BLENDED TUTORING: AN EXPLORATION OF TUTOR EMOTIONAL COMPETENCES VALUED BY LEARNERS IN A HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

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Abstract

This paper reports on research into the emotional competences that mature higher education (HE) students, working in blended learning contexts and studying part-time (PT), vocationally relevant, degrees within a School of Education, value in their tutors. A mixed methods approach was adopted to conduct a detailed exploration of eight tutors' practice with data gathered from three principal sources. Interviews with tutors explored their approaches to delivery and considered factors that impacted on quality; students' perceptions of their learning experiences were assessed using an attitude survey; and, an analysis of the content and communications in the virtual learning environment provided insight into tutors' online practice. Goleman's (2001) 'Framework of Emotional Competences' provided an initial structure but, after analysis, some competences were rejected and others were added. The paper suggests that a new group of competences are required that could support effective blended tutoring for mature learners as well as the recruitment and selection of tutors.

Keywords: Blended Tutoring, Emotional Competences.

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the practices of tutors in blended learning contexts and investigates the emotional competences contributing to their effectiveness. This exploration includes analysis of learners' perceptions of tutor effectiveness. Within this paper, emotional competence (EC) is defined as a learned capability based on emotional intelligence (EI) that leads to effective performance in blended learning contexts (see Section 3 for discussion). Blended learning typically involves significant online teaching, learning and support but includes some face-to-face contact (De George-Walker and Keeffe, 2010). There is a growing amount of literature exploring the roles and competences that online tutors should possess, however, these are commonly practical in nature (for example: see, Guasch, Alvarez, and Espasa, 2010; Abdous, 2011). A number of studies have researched desirable competences for effective online tutoring (for example: see, Goodyear et al., 2001; Klein et al., 2004) but, again, with limited consideration of emotional competences. Bawane and Spector (2009: 383) analysed 14 empirical studies that explored necessary roles and supporting competences for effective online tutors. This was undertaken to consider the priority and criticality of eight online tutor roles and related competences. Of all the studies included in Bawane and Spector's research, only Salmon (2003: 55) included reference to tutor personal qualities and competences, but there was little empirical evidence provided for their inclusion. Overall, there is limited research into the emotional competences that learners value in their tutors within blended learning contexts. This paper takes steps to address this gap.

2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

This research focuses on part-time (PT) learners, undertaking vocationally relevant degrees whilst, usually, in full-time (FT) employment. Blended learning delivery models were used on each course investigated to understand tutor emotional competences that are effective in the eyes of these particular learners. Literatures note the difficulties when tutoring these learners, particularly regarding the influence of daily events within their lives, together with the pressures and time constraints of work (Holley and Oliver, 2010). However, adult learners tend to understand what they want to achieve from education and have clearer goals in mind (Richardson et al., 2003). The changing demographics of UK HE are bringing new challenges to lecturers and increasingly universities are developing delivery models to meet the needs of this group of learners (Beetham, 2012: 8). There is a greater use of online learning and tutoring together with an increasing number of blended learning delivery patterns.

University tutors' roles are changing to meet these challenges (Dykman and Davis, 2008: 159) and the adaption of their pedagogy to this context can be difficult as, in my experience, training is often sparse, which can result in negative teaching and learning experiences. As Wheeler notes, "the future success of blended learning will rely heavily on technology-mediated communication, but even more on the skills and knowledge of responsive tutors" (Wheeler, 2007: 116).

The research is based at a 'post 1992' university in the north of England which has approximately 550 full-time academic staff and 24,000 students. All the courses investigated as part of the research were located in the School of Education, and, therefore, focussed on this particular subject area. The courses under investigation adopt a day school model of delivery where learners typically attend classes one day per month with the remaining time spent studying independently, utilising resources held on the virtual learning environment (VLE). Modules are usually a term in length (approximately three to four months) from the first day school until learners submit summative assessments. Tutors then have three weeks in which to mark the work and feedback. Each module, therefore, has two or three day schools with the overall course structure and delivery models developed by module tutors and course leaders in conjunction with course approval committees.

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

3 EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE: THEORY AND DEFINITION

This section firstly provides a brief background to the construct, emotional intelligence, and outlines its relationship with the construct, emotional competence. The adopted definition of emotional competence is stated and justified. It then goes on to establish Goleman's (2001) Framework of Emotional Competences as a useful template to evaluate competences for tutors in blended learning contexts.

Although the term 'emotional intelligence' was popularised by Goleman (1996) in his book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ,* the construct emotional intelligence[1] was first proposed by Salovey and Mayer (1990). By 1997, Mayer and Salovey defined emotional intelligence as follows:

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

I consider Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Competence to be close constructs. Wakeman (2006: 72) argues that Mayer and Salovey's definition of EI embodies "the distinction between EI and EC", with emotional intelligence factors allowing the development of emotional competences. For example, the ability to perceive emotions in others would aid the development of EC in conflict management or empathy (Wakeman, 2006: 72). Goleman (2001: 1) similarly considers there to be a relationship between the two constructs when stating an emotional competence is "a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work". Thus, the definition of emotional competence adopted for this research is a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that leads to effective performance in blended learning environments.

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[1] The term emotional intelligence was first used in 1985 by Wayne Payne in his doctoral dissertation - "A study of emotion: developing emotional intelligence; self-integration; relating to fear, pain and desire (theory, structure of reality, problem-solving, contraction/expansion, tuning in/coming out/letting go)."

Emotional cues are difficult to identify in both interview transcripts and in online, text-based communications and this gave further weight to the exploration of emotionally competent traits in tutors. Gilmore and Warren (2007: 581) summarise the difficulties of identifying emotion in text-based environments when considering "the absence of the body, diminution of paralingual cues and removal of physical social-spatial indicators", when tutoring online. Salmon's (2002: 150) practical examples of expressing emotion in text, such as the use of correct punctuation, are helpful when analysing online communications. However, even with correct punctuation and appropriate emphases in interview transcripts, emotional cues are still difficult to identify. Due to this difficulty, emotional competences identified by means of trait-based models would strengthen the analysis of tutors.

During the 1990s, three lines of research were established, Salovey and Mayer (1990), Goleman (1996) and Bar-On (1997) with Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts (2002: 175) highlighting these as "the major conceptualisations of EI appearing in the literature". More recently, Zeidner, Matthews and Roberts (2009) note Goleman's Model as a prominent 'mixed' EI construct. Goleman's Framework was chosen to underpin this analysis of tutor emotional competences, and this decision was particularly pertinent with its focus on organisational and workplace success. Goleman's Framework and subsequent development into the Emotional Competence Inventory (Sala, 2002), with a revision into the Emotional Competence Inventory 2 in 2006 (Sharma, 2012), continues to be extensively used to research links between EI and a variety of dependent variables within business and leadership contexts (for example: see, Grimm and Cherniss, 2010; Araujo and Taylor, 2012).

Goleman's (2001: 1) Framework of Competences were derived from "internal research at hundreds of corporations and organisations as distinguishing outstanding performers". This four-domain version was refined from the previous five-domain framework (Goleman, 1998) but still with the vision of EI as a theory of organisational effectiveness, therefore, being pertinent for tutors in higher education (HE). This appeared appropriate for the University in which this research is based with Section 2 (Research Context) describing a culture of target setting and performativity. The Framework outlines twenty competences[2] in four clusters of general EI traits but under two main headings - Self (personal competence) and Other (social competence), with two clusters recognising and regulating competence. It is not the intention of this research to critique Goleman's Framework, rather to use it as a template to evaluate competences for tutors in blended learning contexts. The definitions of Goleman's competences are broad and were adapted to the blended tutoring context (see Section 5).

4   DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH METHODS ADOPTED

A mixed methods approach was adopted to conduct a detailed exploration of eight tutors' practice with data gathered from three principal sources. Interviews with tutors explored their approaches to delivery and considered factors that impacted on quality; students' perceptions of their learning experiences were assessed using an attitude survey; and, an analysis of the content and communications in the virtual learning environment provided insight into tutors' online practice.

The tutors' interviews determined their background and relevant teaching experience whilst exploring factors that influenced the success of the modules. To complement the interviews, a random selection of their students (n=72 covering the eight modules investigated) completed a questionnaire which explored their perceptions of the tutor. The questionnaire was designed to elicit general opinion about the quality of tutoring and the course. To obtain this, a modified version of the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) was used (Ramsden, 1991). The scale items adopted were good teaching communication; good teaching feedback on, and concern for, student learning; clear goals and standards; appropriate workload; and appropriate assessment, with additional scales for the online elements of modules.

From interviews with tutors and the analysis of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) content, I ascertained variables regarding the tutors' emotional competences which allowed analysis and comparisons with the Student Questionnaire results.

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[2] This literature generally classifies Goleman's model as 'mixed' or 'trait- based'. However, Goleman used the term 'competencies' to outline the components of his model.

5 EMOTIONAL COMPETENCES ASSOCIATED WITH EFFECTIVE BLENDED TUTORING

5.1 Introduction

Following data analysis, a number of emotional competences appeared relevant and these were identified from factors described in all modules, such as timely feedback on formative assessments, and are considered to be associated with an effective blended learning experience. In addition, competences have been identified from effective tutors, namely those receiving higher Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) scores, which appear to influence learner perceptions of quality. The identified competences have been analysed in relation to Goleman's (2001) Framework of Emotional Competences.

Goleman's Framework includes a range of emotional competences categorised into four clusters: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management. Although there is theoretical significance in examining each cluster for emotional competence in that area (Goleman, 2001: 10), to be considered emotionally intelligent, individuals must exhibit proficiency across all areas (Goleman, 2001: 1). As Goleman (*2001: 10)* summarises, "people exhibit these competencies in groupings, often across clusters, that allow competencies to support one another. Emotional competencies seem to operate most powerfully in synergistic groupings". In light of this, tutor emotional competences are considered in relation to each cluster in the first instance, followed by analysis for potential groupings. Further emotional competences evident are highlighted, which do not form part of Goleman's Framework. Some of Goleman's competences are rejected and, with the addition of further competences, the paper suggests a new group required for effective tutoring in this context. Goleman's definitions have been adapted to suit the context under investigation.

5.2 Self-Awareness Cluster

This cluster comprises three competences:

- Emotional Self-Awareness - tutors recognise own feelings and how they impact on performance;

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

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

Through analysis of this cluster, common to all tutors was the competence Accurate Self-Assessment, however, varying levels of Self-Confidence were apparent.

Tutors described examples that indicated competence at identifying their strengths and weaknesses with regard to practice on modules. Further, they were aware of areas of improvement particularly around online delivery. They would seek out and act on feedback and work with others to improve practice. Tutors appeared aware of strengths in face-to-face contexts outlining a number of positive aspects to practice, however, they were equally aware of limitations regarding online pedagogy. All tutors either collaborated with colleagues about educational technology and pedagogy or had informal mentors available if needed, and worked with others to improve their practice.

All tutors described self-confidence in face-to-face environments with this appearing to be a factor in the generally high CEQ scores achieved. Three tutors (Ann, Claire and Frank – pseudonyms) showed similar confidence whilst arguing online elements were focussed around learner support. Emily and Bill, were more experimental in their pedagogy beyond day schools but, even despite limited success, were confident in their approaches. Two tutors exhibited a lack of self-confidence at times around differing areas of practice, both receiving lower CEQ scores. George outlined problems with the module including online aspects and elements of assessment, but had not changed practice. Daisy displayed a lack of confidence in delivering the module on a day-school basis and also about her online pedagogy.

Analysis of interview data for Emotional Self-Awareness showed that emotions outlined were commonly positive, often related to enthusiasm for face-to-face teaching and the motivational effects this had on learners. Emily described a number of negative emotions when referring to practice both generally and within the module under investigation. However, Emily showed emotionally intelligent

competences by using these emotions to advise and inform practice when stating: "*that's why you worry when you're frustrated and tired and you have to manage your workload - sometimes you have to walk away so you're in the right mind to give the right feedback*". With regard to Emotional Self-Awareness, it appears unimportant whether positive or negative emotions are exhibited as long as they are used to inform and improve practice.

5.3   Self-Management Cluster

This cluster comprises six competences:

- Self-control - the absence of distress and disruptive feelings;

- Trustworthiness - tutors letting others know own values and principles, intentions and feelings, and acting in ways consistent with them;

- Conscientiousness - tutors being careful, self-disciplined, and attending to responsibilities;

- Adaptability - tutors open to new information, let go of old assumptions and adapt practice;

- Achievement Drive - tutors having an optimistic striving to continually improve performance;

- Initiative - tutors act before being forced to by external events.

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

There were aspects of Achievement Drive, indicated by past experiences and commitment to supporting learners, however, tutors did not describe actions that could be considered "optimistically striving to continually improve performance" (Goleman, 2001: 7).   Tutors were selected for this research as they were experienced teachers/lecturers who were generally successful individuals, in a range of contexts, holding management positions, having studied PT, vocational qualifications. These factors indicate a certain level of Achievement Drive. However, throughout the research, tutors were also managing competing objectives as lecturers and some were aware of weak practice but felt, overall, their modules were successful. Emily's comment was illustrative: "s*o, I suppose, I could do with standing back and looking it afresh - I need another day in the week. But, it works, it's quite good so it stays as it is. It's not a problem*".   Further, George outlined improvements identified to the assessment strategy, but, had not made the desired changes. Whilst these examples illustrate tutors were not continually striving to improve performance, the levels of support given by all tutors indicated Achievement Drive.   Harry's comment was illustrative when discussing workload issues, stating "*it didn't have an impact on the student experience because I didn't let it*".   The high levels of support may also be understood as conscientiousness.

Tutors' conscientiousness was most apparent around formative and summative assessment, and their commitment to learner support, however, there were further competences evident beyond Goleman's definition. Each tutor highlighted quick turnaround of feedback and determination to achieve this even with competing pressures. Further, this determination was apparent when supporting learners and meeting individual needs which was particularly evident from Ann and Claire, who achieved the highest CEQ scores. Goleman's definition of conscientiousness includes 'being careful' and 'self-disciplined' and these are extended in this research by the effective tutors to include 'coping potential', 'organised' with a strong ability to prioritise. In this context, coping potential refers to competence in focusing on key tasks and not being influenced by less important demands of the role.   This competence is supported by organisation, the ability to plan work activities efficiently, and the ability to prioritise. Ann and Claire outlined commitment to learner support and kept the focus of efforts where their strengths lie. They did not spend a great deal of time learning differing educational technologies and focussed on their strengths of learner support. Emily also displayed elements of 'coping potential' when outlining supporting other colleagues; "*there's a danger that again it opens the flood gates to getting my own work done*".   However, Emily was mindful of supporting learners and other key demands of her role. The motives behind tutor conscientiousness are unclear and could be influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Ann and Claire's conscientiousness could be due to a lack of tutor support experienced when they were students or possibly their previous experiences in pastoral care roles. Alternatively, conscientiousness could be influenced by the culture of performativity and target setting within which the University academic staff operate, with staff potentially fearful of weak quality

indicators (National Student Survey (NSS) results, for example). Whatever the source, tutor conscientiousness could foster trust from learners and be a factor in the high CEQ scores generally received.

Tutors described practices indicating trustworthiness, however, there were a greater number of significant examples demonstrated by those achieving the higher CEQ scores. As previously stated, trustworthiness could have developed from tutor conscientiousness around assessment and learner support. Further, adherence to standards, as demonstrated by the high CEQ score on the *Clear Goals and Standards* scale (mean = 3.89, on a 5 point Likert scale), is evidence of trustworthiness. This was exemplified by tutors Ann and Bill who spoke passionately about developing autonomous learners and the actions taken to achieve this, whilst maintaining a dialogue to support the process. Interview analysis highlighted the importance of tutors' previous relationships with learners. Tutors receiving the three highest CEQ scores (Ann, Claire and Emily), each had course management responsibilities on learners' courses and two had taught earlier modules. It is reasonable to assume, learners knew these tutors were available, and trust had emerged through positive exchanges.

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

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

5.4 Social Awareness Cluster

This cluster comprises three competences:

- Empathy - tutors have an astute awareness of other's emotions, concerns and needs;

- Service Orientation - tutor's ability to identify learner's often unstated needs and concerns, and match them to HE provision;

- Organisational Awareness - tutor's ability to read currents of emotions and political realities in groups.

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

Whilst the analysis of tutors' awareness of other's emotions was difficult to interpret, largely due to the general lack of interaction in VLEs, there was awareness of learners' concerns and needs, particularly as adults with competing pressures. Holmberg (1989: 162) stated empathy was central to effective distance education and this was integral to learner feelings of belonging, with this being a key emotional competence demonstrated by tutors. Tutors were empathic, with the most effective describing awareness of adult learners' concerns and needs (Golemen, 2001). Needs were met with timely management of formative and summative assessments with tutors aware of the external pressures learners face. The most effective tutors created space for adult learning, focussed on assignment work outside of day schools, and were mindful of individual needs. Aligned with empathic

tutoring were numerous examples of actions to meet needs whilst developing high achieving, autonomous learners. These actions may be understood as Service Orientation as tutors receiving higher CEQ scores were aware of learners' often unstated needs. This was demonstrated through proactive measures to support learners whilst taking measures to provide space for learning within modules.

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

5.5   Relationship Management Cluster

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

- Developing Others - tutors sense learners' development needs and bolster their abilities;

- Influence - tutors handle and manage emotions effectively and are persuasive;

- Communication - tutors effectively give and take emotional information, deal with difficult issues straightforwardly, listen, and foster open communication;

- Conflict Management - tutors spot trouble as it is brewing and take steps to calm all involved;

- Leadership - tutors inspire others and arouse enthusiasm.

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

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

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

Influence and, to some extent, leadership were demonstrated through assessment and support strategies but also through tutor practices to motivate learners. Tutors generally enthused learners at day schools, stated the value of their learning, drew on their experiences, discussed exemplar work, while some prompted those who had not been in touch. Further, Ann, Bill, Claire and Emily, appeared committed to student support and developing autonomous learners, actions that may be understood as the competence Influence.

Competence at conflict management would appear to be important, however, there were limited examples from the modules to make generalised comments. Quick actions taken by tutor Frank to

deal with disrupted day schools potentially evidenced conflict management competence whilst building on abilities of adaptability and initiative, but further examples were limited.

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

Analysis of individual clusters revealed a group of competences contributing to the effectiveness of tutors within the context under investigation (see Table 5-1). Further, competences across clusters could be supporting one another, for example, trustworthiness and conscientiousness require self-awareness, and this was evident amongst the most effective tutors. Tutors receiving higher CEQ scores appear to be exhibiting proficiency across all four clusters, indicating emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2001: 1). Goleman (2001: 10) argues that "emotional competences seem to operate most powerfully in synergistic groupings", and this section considers possible synergies between competences. However, whilst this paper has argued that these competences are influencing learner perceptions of quality, there is insufficient evidence to conclude they are operating in synergistic groupings.

Table 5-1 - A group of competences contributing to the effectiveness of tutors within the context under investigation. (Adapted from Goleman, 2001: 2).

	Self - Personal Competence	Other - Social Competence
Recognition	Self-Awareness • Emotional self-awareness • Accurate self-assessment • Self-confidence	Social Awareness • Empathy • Service orientation
Regulation	Self-Management • Trustworthiness • Conscientiousness • Adaptability • Organisation • Coping potential • Initiative	Relationship Management • Developing others • Influence • Communication

This paper argues emotionally competent blended tutors appear self-aware with a clear understanding of their abilities and limitations. They seek feedback and learn from mistakes, and work with others to support improvement. This is strengthened by self-confidence regarding pedagogy in blended contexts, and in supporting mature learners studying PT, vocational courses. Emotions, both positive and negative, are recognised with understanding of impact on performance, moreover, positive emotions are likely to be beneficial when interacting with learners.

Self-aware tutors appear more likely to be competent at self-management with trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, initiative and elements of achievement drive most relevant for blended learning contexts. Self-awareness of abilities and limitations, learning from mistakes, use of others, and self-confidence, could support and strengthen self-management competences. For example, self-confidence could support a tutor's ability to be adaptable to new pedagogy and emerging educational technologies. Conscientiousness appears important in all aspects of a tutor's role which can support and foster the competence, trustworthiness. Effective tutors in this research provided support whilst developing autonomous learners and described initiative when problems arose during module delivery. Further relevant self-management competences are coping potential and being organised and these are supported by the ability to prioritise. Competence in self-awareness and self-management appear to support tutors' 'social awareness'.

Empathy and Service Orientation appear necessary for effective blended tutors building on the competences of accurate self-awareness, self-confidence, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, achievement drive and initiative. Emotionally competent blended tutors appear to understand the emotions, concerns and needs of learners, some of which will be unstated. These competences need to be exhibited in relation to adult learners studying PT, vocational degrees. However, more than understanding of needs is required and actions are needed that draw on relationship management competences.

Emotionally competent blended tutors appear to foster open communication, influence and develop learners, whilst inspiring others and arousing enthusiasm. Further, competence at conflict management would appear important, however, it was not evident in the modules under investigation. These competences are supported by the abilities outlined above from the self-awareness, self-management and social awareness clusters.

6   CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This paper has identified a group of competences contributing to the effectiveness of tutors, as measured by learner perceptions of quality, within the context under investigation. These competences were identified using Goleman's Framework of Emotional Competences and this analysis indicates that there is a relationship between some tutor emotional competences and effectiveness in blended learning environments. These competences have been extracted from the analysis of eight modules and, for some, a longer term view may be required before a valid, comprehensive framework of competences can be established. Emotional self-awareness, adaptability, initiative, conflict management and leadership competences require a longer term analysis to accurately determine their validity in this context.

This paper has identified that Goleman's Framework is valuable when considering a group of ECs for a broad range of business organisations and particularly leadership roles. The Framework has been developed within this paper to outline ECs, with associated definitions, for effective tutoring in blended learning contexts. This could support the recruitment and selection of tutors and form part of further empirical research into this area, particularly across differing subject disciplines. This research questions the value of some of Goleman's competences, primarily those with a focus on leadership. Whilst blended tutors do lead learners in some respects, it is not as significant in their role with developing learning structures and providing effective support of greater importance. These require a specific group of competences with Goleman's model developed to add further *Self-Management* competences. This is due, in part, to the greater autonomy over work practices the blended context affords over traditional teaching approaches.

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