understanding of the way in which the world works including what it means to teach and learn in a professional degree program. Identity shapes lecturers' engagement with teaching technologies, pedagogical strategies, as well as privileging certain narratives. (p.85)*

This chapter takes the construct of identity from the social learning theory of community of practice (Wenger, 1998) introduced in Chapter 3. Wenger claims that "issues of identity are an integral aspect of a social theory of learning and thus are inseparable from issues of practice, community and meaning" (p.145). Wenger places a great deal of importance on identity within the community of practice framework (Henderson & Bradey, 2008). This closely relates to Lave & Wenger's (1991) notion of *learning as*

becoming, which suggests that through participation in the social practices in a particular culture, an individual gradually changes and become part of that community. Their identity is central to this as the move from being a novice or newcomer to feeling like they belong to that community.

Henderson & Bradey (2008) found in their study that "online teaching was influenced at a fundamental level by lecturers' identities" (p.91). Furlong (2000) claims that there are three concepts that are central to the notion of traditional professionalism which leads to the creation of teachers' identities, namely knowledge, autonomy and responsibility. He claims these three concepts are interrelated, for example the professional needs autonomy to be able to make judgements and to make those judgements they will need to draw on both specialist knowledge but also their values.

Tutors negotiate an identity for themselves as a member of academic staff. However, where there is a significant change in context, like the positioning of themselves from being a tutor in the face-to-face learning culture, to one of tutor in the online learning culture, they have to renegotiate their identities in terms of how they think they are perceived by their students, their peers and their superiors.

Talay-Ongan (2004) reflects on her own identity as an online tutor, saying she was content with keeping up to date with her subject content but "felt no urgency to explore pedagogy" (p.58). Her philosophy was that "the process of teaching and my identity as an academic/university teacher were securely wrapped in the fact that I knew more than my students did" (p.58). Following experience of teaching online, she found that she moved on considerably in her thinking:

> *I have evolved to reflecting on and being continually inspired by theorists whose business it is to think and write on these issues. Neither of these experiences would have come about as a function of my identity as a university teacher had I not immersed myself, albeit critically at first, in the process and research of teaching online. (Talay-Ongan, 2004, p.58)*

Talay-Ongan (2004) also suggests that online teaching creates an opportunity for many tutors to rethink their pedagogic strategies "online teaching has provided us with renewed opportunities to revisit our teaching practice, thus making reflections and revisions imperative, for students near and far" (p.58). Hislop (2009) concurs:

> *Many instructors find that teaching online causes them to rethink their instructional approach in ways that are invigorating. Introducing digital technology greatly expands the menu of possible approaches to engaging students in various aspects of a course. (p.96)*

Abdous (2011) states that: "online teaching experience enables (and sometimes even forces) faculty to reconsider their deep rooted beliefs about teaching and learning" (p.63). Many of the case-study tutors reported similar things:

> *It has opened my mind a bit (IM5).*

> *It has promoted all sorts of discussion and made people think carefully about what constitutes learning when you have got ICT available (IM6).*

> *It has made me more aware of my teaching, my whole pedagogy really (IF8).*

As pedagogical thinking evolves in light of the affordances of new technologies, so does what is considered to be teaching expertise. This may make some tutors uncomfortable as they constantly need to rethink their practice and develop new skills. This creates a tension for teachers portraying themselves as competent knowledgeable experts to their peers, superiors and especially to the students, but also being learners themselves. Hallman (2007) terms this the "simultaneous representation of oneself as both competent teacher and inquisitive student" (p.483). Learning for many tutors is ongoing in terms of content knowledge being updated as well as pedagogic thinking evolving. Hallman (2007) concludes:

> *Perhaps this recognition means that pre-service teachers and teacher educators alike must abandon their hope for a one-dimensional identity as a teacher, and instead realize that the path to becoming a teacher must confront and embrace the tensions between mastery and inquiry. (p.485)*

The tutors in my study faced this tension, and possibly this is a reason the online teaching received many negative comments as it put the online tutors back in the role of learner, and they did not feel comfortable with that, particularly in terms of how they may be perceived by students. This obviously is a shift in the power relationship which some of the online tutors were uncomfortable with. They felt they should know as much or more about how to use technology than the students and thought they would not be held in high regard if this was not the case:

> *with teaching staff, that don't want to engage and quite often it is because they are frightened, because the students know more than they know (IF9).*

> *I think for some staff, they find it quite intimidating as well, and they think that the student is more adept than they are, and I think that that is a power issue for some (IM1).*

> *it makes you feel impotent, it's frustrating, it makes you lose face in front of students (IF8).*

Notice that the first two of these comments speak of tutors in the third person i.e. not themselves. They were possibly projecting their fears onto the others rather than admitting to any skills deficit themselves.

Henderson & Bradey (2008), in a paper about university tutors negotiating their identities when teaching online, argue that although past experiences do shape teaching practices, tutors' identities are constantly evolving, arguing that a tutor "continually negotiates and maintains multiple identities where each represents a fundamental understanding of the world and can sometimes be at odds with one-another" (p.85). Wenger (1998) agrees that identities are not static stating that they are a "trajectory in time that incorporates both the past and future into the meaning of the present" (p.163). Henderson & Bradey (2008) write that because of this, the way we identify ourselves "is as much by where we have come from and where we believe we are going as by our current competence as members of the community of practice" (p.87). Therefore the identity of a tutor entering the online teaching environment is shaped by a combination of their past experience, where they feel they are going in the future and by their perception of how competent they are as an online tutor. If a tutor is an experienced and confident face-to-face teacher, and feels that their future direction remains within the face-to-face learning culture, their identity may not be hugely affected by any lack of competence in teaching online. However if they feel their future direction may involve more online teaching, and do not feel comfortable in their competency of online teaching, their identity will be affected and this may cause some anxiety for them, (Hughes & Oliver, 2010).

Chapter Conclusions and Suggestions for Practice

Drawing the two concepts of role and identity together, the tutors in this study feel they play a less valuable role in online teaching than they do in face-to-face teaching and this affects how they perceive their identity. In particular they felt that parts of the role that defines their identity as a teacher had been removed. If a tutor is defined by their subject knowledge and their ability to deliver content, these factors were the very things missing in the online environment, so they may feel uncomfortable and therefore negative about their online experience. The tutors had to use technology to conduct their teaching practice, which some were uncomfortable with. All this change to their normal practice put the tutors back in the seat of the learner or novice, which they did not particularly like after building up their professional identity as an HE/FE tutor.

Wenger (1998) argues that identity is not a dichotomy between the individual and the community but rather the point where they intersect. He claims all our thoughts and practices are based on our meaning-making from participation in social communities.

Our identities are therefore constantly evolving and being renegotiated in light of new experiences and situations. The online tutors in this study are therefore in the process of reviewing their identities as professionals in this new environment. This may help to explain why many of the tutors new to the online environment at first do not like it, as it possibly does not fit in with their current perceptions of role and identity and as a result they have to take on new roles and start to establish new identities in this changed environment. Chisholm (2006) found the same in her study, explaining the tutors:

> *had established themselves as experts in their fields (…) long ago and were at the top of the academic food chain; they had the luxury of time but didn't want to reinvent their careers or put in the long hours that teaching with technology requires. (p.39)*

However, once the case-study tutors in my study had worked through the process and felt more comfortable with their new roles and identities, they tended to be much more positive:

> *I hold my hands up (…) but now I am an advocate, I am almost like a missionary (IM5).*

> *what I have noticed as well is some of the people who were quite vocal [against online teaching] have actually become very good online tutors (IM6).*

The significance of these findings and suggestions for practice arising out of them is firstly that identity and perception of role can play an important part in a tutor's transition to and acceptance of online teaching therefore needs to be factored into any professional development support programme. The roles of the online tutor need to be explored particularly in line with current pedagogical thinking, and issues related to identity explored and discussed. Henderson (2007) found that:

> *Teachers' PD [professional development] is intensely multifaceted and involves the issue of identity as much as any question of learning new practices. Consequently, it is argued that situated learning and, in particular, a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) approach can provide a useful lens by which we can address these complex needs. (p.163)*

Henderson (2007) also advises sustaining the professional development over time and that short training sessions alone will not suffice. By providing sustained professional development and the opportunities for the tutors to build a community of practice (see Chapter 11 on peer support), the development of many of the tutors will be transformative, and the tutors by mutual engagement in the community will renegotiate their identities over time, and this will be played out by the roles they enact.

Chapter 8 - Building Relationships with Students Online: *it's like 'plaiting fog' to get it right*

This chapter focuses on one of the key challenges to teaching online reported by the case-study tutors: building relationships with and between students in the online environment. In this context, building relationships is defined as the tutor-to-student interpersonal relationship equivalent to that established in a face-to-face course which meets regularly. This mutual relationship usually helps students to trust the tutor and engage with the course content and each other, in order to facilitate the learning process (Garrison & Anderson, 2003; Palloff & Pratt, 2007; Dykman & Davis, 2008b). This theme helps address two of the research question: RQ4, relating to the challenges of teaching online; and RQ1, on the differences between teaching online and face-to-face delivery. This theme contained a high number of comments from the online tutors who expressed concern about this issue and the anxiety they said it caused. The analysis of the issue of building relationships online will be framed by the notions of *Social Presence* and *Teaching Presence*, the concept of learning cultures, and literature relating to online pedagogic relationships. The discussion also reveals some of the strategies the online tutors used to address this challenge. The chapter aims to illuminate the key issues related to building relationships with students online as identified by the case-study tutors, to gain a better understanding of these and make suggestions of how to manage them when supporting and preparing tutors for teaching online. The chapter will start by revisiting a selection of the literature about building relationships with students online, move on to discuss the theoretical framework pertinent to this theme, and then discuss the findings in relation to the theory and literature.

Revisiting the literature relating to building relationships in the online teaching environment reveals that many authors consider building those relationships to be essential to achieving successful learning outcomes. Palloff & Pratt (2007) suggest that tutors new to the online environment should develop their *electronic pedagogy* which they claim "is about developing the skills involved with community building among a group of learners so as to maximise the benefits and potential that this medium holds in the education arena" (p.227). Dykman & Davis (2008a) report that it is difficult and more complex for many tutors to teach and build relationships with students online, and Ham & Davey (2005) found that building relationships online can be daunting for some tutors and students who are used to social, synchronous face-to-face contact as the usual form of teaching. The literature suggests that building relationships online is important for student learning, but that some tutors find it difficult to establish. Further literature specific to particular points will be introduced in subsequent sections.

Moving on to the aspects of the theoretical framework useful to this theme, Garrison et al. (2000) stress the importance of both *social presence* and *teaching presence* in the online environment as part of the CoI framework. *Social presence* they define as "the ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project themselves socially and emotionally as 'real' people (i.e. their full personality) through the medium of communication being used" (Garrison et al., 2000, p.94). *Teaching presence* is defined as the "design, facilitation and cognitive and social processes for the purposes of realising personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes" (Anderson et al., 2001, p.5). Palloff & Pratt (2007) explain that building tutor-to-student and student-to-student rapport and developing trust is important for any teaching and learning context, so that the students feel safe to take risks, and do not feel exposed. This is usually more difficult online as the normal affordances of face-to-face encounters like non-verbal communication and the dynamics of synchronous communication are missing (Garrison & Anderson, 2003). Studies from the literature have found that higher social presence leads to better student engagement and improved learning outcomes (for example Gorsky & Blau, 2009; Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007) and the tutor is responsible, in the same way as they would be in the face-to-face context, for creating and facilitating the opportunities for building that social presence. The categories for the evaluation of social presence used by Garrison & Anderson (2003) include open communication, group cohesion and affective expression, and the examples of indicators of social presence are enabling risk-free expression and encouraging collaboration. The literature suggests therefore that tutors need to build in and facilitate activities that help build these types of interaction to increase social presence.

In addition to social and teaching presence, another concept that provides a helpful perspective for this theme is learning cultures. James & Biesta (2007) claim that learning cultures are as important to the process of learning as traditional theories of learning and recognise that learning does not take place in the learners' or teachers' minds, but is something which happens through participation in social practices. Therefore many tutors teaching online need to develop effective online social practices in order for learning outcomes to be realised.

The literature and the theory in relation to this theme identified above will now be related to the findings from my study. The issue of building relationships was not originally included as a direct question in either the interview or survey questions, although it featured frequently in the participants' responses to other questions. In later interviews the questions were expanded to include a direct question asking if the participant tutors found building relationships with students different or difficult in the

online environment. The case-study tutors appeared to talk openly and honestly about issues around building relationships with students online, mainly in a more negative way saying how difficult it was, and saying they had not built relationships successfully with their online students, although there were a few positive comments.

The following were the main sub-themes related to this theme, which will be explored individually below:

- o The importance of building relationships with students in a teaching context.
- o Whether the tutors felt that they had built up a relationship with the students online.
- o Making judgements about people when only a limited relationship exists.
- o Issues around trust.
- o Mechanisms and strategies used to build relationships online.

The Importance of Establishing Relationships with Students

The literature suggests that establishing a relationship and rapport with the students in a teaching environment has a direct effect on student learning. Garrison & Anderson (2003) stress the importance of building social presence for learning:

> *Individual knowledge construction is very much shaped by the social environment. That is an environment with choice and a diversity of perspectives will encourage critical and creative inquiry. Such a CoI is a requisite for higher order learning. (p.27)*

This is supported elsewhere in the literature, for example Dykman & Davis (2008b) state that many tutors "need to learn to cultivate and sustain relationships with their students online, which can be a time consuming, even tedious, process but which is also a critical part of online teaching effectiveness" (p.158). This view was congruent with the evidence from the tutors in my study:

> *establishing a rapport with students online is very important from the word go (IM4).*

Social presence is more difficult to establish in text based elearning environments "due to the lack of non-verbal communication the shift from spoken communication to the written communication of an e-learning context presents a special challenge for establishing social presence" (Garrison & Anderson, 2003, p.29).

There was evidence of a perception amongst the online tutors that relationships can only be built face-to-face. For example, many of the tutors suggested how useful it would have been to meet the students at the start of the online course:

> I think it would be really useful to actually having seen the students at the beginning of the process. If only just to say hello (IM1).

> they might have met at the beginning of the year, in order just to be able to touch base and get to know each other (IF2).

> the social thing doesn't really happen until they come to conference. But if there had been that day that they all get together for one day, they would kind of have more than that because they would have met each other (IF9).

The case-study tutors are familiar with face-to-face teaching and it is part of the learning culture they feel experienced with and comfortable in. They consider face-to-face social practices as the norm. Naturally, they prefer to work within the culture where they have built up experience in how to build relationships with students. It provided a challenge for them to learn how to build relationships in this new online learning culture which lacks the very conditions they usually employ to get to know their students, such as face-to-face discussion, non-verbal communication and instant responses and reactions to questions asked.

One of the factors the tutors mentioned frequently in relation to building relationships with students was that learning more about each student helped them understand them more holistically, which makes it easier to connect with and therefore teach the students. Connecting with students was felt to be limited or non-existent in their experience of online teaching. This supports the importance of social presence which includes perceiving that the tutors were dealing with 'real people' online, so getting to know more about the students, other than through their written assignments. Typical comments from the case-study tutors were:

> I work very much with the student and gain their confidence and building their confidence, and dealing with the whole person (IM1).

> it would have been nice to know a bit more about the background rather than just a class list (IF5).

> in teaching face-to-face, not only do you teach a subject but you have to take on board the person in terms of everything that might affect their learning (IF6).

This suggests that the participant tutors have not yet built up the experience of how to build relationships online, and think that it is only possible in the face-to-face learning culture. There is a blogging activity used throughout the module which was developed to attempt to build relationships and social presence, but not all students engaged with it and many of the online tutors did not respond or facilitate any discussion. One tutor

reported the fact that they do not get to know students on a more social level as a positive:

> *the only good thing is that you don't get all the kind of what might be seen as needy therapeutic stuff (IF7).*

One unanticipated finding was that the case-study tutors felt it was difficult to give feedback to students that they have not built up a relationship with:

> *not knowing somebody and giving them some quite critical feedback is very difficult (IF9).*
>
> *Not meeting the students before you mark their work (SF23).*
>
> *how do you assess when you don't know the students? There was some anxiety around that (IM5).*

The perception that it was difficult to mark a piece of work without knowing the student was notable, as it would be expected that an assessment decision would be made purely on whether that piece of work meets the assessment criteria, not dependent on how well the tutor knows the student. In addition many courses/departments use anonymous marking processes to avoid subjectivity issues. In contrast to the above, two of the case-study tutors did recognise that not meeting the students face-to-face made them more objective and less judgemental about assessing their work:

> *In a way maybe that is an asset because it means that I was marking those scripts without labelling those students (IF8).*

The above point about many tutors feeling that they needed to know students better to be able to assess their work also assumes that a tutor always builds a relationship with students in the face-to-face context, which may not be the case, particularly with large students groups. Even if a relationship is built, it may be only at a fairly superficial level as Savery (2005) reports:

> *with larger classes (30+ students) it is difficult for the instructor to get to know the students as individuals, particularly if the transmission mode of instruction is used. There are limited opportunities for one-on-one communications and the quiet students tend to be missed. (p.142)*

The case-study tutors did not seem to recognise this and had the view that relationships could be built in face-to-face contexts but were non-existent or limited in the online context.

In contrast to Savery's comment above, Everson (2011) claims that he gets to know his students better online:

> *I truly get to know my students better in the online environment because of opportunities I've built into the course for them to talk about their understanding*

of the content. I can listen to them as they explain what they know and what they do not know, and I am able to learn more about them through the kinds of examples they share during discussion or the kinds of questions they ask. (p.1)

Most of the tutors in my study did not report this, with many suggesting that the face-to-face environment was superior for building relationships with students. My study focussed on the experience of novice online tutors and other studies, such as Savery's (2005), which are based on the experiences of more experienced tutors may have reported alternative findings.

Tutors' Perceptions of the Relationship they Build with Students

The majority of comments under this heading related to the fact that the tutors felt that they had not established relationships with their online students, including:

> *I don't really think I know them at all, but I have a sense of what I think is important to them. Some of them (IM5).*

> *you try to value what they do but I wouldn't say I have built relationships with them at all (IF7).*

> *Just not really getting to know them. I am used to building a relationship (IF5).*

It appeared to be widely acknowledged by the online tutors that building relationships with students online is not easy. There were many comments relating to this, including:

> *I think it is getting a rapport going it's the hardest part of teaching online (IM4).*

> *Yes I think it was difficult, because they are often silent (IF10).*

> *And I think that [building relationships] is quite hard to do solely online which is why I would like the blend (IF2).*

> *Yeah I think much more difficult online (IF6).*

They possibly were negative about building relationships online because it was an unfamiliar practice for them. This again suggests that some of the case-study tutors were trying to adopt their face-to-face practices online and being negative about the online learning culture when their teaching practices did not easily translate online.

Only one tutor commented that they thought they were able to build a relationship better in the online environment than in a face-to-face context. One other tutor commented that they did not find building relationships online a problem, however these two comments were the exception rather than the norm. A few of the case-study tutors felt that they could establish a different sort of relationship with students online:

I guess I felt I could build relationships with the students, not the same types of relationships obviously that I would build with my undergrads (IF8).

Rapport is established differently when it's not a face-to-face encounter but it's still possible to achieve (SF11).

Building a relationship is completely different (SM6).

These tutors did not elaborate on what was different about the relationships but it is likely that these related to being more limited than in the face-to-face context.

Several participants used the words 'impersonal' or 'less personal' to describe the online environment, which relates to the idea that possibly the social presence (Garrison et al., 2000) necessary had not been established. Examples include:

I think it is a lot less personable, so you don't get to know your students (IF9).

No proper interaction with students - it is too impersonal and detached (SM24).

Online learning is rather impersonal (SM10).

It's a very impersonal method and students often feel unsupported. It is also more difficult to remember students' names and their work without having a face to connect them (SF23).

Again online teaching does not live up to the case-study tutors' preferred way of working in the face-to-face environment which has more social affordances. Alternatively the tutors may be unaware of how to build social presence online. The reference to the students feeling unsupported may just be a projection of the tutor's own feelings about online teaching. This would be an interesting area for further study.

Issues around Making Judgements about People

The case-study tutors reported that sometimes they made judgements about the students, and admitted to often being wrong in their assumptions:

I made judgements about people's ages and characteristics based on their papers and some of them were bang on, but some I was very, very off (IF8).

You build up a kind of picture in your head don't you, around a personality and quite often learn that you are wrong (IF6).

Yeah it is different and I think when you eventually meet them, face-to-face, it is often a surprise, because you didn't think that they were like that (IF2).

As these tutors had the opportunity to meet the students face-to-face at the end of the course at the conference, it gave the tutors the opportunity to make the comparison between how they perceived the trainee from their online engagement and what they

were like face-to-face. In a face-to-face teaching, tutors gradually get to know students as more aspects to personality are revealed over time, and in a totally online context, the tutors would probably not be made aware of any misjudgements.

Some of the online tutors admitted to having some insecurities and anxieties about not building a relationship with the students and were concerned about how they would be judged by the students, comments included:

> I was worried about how I was viewed, we all feel that way don't we? (IF1).

> you are terrified of an unknown person and whether that person will judge you or find you to be lacking or wanting (IF11).

> The lack of relationship that is formed. Meeting students at the conference for the first time when you have marked their work - possibly referring it, so they will have already formed a negative opinion of you (SF23).

> I am much more "cautious" when meeting people for the first time after dealing with them online. They will have preconceived opinions of you based on how they have interpreted your feedback, which can be a little daunting. (SF24).

This is paralleled by the literature, for example, Gilmore & Warren (2007) found that many tutors had to "force a renegotiation of the 'feeling rules' that govern traditional classroom settings which in turn contributed to a more emotional suffused teaching experience for online tutors" (p.581). An explanation for the anxieties reported by the case-study tutors could be the change in learning culture they were experiencing. They did not appear to be concerned about how they are perceived by students in the face-to-face environment, as that is the culture in which they are immersed, so are comfortable with and confident in their approach. The online environment has a new culture, and some of the features of the teachers' usual teaching cultural experiences are missing, such as the non-verbal communication cues and the dynamics of face-to-face teaching. This makes the case-study tutors feel uncertain and insecure, and as a result, they are much more anxious about how they are perceived, especially as they are expected to take the lead in this situation. This uncertainty in role provides the tutor with the tension of attempting to be the leader in the group whilst instead they may be feeling more like a novice.

Issues of Trust

The notion of trust was a frequently occurring sub-theme from the analysis of the discussions with the online tutors connected with building relationships with students.

The comments fell into two main types, the first being students trusting their peers in order to share, takes risks, engage and learn, and the second being the students' trust of their tutor in assessing their work.

In the first of these, the case-study tutors felt that the students were less likely to engage and share ideas because they had not gained that trust of the other students compared to the trust that may be built in face-to-face teaching. This is also reported in the literature, for example, a study by Goodyear et al. (2001) stressed how important it was for online tutors to create an environment where students felt safe. Comments from the tutors in my study included:

> *I think that again comes with that face-to-face, that's a bit of trust, a lot of people, they don't like sharing things (IF9).*

> *Whereas if it was face-to-face they probably would as they would probably get together as a group and share our ideas, so I think they miss out on that (IF4).*

> *I feel that some of the personal interaction is lost and the additional, none criteria based discussions, do not happen the same way online. Because of this the networking becomes less powerful and the team mentality does not occur (SM15).*

The analysis of data suggests that the online tutors perceive that trust in them from the students is important, and that they perceive that trust is only or mainly built up by a face-to-face relationship. This could be attributed to the face-to-face learning culture they have been immersed in, and that they are not sure how to build the trust online. Beem (1999) agrees, suggesting that "the concept of social capital contends that building or rebuilding community and trust requires face-to-face encounters" (p.20). It is important to note that Beem was writing in 1999 though, when mainstream virtual social networking was nascent and the potential for the affordances of Web 2.0 and social networking tools were yet to be realised. The case-study tutors also perceived that students are uneasy handing in work to be assessed to a tutor that they have not built up this trust with. There appears to be an assumption that with face-to-face teaching that there is an automatic trust of the tutor, and because of the lack of face-to-face contact, this same trust is not built up online, as these case-study tutors explain:

> *At that level when you normally teach, you sit down with the student and say, you know give them their feedback and discuss it, they know you, they trust you, they trust your judgement, when you are doing it online you have not met the students, they don't know you (IF9).*

> *the affordances of face-to-face is that you have probably got a stronger trust relationship and that you are putting yourself on the line and handing in a piece of work and if it is somebody you know and you have developed a relationship with then you are more comfortable doing that (IF10).*

I think a lot of the anxiety for students is the unknown, not knowing the person who is going to assess you, and potentially determine whether you complete your teacher training course or not, so there is a lot of anxiety there for students (IM5).

Ham & Davey (2005) reported similar finding: "submitting one's writing for scrutiny and feedback is stressful for many students at the best of times, (...) they preferred to 'know' their assessor than to merely 'correspond' with them" (p.260). However, it is difficult to know in both my study and Ham & Davey's, if the anxiety of not really knowing your assessor is a real issue for students or just a perceived issue by the tutors involved. This could be an area for further research comparing student and tutor perceptions of the online teaching and learning experience.

Mechanisms and Strategies Used to Build Relationships Online

Most online and elearning literature advises the use of activities with students to help build relationships and encourage the online socialisation process (Salmon, 2000; Garrison et al., 2001; Ke, 2010). In Salmon's (2000) five-stage model the second stage is *online socialisation*. This is seen as vital to the learning process and comes directly after the getting access to the technology stage which is a prerequisite to any online teaching and learning taking place. In her model Salmon (2000) defined the tutor's role in the online familiarisation process as "familiarising and providing bridges between cultural, social, and learning environments" (p.29). One of the main mechanisms used in the online module in this study to try and build relationships with trainees, was the blog where students were initially required to upload a photo and some basic information about themselves, such as their teaching career and interests. The tutors were asked to post first, to model good practice and introduce themselves to the trainees, and then ask the trainees to do the same. The trainees were able to comment on each other's blog posts to help build the community, but that did not appear to have much impact:

although the first thing they are supposed to do when we developed this online interaction is to post about themselves, they did this to varying degrees (IF5).

we had the blog where they were supposed to introduce themselves. They didn't really work, and I don't know whether it is because the tool that we used didn't really facilitate it very well, I don't know why it didn't work but it didn't (IF10).

A possible explanation for this was that the case-study tutors and their trainees were all novices to this way of teaching and learning, so did not understand the importance and saw this activity merely as an extra task to do. In addition, lack of interaction by the

tutor can lead to the students thinking the tutor is 'not bothered' about the students which in turn leads to the students not participating either, as Savery (2005) reports: "if the student perceives that the instructor is not participating, they often form a perception that the instructor is not concerned about teaching/learning. As a consequence, students are more likely to adopt a passive role for themselves" (p.143). In addition, the case-study tutors were putting their effort into learning to use the new technologies so possibly concentrated more on that, and the students had their group that they attended face-to-face classes where they could socialise, so possibly did not feel the need to build up relationships with their online group as well.

Another of the mechanisms that the case-study tutors used to try and build up the relationship with their students was email. This was instigated by the tutors themselves in contrast to the blog which was set up by the module leaders:

> I sent emails with my outline paper feedback which I didn't last year I just said 'Hi tutor group', in little kinds of bonding messages in the hope that they won't feel isolated, and they are really kind of drawn into the tutor group (IF4).

> I found it much easier if I had developed an email 'conversation' with students before I assessed their assignments (SF18).

The first of these tutors had recent experience of being a student in an online course so understood the importance of building a relationship and trust with the students, so was attempting to build that community with her online students. The second quote is another example of tutors perceiving that they need to 'know' their students to be able to assess their work.

Although not part of this particular provision, some of the case-study tutors said they would really welcome the opportunity for synchronous communication with the students to help build the relationships:

> More use of Skype and more use of telephone conversations, and things like that with students, is far better than sending text messages and emails backwards and forwards (IM6).

> I would say at the moment a disadvantage is the lack of synchronous contact that we are using within our teaching (IM4).

> Maybe some synchronous tools, maybe that's the secret, I am not sure (IF10).

Again this is evidence of the tutors wanting to revert to their preferred synchronous face-to-face teaching delivery. Some synchronous activities built into the module however, may have increased social presence. Palloff & Pratt (2007) concur: "students who do not do well online attribute this to not being able to see their instructor or classmates, hear what they have to say or actively engage in verbal conversation"

(p.48). They go on to say "the advent of virtual classroom technologies that allow for real-time synchronous interaction (…) helps to some degree to mitigate this problem" (p.48). So introducing some synchronous activity may help the tutors replicate that spontaneity and dynamics of the live face-to-face classroom that these tutors show a strong preference for and allow more social presence to be built.

One notable finding was that any of the participant tutors who had had contact, usually by phone, or possibly extended email contact, with one individual trainee, reported that they felt as though they had built much more of a relationship with that trainee compared to the other trainees. One possible explanation for this is that in these cases the trainees felt that someone cared and took the time to get to know them as an individual. Up to then it has all been either self-directed work or messages sent out to the whole group. In the case of the phone call or extended email conversation, the tutor perceived they had the dialogue necessary to build up a relationship with that trainee. Palloff & Pratt (2007) concur with this "the longer a student is absent from the conversation, the more difficult it will be for that student to connect. Sometimes a phone call or email is all it takes to bring someone back in" (p.48). Two examples of this from my study are:

> I had one student who rang me because she had a baby very early, so the plans went out the window. So we did have to do a bit of telephone conversation and that in itself was better than just the email and so on, as soon as I spoke to her it was very different (IF7).

> one I am thinking about in particular who was very punctilious about replying and I always replied and was very positive, it was nice then as I did feel I had a relationship with her before she came, but that was only one learner out of the group of 12, very disheartening (IF10).

The case-study tutors therefore recognised that having contact with a particular trainee led to building more of a relationship with them. The tutors would not however have had the time (and possibly reason) to make contact with every individual student in this way.

Ham & Davey (2005) found in their study that relationships being built with students not only facilitated the students' learning, but also that it was important for tutors to feel that they have built up relationships and gained the trust from their students to make them feel satisfied with the job they had done:

> we learned that those things which are most valued in the social phenomenon that is teaching are precisely those which can be the most difficult to recreate in an online environment, and we found ourselves having deep philosophical discussions about the socio-emotional needs of the teacher in such situations; our need for a feeling of interpersonal connection with the students, our need to

'humanise' and 'socialise' the process in order to feel better about doing a good job as the tutor, quite separate from any projections about their need for 'personalised' contact with us, or with each other. (p.263)

The tutors in my study reported similar things. They talked about not feeling the same loyalty to the online students, and perceiving that the students need to know their tutor to engage and assess work. It is impossible to tell in my research if the tutors are reporting on what the students' actual responses are, or if it was more of a perception, and this would provide a good area for further research.

Chapter Conclusions and Suggestions for Practice

The case-study tutors understood the importance of building relationships in teaching but found this task difficult online, and saw the online environment as not very conducive to building relationships. Most felt that they had not managed to build normal tutor-to student relationships and those that did saw it as very limited, and again compared online teaching unfavourably to face-to-face teaching. The tutors also felt uncomfortable giving feedback and assessing the work of students they had not met face-to-face as they reported that it helped to know the student better to know how direct they could be in the feedback. Issues of trust were a concern for the tutors, and they felt that the students had issues both trusting tutors to mark their work and with contributing to the activities as they had not built trust up with their peers.

The tutors tried to build relationships by using email and occasional phone calls to students, and reported that when they did do this, they did get to know the individual students much better. They did feel that some sort of synchronous communication would have been useful to develop relationships with students, a possible explanation for this is that the tutors felt that relationships can only be built synchronously as that is what they are familiar with.

The suggestions for practice of these findings are firstly not to underestimate the importance of tutors building up relationships with their students online, both as an aid to student learning and for them to achieve job satisfaction (Ham & Davey, 2005). Secondly, it is also important to recognise that many tutors will not be aware of how to do this online if their whole experience to date has been within the face-to-face learning culture. Experience, time and effort are needed to build online relationships and foster social learning practices. The online environment lends itself to social learning, due to

the asynchronous nature, and that people from diverse geographical locations can access and interact with the other course members at a time to suit them, but social learning can only be maximised when the social presence and social capital has been built up. Thirdly, teaching presence is necessary in online teaching to lead and facilitate the activities so that the social presence and social capital can be built. Possibly in this context the students and some of the case-study tutors were not fully aware of how essential the building up of the social presence in the online environment was, and how to model good practice. Some of the tutors did not see it as part of their teaching role, concentrating instead on the technology itself, the course content and assessment processes.

Chapter 9 – Communication: *talking down an empty telephone and writing letters to people you have never met*

This chapter focuses on the second main challenge of online teaching identified by the case-study tutors: communicating with students online. With wholly online teaching, communication methods rely on technology which is very different from communicating in face-to-face teaching. This chapter addresses two of the research questions: RQ4, about the challenges facing tutors teaching online; and RQ1, on tutors' perceptions of the differences between face-to-face and online teaching. The chapter aims to illuminate issues that the case-study tutors faced in relation to communication, so that it can make suggestions of how to support and prepare academic staff for teaching online. The chapter will start by briefly revisiting the literature in relation to communication in online teaching, then move on to identify theories pertinent to this theme, and then finally discuss the findings from the analysis of communication issues in light of this theory and literature.

In the literature, Hislop & Ellis (2004) warn us that "an increasing number of faculty at academic institutions are being asked to teach an expanding number and variety of courses in an online format, with little or no synchronous interaction between faculty and students" (p.16). Renes & Strange (2011) stress the importance of effective communication in online teaching: "communication alleviates students' concern they might be missing something and reminds them they are not alone out in cyberspace" (p.210). Price et al. (2007) advise that "there is much work to be done in helping students and tutors to understand the nature of online communication and how to achieve effective online interaction" (p.19). Due to the lack of physical presence, tutor 'visibility' is very important online via communications such as announcements and tutor contributions. Savery (2005) reports: "in a completely online instructional environment, instructor visibility is absolutely critical. Students need to know that the instructor is attending to them even though they do not meet in a face-to-face classroom" (p.143). Ham & Davey (2005) agree, arguing that "there was a strong sense of 'out-of-sight-out-of-mind' at both ends of the communication loop if either the tutor or the school teacher was not there to encourage, galvanise or remind the pupils" (p.259).

With face-to-face teaching, tutors are used to having the benefit of a regular, dynamic and efficient communication channel with students. This gives tutors the opportunity to pass on messages efficiently, they can communicate the message to all the students simultaneously, and immediately get an idea of whether students have understood what has been said, answer questions, clear up misunderstandings and make instant

decisions. In contrast, when teaching online, messages to students are usually text based, frequently via email. Tutors cannot be certain that emails are read or understood, and there is no way of gauging each student's reactions to messages, or how they have been interpreted. Gilmore & Warren (2007) suggest that "because non-verbal and bodily cues are missing, intentions become misinterpreted through the structure of the messages or words used in online conversation" (p.593). Dykman & Davis (2008c) agree, warning that "mistakes in process are often difficult to recognize because of a basic lack of traditional contact between faculty and students. This means that relatively minor problems can escalate to a crisis before being recognized by the professor" (p.281).

The theories used to frame the discussion of communication in the online teaching context are the notion of learning cultures and Bourdieu's (1986) related notions of *field* and *habitus* first introduced in Chapter 3. These are supplemented by appropriate elearning literature relating to communication issues when teaching online. Bourdieu's concepts of *field*s are inhabited by power relations and are usually structured hierarchically (Koskimaa et al., 2007). The *field* in this case is the social context in which the teaching environment of the tutors is embedded. *Habitus* refers to the dispositions, skills and knowledge which have been inculcated through experience of being in the *field*. The participants have formed their *habitus* by the *field* they have previously been exposed to, relating to the face-to-face learning culture. They have an understanding of how things work in that culture, and have shared beliefs and attitudes with others immersed in the culture. This has similarities with the notion of tacit knowledge, which is about knowing more than can be easily explained, and understanding the more profound and subtle ways in which the *field* works. This also relates to the work on learning cultures (James & Biesta, 2007), which is about social practices in particular learning cultures. FE and HE are dominated by the face-to-face learning culture. The accepted and valued social practices and *habitus* formed from these environments are therefore centred around face-to-face teaching and communication methods.

Having established the literature and theory relevant to this theme, the discussion now turns to the findings from this study on the theme of online communication. The learning activities as part of the module that formed the basis of this study were all carried out asynchronously, so communication with students was predominantly via email and use of the VLE including announcements, content provision, and electronic feedback. Issues relating to communication with students featured frequently in many of the case-study tutors' discussions about their experience of online teaching. Although communication overlaps with the themes from the other findings chapters, this chapter will focus on

these main sub-themes raised by the tutors relating to online communication and the strategies they used to overcome them, including:

- o The absence of non-verbal communication in online teaching
- o Communicating with students who were not engaging online
- o The wording of feedback and other online communication
- o The permanency of online communication

These are discussed in detail below.

The Absence of Non-Verbal Communication in Online Teaching

The absence of non-verbal communication (NVC) was a common sub-theme in the participant tutors' discussions in connection with communication in online teaching, and is an issue paralleled in the literature: "the nature of communication is also affected by the lack of immediacy, absence of non-verbal cues and the apparent formality of written language" (Bennett & Lockyer, 2004, p.237). Many of the participant tutors reported how much they used NVC in the face-to-face learning context to convey and interpret messages, and that they missed that in the online environment. Price et al. (2007) recommend that "to make online tuition successful both tutors and students need training in how to communicate online in the absence of paralinguistic cues" (p.1). Bawane & Spector (2009) suggest however that "while online communication rarely makes emotions and gestures as explicit as they would be in a face-to-face context, it does have the potential for people to converse with intensity, depth, and meaning" (p.383). The tutors in my study did not report this and many instead said that they found it difficult to reassure students through text, and missed the opportunity that face-to-face teaching affords to soften words with body language and tone of voice. Comments included:

> *Establishing an appropriate online voice. In real life I use humour and eye contact to reassure - this was not possible online so I needed to choose my words very carefully (SF21).*

> *you have no sense of body language or messages coming backwards and forwards and I don't like that (IF7).*

> *because you are not doing that face-to-face, you know exactly what you say, if you soften it, you do it with your body language, don't you? You know your tone of voice, everything, it is much more difficult to do that online, I think in that way then there is more scope for students to misunderstand where you are coming from (IM1).*

Many of the case-study tutors also felt that they had to write in more detail online than they would in the face-to-face context to compensate for the lack of non-verbal communication. Some felt that interacting with students only by using the written word took the social and human side out of the teaching process, and that sometimes it needed human face-to-face contact to fully understand what the students were really asking. Hughes & Hewson (2002) suggest that "the reduction of communication to text and stylistic elements is a significant constraint" (p.151) and many of the tutors in my study also reported this:

> because I think human beings need face-to-face contact in communication because we learn more than one way, we learn about body language and verbal cues and non verbal cues and all this kind of stuff, and I think they miss out on that, most definitely (IF4).

> I think it's a nuance of subtexts really. You can get a sense of what people aren't saying to you face-to-face when they present you with an issue or want to discuss something, usually to my view that the presenting question isn't the question they want answering (IM3).

> Working out how to give feedback that takes into account you are not there face-to-face to explain (SM12).

This perception of the lack of the human factor in online teaching is possibly an indication of some of the participant tutors trying to replicate their face-to-face teaching practices online, which may revolve around face-to-face pedagogies, so they feel unsure when this aspect is missing online. It is also an indication that social presence had not been built in this context, as social presence is about making the students feel that they are dealing with real-life people online. Many of the tutors had obviously not achieved this, so felt dissatisfied with this teaching experience and therefore compared it unfavourably with their preferred mode of face-to-face teaching practice. In this context, the tutors have formed their *habitus* from exposure to a face-to-face learning culture, including the attitude and belief that students learn best in a face-to-face environment, and that communication is best when live and face-to-face. This appears to be the dominant method of teaching and is reinforced by the participants of that culture. As the online teaching is unfamiliar and does not conform to these notions, means it is rejected by the tutors as a suitable alternative, and seen as inferior to face-to-face teaching.

Communicating with Students who were not Engaging Online

Many of the online tutors were particularly concerned about how to communicate with students who did not engage with the course or did not respond to emails, as these

students were absent from the online interactions so were almost invisible. It was difficult for the tutors to find out why these students were not engaging, although if students do not attend a face-to-face class, it is similarly difficult trying to find out about any issues these students may have, so it could be more of a perceived than actual difference between the two delivery methods.

With online teaching, a student's reason for not engaging could be due to issues relating to access to the technology, and sometimes it is difficult to know if a student is receiving or reading emails that their tutors send. This was reported as a concern for tutors:

> *When students were not responding to e-mails - the need to get them to respond was difficult (SF12).*

> *Yes I think it was difficult, because they are often silent. It is like talking down an empty telephone line sometimes, they are unresponsive (IF10).*

This metaphor appears to be an indication that tutors are used to synchronous dialogue, and having what felt like just one-way communication with little response was difficult and uncomfortable for them. Similarly though, in face-to-face teaching there are often quieter students who do not engage much, especially with large class sizes. As Savery (2005) explains: "there are limited opportunities for one-on-one communications and the quiet students tend to be missed" (p.142). The *habitus* engendered by face-to-face learning cultures may create undue expectations for online engagement and/or lead tutors to regard as a problem difference in engagement which they regard as normal in face-to-face learning culture.

Wording of Feedback and Other Communication

The most frequent comments relating to online communication from online tutors were connected to being meticulous in the wording of feedback and email messages. This was mainly due to the concern that textual comments can easily be misunderstood, and tutors did not have the safety net of a face-to-face session to quickly sort out any issues. As Dykman & Davis (2008b) report: "in a conventional classroom, there are ample face-to-face opportunities to reinforce expectations and clarify misunderstandings" (p.157). Several aspects related to the wording of feedback came through strongly from the online tutors:

First, written feedback can frequently be misunderstood or interpreted in a different way from what the tutor intended as Bennett & Lockyer (2004) explain "communication in

the online environment may need to be more explicit and detailed to avoid misinterpretations" (p.237). Most of the tutors in my study reported similar things:

> *Online communication can be misinterpreted because tone is less evident as well as context, for example, paralinguistic features (body language, facial features) which helps to convey meaning. One has to be very sensitive to these (SF20).*

> *the way you write things you have to think very carefully about how somebody will interpret it at the other end (IF7).*

> *Craft all communications with tact and care. Be supportive. Try to understand all communications and what behind what is being said (SM13).*

Because of the potential for misunderstandings or misinterpretation, many of the tutors felt that they had to be extra careful about the clarity of the feedback. Bennett & Lockyer (2004) suggest that "written communication must be carefully crafted to minimize opportunities for misunderstanding" (p.242). Again this meant the wording and vocabulary used became extremely important:

> *in many cases learners do not fully understand written communication unless it follows clear decisions. I hope I do provide clarity (SM14).*

> *the words that you use need to be clear, and that you need to make a clear judgement and not faff about (IM2).*

However this is true of most feedback. Wording is important whether hand-written or electronic, as one tutor sums up:

> *I think it is just good feedback. I don't think there is any difference. Words are always subject to interpretation (IM6).*

So this aspect is not confined to the online environment, it possibly just makes tutors think a bit more carefully about what they write because they do not have any face-to-face contact with the students.

Secondly, and related to the point above, is the lack of NVC signals to accompany the feedback, which can change the meaning or emphasis of points made. There was also no opportunity to soften the written feedback with face-to-face communication, using reassuring comments like 'don't panic' or 'everyone did really well'. As Hughes & Hewson (2002) explain: "live communication is achieved by the manipulation of an amazing array of variables. Written text can only capture a small part of this richness" (p.151). A typical comment from one of the tutors in my study:

> *The feedback similarly can be written but you can also soften it or ameliorate the more difficult things you have to say by saying 'don't worry' and non verbal stuff and all of that is afforded by the face-to-face contact (IF10).*

Again this perhaps relates more to the tutors developing the skills in providing the students with clear feedback.

Thirdly, tutors were concerned about feedback being perceived as too negative because the focus was on how the work could be improved, so by its nature concentrated more on the negative aspects of a student's piece of work. Negative text based comments can be daunting for students:

> they imagine if you are saying something it is like in a negative or a telling them off way and it isn't really, and I have to reinforce all the time where I am saying, please don't take this the wrong way (IF4).

> if you are sending things out to them, not a good paper and they have a lot of work to do, and that is quite difficult at times as I have to think about how I word it, I don't put too much negative down because, they will think 'I can't do it' and just throw it in the bin, and don't bother with it (IF9).

In this case there seems to have been a lack of teaching and social presence built up to assist with this issue. This may be due to the tutors not knowing how to build these types of presence, but also could be a criticism of the online teaching environment, in that it is not as easy to build relationships online as it is in face-to-face teaching, or relationships may just take longer to develop online, and they tutors and students had not yet got to that point. Part of the teaching presence is to set clear criteria, which will include making sure the students understand what is expected of them in terms of assessment. In addition, if social presence has been built up, then there may be a greater level of trust between students and their tutors, so negative comments may be interpreted more constructively and more open discussion can take place online.

Fourthly, many of the online tutors commented that they preferred to write feedback with the particular student in mind as this really helped the tutor with deciding how to approach this task. For example they would know if they could be direct with a particular student or had to be more sensitive. Not having built up that kind of relationship with the student so they knew them well enough to know how they would take the feedback, was reported as a disadvantage:

> the way you give feedback is in relation to what you know about that student, so you know if they can take something direct, or they need something that is very direct or whether you know with that particular student actually I am going to have to be very cautious about the way that I say this (IF2).

> A social communication where you can understand individuals is much more difficult, especially for those students who do not need as much extra support. It is easy to lose a sense of who they are. Tutors phrasing and comments need careful consideration (SF17).

The perception of the tutors that they did not 'know' their students was evidence that social presence had not been built up. Social presence is about getting to know the students or tutor as a real person, so working out aspects of their personality. If this has

been built the tutor should have some idea of how a student may receive feedback. Building relationships and social presence was discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

Finally, many of the tutors felt that because they need to take all of the above points into consideration, they frequently took much longer to write feedback, to make sure it was clear, not too negative, and not open to (mis)interpretation.

> *I feel that because of the lack of face-to-face contact that I had to spend a lot more time and care in writing to make sure that I was clear in my feedback (SM3).*

> *it takes you so long to think about what you are going to put because you have got to think how this is going to come across to the learner you know, it is phrased right, have I mentioned all, got all the detail in this conversation, it is difficult that way, it seems to be very textually time consuming (IM4).*

The wording of feedback caused a lot of anxiety for some of the participant tutors due to the lack of face-to-face contact with students. This may also be a criticism of the online environment, in that it is missing the opportunity to explain feedback in a face-to-face meeting. As this study focuses on novice online tutors, the tutors have not yet had chance to build up their skills in giving feedback online to students they had not met face-to-face. The findings from other studies based on more experienced tutors may produce different results.

The Permanence of Online Communication

Interactions between students and tutors online are in a more permanent form, compared to those in face-to-face teaching. This was reported as an anxiety by some of the participant tutors. Tutors in a face-to-face classroom are much less exposed to this as the details of exactly what was said in a particular session cannot be reproduced exactly. Hislop (2009) suggests that "online teaching is a more public event than traditional teaching" (p.96). Many of the tutors in my study made similar points:

> *It is the permanence of it I think, and the fact that it is out there. I think people have got more chance of reviewing it, more chance of exposing my failures I suppose (IF3).*

Some of the tutors felt that this permanence was possibly also exposing for the students, and were concerned that this would cause anxiety for them:

> *I sometimes worry that we do expose learners to the critique of other learners that they wouldn't have to face otherwise (IF10).*

> *It can be a bit intimidating as well because sometimes students don't want to say something because it is down there on paper, you know, there forever, and it is a scary thing maybe to do (IF2).*

This could be evidence of some of the tutors reflecting their own concerns by engaging in a negative discourse about online teaching in terms of challenges to students.

One tutor pointed out that it takes students longer to contribute as they are aware that what they write will be reviewed, so they take a great deal of care and time over their contributions compared to a face-to-face situation where students would be more spontaneous and less polished:

> *the more mature people, you could tell they were quite anxious and probably spent ages trying to, crafting that two-liner, (…). Well there is a permanency about it you see, isn't there? Which I think adds a whole new dimension to it (IF11).*

This issue of permanency was also highlighted by Ham & Davey (2005):

> *there seems to be a more heightened sense of public and permanent exposure of one's thoughts, ideas or feelings in emails/discussion boards than in the face-to-face, verbal (i.e. ephemeral) equivalents, and that these issues were just as, if not more, problematic from the teacher perspective as from the perspective of the students. (p.263)*

One tutor commented that permanence did have an advantage as it captured the discussion in a way that it would have been lost or quickly forgotten in a face-to-face situation:

> *it is a scary thing maybe to do, but at the other side of the coin, you have captured sometimes some really good discussion or interaction that actually you might have lost if it was across the table (IF2).*

This was an exception rather than the norm though, and most of the participant tutors did not report or focus on the benefits or alternative affordances that online technologies may bring, but instead reported what they liked and missed about teaching face-to-face. This is an example of the tutors' deficit thinking which may be partly to do with the lack of experience the tutors have in online teaching, but also reflects some of the limitations of the online teaching environment.

Strategies the Tutors Used to Communicate with Students Online

Many of the case-study tutors spoke of ways they used synchronous communication with students or would like to have done so. Again this is evidence that they wanted to draw

on their more familiar social practices associated with the face-to-face learning culture and the areas where they had formed *habitus* from the immersion in this culture. A few of the case-study tutors contacted individual students who were having specific difficulties by phone or Skype and reported that they offered their students a phone tutorial following feedback:

> *Yes communication is entirely different and sometimes if a person was struggling, it was easier to explain over the telephone, which isn't face-to-face, however a conversation is sometimes more useful (SF9).*

> *I had to phone at home a couple of very anxious students who were finding it difficult (SF10).*

> *I actually rang the students up and discussed their proposals with them over the telephone (IM4).*

> *I did offer mine individual tutorials, phone tutorials (IF1).*

Three of the tutors mentioned that they would have liked to have used webcams with students, to develop a more human/personal contact:

> *I would like to use the webcam more… if you are starting to use things like webcams (…) then maybe that will make it a little bit easier when you actually see and talk to people from a distance (IF2).*

This could be seen as evidence of some of the tutors wanting to re-create the social practices they are comfortable and familiar with in face-to-face learning culture, attempting to find the next best thing to having face-to-face contact, or it could be thought of as a positive strategy of trying to use the technology to engage learners and build the relationships with them.

One of the ways in which some of the tutors felt that they had to adapt their normal communication strategies was to respond quickly to students in order to reassure them. Because the students were not getting the verbal reassurance in regular face-to-face classes, some of the case-study tutors felt that they needed to reassure students by the speed of their response as well as the wording they used. Renes & Strange (2011) also found this: "instructors who respond to students' concerns quickly (within 48 hours) and who are dependable, friendly, and empathic all support the success of the distance education environment" (p.210). Students who had to wait for replies were perceived by some of the case-study tutors to get extremely anxious:

> *It is easy for a student to get lost online. Respond to e-mails quickly, even if only to say I have got your e-mail and will get back to you shortly. Online learning is lonely (SF12).*

> *I was able to look at email every day and give students a quick answer to an issue, and I think with online learning they need almost instant responses, they don't want to wait three days for a response (IF1).*

It was also seen as important by tutors to be regularly in touch one way or another with students to make up for the regular contact they would have in a face-to-face situation:

> *try to keep in touch with learners. Even if you feel you are not getting anywhere, my experience is that learners really appreciate the fact that you don't give up on them (SF11).*

> *Constantly reassuring the students that the work they are producing is of a good standard. Keeping their confidence up and staying in touch (SF4).*

This was also reported by Dykman & Davis (2008c) as being important in online teaching:

> *A teacher that is communicating with students regularly and showing both enthusiasm for the course material and for the online teaching process, and helping them learn, greatly increases the motivation of the students to perform. Consistent interaction, steady participation, and timely reinforcement are the keys to keeping the students in an online course involved and active in the cyber learning process. (p.287)*

Chapter Conclusions and Suggestions for Practice

It was not easy for many of the tutors to adapt to using online communication methods with their students. They have been immersed in a face-to-face learning culture for their whole teaching experience to date, and formed their *habitus* based on their exposure to face-to-face teaching practices. Their tacit knowledge of communication protocols have been developed during their face-to-face teaching activities, similar to what Hughes & Hewson (2002) report here:

> *Some of the more familiar micro-genres employed in a classroom include presentations, discussions, seminars, question and answer sessions, brainstorms, small group work, debates, etc. There are many others. Each of these micro-genres imposes constraints on who can and cannot speak, on what can be said and how it is said, on the sequence of speakers, on appropriate intonations and degrees of formality, on the physical and interpersonal groupings to be employed, and so on. Teachers and students are more or less expert in interpreting and implementing the requirements of these micro-genres after years of experience in classroom settings. (p.149)*

The case-study tutors are likely to have spent years developing their communication skills in the face-to-face teaching environment, but with the change in teaching context to online delivery, they faced having to learn new strategies for communicating with students online. Savery (2005) reports:

> *In an online learning environment where the students and the instructor meet for a shared learning experience in the same place (an online classroom) but at*

different times, the dynamic is much different. Verbal communication is largely
replaced by text. (p.143)

The change in the normal rules of engagement for teaching as identified above, creates anxieties for most of the tutors, and also for many students who do not know what to expect in terms of amount of contact and communication methods from their tutors, so all of this has to be renegotiated. It is important therefore to manage student expectations in terms of frequency and format of communication with online delivery as it is less clear as to how and when the tutor will be communicating with the students and this can lead to problems. As Dykman & Davis (2008b) explain: "when there is a failure to communicate expectations and the student is not doing what the teacher intends, the situation can deteriorate without either party realizing that there is a problem until it is too late" (p.157). In addition, the online learning culture is more public than that of face-to-face. The tutors had built up their tacit knowledge about social practices in the classroom in a more private way. Now they were renegotiating the social practices in the online teaching learning culture, they had to do it in a much more public way, which felt exposing and uncomfortable for some.

As well as finding it difficult to build relationships and social capital with students, many of the tutors found they had to adapt their communication practice and build up their cultural capital in this area, as Greener (2009) reports "the perceived usefulness of CMC [computer mediated communication] has clashed with already effective and much loved ways of communicating in class" (p.179). Communication online is predominantly text based and permanent, and the tutors had to make their written communication clear, effective, positive and not open to misinterpretation. Most of the case-study tutors missed being able to rely on NVCs to help convey messages and to pick up on any misunderstandings. In particular many of the tutors had not developed any strategies for engaging the non-participating students. Salmon (2000) suggests that e-moderators should develop their online communication skills to engage learners, and Duncan & Barnett (2010) discuss effective online pedagogy and recommend that online tutors have "heightened communication skills, particularly in written communication. With the absence of verbal and physical cues, it is vital that online teachers have the skills to build personal and productive working relationships with their students" (p.249).
There are limitations to the application of the theories of community of practice and situated learning theories here in a number of ways. First, although the tutors are going through the same processes, so can ask each other for help and advice, this teaching practice is taking place in silos, as each tutor just deals with their particular group of students. Therefore the actions of the tutors are not normally visible to the other tutors

which means they cannot observe what the norms of that practice are and learn from them. The novice online tutors are isolated having to act as an expert in this situation. Secondly, with situated learning, novices learn from experts by gradually taking on more responsibility. This is not taking place in the online environment. The novice tutors are not able to observe the expert tutors engaging and communicating with students online and emulate their behaviour; they are learning by doing and by using peer support for suggestions of how to handle specific issues. Thirdly, in the day-to-day practice of their online teaching, the case-study tutors have to find their own strategies to communicate online, and find what works for them. There are formal sessions arranged by the module co-ordinators where the whole group of online tutors meet face-to-face to discuss and share good practice but these only happen once or twice a year, usually at the start and end of the module.

The suggestions for practice arising from the findings of this theme are that by appropriate training and development, new online tutors need to be shown how to communicate effectively with their students via online technologies. Some synchronous activities may be appropriate and this would also assist the tutor to help to build up relationships with and between students. Tutors need to be shown how to create an environment that students feel happy making contributions to. Tutors have to be clear in their feedback as they do not have any face-to-face meetings to clear up any misunderstandings. Finally tutors have to communicate regularly with their students to show that they care and are present in the online teaching environment.

Chapter 10 - Online Tutors & Time: *the danger of it 'spreading out like jelly'*

This chapter focuses on the third challenge to online teaching reported by the case-study tutors, namely issues in connection with time and workload. These issues were frequently cited by the tutors in response to questions relating to the differences between the delivery methods and also when discussing the challenges to teaching online. The chapter helps address two of the research questions: RQ4, about the challenges in teaching online; and RQ1, to do with perceived differences in delivery modes. The chapter will start by briefly revisiting some of the literature in relation to time management and workload issues in the online teaching environment, then move on to identify the theories that are useful to this theme. Next, the theory and literature will be related to the findings from the data analysis in terms of time and workload issues. Finally, the strategies that the tutors adopted to manage these time and workload issues will be considered. The aim of this chapter is to illuminate the differences and challenges for the case-study tutors relating to time and workload issues in the online teaching environment, in order to make suggestions of appropriate development and support strategies to prepare tutors for teaching online.

Firstly a brief review of the literature in relation to time management and workload issues. Colley et al. (in press) claim that "thinking about time still remains infrequent in research on education, health and social care". In their paper they make the distinction between *abstract* time, measured by clocks and *concrete* time, measured by labour and processes, and it is this latter conceptualisation of time which this chapter uses. In this research, time is therefore conceptualised as how long the processes of online teaching are perceived to take by the participant tutors, compared to face-to-face teaching, in terms of labour and effort rather than number of hours. Time is also a socially constructed notion, and the tutors having various tasks and responsibilities competing for their time, find that a tension occurs between what is considered their working time and non-working time.

In the elearning literature, there is much discussion about whether online teaching is more time consuming than to face-to-face teaching, with most literature arguing that it is. For example, Keramidas et al. (2007) claim that "instructors have stated (and research backs them up) that teaching online requires more time and effort than teaching face-to-face in a classroom" (p.34). Ham & Davey (2005) agree:

> teaching online takes longer than teaching face-to-face and therefore costs more, (…) the preparation loads were similar but there was a much greater

> *amount of time required to moderate and sustain discussion both with the group and with individuals. (p.263)*

Dykman & Davis (2008c) concur, warning that:

> *quality online teaching requires extensive interaction between the teacher and his or her students. This interaction demands a commitment of the teacher's time, so the number of students in an online course has a significant impact on the level of interaction that is possible. (p.287)*

It can therefore be a surprise to some tutors and institutions that online is not necessarily a more efficient way of teaching, or a cost-saving strategy. Efficiencies can be gained, but usually occur over time when learning designs can be reused (Clark et al., 2011). In contrast Bailey & Card (2009) argue that online teaching being more time consuming is more of a perception than reality. This discussion is continued below in relation to the data from my study.

A second issue relating to time from the online teaching literature, is that many tutors perceive that there is an expectation to be always available to students. Keramidas et al. (2007) explain:

> *interactions with learners in the 24-7 environment of cyberspace puts tremendous pressure on the instructor to monitor activity in online courses on a continuous basis and provide rapid responses to content questions and succinct solutions to technology problems. (p.37)*

Bailey & Card (2009) agree suggesting that "the expectation of being constantly online and interacting with students can lead to burnout" (p.153). One of the problems relating to time in the online environment is that there are no clear parameters of when to start and stop as there is with face-to-face teaching (Ragan, 2009). This is discussed in more detail below.

Further literature will be included later in this chapter where appropriate, but this chapter will now move on to identify the theories useful to the discussion of time. The notion of learning cultures (James & Biesta, 2007), introduced in Chapter 3 is helpful here in framing the discussion as the tutors move from a predominantly face-to-face learning culture to that of a new online learning culture. In connection with learning cultures, Bourdieu's (1996) notions of cultural capital and *habitus* are also useful, where the tutors have learned through experience the unwritten rules about time commitments and strategies for managing time in relation to face-to-face teaching and now suddenly things have changed and they have no cultural capital on which to draw or *habitus* formed from this new context. Colley et al.'s (in press) notions of *concrete* and *absolute* time, as mentioned above, are also helpful. They argue that in the human service industries, which include teaching, tasks cannot really be measured by concrete time

(clock time) as they take as long as they need, instead they are measured by labour. How long a particular teaching task takes is going to be variable for each tutor. How much real time they spend on their online teaching tasks is partly in their control, in terms of how much time they want to spend responding to contributions, trying to build up relationships, how often they check the site and so on. Part of the time they spend however, is out of their control, for example the assessment tasks as these may depend on the complexity of what they are assessing; and responding to student emails, as how long this task takes will depend on how often the students in their group email them, how many students regularly email them, and the complexity of responses needed.

Situated Learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991), introduced in Chapter 3, is less appropriate here as the tutors are not immersed in an online learning culture in which they can actively learn from the experts by participation in social practices within the community. This is because the issue of managing workload in the online environment is also new to the people the tutors usually consider to be experts. Some tutors who are expert in face-to-face teaching and learning may also resist change. Trowler (1998) argues that the culture of academics including their beliefs, assumptions, values, and behaviour, is extremely durable and resistant to change. Bourdieu's (1997) notion of *habitus* is useful here as the tutors have developed their beliefs, values and norms as part of their *habitus* formed from exposure to the face-to-face learning culture. They are then exposed to a new online learning culture in which they have no experience and therefore does not form part of their *habitus*. This change in culture causes the tutors to feel uncomfortable, "like a fish out of water and rendering conscious what was previously taken for granted" (Sweetman, 2009, p.494). The norms relating to time and workload in the face-to-face learning culture are often no longer applicable to the online learning environment and new skills and practices have to be developed.

This chapter will now consider the analysis of data relating to time using the literature and theories outlined above. Although there was no direct question in the interview or survey to do with issues relating to time management, the issues were a frequently occurring theme in the tutors' discussions about their online teaching experiences. The tutors reported that on the whole they found time more difficult to manage online than in traditional face-to-face teaching. The analysis of data revealed comments clustered around the following main sub-themes: the perceived workload compared to face-to-face teaching; the fluidity of time in online teaching; and the perception of students expecting instant responses online. These will now be discussed in detail below, along with the strategies that the tutors reported they used in managing their online teaching workload.

Perceived Amount of Time Compared to Face-to-face Teaching

As discussed above, it is contested in the literature whether online teaching is more time consuming compared to face-to-face teaching. Barker (2002) commented that being an online tutor "is far more time consuming that conventional face-to-face teaching" (p.11), and Orr et al. (2009) agree writing that "research has reported that teaching online is twice as time consuming than traditional instruction" (p.258). In contrast, Bailey & Card (2009) claim that although many tutors perceived that it takes longer to teach online: "interestingly studies that compared the amount of time instructors spent teaching online and teaching in the classroom found there was no difference" (p.153). Morris et al. (2005) reported that "one of the primary challenges reported by online instructors is the increased workload involved in online teaching" (p.66), but they suggest that "the majority of studies addressing faculty time and workload have relied on survey and faculty perceptions; few studies have explored the issue of workload and time commitment systematically and contemporaneously" (pp.67-68). Duncan & Barnett (2010) state that "online learning, while flexible, is also time consuming for instructors and students alike" (p.259). So the perception of time reported in the literature depends whether the studies are reporting on the preparation of materials for online teaching and/or the facilitation of activities as well as whether the studies are based on tutors' or students' perceptions or empirical evidence of the actual time taken. Hislop & Ellis (2004) offer the explanation that online teaching is perceived to be more time-consuming due to the time spent online being "more fragmented in nature as opposed to a traditional offering" (p.27). They go on to report that "the results of this study seem to contradict common opinion which holds that teaching online takes a great deal more time than teaching face-to-face" (p.29). It was a fairly unanimous perception amongst the tutors in my study that teaching online was more time-consuming than teaching face-to-face. This may be for various reasons discussed below, but typical comments included:

> I accessed the site every day and there was nearly always something to reply to. Basically, it was more time consuming (SF13).

> I just don't think that people recognise the amount of time that you do take up doing it if you are going to do it properly (IF7).

> it is probably more time intensive (IF2).

Some of the tutors offered the explanation of online teaching being more time consuming because it was more text based:

> They also have to write it all out instead of telling people so that might make it more time intensive (IF10).

> *it takes you so long to think about what you are going to put because you have got to think how this is going to come across to the learner you know, it is phrased right, have I mentioned all, got all the detail in this conversation, it is difficult that way, it seems to be very textually time consuming (IM4).*

Asynchronous courses can be very time-consuming, especially if the students get very engaged with the discussions and often the amount of text to read and write can be overwhelming for new online tutors (Bernath & Rubin, 2001; Barker, 2002). Reinheimer (2005) agrees "student-centered activities, especially those involving one-on-one feedback, are time-intensive, if only for the mechanical reason that they require a large amount of typing" (p.462). Again the comments above from the tutors in my study demonstrate that they are comparing online teaching unfavourably to their preferred mode of face-to-face teaching and concentrating on the things that are absent from the online mode of delivery.

Some of the case-study tutors recognised that online teaching may be more time consuming because it was something new to them and involved learning new skills. Most of the tutors had to learn how to use new technologies like the institutional VLE (Blackboard), the electronic marking software (Grademark), and the originality detection software (Turnitin). If these tools were all new to them, it is likely to be time consuming to learn how to use them effectively. In addition to that, they needed to learn the pedagogical aspects of teaching online, and communicating and engaging with students who they had not met, and through the use of technology. Comments included:

> *So you need to find your own way of working that helps you speed up, but often that is quite a slow process to start with isn't it? (IF11).*

> *I did 70 of supporting hours, and that is a lot to do with my own learning how to use the system, being a little unsure if that was the right thing I was writing in terms of feedback, and having to go over it again. It was just like the learning curve for me (IF4).*

Hislop & Ellis (2004) report however that when a tutor experiences a change in the way they normally teach it appears more time-consuming than it really is, suggesting a "change in instructor teaching style and instructor familiarity with the technology may also contribute to the perception that increased time is required for online courses" (p.16). It is possible then that the tutors in my study were perceiving the time they were spending on this online module to be higher than their face-to-face modules in the same way. This may improve over time as they become more experienced. Robinia & Anderson (2010) found that "the highest levels of teaching efficacy resulted after teaching at least 3 online courses" (p.168). They define 'efficacy' as the "confidence or

belief in one's teaching capabilities to achieve success in a specific teaching environment" (p.168).

Fluidity of Time

Teaching students is no longer simply restricted to the classrooms, offices and corridors of the university, or to '9–5' daytime classes. (McShane, 2004, p.10)

The second sub-theme relating to time, and the one most commonly reported by the case-study tutors, was related to issues around time being much more fluid in the online teaching environment. Tutors' discussions around this sub-theme suggest that there is no clear start and stop time for teaching online. Dykman & Davis (2008c) claim "in some ways, online teaching is like conducting a large, ongoing tutorial" (p.286). In addition, switching between synchronous and asynchronous modes can be difficult as Bayne (2010) suggests "working virtually has already been described as working within a 'rolling present' (Hoefling, 2003) – the multiple synchronicities of online communication play on this notion of temporal disjuncture, of many 'nows'" (p.10). Although assessment in both methods of delivery is done in non-timetabled time and can be comparable, the teaching/facilitating time in the two contexts is very different. In the face-to-face environment, class time is very clearly delineated by a set timetable, the class ends at a certain time even if discussions or activities are not complete. The amount of time spent facilitating in the online environment is much more flexible and there are usually no scheduled classes to prepare for. This caused two main issues for the case-study tutors: first, when to fit in online teaching around face-to-face teaching and other responsibilities; and secondly, how much time to dedicate to online teaching, gauging how much time is sufficient to spend on it and more specifically when to stop.

Many of the case-study tutors found time management and fitting their online teaching duties around their other responsibilities and tasks particularly challenging. A discourse about having to 'fit it in' round their 'normal work' came across strongly revealing that they perceived the online work as an extra task and an inconvenience. The case-study tutors reported that they needed self-discipline:

I think that you have got to have a very, very strict self-discipline rule, because I think it is all too easy to leave things when they are on the computer, but I feel you still have to think about that marking scheme and getting that work turned round and not to underestimate the amount of time it might take to do it (IF6).

I think one of the biggest things is organising your time as I think there you need a discipline about it (IF7).

Duncan & Barnett (2010) also found that it is necessary to be self-disciplined as an online tutor especially if the course is predominantly or totally asynchronous. Similar results were found for students (Palloff & Pratt, 1999; Burd & Buchanan, 2004; Savery, 2005; Duncan & Barnett, 2010).

The notion of learning cultures is helpful in interpreting tutors' accounts of their teaching experiences. The tutors, immersed so far in a face-to-face learning culture, have learned - by experience and observation - the cultural norms for the amount of time dedicated to teaching, supporting and assessing students in that face-to-face environment. There is a tacit understanding of acceptable amounts of time spent on supporting and assessing students, usually based on the amount of face-to-face contact hours a tutor is assigned for a particular class. In the online learning culture, there is nothing that they can compare this to, or - with time not being structured in the same way - it leaves them very unsure as to how much time to dedicate to it. As tutors have the opportunity to be constantly online, they feel under pressure to dedicate a great deal of time to this. Tutors agreed it was difficult to gauge the amount of work and time to spend on the online support, and more specifically when to stop. Ragan (2009) termed this the "seemingly timeless classroom" (p.9), where the boundaries between class time and other work are blurred. He continues "the temptation to reach out and be available to the online learner all the time is hard to resist when the laptop and wireless computers make accessing the course so easy" (p.9). The case-study tutors reported similar concerns:

> You then have to decide, where do I draw the line? What level of support you are going to offer, where are you going to begin and end (IF2).

> Just that danger of it spreading out like jelly really, and just taking over your life so without those rules and regulations and structure, it will take over (IF3).

> I wouldn't know when I call a halt (IF6).

The volume of asynchronous activity can build up and be overwhelming for some tutors new to online teaching (Barker, 2002). For example, if a discussion topic engages the students, it can cause a great deal of reading and/or moderating for the tutor. A class discussion would normally finish at the session end time and not all students will have time to contribute. In contrast, an online asynchronous discussion is open-ended and every student can take part and post multiple times. Although asynchronous discussions have the advantage of being more democratic and allowing students who perhaps would not speak up in class to join in, it can be overwhelming for the tutor to manage and keep up with (Bernath & Rubin, 2001). Meyer (2012) found that more experienced online tutors spent less time moderating online discussions, and were able to spend more time

checking other areas of the online course where questions may appear for them. The tutors in my study were generally inexperienced online tutors, so other studies of more experienced tutors may report different findings from this.

In addition to not knowing when to stop, many tutors also reported that it was easy to neglect their online teaching duties because the students were based remotely and there was no scheduled synchronous time, so did not really know when to start either. Duncan & Barnett (2010) recommend that a key skill for online tutors is good time management "because students and teachers can be online at any time. Therefore, more forward planning is required than is usual for traditional classrooms" (p.249). Bailey & Card (2009) agree, one of their 10 principles for effective online teaching being: "learning to use one's time well is critical for students and professionals alike" (p.153). Comments from the tutors in my study included:

> *Keeping up to date with the activities, and remembering to, because the learners aren't presenting themselves at your door for a class, you tend to think, oh no I haven't checked that for a while (IF10).*

> *Sometimes I think I just forgot that that deadline was coming up, because it is only a very small part of my teaching timetable (IF5).*

> *I did forget one of them, until the very last minute (IF2).*

The tutors had not yet gained the experience necessary to feel confident to operate in this environment, feeling like they were doing too much, or not enough, or sometimes both. McShane (2004) reports that the demands of online teaching "have necessitated different time management routines to facilitate up-front planning, and ongoing teaching and communication with students" (p.10). The case-study tutors were also not immersed in an online teaching culture so Situated Learning Theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991) is more limited in its application here, as the tutors in this study had been unable to learn from other experts. The case-study tutors had neither the time nor opportunity to be apprentices and slowly learn the 'trade' of the online tutor, and needed to form their *habitus* by exposure to an online learning culture. They could ask for advice from the course co-ordinators, but having an understanding and confidence of the amount of time to dedicate to online teaching is more gained by experience and by learning by doing, a kind of tacit knowledge built up over time. They had formed their *habitus* by exposure to a face-to-face learning culture, and now their skills and knowledge of the *field* were not appropriate in the online culture, so they were put back in the role of novice having to acquire their knowledge and experience in this new *field*. The case-study tutors had not yet identified with an online tutor community of practice, so in terms of Lave & Wenger's (1991) *learning as becoming*, tutors had not yet become expert online tutors.

Student Expectations Regarding Instant Responses

The online tutors' perception was that the students have an expectation of instant responses because the course is online and therefore accessible 24 hours a day, and the students are used to getting quick responses from other technologies such as social networking sites. Ragan (2009) concurs, warning that:

> the very advantages of flexibility and freedom of choice regarding where and when to conduct the course turn into a trap that makes the instructor feel the online classroom demands constant and ready access. (p.9)

There was strong evidence that the online tutors felt pressure to respond quickly:

> I think with online learning, they need almost instant responses, they don't want to wait three days for a response (IF1).

> there is an expectation that once someone has pressed a send button that they will get an automatic or very very quick response (IF7).

> They also expect tutors to be there all the time, as soon as they log in (SM8).

> students perhaps feel that the tutor is at the other end all the time. And I think that one of the disadvantages is that perhaps students might get frustrated if you don't respond immediately (IF6).

A few of the tutors thought though that it was not unreasonable for the students to expect such quick responses:

> It is not the students having unrealistic expectations, I think it is us as a society behind those expectations, and I think you know, if you are going to do this work, you have got to look at your email every day, and that way you keep the students happy too (IF1).

> be organised enough to answer email within 24 hours, because I think the students are very anxious, and they have said to me that they expect responses, fast responses, if they have to wait three days, they have gone cool on whatever it was they were interested in (IF3).

Hislop & Ellis (2004) suggest that "the more continual attention required by an online class may increase the instructors' perception of effort much more than the actual time expended" (p.29), so here they are proposing that it just feels like more work but actually the time involved is not actually greater. This relates to Colley et al.'s (2012) notions of *concrete* and *abstract* time. The tutors here are not thinking of this in terms of hours spent but in perceived labour, because they are spending time on tasks that are unfamiliar and therefore involve concentration and effort, it is perceived that this is very-time consuming, more so that the concrete time it is taking. They perhaps are not factoring in the fact that they are not teaching in class time or preparing materials or content for students, so the facilitation time may be greater than in face-to-face teaching, but overall it may not be more time in terms of concrete time, or number of

hours. In addition, because the technology affords constant access does not mean the tutors have to be available round the clock, but they need to negotiate what is acceptable and manageable. They have not yet achieved this. Available time to students is more clear with face-to-face teaching as there is scheduled class time and usually pre-arranged tutorials or office-hours for tutorials. When the primary delivery mechanism is via technology this has changed the rules and the tutors are not sure what the established practice is. They want to be supportive to the students but there seems to be a tension between providing enough support and being always available and they have not yet established what they consider to be an acceptable balance.

Strategies Used by the Tutors to Manage their Online Teaching

Strategies that the case-study tutors used to deal with these time management issues included scheduling specific times to work on the online teaching. Usually, tutors chose to do this work outside what would normally be considered the working week. Examples of these strategies included:

> *I have online time scheduled in, if that doesn't sound illogical. But it is always I do 99% of it at home, and usually in the evenings or weekends. But I am prepared to do that because to me it is a better work environment (IF5).*

> *plan it in your diary. Know when you are going to be doing what and when and you know how much time you are going to need to contribute to that (IF2).*

> *I just didn't have time during the day because I was busy doing other things so I had to do it in the evenings and weekends, yes that is when I did it, I didn't have any time in my working day at work (IF11).*

> *I can actually set aside 2 or 3 hours, in an evening to be completely uninterrupted, and get through a lot of work (IF6).*

> *as much of this module is delivered online, it's important that you figure out a strategy to manage your time effectively. Identify an hour a week on your timetable for this module (IF8).*

Ham & Davey (2005) found they needed to set structured time aside for the online teaching workload: "we learned, for example, that asynchronous should not be a synonym for untimetabled or unplanned, and that a clear written timeline that scaffolds the whole process is necessary to ensure structure, support and involvement" (pp.262-263). It is notable that most of the tutors in my study saw this as an extra duty so carried out their online teaching in time they considered out of their normal working hours, possibly evidence of the tutors not accepting the online teaching as part of their 'normal' teaching role.

Meyer (2012) carried out a study on experienced online tutors who chose to teach online. Her study was about the motivations and productivity of the online tutors. She found that most of the tutors reported greater productivity in teaching online but admitted that "given the faculty's largely positive motivations for teaching online and moderately positive comments about productivity, it may be that positive motivations, whether personal or professional, encourage faculty members to work harder" (p.50). This was in complete contrast to the tutors in my study, many of whom did not choose to teach online, were not positive about the experience and therefore perceived the time they spent on it as more of a burden. Hislop & Ellis (2004) concur with this suggesting that "another interesting aspect to be examined is the extent to which faculty enjoy teaching online. If instructors enjoy it much less, they may find the work more burdensome. This could affect the perception of time required" (p.29).

Chapter Conclusions and Suggestions for Practice

The notion of learning cultures (James & Biesta, 2007) is useful in discussing time and the online tutor. The tutors have been immersed in a face-to-face learning culture, where content delivery, timetables and contact time are part of the normative discourse, and a balance of time between these endeavours has been negotiated and accepted. The tutors have developed expertise in managing their time within that context. In the online teaching environment, some of this structure is absent and tutors have lost the normal rules that govern their time. The tutors no longer have guidelines for what is an acceptable amount of time to engage with different aspects of their online teaching duties as there is an absence of norms and established practices, and similarly they are not immersed in an online teaching environment from which to learn. The tutors also feel they have to 'make time' amidst what they consider to be their 'normal' teaching, managerial and administrative duties to work on their online module, as for most this will be the only online module they teach. In addition, institutions do not always recognise that the tutors are learning in this new environment, so usually no extra time is allocated to them to develop the necessary skills (Gonzalez, 2009; Orr et al., 2009). Bolliger & Wasilik (2009) report:

> At least initially, faculty expect to spend more time on online course development and online teaching. Faculty are more satisfied when the institution provides release time for course development and recognizes that online teaching is time consuming. (p.106)

Also of note is that the tutors did not refer to using peer support or experts in online teaching for advice about time management issues. One reason for this may be because they see time management as a personal and/or practical skill which they need to develop themselves rather than something they can learn from others, or possibly they just felt reluctant in owning up to a weakness in this area.

Although the tutors recognised that the increase of time invested in this particular module was partly due to the fact it was new to them and they were getting used to new technologies and practices, they were negative in their responses when discussing the amount of time they spent on this module. Markedly not one tutor mentioned any time saving aspects of this module, e.g. not having to prepare for or deliver face-to-face classes to this group or the fact that the course design was already done for them. This would have offset some of the extra time they spent in other ways but this was not recognised by the tutors.

There is also little precedent to follow in terms of how much time needs to be allocated to this module, and possibly a mismatch between the amount the tutors perceive they need to spend on it, and the time they are compensated for in terms of the time they are being paid for or allocated on their timetable. As time is flexible on an online module, the tutors have to self-regulate the amount of time they think is fair to spend and this can be a tension between meeting the students' needs and the corresponding impact on their other duties and responsibilities. Their other teaching is all face-to-face and the tutors are giving that higher priority in their workload than the online module partially due to the synchronous nature demanding it (as they have no choice but to attend scheduled classes) and partly because they prefer and are more familiar with that method of teaching.

Time is also a socially constructed concept, so often a factor of individual experience and expectations. A task that is new can often appear to take longer than it really does because of the concentration on the task needed. Hislop & Ellis (2004) agree, suggesting that "due to the nature of online technology and faculty experience with this technology, some faculty may perceive an increased effort involved in teaching an online course, with no increase in time expended" (p.16). In terms of Colley et al.'s (2012) notion of abstract time, the tutors feel they are putting in more than the required effort into this module. They are measuring this in terms of abstract time, so in terms of perceived labour rather than in concrete (clock) time. In addition if tutors are feeling negative about doing a task, they are naturally going to resent the time they spend on it, as it is taking the time they would prefer to spend elsewhere, again altering their perception of

the concrete time it is taking. If the tutors perceive a great proportion of their available working time is spent on the activities outside their control (such as answering emails and assessments) they are going to spend less concrete time on the things they do have control over, such as making contributions, and building relationships.

In addition to the above, it was notable that many of the tutors talked about teaching online in what they considered to be their own or non-working time, namely evenings and weekends. This may suggest that in fact they do not consider the online teaching to be part of their day-to-day role and/or that they have given it lower priority than their other teaching commitments. This may be practical, as they have to attend time-tabled classes, but also may be because they are construing this online teaching to be extra to their normal teaching practice rather than part of it, and as a result not allowing it to take any time away from their preferred mode of teaching. Doing the online teaching out of normal working hours could be construed as the tutors' rejection of it being a real part of their role.

The suggestions for practice arising from this chapter's findings are that first, for new online tutors to recognise that there is a learning curve and online teaching will take longer initially whilst they get used to the technology and new methods of working. They need to discuss and manage student expectations in terms of response time and how accessible they will be. Secondly it is important for institutions to recognise that offering courses online may not provide a more efficient way of teaching, they are more flexible but not necessarily more cost-effective. They should therefore allow new online tutors development and training time to get used to the new methods of delivery as Bolliger & Wasilik (2009) warn: "as online teaching has become an expectation and an element of instructors' regular teaching loads at many colleges and universities, we should be concerned about faculty burnout" (p.114). Institutions need to make sure they allocate fair amounts of time to tutors teaching online and not allow this time to be invisible on the grounds that there is no scheduled synchronous time allocated.

Chapter 11 - Peer Support: *find a friend or 'sit by Nelly'*

This chapter focuses on the importance of peer support, which was used as a strategy by the case-study tutors to assist in the transition to the online teaching environment. Peer support, in the form of support from colleagues, experts and central staff, and in giving support to peers, was a frequently occurring theme identified and a key factor for the tutors in coping with this change in working practice. This chapter will start by revisiting the theories and literature appropriate for framing the discussion around this theme, and then relate the analysis of data to these theories. This chapter helps to address RQ5, about the factors which helped support the case-study tutors in their transition to online teaching, and explores the ways in which tutors used peers as a supporting mechanism to ease this transition. It aims to identify the factors needed to be taken into consideration in regards to support mechanisms in order to make suggestions for the development and support of tutors new to the online environment.

This chapter uses the related theories of Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice and Lave & Wenger's (1991) Situated Learning to help frame the analysis of data around the theme of peer support, and these were introduced in Chapter 3. They both relate to the idea that learning is social and contextual. The theories suggest that people learn informally by observing how experts operate in the community. Further, they suggest that people help each other and discuss with others, and learning happens naturally and collaboratively. With CoPs the participants are assumed to have a shared purpose, and learn and interact with each other within the community. Lave & Wenger's (1991) Situated Learning Theory introduced the concept of Legitimate Peripheral Participation which involves experts at the centre and novices on the periphery. It suggests that by taking part in easier activities to begin with, novices gradually become experts by participating in the community and taking on more responsibility.

There are, however criticisms of the CoP and Situated Learning theories. For example, Fuller & Unwin (2004) argue that situated learning theory is possibly over-simplified as the notion of expert can mean different things in different organisational contexts, so that there is not always a clear distinction between novice and expert. They also discuss the implication of Engestrom's (2004) expansive-restrictive learning, suggesting that if the novice just learns a selected number of tasks, and becomes expert in those, then although they can become expert quickly, it is only in that narrow range of skills or tasks rather than developing a broader, more expansive range of skills.

This chapter also uses the notion of social capital as a lens for exploring the tutors' use of peer support. The premise of social capital, first introduced in Chapter 3 is that relationships really do matter (Field, 2008). It suggests that at their core, people are social beings and enjoy being part of a community. By making connections with each other and sustaining them over time, "people are able to work together to achieve things they either could not achieve by themselves, or could only achieve with great difficulty" (Field, 2008, p.1). Social capital sees social networks as valuable assets. It suggests that the interaction between people helps build the community and encourages people to form a bond with others within the community and therefore makes them more committed to that community. Bourdieu (1986) presents social capital as a conflict model which gives people power to use the capital to further their own interest. Bourdieu (1986) claims that social capital functions as symbolic capital because it is "governed by the logic of knowledge and acknowledgement" (p.257). This also links to his ideas of cultural capital and *habitus* whereby dispositions, attitudes and beliefs are learned by the experience being immersed in a particular *field*, in this case the *field* is based on the face-to-face learning culture. Bourdieu argues that social capital is context specific, so what is seen as social capital in one *field* may not be recognised as such outside that context. Bourdieu sees capital as giving people power which could potentially be exchanged or misused for personal gain. The notion of social capital will be used to explore the data in respect to the use of peer support as a mechanism for easing the transition from face-to-face to online teaching. Evidence from the data will be sought to see the influence of social capital, and whether this is used in a more community building and trust way or in more of a conflict way as Bourdieu suggests.

Having established the theories that frame the analysis of data, the discussion will now move onto the analysis of data. Examining the data as a whole, the notion of peer support was a frequently occurring theme emerging from the data in this study, even though there was no direct question relating to peer support in the interviews or survey. It was particularly mentioned frequently in the tutors' advice to other tutors who were about to teach online for the first time. The tutors were open and honest about their reliance on peer support and in their acknowledgment that it was mutually beneficial. It was clear from the evidence that peer support was one of the strategies the tutors used to cope with, and learn about this new teaching context. In the main it was instigated by them but on occasions it was also supported centrally in the form of occasional face-to-face networking and training sessions which brought all the tutors together to share good practice and discuss concerns. Three main sub-themes emerged from the analysis of the peer support theme, which related to support from three different groups of peers: colleagues going through the same process who were therefore on the same or a

similar learning curve; colleagues perceived to be expert, or at least more experienced online tutors or users of technology; and colleagues involved with the setting up and management of this particular provision. Peer support was clearly of great importance to a few participants who mentioned it on several occasions during their responses to different questions. These three main sub-themes will be discussed in more detail next.

Find a Friend

The first of these sub-themes, having peer support from colleagues going through the same process, appeared to be extremely important in supporting the online tutors and an aspect that was most frequently mentioned by them. This support was highly valued, even more than the support from more experienced tutors, because there was an element of team work and working problems out together, sharing their experience and knowledge. There was a sense of community with no power, role or identity issues as with Bourdieu's view of social capital. In other words, participants contributed to the shared knowledge and freely exchanged the acquired wisdom with each other. This informal element is a feature of Wenger's (1998) CoP, as Denscome (2008) explains: "the social learning theory that underpins the notion of communities of practice emphasises the role of informal groupings initiated in response in the need to deal with a shared problem" (p.276). In this case the shared problem is the issues, both pedagogical and technological, in connection with online teaching and this new environment they are encountering. The groups are informal in that they have not been initiated by management but were instigated by the tutors themselves sharing this common experience. As Denscome (2008) describes: "it is crucial to the whole idea of the communities of practice that they come into existence through the need to collaborate with those who face similar problems or issues for which new knowledge is required" (p.277). The tutors formed this community themselves to fulfil a need to mutually support each other through this period of transition in their teaching practice.

Some of the tutors worked in the same organisation as each other and they explained how valuable it was to have colleagues on hand to compare notes, discuss any problems and issues, and share any anxieties they had. Comments included:

> So there were a lot of those moments, lots of alarming moments which if you have got peers around you saying 'oh that happened to me as well' so don't worry, or this is how you get it back or retrieve it. So I felt very lucky because we had got this support network and a lot of us were all in it together (IF11).

> *Well again, for me, one of the spin-offs, I have been working through the insecurities with established colleagues (IM5).*

> *Just ask for help constantly, don't be afraid to email other people or just say to other people I am really really stuck. Now I think you do very much need face-to-face contact as well, I think that is what has been really useful, the fact that we have all been able to go and sit in a room over lunchtime and do our Turnitin feedback and somebody saying…oh what do you do? (…) They have been really valuable, really really good. So not being afraid to ask, even what seems like a stupid question like which button do I press? (IF5).*

We can understand the learning of the tutors using social constructivist concepts. They are building on their existing knowledge and experience of teaching and technology, through engagement with the process of teaching online and discussion with their peers, constructing their own knowledge about the skill of teaching in an online learning culture.

This idea of being in a mutually beneficial community of practice combines well with the notion of social capital. As Putnam (2000) explains "social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (p.19). So the act of peers offering reciprocal support helps build trust between individuals and leads to the community being strengthened. In this study the people with the highest social capital were those with the greatest experience of online teaching, so people with low social capital in this area could feel inferior or intimidated by those with higher social capital. This could be an explanation for the majority of the tutors turning to peers (at least in the first instance) for support rather than the people they consider to be experts, because there were no power differentials in this kind of support. However, social capital could be extended in this context to both experience in teaching (of any type) and position/role within the University, as this is taken into consideration when thinking about a tutor's credibility. Because many of these tutors had already built up social capital in this wider context, possibly that they did not mind as much admitting to not being experienced or expert in this new and more narrow context of online teaching. This aspect does not really support Lave & Wenger's (1991) notion of Legitimate Peripheral Participation idea where the novices move towards the centre of the community by learning from those more experienced. Instead, this is more like novices learning together and supporting each other. They will each have expertise and skills in differing areas, so work together to help each other out.

A criticism of Lave & Wenger's (1991) Situated Learning Theory is that it works from the assumption that the expert is expert in *all* aspects of the role and similarly the novice is novice in *all* aspects. Fuller & Unwin (2004) in their study into the expert-novice

relationship in the workplace found much evidence of experts learning from novices: "our evidence is indicating that the pedagogical relationship is not all one way, as apprentices frequently report that they are 'helping others to learn', a role normally associated with experienced older workers" (p.40). In my study the tutors will have varying degrees of skills and experience in both the pedagogic and technological aspects, so where one tutor could be more expert, for example, in one of the technologies used, another could be more expert in another area like grading assignments. Therefore, it could then be mutually beneficial to share that knowledge and help each other out, as one tutor explains:

> me and another tutor were just saying, will you have a look at this paper because I don't know what to do about it. Do you think it is a tutor reassessment kind of thing, we shared a bit of that really the last few days and that has been reassuring for me as well as her (IF4).

The tutors were also expert and novice at the same time, expert in their face-to-face teaching which accounted for the majority of their workload, and novice in the online teaching. As that only accounted for a small percentage of their workload, the tutors possibly did not mind admitting any shortcomings in this area.

Ask an Expert

The second sub-theme relating to peer support was in connection with support from someone the tutors considered to have more expertise in either online tutoring or specific technologies. Again this was seen as important but possibly secondary to having the community of peers going through the same process together. This idea, in contrast to using support from peers discussed above, does have more in common with Lave & Wenger's (1991) notion of Legitimate Peripheral Participation, whereby novices learn from those with more expertise in order to become more expert themselves. The tutors valued having a face-to-face person to turn to rather than relying on resources like scholarly articles or the internet for example. Comments included:

> the support that was available, the mentoring and the hand-holding I think was one of the things that I really benefitted from, and having somebody just there who was almost like a scaffold (IF3).

> I would have liked an experienced buddy but at the time I was doing it, there weren't many about (IM3).

> I would go to the people who I know can help me (IF2).

This section takes a closer look at relating the using peer experts for support to the idea of learning by Legitimate Peripheral Participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This notion suggests that by moving from the outside as a novice to the centre as an expert usually implies having time to learn slowly by gradual participation in the processes involved and learning from experts. The idea with this model is that a novice starts by taking on just the peripheral jobs and as they prove their worth and learn the ropes, they are gradually entrusted with more important or complex jobs until they become experts themselves. Relating that to my study is difficult, as the participants did not have the luxury of taking their time to learn slowly at their own pace and gradually taking more responsibility; they had to learn quickly and act like experts immediately (at least to the students) and quickly fill any gaps of knowledge or skill. Therefore these novices to online teaching did not have the time or opportunity to act as apprentices until they felt confident, they were catapulted directly into the seat of an expert and were expected to operate as the expert. There was therefore no opportunity for them to be working at the periphery in this context. Although there may be a gradual move from novice online tutor to becoming an expert online tutor, the novice is this situation is thrown straight into the expert role in the centre (rather than on the periphery) and has to perform at least at a satisfactory level from the start. They can ask for advice and get support along the way but are expected to play the role of competent expert. This was alleviated to some extent by the teaching methods being asynchronous, so advice could be taken whenever necessary before taking any action. As a result, no novices were exposed in front of the students as may have been the case with face-to-face teaching. The support and help needed could take place without the students being aware of it.

Another way in which the situated learning theory can be difficult to relate to some contexts, is that novices in some aspects of a job or role can also be experts in other aspects, and evidence of this was found in my data, where the tutors were mutually supporting each other. Fuller & Unwin (2004) concur, reporting that the pedagogic relationship between expert and novice is not always one way as "apprentices frequently report that they are helping others to learn" (p.40). Of course, in the Legitimate Peripheral Participation notion this would be the role of the expert alone.

Central Support

The final sub-theme of peer support reported by the online tutors was the official support on offer, including from the central academic and support staff who designed the module

and managed it. In general, the online tutors could not praise this support enough, and most tutors talked about how helpful and supportive the central staff were. Within this sub-theme, there were two types of support requested. The first revolved around the use of specific technologies and the second about procedural or administrative issues to do with this provision, such as assessment decisions, extenuating circumstances and so on. Typical comments included:

> *The support from the Uni was prompt and excellent (SF7).*

> *The support from [the module leaders] was stupendous and I for one would never have coped and survived without their support. Knowing they were only an e-mail away or phone call away was great (SF10).*

> *Also, don't be scared to ask for help with the online stuff - from my experience the support staff have been really helpful (SF24).*

It is notable that the tutors preferred the support of people (experts or novices), for help and support rather than using other resources. Hardly anyone mentioned using books, journal articles or web resources to help them with the online teaching. This reinforces both the importance of human (and preferably face-to-face) contact and the idea of socialisation in the learning process, which supports the central tenet of both Situated Learning and CoP: that learning is social. It may also point to limitations in how many tutors conceptualise their own professional development i.e. they consider face-to-face teaching and learning to be the norm and the best way for students to learn so seek to learn in that way too.

Learning from peers (both at the same level and superiors) is common within the workplace context, and Eraut et al. (1998) suggest that: "learning from other people and the challenge of the work itself proved to be the most important dimensions of learning for the people we interviewed" (p.37). This is reflected in how the tutors in my study learn about teaching online. The tutors also prefer asking for help from peers informally in practice rather than going on formal staff development training courses, as one tutor explains:

> *I would avoid formal training courses, but if I had a specific need I would seek out somebody who could help me (IF3).*

One of the possible explanations for this is that it is not necessarily the face-to-face contact that is needed but the idea of a real person to connect with which could be replicated by other means like phone calls or synchronous sessions. While this is harder to achieve online it is clearly not impossible. The tutors showed a strong preference for dealing with this by face-to-face means, evidence of their preference for face-to-face teaching and learning. Most participants referred to the support that was available in a

face-to-face setting, there were numerous mentions of 'popping into someone's office' or participating in informal lunchtime discussions as evidenced here:

> *I would say have somebody to hold your hand. I would say you do need a real person who will give you back-up (IF3).*

> *I would just make a fool of myself and say, I know I should know this but… I find that the people that I work with incredibly supportive, really generous with their knowledge and time (IF2).*

There was not much evidence of peer support between tutors based at different locations, so no online community of practice seemed to develop between the whole group of online tutors or sections of them, other than those located together. The tutors based elsewhere would mention contacting the central staff by phone or email, but there was no evidence of peers supporting each other in this more informal way apart from those tutors who already knew each other and worked in the same departments or institutions. This may be due to these tutors not having much experience in using online means as a form of potential support for themselves as well as in respect to students. This could be an area for further study as possibly as the tutors get confident in supporting their students online, they become more open and experienced in seeking help and support via online means themselves.

Chapter Conclusions and Suggestions for Practice

In relation to the CoP notion, the group of case-study tutors appears to meet the criteria for a community of practice. Wenger (1998) defines a community of practice as having three main elements, a *domain*, a *community* and the *practice*. Wenger (2006) states that the membership of a *domain* includes "a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people" (p.1) and this relates to the teaching role these tutors have. This alone however is not sufficient to form a community of practice, but the shared new experience of teaching online, sharing similar issues in connection with that and being brought together for training, networking and the conference created the *community* element. As Wenger (2006) points out "having the same job or the same title does not make for a community of practice unless members interact and learn together" (p.1). The final element of the community of practice is that the members of a community of practice are practitioners, so it is not just a shared interest. In this context the shared practice is teaching online. So this context has the three essential elements of a community of practice as defined by Wenger. However, the real learning from the community only seemed to happen in two ways. First, where the central team brought

the whole group of tutors together for networking and training sessions, these were seen as valuable by the tutors, relating to their preference for face-to-face learning:

> I do like as well the idea that you meet up with the other online tutors, when you come to training and you get to meet your group and other people, and you get to know what has worked well and what needs to be done better and I like that (IF9).

> it was interesting talking to the group of tutors because they were more experienced than me. So we had a full day of training, a lot of which was spent talking to other individuals who were teaching on the course and I found that much better than didactic training (IF1).

The second type of evidence of people working in CoPs were the groups of people working in close proximity to each other who formed smaller CoPs, in either their pre-established friendship groups or the groupings of tutors in the same subject specialism. Here there was evidence of social capital being built as a result of this particular module, with colleagues working together who had not previously done so:

> I am working with [IF8], which again is another opportunity, I have never worked with [IF8] before, and we have got on like a house on fire (…) we were in complete harmony (IM5).

It appears then from the evidence that face-to-face peer support was most of the participants' natural preference for help and support. This may have also been a practical strategy as well. As mentioned before, the tutors needed to know how to do tasks quickly so the proximity of people working closely together would help with getting instant responses, rather than waiting for a reply via email or discussion board in a virtual community of practice. Tutors in geographically separate locations had not built up sufficient social capital to enable trusting online relationships, whereas social capital had already been accumulated in relationships between tutors who already worked in the same location. The social capital had been built by the tutors working together previously in developing and delivering face-to-face courses, where teams had co-produced and team-taught cohorts of students. Social capital can be exchanged in these circumstances whereby people play to their strengths and contribute in ways they feel confident with and have the skills for, or can be exchanged in the future as Field (2008) suggests: "as well as being useful in its immediate context, this stock of capital can often be drawn on in other settings" (p.1). So tutors can utilise the social capital gained in the face-to-face learning culture when they start teaching in the more unfamiliar online culture.

The tutors valued learning and support from other people (experts, central staff, peers), supporting the constructivist and social learning theories, and did not see learning new pedagogic and technical skills as an individual pursuit, in that they did not tend to

consult books, journal articles or web-based resources. This was also due in part to the fact that the 'knowledge' they sought was contextualised, in that it was specific to the context they were in, for which books and other generic resources may not have been helpful. This is one aspect that does support the Situated Learning theory where learning is both social and contextual.

The significance of these findings and suggestions for practice arising from the findings of this chapter are firstly that peer support structures need to be considered a vital aspect of learning to teach online. Where possible, groups of tutors should be learning to teach online together rather than in isolation, so that opportunities are provided for these communities to develop, but not be management led or formed. CoPs are usually self-formed by people with common interests and values. The tutors in my study needed the mutual support of colleagues preferably face-to-face, partly due to the fact they are most comfortable in, and familiar with, operating in a face-to-face environment, and partly due to the practicality and proximity that this environment lends itself to. Secondly, because of their preference for the face-to-face teaching environment, the tutors also preferred to learn in a face-to-face learning environment, ironically even if they are learning about teaching online. They would not have been ready to undertake supporting each other totally online as well. The mutual support appeared to work well where they already have at least some social capital built up so they do not feel at a disadvantage or that they have to prove themselves in any way. In this context the social capital had already been built within the face-to-face teaching environment, so could be exchanged for support in the online environment. Colleagues who are more expert in online teaching can be a useful addition to the support framework. Thirdly the tutors liked being part of a community of practice to learn and develop, they found working with colleague at the same level of expertise (in terms of online teaching) less threatening and more informal than those they considered experts. They prefer not to learn these skills from either formal staff development courses or non-human resources like books or web resources possibly because these are de-contextualised. There did not appear to be any evidence of social capital used for self gain at the expense of others, and no evidence of power or identity issues as Bourdieu suggests, possibly because the tutors felt secure in the majority of their teaching commitment which was face-to-face. There was a sense of community, 'we are all in this together, let's help each other' attitude, with mutual issues and support, and no evidence of competitiveness. Having a peer support system in place, and colleagues to support each other made the tutors feel much more confident as they venture into the unknown territory of teaching online.

Chapter 12 – Conclusions

The features and landscapes of our universities and colleges have changed and over the land hangs the star of new technologies. (Salmon, 2000, p.9)

Over the last decade, there has been rapid growth in online teaching and learning worldwide (Shea et al., 2010). Kupczynski et al. (2010) report that even in 2008 there were nearly 4 million students in the USA enrolled on online courses, and therefore "understanding what constitutes best practices in online teaching is a priority for insuring quality interactions with learners in this environment" (p.23). The combination of educational technology having the potential to impact on pedagogic practice and HEIs moving to a higher proportion of courses being offered online, makes it probable that many HE tutors will have to teach online in the future. As Keramidas et al. (2007) report: "the need to develop and deliver an online course is now a requirement for almost every faculty member at every institution of higher education" (p.34). Hislop (2009) concurs "every faculty member who is not near retirement today is likely to teach online during his or her career" (p.94).

The literature and findings from this study add to a growing body of evidence that the transition from face-to-face teaching to online teaching is far from straightforward, and many tutors experience challenges and anxieties with this new and strange environment. The main aim of the study, as explained in the Introduction chapter, was to explore the experiences of the transition from face-to-face teaching to online teaching, of a group of tutors who had recently been introduced to the online teaching environment, to illuminate tutors' challenges, anxieties and perceptions of difference. This will assist in recommending how best to prepare and support staff teaching online in the future. The findings reveal that most of the case-study tutors did find the online teaching environment very different from teaching face-to-face and that the very things that they enjoy about teaching are absent from the online environment, so they saw it as inferior to face-to-face teaching.

This chapter will firstly draw together the main findings from the study and then examine the usefulness of the theoretical frameworks used to help understand the experiences of the novice online tutors. Next the contribution to knowledge will be identified and suggestions for practice explored. Finally the chapter will consider the limitations to the study and make recommendations for further study that could be undertaken to build on this research.

Key Findings

One of the key findings from this study is that the tutors predominantly perceived teaching online as being substantially different from teaching face-to-face. This is reported elsewhere in the literature, for example Dykman & Davis (2008b) suggest that "teaching well online is really very different from teaching in a conventional classroom" (p.158). Kupczynski et al. (2010) concur: "it is important that faculty understand that online learning differs significantly from its face-to-face counterpart" (p.23). However there is a subtle difference here. These advocates of online teaching discuss the differences in terms of online teaching offering different affordances, possibly even superior to that of face-to-face teaching, but at least equal. The differences that the tutors in this study reported were negative, and they focussed on the things that were lacking in the online teaching environment. Other than the benefit of time and place independence, the tutors did not really acknowledge any affordances of online teaching that face-to-face teaching does not offer.

A second main finding emerging from this study is that in general the tutors referred to online teaching by means of a *deficit model* of teaching. Hall & Knox (2009) explain that the deficit model of distance education is characterised as "education with the f2f element missing" (p.76). This was evidenced by the tutors in this study constantly referring to the aspects of face-to-face teaching that are absent from online teaching which they were noting as a deficiency, such as the lack of face-to-face contact, absence of NVC and missing the dynamics of spontaneous classroom discussion. Ham & Davey (2005) reported similar findings:

> *Rightly or wrongly, we all still tended to think of 'real' or 'good' teaching as necessarily interpersonal and not just interactive, and that therefore virtual teaching, being technologically mediated by necessity, could only ever be a second tier alternative, a supplement to, face-to-face, real-time group interactions, but never an adequate substitute for them. (p.260)*

In addition the case-study tutors did not acknowledge the different affordances that teaching online may bring to teaching and learning. Hall & Knox (2009) suggest that this is not helpful and instead "it would possibly be more useful to consider distance education in its own right, with its own processes, affordances, and outcomes, rather than look at comparative indicators between different modes" (p.76).

The next finding emerging from the data, again linked to the notion of online teaching being the deficit model, is that some tutors are acculturated to face-to-face teaching and are experienced and comfortable in that environment, so show a strong preference for it. Bawane & Spector (2009) agree: "many teachers regard face-to-face communication as

a preferred mode for teaching and learning, in spite of the dramatic progress taking place in online education" (p.383). The tutors in this study have always been immersed in the face-to-face learning culture, view it as the norm, and see it as superior to online teaching. Ham & Davey (2005) suggest that academic staff have "an inability to loosen themselves from conceptual assumptions about 'courses' and 'teaching/learning' having to be, or being best when, 'live' and synchronous" (p.259). The tutors were taught themselves face-to-face, importantly they were trained to teach this way, and so far in their career they have taught face-to-face. This environment in which the tutors are experienced and comfortable has suddenly been replaced, so not surprisingly they feel anxious and fear they are treading into the unknown. This preference for face-to-face teaching often manifested itself into the tutors attempting to recreate their face-to-face practices online, and reporting that they would like some kind of synchronous activities, evidence that they wanted to draw on their more familiar teaching practices associated with the face-to-face learning culture and the areas in which they felt they had acquired cultural capital. In addition, tutors' views of online teaching were strongly influenced by their views of the nature of teaching and learning more generally. Those who subscribed more to the acquisition metaphor of learning thought they were not teaching at all, due to not doing any actual content delivery. The tutors' preference for face-to-face teaching was also reflected in how they conceptualised their own professional development i.e. they considered face-to-face teaching and learning to be the norm and the best way for students to learn so they also preferred to learn in that way too.

A fourth finding emerging from the data in this study is that most of the case-study tutors had no experience of being an online student on which to draw, and as a result struggled with knowing how to build up relationships with students online. For this aspect the tutors have neither the experience of being a tutor or student in this teaching context. They also found it easier to avoid this issue as they were not forced to engage with this in the same way as they would be in face-to-face teaching. Reisman (2006) reported that most HE/FE teachers "had little exposure to online learning as students, and they are consequently not that comfortable with online teaching technologies" (p.64).

The negativity in the tutors' online experience is exacerbated by additional factors. Some of the case-study tutors found it particularly difficult to manage their time in the online environment, particularly with when to fit it in around their face-to-face teaching and how much time to dedicate to it. They often felt they had to do the online teaching work outside their normal working hours. The tutors felt more exposed about teaching online because of the permanency of online communication and interactions. The wording of

feedback caused particular concerns for the tutors who were worried how it would be received by the students. The tutors also perceived that they do a lesser role online, often reporting they were 'not teaching' and this impacts how they perceive their identity which had been built around face-to-face pedagogy. All these factors combined together leave the tutors feeling negative towards their online teaching experience and this is projected in their preference for face-to-face teaching.

Revisiting the Research Questions

RQ1: What did the tutors perceive as the main differences between teaching face-to-face and teaching online?

The tutors did see the online environment as very different to teaching face-to-face. The main differences the group of tutors identified were differences in pedagogic approach, missing the dynamics of face-to face teaching; differences in building relationships with students as this was more difficult to establish online, and building trust was seen as essential; differences in role, as online teaching was perceived more of a facilitatory role; differences in communicating with students, including the lack of non-verbal communication, perceived students expectations of instant replies, and difficulties with giving and receiving feedback; and differences relating to time and workload, as this was more difficult to manage online as was less fixed. These differences are all explored in more detail in Chapters 6-10.

RQ2: Did the tutors think that a different teaching approach or pedagogical strategy was needed online, and if so in what ways?

Summarising the responses to this from the tutors, the answer would be yes, the tutors did think a different teaching approach was needed online. This was due to many viewing teaching as lecturing or content delivery, and there were no lectures (even online ones) in this module. Because the content and learning activities were prepared by the central course co-ordinators, the tutors also did not have an input to the activities that the students undertook. Because of this the tutors felt it was a very hands-off way of teaching. The tutors missed the dynamics of face-to-face sessions including being able to have group activities and spontaneous discussions. The differences in pedagogic approach are discussed in much more detail in Chapter 6.

RQ3: Did the tutors perceive their role to be different online? If so, how?

The case-study tutors, again taking them as a group, did perceive their role to be different online. Most reported that it was more of a facilitatory role rather than one of leader or subject expert. They did perceive their role as very much on the sidelines rather than centre-stage. Because of this they felt they played a lesser role than they do in their face-to-face teaching. Many of them did not feel they had a leadership or social role to fulfil. The issues relating to role are discussed in Chapter 7 of the thesis.

RQ4: What did the tutors feel were the main challenges to teaching online?

The main challenge to tutors was the lack of face-to-face contact with the students, which had a corresponding effect on the way they taught, their communication methods, and how they saw their role. They had to teach via technology which in many cases they had to learn how to use. These two factors taken together made the process of teaching much more difficult for the tutors, and they were anxious about giving feedback via technology and without having built up a relationship with the students online. The online tutors also found managing their time and workload difficult for the online teaching, mainly because time is more fluid, they had not established practice of when to fit it in and when to stop. Many reported having to carry out the online teaching workload in what they considered to be their own time, such as evenings and weekends. The challenges to online teaching are addressed by the themes in Chapters 6-10.

RQ5: What helped support the tutors with this transition?

The main thing that helped the tutors with the transition to online teaching was the support they received from their peers as well as the support and help from the central course co-ordinators and learning technology staff. In addition, the few tutors that had had experience being an online student claimed it was transformative in terms of how they approached their online teaching. Most of the tutors had not had any experience of being an online student on which to draw from. The discussion on the value of Peer Support is in Chapter 11, and the usefulness of being an online student is discussed as part of Chapter 6.

Usefulness of the Theoretical Framework

Communities of Practice

In some respects the notion of CoP is effective in useful to this study in helping to understand the data. This context has the essential elements necessarily for a CoP:

there is a *domain*, the online teaching environment; a *community* of new online tutors; and a shared *practice*-based problem, which is adapting to the new online teaching environment and teaching the same module to students. The tutors formed informal communities to mutually support each other through this change process. The tutors learned together and supported each other, sharing knowledge and advice. It was also accepted amongst the community of tutors that teaching works best when live and face-to-face. They shared these common values and beliefs, and this contributed to the community feel.

CoP does not prioritize knowledge gained from research over knowledge gained from experience (Bentley et al., 2010) which is how the tutors preferred to learn in their workplace. The tutors turned to each other for help rather than reading scholarly literature or using web-based or other resources. Bentley et al. (2010) suggested that "communities of practice are social learning structures: they are open venues of exploration, 'where it is safe to ask hard questions and speak the truth' and where members 'develop the habit of consulting each other for help'" (p.3). This was much in evidence in this case study. However, it was not the only source of knowledge as the tutors also learned from experts and more formal training sessions alongside the peer support. They also turned to the central team for making decisions.

In relation to the idea of legitimate peripheral participation, the usefulness of CoP is more limited in its applicability to this study. The tutors were novices in teaching online, but not immersed in an online teaching culture, learning from expert online tutors. They were still very much immersed in the face-to-face learning culture, and face-to-face teaching made up the majority of their teaching workload. Also the tutors did not have the time to gradually take on more responsibility and work from the periphery to a more central role. Instead, they had to learn and adapt quickly as they had to take on the expert role immediately, and all the responsibilities that entailed. Even though support was available from peers and central staff, they had to at least appear to be competent in front of the students who expected them to take the lead. Bathmaker & Avis (2003) claimed that access to resources for newcomers into the CoP was very important and that "this includes access to a range of ongoing activity, to experienced members of the community, and to information, resources, and opportunities for participation" (p.514). In the context in this study, not all these elements were easily available.

In addition it appeared that only online teachers based in close proximity to each other created informal communities. There were no reports of sharing practice with tutors based geographically separated from them. Tutors in the same subject specialist groups

would have made ideal communities of practice, but did not appear to work in this way unless they also worked in the same department/institution for their face-to-face teaching. This is possibly because these communities would have had to develop and communicate online and the tutors have already shown their preference for face-to-face teaching and learning.

In summary then, a CoP model may not be totally appropriate for conceptualising tutors' introduction to teaching online as there is no 'centre', only 'periphery', and few experts around to learn from. The tutors were not immersed in an online teaching community, as the online teaching was only at the periphery of all their roles. The CoP notion was useful however to conceptualizing how the tutors preferred to learn the skills and knowledge that they thought were lacking, as they used their peers who were in the same community to learn from. They learned predominantly informally and whilst in practice.

Community of Inquiry

CoI (Garrison et al., 2000) is an evaluative framework used in online teaching and learning contexts. It comprises three key elements: cognitive presence; teaching presence and social presence, and Garrison et al. (2000) argue that all three must be present to create meaningful learning outcomes.

Cognitive presence involves the creation of content and learning activities for the students to actively engage with. This was present in this context as the learning activities had been carefully designed centrally and the activities were released automatically on the appropriate date. The activities though were more individual rather than collaborative, and the activities that were built to be more group orientated like the blogging and discussion board activities were optional. Most students worked strategically and either did not engage with those optional activities or engaged quite superficially.

Social presence is described as "the ability of participants in a community of enquiry to project themselves socially and emotionally as 'real' people" (Garrison et al., 2000, p.94). In this context there were activities designed to facilitate this such as the profile blog and various discussion activities, but it did rely on the tutor leading by example and playing an active role in building an environment where the students felt safe to open up and express their opinions. The open communication was present to a limited extent. Some students contributed to the discussion boards, however there was not much in-depth discussion taking place, and often the tutors were completely absent from the

discussions. A minority of the tutors attempted to take a more active role but reported that most students just posted one message and then did not revisit the discussion boards. In terms of group cohesion, there were very few collaborative tasks present in this module. The assessment was very individual and did not require the students to collaborate or take part in the discussions. Because of this there was not much group cohesion evident until the group met face-to-face at the conference after all the assessment had taken place. There was little evidence of students revealing their true personalities but rather a more individual, strategic, task-orientated approach was taken. There was clear evidence that the tutors did not fully understand the role of social presence in online teaching environments, either in terms of modelling good practice themselves or in encouraging students to engage with the course at a more social level. They did recognise that they did not build the same relationships with students as they did with their face-to-face classes, but seemed to accept this as a failing of the online medium of delivery rather than attempt to try to find methods of building social presence online.

Finally teaching presence is the pulling together the other two elements and facilitating activities to ensure an engaging and quality educational experience. It is clear that the tutors did not fully understand their roles in the online teaching environment, thinking that the activities were prepared and released to the students, so all they had to do was assess their work and handle any enquiries. They took on a facilitatory role but possibly not what an elearning proponent would term an online facilitator or moderator but more of a back-seat role. There was some facilitating of the discussion boards or blogs but this was very limited.

To sum up, the CoI model does provide us with a useful tool to evaluate online teaching environments. The lack of both social and teaching presence in this context helps to explain why many of the tutors did not feel they had a satisfactory teaching experience. The course in terms of learning activities was well designed; however the new online tutors had no input to the course design and structure. As a result, they may have felt no sense of ownership or control in this module, which is in contrast to the other modules they teach face-to-face, where they will usually have total autonomy over the design, structure and delivery.

The CoI model is also based on a constructivist theory of learning in which collaboration and joint effort is required to achieve learning outcomes. In this context, the learning outcomes could be achieved by individual pursuit alone, though activities were built in to try to foster collaboration and discussion. It is also important that tutors teaching in this

environment understand the theory of learning that this is based on, and know how to develop meaningful engagement in online learning activities. In this context, there was evidence that the tutors did not know how to do this or subscribe to this teaching philosophy.

Learning Cultures

Learning cultures is an important concept for this study. Learning cultures shape the practice in that culture, and are reinforced by actions within the culture. As these tutors had been immersed in a face-to-face learning culture, and were taught within that culture themselves, the very notion of teaching online, where you do not actually meet the students is an unfamiliar culture to them. When novice face-to-face teachers start their teaching career in FE/HE, they learn from those around them not only about their subject and pedagogic practice, but also the subtle ways in which the culture works. They start to engage in the discourse relating to that culture and engage in social practices that are acceptable and expected in that culture. This in turn reinforces the discourse and practices within the culture and the social practices and behaviours are passed down to the next generation of that culture, so change is difficult to achieve as Baran et al. (2011) explain:

> *teachers often rely on traditional pedagogical approaches that they develop in emulation of professors they consider to be effective teachers. Furthermore, these approaches are formed over the years of developing expertise in the face-to-face classrooms. (p.422)*

Hodkinson & Hodkinson (2004a) found from an empirical study that they carried out in a secondary school, that the cultures of the four different departments were really different, which they suggested demonstrates "the significance of departmental cultures and practices in relation to patterns of working and learning in the teaching profession" (p.29). This of course is not restricted to online teaching but to teaching and learning practices in general. Teaching and learning practices are reproduced from generation to generation but at the same time subtly altered over time. Past experience also plays a part in the shaping of teaching practice as Orr (2009) reports: "pre-existing constructions of teaching practice derive from the biography of trainees" (p.155). Orr (2009) found in his study that whatever the trainee teachers had learned on their teacher-training course, they often reverted back to how they were taught themselves and especially when this matched the learning culture of the organisation within which they were working.

HE and FE are characterised by face-to-face teaching. The discourse around teaching reinforces this for example: lecturers, contact time, lecturer theatres, exams, time-tables, all part of the normative discourse of face-to-face teaching. Because the tutors preferred their face-to-face teaching environment as they were more experienced and comfortable in that culture, they engaged in a negative discourse about online teaching, which was reinforced by participants in that same culture. As the others in the culture shared their views on online teaching, they felt validated in their negative opinions to online teaching. In addition their identity as a HE/FE tutor is based on face-to-face teaching roles and responsibilities. The tutors felt their role as an online teacher was not as central, therefore this impacted on how they perceived their identity.

Leaning cultures can change over time, as James & Biesta (2007) suggest: "they are social practices that depend on what people do and therefore subject to continuous change" (p.4). So they can alter in subtle ways as new practices are adopted and slowly become part of the established practice. The use of technology in teaching is a case in point, first the use of overhead projectors instead of using blackboards became established practice in teaching, this was followed by the use of PowerPoint, which is a tool still used ubiquitously in HE. As technology continues to evolve, it is gradually impacting face-to-face teaching practices, so much so that the majority of face-to-face courses will now be at least supported by technology even if only by a VLE presence. It is unlikely though that totally online teaching will ever become more than just a small percentage of a HE/FE tutor's workload unless they work in a specialised distance learning provider like the Open University in the UK. Because of this, although use of technologies in teaching and learning will become part of established practices in learning cultures and these will change and develop over time, it is likely that online teaching will always be on the periphery of established practice.

Contribution to Knowledge

Several authors in the field report that there is insufficient knowledge about online teaching. Gonzalez (2009) states that "there has been relatively little phenomenographic research on learning and teaching in distance education settings (…) and even less that looks at online teaching" (p.301). Bangert (2004) agrees suggesting that research into online teaching is just beginning to emerge as a unique field of study, and claims that his research:

only begins to inform the knowledge base desperately needed by new and veteran on-line course instructors. As on-line course offerings continue to flourish, conclusive research is needed to validate the effectiveness of teaching practices that have been identified as essential for the design and delivery of quality internet-based courses. (p.219)

In addition there seems to be a clear gap between research findings and teaching practices in this area, as Morris et al. (2005) explain:

Although the availability of web-based education and the number of totally asynchronous courses have grown exponentially in the last decade, the literature on online instruction offers limited empirical guidance to faculty teaching in this environment. Much of the literature is anecdotal and prescriptive, and much more research needs to be done to situate research in practice setting. (p.65)

This study attempts to fill some of these gaps and add to the body of knowledge relating to the online teacher experience.

This study is original in two ways in terms of its methodology. Firstly in its use of case study methodology combined with the application of the theories of Communities of Practice, Community of Inquiry and Learning Cultures to the online teaching experience. The three theories complement each other, but are individually nuanced to provide differing perspectives into the online tutor experience. Secondly this study does not offer theory generation but a different type of knowledge, more useful in practice. As discussed in Chapter 3, it was anticipated that this research study would contribute what Thomas (2010) terms 'exemplary knowledge' which is practical knowledge in a particular context, but that can be used and adapted to suit another situation in a different context. This type of knowledge is generally created from case study research as in this study. Thomas's (2010) article discusses the notion of phronesis which occurs through the practice of teaching (or other practice) and explained more fully in the Methodology Chapter. Teachers are reflective practitioners and use and develop phronesis. Tacit knowledge and insider knowledge are used based on phronesis. This therefore links closely to both situated learning theory and the acquisition of social and cultural capital within learning cultures.

In addition to the unique blend of theories applied to this context, and the way that knowledge is generated, this study also focuses on an under-represented area of educational technology literature. Although there has been prolific research on the use of educational technologies, most of it seems to be based on the effectiveness of specific technologies (Ross et al., 2010; Luo, 2011), and often the research is about using technology to supplement face-to-face teaching or in a blended learning context. Literature about teaching online is available, but in general participants in these studies are advocates of learning technology, have an affinity with technology and have chosen

to teach online or use technology. These tutors are termed by Rogers (1995) the *early adopters*. Many of the tutors in this case study, however would fall into the groups Rogers (1995) would term the *early-majority* or *late-majority*, i.e. those who are not advocates or innovators but rather wait until a technology had been tried and tested and becomes more mainstream before adopting. We are now entering a period of time when more and more HE tutors are required to start teaching online. Up to now these *early* and *late-majority* tutors have not had to teach online and continued to work with the dynamics of the classroom, but now need to be shown how to take this enthusiasm for teaching and translate it to the online environment. Therefore adding to the body of knowledge in this area of educational research and in particular for this specific group of *early* and *late-majority* tutors is vital to inform HEIs the issues and challenges this group of tutors face, and therefore how to best support them in this transition.

The contribution to knowledge of this research includes that teaching online is perceived by these *early* and *late-majority* tutors to be extremely different from teaching face-to-face. Without the necessary understanding of those differences, some tutors will struggle to cope with this new environment as they will naturally try and adapt their face-to-face teaching strategies developed over a number of years and then be uncomfortable if they do not translate well online. As a result most of the case-study tutors discussed the online teaching in a negative way (as explained in the findings above), and see teaching face-to-face teaching as the gold standard and online teaching as inferior. The early-adopter tutors are unlikely to be in this position as they have already experimented with technology in their teaching, identified affordances of specific technologies and adapted their pedagogic practice accordingly. This they have done over a period of time, and been able to try things out gradually having the face-to-face classes there as a safety net if anything does not go to plan. When this group of tutors have to teach online, it is less daunting and less of departure from what they have been doing in their face-to-face teaching. The *early* and *late-majority* are not in this position and they have been reluctant to engage in new practices involving technology and now find themselves having to take this huge step into unknown territory.

This study also identified the support the case-study tutors valued in this transition. In addition to the provision of formal training and central and technical support, the tutors highly valued having the mutual support of peers going through the same process. Having the opportunity to develop these informal localised communities of practice was deemed very useful to the tutors. Within their communities they shared the same values of a preference for face-to-face teaching, and negativity towards the online teaching so

they did not mind admitting any lacking in their skills or knowledge of online teaching to each other as these skills were less valued by the community.

This study provides evidence in support of the CoI framework in that it demonstrates what was missing from the online teaching environment which helps explain why the tutors perceived their experience as unsatisfactory. Although developed for use as an evaluation tool for online courses, the CoI framework was a useful tool to help analyse the experience of the tutors in relation to this framework. This framework identified the elements that were missing online when the participant tutors who were more experienced in face-to-face teaching made the transition to teaching online. The elements of social and teaching presence were generally absent in this context, but tend to happen more automatically in the face-to-face situation. For example students chatting in a corridor waiting for a face-to-face class to start, automatically begins to build social presence, and in the same way just by attending a class, a tutor demonstrates teacher presence. In contrast in the online class, a tutor may often check the VLE site to see if students are engaging but this activity is invisible to students unless the tutor leaves a trace of their activity in the form of comments, new content, announcements or updates.

This study partially supports the CoP notion evidenced by the informal localised communities forming, but this could have been also explained as being a practical solution to the issues the tutors were experiencing. The application of the CoP theory to the practice-based learning of the tutors was limited, as this situation was complex with the tutors not really being immersed in online teaching culture which they were trying to learn about and adapt to. They could not act as newcomers and take on small, low risk activities initially, whilst observing and learning from the experts. In addition, the experts they have learned from previously are likely to have the same negative opinion about online teaching which then reinforces and perpetuates this view of it being inferior. Introducing change that is not widely accepted as positive is complex and hard to deal with using the CoP perspective. Situated Learning theory briefly touches on this point agreeing that "everyone can to some degree be considered a newcomer to the future of a changing community" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.117).

Transferability to Other Contexts

> *If the potential of online learning is to be reached, there is a recognized need to expand our perspectives of online teaching and learning practices beyond the current dominant practices in face-to-face and on-campus classrooms. (Kreber & Kanuka, 2006, p.122)*

As this is a case study, it is recognised that the findings are context specific, so rather than offer implications for practice in general, this study offers suggestions which may be transferable and adapted appropriately to other contexts. In addition, in light of the type of knowledge produced by this research in terms of exemplary knowledge and phronesis explained above, the findings should be taken into consideration with the findings from other case studies of teaching online to build up the body of knowledge in this area.

With the above points taken into consideration, in terms of suggestions for practice for other contexts, this study raises questions about how HEIs can support tutors better in the transition to online teaching. It is suggested that the first step is for HEIs to recognise that this is an unfamiliar and quite possibly uncomfortable change for staff. Because of this, most tutors will need supporting before and during their early experiences of teaching online. This places a huge staff development implication on HEIs in order to deliver a first class and engaging educational experience to their students as Shea et al. (2010) suggests "it is clear that adequate preparation of instructors who venture into this new mode of teaching and learning is vital to its successful implementation" (p.127). With the latest developments in tuition fees in the HE sector in the UK, students will be demanding value for money, and are more aware of what their entitlements are, and this puts additional pressure on HEIs and individual tutors. Hislop (2009) recommends that "to stay ahead of the wave, all instructors and institutions need to begin serious efforts in online learning today" (p.96). The differences for tutors between online and face-to-face teaching identified in this thesis need to be explored with new online tutors and advice and support given. For example the case-study tutors found it difficult to build up relationships with students online, so they need to be shown how to build that social presence, and get students engaging more. The tutors missed the face-to-face contact and spontaneity of live discussion, so they need to be shown how to use synchronous tools to inject some of the live dynamic discussion but also be made aware of the alternative affordances of online teaching, such as students being reflective and it being more democratic (see Chapter 2). Another criticism of the online teaching from the tutors was that it was too linear and formulaic, so tutors need to

explore the wide variety of tools and technologies available, and that in fact it can be made very dynamic with a range of interesting content and activities.

The second potential implication is to ensure that new online tutors receive training and support in both the technological and the pedagogical aspects of teaching online. They need training in respect to technology in various ways: up front training on practical skills; ongoing support if anything does not go to plan; and they need to be shown how to teach using technology and how to re-examine their teaching approaches so they work effectively online. This last factor frequently gets overlooked, so needs to be addressed by training and support that includes discussion about these issues and being able to see models of good practice. LeBaron & McFadden (2008) found that "deeper support is needed to guide the faculty through the pedagogical challenges of online course design" (p.153). Tutors need to have time to reflect on their current teaching strategies and think how well (or not) these may translate online. One way of overcoming this challenge is for institutions to employ academic developers or learning technologists to support tutors in this way. Davis & Fill (2007) suggest that "it is well established that an effective approach to group change is to introduce a change agent. A communicative learning technologist can be a very good change agent" (p. 826). Ooms et al. (2008) found that the "e-developers provided cost-effective mentorship which participants believed would have a positive impact on student learning" (p.111).

This research also revealed the value of peer support. Most of the case-study tutors preferred to learn from peers going through the same process over other potential methods of support, and this is important to recognise when devising support for new online tutors. They need to be provided with the opportunity to work in groups to help develop a learning community working together to learn how to teach online. Bennett & Marsh (2002) concur:

> where possible, the teaching practice should involve groups rather than lone individuals. This will facilitate peer discussion as the backbone of the teaching practice experience, supported and mentored by experienced facilitators but allowing the new tutors to explore issues through a process of collaborative experience-based learning. (p.19)

The tutors in this study also valued informal support from colleagues over and above any formal training provided. A certain amount of formal training is probably required, but it is important for the tutors to be provided with the opportunity to create their own informal communities of practice to support one another. This could be seeded by some formal sessions to train groups of tutors who are located together or work in the same subject area to begin with, to allow informal support communities to develop naturally from this.

New online tutors need to be shown how to build up social presence and relationships with students online. The tutors so far have been immersed in the face-to-face learning culture and have developed all their teaching strategies whilst being a part of this culture. They want to replicate these strategies in the online context, but find this not straightforward and that the online context does not have the same affordances, particularly in respect to building relationships. This means new online tutors need to be shown how to be more visible and increase the social and teacher presence in online delivery. We have established that learning is a social activity and that learning is improved by collaboration and discussion with others, so this nurturing of relationships via new communication channels online is important, and frequently overlooked as part of the transition to online teaching:

> in today's online classroom, student-to-student and student-to-instructor interactions remain an important component of the learning experience. Increasingly studies report that this is a vitally important feature of success for the online learner. (Ragan, 2009, p.16)

Until the relationships have been built, the students are perceived by the online tutors not to trust their peers or their tutor to take risks and share in order to learn. Learning can happen, but will be limited without this trust in place, and the trust is built up via communication to build online relationships. So the key aspects to explore with perspective online tutors is how to build the social and teaching presence online.

Finally, the module on which this study was based was designed based on Salmon's (2000) five-stage model, but the tutors did not seem aware of this. However, it is worth briefly discussing a few related points, as the early and late-majority tutors are likely to be following courses designed using this model. In terms of Salmon's (2000) five-stage model, the tutors in this study appeared to have difficulty with the second level which is online socialisation. As technology has moved on considerably since Salmon first developed her model about 12 years ago, and particularly in the area of Web 2.0 tools and social networking, much of her advice was in connection to discussion forums and use of email and is outdated. Students today are generally much more experienced with online communication including netiquette, privacy issues and permanency. The basic concepts about creating learning activities to collaborate and learn together still hold true though, and Salmon offers some good advice concerning how to develop activities for students online and how to engage students. In applying Salmon's (2000) model to this study's module, the first two stages of access and motivation and at least some initial online socialisation are important, and needed to happen in for students to engage in any way. This did seem to be the case in this context. The other three stages of information exchange, knowledge construction and development were more limited and seem to blur together in this instance rather than being discrete steps which could be

identified (or not). My study both supports and expands aspects of Salmon's model. For example one of the findings from my study about the importance of having experience as an online student is consistent with Salmon's advice to training e-moderators as her first point of advice is to "ensure that the trainee e-moderators experience online learning as learners before they start e-moderating for real" (Salmon, 2003, p.182). However my study extends the issues and challenges that many tutors face when teaching online, particularly with the building relationships and online socialisation aspects of putting Salmon's model into practice.

Limitations of this Study

Every research study has limitations as well as strengths as there is no one right way to conduct research (Malterud, 2001; Savenye & Robinson, 2005). Possible limitations could relate to various aspects of the research process for example limitations of the data collection methods, and the sample used; limitations due to the case study methodology; and limitations in the types of data collected. The possible limitations of this study will now be considered.

First, in terms of the interview sample, the tutors who agreed to be interviewed for this study were probably more secure in their perceptions of online teaching, or at least very secure in their face-to-face teaching practice than those who did not volunteer to be interviewed. This means that the data was slightly limited in this sense, and possibly a more negative view would have been uncovered had I been able to elicit the views of those feeling more insecure. Doing the anonymous survey helped to minimise this limitation and the comments on the survey were generally more negative. In addition because the tutors were secure in their face-to-face practice, I felt that they were fairly open and honest in their opinions about any aspects of the online teaching they disliked. They did not consider it as a main part of their job so appeared to be comfortable to disclosing any negative views; this was evidenced by their discourse in describing their online teaching experience.

Secondly, the fact that this was a centrally-designed, large-scale provision took both the design of the module and some of the autonomy away from the tutors. Had the tutors had more input into the design, and more flexibility in the way it was delivered, they may have felt more sense of ownership over the module and engaged with it more. However this model is probably typical of large-scale provision elsewhere, such as the

Open University in the UK, or where a new tutor is taking over a module from another tutor where the materials are pre-prepared, so it is considered that the findings still have practical value for transferability to other contexts.

Thirdly, despite being asked on several occasions, only four of the tutors agreed to give me permission to look at their VLE sites, which obviously limited the amount of data I was able to collect via this method. This would have provided a richer picture of the interactions between the tutors and students and helped counteract a limitation of interviews which is what people report may not be totally accurate. Merriam (1988) agrees claiming that with interview responses "there is the possibility that information has been distorted or exaggerated" (p.84). If I had access to the tutors' VLE sites, what the tutors actually did would have been visible rather than relying on what they said they did. The fact that few of the tutors felt confident for me to look at these sites possibly suggests their insecurity about this area of their teaching. However, this was not considered to compromise the value of the data that was collected as the focus was on the tutors' experiences, opinions and concerns rather than on what they actually did. In the Methodology and Data Collection chapters triangulation was mentioned as one of the features of case-study research. Triangulation was attempted to be achieved in this study through the collection of data from differing sources including the interview data, the survey data and the data from documents (which included the VLE sites). As explained above, the usefulness of the documentary data was limited, however it was helpful in building up a more holistic picture of the module which formed the basis of the case study. This all added contextual information for the researcher to more fully understand the situational factors the online tutors faced.

Finally, because this was a module that was taught entirely online and by text-based asynchronous methods, the findings are limited in that sense. Different findings could have been produced from the study if the module was delivered in blended format or had included some synchronous sessions.

Areas for Further Research

As is often the case with qualitative research, much more data were collected than could be reported on here due to space to do it justice. Therefore, decisions had to be made about which specific elements of online teaching to focus on, and in particular a potential chapter focussing on issues relating to technology was omitted. The chapter was left out

because it was thought that it produced predictable, and therefore less interesting, findings and was considered to be discussed adequately elsewhere in the literature. The findings from that chapter revolved around the tutors' concerns about the reliability of technology and also issues with very specific elements of particular software which would have probably changed and developed by the time this thesis was even completed. However tutors' adoption of, and attitudes to technology in the teaching and learning process remain interesting areas for future development.

Investigating the role of facilitator in both the face-to-face and online teaching environment would be an interesting further study. This role is frequently mentioned, particularly by, and in connection with, online teaching by experts and novices alike, as in this study, but it would useful to gain a fuller understanding of what tutors comprehend by this term. It is anticipated that there are various ways of interpreting this in relation to teaching online with a range of how much involvement the tutor has and what activities are involved, which would be worth further exploration. There appears to be a gap in the literature about this, which Morris et al. (2005) started to explore in their paper, but there is scope for a more comprehensive study.

The tutors in this study often discussed their criticisms of the online teaching environment in terms of the disadvantages to students. It is possible that the tutors may have been making assumptions about what the students wanted and/or needed based on their own opinions of online teaching. A potential extension of this study therefore would be to explore if tutors and students agree on what constitutes a successful learning experience in an online environment. Again there appears to be a gap in the literature for this type of comparative study as most studies concentrate on either the tutor or the student experience. One study by Lofstrom & Nevgi's (2007) that did explore the challenges for both staff and students in online learning, found that their reports differed, so further research would prove beneficial to more fully understand these perspectives.

In addition Robinia & Anderson's (2010) study reported that tutors became more proficient and confident in their online teaching skills after teaching at least three online courses. A longitudinal study looking at online tutors development and transformation over a number of years would be a really interesting and useful further study.

In Summary

In summary this thesis argues that most of the case-study tutors who are not 'early adopters' found teaching online far from straightforward, and as a result perceive online teaching as a poor substitute to face-to-face teaching. However, due to the increasing number of online courses offered by HEIs, many tutors are likely to become involved with online teaching during their career. Most of the tutors in this study found the online teaching environment very different, and because of this they talk about it in a deficient way compared to face-to-face teaching. They focus on what online teaching does not offer that face-to-face teaching does, but not on any alternative benefits or affordances of teaching online. The tutors frequently tried to adapt their face-to-face teaching practices into online delivery, and constantly compared it to face-to-face teaching which they saw as the 'gold standard' of teaching. The tutors also employed a discourse in which the online approach was compared unfavourably with face-to-face teaching in terms of benefits for students. The tutors had particular difficulties with building relationships with students online, with time management, and with communicating with students online. They found having experience as an online student and mutual peer support very important in their transition to online teaching. The tutors did learn and adapt to the new teaching context though, and both formal and informal processes helped support this, with the emphasis on the informal. Several tutors also found that by engaging in online teaching, it made them rethink their pedagogic practice. In terms of usefulness of the theoretical framework, Garrison et al.'s (2000) CoI was found to be a useful tool to evaluate online environments and by means of the various presences helped to explain what the tutors found more difficult and unsatisfying with online teaching. Learning cultures was useful in identifying the cultural aspects which shapes the perceptions, attitudes and beliefs of the tutors. Finally, Wenger's (1998) CoP was useful in examining the informal peer support structures in this case-study but less useful in terms of how the tutors learned the skills and knowledge of teaching online.

The findings that I have presented suggest that in order to offer students a quality online course experience, HEIs need to acknowledge the substantial differences between face-to-face and online teaching as perceived by the tutors, and take steps to prepare staff adequately for the challenges that they may face.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Survey Questions

(Please note: this survey was done online so the formatting was different to below)

1. Gender:
   a) Female
   b) Male

2. Your Age Group:
   a) 20-29
   b) 30-39
   c) 40-49
   d) 50-59
   e) 60+

3. What teaching qualification do you have?
   a) Cert Ed
   b) PGCE (Secondary School)
   c) PGCE (PCET)
   d) I don't have a teaching qualification
   e) Other…….

4. Other than your teaching qualification what is the highest qualification you have?
   a) HND
   b) BA/BSc
   c) MA/MSc
   d) PhD/EdD
   e) Other….

5. Which sector do you currently teach in?
   a) Higher Education

b) Further Education

c) Secondary Education

d) Primary Education

e) I am not currently teaching

6. Approx how many years have you been teaching (to the nearest year)?

    a) 0 - 1 years

    b) 2 - 5 years

    c) 6 - 10 years

    d) Over 11 years

7. In which of the following general subject area(s)…

	…is your degree?	…do you have previous teaching experience?	…do you currently teach?	…is your subject specialist group?
a. Art/Design/Crafts				
b. Beauty Therapy/Hairdressing				
c. Business/Management/Accountancy/Law				
d. Construction				
e. Early Years/Social Care				
f. Education/Teacher Training				
g. Engineering				
h. English/Comms/Expressive Arts				
i. Health Practitioners/Nursing/Medicine				
j. Hospitality/Catering and Food				
k. ICT/Technology				
l. Land Based Industries				
m. Languages/TESOL				
n. Learning Difficulties & Disabilities				
o. Office Admin				
p. Organisational/Professional Dev				
q. Recreation and Leisure				
r. Science/Mathematics				
s. Skills for Life				

t. Social Sciences/Humanities				
u. Uniformed Services				
v. Other (please specify)				

8. Have you had any previous experience of online teaching prior to becoming a tutor for this module?
   a) Yes – I have taught several online courses before/taught online for several years
   b) Yes – I have a little experience in teaching online
   c) No – I have never taught online before

9. Which of the following technologies have you used within teaching and learning prior to this module?
   a) OHP
   b) PowerPoint
   c) Interactive Whiteboards
   d) Showing DVDs/films/Documentaries
   e) Wikis
   f) Blogs
   g) Podcasts
   h) Film-making
   i) Discussion boards
   j) Instant messaging/Chat facilities
   k) Skype or similar
   l) Video conferencing
   m) Twitter
   n) Second Life
   o) Facebook/other social networking tool?
   p) Other…. Please specify…

10. Did you think you taught in a different way online than you do face-to-face?
    a) Yes
    b) No
    If yes – in what way?

11. Did you follow all the five steps of the model provided by the University on the Specialist Subject site?

    a) Yes

    b) No

    If not which steps did you not follow and why not?

12. Did you find it a useful online teaching model to follow?

    Please rate from 0 not useful at all to 5 extremely useful

    Please give reasons for your answer

13. How would you improve /change the model?

14. Do you think a model like this is appropriate to tutors in all subject areas?

    a) Yes

    b) No

    If no – why not?

15. Do you think that tutors play a different role in online teaching to face-to-face teaching?

    a) Yes

    b) No

    If yes – in what way?

16. Was online teaching different to what you expected?

    a) Yes – it was easier than expected

    b) Yes – it was more difficult than expected

    c) No – it was just what I expected

    If yes – please explain your answer

17. Has the experience of teaching online affected the way you teach face-to-face at all?

    a) Yes

b) No

If yes, please explain how.

18. Would you teach online again?

    a) Yes

    b) No

    Give reasons for your answer

19. What advice would you give to someone just about to teach online for the first time?

20. What do you feel were the greatest challenges to teaching online that you encountered? Please give details.

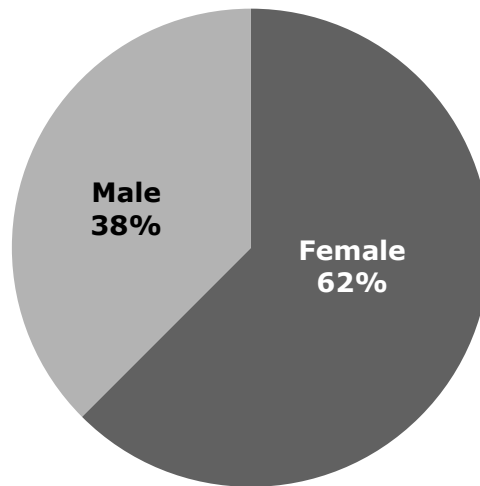21. Any other comments you would like to make about teaching online that have not been covered above?

Thank you very much for completing the survey, if you are interested in the results or would like any further information, please contact me by email: s.folley@hud.ac.uk
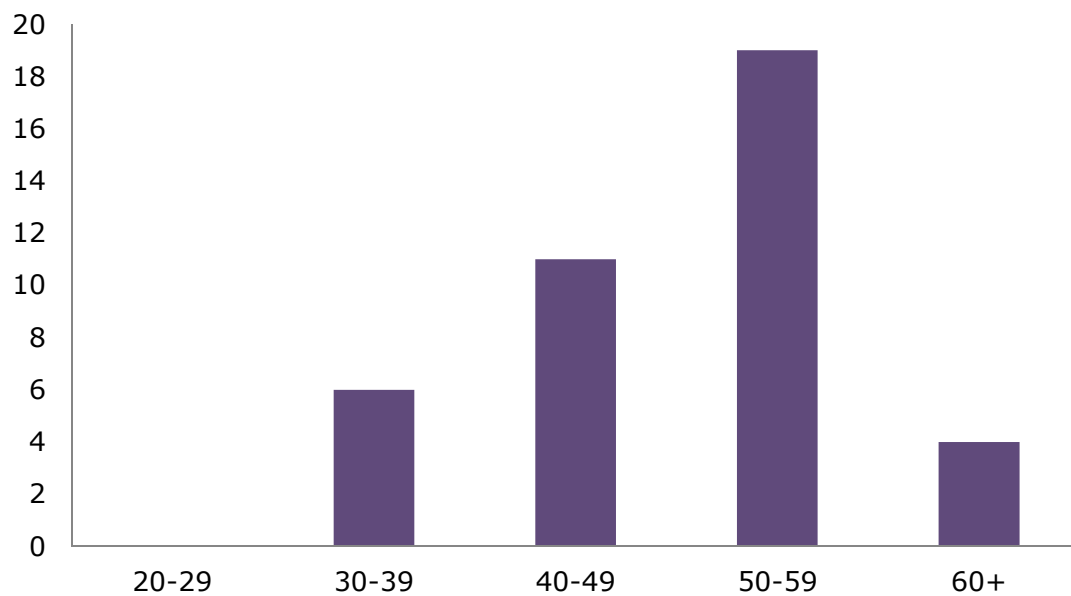
Appendix B – Survey Results

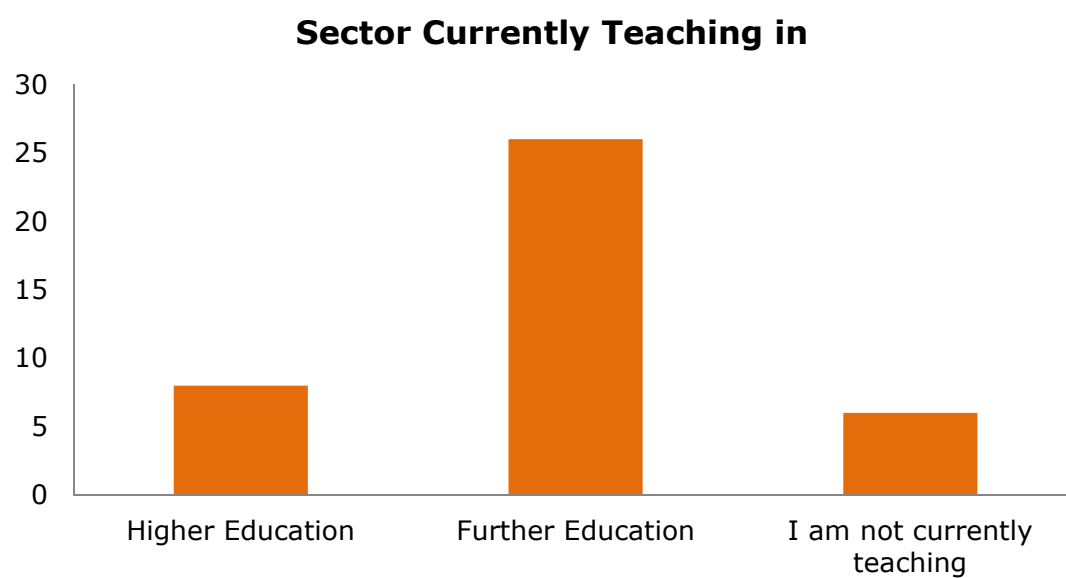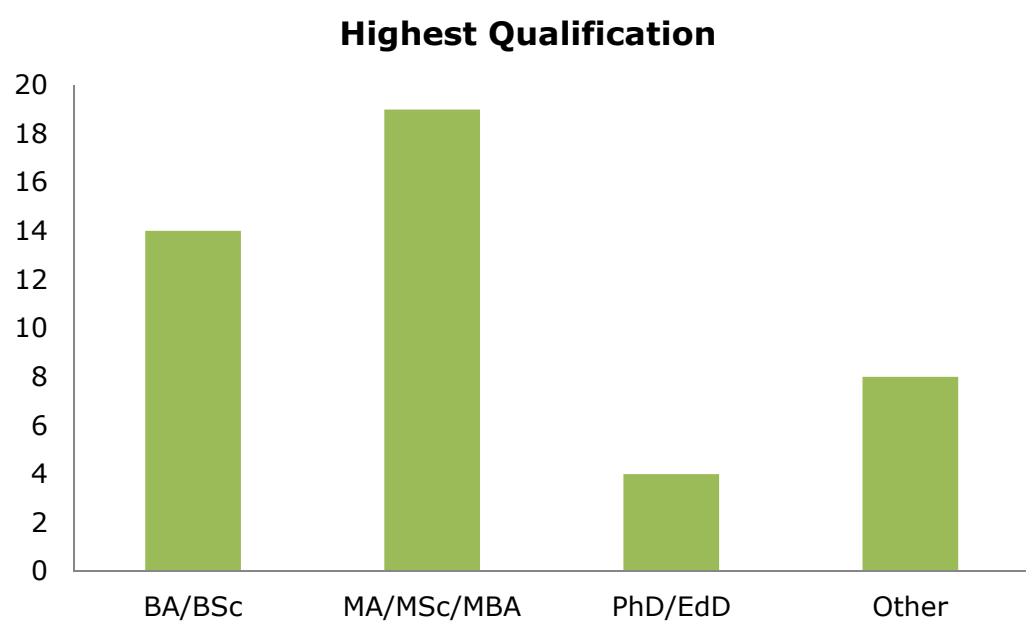40 respondents from a possible 61 online tutors representing a 66% response rate.

Demographic Information

Gender

Age Group

Highest Qualification

Sector Currently Teaching in

Number of Years Teaching

| | less than 2 years | 2 - 5 years | 6 - 10 years | over 11 years |

Previous Online Teaching Experience

| Never taught online | a little experience of teaching online | Taught several online courses before |
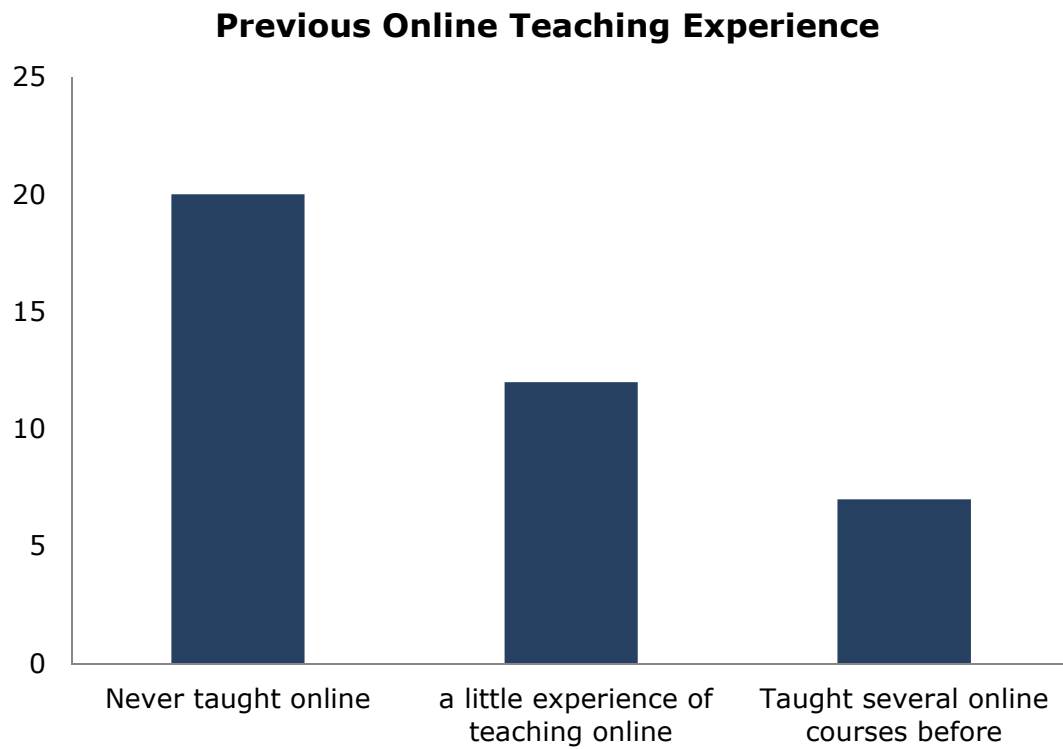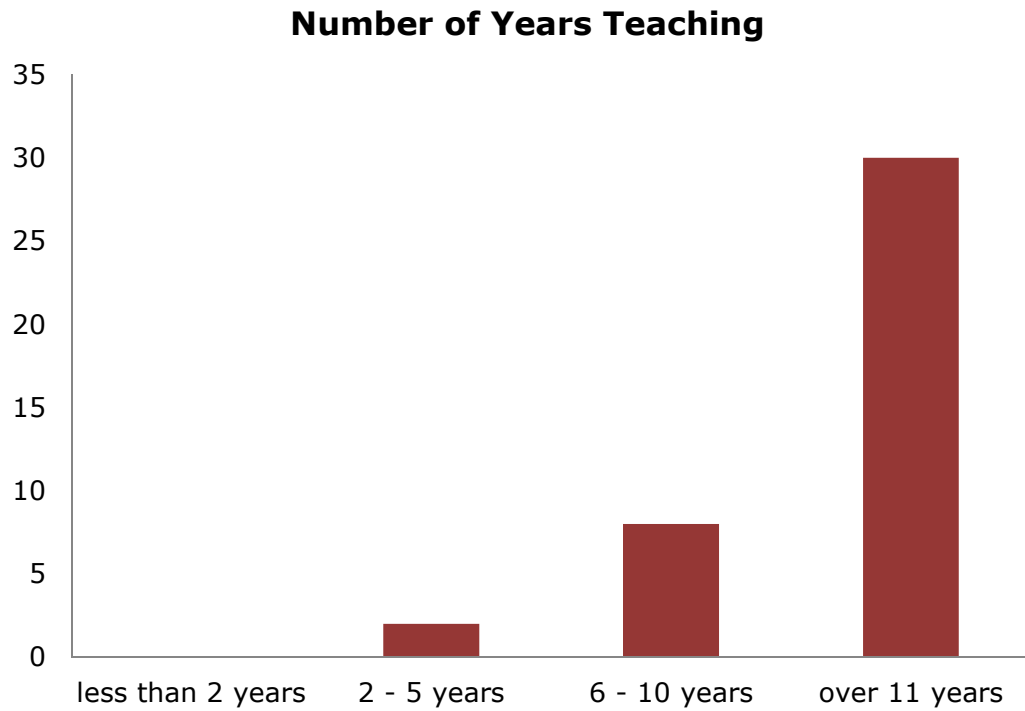
Did the tutors think their teaching role was different online?

No
13%

Yes
87%
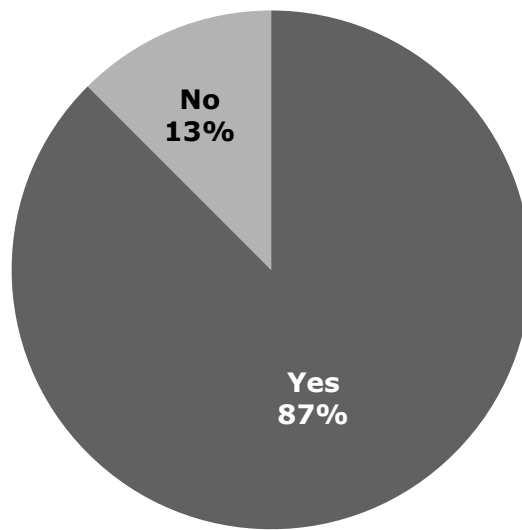
Did tutors think the online teaching was different to what they expected?

Yes - it was easier than expected
25%

No - it was just what I expected
53%

Yes - it was more difficult than expected
22%
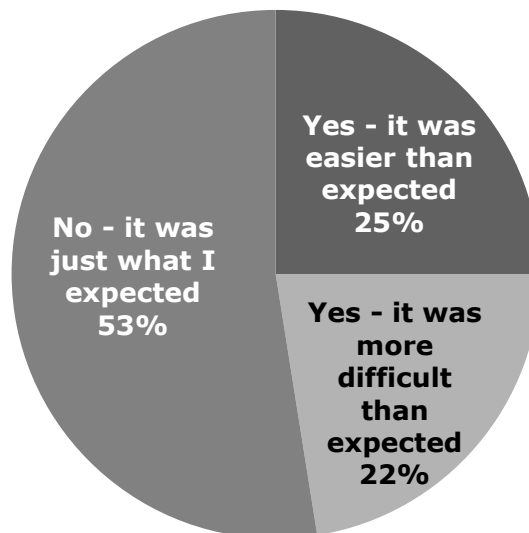
Has teaching online affected the way the tutors teach face-to-face?

Yes
28%

No
72%
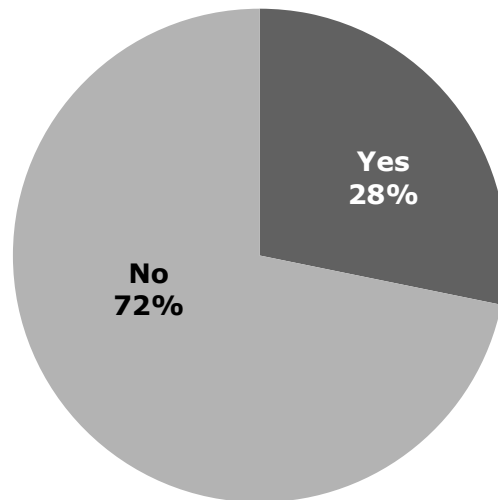
Woud the tutors teach online again?

No
10%

Yes
90%
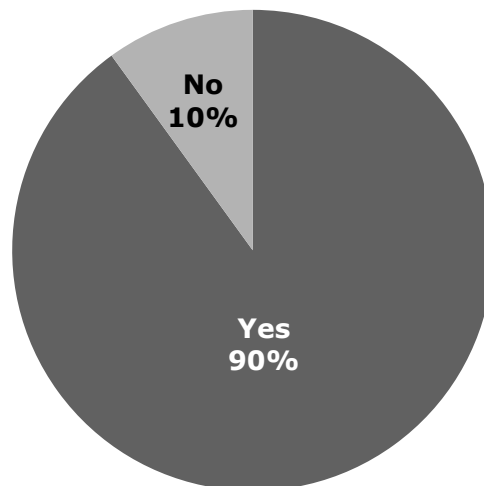
Appendix C - Interview Schedule

Introduction

Welcome respondent and introduce myself.

Provide brief summary of research project

Explain that the interview is being taped, but stress anonymity, explain system and ask if they are happy with being taped.

Explain how the data will be used and stress both anonymity and confidentiality.

Ask if the respondent has any questions before you start recording.

Main Questions	Notes and follow-up questions
How long have you been teaching?	Mainly an ice-breaker question, but also interesting to see if those that have taught for longer f2f have the same issues as new teachers. Ask what subject and level they teach and if they have always taught that subject and level.
Have you taught online at all prior to tutoring on this module?	Explore their background in online teaching – is it totally new to them? Maybe explore their comfort level with technology both for teaching and learning and otherwise.
What support did you receive for helping you to teach online?	Did they attend the given training – what did they think of it? Did they take any other measures to acquire skills for online teaching?
With hindsight, what extra/different support would you have liked for this process?	Could they have benefited from any extra help with anything? If so in what way?
Have you ever been an online student?	If so explore the type and level of course, and how it felt for them. Check if it was just a computer based learning course. Follow up with if they think it has helped them at all in their approach to teaching their online course.
What types of tools and technologies do you use in your face-to-face teaching?	Gauge how comfortable they are with learning technologies. Follow up with if they use technologies in their own personal development like twitter or blogging or being part of an online community – do they think there are benefits to these?
Was online teaching different to what you expected?	If so in what way? Was it harder or easier? Why?
What do you consider to be the main differences between teaching face-to-face and teaching online?	If they do not mention it explore the role of the tutor. Do you think the role of the tutor is different in online teaching and face-to-face teaching? Did they use different methods to teach? Did they need to prepare in a different way? Did they approach teaching differently?

What do you consider to be the main challenges to academic staff teaching online for the first time?	This may get discussed in the question above but if not try and probe for the main issues and challenges that face tutors teaching online for the first time.
Did you have any anxieties about teaching online?	If so what were they? Is there anything that could have been done to minimise these in terms of support?
What did you think to the structured way of teaching online?	Did they like the fact that everything was prepared for them? Did they find this restrictive, would they have liked more control or did they welcome the structure?
Did you find any of the tasks difficult to manage/moderate?	How did they get the students to engage? Did they do anything about students who weren't engaging with the tasks?
If you were designing a similar online module – would you have done it differently? In what way?	What would they change about the design and why?
What advantages did you find to teaching online when compared to face-to-face teaching?	Ask them to identify the main advantage. Was there any unexpected benefits?
What disadvantages did you find to teaching online when compared to face-to-face teaching?	What is the main disadvantage? Did they find any way to overcome this?
Has teaching online changed the way you teach face-to-face at all?	Explore if they are reflecting on their teaching practice and considering using some of the approaches or tools in other teaching formats.
What advice would you give to someone teaching online for the first time?	Any tips they have to pass on? What would they do differently?
Are there any other aspects about your experience of online teaching that you would like to discuss that we have not already covered?	

Conclusion

Thank the respondent for taking part.

Ask the respondent if they are happy with everything they have said, and with how the interview was carried out.

Ask the respondent if they would like to review the recorded interview now or at a future time to see if they are ok with it.

Explain that the recordings will be transcribed but they will be made anonymous, and that the recordings would be kept stored securely.

Ask the respondent if they have any other questions.

Appendix D – Mapping the Interview Questions onto the Research Questions

Interview Questions	Notes and RQ(s) that it helps answer
1. How long have you been teaching? 2. Have you taught online at all prior to tutoring on this module?	Questions 1 and 2 were initial questions to get the participant talking and comfortable and to provide some context and background information.
3. What support did you receive for helping you to teach online? 4. With hindsight, what extra/different support would you have liked for this process? 5. Have you ever been an online student?	These 3 questions helped answer RQ5: *What helped support the tutors with this transition?*
6. What types of tools and technologies do you use in your face-to-face teaching?	This was a background question to help understand the participant's use and level of comfort with using technology in general.
7. Was online teaching different to what you expected? 8. What do you consider to be the main differences between teaching face-to-face and teaching online?	These questions were mainly included to help answer RQ1: *What did the tutors perceive as the main differences between teaching face-to-face and teaching online?* But also expected to provide data for RQ2: *Did the tutors think that a different teaching approach or pedagogical strategy was needed online, and if so in what ways?* and RQ3: *Did the tutors perceive their role to be different online? If so, how?*
9. What do you consider to be the main challenges to academic staff teaching online for the first time? 10. Did you have any anxieties about teaching online?	These questions helped answer RQ4: *What did the tutors feel were the main challenges to teaching online?*
11. What did you think to the structured way of teaching online? 12. Did you find any of the tasks difficult to manage/moderate? 13. If you were designing a similar online module – would you have done it differently? In what way?	These were questions specific to the Specialist Conference Module that were intended to further provide data for two of the RQs. RQ1: *What did the tutors perceive as the main differences between teaching face-to-face and teaching online?,* and RQ4: *What did the tutors feel were the main challenges to teaching online?*
14. What advantages did you find to teaching online when compared to face-to-face teaching? 15. What disadvantages did you find to teaching online when compared to face-to-face teaching?	These questions were included to explore tutors' attitudes to teaching online and help answer RQ1: *What did the tutors perceive as the main differences between teaching face-to-face and teaching online?,* and RQ4: *What did the tutors feel were the main challenges to*

	teaching online?
16. Has teaching online changed the way you teach face-to-face at all?	This question was to see if the teaching online had changed tutors' perceptions of teaching in general and to help answer for RQ2: *Did the tutors think that a different teaching approach or pedagogical strategy was needed online, and if so in what ways?*
17. What advice would you give to someone teaching online for the first time?	This question was mainly another way of asking about the challenges to online teaching but reframing it in terms of advice to others. This was to help answer RQ4: *What did the tutors feel were the main challenges to teaching online?*
18. Are there any other aspects about your experience of online teaching that you would like to discuss that we have not already covered?	This was just a final question to invite any further comments that the participant would like to make that had not been covered by the planned questions.

Appendix E – Interview Consent Form

Interview Consent Form

Researcher: Sue Folley

Study: Exploring tutor's experience of teaching online

- o I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- o I understand that I can withdraw from the research project at any time.
- o I understand that I will be audio-taped and the recordings held off site, but will be kept secure and confidential.
- o I understand that information I provide will be made anonymous by the researcher in publications.

Name of participant: _____

Role of participant: _____

Name of Organisation: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F – Coding Template

This appendix contains the coding scheme with descriptions and an example of each one. The main code is in bold type and sub-codes in italics. The notation for the direct anonymised quotes indicate the gender of the person (F=female; M=male), a code to represent where the quotation was from, either from the interview participants (I) or the survey respondents (S) and numbered so that each participant has a unique number so that quotations from the same person could be identified. So for example, IF5 is a female interview participant number 5 and SM4 is a male survey respondent number 4.

Attitude to Change
o *Individual:* Comments in connection with an individual tutor or other individual tutor's attitude to change, examples of them accepting change as a normal part of professional development or alternatively if they were negative towards change.
> *"sometimes I think the problem is not based necessarily in the technology, but rather than the barriers that people put up, saying that they don't do it, it is like people saying they don't cook or don't wash up, they don't do something, you know they can do it, they just choose not to" (IF2).*

o *Institutional:* any comments relating to institutional change, policies, procedures, expectations, management driven etc, positive or negative.
> *"I see it as a cost-cutting initiative/exercise by management with little, or, no educational benefit to anyone. We are progressing steadily backwards" (SM10).*

o *No anxieties:* any reference to the fact that tutors did not have any concerns about the change from face-to-face to online teaching.
> *"I don't know that it being online really made a difference to be honest. It didn't faze me at all" (IF8).*

Benefits to Online Teaching
o *Can compose response:* Any comment suggesting that students or tutors have time in online teaching and learning to compose a response to email or other posting, so can give a more considered reply than they would in the face-to-face situation.
> *"I would almost prefer email over f2f, I can give a better, considered, I can edit and also provide more information by email than I can face-to-face" (IF3).*

o *Can access anytime:* recognition by tutors that the online environment is constantly available rather than being restricted to class time.
> *"I like the idea it is 24/7, so that people up at 3 o'clock in the morning and want to be getting on with something, they can do, they have got access to it anytime" (IF9).*

o *Can revisit:* examples of the benefits that students can revisit content or discussions when it suits them, so can review things after a class or at assignment time.
> *"It's great for learners and tutors alike to be able to access anywhere any time and if used well, materials are there for students to go back to and refer to" (SF13).*

- o *Easy to share:* comments relating to the fact that online resources make it easy to share compared to paper-based resources.

    "So I think there is a benefit to being able to share information and ideas that way" (IF2).

- o *Efficiency:* comments relating to online teaching being more efficient, so being able to re-use materials, teach large groups, or having time and/or cost savings due to not having to travel.

    "So all that efficiency stuff, I was telling you about, as traditional teaching might say, let me get back to you when I have found my file, you know, all that sort of stuff" (IM5).

- o *Flexibility:* Students and/or tutors being able to fit the online learning/teaching around other commitments. Not having to keep to a strict timetable of engagement.

    "The biggest factor for it, I feel is its flexibility, so I can fit it round doing my consultancy work, doing my classroom teaching, my writing" (IM1).

- o *Good for students with learning needs:* any recognition that online materials can be customised and/or personalised for those with specific learning needs.

    "that kind of activity should be available to students who you know who are finding it difficult to converse in a f2f situation, any combination of physical or cognitive disabilities really but obviously everyone is very different" (IF2).

- o *Keeps copies:* any comment relating to the fact that everything is in one place when in a VLE, so copies of assignments, or learning resources are easy to locate.

    "I have online copies of everything I have written, and everything the students have written to me. I have got online messages, discussion rooms, emails" (IF6).

- o *Time to reflect:* comments recognising that online teaching and learning can help students reflect more on the course content.

    "they can think about what is said before they reply, so it helps reflection" (IM3).

- o *Students given more voice:* Comments relating to students being given more of a chance to engage, like it encourages quieter students to join in and allows every student to have a say.

    "More reticent learners who are unlikely to speak up in class sometimes feel liberated in online environments, they will be more vocal" (IF10).

Feedback

- o *Amount of:* comments relating to the amount of feedback that tutors feel they have to provide online, particularly compared to the norms for face-to-face teaching.

    "I feel that because of the lack of face-to-face contact that I had to spend a lot more time and care in writing to make sure that I was clear in my feedback" (SM3).

- o *Students receiving:* Any comments relating to concerns or anxieties about how the students may receive online feedback, especially because of no face-to-face contact.

    "I think in that way then there is more, more scope for students you know to misunderstand where you are coming from" (IM1).

- o *Wording:* comments relating to having to carefully word feedback to prevent misinterpretation or too much negativity.

"that I was always conscious of trying to use the right words to describe the decision and further action, in a supportive way" (IM2).

Lack of Face-to-face Contact
o *Building Relationships:* Any comments referring to building relationships with students or between students online.
   "Building a relationship is completely different" (SM6).

o *Communication Methods:* Comments regarding communication with students online, including strategies of communicating when there are no face-to-face sessions.
   "Effective communication between both parties. Sometimes things can get misinterpreted online. One is not able to observe things such as body language" (SM11).

o *Dislike of no face-to-face:* Any negative comments relating to not having face-to-face contact with the students.
   "I don't think I would do it through choice because it is not really my preferred way to work, I much prefer to work with people in the classroom, and dialogue in real life to be honest" (F11).

o *Dynamics of face-to-face situations:* Any examples tutors give about the dynamics of face-to-face sessions which they feel cannot be replicated online.
   "but the heated debate that would spontaneously happen in the classroom, there is something really special about that" (IF8).

o *Issues of trust:* Comments relating to students trusting the tutor for either submitting assessment or contributing/engaging with activities. Also any examples of where tutors think that students need trust in each other in order to engage.
   "I think trust, students trust in you because they don't know you and there an element of, when you give feedback and do it online, you learn from your bad mistakes along the way, you have to be a lot more careful when you give it, because you are nto actually seeing that person" (IF9).

o *Making judgements:* examples of tutors saying they made judgements about the students based on their limited engagement and whether they were misguided or not.
   "Well I found that I was making judgements about people based on their draft proposal" (F11).

o *Non verbal communication:* any mention of the lack of NVC in online teaching.
   "you have no sense of body language or messages coming backwards and forwards and I don't like that" (IF7).

o Text based: any comments regarding the online environment being more text based due to no face-to-face contact.
   "They also have to write it all out instead of telling people so that might make it more time intensive" (IF10).

Metaphors
Any metaphors the tutors used in describing their online teaching experience. It can relate to any aspect of it.

"Yes I think it was difficult, because they are often silent. It is like talking down an empty telephone line sometimes, they are unresponsive" (IF10).

Pedagogic Approach

o *Affect on other teaching:* any examples of where teaching online has had an effect on a tutor's face-to-face teaching.

"I have incorporated more IT into my learning, I am using IT rooms more in my learning. It has made me more aware of my teaching, my whole sort of pedagogy really" (IF8).

o *Chance to rethink teaching strategies:* Any examples of where tutors have rethought their teaching philosophy or strategies after teaching online.

"I think it has made people think differently; it has forced people to think differently about the way that they deliver other parts of the course" (IF10).

o Face-to-face teaching style: Any references to how tutors teach in their face-to-face teaching, or their teaching philosophy.

"my personal ethos around teaching is very much about interpersonal relationships and face-to-face can't be taken out of that altogether" (IF7).

o *Learning though doing:* Comments relating to the way they have learned the skills of online teaching through actually taking part in it.

"learning how to deliver online is stuff you learn as you go along, it is not stuff you can kind of anticipate" (IF8).

o *Not teaching:* any examples of the tutors believing they are not actually teaching in the online environment, maybe just assessing.

"it feels like I am just talking to people, I don't feel there is any teaching going on really at all" (IF7).

o *Online Student Experience:* any comments relating being an online student and how that may have impacted on their online teaching.

"Yes, I think it was transformative being an online student" (IF3).

o *Online teaching as a useful skill:* any discussion of the online tutors feeling that the online teaching has taught them useful skills or developed them professionally.

"I now use the skills I have learnt to upload and mark my assignments online. I no longer mark paper assignments for most of my teaching" (SM12).

o *Perception of Difference:* any general comments on the perception of differences between face-to-face and online teaching. Can be in relation to any aspect as long as a comparison is being made.

"I like to have a joke and make learning fun, and I think the danger is with these environments, is that they can be very dry and bringing that fun element, that creative element in, is a spontaneous element in, is quite difficult sometimes" (IM1).

o *Role:* any comment relating to tutors' perceptions of their role in online teaching or compared to face-to-face teaching.

"I think it is more of a limited role. You are definitely mentoring and definitely providing information, support and guidance" (IF1).

o *Unknown environment:* comments relating to the online teaching environment being unknown or unfamiliar.

"Well it is that unknown isn't it? Where anyone doing something for the first time. It is that unknown and you always think that everyone else knows how to do it and you don't, you are the dinosaur" (IF11).

Peer Support

Any comments relating to how tutors have used peers, colleagues, or central staff as support during the transition to online teaching.

"we agreed to meet as tutors regularly every week, so we met early on Friday morning in an IT room and we did our bit of blogging together so we had some consistency between us" (IF8).

Permanency Online

o *More exposed:* Comments relating to tutors or students feeling more exposed by online teaching, maybe in terms of online activity being permanent, or being judged by peers.

"All it does is expose your weaknesses, and if you are happy with your weaknesses, if you already know your weaknesses, then that shouldn't really matter" (IF3).

o *More visible:* Comments relating to the online environment being more visible to others rather than contained in the four walls of a face-to-face classroom.

"It is the same in FE, people don't share things. I think teaching is a very lonely profession, you go in a room and shut the door and you don't know what everyone else is doing" (IF9).

Specialist Subject Module Specific

o *Activities Related:* Any comments relating to the specific activities which were designed for students to engage in as part of the module.

"I didn't go on any of the activities, I assumed the students did them or didn't. I didn't do any of those. To be honest I didn't read either of the papers, I didn't do those activities and I didn't contribute to that discussion board" (IF8).

o *Assessment Decisions:* Tutors' comments regarding the making of assessment decisions, positive or negative.

"Well I guess one of the things is making the assessment decision. Have I got the level right? Certainly in the first cycle we got a lot of pieces of work – can you have a look at this, have I got this right?" (IM6).

o *Central Support:* Any comments relating to the support from the course co-ordinators or central technology support staff.

"So I found the advice they gave me was excellent, so I really appreciated that" (IF11).

o *Links with other modules:* Any mention of other modules, as this online module was only part of a larger course.

"I think the reason why it is perceived as being too much work is that the burden of learning to write academically being referenced is falling onto that module, as it is not adequately covered elsewhere" (IF10).

o *Recommendations:* Any suggestions from the tutors on how the module design, activities or set up could be improved in the future.

> *"I'd have a lot more up front about the learner, in terms of what makes them tick as a learner, what sorts of things do they enjoy doing, and what are the things that get in the way of them learning effectively" (IM1).*

o *Structured Approach:* Any comments relating to the structured approach, and the guidelines for the tutors. Whether they liked the structure or found it a bit restrictive.
> *"I don't have much ownership at all and that's worse because of the constraints of having to do it in a particular way, I don't feel I have the same flexibility or freedom to do it the way I want to do it" (IF7).*

o *Students based at centres:* Any comments that mentioned the students being based elsewhere for the rest of their course and any issues this caused.
> *"you know we had told him one thing and the Centre had told him another and he didn't know if he could get the thing done in the time he had been given, it was terribly, terribly negative" (IF1).*

Student Engagement
o *Lack of*: any comments mentioning that the students did not engage much with the module/at all or any issues in connection with trying to get students engaged.
> *"I can't see how I would have the time for discussion boards and if students would engage with it then fine, but they just won't" (IF8).*

o *Students need to be self-directed:* any comments about students needing to be more self-directed or self-disciplined when learning online.
> *"the expectation is that we will explore that and find that out for themselves and that's the high level of autonomy which is possibly why it may not suit some learners" (IM2).*

o *Tutor input:* Any mention of how the tutor impacted engagement. For example if they mentioned commenting on posts or emailing students to remind them to take part.
> *"actually I wasn't terribly good at, I probably hardly did it, pulling a few threads together and move onto something else, I didn't have time to do that, I just didn't at all, I had all on marking these scripts online" (IF11).*

Technology
o *Access to:* Comments relating to students or tutors access to technology/internet.
> *"I found my computer couldn't support it at home, it supported bits of it, and bits of it it couldn't" (IF8).*

o *Confidence with:* Any comments relating to the tutor's confidence with using the various tools and technologies.
> *"Once I got into it and gained confidence it was easier" (SF7).*

o *Insecurity:* Any comments about feeling insecure or unconfident in using the technology and how this affected them.
> *"Feeling inadequate and putting things in the wrong place" (SM6).*

o *Reliability with:* Comments relating to the perceived reliability of the technology.
> *"I just did not want it to collapse whilst I was doing it" (IM3).*

o *Skills with:* Any general comments about the tutors skills with technology including references to using any technologies in their face-to-face teaching.

> *"I am very computer literate, so if someone presents me with a platform, or a website etc, it is easy for me to navigate it" (IM1).*

- o *Specific Blackboard:* Comments specifically relating to the VLE – Blackboard.
  > *"Because Blackboard isn't the best platform in the world by any means and if you are used to using a different one in particular for the course you are doing" (IF7).*

- o *Specific Grademark:* Any comments the tutors made specifically about Grademark, the electronic submission and marking tool.
  > *"Grademark was just too remote, the comments were just too remote, from what I actually wanted to say" (IF5).*

- o *Support for:* Comments relating to the central support provided for any technical issues the tutors experienced.
  > *"As far as all that technical side of things there was plenty of support, the IT people were very supportive, you know if I had any issues or the students had any issues, they were very supportive" (IF9).*

Time Management
- o *Fluidity:* Comments about time being more fluid online, so less clear in terms of when tutors do the work and when to stop.
  > *"you then have to decided, where do I draw the line, what level of support you are going to offer, where are you going to begin and end" (IF2).*

- o *Organisational Skills:* Comments relating to the tutors having to be more organised to schedule in the online teaching responsibilities.
  > *"I think one of the biggest things is organising your time as I think there you need a discipline about it" (IF7).*

- o *Student expectations*: Comments relating to perceived student expectations in terms of how responsive the tutors should be online.
  > *"that students perhaps feel that the tutor is at the other end all the time. And I think that one of the disadvantages is that perhaps students might get frustrated if you don't respond immediately" (IF6).*

Workload Issues
- o *Additional work on top of normal workload:* Comments relating to tutors having to fit this task in on the top of their normal work, including references to working in evenings or weekends.
  > *"I could only do it at weekends. I would find that I spend all day Sunday doing this stuff" (IF11).*

- o *Compared to face-to-face:* Any comment relating to the amount of time online teaching took in comparison to face-to-face teaching, so if it takes longer or is quicker.
  > *"The amount of time that it actually takes to get the message across. and this is one thing that I am really keen on is the fact that you seem to have to write 300 words to say 10 face-to-face" (IM4).*

- o *For the students:* Any workload issues mentioned related to the students, i.e. tutors perceptions of students' workload for this online module.
  > *"I just think sometimes, we are asking them to do too much" (IF9).*