UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF SOCIAL, HUMAN AND MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES

Southampton Education School

Egyptian Higher Education Tutors' Perceptions of Student-Centred Learning in the Online Environment

By

Nashwa Ismail

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2016

ABSTRACT

It is widely acknowledged that student-centred learning (SCL) gives learners feelings of being appreciated and respected, and thus helps students to be engaged and motivated to learn. SCL is an approach implemented in online learning (OL). This study investigates the role of the tutor, in implementing and facilitating SCL as a positive learning environment in the specific context of OL in Egyptian Higher Education (HE). The study examines tutors' perceptions of SCL in OL as a concept and the factors that influence these perceptions, the pedagogical approaches they need to successfully implement SCL, and the affordances and challenges of this implementation in the specific context of Egyptian HE. Data for this study was collected from 20 online tutors at two major Egyptian universities in Northern Egypt both in focus groups and in individual semi-structured interviews. This study contributes to the area of research into SCL on matters such as definition of SCL, tutors' approaches to understanding the concept, and its practical application in OL. The study investigates the pedagogical repertoire tutors need to implement SCL, describes approaches and strategies applied in SCL, and highlights results which can be used to offer support and guidance to tutors in order to facilitate their students' ongoing learning processes, leading to individually tailored and flexible education paths. The study findings indicate that online tutors approach the issue of SCL in OL with reference to four main aspects: prerequisites, challenges, concerns and solutions. The main research findings are that student control and independence are not widely practised in online Egyptian HE. There are many concerns for online tutors when empowering students such as: losing control, losing tutors' respect and the invisibility of online students for monitoring them. Moreover, the research found that student trust is an issue that needs to be resolved. For tutors, tutor-student trust is a process that requires students' early preparation to learn how to be responsible. The study found that social collaboration in OL offers promising opportunities for educational reform in Egyptian HE, particularly with respect to problems such as overcrowded classes. Furthermore, tutors acknowledged the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in gaining the professional and experiential skills that they need to develop their teaching practices. Another finding of this study, referring to the low wages for tutors in Egypt, is that financial incentives have a significant impact on tutors' feelings that they are invested in and acknowledged by their academic institutions. Consequently, tutors are getting engaged with the learning community and using the utmost abilities to pursue their work.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT ..... **iii**

Table of Contents ..... **iv**

List of Tables ..... **xiii**

List of Figures ..... **xiv**

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP ..... **xvii**

Acknowledgements ..... **xviii**

Definitions and Abbreviations ..... **XIX**

Definitions XIX

Abbreviations XX

Chapter 1: Introduction **1**

1.1 Overview of the Literature 3

1.1.1 SCL, OL and Online Tutors 3

1.2 The Rationale for the Study 7

1.3 The Author's Personal Motivation to Conduct this Research 8

1.4 The Research Problem 9

1.5 Research Aims 10

1.6 Research Questions 10

1.7 Beneficiaries of Research 11

1.7.1 Benefits for Learners 11

1.7.2 Benefits for Tutors 12

1.7.3 Benefits for the Academic Institution 13

1.7.4 Benefits for Society 14

1.8 The Structure of the Thesis 15

Chapter 2: Learning in Egyptian Higher Education **17**

2.1 Introduction 17

2.2 Historical Background of Higher Education in Egypt 17

2.3 Governance of Higher Education 18

2.4 Higher Education Structure 19

2.5 E-Learning in Egyptian Higher Education 21

2.6 Academic Staff 24
2.7 Potential Advantages of E-Learning 29
2.8 Challenges of E-Learning 32
2.9 Summary 33
Chapter 3: Literature Review 34
3.1 Student-Centred Learning 34
3.1.1 The History of student-centred learning 34
3.1.2 The Definition of Student-Centred Learning 35
3.1.3 Features of student-centred learning in OL 37
3.1.4 Technology and tools that enhance Student-Centred Learning implementation 41
3.1.5 Limitations of student-centred learning 43
3.1.6 Affordances of student-centred learning 47
3.1.7 Current situation of student-centred learning in the OL Environment in Egyptian Higher Education 50
3.2 Learning approaches that have an impact on e-learning 60
3.2.1 Reflective Learning 60
3.2.2 Experiential Learning 67
3.2.3 Discovery Learning 72
3.2.4 Problem-Based Learning 75
3.2.5 Activity-Based Learning 78
3.2.6 Creative Learning 80
3.2.7 The integration between learning approaches 84
3.2.8 E-Learning theory 87
3.3 Relationships between tutors and students 92
3.3.1 Power 92
3.3.2 Control 96
3.3.3 Responsibility 99
3.3.4 Democratic Education 100

3.3.5 Current professional training and development in OL.. 106

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework 113

Theory of empowerment 113
4.1 Definitions of empowerment 114
4.2 Benefits of students' empowerment 116
4.2.1 Students' engagement in learning 116
4.2.2 Responsible citizens 117
4.3 Challenges to students' empowerment 117
4.3.1 Administration of academic institution 117
4.3.2 Resistance 118
4.3.3 Cultural challenge 119
4.4 The tutor's role in empowering learners 119
4.4.1 Teaching practices that empower learners 120
4.5 Requirements for students' empowerment 123
4.5.1 Active students 123
4.5.2 Tutor-Student Trust 124
4.6 Empowering online students 124
4.6.1 Students' control in OL 126
Summary 128

Chapter 5: Methodology 129

5.1 Introduction 129
5.2 Research Philosophy 129
5.3 Research Method 131
5.3.1 What is a case study? 131
5.3.2 Benefits of a multiple case study in the research 132
5.3.3 Types of case studies: Exploratory, Explanatory and Descriptive 133
5.3.4 Design of a multiple case study 134
5.4 Research Approaches 135
5.5 Research Methodology 137
5.5.1 Qualitative Methodology 137

5.5.2 Why a Quantitative Methodology Is Not Used 139
5.5.3 Limitations of a Qualitative Methodology 140
5.6 Access and Setting 141
5.7 Sampling Participants 142
5.7.1 Purposive Homogenous Sampling 142
5.7.2 Sampling steps 144
5.8 Data Collection 148
5.8.1 Focus Groups 148
5.8.2 Semi-Structured Interviews 148
5.8.3 What did the use of focus group add to the study that is different from one-to-one interviews? 149
5.8.4 Focus group precedes interview 153
5.9 Data Analysis 155
5.9.1 Analysing Verbal Data in Interviews and Focus Group 155
5.9.2 Non-Verbal Data 157
5.10 Validity and Reliability 158
5.10.1 Validity 158
5.10.2 Reliability 159
5.11 Pilot Study 160
5.12 Ethical Considerations 161
5.12.1 Challenges of the pilot study 161
5.12.2 Challenges of the final data collection 166
5.13 Summary 167
Chapter 6: Data Analysis and Findings 169
Coding Interviewees 169
6.1 Online Students: Characteristics and Needs 170
6.1.1 Characteristics of OL students 170
6.1.2 Students' power and control 174
6.1.3 Creativity 180
6.1.4 Family impact 181

6.1.5 Students' needs 181

6.2 Online Tutors: Knowledge, Characteristics, Responsibilities and Challenges 188

6.2.1 Online Tutor's knowledge 188

6.2.2 Characteristics of online tutors 190

6.2.3 Responsibilities of online tutors 192

6.2.4 Challenges for Online Tutors 196

6.2.4.1 Invisibility 197

6.2.4.3 Lack of CPD 197

6.2.4.6 Unanswered questions 198

6.2.5 Concern about losing control 198

6.3 For and Against Online Social Collaboration 202

6.3.1 The impact of OL on social collaboration/isolation 202

6.3.2 Methods of social communication 203

6.3.3 The role of the tutor in encouraging and maintaining social collaboration 204

6.3.4 Advantages and disadvantages of online forums as a proposed method of social collaboration 204

6.4 Monitoring and Guiding Feedback 209

6.4.1 Monitoring 209

6.4.2 Guiding feedback 212

6.5 Novelty: Technology and Terminology 217

6.5.1 Novelty in the use of the internet in learning 217

6.5.2 The novelty of using technological features in OL 218

6.5.3 Novelty of the understanding of freedom, control and group work 219

6.6 Education Climate 223

6.6.1 Online Learning climate 223

6.6.2 Face-to-face climate 227

6.6.3 University Climate 230
6.6.4 Pre-university climate 231
6.6.5 Governmental climate 232
6.6.6 Economic Climate 234
6.7 Concerns About CPD 238
6.7.1 Successful features of CPD 238
6.7.2 Challenges of CPD 242
6.7.3 Tutors' self-development 245
6.7.4 Required topics in CPD 246
6.7.4.1 Soft Skills 246
6.7.4.2 Authoring e-content 246
6.7.4.3 Online tools 247
Summary 250
Chapter 7 : Discussion 252
Introduction 252
7.1. Concepts and beliefs 253
7.1.1. Power and control 253
7.1.2. Tutor creativity 256
7.1.3. Student creativity 257
7.2 Values 258
7.2.1 Losing control 259
7.2.2 Incentives 261
7.2.3 Tutor respect 263
7.3 Attitudes 265
7.3.1 Student trust 265
7.3.2 "Thinking outside the box" 267
7.3.3 Resistance to change 271
7.3.4 Group work 272
7.3.5 Personal development plans (PDPs) 274

7.4 Processes 277
7.4.1 Offering guidance 277
7.4.2 Monitoring 281
7.5 Skills 283
7.5.1 Tutor's knowledge 283
7.5.2 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) 288
7.6 External factors 293
7.6.1 Over-crowded classes 293
7.6.1 294
7.6.2 Limited Funding 296
7.7 Proposed development of Turner-Bisset's Pedagogical Repertoire 297
7.7.1 Introduction 297
7.7.2 The Turner-Bisset pedagogical repertoire 297
7.7.3 What areas from this repertoire do I consider in my research? 299
7.7.4 Implementation of the pedagogical repertoire developed in my study 301
Chapter 8: Conclusions, Recommendations, Implications and Limitations 302
8.1 Answer to research questions 302
8.1.1 Main Research Question: 302
8.1.2 Subordinate Research Questions: 304
8.2 Conclusion and Recommendations 308
8.2.1 Power and Control 308
8.2.2 Tutor Creativity and "Thinking outside the Box" 311
8.2.3. Group Work 312
8.2.4. Over-Crowded Classes 313
8.2.5. Offering Guidance 314
8.2.6. Tutor Knowledge 314

8.2.7. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) 315
8.2.8. Incentives.....316
8.2.9. Novelty.....317
8.3 Implications of the research.....317
8.3.1 Policy 318
8.3.2 The tutor's experience.....319
8.4 Limitations of the research 320
8.5 Contribution.....322
8.5.1 Conceptual.....322
8.5.2 Social and cultural perspectives within SCL 323
8.5.3 Methodological.....324
8.6 Further research 326
List of References.....329
Appendices.....378
Appendix A: The Pilot Study 379
A.1 Initial Plan for Piloting 379
A.2 Translation of Interview and Focus Group Questions and Transcripts.....380
A.3 Changes in the Real Piloting Study.....380
A.4 Initial Interview Questions 381
A.5 Final Interview Questions.....384
A.6 Reflections on the Pilot Study 385
A.7 General recommendations in relation to the professional perspectives.....385
Summary.....387
Appendix B: Correlation between the research questions and interview questions 389
Appendix C: Data Analysis 391
C.1 Analysis of Verbal Data : Transcript Analysis (IPA).....391

C.2 Analysis of Non-Verbal Data : Facial Action Coding System (FACS) 399

Appendix D: Divergent and Convergent Steps to "Think Outside The Box" in OL 406

Appendix E: Conference Proceedings, Presentations and Publications 409

E.1 Conferences 409

E.2 Taught Assignments 410

E.3 Courses/Workshops 411

E.4 Publications 411

Appendix F: Ethical Approval 412

Appendix G: Sample of Data Collected 413

G.1 Translated sample of a focus Group (FG1) 413

G.2 Translated sample of an interview (Int1) 427

Appendix H: Sample of Guiding Questions 432

H.1 Guiding questions in one-to-one interviews 432

H.2 Guiding questions in focus groups 433

List of Tables

Table 2-1: Continuum of learning environments with the percent of use of technology from traditional to online learning (Allen, Seaman and Garrett, 2007) 28
Table 2-2: Comparison between the number of learning hours in two faculties in HE in Egypt and USA. 31
Table 3-1: A model of knowledge bases for teaching (Turner-Bisset's, 2001) 57
Table 3-2: Comparison between reflective learning and experiential learning 72
Table 3-3: Integration between different learning approaches..... 87
Table 3-4: Power Taxonomy (Yukl, 2002, p:201)..... 93
Table 3-5: Power outcomes, based on Power Taxonomy of French and Raven (Yukl, 2002, p:200-201) 94
Table 3-6: Comparison between the classic democracy and the contemporary democracy (Carr and Hartnett, 1996) 101
Table 3-7: Framework of Professional Training and Development adapted from Kennedy, 2005 108
Table 6-1: OL tutor responsibilities applied to the time before, within or after the course 196

List of Figures

Figure 1-1: Distance Learning vs. E-Learning vs. Online Learning (Urdan and Weggen, 2000, p:8)..... 2
Figure 1-2: Research area: perceptions of online tutors of SCL in OL in Egyptian HE..... 3
Figure1-3: Learning pyramid from, Francis, 2011 (adapted from National Training Laboratories, 1997)..... 12
Figure 2-1:Overall education structure in Egypt by level and age (OECD, 2015, p:36)..... 20
Figure 2-2 The period of study in Egyptian universities-undergraduate and postgraduate (TEMPUS, 2012, p:2) 21
Figure 2-3: Egyptian education initiative plan to e-learning infrastructure (SCU, 2009)..... 23
Figure 2-4: Overview of the HE enhancement system of the HEEP projects (Abdellah *et al.* 2007, p:5)..... 26
Figure 2-5: Blended Learning vs. Online vs. Face to Face in Egyptian HE..... 28
Figure 3-1: Online learners' dependency curve (Lowe, 2012)..... 39
Figure 3-2: Total social network users (eMarketer & American Marketing Association, 2015) 42
Figure 3-3: Tutor's skills to support students' learning 46
Figure 3-4: Quality challenges and inequality in the education system (The Population Council, 2012)..... 51
Figure 3-5:The TPACK framework and its knowledge components of Shulman, 1986 (Bauer, 2014, p:12) 55
Figure 3-6: A comparison between single and double loop of learning..... 62
Figure 3-7: Skills underpinning the concept of reflective practice (Eby, 2000, p:53)..... 66
Figure 3-8: Kolb model of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984, p:6)..... 69
Figure 3-9: Levels of RL within EXL (Smith, 2010) 71
Figure 3-10: Steps of Problem Based Learning (PBL), Silver (2004) 75
Figure 3-11: 3D model of pedagogy framework (Conole *et al.* 2004, p:24).... 85
Figure 3-12: The number of social network users (2010-2018 (eMarketer & American Marketing Association, 2015a)..... 88

Figure 4-1: “Read, Reflect, Display, and Do" (R2D2) Model for online learners (Bonk and Zhang, 2008, p:6)..... 120
Figure 4-2: Edited model of involvement in the process of empowerment (Kieffer, 1984) 122
Figure 5-1: Comparison between deduction and induction research approach (adapted from Trochim, 2006) 136
Figure 5-2: Sampling terminology, adapted from Trochim (2006) 146
Figure 5-3: Paradigm components of the research structure 168
Figure 6-1: Characteristics of online students 170
Figure 6-2: Online students' needs 182
Figure 6-3: Summary of: online Students: characteristics and needs 187
Figure 6-4: Characteristics of online tutors 190
Figure 6-5: Responsibilities of online tutors..... 193
Figure 6-6: Challenges for online tutors..... 196
Figure 6-7: Summary of: online tutors: knowledge, characteristics, responsibilities and challenges 201
Figure 6-8: Summary of: for and against online social collaboration..... 208
Figure 6-9: Summary of: monitoring and guiding feedback..... 216
Figure 6-10: Summary of: novelty: technology and terminology..... 222
Figure 6-11: Challenges of online learning climate..... 223
Figure 6-12: Affordances of online learning climate..... 226
Figure 6-13: Challenges and affordances of face-to-face learning 228
Figure 6-14: Summary of education climate..... 237
Figure 6-15: Successful features of CPD..... 238
Figure 6-16: online tutors’ views about challenges of CPD 243
Figure 6-17: Required disciplines in CPD 246
Figure 6-18: Summary of the super themes in the findings 249
Figure 6-19: Discussion framework: elements of tutors’ perceptions of SCL 251
Figure 7-1: Edited Maslow’s pyramid of needs, applied to online tutors’ needs of incentives 262
Figure 7-2: Knowledge bases for teaching adapted from Turner-Bisset, 2001285
Figure 7-3: Knowledge of online tutor adapted from knowledge bases for teaching model (Turner-Bisset, 2001) and TPACK Framework (Shulman, 1986) 286

Figure 7-4:The pedagogical repertoire (Turner-Bisset, 2001, p:70) 298
Figure 7-5: Pedagogical repertoire further developed from Turner-Bisset (2001)..... 300
Figure 8-1: Egyptian HE tutors' perceptions of SCL in OL..... 303
Figure Appendix-1: FACS in action using nVISO software 400
Figure Appendix-2: Extracted emotions in FACS using nVISO 401

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

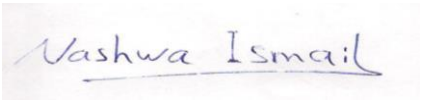
I, Nashwa Salah Eldin Ismail

declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

Egyptian Higher Education Tutors' Perceptions of Student-Centred Learning in the Online Environment

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. [Delete as appropriate] None of this work has been published before submission[or] Parts of this work have been published as: [please list references below]:

Signed:  .....

Date: 02/02/2017 .....

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest thanks to my supervisors: Dr. Gary Kinchin and Dr. Julie-Ann Edwards. Their wisdom, knowledge and commitment to the highest standards inspired and motivated me. My very special thanks and gratitude go to my mother; she was always supporting and encouraging me with her best wishes. Finally, I would like to thank my two sons; Omar and Marwan for their immeasurable support and patience.

Definitions and Abbreviations

Definitions

Asynchronous: it is where the participants (tutors and students) are logged on at different times. Examples: CBT (Computer Based Training) or WBT (Web Based Training), available 24 hours per day and 7 days per week.

Digitalization: is the process of converting information into a digital format. Digital format can be: image, sound, document, etc.

Problem Analysis Interview: is evaluating and obtaining agreement on the sufficiency and the adequacy of the baseline data

Problem Identification Interview: is defining the problem(s) in behavioural terms.

Synchronous: is the term for real-time. It requires all participants (tutors and students) to be virtually present (logged on) at the same time. Example: video conferencing

Web2: a collective term for certain applications of the Internet which focuses on social uses of the web, interactive sharing and participatory collaboration between users. Examples of these applications are: blogs, wikis, video sharing services, and social media websites such as Facebook and MySpace.

Abbreviations

ABL: Activity-Based Learning

APCL: Association for Promotion of Creative Learning

AU: Action Unit

BAP: Body Action and Posture coding system

CPD: Continuing Professional Development

CYPW: Children and Young People's Workforce

DE: Democratic Education

DL: Discovery Learning

DREC: Denial, Resistance, Exploration and Commitment

ECC: E-learning Competence Centre

EDLOU: Egyptian Distant Learning Open University

EEI: Egyptian Education Initiative

EELU: Egyptian E-Learning University

ECASTI: Egyptian Centre for the Advancement of Science, Technology and Innovation

EUN: Egyptian Universities Network

EXL: Experiential Learning

FAA: Federal Aviation Administration

FACS: Facial Analysis Coding System

FG: Focus Group

GCSE: General Certificate of Secondary Education

HE: Higher Education

HEEP: Higher Education Enhancement Project

HEEPF: Higher Education Enhancement Project Fund

HEFCE: Higher Education Funding Council for England

ICT: Information Communication Technology

ICTP: Information & Communication Technology Project

IDCS: Information and Decision Support Centre

ILIAD: Institute for Learning Innovation and Development

Int: Interviewee

IOA: Inter-Observer Agreement

IPA: Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

IT: Information Technology

PAI: Problem Analysis Interview

PII: Problem Identification Interview

LMS: Learning Management System

MCIT: Ministry of Communications and Information Technology

MHE: Ministry of Higher Education

MOE: Ministry of Education

MOOC: Massive Open Online Courses

NAACE: National Association of Advisors for Computers in Education

NACCCE: National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education

NAGT: National Association of Geoscience Teachers

NCETM: National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics

NELC: National E-Learning Centre

NNSR: National Network of Scientific Research

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OL: Online Learning

PBL: Problem-Based Learning

PCK: Pedagogical Content Knowledge

PDP: Personal Development Plan

PL: personalised learning

RL: Reflective Learning

SCL: Student-Centred learning

SCU: Supreme Council o Universities

SIS: State Information Egypt

SMK: Subject Matter Knowledge

TE21: Tutor Education Model for the 21st Century

TEMPUS: Trans European Cooperation Scheme for Higher Education

TILO: Teaching for Improved Learning Outcomes in Education

TPACK: Technological, Pedagogical and Content Knowledge

TTEEDP: Technical Teacher Education Development Programme

UCT: University of Cape Town

USAID: US Agency for International Development

VARK: Visual, Aural, Read/Write, and Kinaesthetic

Chapter 1: Introduction

My study focuses upon an area of research in which I have always been interested: how the quality of Online Learning (OL) can be improved and specifically in my country, Egypt. It has been suggested that the student-centred learning (SCL) approach may contribute to improving OL (Zuhal, 2012). This study places emphasis on the tutor's role in facilitating the environment in which the student can be engaged and motivated to learn. For this reason this thesis investigates the perception of online tutors towards SCL, exploring the factors that affect these perceptions. This chapter orientates the reader to the study. It highlights: the rationale for the study, my personal motivation to conduct this research, the research problem, research aims, research questions and the beneficiaries of the research. Finally, it ends with the thesis structure.

Regarding the terms used in this thesis, it is important to highlight that, "Distance Learning", "E-Learning" and "Online Learning" are different terms in education. Distance learning has been a method of teaching and learning for many individuals for at least a century, starting with correspondence learning (home study) via postal mail (Moore and Kearsley, 2011). E-learning is the use of technology and digital technology to create experiences (Aldrich, 2003). Through the introduction of the internet and the spreading of its network to almost every home, distance learning materials have been transformed into an online mode called OL. In other words, online learning is a subset of e-learning and distance learning with the two added values of technology and flexibility of time and place of learning (Anderson, 2008). The following diagram (Figure 1-1) illustrates the overlap between the three terms "Distance Learning", "E-Learning" and "Online Learning".

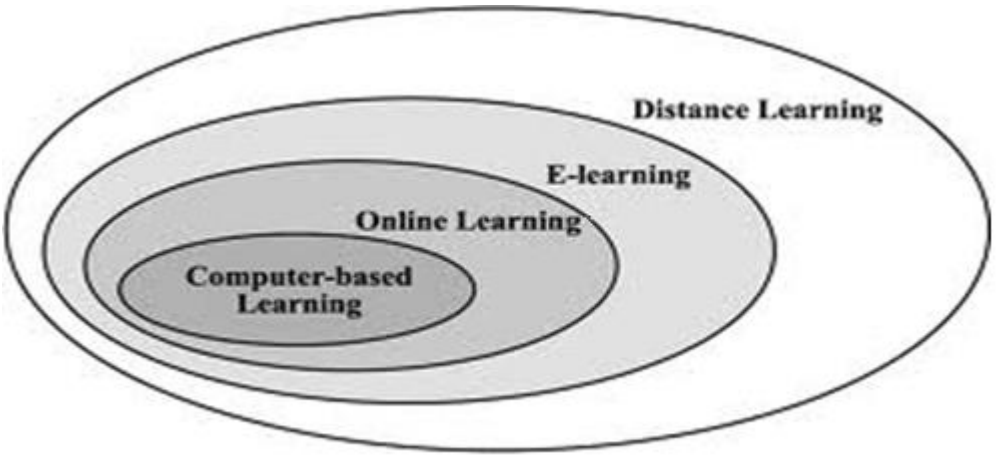


Figure 1-1: Distance Learning vs. E-Learning vs. Online Learning (Urdan and Weggen, 2000, p: 8)

In this thesis, the main concern is OL. OL delivery modes are: synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (non-real time). Other learning approaches, those of OL in particular, such as discovery learning and problem-based learning, are also to be considered here. However, although OL is uniquely defined, "distance learning" and "e-learning" are used synonymously throughout the thesis to comply with the usage of many researchers. This does not indicate any particular philosophical stance, but rather reflects the scale of terminology which is employed.

Another focus on the terminology in this study concerns the research participants. The main focus is on tutors', not teachers', perceptions of SCL. The reason behind the specific terminology for tutors is that teachers provide instruction and guidance in a set of standards that have been created by some sort of governing body such as the Legislature or Board of Education (Jacques, 2003). For McCrorie (2006), teachers have a wide range of skills in their teaching repertoire such as: questioning; listening; reinforcing; reacting; summarising; and leadership. However, according to Jacques (2003), one of the problems associated with leading students is that a teacher gives a lecture rather than conducting a dialogue. Also, students are not allowed to talk to each other but they only respond to questions asked by the teacher. According to this study, the learning environment investigated is OL, in which tutors and learners are separated by time and place. Online tutors tailor the lessons to the students' learning style, motivate and help them to understand how to apply

what they have learned to suit the flexibility of OL (Salmon, 2004). Therefore, for the purpose of this study the term used to refer to the research participants is “tutor”.

It is noteworthy, that in much academic literature “teacher-centred learning” is a paradigm that reflects knowledge transmitted from tutors to students, the term “teacher” not “tutor”, is used (Huba and Freed, 2000), even in OL (Wright, 2014).

1.1 Overview of the Literature

1.1.1 SCL, OL and Online Tutors

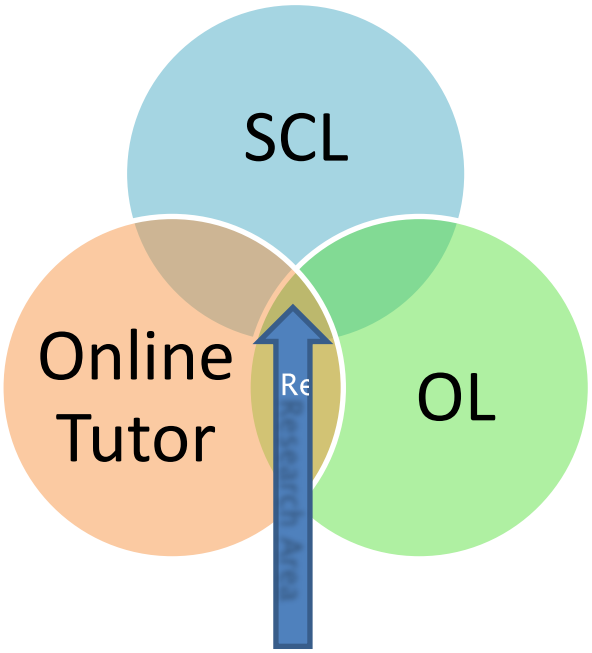


Figure 1-2: Research area: perceptions of online tutors of SCL in OL in Egyptian HE

The following section highlights what is known about Student-Centred Learning (SCL) and the overlap with Online Learning (OL). It focuses on the extent of the challenges and affordances of OL and SCL in Egyptian HE.

1.1.1.1 SCL and OL

SCL has been conceptualised in different ways and with different terms. Benett (1999) explained that the SCL environment is more active than teacher-centred

learning and also permits the opportunity for discovery learning which is according to Bruner (1961), learning through satisfying the natural human curiosity for knowledge. Shulman (1986) added the problem-based approach to the definition of SCL. In order to engage and motivate learners, Burnard (1999) described the learning process itself when it is student-centred as participatory, active and experiential. Taylor (2000) and Gibbs and Jenkins (1992) respectively, added the characteristic of flexibility in learning and the idea of students' control and autonomy. In OL, "A well-designed online course should be focused and centred on the learner" (Palloff and Pratt, 2007, p. 90). Therefore, understanding the characteristics of SCL can be guidance for tutors and students for its implementation in OL. For tutors, SCL helps tutors in arranging activities in line with the learners' interests and aptitudes. For learners, SCL enables learners to think critically, solve problems, evaluate evidence and synthesise hypotheses. According to Anderson (2008), OL needs to promote flexibility to respond to diverse learning cultures, styles and motivations and to meet the individual needs for each individualised learner. In addition, the European Student Union (ESU) (2010), called for another pedagogical shift from teacher-centred approach to student-centred approach, to be applied by tutors. This shift implies making online learning constructive, flexible, interactive and collaborative. To define flexibility specifically, according to Rogers *et al*. (2010), OL is the three "As", as "Anyone" can learn "Anywhere" and "Anytime". In my view, SCL in OL adds a fourth "A", which is at "Any pace". The four "As" support the learners' individuality and uniqueness that exist in SCL. According to Andrews (2011), in SCL, learners learn to work at their own pace and use their own strategies, making decisions about their learning.

In OL, there are a number of facilities and simulations to facilitate active learning (Beard, Wilson and McCarter, 2007). According to Rogers *et al*. (2010), SCL in OL is implemented through presenting interactive activities such as games and simulations. Moreover, technological tools in OL, such as emails, video conferences, and online forums are expected to give the students control over their learning and lead them to be responsible for it (Rogers *et al*. 2010).

In summary, technology in OL can complement tutors and classrooms by first empowering individual learners when they are working independently and

place them at the centre of their learning, and then by providing data that inform tutors' instructional planning and communication with students themselves.

1.1.1.2 OL tutors and SCL

According to Bransford, Brown and Cocking (1999), SCL includes awareness by the tutor of the cognitive structures and understanding of what learners bring to the learning context. In terms of a tutor's role, Anderson (2008), advises tutors to gain understanding of a student's previous knowledge and the construction of new knowledge. Moreover, according to Anderson (2008), OL for a SCL approach needs to provide educational tools and activities to make this knowledge, previous and new, visible for both tutor and student. As a result of the various roles and responsibilities of online tutors to implement SCL, the ESU report (2010), found that academic staff had a negative attitude towards SCL applications and had provided little co-operation in implementing it.

1.1.1.3 OL in Egypt

1.1.1.3.1 Affordances

OL is officially regarded as a major approach for fulfilling the incremental demand for higher education in Egypt (ICT Trust Fund, 2012; EL-Gamal, 2014). Also, OL can support learners to retain information, Bernstein (2010) and Zaidieh (2012) highlight that repetition is a normal method in teaching but it works for short term retention only. For long term retention, Zaidieh (2012) explains some strategies for teaching practices for improving memory such as short learning sessions, problem solving and real world scenarios, instead of over-loading students with information. Bernstein (2010) suggests guiding students to the resources from which they can get information.

1.1.1.3.2 Challenges

Abdelraheem (2006) explains tutors' resistance as a challenge of the implementation of SCL in OL. This resistance is related to the difficulty of changing people's attitudes and values about what e-learning constitutes. El-Gamal (2014) adds other reasons for tutors' reluctance to redesign and deliver

e-learning courses. These reasons are: the lack of technical support; inadequate equipment; and the increased amounts of preparation time required. According to Afifi (2011), it has been observed that academics generally believe that the advantages of e-learning outweigh its disadvantages. However, some university tutors prefer to use pen and paper and face-to-face instruction than e-learning technologies (EL-Seoud *et al*. 2014).

1.1.1.4 SCL in Egypt

The overall situation in Egyptian education is not ideal; from the administrative perspective it is characterised by large class size and centralisation and bureaucracy, while from the pedagogical perspective, learning is focused on memorisation of the material presented, and students' assessment is mainly based on test grades. According to Mansour (2006), large class size and a lack of time to cover the content, act as constraints and push tutors towards a teacher-centred learning approach in their teaching. Moreover, tutors are poorly trained (Richardson *et al*. 2012).

According to the World Bank (2013), in Egypt, the primary activities in the classroom are copying from the blackboard, writing, and listening to tutors. Regarding the examination system, education in Egypt is based on lecturing by a tutor, and then testing students on the material presented (UNESCO, 2013).

Such concerns illustrate the lack of interactivity and critical thinking in the Egyptian education. They lead to students' disengagement with the course studied and a lack of motivation to continue it, which in turn leads to an increase in the student dropout rate. Consequently, according to the World Bank (2013), there is a need to shift from the traditional teacher-centred learning approach to SCL as a pedagogical approach.

It is worth mentioning that in considering SCL as a learning approach in Egypt, one does not only need to investigate the availability of technology, but may need to highlight Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for online tutors.

This research is expected to contribute in terms of investigating SCL, including its definition and practical application in OL. Also, it focuses on exploring online tutors' attitudes towards SCL as, according to Koo (2008), the more positive attitude or belief towards a learning paradigm, the easier and faster it

is to apply. Moreover, the research contributes to questioning whether implementing SCL requires a pedagogical repertoire that offers support and guidance for tutors to achieve flexible and individually tailored education paths. Moreover, it helps to raise awareness of the benefits of e-learning and strategies for its implementation in Egypt.

1.2 The Rationale for the Study

One of the drawbacks of OL with regard to the role of online tutors, highlighted by Salmon (2013), is that the OL environment lacks the physical presence of a tutor. Consequently tutors are likely to encourage students towards collaborative work and developing skills with the use of relevant online technology. Salmon (2013) added that the lack of such skills is likely to be a reason for students' lack of motivation and engagement with the course studied. Moreover, Thomas (2011) highlighted the consequence of a lack of students' motivation in the form of low completion rates in OL courses.

Khan (2012) considered the main pillars of OL as being pedagogy, technology, interface design, evaluation, management, resource support, ethics and institutional issues. Therefore, the role of the online tutor is becoming increasingly vital and challenging in terms of successful integration of all the aforementioned factors. Accordingly, the main objective in conducting this research is to minimise the constraints of these factors in OL through investigating and developing the skills of online tutors, with the focus placed on SCL as a model for learning.

SCL as a learning approach is suggested in this research to contribute in terms of minimising constraints, such as power shift from tutor to student and the multiplicity of SCL terminology. SCL tutors consider each learner as being unique and distinct with different abilities and talents (TEAL, 2010). Whilst SCL students in OL incorporate different communication technologies, SCL supports the interaction and collaboration between them. The result, according to McCombs and Whistler (1997), is that SCL is promoted as giving the learner the feeling of being appreciated, acknowledged, respected and valued. In summary, it can be claimed that tutors' implementation of SCL is assumed to support students' engagement and motivation in their online study.

In summary, SCL can be defined as a practice derived from pedagogy where students are active, autonomous and collaborative. Students take responsibility for their learning, setting goals and objectives, and managing and assessing their own learning activities. More insights on defining SCL are highlighted in Chapter 3 (Section 3.1.2).

1.3 The Author's Personal Motivation to Conduct this Research

This thesis focuses on an area of research of which I have always been interested, which is how the quality of OL can be improved. I started my journey with my Master's thesis, which investigated how interactivity can lead to reducing the high drop-out rate in OL and increasing capacity of OL to cover a greater range of disciplines. The final recommendation of the Master's thesis addressed the issue of further research on tutors' perceptions of SCL.

The reason behind this recommendation is that, according to Blass and Davis (2003), in the past tutors controlled the pace, place, time and style of presentation and interaction in OL. Over time, the control of these elements has shifted more and more to the student. Lynch *et al*. (1997) argued this claim, and explained clearly that tutors resist SCL as they see this approach as a breakdown of their power over students. However, the word 'past', according to Blass and Davis (2003), is arguable as this is still presently the case (Ismail, 2011), as explained in the following paragraph.

In the case of my Master's thesis in 2011, one of the research questions was centred on investigating what interactivity means for tutors in the context of OL. According to Shedroff (1999), SCL is one of the elements in delivering interactive OL, where learners create their learning from their own dynamic experience whilst collaborating with peers to share their experience. Consequently, one of the sub-questions in the questionnaire examined tutors' perceptions of the student-centred approach in the context of OL learning. Respondents' answers showed it was statistically significant that 26% of tutors disagree with a student-centred approach in OL. Although the total number of respondents was relatively small (30 tutors), the response is certainly worth

investigating to identify reasons behind tutors' disagreement to adopt SCL in their teaching practices.

1.4 The Research Problem

This section considers three challenges that are expected to be investigated in this research. Firstly, challenges and constraints that online tutors in Egypt are likely to be confronted; secondly, the vagueness in identifying SCL; and thirdly, tutors' resistance to SCL.

This research was conducted in the context of Higher Education (HE) in Egypt with academic tutors and professors as participants. There are many challenges facing the Egyptian HE learning environment, including large class size, and low wages, all of which lead to poor tutor training and development (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 2012). Such factors lead to a certain method for teaching, which is based on memorising material (Richardson, Finholt-Daniel, Sales and Flora, 2012). Regarding OL in Egypt, according to Hyde (2013), OL is still in its infancy, with more need for effective CPD to be provided by academic institutions. Moreover, tutors are required to incorporate technology in learning. Consequently, more educational programmes are needed to be geared towards preparing future tutors, in order to deliver technology-rich experiences throughout all aspects of training.

The second research problem has been explained by O'Neill and McMahon (2005), who stated that the multiple concepts used in connection with SCL can mean different things to different people. Curaj *et al*. (2012) confirmed that despite popularity of SCL, it remains a notoriously vague notion, thus causing various difficulties in its implementation. Additionally, this is expected to lead to misinterpreting SCL and contra-indications of it. In other words, SCL remains a debated concept with no clear definition available.

The third problem is expected to be related to the tutors themselves. According to Curaj *et al*. (2012), one of the reasons why SCL is not fully implemented in learning is because of tutors' resistance to SCL. Lynch *et al*. (1997) explained the reason behind this resistance is that they see this

approach as a breakdown in their power over their students. In the author's view, investigating this resistance is key to this research.

1.5 Research Aims

The main aims of this research are summarised as follows:

- To investigate Egyptian tutors' understanding and perceptions of SCL in OL as a concept
- To examine the factors that influence these perceptions
- To identify the affordances/challenges that confront tutors in the implementation of SCL
- To investigate if implementing SCL requires a model of pedagogical approaches

1.6 Research Questions

This qualitative research examines the following questions:

Main Research Question:

1. How do Egyptian tutors perceive SCL as an approach in the OL environment, and what factors influence this?

Subordinate Research Questions:

a. What is tutors' understanding of SCL?
b. How do tutors consider the differences between the SCL model in OL, compared with the face-to face learning environment?
c. What are tutors' beliefs about the relationship between the tutor and the student?
d. How are tutors provided with professional training and development to implement SCL?
e. What are the affordances/constraints of using SCL in OL in Egyptian Higher Education?

f. Does implementing SCL require a different model of pedagogical repertoire?

1.7 Beneficiaries of Research

SCL offers benefits to: educational institutions; students and staff; higher education staff unions; and society as a whole (ESU, 2010). The following section highlights the benefits of this research on three scales: learners; tutors; academic institutions; and the community.

1.7.1 Benefits for Learners

In this section, the benefits of SCL for learners are discussed with regard to collaboration, knowledge retention, independence and flexibility, respectively. SCL, as a model of learning, places emphasis on learners' individuality and independence. It allows learners to identify their own learning needs and accordingly to construct knowledge based on those needs (McCombs and Whistler, 1997). This autonomous learning benefits learners as it generates collaboration between tutors and learners, thus encouraging enjoyment in the learning process (Bart, 2010). As a result, students may also be encouraged to continue their online courses. According to Smith (2006), SCL can help to a great deal in resolving the problem of the high drop-out rate in OL.

Another benefit of SCL is that SCL learners have high knowledge retention. According to Burnard (1999), SCL is an active and participatory learning process, as it is demonstrated in the learning pyramid (Figure 1-3). The learning pyramid indicates that the passive method of teaching ends with a lower rate of knowledge retention, compared with high retention of knowledge for the active methods of teaching (SCL is one of them).

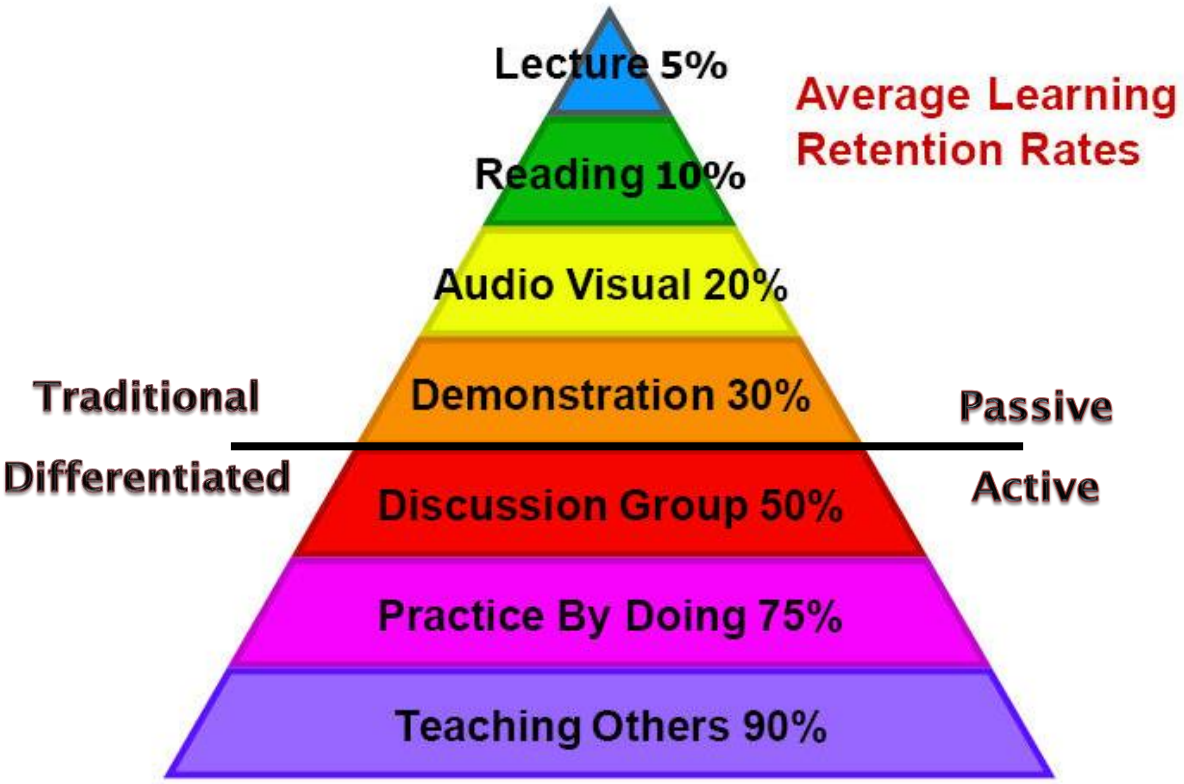


Figure1-3: Learning pyramid from, Francis, 2011 (adapted from National Training Laboratories, 1997)

According to Carlile and Jordan (2005), SCL is independent learning that is expected to improve the learning experience. In the future, this independence will enable the learner to work effectively in group and to gain skills other than learning, such as team work, active communicating, critical thinking and better written and verbal communication. Taylor (2000) focused on identifying SCL as flexible learning, which can provide learners with different methods for learning, i.e. audio and visual learning. Referring to SCL definitions in literature such as Carlile and Jordan (2005) and Taylor (2000) and figure 1-3, it can be concluded that SCL helps the students to make the shift from passive to active in their learning.

1.7.2 Benefits for Tutors

The benefits of applying SCL for tutors can serve their work from three different angles: firstly, by considering the improvement to teaching practices; secondly, by looking at facilitating working conditions for tutors; thirdly, by

embedding tutor–student collaborative work that is suggested as being augmented through SCL.

According to Scott (2008), SCL places emphasis on learners' critical thinking. It encourages students to reason, question, draw connections, frame problems and look for solutions to these problems. In the author's point of view, learners' critical thinking suggests that tutors develop their teaching practices by guiding and facilitating their courses professionally. Additionally, by implementing SCL, students are likely to be active, flexible and innovative, and to foster their critical thinking (Rogers, 1994). At the same time, teaching practices may be more interesting as tutors are likely to enhance their learning to challenge the students. This may lead to a higher level of academic professional development.

With SCL, tutors use a flexible range of pedagogical and curriculum approaches (Australian Curriculum Studies Association, 1996). This flexible environment is suggested as providing ease for tutors' working conditions. Tutors can work anytime during the day and can manage their work from anywhere using any device for communication technology (phone, PC, laptop, etc.). ESU (2010), added another perspective for OL flexibility as tutors have choices in terms of designing ways to run their courses or to apply new ways of teaching.

The third advantage for tutors, when applying SCL, is to develop a more collaborative tutor–student relationship, as SCL moves its learning environment from large groups towards smaller groups and individual inquiries. Therefore, tutors are likely to focus on topics that interest these small groups, creating questions and answering inquiries into these areas (TEAL, 2010). Consequently, this creates a holistic learning environment where tutors are members, addressing the individual needs of learners.

1.7.3 Benefits for the Academic Institution

The quality of OL is expected to improve, as research literature suggests that SCL facilitates students in developing learning in their own ways. Students are able to make decisions about what and how they learn (TEAL, 2010). According to Lynch *et al.* (1997), with the SCL approach, learners are expected to be encouraged to enjoy their learning and to attend and complete their courses.

Consequently, this leads to an increase in the number of students enrolled in OL courses, whilst decreasing the dropout rate of enrolled students.

Another benefit for academic institutions is that SCL, in an OL environment, provides a collaborative approach between institutions. Institutions are able to create a network by liaising between OL courses, allowing for greater representation of both students and staff. ESU (2010) adds that SCL can be implemented without extra costs for both the academic institution and the learner. All of the aforementioned benefits are expected to encourage institutions to view the application of this approach in a much more attractive light for students.

1.7.4 Benefits for Society

Arguably, SCL students may be considered responsible citizens who show respect for others in the society in which they live, as SCL emphasises and develops the skills of critical, logical and practical thinking (ESU, 2010). Moreover, according to Bart (2010), SCL learners not only have more power and options in their learning, but also become more responsible for their whole learning. According to ESU (2010), when learners think for themselves in the context of HE studies, they are expected to be reliable citizens. Learners can tackle any problems that arise and turn them into learning experiences, suggesting a lifelong learning culture for students.

1.8 The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters. An outline of each chapter is provided below.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the motivation for the research and rationale for the study. It identifies the main research question and subordinate research questions. In addition, it clarifies the context of the research as well as its structure.

Chapter 2: Higher Education in Egypt

This chapter seeks to provide an overview of the present situation for OL in the context of Egyptian HE including its structure, policy makers and the academic staff. Also, it looks at the e-learning environment in Egyptian HE, covering plans and projects that contribute to the enhancement of e-learning, challenges, and the advantages of using e-learning in Egyptian HE.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

This chapter investigates the literature for SCL, covering its definitions by different academics and the technology tools that enhance its implementation in OL. It also discusses the affordances and challenges of SCL and the learning approaches that have an impact on e-learning. The literature highlights the current role of online tutors, including their relationship with students, power, control and responsibility. Moreover, the current training and professional development, which is offered to tutors in OL, is explored. In each section in this chapter, the Egyptian HE with regard to the OL environment, with its potential affordances and constraints, is discussed.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theory that guides the research. The main theory that this research depends on is the theory of empowerment.

Chapter 5: Methodology

This chapter explains the research design; it highlights research method, research methodology, research approach and sampling participants. It describes the different tools in the process of data collection, including an overview of the instruments used. The chapter also examines a number of related issues, such as the validity, reliability, ethical challenges of data collection and the procedural tools for data analysis.

Chapter 6: Data Analysis and Findings

In this chapter the results of the data analysis are presented which lead to the findings of the research. This involves reviewing the information, identifying links, patterns, and common themes, arranging the facts in order, and presenting them as they are.

Chapter 7: Discussion

This chapter is based on the results from the data analysis and findings stage in the previous chapter. Considering the main research question, the discussion leads to the creation of a framework that illustrates the main topics related to SCL. These topics answer the main research question.

Chapter 8: Conclusions, Recommendations, Implications and Limitations

This chapter presents answers to the research questions, based on the literature review, academic discussion and collected empirical data. It makes recommendations based on these answers, presents a discussion of the implications and limitations of this study, and concludes with some recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Learning in Egyptian Higher Education

2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to provide an overview of Egyptian Higher Education (HE) in general and e-learning in this context in particular. It starts by explaining the historical background of HE, its structure, and the governing bodies of HE. Subsequently, focus is placed on e-learning in regard to HE. It includes the emergence of this environment within the vocational education sector, and the plans and projects that contribute to the enhancement of e-learning. Also, an overview of HE academic staff is provided, with consideration of their recruitment, training and development. Finally, the advantages and challenges of the use of e-learning in Egyptian HE are discussed. It is important to highlight that although OL is uniquely defined, "distance learning" and "e-learning" are used synonymously in this chapter. The reason behind this interchangeable use of e-learning and OL is that, according to Afifi (2011), there are some concepts still used in education in Egypt as synonyms, such as open learning, e-learning and computer-based learning.

2.2 Historical Background of Higher Education in Egypt

Higher Equation (HE) in Egypt dates back to 998 AD when the Fatimides (a dynasty which ruled Egypt between the 10th and 12th centuries) built Alazhar University, which was founded initially as a university providing all disciplines related to Islam such as: pharmacy; medicine; education; and commerce (Megahed and Salah, 2006). In 1908, the first liberal university in Egypt was founded, known as Cairo University, which delivered courses in various disciplines, including economics, philosophy, history and literature. These courses were taught mainly by European tutors of Oriental Studies (the Trans European cooperation scheme for higher education (TEMPUS, 2012a). According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2015), following the 1952 Revolution, the Egyptian government changed its educational system to an entirely social system, accessible to all Egyptians, as it had been previously restricted to privileged citizens. Until then,

there were five public universities in Egypt. In 1961 the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) was established for the purpose of assuming the responsibilities of HE (Ministry of Higher Education (MHE), 2011). The Ministry of HE fulfilled a plan to expand the number of universities, which were to be spread across different regions across the country. According to the League of Arab States (2015), in the current education system, there are 27 public universities and 28 private (profit-making) universities. According to Sawahel (2014) the Egyptian Centre for the Advancement of Science, Technology and Innovation (ECASTI) published a report in June 2014 explaining that these universities employ 70,497 academics to teach more than 2.11 million undergraduate and postgraduate students. Moreover, according to TEMPUS (2012a), there are also 51 non-university HE institutions with approximately 500,000 students; 47 are two-year upper secondary-level technical institutions, whilst four are four to five-year higher education-level technical institutions. According to El-Seoud *et al.* (2014), the population of Egypt is 90 million, which is supposed to have around 90 universities. Consequently, Egypt has announced a US$5.87 billion higher education plan to run in two phases from 2014 to 2022 and include 61 HE institutions. The plan promotes the expansion of technical and technological education within universities and institutions, aiming at producing market-ready graduates (Sawahel, 2014).

2.3 Governance of Higher Education

According to El-Gamal (2014), the general responsibility for education in Egypt is divided between the Ministry of Education (MOE) and MHE. The MOE oversees preschool, primary, preparatory and secondary education, while the MHE oversees postsecondary education. The MHE has authority over HE through all major decisions concerning policies, admission levels, definition of programmes and curricula, staff recruitment, allocation of resources, establishment of academic standards and the assessment of quality of standards (MHE, 2011). Furthermore, the Supreme Council of Universities (SCU) sets overall policy and supervises the establishment of new institutions. Al-Azhar education is under the authority of the Ministry of Al-Azhar Affairs (TEMPUS, 2012a).

Accordingly, in the case of opening a new educational institution, the university should submit an entire syllabus of the taught programmes to the affiliated supreme council. The council, in turn, should get the approval from the MHE. The reason behind this is to ensure that this new faculty is within the whole system prior to issuing an approval for its creation. On the other hand, this hierarchical structure has led to a centralised and bureaucratic structure in Egyptian HE. In detail, the MHE at the top of the educational pyramid, predefines and predetermines what is to be taught and how it is to be taught in all universities (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2010). Gahin (2001) extends the effect of this bureaucracy to its impact on individuals who integrate into the education process including tutors and learners, as it is impervious to influences, initiatives and creativity from them. As a result, TEMPUS, in its future plan in 2021, recommends more autonomous decisions for universities within the Higher Education Enhancement Project Fund (HEEPF).

2.4 Higher Education Structure

HE in Egypt is preceded by 12 years' formal education in schools, ending with a general examination similar to that of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in the UK. After passing this examination, the student can select one of two main paths, either to continue to university education (public or private) or to enrol in vocational training institutions (two to four years of study). As illustrated in the following figures (2-1 and 2-2), the period of study in Egyptian universities is standardised across all universities, the period being four years for most studies, five years for engineering studies, and six years for medical studies (TEMPUS, 2012b). The overall education structure in Egypt and the period of study in Egyptian universities are illustrated in Figure 2-1 and Figure 2-2.

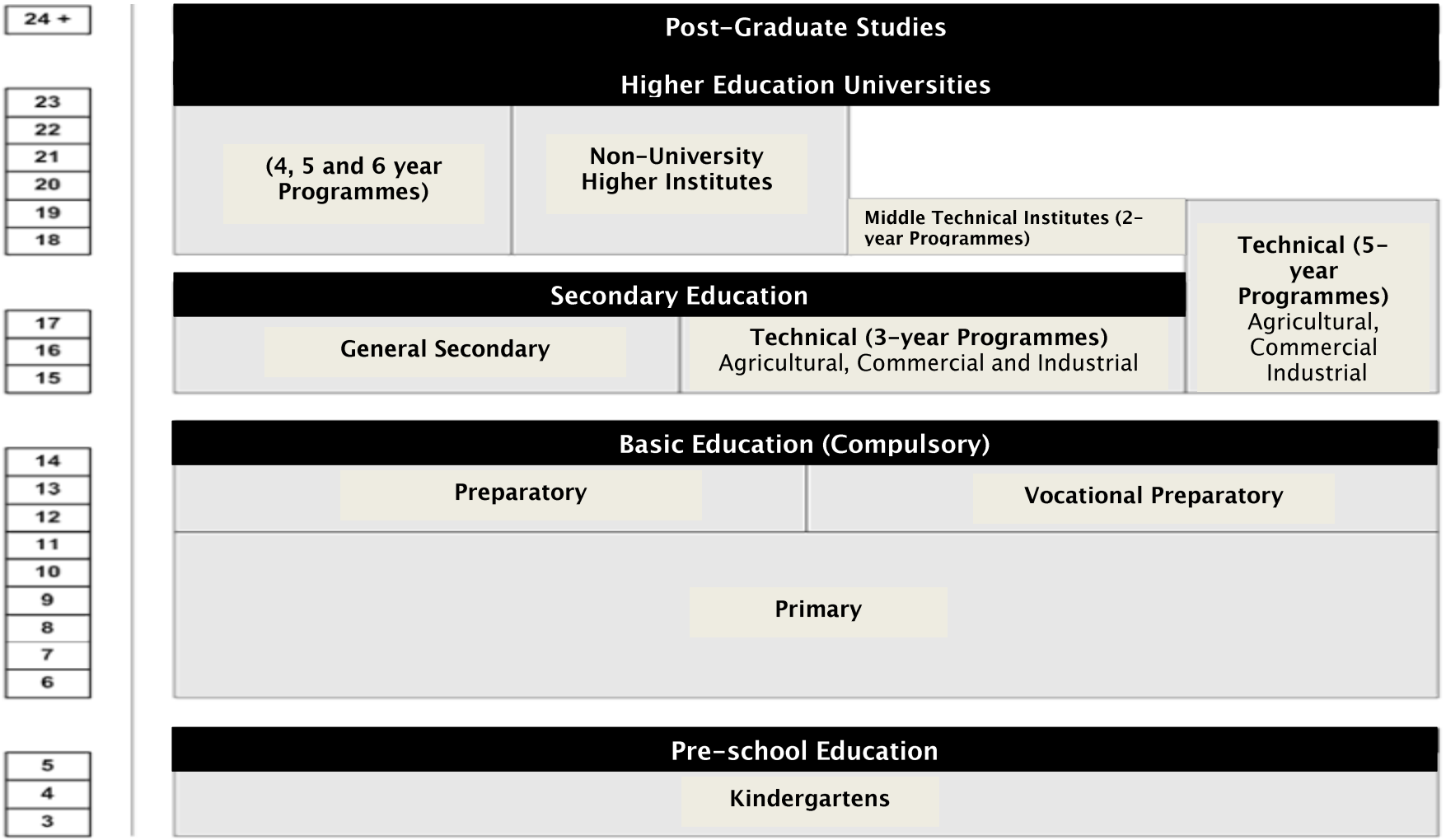


Figure 2-1:Overall education structure in Egypt by level and age (OECD, 2015, p:36)

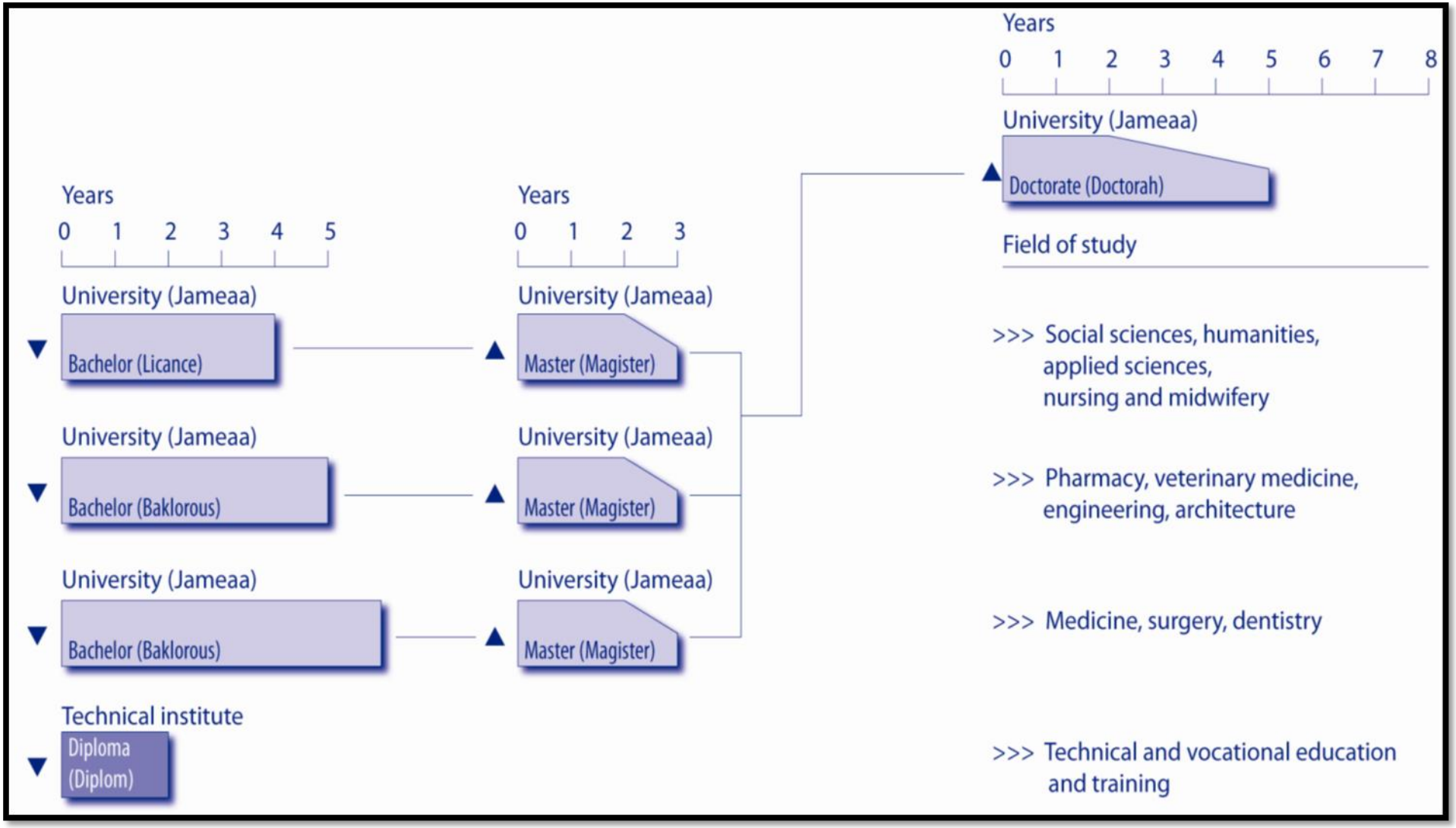


Figure 2-2 The period of study in Egyptian universities-undergraduate and postgraduate (TEMPUS, 2012, p:2)

2.5 E-Learning in Egyptian Higher Education

In less developed countries, creating, implementing, and sustaining technology-focused professional development is a relatively recent phenomenon (Richardson, 2011). Moreover, according to UCT (2007) and MHE (2011), there is a general paucity of research on ICT and HE in Egypt, particularly with regard to the use of ICT and e-learning in HE. Therefore, only during the past seven years has the notion of using online courses been entertained in university education introducing innovative programmes that focus on problem-solving and designing the official curriculum in which e-learning tracks are to be considered (El-Gamal, 2014). An initial step was launching the Egyptian Distant Learning Open University (EDLOU) in 1991, mainly to give students who missed their chance in conventional academic education, and who were looking forward to enhancing their educational standards, with new opportunities (Cairo University, 2009). In this context, EDLOU presented the first Egyptian educational entity that depended entirely on e-learning. Subsequently, several other steps were taken, such as establishing the e-learning Competence Centre (ECC) to lead and coordinate all e-learning projects in Egypt (Hamdy, 2007), initiating satellite TV educational channels (12 channels now), launching official websites for universities, colleges and schools, and encouraging academic staff members to upload educational materials to the internet (Egypt State Information System (ESIS), 2009). Simultaneously, authoring e-learning courseware has been encouraged by UNESCO and through a World Bank project (Hamdy, 2007).

Another significant step aimed at improving and upgrading university infrastructure in the field of e-learning is made by the Information and Communication Technology Project (ICTP). ICTP's main responsibility is centred on converting university management systems in academic institutions of Egyptian HE to computer-based management. The plan is based on linking Egyptian universities with both the Egyptian Universities Network (EUN) and the National Network of Scientific Research (NNSR) (SCU, 2009). The main activities for ICTP are illustrated in Figure 2-3.



Figure 2-3: Egyptian education initiative plan to e-learning infrastructure (SCU, 2009)

Working together to enforce MHE efforts in the field of e-learning in education, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), in 2008, has maintained free internet access nationwide since 2002, whereby more than 15,000 ports serving two million internet users have been established. MOE has been diligently working with international development agencies on a variety of ICT-focused education projects. The MOE launched the Egypt PC 2010 initiative in December of 2003. The goal of this project was to provide a computer to every home by 2010. Consequently, the efforts of MCIT have made great contributions to the growth of e-learning in education as a result of lowering its cost (MCIT, 2008)

Most recently, the Egyptian E-Learning University (EELU) has launched an open initiative called "Learn4All". The Learn4All initiative follows the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) that provides free learning opportunities for everyone. Planning for the future, Learn4all should link with similar national and African academic institutions to form a network of MOOC-based education platforms

in order to create an outstanding environment for e-learning in Africa (Sawahel, 2015).

It can be concluded that the Egyptian government has expended significant effort to establish the required Information Technology (IT) infrastructure. This infrastructure facilitates e-learning to provide an economic solution to the HE problem by filling in the gap between the number of university places available in Egypt and the growing demand for HE students. However, e-learning strategies are recommended to raise the awareness of technology and its benefits for tutors and administrative bodies in education.

2.6 Academic Staff

This section considers teaching from three different perspectives: firstly, regarding staff qualifications and their recruitment policy; secondly, regarding tutors' training and development; thirdly, about tutors' perspectives towards e-learning in education. Moreover, the current practice for e-learning in education is highlighted.

Regarding staff qualifications, according to Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (2015), there are more than 109.000 teaching staff in the Egyptian higher education system. The main categories of academic staff and the qualifications needed for these posts are as follows:

- Demonstrators (must hold a Bachelor or Licence degree)
- Assistant Lecturers are demonstrators who obtain a Master degree
- Lecturers are assistant lecturers who obtain a Doctorate degree
- Associate Professors (minimum of five years after reaching lecturer level)
- Full Professor (minimum of five years after being appointed an associate professor, in addition to submitting a level of specified research within a speciality field and teaching track record) (TEMPUS, 2012a).

An individual is typically appointed to an academic position based upon their undergraduate academic results, without considering actual competency or potential ability in teaching or conducting research (Said, 2001). However, such

individuals are likely lacking the experience and expertise to teach, thus impacting on the quality of teaching. Consequently, the MHE has to adopt another strategy in hiring university tutors, where tutors who master the practical knowledge in their area of expertise, can be hired (Maharat, 2013). Also, there are no mechanisms available to measure quality of teaching or accountability, such as annual reporting by staff on the work they have done (Said, 2001). University of Cape Town (UCT) (2007) confirms the previous claim explaining that the standards for quality evaluation as efforts of tutors and university students' feedback are not sufficiently organised to reflect HE tutors' efficiencies.

The second point focuses on HE tutor' training and development, Leach *et al.* (2004) summed up the future of online tutor development by highlighting that, in the context of developing countries in a continent such as Africa, where the capability to train large numbers of tutors is not possible, computer-supported tutor training may be an essential aspect of the solution. Recently, El-Gamal (2014) explained that tutors' competence in using e-learning in terms of getting the training needed is one of the main factors desired for e-course delivery. According to Hyde (2013), efforts dedicated to tutors' training and development in Egypt are still in the infancy stage. In detail, the development rate of science and technology and the increased rate at which new knowledge is created and circulated are faster than the rate of preparing well-informed tutors capable of self-development and the creating of life-long learning.

Regarding the current efforts in this field, one of the major achievements of the Higher Education Enhancement Project (HEEP) is to support HE institutions in training the faculty staff members and their assistants to enhance their educational and research capabilities (OECD, 2010). HEEP's development procedure is a long term plan for 15 years. Since it has started, the first phase (2002-2007) has notable achievements in the Technical Teacher Education Development Programme (TTEDP), such as establishing a comprehensive education engineering database accessible to all HE tutors in all faculties of engineering supported by internet and intranet service (Said, 2001). According to Abdellah, Taher and Abelrahman (2007), the HEEP project involved 18 faculties of engineering. Its main aim was to create a competitive environment among the faculty staff members, to enhance their educational and research capabilities and to improve their management of resources and administrative

structure. Figure 2-4 illustrates the HEEP's project to upgrade and redesign the education programmes in the18 faculties.

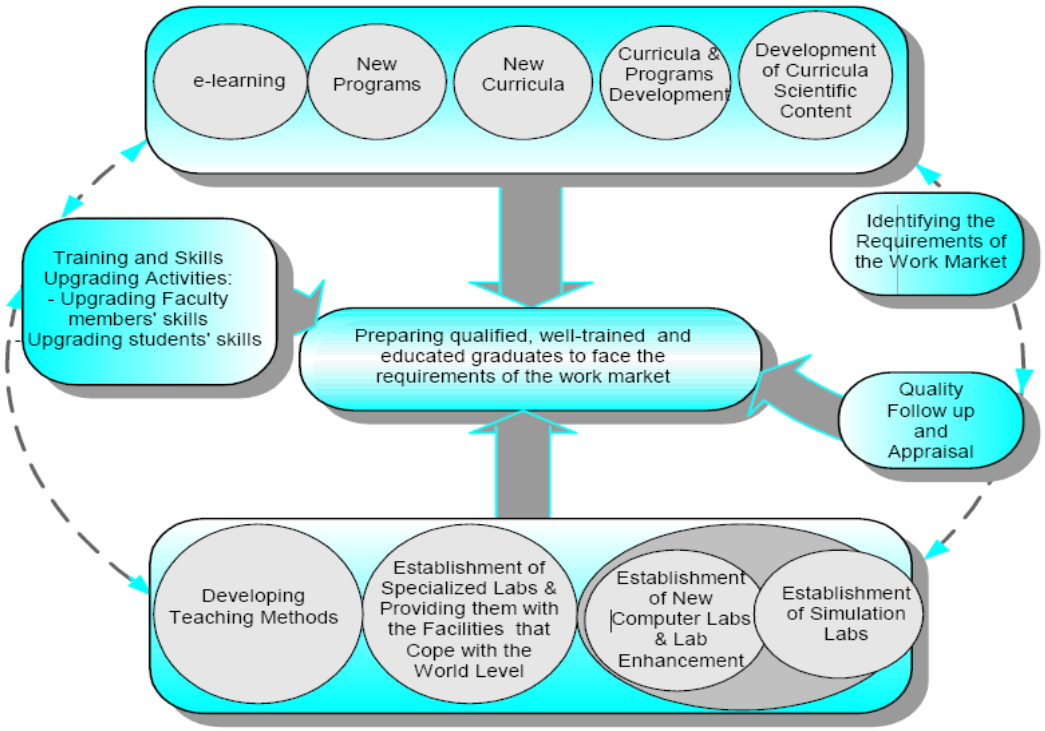


Figure 2-4: Overview of the HE enhancement system of the HEEP projects (Abdellah *et al.* 2007, p: 5)

In the author's point of view, the HEEP project can be significantly effective in Egyptian HE if e-learning is expanded and becomes the main part of the educational system. It is to note that quality assurance mechanisms and monitoring systems are embedded in the HEEP project. Moreover, students' perspectives can be added to this project by embedding the standard assessment of student achievement through defining student learning outcomes, then, measuring if the programme or service implemented to facilitate such learning was effective.

The third point is centred on staff perceptions of e-learning. According to Afifi (2011), it has been observed that academics generally believe that the advantages of e-learning outweigh its disadvantages. Surprisingly, some university tutors prefer to use pen and paper and face-to-face instruction than e-learning technologies (EL-Seoud *et al.* 2014). Afifi (2011) adds that there are some concepts still used as synonyms without clear meaning, such as open learning, e-learning and computer-based learning. Consequently, some tutors

still consider e-learning as an educational practice, being formed from two steps: firstly, transforming the course content into downloadable files through the internet; and subsequently focusing on the delivery of information whilst not providing the environment within which social and cultural learning can take place.

The last point about HE academic staff explains the actual application of e-learning in education. Most Egyptian colleges that claim to be applying e-learning are actually using blended learning techniques, that is, a combination of e-learning and face-to-face learning (Elliott 2002 and Elwady's 2010). Regarding e-learning, according to Afifi (2011), the majority of the e-learning materials utilised are asynchronous (non-real time) in nature, whilst less common is synchronous (real time) learning materials. One of the disadvantages of an asynchronous mode of learning is its limited interactivity and efficacy of collaborative learning between student and tutor. Accordingly, a student who does not feel connected with the class or instructor may lose motivation (Croft, Dalton and Grant, 2010).

Table 2-1 and figure 2-5 explain different views about the overlap between OL and blended learning. Table 2-1 explains that blended learning can be modelled as a continuum from face-to-face delivery to online. In Figure 2-5, which illustrates the Egyptian HE, the overlap is between distance learning and blended learning. Notably, in this figure, blended learning is separated from online learning and e-learning.

Proportion of Content Delivered Online	Type of Course	Typical Description
0%	Traditional	Course with no online technology used — content is delivered in writing or orally.
1 to 29%	Web Facilitated	Course which uses web-based technology to facilitate what is essentially a face-to-face course. Uses a course management system (CMS) or web pages to post the syllabus and assignments, for example.
30 to 79%	Blended/Hybrid	Course that blends online and face-to-face delivery. Substantial proportion of the content is delivered online, typically uses online discussions, and typically has some face-to-face meetings.
80+%	Online	A course where most or all of the content is delivered online. Typically have no face-to-face meetings.

Table 2-1: Continuum of learning environments with the percent of use of technology from traditional to online learning (Allen, Seaman and Garrett, 2007)

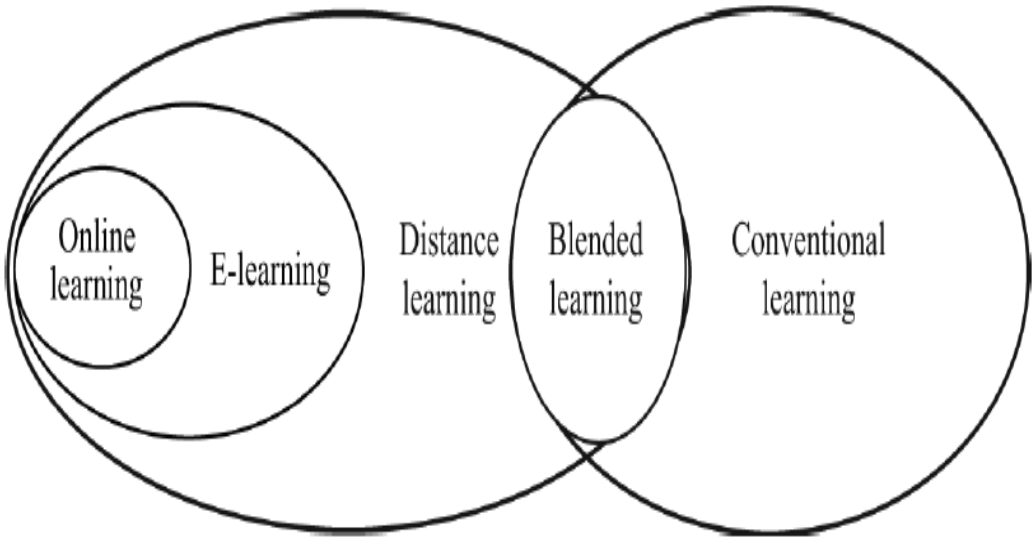


Figure 2-5: Blended Learning vs. Online vs. Face to Face in Egyptian HE

(Afifi, 2011, p:369)

Figure 2-5 highlights two questions. Firstly, by separating the two entities: blended learning and OL, what is the applied approach or strategy for e-learning to be combined with the traditional classroom to create blended teaching? Secondly, can this separation be claimed as a reason that there is no 100% OL in Egypt? (Elliott 2002 and Elwady's 2010).

In the author's point of view, the difference between the previous two diagrams can justify the misconception and misapplications of many issues regarding e-learning. For example, in figure 2-5, online resources and technology –enhanced learning were embedded before the transition to blended learning. This misconception has led to difficulties for e-learning to find its way into a best practice model in teaching. The next section considers the advantages and the challenges confronting e-learning implementation in HE.

2.7 Potential Advantages of E-Learning

This section highlights three main capabilities of e-learning in HE. The first is centred on its contribution to reduce the number of students in the face-to-face class. The second focuses on how e-learning can help in regard to the information retention of students. Finally, it explains that e-learning implementation in learning is not expected to exceed students' budgets. In this regard, it is important to explain that, according to Helal (2011), although HE in Egypt is free, since 2007 many public universities have adopted a system of semi-private education, where new disciplines are introduced in public universities at higher fees. Adding to that, there is no system of loans existing in Egyptian universities. Consequently, according to El-Gamal (2014), students with average grades in high-school find difficulties in joining the governmental universities, and they have only two choices, firstly, to join private universities with a high tuition fees, secondly, to allow the governmental universities to accept extra students through e-learning programmes.

The first contribution is that e-learning can help to ease overcrowding in classes in Egyptian HE. E-learning is officially regarded as a major approach for fulfilling the incremental demand for higher education in Egypt (ICT Trust Fund, 2012 and EL-Gamal, 2014). This contribution agrees with the claim made by Welsh *et al*. (2003) that some educational entities use e-learning

when they are pushed to deliver education to such a large number of students, which exceeds their classrooms' capacity. In Egypt, some lecture halls accommodate up to 1500 students (El-Gamal, 2014). In this regard, it may be important to highlight that the Economist (2009) explains that, currently, HE buildings, facilities and staff are not well-placed to provide the necessary standards of education with the escalating number of students. Additionally, the World Bank expected that the number of students enrolled in Egyptian higher education entities would grow by approximately 6% annually during the period 2000-2010 (World Bank, 2013). However, reality exceeded expectations, according to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (2015), the number of students enrolling in HE in 2015 is 2.5 million. According to Sawahel (2014), the government would like to see, in the next five years, the number of students enrolling in higher education rise to 2.8 million. In other words, the number of students enrolled in Egyptian higher education entities would grow by approximately 9% in the next 5 years.

Consequently, implementing e-learning implies that the government will not need to spend as much as the potential expenditures for establishing buildings and educational resources. Also, e-learning reduces the number of students in the face-to-face classes. The previous advantages of e-learning confirm that there are promising affordances of e-learning in Egyptian HE. Importantly, this promising enhancement in learning does not overload the student with extra potential costs.

The second contribution is that e-learning can support learners to retain information (Bernstein, 2011 and Zaidieh, 2012). They highlight that repetition is a normal method in teaching but it works for short term retention only. For long term retention, they explain some strategies for teaching practices for improving memory such as short learning sessions, problem solving and real world scenarios, instead of over-loading students with information. They suggest guiding students to the resources for which they can get information. In the OL environment, the duration of the online session is shorter than the duration of the face-to-face one. According to Wolter, Avritzer and Vieira (2012), the length of OL session is about 18 minutes, while in face- to-face, a class session can be up to 3 hours (FAST-US-5, 2010; University of Windsor, 2013). All the previous give the opportunity for learners to retrieve the information immediately or later. When considering the credit hours in

Egyptian HE curriculum, students in the faculty of tourism, for example, study approximately between 38-41 courses over a period of four full academic years. In each course, face-to-face teaching hours are, on average, 60 hours per course (Afifi and Wahab, 2010). Table 2-2 below, is a comparison between undergraduate teaching hours in the Faculty of Tourism in Egypt and the college of Liberal Arts and Sciences in Iowa State University in USA, which shows that Egyptian students undertake face- to-face sessions nearly three times the learning hours more than USA.

Country	Discipline	Number of courses	Number of learning hours
Egypt	Tourism	38-41 courses in four years= 10 courses per year	60 hours per course (Afifi, 2011)
USA	College of Liberal Arts and Sciences	16 courses in 4 years = 4 courses a year	24 hours per course (Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS), 2010)

Table 2-2: Comparison between the number of learning hours in two faculties in HE in Egypt and USA.

In my view, regarding information retention, when comparing the amount of information and the number of learning hours in Egypt, students are expected to find difficulties in retaining all this information in this limited period of time. Consequently, e-learning can contribute in enhancing the students' retention of information.

The third advantage of using e-learning in Egyptian HE is that the cost of delivering this learning environment in Egypt is relatively affordable compared with other countries. According to the ICT Trust Fund (2012), Egypt is one of the cheapest countries when it comes to the cost of the internet, as it costs approximately US$5 monthly per user. Additionally, the government's drive for free internet access and the 'PC in Every Home' project indicate that computers are relatively accessible at the broader societal level (Liquid Africa, 2014). Hence, this reduced cost implies that the students' financial affordance is not expected to be a barrier when applying e-learning in Egypt. Consequently, the application of e-learning in Egyptian HE will probably reduce the total cost of HE in Egypt (MCIT, 2010). Orellana (2006) explains in detail that there is a

saving for academic institutions in using online programmes with large numbers of students. For example, a class size of 40 students as opposed to 30 may have a positive financial implication through tutors' salaries. Hence, significant effort is required to provide academics with a clear vision of e-learning features and the necessary requirements to minimise controversial arguments and misunderstandings prior to embarking into the realm of e-learning.

2.8 Challenges of E-Learning

This section highlights the main challenges to using technology for learning. The challenges to be mentioned here are mainly focused on those relating to tutors and administrators in education.

El-Gamal (2014) argues that it is difficult to use innovative teaching strategies, as opposed to the well-established traditional lecturing style, owing to the limited knowledge of administrators and policy makers in education of the new teaching technologies (such as interactive boards). This has led to a reluctance to accept these strategies as substitutes or supplementary to the conventional face-to-face learning environment. Notably, the University of Cape Town (UCT) (2007) focuses on tutors themselves and their acceptance of e-learning, with El-Shenawi (2005) suggesting that tutors are likely to be resistant towards the adoption of e-learning owing to the fact that it is empowering students, at all educational levels, through an active educative system. Importantly, tutors are likely to prefer that students do not have the free of choice they have within the e-learning environment. Abdelraheem (2006) adds another point concerning tutors' resistance, which is related to the difficulty of changing people's attitudes and values about what e-learning constitutes. El-Gamal (2014) adds another reason for tutors' negative willingness to redesign and deliver e-learning courses. These reasons are: the lack of technical support; adequate equipment; and the increased amounts of preparation time required.

In the author's view, such challenges are recognised as a lack of technology awareness by tutors and stakeholders such as administrators of academic institutions. As a result, they may not perceive the benefits of online courses. Importantly, limitations of financial resources and tutors' training before implementing online courses might be considered as a main obstacle.

2.9 Summary

It can be concluded that the Egyptian government has expended significant effort in order to establish an IT infrastructure. Regarding e-learning, although there is evidence of significant activity and increased attention in the arena of e-learning in HE in Egypt, a review of various current initiatives, such as ICTP, shows that e-learning appears to be in the relatively early stages of development.

The chance of sustainable growth in the area of e-learning in Egyptian HE is promising, as it could be claimed that the current escalating trend towards e-learning in Egypt is highly stimulated by a list of beneficiaries, including: firstly, scholars (e.g. overseas' students, employees with a tight timetable, disabled students, students living in remote areas, etc.); secondly, educators who feel the pressure of providing quality education due to the current growing number of students; thirdly, universities that perceive e-learning as an opportunity to widen access to their courses; fourthly, technical support organisations; and finally, the Egyptian government, which recognises e-learning as a fundamental solution for overcoming the challenges of overcrowded classes and facilitating the provision of up-to-date educational service that all students can financially afford.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

This literature review chapter comprises three sections: firstly, student-centred learning; secondly, learning approaches that have an impact on e-learning; thirdly, relationships between tutors and students and tutors' CPD.

3.1 Student-Centred Learning

The following section looks at defining student-centred learning (SCL), its features in Online Learning (OL) and the technology enhancement to implement SCL in OL. Finally, it ends with the affordance and challenges that are associated with SCL.

3.1.1 The History of student-centred learning

Creating the concept of SCL has been credited to Hayward, who, in 1905, argued that the learning process should be able to create, sustain students' motivation to learn and giving them control over their learning (O'Sullivan, 2003). Later, in the 1950s, Dewey placed the student at the centre of the learning environment. He described learners' practices as active, where they explore, think, and reflect, with interaction as an essential ingredient in the learning process (Dewey, 1956).

"Student-Centred Learning" as a term was conceived by Carl Rogers in 1956. He is considered to be the modern-day father of humanistic education, and developed SCL from two perspectives. Firstly, the shift of the tutor's role to that of facilitator, in which role tutors help students to discover their own meaning. Secondly, he designated the students' role as developing their own learning and reaching their personal goals through self-discipline (Rogers, 1994). Rogers' development of SCL highlights the change of power from tutor to student as well as the responsibility that is imposed on the students.

SCL stems from a constructivist learning theory in which students construct their knowledge (Semple 2000; Zain, Rasidi and Abidin, 2012). Atherton (2010) explains that social constructivism presents the idea that the learner is actively involved in a joint collaboration with both tutor and peers to create new meaning. SCL thus has a clear connection to constructivism as a main theory

and social constructivism as another theory, which is an important step in the development of SCL. It is related primarily to the social theory of constructivism which is laid down by Vygotsky (1986), and highlights the importance of social community in learning as well as increases the importance for learners, when learning, to be actively involved in a joint enterprise with tutor and peers. In summary, in SCL, constructivist strategies are implemented for both tutors and. Here tutors become facilitators instead of lecturing and controlling all classroom activities, while students negotiate and generate solutions through problem solving, sharing and exchange of ideas, and construct rather than receive or assimilate knowledge.

Another theory that relates to SCL is the theory of empowerment. According to Fitzgerald (2011), as students who are centred in their learning, modify actively their own learning. Consequently, these students are empowered. Also, empowerment theory implies that for people to better control their own lives, they must be supported and given access to resources for success (Zimmerman, 1995). Therefore, constructivism and empowerment share the theory that knowledge is constructed. Hence, learning environment based on a combination of these two theoretical approaches can help to assure that each student can relate new concepts to existing knowledge.

3.1.2 The Definition of Student-Centred Learning

SCL as a term is linked to many other concepts such as "Flexible Learning" (Taylor 2000), "Active Learning" (Bonwell and Eison, 1991), "Experiential Learning" (Burnard1999), or "Cooperative Learning" (Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1991). For that reason, SCL does not refer to one specific method to adopt, but a broad spectrum of differently termed approaches is linked to it.

McCombs and Whistler (1997) discuss the role of the abovementioned approaches, as these learning models help students to think critically while learning, and analyse, evaluate and be reflective towards their own learning. This reflection helps the student to link to prior knowledge and experience, and introduces meaningful learning topics that are relevant to the students' lives, needs and interests. Reflection in learning powerfully influences future learning and a learner's life-long career (see Section 3.1.1).

Semple (2000) adds the idea of "authentic learning" as applied to SCL - "authentic" activities such as Problem-Based learning (PBL) (see Section 3.1.4) and Activity-Based Learning (ABL) (see Section 3.1.5), reflect complex real world problems, and form links between the learners' knowledge and real-life application. Semple (2000) and Weimer (2013) also define further characteristics of SCL which enhance students' reflection upon their learning. They explain that in order to motivate and engage SCL learners, social collaboration and communication between peers and tutor needs to exist. This also carries the implication of empowering learners and giving them control. In the author's view, SCL may not be thought of as a linear construct which has a starting point which is engaging and motivating, and ends up with developing learners' learning skills and enhancing real-life application. Instead, it is a continuing reflective loop each cycle proceeds to a deeper level of learning

In summary, SCL can be defined as a pedagogical practice: individualised, flexible, and tailored by the tutor. Tutor is a guiding facilitator and students are active, autonomous and collaborative. Students take responsibility for their learning, setting goals and objectives, and managing and assessing their own learning activities. Through implementing SCL, students' learning skills such as reasoning, decision making, reflecting and critical thinking are developed. Moreover, within SCL the relationship between tutor and student is interdependent based on shared power between them - the more control the students have; the less the tutor needs to worry about this control.

The question to be asked, then, is: Do educational institutions, tutors and students have a common agreement regarding what constitutes SCL? This section is trying to answer this question. O'Neill and McMahon (2005) note that the multiple terms that are used in connection with SCL can mean different things to different people. The conceptualisation of SCL with a range of terms may have led to confusion surrounding its meaning, thus causing difficulties when putting SCL into practice (Lynch, *et al.* 1997). Also, even if there is an agreement that student is at the heart of the learning process and SCL's benefits are considered (European Student Union (ESU), 2010). Chris (2005) addressed that, activities which focus on the learners' needs, interests and background, to be used in SCL, still are not well identified. This confusion may be the reason for many institutions or educators claiming to be putting SCL into practice, but in reality are not (Lea, Stephenson and Troy, 2003). Doyle

(2011) claims that SCL is still not in practice, as little literature focuses on how to make changes to shift from teacher-centred learning to SCL. Based on the discrepancy of SCL conceptualisation, the answer to the aforementioned question is expected to be negative

In the author's view, the existence of a common definition of SCL is expected to create full awareness of the actions and responsibilities for students and teaching strategies for tutors needed to achieve SCL. Consequently, would expand its application in learning. Moreover, it may result to the existence of other associated terms such as student- centred activities.

3.1.3 Features of student-centred learning in OL

"A well-designed online course should be focused and centred on the learner" (Palloff and Pratt, 2007, p. 90). In other words, SCL in OL is suggested to contribute to enhancing learning. The following section highlights some features of SCL when it is applied in OL. Firstly, Information retention. Secondly, roles of tutors who implement SCL in OL. Thirdly, responsibilities of students in OL when SCL is implemented.

3.1.3.1 Information retention

According to Bernstein (2010) and Zaidieh (2012), for long term information retention there are a number of teaching strategies that may improve a learner's ability to memorise information, such as short learning sessions, problem solving and real-world scenarios. They suggest guiding learners to the resources in which they can search for and discover new information. In the author's view, features that are explained by Bernstein (2010) and Zaidieh (2012) are existed in OL. In detail, regarding the session duration, in OL , the average length of an OL session is about 18 minutes (Wolter, Avritzer and Vieira, 2012), while in face-to-face learning mode, a class session can be up to 3 hours (FAST-US-5, 2010; University of Windsor, 2013). Regarding learning approaches such as discovery learning, internet search engines can help the learner to explore resources and navigate to find an answer for their questions. The nature of OL with its real time and non-real time sessions give learners the opportunity to retrieve information either immediately or later. Also, it may need some guidance and support by online tutors to facilitate other learning approaches for learners such as problem solving and critical thinking. In

summary, OL presents an acceptable learning environment that may help to retain information for a long time.

3.1.3.2 Tutors

According to Frenay *et al*. (1998, cited in De la Sablonniere, Taylor, Donald and Sadykova, 2009), tutors in OL have become facilitators, guiding and orienting learners to achieve their learning goals and objectives. Dixon, Dixon and Axmann (2008) discuss the difference between the face-to-face learning environment, where tutors read and respond to their learners directly and instantly, and OL, where tutors are likely to be unaware of their students' immersion into OL learning resources, their interaction and collaboration in the OL learning community, and their subsequent experiences. These differences may add to the OL tutor's role to do some extra tasks such as:

- Implementing strategies that are interactive and collaborative (McCombs and Whistler, 1997),
- Considering learners' prior knowledge and experience (De la Sablonniere *et al*. 2009) and
- Setting learning goals that are likely to extend to a real-life application (Frenay *et al.* 1998, cited in de la Sablonniere *et al*. 2009).

Tutors may need to do extra tasks with online learners to break the ice that can exist at the beginning of an online course (Dixon *et al*. 2008). As it is illustrated in the following diagram (Figure 3-1), many online students at the beginning of their study are dependants and they need more guidance and support by online tutors and peers.

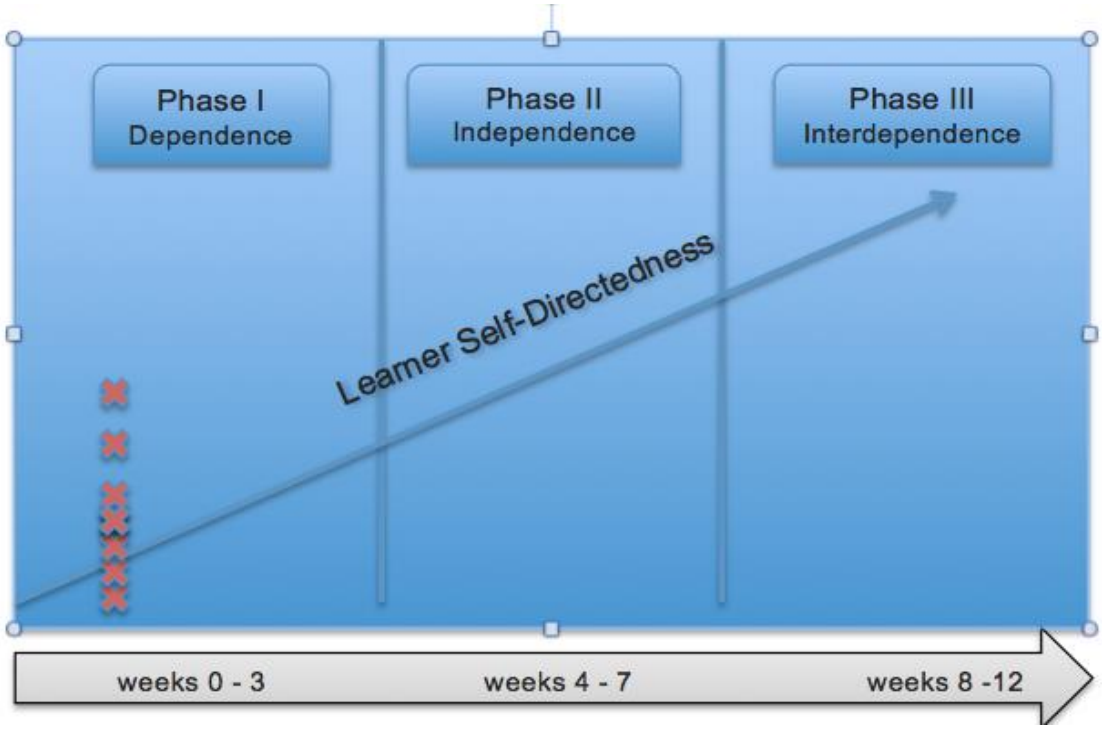


Figure 3-1: Online learners' dependency curve (Lowe, 2012)

It is advised that tutors consider that learners need both pedagogical and interpersonal support. They may need to appreciate students' opinions by giving positive comments for students' posts and online uploaded materials (Bhaskar, 2013). Skvorak (2013) starts tutor's role with knowing learners to enable tutors to present their lessons in a manner that suits all learning styles. Also, because in OL environment students may become demotivated and disengaged easily, Lowe (2012) recommends that tutors provide immediate responses to student questions, as delayed responses can discourage students, even may increase levels of stress for some students. In terms of online discussion and collaboration, Dixon *et al*. (2008) add further tasks for the online tutors who implement SCL, namely those of always keeping up to date with relevant information, tracking the students' comments and participation, and the ability to efficiently respond to problems, whether technical or through conflicts in the students' views. Salmon (2013) focuses on the social perspective in the process of: encouraging students' interaction, supporting their learning activities, and helping make the use of technology easier in order to foster engagement and learning.

In the author's view, the online support by tutors needs another support by academic institutions. They need to provide the easy access to the online

learning resources such as Learning Management Systems (LMS) and to facilitating the online 24 hour technical support. These efforts are expected to be essential and complementing the efforts of online tutors.

3.1.3.3 Students

According to Palloff and Pratt (2007), in online when SCL is implemented the responsibility of achieving learning aims falls to the students. As students set their goals and direct their learning process, they contract the tutor to set the stages of the course, set the class climate, and monitor their progress to achieve their goals. According to Dixon *et al*. (2008), some students found that because of this responsibility they were overwhelmed by learning through a SCL online course for example, the delayed responses from tutor or peers in the social forums, and difficulties in online navigation. Palloff and Pratt (2007) explained the consequence of this overwhelming, as students may resist continuing as SCL students and insist on being teacher-centred learning students. At this point, where tutors might shift to teacher-centred learning, Doyle (2008, p.95), stated, “As teachers, we need to support learners in this process, enabling them to take risks and learn from their mistakes “.

Dixon *et al*. (2008) suggested getting students ready for the OL environment through activities such as: preparing them for internet search, accessing information, communicating, and collaborating in a fast-paced global society. Finally, increasing the amount of time that a student spends reviewing online content, as students need more time to reflect. It is important to highlight in this regard that SCL may not be a panacea in learning for all students (Weimer, 2013). Some learners who are not ready to be self-directed may opt out of an online course because they may find it does not meet their needs or abilities. Diaz (2002) similarly explained that some learners may do well in a face-to-face learning class, while others do well in OL. The conclusion is that going with a preferred learning style is not a failure.

In the author’s view, if OL is the three “**A**s”, as **A**nyone can learn **A**nywhere and **A**nytime (Rogers, P., Berg, G., Boettcher, J., Howard, C. and Justice, L., 2010), then SCL in OL adds a fourth "**A**", which is "at Any pace" which is the personalised learning. The four “**A**s” agree with the learners' individuality and uniqueness that exist in SCL. According to Andrews (2011), in SCL, learners learn to work at their own pace and use their own strategies, making decisions

of their learning, the question that can be asked in this context: Are students skilled enough to take control? Doyle (2008) adds to the tutors' tasks to ensure that their learners have the skills and strategies to be successfully centred in their learning.

3.1.4 Technology and tools that enhance Student-Centred Learning implementation

This section discusses the enhancement of technology in learning when implementing SCL. It discusses its affordance for deep learning and social collaboration.

In OL, there are a number of facilities and simulations to enable deep learning (Beard, Wilson and McCarter, 2007). According to Rogers *et al.* (2010), SCL in OL is implemented through presenting interactive activities such as games and simulations. Students' interaction with these activities and their collaboration with peers direct the delivery of the module content. That confirms the claim that SCL is derived from social constructivism theory (Vygotsky, 1978). Moreover, technological tools in OL such as emails, video conferences, and online forums are expected to give the students control over their learning and lead them to be responsible for it (Rogers *et al.* 2010).

Another enhancement to learning that is provided by OL technology regards the lack of time for learners to be reflective in the classroom (Brockbank *et al.* 2002), as learners need time to reflect (Kolb, 1984). According to Kemmis (1985), in a face-to-face learning environment some learners may find it difficult to express themselves verbally. In contrast to this, in OL, students have the opportunity to return to any part of the learning environment if they desire, and to act only upon reflection. With respect to the issue of students not being able to effectively express themselves in a face-to-face learning mode, in OL, learners are likely to have access to multi-tools with Web 2.0 technology to allow for communication and collaboration (Smith and Cockburn, 2014). Wikis and blogs are applications that allow users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue as creators (Mohamad and Klobas, 2010). Regarding wikis, they have a lot of potential for successful collaborative online learning through promoting engagement and interaction between student peers and tutors. Wikis also have a strong emphasis on the

social perspective of learning as proposed by Vygotsky (Mohamad and Klobas, 2010). While, blog is a social network that supports knowledge sharing and peer learning, and facilitates reflective and autonomous learning (Maloney, 2007). The blog's flexibility enables a focus on one narrow subject (like a personal diary) as well as an extension to a whole range of subjects such as a website. These tools can challenge learners to look at issues from multiple perspectives, to think critically and they encourage them for risk-taking, which is necessary for learning to occur (Rogers *et al*. 2010).

According to Mohamad and Klobas (2010), young learners are captivated and motivated by social networking facilities like Facebook and MySpace. That is confirmed by the figure (3-2) below that illustrates that young learners (18-25) of social network users in USA are 52.9 million users in total in 2015.

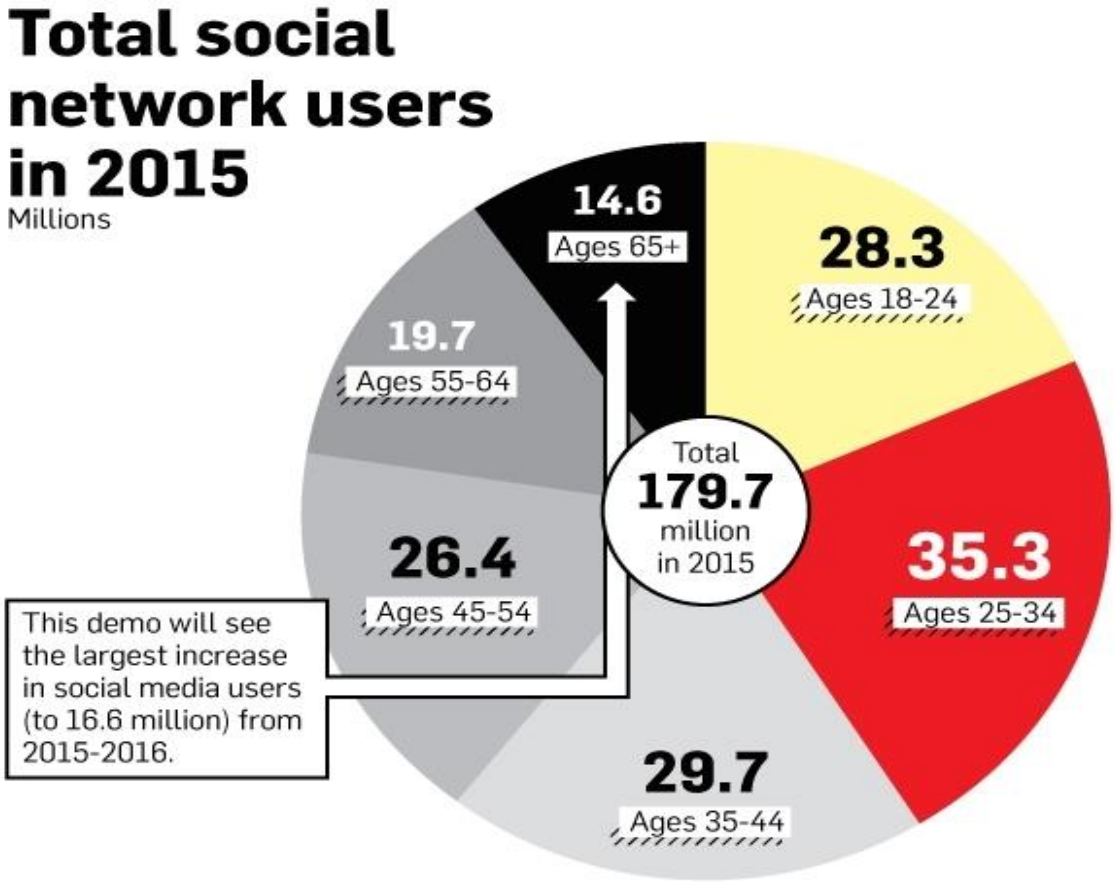


Figure 3-2: Total social network users (eMarketer & American Marketing Association, 2015)

Learners in the twenty-first century prefer learning that supports participation and interaction, and which connects them to their peers (West and West, 2009). Therefore, using social software for learning can easily motivate and engage these learners in education.

The author addresses that although the advantages of using many of social network applications, some critiques are directed to them. For example, wiki is criticized that it leads to disorientation for some learners. According to Andrews (2011), OL in general can disorient learners because of the free of choices that they have in OL. Therefore, technology tools that are used in OL add more tasks for the tutor's role. Tutors are asked to examine and evaluate online course delivery to ensure that it can achieve its pedagogical aims. According to Ruth and Houghton (2009), there is an obvious lack of research that investigates the pedagogical potential of social network and its capabilities to construct knowledge. Consequently, it is recommended that academic institutions that adopt OL as a learning environment, they are asked to carefully evaluate what technology works pedagogically, and what needs to be adjusted or improved and to provide professional training and development for their teaching staff to adopt these technologies.

3.1.5 Limitations of student-centred learning

This section discusses two limitations for SCL: firstly, its affordance for content coverage. Secondly, SCL's ability to balance between Individualized learning and diversity of learners.

3.1.5.1 Content coverage

According to Froyd and Simpson (2010) and Barr and Tagg (1995), content coverage is still a high priority in education and one of the main concerns for the administration of the academic institution. In SCL, where students influence the content, material, activities and pace of learning (Froyd and Simpson, 2010). Consequently, affordance of content coverage in SCL may become questionable and raises the question if tutors can cover the same content when implementing SCL? In OL, content coverage may become more challenging, where internet provides learners with wide range of information sources and different media. Also, students in online communication and collaboration extend their sources of information by asking each other,

suggesting and testing ideas. Therefore, content coverage in OL presents difficulties for tutors in terms of addressing the tension between rigid structures and being responsive to SCL flexibility in learning.

Froyd and Simpson (2010) explain that covering the course content when applying a SCL approach is an individual matter for each tutor; some tutors found that they cover the same, others found that they cover less but that the students learned more. In the author's view, SCL implementation and covering the same content as the teacher-centred approach is susceptible. The reason behind this is when SCL is an applied approach, students practice and develop their abilities for time-management, self-management, critical and reflective thinking and other learning approaches, that have been explained earlier. All these skills and methods are not expected to take the same time as it takes in a teacher-centred approach, where few only of these approaches are implemented. That is confirmed by Liu and Pederson (2003), as some tutors believed that for the amount of covered content, SCL activities are more time consuming. Therefore, they would use only a limited number of SCL activities in their teaching, and be less likely to use these activities during periods when they are preparing students for a standardized test. In other words, tutors may choose to avoid SCL as it contraindicates with content coverage.

According to UCD Centre for Teaching and Learning(2005), there is a growing practice that, course's outcomes and objectives are to be evaluated based on what the student will be able to do, rather than on the content being covered by the tutor. In this regard, the author's question to the administration of the academic institution is: if the course, where SCL is implemented, resulted in much greater understanding for the concepts, more critical thinking and reflective learning skills have been developed, better class attendance. Meanwhile, the content is not fully covered. Is this course considered a successful one and can be added to the success rate of the institution? If the answer is negative, it means that, for the full implementation of SCL, some radical changes in the bases of students' evaluation of achievement are likely to be changed.

3.1.5.2 Personalised Learning and Diversity of Learners

Today there is growing recognition for personalised learning (PL) than before. The reason behind the importance of PL that, tutors need to take account of

differences in students' learning styles and preferences (Prain *et al.* 2015). Moreover, the whole education system should be built upon students' needs, abilities and to make sure that the talent of each student is supported and encouraged (Gibbons, 2004). In the author's view, the powerful of personalised learning that it motivates and engages learners with in learning, as it creates a feeling for them that learning is individualised for the purpose of achieving their goals and suiting their abilities.

SCL's adoption of the learner's autonomy and individuality of learning is criticized by Simon (1999) and Lea, Stephenson and Troy (2003). Simon highlights the point that 'if each child is unique, and each requires a specific pedagogical approach appropriate to him or her and to no other, the construction of an all-embracing pedagogy or general principles of teaching becomes an impossibility' (Simon, 1999, p:42). In other words, the more individuals in the class with different needs and objectives, the more approaches needed to be used. That is considered to be a challenge for tutors to develop teaching and learning strategies for each learner and actively engaging them to meet all their needs (NCLS, 2005). Also, it is a challenge for leaders to think creatively and flexibly about how to support high-quality teaching and learning that suits each learner's needs. Andrews (2011) concluded the difficulty to personalise learning is because that neither students nor institutions are sufficiently prepared to implement learner's autonomy, which, in turn, is a key variable for PL.

Lea, Stephenson and Troy (2003) highlighted another critique in this regard, that within individualised learning with SCL, each learner may become isolated from peers to achieve his/her own learning aims. In this regard, OL has positive side that may enhance learners' opportunity to find the learning community that has common aims and interests. In this case, social isolation is minimised. On the other hand, the negative side that in OL, learners' diversity is more, as students may different in language, education and culture. According to Croft *et al.* (2010) students may be following different working regulations (for example England, Wales and Scotland have different approaches to planning); or having different issues facing them in their daily life, for example in urban, rural and coastal areas. Moreover, technology tools and internet search capabilities are expanding the scope of learners' choices

and preferences. That may lead to make their individual goals and objectives of learning are constantly changing.

Additionally, learner's stages of learning and development lead to incorporate different pedagogical approaches to suit their different abilities and needs (FAA, 2009). In this regard, a question may be raised for both tutors and academic institutions: What teaching strategies, learning approaches and resources to be implemented in SCL, that suit the diversity of learners? The following diagram (Figure 3-3) illustrates the range of skills that tutors implement to support and facilitate learning for learners.

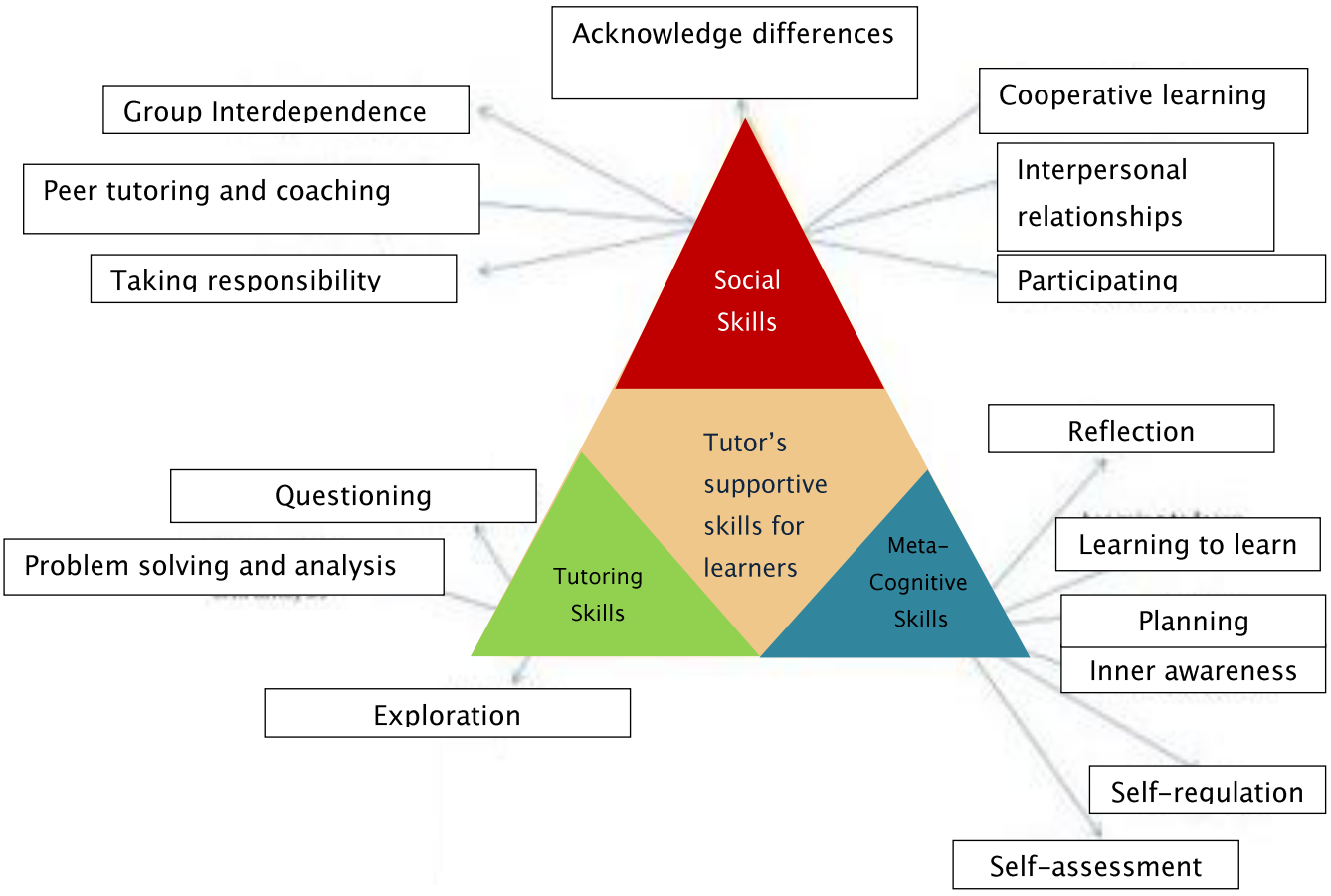


Figure 3-3: Tutor's skills to support students' learning

I assume that the previous figure (3-3) shows a challenge for tutors, as these skills are diverse and they may need sustainable professional training and development to integrate them into their learning strategies.

3.1.6 Affordances of student-centred learning

The following section discusses SCL's affordances regarding its supporting to the social collaboration in learning.

3.1.6.1 Student-centred learning and social collaboration

Weimer (2013) explains that SCL implies engaging and motivating students, empowering them, giving them control, and encouraging collaboration between peers and tutor. In detail, SCL is offering students different learning approaches, as explained in the previous topic, such as PBL and ABL. Thus, SCL gives students various opportunities to enhance their learning skills in various collaborative environments and allowing them to experience different self-directed learning activities within this environment.

As the three sides of the learning process triangle is: student, tutor and content, the following section highlights the benefits of collaboration that exists in SCL for each side of them:

(1) For the course content, it provides rich discussion and sharing experiences between students may lead to increased variety and flow of the course (Barr and Tagg, 1995).

(2) For OL students, who are usually geographically dispersed, they can gain and share different experiences and knowledge through online forums (Academy of Art University, 2013).

(3)For OL tutors, collaboration can help them to manage high numbers of students in the class, since tutors are not the sole responders to each online student (Academy of Art University, 2013). It is worth noting that some educational institutions use e-learning when they are pushed to deliver education to a large number of students which exceeds their classroom capacities (Welsh *et al.* 2003).

In the author's view, social collaboration in SCL has many advantages in learning, as explained above. On the other hand, it is considered a challenge for tutors to encourage and sustain students' collaboration and communication. In detail, referring to the "Learning Pyramid" (Figure1-3), example of students' collaboration on the top of the pyramid is such as

students' reading others' posts and reply to them, whilst, examples of students' collaboration on the bottom of the pyramid are such as: students' communication and collaboration with their peers; editing; and critiquing. Students' shift in the "Learning Pyramid" from the top to the bottom of the pyramid implies tours' guiding their students to articulate their ideas, ask questions, be exposed to different perspectives in learning to think, reflect and interact with new information.

In OL, collaborative learning can be more challenging for tutors, as it requires embedding some online programmes such as: educational games and setting up group projects. Therefore, online tutors have to be well-trained to integrate collaboration into their online teaching practices. Therefore, for tutor to overcome this challenge, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), is needed.

On the other hand, personalised and individualised learning in SCL are considered to be critiques against it because individualisation leads to social isolation. According to Cobb (1999) although SCL supports independent and collaboration among learners, SCL would result to the social isolation for learners, if the social perspective is not highly considered in SCL implementation. It is to mention that, there are negative implications of social isolation, especially in OL where the physical and temporal separation of tutor and student, and between students themselves. Students might find the problem of misconception or need further explanation. They sometimes read some ideas or concepts and construct the wrong knowledge in their minds. Accordingly, that may minimise the richness of the learning experience and lead to negative impact on their learning outcomes.

I argue that SCL as a learning approach leads to social isolation. Since SCL is derived from the constructivist view of learning in which the learners are building their knowledge and their personal interpretation of experience (O'Neill and McMahon, 2005). Moreover, SCL has connections with the social constructivist view in learning and its impact on the community of learning (tutor-student-peers) in constructing its knowledge (Cobb, 1999). Therefore, SCL is no longer a one-way route from tutor to learner, but a dynamic process where there are links between tutors, students, peers and learning resources through tasks such as discussions or challenging and creative projects. This

makes SCL a highly social enterprise that requires the constant development of human relationships and communication (ESU, 2010 and EIC, 2004). Bart (2010) and Lynch *et al.* (1997) argue that when learners construct their knowledge this is based on their various experiences and learning objectives. This generates collaboration between the whole learning community, tutors and learners. This environment contributes to learners' engagement in the learning community (Lynch *et al.* 1997). As a result, students may also be encouraged to be members in the academic community (ESU, 2010).

In OL especially, social engagement is more challenging for tutors, because of the absence of physical existence of tutors, students and content. Therefore, students' feeling of social isolation is one of the main challenges in OL, for example, Croft *et al.* (2010) found that 22% of OL students mentioned that the risk of feeling isolated is as a real challenge for them. Venter (2003) gave another reason behind the feeling of social isolation in OL, because OL students are heterogeneous. OL students may have different languages, different cultures and even different backgrounds. These differences lead to difficulty in collaborating between them if they are communicating via any online social media. The implication of this social isolation in OL is the increasing ratio of drop out ration. It is confirmed by Jordan (2013) as online courses' in general completion rates can approach 40% and Massive Open Online Course MOOCs have completion rates of less than 10% (Jordan, 2013).

As solutions, Romero-Frias and Arquero Montaño (2012) and Cohen and Lotan (2014) addressed that there is a conceptual change that educators need to carry out. This change means that online tutors need to step outside the traditional social interaction between them, which is based on individual competition between learners to achieve a target or high grade, and promote collaboration and team work that achieves a group target.

In summary, when implementing SCL in OL, encouraging learners' creativity and innovation, while sustaining and fostering their social collaboration, is a challenge. It may need more research focusing on these challenges and CPD for tutors to enrich their skills in this regard.

3.1.7 Current situation of student-centred learning in the OL Environment in Egyptian Higher Education

In general, education is a key to creating sustainable economic development (World Bank, 2013). Nevertheless, the overall situation in Egyptian education is not ideal; from the administrative perspective it is distinguished by large class size, centralisation and bureaucracy, while from the pedagogical perspective, learning is focused on memorisation of the presented material, and students' evaluation is mainly based on test grades. According to Mansour (2006), large class size and lack of time to cover the content, act as constraints and push tutors towards teacher-centred learning approach in their teaching. Moreover, tutors are poorly trained (Richardson *et al.* 2012).

Regarding students, The Population Council (2012) points out that one of the main problems in Egyptian education is that students are dissatisfied about their learning. Only around 3% report the school building or commutes as the source of their dissatisfaction; the rest are dissatisfied about the quality of learning. The reasons behind this dissatisfaction are many reasons related to the teaching strategies and information delivery. According to the World Bank (2013), in Egypt the primary activities in the classroom are copying from the blackboard, writing, and listening to tutors. Regarding the exam system, education in Egypt is based on lecturing by tutor, and then testing students on the material presented (UNESCO, 2013). Moreover, the studied subjects are irrelevant to the market needs of employment, which reduces the students' opportunities to find jobs after finishing their studies. Figure 3-4 below illustrates the impacts of the aforementioned obstacles on the educational and the economic level.

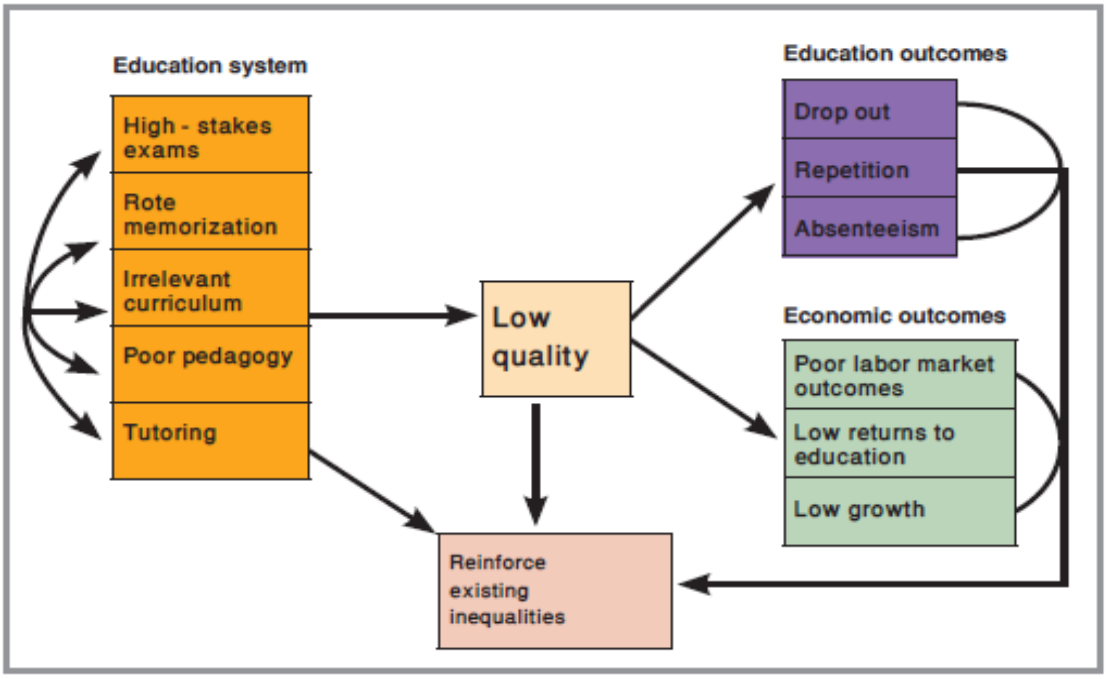


Figure 3-4: Quality challenges and inequality in the education system (The Population Council, 2012)

All the previous concerns illustrate that the lack of interactivity and critical thinking in Egyptian education. These concerns lead to the students' disengagement with the studied course and a lack of motivation to continue it, which in turn leads to an increase in the students' dropout rate.

The government is making efforts to overcome these obstacles in many directions. Regarding technology in learning, the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) is committed to help the entire education sector (tutors, students and administrators) to develop the necessary skills to compete in this field (MHE, 2011). Efforts are also made by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in that they aim to facilitate the use of internet through maintaining a free internet access nationwide since 2002 (Abdelwahab, 2008). This free access to the internet facilitates the use of computers in education - for example, 100% of private schools and 99.7% of government schools in Egypt have computers and the computer-to-student ratio is 52:1 in government schools and 47:1 in private institutions (Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, 2008). Regarding the use of technology tools within the learning environment, such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), there are many examples of a positive response to the implementation of technology tools in academic institutions, for example,

the use of interactive books and CD-ROMS at the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Cairo (Hamdy, 2007) and the use of Moodle as a learning management system at the American University in Cairo (AUC) (AUC, 2014).

With reference to the features of SCL that have been discussed in Section 2.1 above, it can be concluded that the more the SCL approach is applied in Egypt, the greater the enhancement in education can be. This is confirmed by the statement by World Bank (2013) that there is a need to shift from the traditional teacher-centred learning approach to SCL as a pedagogical approach.

An analysis of Figure 3-4 above and the assumption of the positive correlation between SCL and education enhancement may raise the following questions:

- Will there be a similar positive correlation if SCL is applied in OL?
- Does Egypt have the facilities needed for OL delivery that implements SCL?

It is worth mentioning that in considering SCL as a learning approach in Egypt, one does not only need to investigate the availability to technology, but may need to highlight professional development for tutors and training for students. This investigation will help to gain awareness of the benefits of e-learning and strategies for its implementation.

The following section focuses on the affordances and challenges that have an impact on SCL in OL in Egypt. Regarding affordances, the overcrowded classes are discussed. Regarding challenges, the tutors' Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is discussed. Then, the cultural acceptance of the use of the internet in learning to be highlighted. Finally, e-learning as technology-centred learning is investigated.

3.1.7.1 Potential Affordances

3.1.7.1.1 Overcrowded Classes

According to El-Gamal (2014), some university halls in Egypt contain more than 1500 students. According to Jones and Skaggs (2012), overcrowded classes are considered to be an obstacle for effective learning. These crowded classes lead to a reduction of the learning outcomes. The main reason behind the deterioration of learning outcomes is that a large number of students

indicate a greater heterogeneity within the student group. Therefore, more efforts from the tutors' side are required to understand the diversity between learners. In addition, tutors may find it more difficult to control bigger classes, which may be the reason that many tutors tend to implement a teacher-centred approach (such as lecturing while students are passively listening) in big classes to control the class. That can explain the reason behind the implementation of teacher-centred approach in Egypt in some cases (El-Gamal, 2014).

In my view, implementing SCL can be considered one of the affordances for OL in Egyptian HE. According to Jones (2007), the larger the class, the more necessary it is to have a student-centred class. There are three benefits for implementing SCL in overcrowded classes. Firstly, within SCL, learners have high knowledge retention (Burnard, 1999), where students are: active, discussing, exploring and solving problems. According to ESU (2010) active students are motivated and engaged in learning. Secondly, in a crowded classroom, tutors may not even be able to reach some students as they circulate. At this point, Cohen and Lotan (2014) highlight the attention that students need to get prepared to behave in the group work situation without direct supervision. Thirdly, autonomous learning in SCL benefits learners in generating collaboration between tutors and learners, thus encouraging enjoyment in the learning process (Bart, 2010). In detail, learners are able to work effectively in group and to gain skills other than learning, such as team work, active communicating and critical thinking (Carlile and Jordan, 2005). Based on the aforementioned benefits of implementing SCL in overcrowded classes, it can be expected that educational outcomes, that are illustrated in Figure 3-4; drop-out, repetition and student absenteeism, can be minimised.

3.1.7.2 Potential Constraints

There are three main challenges discussed in the following section: the Continuing Professional l Development (CPD) provided for tutors, the cultural constraint of using the internet in education, and the use of e-learning as technology-centred.

3.1.7.2.1 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

There are efforts being made towards CPD provided for tutors in developing countries. In Egypt, Teaching for Improved Learning Outcomes in Education (TILO) is a four-year project funded by the US Agency for International Development. TILO is centred on professional development across education (Bosch, 2009). TILO plans are working in two directions: firstly, tutors training for effective teaching practices including SCL; secondly, tutors training in embedding technology into their teaching practices.

In the authors' view, with the increasing role of technology in education, and in order to maximise the learning outcomes, Egypt needs projects similar to TILO. These projects would focus on CPD provided for tutors and include the use of technology with theories of learning behind this technology. Egypt may need a number of such projects over a longer period of time, and each project would be divided into phases. By the end of each phase, feedback and evaluation would be the basis of the following phase. In addition, the author recommends the establishment of a professional association for those who are concerned with advancing education through the appropriate use of information and communications technology (ICT), such as the National Association of Advisors for Computers in Education (NAACE) in the UK. NAACE members from the education sector including tutors, school managers, and curriculum leaders, and all who share the same interest in embedding the effective use of technology into teaching, learning and school management (www.naace.co.uk).

Another professional and development training project running up to 2015 is set up jointly by the National ICT policies in the area of education with the Ministry of Education (MHE); the project is targeted to spread ICT tools and knowledge to many aspect of education. One of its main aims is to train the educational cadres, targeting three main goals: for tutors to earn the International Computer Driver's Licence (ICDL); to train tutors to use ICT; and to train them to use discussion groups with learners to integrate it in teaching (Hamdy, 2007).

The author evaluates these efforts with respect to two different aspects. Firstly, this project is managed by MHE, which raises the problem of bureaucracy and centralisation as explained in chapter 2. This bureaucracy in turn may lead to a central planning and implementation for the objectives of CPD, and disregard

the objectives of individual academic institutions. Secondly, although these efforts are considered to be promising steps towards the use of technology in learning, focusing on tutors' CPD, training tutors to use ICT may need more than that. Cruz-Yeh (2011) proposed a model of CPD that follows 6 sequential steps. These steps are: training, observation, evaluation, and feedback assessment, involvement in an improvement process, inquiry/collaborative action research, individually guided or self-directed, and mentoring or developmental coaching. With reference to both: Cruz-Yeh's (2011) previous steps and Kennedy's nine models of CPD (2005) (to be explained in the next section, Table 3.7), additional elements need to be added when planning for training tutors for the use of technology in Egyptian HE. These elements are: political, economic (cost), social (sharing and communication) and individual (perception for sharing responsibilities). Moreover, the figure below (Figure 3-5) highlights the types of knowledge of which online tutors have to be aware of. They are: content, technology and pedagogy. The figure illustrates that there is an overlap between each one of them. In other words, CPD should highlight that there is no technology without pedagogical motivation and reasoning and no content without overlapping with technology.

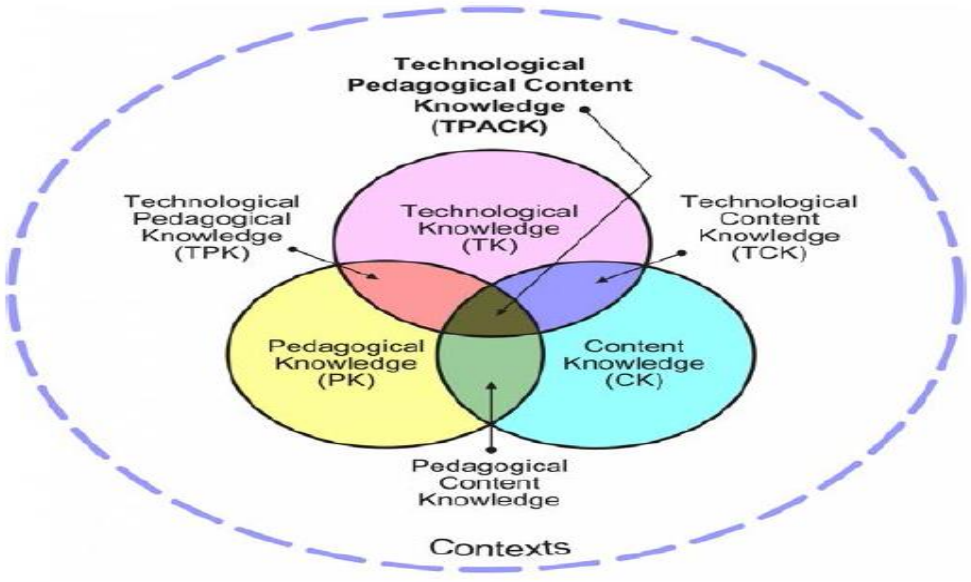


Figure 3-5: The TPACK framework and its knowledge components of Shulman, 1986 (Bauer, 2014, p: 12)

As illustrated in the previous figure (3-5), Shulman (1986) focuses on tutors' knowledge and upon the connections among technology, content, and

pedagogy as they play out in classroom contexts. Turner-Bisset (2001), presents another model of knowledge bases for teaching that uses twelve categories, as illustrated in the following table (Table 3-1).

Knowledge type	Description
Subject knowledge: Substantive	Content knowledge associated with facts, concepts, models and frameworks
Subject knowledge: Syntactic	The ways through which propositional knowledge is generated and established.
Beliefs about subject	Relates to the way in which the tutor understands the history and purpose of the subject or discipline.
Curriculum knowledge	A broad concept that incorporates knowledge of programmes and resources developed by government, commercial interests and others.
General pedagogical knowledge	Generic and largely procedural knowledge about teaching that is gained from and is likely to develop with practice.
Knowledge/models of teaching	Described as beliefs about what constitutes good teaching practice which is derived from one's own experience as a learner.
Knowledge of learners: Empirical	Relates to criteria such as age, interests, social nature and behavioural patterns.
Knowledge of learners: Cognitive	Relates to knowledge of learning theories which inform practice, and context specific knowledge of how a particular group of learners respond and behave.
Knowledge of self	Combines the personal and the professional. Is important in shaping the way that tutors' perceive their identity and critical to reflection on personal teaching practice.
Knowledge of educational contexts	Knowledge of the settings in which teaching occurs. In the VET system these include fee for service and government funded programmes, classroom based, workplace based, face to face, online, and flexible approaches.
Knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values	Based on the premise that teaching is a purposeful activity expert tutors are able to make educational ends, purposes and values explicit. In the VET system, officially legitimised statements of ends, purpose and values are embedded in

	policy and associated documents. For example, competency based training that is manifest in the nationally endorsed Training Packages, quality assurance processes detailed in the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQFT), recognised qualifications according to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).
Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)	Shulman (1986) describes PCK as an amalgam of pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge. Turner-Bisset (2001) describes PCK as that knowledge which embeds all other knowledge bases. PCK cannot develop in the absence of any other knowledge base. There is a common view that PCK is the knowledge base which differentiates the novice from the expert tutor.

Table 3-1: A model of knowledge bases for teaching (Turner-Bisset's, 2001)

Shulman (1986) and Turner-Bisset (2001) emphasise the importance of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). They argue that PCK is more than content knowledge plus knowledge of general principles of pedagogy. For Shulman (1986), it is knowledge that guides the tutors' actions and reasoning in their teaching practices. For Turner-Bisset (2001), PCK is not a separate element in tutors' knowledge and cannot be reduced to sets of facts or isolated propositions, but is knowledge of self in relation to subject knowledge and pedagogy, and knowledge of educational aims, purposes and values. Moreover, for Turner-Bisset, without PCK, tutors are unable to help learners to learn when, where and why to use their content knowledge. In OL, Elliot (2008) explains that online tutors' knowledge is expected to develop tutors' ability to implement communication and collaboration between students in OL, emphasising the need for tutors themselves to interact and collaborate via social network applications. Therefore, tutor-tutor interaction in OL needs to be encouraged in CPD, and its benefits and strategies need to be explained.

Considering tutors' low wages (Abdelwahab, 2008), tutors in Egypt may need to have an incentive to participate in CPD, for example free software or direct payment (Richardson *et al.* 2011). In the author's view, this could form a limitation of the bureaucratic structure in Egyptian HE (see Section 2.8). The top level of authority in this regard is the MHE and any financial decision, like the one mentioned above, has to be raised to the top level of for processing.

That may lead to another recommendation for more autonomous decisions for universities within the Higher Education Enhancement Project (HEEP) as requested by TEMPUS (2012b).

3.1.7.2.2 Cultural Acceptance of the Use of the Internet in Learning

"The Internet offers major opportunity for freedom of expression and democracy. " (Brunet, OumarouTiemtoré and Marie-Claude Vettraino-Soulard, 2004, p. 5) – this is a characteristic of the internet which is considered an advantage in some cultures, for example Western cultures. On the other hand, according to Alghannam and Basheoh (2011) and Wardany (2009), in Egypt, this may be different. Communication and ethics are two sides of the same coin (Brunet *et al.* 2004). Therefore, internet use is linked in some aspects to the deterioration of ethics. In some Eastern communities, misbehaviour of the younger generation is linked to the excessive use of internet technology

The nature of the online communication that exists in the internet facilitates networking between users, and dissolves the barriers of space and distance between them, with interaction and mutual recognition. All this is an advantage of mass communication. According to Wardany (2009), in the internet, we do not fully know with whom we are communicating; therefore, the ethics from this point of view are vulnerable. Importantly, Egypt has the largest number of Facebook users in the Arab world, reportedly 18.84% of the Egyptian population (Farid, 2013). According to Riley (2014), the protest in Cairo in January of 2011 was organised through Facebook groups and had over 90,000 people signed up to its page, showing how effective Facebook was when used by Egyptian grassroots organisers. The concern to be highlighted here is that the young generation may waste their time browsing web sites and participating in anonymous chats in forums (Wardany, 2009). The concern is also that they may lose a large part of their ability to control the new behavioural patterns resulting from communicating with the outside world (Alghannam and Basheoh, 2011). For this reason, the use of the internet in learning is opposed by tutors and the administration, as well as possibly the students' parents at home.

In the author's view, the protest in 2011 has successfully shown how useful social media sites could be when used correctly. The internet is a double-

edged weapon, and it is not easy to control it. It is a matter of selection; each user needs to select the appropriate site according to their educational level and the rate of their mastery of foreign languages. In this regard, it is not an easy process, or one of few steps. It may require all bodies in a community to work on preparing students to take on this responsibility.

3.1.7.2.3 E-learning as Technology-Centred Learning

Gillen *et al.* (2007) explain that there is a lack of theory in e-learning because e-learning is frequently technology-led rather than theory-led. According to Richardson *et al.* (2012), in developing countries like Egypt the shift in the education system to use ICT gives the priority to technology-centred rather than teacher-centred or student-centred professional development. Richardson (2011) explains that identifying and understanding the new technology may take some time until tutors become familiar with it. After that, tutors start to use it as a vehicle for learning, not an aim. That can be the reason for the suggestion by AbdEl-Gawad (2011) that e-learning at the moment does not have a great opportunity to be student-led. As technology tools are still new and tutors are novice users, AbdEl-Gawad (2011) suggests that e-learning can be content-centred at the beginning until tutors are familiar with the new technology. So, the more knowledge of technology and its affordance in learning there is, the less learning can be technology-centred. For developing countries that are using technology in their infant stages, learning is still technology-driven.

In the author's view this can be considered to be a limitation for the implementation of SCL in OL. When learning is technology-centred, it is considered to be an aim, not a means to improve the learning outcome. It is not a matter of the existence of technology; it is a matter of understanding what produces learning and what technology can do to support a system focused upon education quality. In other words, in a technology-centred approach, a tutor would explain a new learning tool such as a forum to their students from a technical perspective, without considering the impact on the students' motivation, engagement, or the achievement of their learning goals.

3.2 Learning approaches that have an impact on e-learning

The impact of e-learning on education has expanded rapidly, although it is a multifaceted and complex area (Andrews, 2011). There are many models presented for learning, such as Kolb's model of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) and Jarvis's model of reflective learning (Jarvis, 1995). Furthermore, Wenger (2006) presented the model of communities of practice. These communities are formed of people who are engaged in a collaborative process of learning; they practise activities to pursue their common tasks. These communities develop their practices through various activities, such as problem-based learning (PBL) and activity-based learning (ABL). According to Dyke, Conole, Ravenscroft and Freitas (2007), all these models of learning are rarely being applied to e-learning.

The following section identifies different approaches that the author believes are most relevant and applicable to e-learning. These approaches include reflective learning, experiential learning, discovery learning, problem-based learning, activity-based learning and creative learning. The reason behind selecting these methods specifically is, according to Dyke *et al*. (2007), that effective e-learning approaches combine experiential and reflective approaches. They also consider learning by doing individually or in a social context. Furthermore, these approaches are presented in terms of defining student-centred learning (SCL) as an approach to support a student's choice and activity in learning. For example, Boud and Feletti (1997) and Toohey (2000) associated SCL with experiential learning and problem-based learning, while Carlile and Jordan (2005) defined it as discovery learning. An explanation of each method is highlighted with regard to learning in general and SCL's suitability for the implementation of OL in Egyptian HE, especially. Finally, e-learning theory is highlighted.

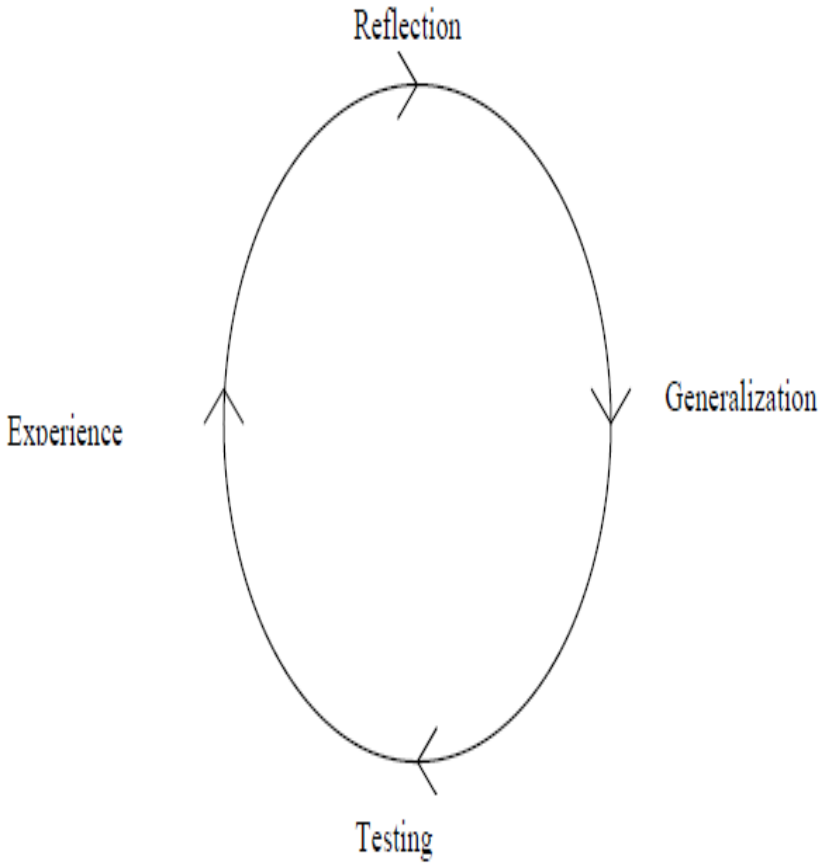
3.2.1 Reflective Learning

Dewey (1916) described reflective learning (RL) as an active and dynamic process, by engaging learners in their learning experience, which profoundly influences their experiences (Tomkins, 2009). The material of effective thinking is not thoughts, but actions, facts, events, and the relations between

all of them (Dewey, 1916). In other words, to think effectively in RL, one must use the old and new experience as a resource to cope with the difficulty at hand. Both Hatton and Smith (1995) and Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) focused on the benefit of RL, as these intellectual and affective activities lead to new understanding, concepts, and assumptions and highlight the points of improvement. Tomkins (2009) added that RL ends with developing the learners' knowledge and skills for mentoring practice, questioning, exploring and to be more independent in the progress of their learning (Moon, 2000). Moon (2013) extended the benefit of RL to develop the learner's employability skills and their work experience.

Hatton and Smith (1995) and Moon (2013) explained that RL occurs in a double loop learning model. This model was taken from Brockbank and McGill (2006), who adapted the work of Hawkins (1997). Hawkins' (1997) model assumes that, in RL, learners attempt to achieve a goal, modify a goal, question the goal or possibly even reject the goal. In the light of new and old experience, the learned experience is formed. This new experience enables us to apply complex issues which lead to a further higher level of goals. According to Moon (2000), the previous phases take the student to deep learning. Regarding the single loop of learning, Kolb (1984) stated that the learning process often begins with an individual undertaking a particular action and then observing the effect of that action in a particular situation. Accordingly, the experience in the single loop is that if the same action is taken again, in the same circumstances, it is possible to anticipate the result, so we can do the action differently the next time. According to Brockbank and McGill (2006), this is doing the thing right or doing it many times to get it right. Either way, RL is doing the right thing (Tomkins, 2009). The right thing in RL means that, when learners are asked to reflect on and inquire into previous episodes of learning, they discover what they did to facilitate or inhibit learning. Effectively, when learners are reflective, they invent new strategies for learning. Then, they discuss these strategies in the light of previously learned values and experience and reflect on and inquire into the validity of these norms. The following figure 3-6 illustrates a comparison between the single and double loop of learning.

Single loop learning (Kolb) “doing things right” (Tomkins, 2009, p:22)	Double loop learning “doing the right things” (Tomkins, 2009, p: 24). adapted from Hawkins (1997)



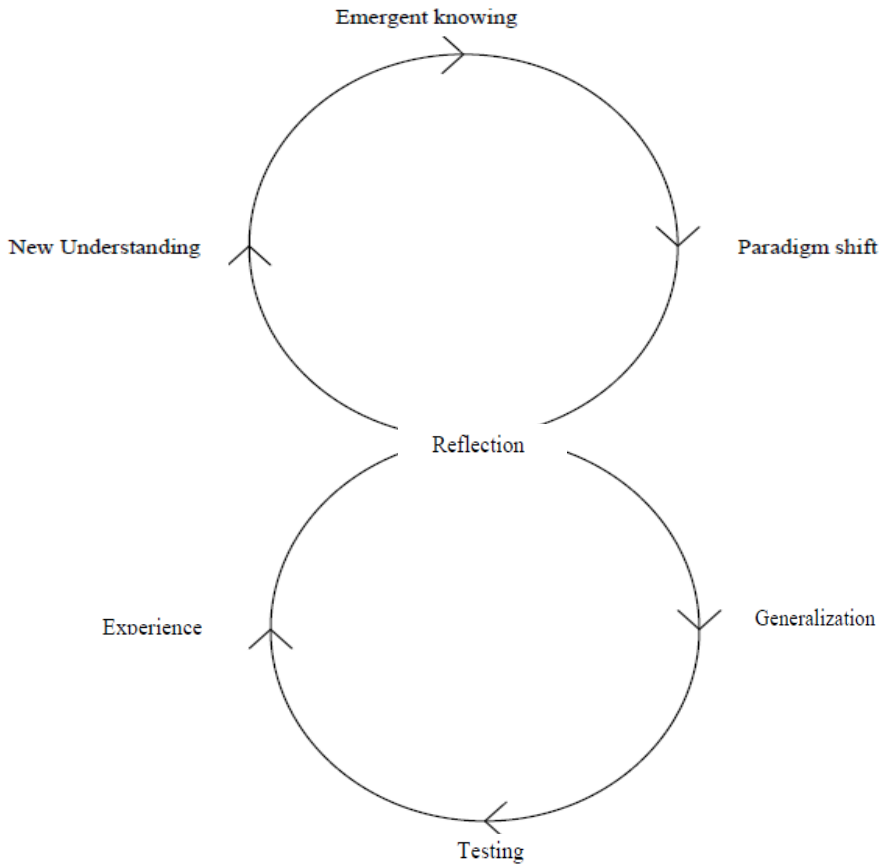


Figure 3-6: A comparison between single and double loop of learning

It can be observed that methods are subject to change to obtain objectives when reflecting in the single loop of learning, while, when reflecting in the double loop of learning, objectives themselves are subject to change in the light of experience. In my view, RL does not end with thinking, but it is likely to lead to improvement in the learner's experience from all actions, events and facts that they went through within learning.

Regarding the tutor's role to embed RL, there are specific skills for tutors to adopt and implement to foster RL in their learners. According to Moon (2013, p.102) "We do not appear to reflect on straightforward or simple material". Consequently, tutors are likely to prepare learning material that challenges learners to be reflective, unpredictable and complex. According to Bringle and Hatcher (1999), the tutor's role in adopting RL at the beginning is to motivate learners and to give them feedback. Thereby, enabling them to weigh up the evidence. This will allow learners to review themselves and try different approaches in learning. Harrington and Oliver (2002) added another skill for tutors in RL supporting learners in examining the past and reframing the future actions. This will assist students to engage in a cycle of reflection and action and, ultimately, to enhance the chances of those students in becoming lifelong learners.

In the author's view, RL is beneficial for both tutors and students. For tutors, RL can be a self-evaluation and a self-observation tool, as it implies that tutors observe and think about their teaching practices in their classes, then, analysing and evaluating the information extracted after evaluation. For students, as RL incorporates them into deep learning, it helps to give feedback to learners about their strengths, weaknesses and areas of improvement.

3.2.1.1 Reflective Learning in the Online Environment

Kolb (1984) and Brockbank *et al*. (2002) drew attention to lack of time in the classroom for learners to be reflective as one of the challenges in embedding RL. Due to this lack of time, some learners may find it difficult to express themselves and their voices cannot be heard. According to Robinson and Taylor (2007), students' voices are much more than the speech of the speaker. Rudd, Colligan and Naik (2007) maintained that learner's voice is about empowering learners by providing ways to listen to their concerns, interests and needs, such as brainstorming and group discussion. When learners are

able to express themselves, they can develop ideas, articulate discussions and advocate change within their learning. In class, text and voice are the only medium they can use to give evidence of their reflection.

The following section explains the affordance of OL to overcome these obstacles and its contributions to facilitate and enhance RL.

Regarding the lack of time, OL students have the facility to return to any part of the learning environment, if requested, and to act upon reflection (Rogers, 2010). With respect to the drawbacks of students not being able to effectively express themselves in the face-to-face learning mode, in OL, learners are likely to have access to multi-tools with Web 2.0 technology to allow for expression, such as Web 2.0 applications like blogs and wikis, where any user can take part in editing and sharing information. According to (Smith and Cockburn, 2014), many of these tools are typically text based, but can be enhanced by including graphics, videos and links.

Regarding the social perspective in OL, online technology tools, such as forums and discussion boards, can facilitate RL (Blaschke, 2014). According to Kemmis (1985), reflection does not occur in a vacuum; reflection is a social process that involves collaboration to enable the reflective process to become apparent. The term e-community is the social network of individuals who interact through specific social media, crossing all geographical boundaries to pursue mutual goals (Rheingold, 1993). The e-community provides the opportunity for learners to compare themselves with experts and with other learners in varying stages of accomplishment (Blaschke, 2014). Social networking enhances the RL experiences of an online student by reinforcing key ideas, concepts and allows one to make connections with the real world. Therefore, learners can use wikis, blogs, and twitter with all their multimedia capabilities, to reflect on their learning. Moreover, through using these tools one can globally share video blogs, consisting of reflective learning journals, by using YouTube, Google Video or other video sharing sites.

Web 2.0 tools of technology contribute to facilitating RL. According to Blaschke (2014), it can be understood that these tools are still underestimated to incorporate activities for self-reflection. Subsequently, the following list of suggestions relates to the use of Web 2.0 tools for RL in OL:

1) To have a weekly course evaluation in a wiki-blog to gain class consensus on feedback (Pang, 2009)

2) Students can use the online library to search for research articles related to their course, and then create a bibliography of resources. For a later skill builder, students would select one of the articles from the bibliography and prepare an annotation, which they would share with the class, using a social media bookmarking tool. As on-going reflection, learner-directed questions for reflection can be included.

In summary, RL is defined as follows: It Is a dynamic process of thinking occurring in the double loop of learning, where learners reflect on action and learn from their own experience. RL is important for both tutors and learners to develop their self-awareness, critical thinking and analytical skills, in order to reorganise their knowledge to achieve further insights.

3.2.1.2 Critique of Reflective Learning

According to Bradbury (2010), one of the main critiques that is directed towards RL is that social communication and collaboration among the learning community (tutor, student and peers) is marginalized. The original notion of reflection does not take sufficient account of group work and the social impact on the individuals' reflection. Consequently, reflection is understood as a process which occurs subjectively solely in the individual's head apart from any social impact upon them. Moreover, according to Boud and Walker (1998) the relationship between thinking and reflection in learning is still not really clear. Consequently some questions arise about the location of reflection, and reflective practices, in learning. Eby (2000) presents a model about reflection, the factors that have an impact on it and how it leads to the reflective practices (see Figure 3-7).

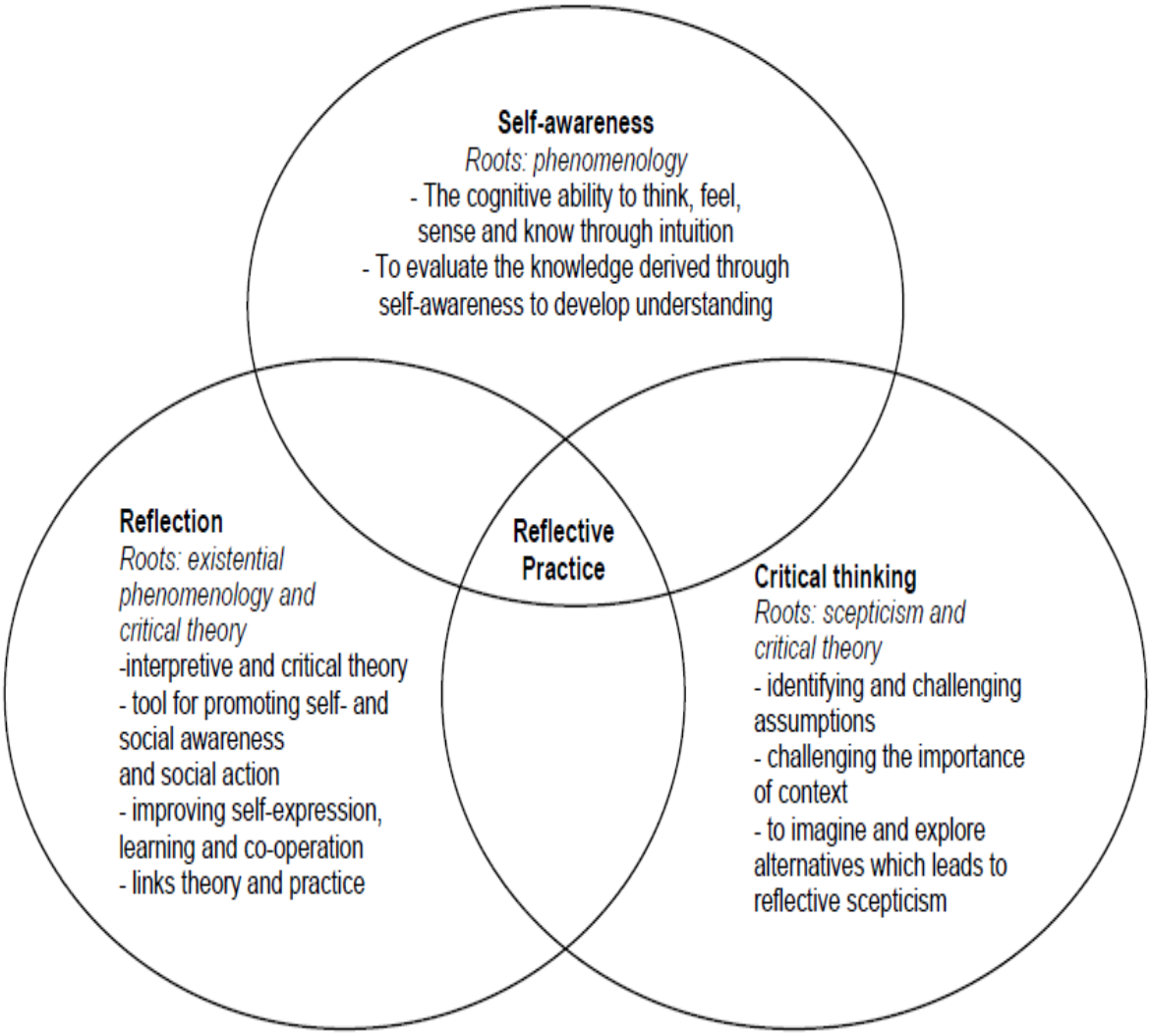


Figure 3-7: Skills underpinning the concept of reflective practice (Eby, 2000, p: 53)

According to this diagram, in order to promote reflection into a reflective process, other processes such as self-awareness and critical thinking need to be associated with it. Also, it is evident that reflection is an individual process, but it does not work apart from the social community. Dewey (1956) and Vygotsky (1986) confirmed this claim when addressing that knowledge is individually constructed and socially mediated. In the author's view, tutors who are implementing RL, sometimes, need to keep the social settings and values independent and separate them from the individual reflection. The reason behind this is that they need to give a reason for these values and make sense of the social, cultural and organisational values. It is important to denote that, if RL is an invitation to individualisation in learning, it may not be applicable to

be applied as part of SCL implementation, as SCL has to maintain the social perspective of learning.

3.2.2 Experiential Learning

According to Kolb (1984), Experiential Learning (EXL) is a process of deep learning, derived from experience and knowledge is its outcome. It involves resolving problems in the learning environment. Moon (2013), focused on defining EXL through its effect on forming the new experience. It provides direction for making the judgment as a guide to choice and action, leading to a new experience.

Moon (2013), explains some methods for EXL such as: games, work experience and simulations. These methods present learning by doing, where learners apply academic understandings through hands-on experience, while simultaneously learning new information about the world around them (Barab and Duffy, 2000). The benefit of EXL for the learner, as explained by Clark, Threeton and Ewing (2010), provides students with rich experiences. It is better for information retention as learners remember what they learn by doing better, rather than using traditional learning techniques (Craik and Endel, 1975). In the author's view, EXL links the formal education on campus with the outside community. Through EXL, students gain confidence in their own abilities, discover innovative ways to overcome obstacles and turn their course project into a life experience. Moreover, it helps tutors to identify learners' abilities and to trust their potentials.

Clark *et al.* (2010) argued that most existing literature on EXL focuses on experience (hands-on application of learning) itself, rather than the complete cycle of EXL. The complete cycle of EXL starts by Doing, reviewing and then developing and implementing concepts and ideas for improvement. Consequently, if limited research focuses on the EXL as a whole process, then little literature focuses on the role of an EXL tutor. It is therefore suggested that more attention in literature is required for instruction and teaching strategies. These teaching strategies are likely to prepare learners to go through the whole process of experiential learning, not just learn through hands-on experience.

3.2.2.1 Types of Experiential Learning

There are two types of EXL. Firstly, *primary experience,* which involves a direct encounter with the phenomena being studied, rather than merely thinking about the encounter, or only considering the possibility of Doing something about it (Jarvis, 1995). According to Moon (2013), this experience can be guided by tutors through observation and helping learners to be reflective. Secondly, *secondary experience*, as named by Jarvis (1995). According to Clark *et al.* (2010), secondary experience occurs as a direct participation in the events of life. Learning in this situation is not sponsored by some formal educational institution but by people themselves. It is learning that is achieved through reflection upon everyday experience. Clark *et a*l. (2010) and Moon (2013) highlighted two benefits of secondary EXL. Firstly, it serves the purpose of providing learners with experiences that help them to explore their career and being prepared for employment and independent living. Secondly, this is learning from experience, and that highlights the importance of social and cultural norms in the construction of individual experience and its interpretation. Clark *et al.* (2010) suggested that further research is required on secondary experience. According to Curaj *et al.* (2012), looking at just one type of these two steps is a narrow view for EXL.

According to Kolb's (1984), EXL starts with immediate experience which leads to observations and reflections. These reflections are then translated into concepts with implications for action, which the person can actively test and experiment. This in turn enables the creation of new experiences, as illustrated in the diagram below (Figure 3-8)



Figure 3-8: Kolb model of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984, p: 6)

Thompson's (2008) view of EXL agrees with Dewey (1938) as a cycle of trying, reconstruction of experience, development of concepts and as a means to elicit active questioning for further experiences. Regarding SCL, Thompson (2008) highlighted that the whole process of EXL is entirely student-centred, not by the content, or the tutor's personal opinions.

3.2.2.2 Experiential Learning in the Online Environment

In OL, there are multiple facilities and simulations to enable deep learning as part of EXL (Beard, Wilson and McCarter, 2007). Mainly, social networks that exist in simulation and gaming in OL contribute in facilitating the collaboration perspective. They can challenge learners to look at issues from multiple perspectives, to think critically, and support them by encouraging in risk-taking, which is necessary for learning to occur (Andrews, 2011). Finally, according to Saunders (1999), simulations develop SCL. As they imply: knowledge acquisition, development of teamwork and communication skills, and development of decision making skills and generation of an awareness of the responsibilities.

In summary EXL is defined as follows: It is internalised knowledge created from old experience, through transforming the old experience into a new experience. It involves external experiences from the social norms and culture, while moving between personal and society. Reflection is the prerequisite to engendering new experience. EXL is also a SCL approach, as it starts with the

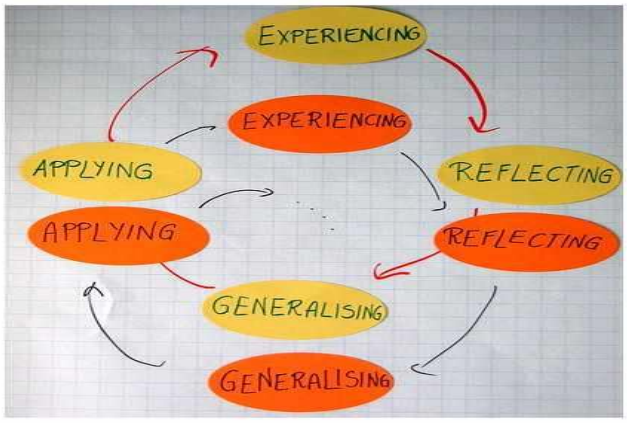
learner, primarily assisting them to grow, learn and develop in their own direction and in their own way.

3.2.2.3 Critique of Experiential Learning

A point of critique that is directed at EXL is its failure to find a relationship between social and personal learning (Greer and Dunlap, 1997). Kolb's work focuses on the individual level more than the social level, disregarding the networking between learners being affected and affecting each other. Vince (1998) adds to this critique that when experiential learning theory does not include this social factor, it does not consider other power relations such as: social beliefs, gender, culture and their impact on learning. In other words, when these elements are not clear where they fit into the learning cycle that may lead to isolate learners from the social community.

The author's argues the later critique about the exclusion of Kolb's model of the social factor. In my view, Kolb's model frames individual exploration of the world, in a number of activities such as problem-based learning and experiential learning. It can be claimed that none of these activities excludes the social element of learning such as group discussion. However, individual constructivism tends to rely on the ability of the learner to be an autonomous and independent self-learner. Further recommendation, in OL specifically, to re-develop the existing model highlighting the processes that occur when people learn using socially rich interactive online digital media. This developed model stimulates internalised knowledge created from old experience, through transforming the old experience into a new experience in a collaborative social environment. This section is summarised by a comparison between RL and EXL, (see table 3-1, below)

Reflective Learning	Experiential Learning
An approach in which learners recapture their experience. learners return to their experience, evaluate it in the light of the existing knowledge, then integrate the new knowledge into the learner's conceptual framework (Boud, Keogh and Walker ,1985)	An approach which implies reflection. Its outcome is generating ideas and seeing things from different perspectives, then applying and testing these new ideas (Smith, 2010).

Is a prerequisite for EXL. According to Kolb (1984) and Clark *et al*. (2010), it is a stage in EXL.	According to Jarvis (1995), some EXL learning is non-reflective. In this case learning is not considered a deep learning process.
RL has two levels (1) Deep RL: occurs in the double loop learning; it produces a change in the learner's actions in future experiences, in similar situation. (2)Superficial RL: occurs in the single loop learning: it produces a change in the learner's perspectives for actions in future experiences (Argyris and Schön, 1982). As is illustrated in the following diagram, superficial RL (yellow shapes) leads to a narrow scale of generalizing ideas and theories, while deep RL (orange shapes) leads to a more generalized scale of ideas.  Figure 3-9: Levels of RL within EXL (Smith, 2010)	EXL has two types: Primary: sponsored by an institution; learning is undertaken by students who are given a chance to acquire and apply knowledge, skills and feelings in an immediate and relevant setting Secondary: It is learning that is achieved through reflection upon everyday experience.

Integration between RL and EXL that leads to deep learning		
(1)Level I experience	(6) Level II experience	Concrete Experience
(2)Observe	(7) Observe	Reflective observation
(3)Reflective/analyse	(8) Reflective/analyse	Abstract Conceptualisation
(4)Evaluate relevance	(9) Evaluate relevance	Reflective observation

(5)Plan to apply	(10) Plan to apply	Active experimentation

Montgomery's reflective learning process within Experiential learning (1992)

Table 3-2: Comparison between reflective learning and experiential learning

3.2.3 Discovery Learning

Jerome Bruner was the originator of discovery learning (DL). Bruner (1961) suggested that students are more likely to remember concepts if they discover them on their own, as opposed to those that are taught directly (Bruner, 1961). In other words, DL has a significant positive impact on information retention. Castronova (2002) identified five characteristics of DL that differentiates it from traditional learning models. They are as follows:

- DL satisfies natural human curiosity and promotes individual interests
- DL implies the use of hands-on and problem-solving activities
- DL emphasises the process of learning instead of the end product
- DL is learning from failure thereby encouraging students to continue to search for solutions, which increases the importance of feedback
- Collaboration and discussion allows students to develop deeper understandings

Hooks (1994) focused on the role of the student in DL. Hooks noted that DL is a student centred approach, as the student can determine the sequence of the learning process. Carlile and Jordan (2005) explained that the importance of SCL in DL is that learners are able to control their discovery of knowledge. It provides them with multiple opportunities to create, organise and structure information, in order to contribute to their own learning resources and experiences. Hai-Jew (2008) explained that learners who learn without any assistance or support from others, are learners who have low dependency needs. These learners are self-driven, self-directed, self-regulatory and generally self-disciplined. According to Balim (2009), all of the above characteristics are effective reasons to engage learners and drive them to learn.

Regarding the role of a tutor in DL, according to Johnson (2003), tutors in DL guide the learner's learning process as they provide the guidance, support and feedback to the individual. Subsequently, they increase students' success and inquiry learning skills more than traditional teaching methods (Balim, 2009).

Bicknell-Holmes and Hoffman (2000) explained that in order to deepen learners' knowledge and enhance their skills in DL, when learners ask questions, tutors should not answer them directly. Rather they should answer them with additional questions, the purpose being to help the learners to ask better questions and enhance their abilities for DL.
I believe that DL is a part of human curiosity which explores a desire for knowledge, to attract the students' attention, to become motivated and engaged to find the answer to the arising questions. Regarding tutors, DL facilitates their job, as curiosity already exists and they do not have to initiate it. Tutors can provide different activities, such as problem solving, while keeping activities student-driven.

Regarding the freedom of discovery that the learner has in DL, Mayer (2004) argued that in constructivism, the open discovery approach is expected to engage learners, but may not lead to learning. When students have too much freedom, they may fail to come into contact with the material to be learned.

I question whether if a student fails to find an answer for their questions through DL, can this be considered a failure? Bonwell (1998) argued that failure is seen as a positive circumstance as learning occurs even through failure. Learning does not occur if the student has not learned something new. Bonwell added that expected failure is one of the attributes for DL.

According to Leathwood (2006), one of the pitfalls of DL relates to there being more opportunities for inaccuracies and mistakes. In this regard, it is recommended for literature to focus extensively on self-guided DL and the methods of enhancement presented by tutors or the online content itself. It is worth mentioning to highlight that there is still the need for tutor guidance in DL (Castronova, 2002). With regard to limiting the learners' freedom of discovery, the author suggests that it may be difficult to achieve due to the affordance of the internet and search engines. This affordance presents an example of an inevitable self-discovery of learning for all ages and all learning environments.

3.2.3.1 Discovery Learning in Egypt

In respect to the context of this study, regarding Egyptian HEt, DL has two main constraints. Firstly, according to Chambers (1971), for students who are

overwhelmed by excessive information or study being based on memorisation, DL does not work effectively. Secondly, according to Bonwell (1998), tutors are unlikely to adopt DL in their teaching practice if it is large class number. Piaget (1973) and Vygotsky (1978) explained the importance of one-to-one interaction in DL, and suggested that tutors should be aware of the individual differences between students.

However, as mentioned in chapter 2, education in Egypt has the following two constraints:

- Learners are overloaded with information (TEMPUS, 2012a)
- Large class size (Afifi, 2011)

The author regards these constraints as not being real challenges in OL environment, as in online courses learning does not solely depend upon tutor-student interaction. Group interaction through numerous social networks and forums can provide collective experience and assist learners to create new knowledge (Castronova, 2002 and Cohen and Lotan (2014). Further, with internet facilities to search for information, learners can ask questions and find the answers without the need for one-to-one tutorial with the tutor.

In summary, DL is defined as follows: It is a method used to engage and motivate learners through satisfying the natural human curiosity for knowledge and promoting individual interests. It starts with conducting inquiries through curiosity, followed by investigation and conclusion, carrying out procedures to get results. It identifies new relationships and creates new models of thinking and behaviour. DL does not pressure the learners to get the correct answer, thus making it an enjoyable learning experience.

3.2.3.2 Critique of Discovery Learning

According to Castronova (2002), changes in the structures of formal education with regard to emphasising test scores, developing content based curricula, and sizing of classes, are main requirements for the implementation of DL. In this approach, technology plays a major role, for example, in large online class size, tutors make an immediate response to questions using emails or social forums (Lowe, 2012). Therefore, discovery learning needs both flexibility in decision making and availability of technology facilities.

In the context of Egyptian Higher Education, the bureaucracy can be a problem for the changes needed in the test grading system or content in order to implement discovery learning. However, in OL, the opportunity can be better for different content and evaluation using different applications and different media. It may be needed to be mentioned again, as previously mentioned in chapter 2 (see Section 2.3), technology in learning is still in its infancy stages, and still needs a lot of effort towards designing online learning tools and qualifying tutors who are able to implement these tools from a pedagogical perspective.

3.2.4 Problem-Based Learning

According to Silver (2004), Problem-based Learning (PBL) focuses on a complex problem that does not have a single correct answer. Students work in collaborative groups to identify what they need to learn in order to solve a problem. Learners engage in self-directed learning and then apply their new knowledge to the problem and reflect on what they learned. The following diagram (Figure 3-10) illustrates the steps of PBL.



Figure 3-10: Steps of Problem Based Learning (PBL), Silver (2004)

According to Neville (2009), the successful implementation for PBL is dependent upon the following: a) learners' motivation to collaborate and to engage in the group dynamics; b) the nature of problems used and the influence of the facilitator on the group.

In the author's view, if the nature of the problem is an effective factor for PBL, then PBL may not represent the most appropriate approach to learning in all disciplines, such as social sciences. However, PBL has been successful in areas such as mathematics (Teoh, Preechaporn, and Leong, 2012) and medicine (Koh *et al.* 2008). With this in mind, it is suggested to conduct further research on implementing PBL in all disciplines, to investigate whether there are different requirements in learning strategies when applying PBL to different disciplines, especially in the social sciences.

According to Loyens, Magda and Rikers (2008), one of the fundamentals of PBL is the implementation of SCL. They define SCL as an approach where learners are initiators of their learning. Students define their learning needs, formulate goals and resources, choose and implement the appropriate learning strategies and evaluate learning outcomes. That is confirmed by Severiens and Schmidt (2009), who studied 305 students and found a positive correlation between PBL and student-centred learning and the increasing of learners' engagement and motivation. This suggests that motivation and engagement occur as a consequence of learners' practice of PBL.

3.2.4.1 Problem-based Learning in Online learning

Alexander (2014) argued that the use of technology for e-learning can be overwhelming for learners. Online learners may feel uncomfortable and a loss of control with the boundless and flexible online environment. Consequently, they may find difficulty in merging the online use of technology and the pedagogy without being distracted. Another issue, which is related to PBL itself, was highlighted by Sweller (2006) and Baden (2007). They found that, when implementing PBL, a cognitive overload may occur. This overload is causing users to have difficulty processing a large and complex amount of information in a short amount of time.

The author therefore is of the opinion that the use of PBL in OL may be better at minimising learners' loss of control with the online material. It all depends on devoting the appropriate time and embedding the applicable course elements and online tool to implement PBL. For example, a wiki has embedded tools to facilitate and record the group's progress, recording ideas generated, data acquired and learning issues to be pursued. It is also important to consider that PBL may not present the best approach for all learners, especially those who find it leads to cognitive overload. Ultimately, these concerns highlight the role of the tutor in guiding and supporting learners in PBL

3.2.4.2 Problem-based Learning in Egypt

According to Teoh *et al.* (2012), the Malaysian experience of PBL in mathematics education and medicine, is one of the most successful models in education. It is applied in many educational institutions all over the world. Mahateer, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, at the time of writing, mentioned that

there are many similarities between Egypt and Malaysia regarding the nature of each country; for example, the nations both depend on agriculture as the main source of income. Accordingly, he suggests that Egypt can benefit from the Malaysian model in education to establish its educational development (State Information Egypt (SIS), 2013).

3.2.4.3 Critique of Problem-based Learning

The successful implementation of PBL is strongly related to the availability of resources, both of tutors and other facilities such as libraries and technology tools for both face-to-face and OL. According to Walsh (2005), PBL needs Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to equip tutors with the required skills to implement it successfully, and to give student their required skills. Therefore, either a limited staff number or unqualified staff may lead to the students' disengagement from the course and a lack of motivation. Another limitation that may exist in PBL is the lack of resources that students need to solve a given problem, such as libraries, internet access or lab tools. According to Boud and Feletti (1997), this limited accessibility may enforce a teacher-centred approach to be applied. According to the World Bank (2013), limited funding allocated to education learning resources and tutors' wages are main challenges in the Egyptian HE. Another critique of PBL offered by Walsh (2005) is that there is sometimes a resistance by students to solve the problem, complaining that they are paying tuitions to teach themselves. According to the practices of PBL, students are thinking, reflecting and applying their knowledge to solve a certain problem, and therefore may find that they make a greater effort than their tutors (Boud and Feletti, 1997). Mohamad and Klobas (2010) addressed that learners' previous knowledge and acceptance of the implemented learning approaches facilitate tutors' task to embed these approaches. Therefore, students' knowledge of PBL benefits and objectives is claimed to be essential prior to implementing it.

In the author's view, students' thinking that they do more effort or consume more time, means that the concept of PBL is not quite clear to students. Students have to be aware that, the value of learning is not measured by the amount of effort that is made by the tutor or the quantity of information that is passively received by the students. In this study's context of Egyptian HE, this issue is likely to be vital because of the prevailing method of learning which is

based on memorisation, and in many cases teacher-centred approach is applied. Therefore, students' resistance is expected to be evident. It may be needed to ensure students' understanding by demonstrating the learning process, highlighting the role of dynamic learning to achieve learning goals through PBL. Regarding the limitation of PBL with regard to content coverage or students overwhelming (Walsh, 2005). This means that, PBL is not always the size that fits all learners. It is the tutor's role to observe and evaluate the learner's ability to use this approach. This fact refers back to the importance of CPD for this approach. It is a real challenge for the tutor to identify the learners' needs and abilities especially if there are many learners, as is to be expected in OL. Therefore, PBL needs preparation for both tutors and students.

3.2.5 Activity-Based Learning

Activity-Based learning (ABL) is a method of instruction where activities of different types, relevant to specific subjects, are integrated into the instructional materials and methods (Suydam and Higgins, 1977). According to Hariharan (2011), ABL is considered relatively easy to attract the student's attention through these activities and create an adventure in learning, making it an enjoyable experience.

Suydam and Higgins's (1977) definition of ABL highlights some changes in the students' role, as ABL has to be student-centred to engage learners with the activity. According to Hariharan (2011), ABL is shifting them from learners to tutors. That is expected to result in involving, motivating and engaging students in the learning processes. The cognitive benefit of ABL for the learners is explained by Hariharan (2011), students process the information with high levels of thinking, such as analysis, comprehension, synthesis, application, and metacognition. When this happens, students are able to relate the information to any life situation, connect it with previous experience and build their own knowledge. Also, learning with high information retention is one of the main outcomes of these activities.

Hariharan (2011) drew the attention to some of the pitfalls of ABL. These include time to prepare activities. Preparing students to practice these activities can be a further constraint for tutors who are under pressure of completing a syllabus on time. Moreover, ABL requires tutors to monitor all

groups, but also to provide one-to-one feedback for students. Thus, a large number of students in the class can be an obstacle. As mentioned previously, OL provides flexibility and the facility for students to return to any part of the learning environment if desired ((Blaschke, 2014). Moreover, social networks can provide collective experiences and assist learners to create new knowledge (Castronova, 2002 and Cohen and Lotan, 2014).

3.2.5.1 Activity-Based Learning in Egypt

According to Hariharan (2011), ABL implementation in India has led to successful results. ABL has made some changes to the tutor's role as a giver of information, rather the tutor as a facilitator of learning, making the classroom more student-friendly and reducing the domination of the tutor. Initial studies by SchoolScape and SSA (2008) have shown the physical, emotional and social environment of the whole learning process improved after the implementation of ABL. Improvements were also seen in the ways students were assessed and given feedback about their academic work. All the previous improvements are required to resolve the challenges that exist in Egyptian HE such as limited funding and teacher-centred learning approach (see chapter 2) for the opportunity for ABL to be better applied in Egyptian HE.

In summary, ABL is defined as a constructivist educational approach that engages learners by learning through direct experience (exploring a subject by simulating the work environment). ABL allows students to engage with and process information in such a way that they understand and build their knowledge. The outcome of ABL is that the student has acquired the basic skills and is able to apply this knowledge to a relevant situation.

3.2.5.2 Critique of Activity-Based Learning

The main critique directed at ABL is that it may not help all learners to the same degree. Learners have many learning styles, each style, certain approach (es) can enrich their learning experience more than other learning approach (es). Fleming (2006) grouped people into four styles of learning: visual (seeing and looking to pictures and diagrams); aural (listening to lectures and tapes); read/write (text); and kinaesthetic (learning by doing moving, and touching) Visual, Aural, Read/Write, and Kinaesthetic (VARK). According to Sheppard (2013), learners have different strengths, weaknesses, skills and interests.

Therefore, they have individual attributes related to their learning and how they perceive the information. In detail, some learners rely on visual presentations such as images, these individuals are known as visual learners. Others prefer spoken language and these people are known as auditory learners, while others prefer hands-on activities and are known as kinaesthetic learners. This diversity between learners accord to their learning style might raise a challenge for students to learn. According to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) (2009), some learners are discovery learners, who realize learning through doing before initiating action, rather than thinking. Other learners, who depend on observing or listening in their learning, may not find ABL is the best approach for learning for them. These learners may find their learning through reading or observing is sufficient to understand the topic and they may not need any further learning approaches. Therefore, ABL for some learners, tedious and time consuming may occur (Bonwell and Eison, 1991).

This conclusion may limit the use of ABL in learning, as it may be restricted to the use of kinaesthetic learner. The author in this regard, suggests that ABL activities can be weaved within other approaches. In group work, learners vary according their individual abilities, so they can complement each other. For example, a creative learner can create innovative ideas and another learner who is kinaesthetic and likes to work by doing can implement the ideas through ABL. Then, the result would go back to another learner to be tested or redeveloped. This network can achieve three objectives: Firstly, a collaborative working community. Secondly, the complementary use of all individual abilities within one group of students. Thirdly, the complementary use of many learning approaches within one group of students.

3.2.6 Creative Learning

The APCL (Association for Promotion of Creative Learning) developed a new teaching/learning methodology in 1996 called "Creative Learning". It aims at developing the creativity of a person (APCL, 2009). The APCL follows a model for creative learning based on seven components: concentration; power of observation; memory; thinking; imagination; emotional management, and communication/expression power (Prakash, 2007). Jeffrey and Woods (2003) highlighted the importance of learners having control of their own learning processes and ownership of the knowledge produced. Rosen (2011) added the

social perspective to the definition of creative learning, as it involves co-operation and collaboration. It is worth noting that creative learning does not always involve collaboration. According to the Derbyshire County Council (2013), the main features of creative learning are based on self-evaluation, using imagination, pursuing the purpose, originality and judging values. Hence, characteristics of creative learning are likely to encourage autonomous and individualised learning. This may lead to student's social isolation. According to National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE), 1999), one of the main characteristics of creative learning is that learners tend to be self-monitoring, reflect upon their own performance and progress, and thinking about their own learning. In other word, creative learning fosters SCL approach.

Regarding the benefits of creative learning, according to Derbyshire County Council (2013), it helps to address the area of improvement for the student, such as concentration and communication. Piaget (1967) explained that, for learners without innovation and creation, their learning would guide them to repetition and recalling information that is dependent upon memorisation. For Vygotsky (1978), creativity does not impact on the external world only in the form of the invention of new work. It is reflective for the learners themselves, as it combines the human imagination, concepts and changes. Then the individual is able to create something new.

According to NACCCE (1999), creativity as a mode of learning requires special and flexible conditions for learners to challenge their preconceptions and assumptions. Lack of flexibility occurs when parents and tutors insist that the learner conforms to the traditional and fixed curriculum. For Khan (2007) there are eight reasons which affect the flexibility of learning, namely: institutional; management; technological; pedagogical; ethical; interface design; resource support; and evaluation. The absence of these elements leads to the students becoming unable to explore and master their learning tasks. Moreover, following a teacher-centred approach is likely to suppress their creative abilities. This confirms that flexibility is one of the main characteristics of creative learning. Schindler (2009) explained flexibility as that which requires learners to learn in a flexible time and place, allowing many types of interaction (tutor-learner-contact-peers). In this regard, another challenge that confronts creative learning added by Fry *et al*. (2014), regarding the models of

learning in a HE system that are driven by rigid content, which is ordered by inflexible standards.

The author is of the opinion that students' roles in creative learning are very clear throughout the whole learning process and it is mainly student-centred approach. It starts from their imagination and experience, and then it is developed through their social communication and collaboration. This enables them to critically evaluate their own performance.

3.2.6.1 Creative Learning in the Online Environment

Notably, the previous requirements, mentioned by Khan (2007) for flexible learning exist within the OL environment (Richardson, 2011). According to Khan (2007), in OL environment, students know what, when, where and how they learn. They may want to study at their chosen time and location and at their own pace. Therefore, increasing the opportunity for creative learning to be applied successfully in OL. Rumpite, Zuga and Ritins (2007) highlighted two main challenges confronting creative learning. Firstly, is regarding the content of OL as it needs to be more flexible, to enable learner for creativity. Secondly, is the limited skills of online tutors to weave the collaboration and engagement of learners in the e-community, to facilitate and develop creative learning.

According to Curaj *et al.* (2012), in the OL environment, students are heterogeneous and unique. Accordingly, tutors themselves are likely to be creative and innovative in their teaching methods and to develop strategies to go with students to a deeper level of learning. NACCCE (1999) made a clear distinction between teaching creatively and teaching for creativity. Teaching creatively is where tutors themselves are creative in developing materials and approaches that motivate learners for learning. Teaching for creativity is where tutors develop the learners' abilities to be creative. Eventually, teaching creativity is part of teaching for creation, as tutors help students to develop their understandings and awareness of their own creativities. In this regard, research may need to raise awareness of what creativity means in different contexts (Chemistry, Maths, English, etc..) and encourage tutors to support forms of learning that will enable students to develop the forms of creativity that are most appropriate for their field(s) and future careers.

In an OL environment, according to Rumpite *et al.* (2007), it is expected that online tutors integrate creative learning methodology, with e-learning facilities, to promote creative abilities of their learners. For example, tutors can ask students to co-create the studied course, using their own research to suggest methods and alternatives.

In summary creative learning is defined as: a flexible and student-led approach that develops learners' capacity to produce new work and it integrates with other learning methods, such as experiential and discovery learning. Its applied strategies vary according to the learning content, as techniques and approaches supporting creative learning vary and depend on the discipline (Children and Young People's Workforce (CYPW), 2011). Finally, creative learning is highly dependent upon the creative tutor to foster and develop learners' creativity.

3.2.6.2 Critique of Creative Learning

According to the Derbyshire County Council (2013) practices in creative learning are based on, using imagination, pursuing the purpose, originality, self-evaluation and self-judgement. In other words, creative learners are driven by a strong self-belief in the student's ability for creating in an area. All of these features are likely to encourage autonomous learning. Therefore, it may also lead to isolate the learner from the learning community and encourage individualisation.

For tutors, to develop students' skills for creative learning and minimise, as possible, its tendency to social isolation. Teachers have to learn to make it towards the social perspective in an indirect way. For example, giving a task consists of sub tasks; each student will create his/her own task in a serial pattern. So, each student's success is dependent on the previous one. By the end, there will be a social trend for the whole group to meet the overall objective, or to solving the central problem. This can be a highly dynamic process, whose eventual outcomes can be quite different than those anticipated. Another challenge of creative learning is one related to administration and policy makers more than tutors. According to Martin *et al.* (2009), in creative learning there needs to be active institutional support and tolerance of experimentation and innovative ideas by staff and students. Martin (2007) explains that when students were asked about the barriers for

implementing creative learning, the rigidity of academic institutions was one of the main barriers named. For example, students may need to run advanced lab experiments or need specific facilities as part of an idea in their creative learning. With the financial constraints that present in Egypt, funding (TEMPUS, 2012a) and training (El-Gamal, 2014) to provide the necessary flexibility for creative learning is an obstacle. Also, bureaucracy in education administration can be an obstacle as well (see Chapter2).

3.2.7 The integration between learning approaches

According to Conole *et al.* (2004) and Conole (2010), integration between learning approaches offers an excellent opportunity for individuals wishing to maximise the benefit they receive from learning. Conole (2010) added that in e-learning specifically, learning could be improved if three elements are considered: thinking and reflection; experience and activities; and Social learning through interaction and communication. Conole *et al.* (2004) developed the following 3D diagram (Figure 3-11). It integrates learning approaches to allow the learners to be active in experiential learning. This model argues that any learning approach can be mapped between three spectrums:

- A spectrum from being an individual, isolated experience to being social in nature.
- A spectrum from being active (learning involves activities which support active engagement) to other aspects of learning that may occur through some degree of passive immersion.
- A spectrum from learning activities that vary in the degree to which they are information or experience based.

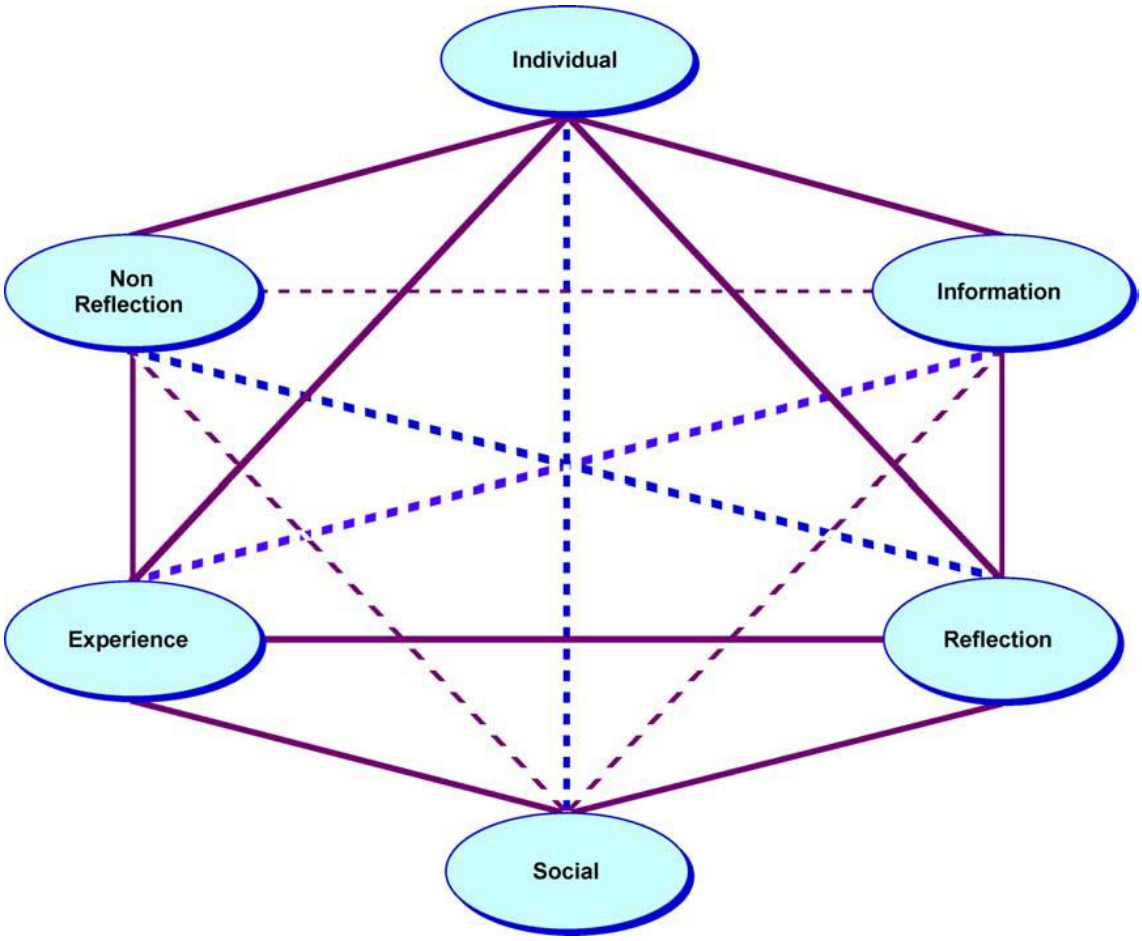


Figure 3-11: 3D model of pedagogy framework (Conole *et al.* 2004, p: 24)

In the author's view, different learning approaches are designed to support each other. Each method is viewed as part of the whole. They are mutually supportive and beneficial to the individual in learning. Therefore, students and educators are encouraged not to focus solely on one approach in order to maximise the learning experience.

The following table explains the integration between some of these approaches.

Learning approach	Associated with	Purpose
Experiential Learning	(1)Reflective Learning (2)Activity-Based Learning	To enable deep learning (Montgomery, 1992). Learners learn from direct experience through activities

		(Moon, 2013)
Problem Based Learning	(1)Reflective	To apply the learners' new knowledge to the problem and reflect on what they have learned (Silver, 2004)
	(2)Creative learning	To imagine, causal reasoning and taking multiple perspectives (Tan, 2009)
Creative learning	(1)Activity-Based Learning	When learners solve a problem, they are engaged in an active search for meaningful information. Therefore, a deep immersion in the task, along with the adoption of goal and future actions are achieved (Tan, 2009).
	(2)Discovery learning	Learning starts with discovery to understand everything around the studied phenomena and it ends with creativity (Kolb, 1984). Without this understanding that comes with the natural human curiosity, no understanding can occur. Consequently, creativity is lost and no new ideas are created (Castronova, 2002).
	(3)Problem Based Learning	It develops cognitive abilities, such as flexibility and originality, which are

		important to develop abilities related to learning and to learn how to problem solving. Notably, flexibility and originality are main characteristics of creative learning (NACCCE, 1999) Therefore, Gallagher (2015) considered problem-based learning as a catalyst for creative learning
Discovery Learning	(1)Activity-Based Learning (2)Problem-Based Learning	These activities enhance the student's ability to explore a subject by simulating by the work environment (Castronova, 2002).

Table 3-3: Integration between different learning approaches

3.2.8 E-Learning theory

The concept of "theory" is defined as an explanation about what, why and how something occurs. Theory is based on confirming or rejecting the hypotheses that are around the phenomena to pursue a coherent ordering of relevant variables and relationships to guide both practitioners and researchers (Garrison, 2000). According to Andrews (2011) and Andrews and Haythornthwaite (2011), e-learning theory itself remains relatively undeveloped. This lack of development may be because it is felt that there is no need for such theory. Most literature focuses on the use of technology in learning. In other words, literature focuses on the "why" of the theory, more than the "how" of the theory.

Before defining e-learning theory, it is important to highlight that there are new conditions of learning in the e-learning environment. According to Andrews and Haythornthwaite (2011), internationally, there is an increasing use of electronic communication in our daily lives, for example the internet

and mobile devices, such as laptops and smart phones. Additionally, there is growing access to international digital libraries, the Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) and the Learning Management systems (LMS). Moreover, statistics show the number of social network users worldwide from 2010 to 2014 with projections until 2018. In 2016, it is estimated that there will be around 2.13 billion social network users around the globe, up from 1.4 billion in 2012.

The below figure (Figure 3-12), illustrates that one quarter of the world's population uses social media and it is projected to increase steadily.

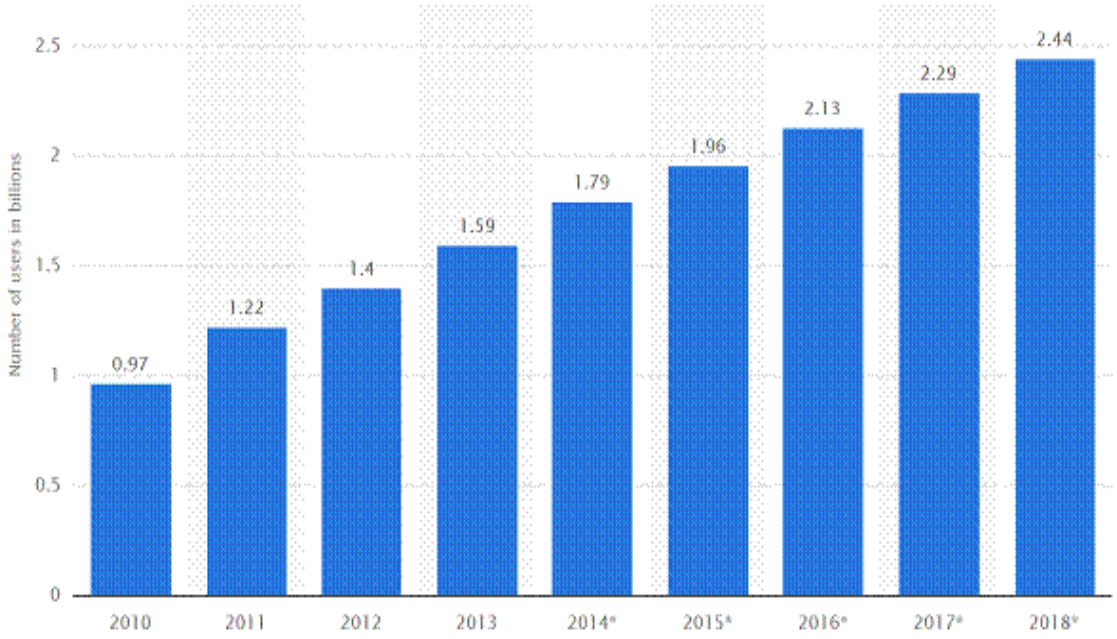


Figure 3-12: The number of social network users (2010-2018 (eMarketer & American Marketing Association, 2015a)

This technology revolution has an impact on learning. According to Andrews and Haythornthwaite (2011), the technology revolution led to changes in active roles in the learning process, with regard to the learner, tutor and content. This implies some changes to the theory of learning itself, even if the result of the learning process is the same.

Regarding e-learning theory definition, although e-learning is gradually bringing about a new theory on learning (Andrews, 2011), there are two trends in the literature. The first defines it as a drive for learning. The second considers e-learning as an infrastructure and drive to deliver information, highlighting the overlap between learning and technology. The following

section represents some literature that defined e-learning as a drive for learning.

According to Hodgson, Dirckinck-Holmfeld and McConnell (2012), e-learning became networked learning, multimodal with different modes of activity. Dyke *et al.* (2007) explain that e-learning includes reflection and practice. Dyke *et al.* (2007) included reflective thinking, experiential learning and interaction in the definition of e-learning. Dyke *et al*. (2007) added that e-learning is activity-based learning and situated learning. Situated learning is learning that is situated in a specific context and embedded within a particular social and physical environment.

Regarding the social perspective in e-learning, according to Dyke *et al*. (2007), there is a shift from individual learning to social collaborative learning in defining e-learning. This is well situated in the social network applications that exist in the e-learning environment. Harasim (2012) explains the shift as a response from the industrial society, to the knowledge age in the 21st century where the new generation is the Net generation. In such a technology driven world, technology is not a drive for learning; there is an intersection between learning theory and technology.

According to Dyke *et al.* (2007), although there are many proposed models for learning such as Kolb's experiential learning (1984) and Jarvis' reflection and learning (1995), e-learning has its own unique characteristics that differentiate it from conventional learning. Still, these learning models are rarely applied to the creation of e-learning. However, we still do not have a holistic approach for e-learning theory. This lack of a clear definition may be the reason that invited Harasim (2012) to highlight the need for tutors to have pre-service and in-service training for the use of this technology. Yet in the theory-informed approach e-learning is not solely a drive for learning. Nichols (2003) highlighted that it is unlikely that e-learning practice will continue to evolve, unless the theoretical underpinnings of e-learning are explored and debated. This is providing a wider platform and a common philosophy for e-learning development.

The following explores the literature that defines technology as a drive for learning in e-learning. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) (2005) defined e-learning theory as the use of communication and

information technology as tools to improve the learning management to deliver information for students. This definition suggests that technology has an effect on improving students' learning. A different point of view is put forward by Clark *et al.* (2010), who claims that technology does not have any effect on the student's achievement or satisfaction. In particular, he claims that if there is a distinctive achievement for learners, who gained benefit depending on audio or video material, the benefit is merely due to the instructional strategy used in the media. Schacter and Fagnano (1999) argued against this, maintaining that the level of effectiveness of educational technology on learning is influenced by many factors such as software design, the educator's role, the students' abilities to use technology, and the level of student access to the technology. Therefore, the impact of technology on learning is a combination of many factors, both technological and pedagogical. These different points of view lead many authors, such as Gillen, Staarman, Littleton, Mercer and Twiner (2007) and Andrews (2011) to highlight that there is a lack of theory in e-learning, and a need to focus on the role of technology in learning as theory-led rather than technology-led. The following section focuses on several factors which have an impact on students' learning when technology is used.

Firstly, the author has observed that there are other disregarded factors in this claim, factors such as linking between the old experience and new experience, challenging activities to get the learner to a deeper level of information, using their metacognitive abilities, being engaged and communicated in the learning environment. These factors affect students' achievement and engagement and subsequently their satisfaction.

Secondly, with the existence of e-community in learning (Andrews, 2011), the learner has a tutor and peers through the social networking environment. Furthermore, the source of knowledge for the learner has become different; instead of a hierarchical conception of knowledge, which is taken directly through books or tutors, sources of knowledge become networked, democratic and more dialogic. However, the definition disregards the social perspective of the e-community, which forms a part of the learner's achievement, engagement and motivation for learning.

The third point argues the claim that technology does not have any impact on the learner's learning. In OL, learners produce and share new materials while learning in the form of text, audio and video. All the new created material makes the opportunity for achievement through e-learning relatively high (Andrews, 2011).

In the author's opinion, both learning theory and e-learning theory have the same goal, which is learning. Both are dependent on the three main active roles, that of learner, tutor and content. Consequently, there are learning theories that need to be considered in designing and interacting with e-learning practices, such as social and cognitive constructivism. However, e-learning has a different nature from face-to-face learning from many perspectives. Firstly, because of its existence in an environment where both: tutor and student are physically absent, depending on technology to make them present. Therefore, the horizons of learning in space, resource and time are different. Secondly, if we accept that learning is socially situated (Vygotsky's, 1978), and that e-learning social community is different from face-to-face social community, then it follows that e-learning is different learning environment. These differences might conclude that, as OL has evolved, new theories of learning are emerging.

According to Andrews (2011), e-learning requires from the learners to make selections and take decisions in their learning between resources of knowledge, as well as decide how and when to engage in the e-learning community. Consequently, the following section explains in-depth student-centred learning.

3.3 Relationships between tutors and students

This section focuses on the relationship between tutors and their students; the discussion here focuses on power, control and responsibility. Here, also, the concept of democratic education (DE) is investigated, highlighting similarities (if any) with SCL. The final perspective is that of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) provided for tutors.

3.3.1 Power

Feeling power is a human need. It is therefore a need for both student and tutor (Schindler, 2009). Power is an ability to influence the behaviour and actions of others or the course of events. Power has degrees of strength in practicing it from high to low. These degrees depend on the relations between actors (Hinton and Groves, 2013). In this study context, the actors are tutors and students. Also, these degrees depend on the student's goals and personality (Schindler, 2009). In detail, students are thinking differently; each student has his/her aim of learning; each student has a different ability to take ownership for their learning. Moreover, tutors' motivation to empower students may vary. It can be as a reward or because the student is expertise in a certain area. Therefore, it can be said that power is flexible as it fluctuates between tutor, student and between students themselves (Frankham, 2009). It is not necessary for the student to have power all the time or all students to hold the same degree of power (Schindler, 2009). Consequently, it is necessary for tutors to consider thoughtfully the implementation of power with different degrees. Each form of power will produce different effects on the student and lead to different sorts of results with students. Tutors could practice a higher or lower degree of any or all of them simultaneously.

Looking in depth for the reasons behind empowering students by tutors may entail discussing the types of power. French and Raven (1958), classified five different types of power: reward, coercive, legitimate, expert and referent (See Table 3-4).

Type of Power	Description
Reward Power	The target person complies in order to obtain rewards he or she believes are controlled by the agent
Coercive Power	The target person complies in order to avoid punishments he or she believes are controlled by the agent
Legitimate Power	The target person complies because he or she believes the agent has the right to make the request and the target person has the obligation to comply
Expert Power	The target person complies because he or she believes that the agent has special knowledge about the best way to do something
Referent Power	The target person complies because he or she admires or identifies with the agent and wants to gain the agent's approval

Table 3-4: Power Taxonomy (Yukl, 2002, p: 201)

Table 3.4 above shows the types of power given to an "agent" and the reasons why it is given. Whether it is a kind of reward, to avoid punishment, it is believed to be the agent's right to have this power; the agent is expert in a specific field or because team members admire the agent. Raven (1990) added a sixth type of power, which is "informational power". The agent takes power because of the ownership of information that can be shared and manipulated with others. The importance of identifying the type of power used that each one has its own outcome. Yukl (2002) explained the three possible outcomes of each type as explained in table 3-5.

Type of Power	Outcome		
	Commitment	Compliance	Resistance
Reward Power	Possible—if used in a subtle, very personal way	LIKELY*—if used in a mechanical, impersonal way	Possible—if used in a manipulative, arrogant way
Coercive Power	Very unlikely	Possible—if used in a helpful, non-punitive way	LIKELY*—if used in a hostile or manipulative way
Legitimate Power (or "Position" Power)	Possible—if request is polite and very appropriate	LIKELY*—if request or order is seen as legitimate	Possible—if arrogant demands are made or request does not appear proper
Expert Power (or "Skill" Power)	LIKELY*—if request is persuasive and subordinates share leader's task goals	Possible—if request is persuasive but subordinates are apathetic about task goals	Possible—if leader is arrogant and insulting, or sub ordinates oppose task goals
Referent Power (or "Friendship")	LIKELY*—if request is believed to be important to leader	Possible—if request is perceived to be unimportant to leader	Possible—if request is for something that will bring harm to leader

*Indicates most common outcome.

Table 3-5: Power outcomes, based on Power Taxonomy of French and Raven (Yukl, 2002, p: 200-201)

In the author's view, the success of empowering students depends greatly on the manner in which power is exercised. Therefore, before practicing any kind of power, tutors need to be knowledgeable about the commitments and compliances of empowering learners. This kind of knowledge, that can be obtained by CPD and work experience, would help them to identify in what context this power can be used. Also, tutors need to acknowledge the outcome

of this power to get the best out of it and minimise the student's prospective resistance.

Erwin (2004) focused on the behavioural impact when giving power to students and differentiated between two consequences of power. Firstly, "power over", which means controlling others. This can lead to students being violent towards others to distract them. Secondly, "power with", which means power achieved by working cooperatively with others. This can lead to strengthening the social perspective in learning.

Benefits of empowering students are highlighted in literature from different perspectives. Jones and Skaggs (2012) invented the MUSIC (eMpowerment, Usefulness, Success, Interest, and Caring) as a model of student motivation. Empowering students is considered in this model as a main factor that contributes to student motivation.

Barriers to empower students are discussed from three different perspectives: tutor, student and the administration of the academic institution. For tutors, according to King, Danforth, Perez and Stahl (1993), tutors' resistance to empowering learners can be observed when they do not encourage students to engage in the class or they do not attempt to apply some learning approaches such as critical thinking. This resistance is justified by Lynch *et al.* (1997), as tutors are concerned about devaluing their role through giving increased control to students. Vrasidas and Glass (2004) justified this resistance from another perspective that tutors teach as they were taught. Teachers themselves were students for about 20 years and consequently their experience as learners has shaped their daily teaching practices. So, if tutors were not empowered while they were studying, most likely they would apply the same strategy with their learners. From the students' perspective, Doyle (2011) highlighted that they may resist sharing power because they are not used to it. Students have started school life with a teacher-centred approach to learning, which, for them, may imply less work to be done. Therefore, students may find that being empowered implies more work to be done. Another barrier against students' empowerment comes from the school or academic institution itself, as there is a fear that empowering students might be threatening to their policies and rules. School, or institution administration, might then empower students and give them control in non-threating issues, such as meal planning

or selecting wall colours (McDaniel, 2008). Bromage (2006) highlights two other reasons for tutors' resistance to change. Firstly, teaching staff may resist if they do not perceive the value or benefits of the proposed plan in promoting learning. In this case, accurate indicators of student achievement are desirable. Secondly, academic staff may resist if they perceive that the proposed change is an attempt to limit their academic freedom or otherwise disempower them.

In OL, and to empower students, Doyle (2011) suggests Wikis as an example of a social network application where students can collaborate and so be empowered. In Wikis, students pose questions, enquire into resources, and post possible test questions. Its main benefit lies in that it can train students to do work and be responsible. In addition, it also works on the social level, as students will carry the responsibly for the whole group's work, not only their own individual work (Mader, 2008). Moreover, Kelly (2012) applied Jones and Skaggs' (2012) model of MUSIC to effective online learning. An example of empowering learners is to give them the freedom to make a decision about a topic within an assignment, which lets them feel that they have some control over it.

In summary, previous literature encourages students to select and sequence their own activities and materials (individualisation), to collaborate and teach each other (interaction), and to link all symbolised and symbolising subjects so that the student can effectively construct knowledge structures in their own mind (integration). All this implies a shift in power away from the tutor to rest primarily with the student. More research is needed to highlight that empowerment is a process and not without structure, to focus on identifying a clear structure for empowering students. This structure can enable people to work within established boundaries in a creative and autonomous way.

3.3.2 Control

For Zull (2002), one of the important rules in helping students is to give them control. For Kohn (1999), taking control from students is a punishment. According to Rogers (1994), the control to be given to students is to be able to develop their own aim of learning, alone or with peers, explore resources and to make choices about the best direction in which they consider they can achieve their learning aims. The benefit of this freedom, as explained by Carl

(2004), is to ease users' anxieties and to thereby maximise their self-confidence.

There are two main constraints in giving control to students. Firstly, by the students themselves; according to Rogers (1994), some students resist when they are given the control to select the learning objectives that are relevant to their needs. So, they may opt out of this control. In the Egyptian context, losing control is regarded differently with reference to the learning environment of Arab culture: "Students learn to accept their tutors' absolute authority and control over all aspects of their learning without question" (Herrary and Torres, 2006, p.69). Therefore, students accept of losing control. Secondly, by the tutors and administrators; according to Rogers: "The tutor or administrator who considers using SCL must face up to the fearful aspects of sharing power and control." (1994, p. 214). This fear is explained by McDaniel (2008) that a school's or institution's administration fears that students may use this control to challenge or threaten policies and rules. Zimring (1999) highlights the consequences of these fears and concerns; it is difficult for tutors and administrators to change their attitudes, to share their power and responsibility, and to trust the intrinsic motivation of their students to learn. The following sections focus on giving control to students in OL.

3.3.2.1 Control in OL

E-learning programmes have the potential to offer a great deal of flexibility of pace and sequencing, and the user can enjoy ample control of the programme (Fröschl, 2005). According to White (2003), students' freedom in OL is an inevitable consequence of the existing freedom in OL, since it decentralises the nature of controlled learning, which is usually found in traditional environments, as students develop their own style and learning strategies. According to Lindsay (2009), online students can access content, free of charge, from multiple sources via the Internet. Students have tools such as mobile phones and video cameras that can collect digital examples. Also, collected data can be edited, shared, stored and reused in student work. Thus, strictly managing a set curriculum in terms of a limited content chosen by the tutor becomes less meaningful. Regarding the tutor role in giving control to online students, Salmon (2013) explains that when online tutors facilitate the material studied, they need to encourage students' participation and sharing

knowledge together as a group. Rogers *et al.* (2010) explain that these technological tools support cooperative learning between students. Osborne, Pittaway and Downing (2014) focus on a tutor's role in this regard to achieve students' potentials for self-direction and self-guidance in their online study. Bearne, Jones and Sapsford-Francis (1994) further detailed what control exactly should be given to e-learners by specifying that learners should control the appearance and disappearance of each element in a given application. Notably, their research focuses on the limitations of the human attention process. Their research results revealed that learners feel comfortable when focusing temporarily on one piece of information to deal with, and then hide it and another piece of information to appear. In terms of the pedagogical approach, Moore and Kearsley (2011) justified the importance of user control, stating that any e-course involving students with different backgrounds or ability levels require individualised instruction tools. In other words, students need to have control to select the level that is suitable to them. In summary, students' control in OL is an important prerequisite for learning. Importantly, the OL environment requires the students' communication, collaboration, self-monitoring and self-evaluation.

Despite all of this "inevitable" freedom, Mader (2008) finds that online students repeatedly have limited control over the time expended on the course. On the other hand, Benyon, Stone and Woodroffe (1997) warned against this freedom, arguing that too much freedom leads the user to become confused, and the course content would consequently lose its coherence.

Piave (2008) added another concern about this open freedom for learners, discussing the potential risks that may occur if online students are left to their own devices in building their knowledge and negotiating and sharing such knowledge with other colleagues or online users. Although e-learning software can grant online students the autonomy to produce self-made content, and may thereby help online students to reinterpret and share more resources, this requires a higher level of understanding. Moreover, Piave (2008) highlighted the vital role of online tutors in managing and monitoring users' online contributions by giving an excess of freedom without reducing their individual performance. Cheesewright (2015) commented that some students are more responsible than others. In detail, when students can prove that they are

capable of making good decisions, then more control should be granted to them.

It may be summarised from the above discussion that online learners may be given control over all elements of their e-learning product, i.e. controlling the pace of words, videos or graphics. Nevertheless, in OL, in order to avoid reducing the positive effects of open environments, it is necessary to maintain the freedom within an institutional 'box', which is rich in rules and interaction tools, and which is partially created and monitored by online tutors.

3.3.3 Responsibility

According to Rogers (1994), students can be responsible for their learning if they are given the control and have ownership of their learning, lesson, class, and school. This makes them eager to learn and motivated. If they are engaged in independent study, students will carry the responsibility for the consequences of their choices. According to Doyle (2011), giving students this responsibility gives the student the feeling of being considered and valued, since responsibility is based on trust.

The constraints of this responsibility, for both students and tutors, are explained by Rogers (1994) and Doyle (2011). For students, they may not accept the responsibility, since they may think that it leads to making mistakes and living with the consequences of these mistakes. For teachers, they may not be willing to give students control unless they trust that students can be responsible. Notably, according to Skvorak (2013), if students are not used to responsibility, they cannot practice it without support and encouragement from the tutors. It can be said that tutors may have to start by teaching their students how to handle control.

In summary, the more freedom is given to the student the less we need to worry about control (Gray, 1997). The reason that we are less worried is because students will be more responsible. The path to encourage students to be responsible for their learning starts with building trust, then moving to empowering and giving them control over learning. Students in this phase are co-researchers, co-testers, and co-documentarians. This path ends with students being responsible for their learning.

3.3.4 Democratic Education

The following section investigates democratic education (DE). This investigation tries to answer the following questions: What is democracy? What is DE? What are the challenges of DE? What is the relationship between DE and SCL?

3.3.4.1 Definition of Democratic Education

Democracy entails two main principles: giving popular control to decision-making and equality of rights to exercise that control (Beetham and Boyle, 1995). Therefore, democratic governmental systems honour citizens' rights to vote and speak freely (Levin, 2007). Notably, because democracy is based on people and their decision making, it entails discussions of, as well as remaking and re-valuing, these decisions. Therefore, in a democratic community, people and opinions are forever changing their form and place, and the democratic community goes through rapid and non-stop transformation.

Dewey (1916) extended the definition of democracy to the social perspective beyond the political, since community does not entail government only, but people who affect and are affected by the government. Moreover, Dewey (2011) linked democracy and education explaining that a government would suffer if it is not elected by educated people who can live in equality and freedom. Consequently, education becomes the gate for democratic people in a democratic community, as education prepares people for citizenship.

Hecht, the founder of the democratic school system, considers DE as a developmental process encouraging autonomy and independence of learners (Hecht, 2011). This process accompanies people throughout their lifetime, increases their awareness of their community and helps them to achieve their goals. Moreover, for learners as citizens in a community, DE includes tolerance of diversity, and mutual respect between individuals and groups (Purkis and Bowen, 2004). DE therefore gives students the feeling of being valued and respected (Peace Pledge Union (PPU), 2013 and Hart, 1997). Gribble (2005) defines DE in its simplest terms as sharing between tutors and students. This extends the benefits of DE to enhancing the relationships between students and tutors, as both tutors and students work together democratically in active participation to create a positive environment. Dewey (2011) explains that, for

students, the path to practice democracy in education is to answer questions about what to learn, when to learn, how to learn, and how to assess learning. To answer these questions, Smith (2012) and Dewey (2011) considered both empowering learners to make decision within learning, and the students' ownership of the learning created to be important elements.

Carr and Hartnett (1996) differentiate between two types of democratic education; firstly, the classical conception of democracy in which democracy is seen as a form of power; secondly, the contemporary conception in which democracy is seen as political decision-making (see Table 3-6 below).

	Classic Democracy	Contemporary Democracy
The primary aim of education	To initiate individuals into the values, attitudes and modes of behaviour appropriate to active participation.	To offer a minority an education appropriate to future political leaders, the majority an education fitted to their primary social role as producers, workers and consumers.
Curriculum Content	There is a focus on liberal education, based on critical thinking and reflective learning	Education will focus on real life world, skills and that knowledge that have some market value.
Typical educational processes	Participatory practices that cultivate the skills and attitudes that democratic discussion require.	Pedagogical relationships will be based on authoritarianism and competition.

Table 3-6: Comparison between the classic democracy and the contemporary democracy (Carr and Hartnett, 1996)

Looking at the above table, some aspects of DE imply giving learners the autonomy and independence to build their learning goals. These goals are based on individual values, attitudes and modes of appropriate behaviour. In other aspects, DE is more social and implies participatory and collaborative co-operation between learners to accommodate their individual goals into a common goal and share their experience.

In the author's view, an integrated DE is a mix between the classic and contemporary conceptions of democracy, since curriculum content is expected

to be based on critical and reflective thinking (exists in the classic DE). These skills allow students to apply their learning in their daily life practices (exists in contemporary DE). In addition, DE has implications from two different directions, the collaborative and social direction on the one side (exists in contemporary DE). On the other hand, it encourages the individuality of learning (exists in classic DE).

With reference to discussions of SCL in the literature, there are elements that SCL has in common with DE. For example, DE's flow and exchange of ideas through students' engagement and participation, critical thinking and problem solving (Okenyi, 2007). According to McCombs and Whistler (1997), SCL similarly helps students to think critically while learning to analyse, evaluate and be reflective towards their own learning. Moreover, Hecht (2011), explaining the importance of independence and autonomy in learning, agrees that the benefits of SCL lie in it being based on student's individual choices, interests, needs, abilities, learning styles, types of intelligences and educational goals. Therefore, similarities exist between SCL and DE not only regarding approaches and principles, but extending to practice and learning skills that are used to achieve these principles. SCL is thus an acknowledged part of DE.

3.3.4.2 Democratic Education in Egypt

Egypt occupies the most North Eastern part of the African continent. Egypt is part of a group of countries known formally as SANE (South Africa, Algeria, Nigeria, and Egypt). These countries account roughly for half of the continent's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), nearly a third of its population and fifth of the total land area in Africa (Oxford Business Group, 2010). SANE countries, share half of Africa's exports, trade balance and foreign direct investment. Particularly in education, there are some similarities between these four countries regarding some aspects in school systems such as school expenditures and enrolment rate. Significantly, there is similarity in sustaining democracy (Anyanwu and Erhijakpor, 2007).

According to Apple and Beane (2003), SCL has started to be promoted in Africa. The reason behind implementing SCL is explained by The South Africa Department of Education, as SCL is seen as the most appropriate means of breaking the abovementioned rigidity by fostering DE through learner

participation, and promoting knowledge relevant to learners' social contexts and previous experience. In spite of the aforementioned benefits of DE, Okenyi (2007) notes that the democratic education system, which fosters SCL, is still in its infant stages in many developing countries in Africa, Egypt among them. In detail, there is a growing resistance to traditional methods of teaching and assessments based on tutor-centred approaches. This resistance is because tutor-led learning approaches promote students' rigidity, passive actions and dependence. In the context of this thesis on Egyptian HE, Faour (2011) explains that in most of the Arab countries, teaching throughout the whole education system is still guided by the tutor who is, in most cases, the decision maker in the class. The following section highlights resistance to DE.

3.3.4.3 Resistance to democratic education

The resistance to DE discussed in the following paragraphs comes from academic institutions, tutors, and students. The first kind of resistance can be explained by pointing out that, according to McDaniel (2008), DE empowers students to be able to make decisions regarding their learning in schools and as citizens in the community. Therefore, there is fear from the school or institution administration about giving students this power - from their view, students may use this power to challenge and threaten policies and rules (McDaniel, 2008). Moreover, from practising democracy, a collapse of control may occur between the different parties in learning (tutor-students-administrators). According to Hart (1997), this collapse would result in an educational instability in conservative systems of authority. Consequently, students may not be empowered to practice this democracy.

Moreover, if an academic institution does not accept DE, this may be an obstacle for tutors who consider it - according to Rogers (1994), if a tutor then starts to make efforts to give students responsible power, these efforts are likely to be suppressed by the school administration. Another obstacle to be considered is a nation's political direction, if it is not democratic. According to Hecht (2011), DE is an expression of a democratic society. In Egypt, after the rebellion of "Arab Spring" in 2011, according to Riley (2014), the old regime stopped the internet service for a limited time assuming that the online social network "Facebook" was the tool used by democratic movements to mobilise and explain their positions. Therefore, before students practice democracy

outside their schools, there needs to be an increasing recognition of students' abilities to speak for themselves and practice democracy inside schools (Hart, 1997).

Other academic institutions may empower students and give them control in non-threating issues such as meal planning or selecting wall colours, or election of class representatives to sit on school councils (McDaniel, 2008). Here it is important to highlight the risk of this sort of "window dressing" empowerment. For students, it quickly becomes apparent that they are invited to a mere tokenistic participation (Badham and Davies, 2007). When students find themselves part of a community, but are not empowered to be an active part of the group, this will be kept in their memory as being involved in a fake participation. The feeling of a lack of access to power signifies to them unimportance and unworthiness (Messiou, 2012). Thus, tokenistic DE may lead to students' low self-esteem and low self-confidence (Vanner, 2013). Moreover, it may result in affecting their ability to be leaders and may block and constrain their life progress as citizens (Messiou, 2012). Hart (1997) further explained the effect of disempowering students in their leadership as follows. In order to prepare students to be leaders and process any change within the community, it is essential to identify the problem, conditions and causes, accordingly giving power to solve the problem and then begin to address any change in the community. Therefore, a lack of power for young citizens means a feeling of social isolation and not being socially centred to develop changes in their communities.

The second resistance is the student's own resistance against DE. According to Ruder (2008), not all students are capable of "doing", and making decisions. For example, at a young age they may need authoritative figures to guide and direct them. The scientific reason behind this is that the human brain during the teenage years is not fully developed to take an independent decision. This is confirmed by Andolina , Jenkins, Zukin and Keeter (2003), who state that not all students are able to practise their freedom of choice in answering questions about what, how and why they learn. Students prefer not to carry the responsibility of making a decision and its consequences. Accordingly, training and teaching practices are suggested to foster the development of such skills to shift the student from a dependent to a self-determined individual. For the implementation of DE, the question to be highlighted here is: do students

receive a type of education that actively engages them as citizens in their own schools and communities? And if not, what type of education is to be provided?

According to Andolina *et al*. (2003), in order to prepare students for understanding and implementing DE, they need to receive a type of education that actively engages them as citizens in their schools and communities. According to The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) (2002), colleges and universities should place a new emphasis on educating students to be purposeful and self-directed, empowered through intellectual and practical skills, informed by knowledge and ways of knowing, and responsible for personal actions and civic values. For Weimer (2013), some learners are not ready to be self-directed and they need early preparation to be responsible for making decisions and given choices. Peace Pledge Union (PPU) (2013) suggests that some co-operative learning which emphasises DE should be adopted in the students' curriculum – for example, group projects where all students take on decision-making about some content and method. It is suggested that these groups should be flexible enough to avoid being evaluated by assessments. Hence, there are some promising examples of the implementation of DE in education as follows:

- In UK, the UK democratic community that connects individuals, schools and organisations who practise or support democratic education in the UK (Phoenix Education Trust, 2014)
- The Directory of Democratic Education (2006) lists 175 democratic schools in 28 countries. It includes 15 colleges and universities with programmes that support democratic education (Graves, 2006)
- At Highfield Junior School in Plymouth, UK school aims have been successfully attained precisely through an emphasis on democracy. One of the rules is to resolve conflict peacefully, mediate and negotiate (Purkis and Bowen, 2004)

In the author's view, before practicing DE, students need to be prepared. Teaching practices need to be directed towards the development of students' skills and abilities to be motivated and engaged, participating and self-directed to manage the responsibilities of practicing democracy. Since, as discussed above, SCL is an acknowledged part of DE, an active involvement in the learning process by all members in the academic institution is expected to

prepare the learning environment for easy access, understanding and implementation for DE. In other words, for a genuine DE implementation in education, the learning community must be SCL driven, and according to Okenyi (2007), teaching approaches that are teacher-centred are less likely to adopt DE.

3.3.5 Current professional training and development in OL

The following section discusses Continuing Professional Development (CPD). It focuses on its definition, highlighting online tutors' needs within CPD. Finally, some barriers for effective CPD are discussed.

3.3.5.1 Definition of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The process of defining CPD starts by examining the literature that defines it with regard to learning in general, without specifying it to be directed towards either a face-to-face tutor or an online tutor. According to Gusky (2000), a tutor's professional development is normally associated with in-service courses or programmes that are provided by an educational institution. Ur (1997) defined it as the training that is related to what tutors do for their own personal development, with special importance given to reflection. Pollard and Collins (2005) highlighted the importance of training tutors is to be reflective in their teaching. According to Meighan (1981), tutors are sometimes affected by their students' gender, social class or even their names. Therefore, that may have an impact on tutors to treat their students differently. Consequently, students may respond differently as they may have a feeling of considerable social injustice. According to Pollard and Collins (2005) a reflective tutor needs to examine evidence on which conceptions of each learner are based. Moreover, CPD for reflective teaching should imply a more systematic process of collecting, recording and analysing tutors' thoughts and observations of their students. The expected result of providing this CPD is that it helps tutors to identify and explore their own practices and underlying beliefs. Consequently, it leads to changes and improvements in their teaching.

In the author's view, regarding the OL, the task of a reflective tutor is considered to be a challenge for the tutor. The challenge is because in OL, diversity between learners is much broader than face-to-face. Learners are from different religions, sexual orientation, ethnic backgrounds, language,

country of origin, socioeconomic status, disabilities, etc. Therefore, more CPD is required in this regard.

Gusky (2000) and Ur (1997) added the social perspective in CPD and the importance of embedding collaboration and communication in it. Therefore, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) suggested that traditional notions of in-service training need to be replaced by opportunities for "knowledge sharing" based in real situations. They added that tutors should be provided with opportunities to share what they know, discuss what they want to learn, and connect new concepts and strategies to their own unique contexts.

In the author's view, the definitions of CPD discussed above go in two different directions. Firstly, personalised and individual CPD to achieve tutors' professional goals can give them a lot of flexibility to be reflective and motivated for the CPD. According to Frost (2013), this personal development plan (PDP) is a plan that enables the tutor to reflect on achievement, identify strengths, and address areas for development. Secondly, scheduled and pre-planned CPD is provided or managed by others such as the school administration or government, who follow their own agenda to achieve their goals. According to Mizell (2010), research in education has shown that teaching quality is one of the most important factors in raising students' achievement. Most importantly, new tutors who received intensive mentoring had a significant effect on student achievement after as little as two years. The reason behind the need for ongoing CPD is that tutors confront great challenges each year, including changes in subject content, new instructional methods, accelerated changes in technology, changing laws and procedures and students' needs. Tutors who do not experience effective professional development do not improve their skills, and student learning suffers, as they may have needs that their tutors lack knowledge to fulfil these.

A holistic view for CPD is presented by Kennedy (2005) (See Table 3-7).

Training name	Training aim
Training model	That provides teachers with the opportunity to update their skills in order to be able to demonstrate their competence.

Award-bearing model	That emphasises the completion of award-bearing programmes of study, validated by universities.
Deficit model	That addresses a perceived deficit in teachers' performance.
Cascade model	That involves individual teachers attending training events and then disseminating, the information to colleagues.
Standards-based model	That represents a trend to create a system of teaching and teacher education
Coaching/mentoring model:	That targets a one-to-one relationship between two tutors
Community of practice model:	That involves more than two tutors, where there is mutual engagement between them to develop their repertoires, styles and discourses.
Action research model	That allows teachers to ask critical questions of their practice
Transformative model	That combines practices and conditions which support a transformative agenda.

Table 3-7: Framework of Professional Training and Development adapted from Kennedy, 2005

The framework in Table (3.7) identifies nine key models: each model of training is classified in relation to its capacity for supporting professional autonomy and transformative practice, for example; the training model, the award-bearing model, the deficit model, and the cascade model-are transmission. The standards-based model, the coaching/mentoring model, and the community of practice model-are transitional. The action research model and the transformative model-are transformative.

In the author's view, there is no step in the previous model that can guide tutors to make sure that CPD is effective and achieve its objectives. In this regard, the effectiveness of CPD depends on how tutors conceive, plan, and implement it that may imply their rigorous thinking and execution. Finally, it can be said, CPD is not effective unless it causes tutors to improve their instruction and addresses the students' learning challenges.

This next section discusses specifically online tutors' needs within the CPD provided. The online environment poses more challenges to tutors (Ruth and Houghton, 2009). In OL, due to their physical absence, tutors may need to implement strategies and practices that overcome this absence to keep learners engaged and motivated (Anderson, 2008). Online learners are from different places in the world, different cultures, and addressing their own development needs (Elliot, 2007). Tutors thus need to provide guidance and support to students so they can interact and collaborate with peers of different social and cultural backgrounds (Ravitch, 2011). In addition, it is the online tutor's role to balance the diverse needs of individuals with the curriculum demands and the goals of the larger group (Hammerness *et al.* 2005). Also, technology that is used in OL, which is constantly updatable, provides online tutors with endless possibilities for innovative approaches in facilitating the course studied (Elliott, 2007). For example, tutors can select between e-mails or forum chats to communicate with their students. Moreover, to deliver the online course, a tutor can select between the two modes of real time (synchronous) or previously recorded (asynchronous). According to Hrastinski (2008), each learning mode has its own objectives, advantages and disadvantages. Consequently, training tutors in OL is different from training them for a face-to-face learning environment (Elliot, 2007). It can be observed that types of knowledge that online tutors have to be aware of vary between content, technological and pedagogical knowledge as illustrated in Figure 3-5: The TPACK framework and its knowledge components by Shulman (1986).

Considering that the OL environment emphasises the student-lead approach in learning, as it focuses the attention on learners' dialogue, involvement and control (Coomey, 2001), online tutors need guiding training about what, when and why to use any tool in OL while fulfilling the SCL approach. Moreover, a focus on the implications of using any technology regarding empowering learners and giving them control over their learning is important since the lack of knowledge or continuing training for these technologies can take tutors away from their best use in students' learning.

In the author's view, the different nature of the OL environment leads to changes in the role of online tutors and consequently leads to changes in their CPD. Lehmann and Chamberlin (2009) explained that future online teaching would be well served if there was a professional certificate programme in

online teaching which would need to be completed by a tutor prior to applying for an OL-related job. It may be another selling point for a qualified online tutor to have a portfolio, where the tutor can gather and present evidence, and also include an element of critical reflection or commentary. A full professional department and degree in online teaching for tutors may well be in the future.

3.3.5.2 CPD Features

The following section investigates two points which are suggested to be integrated into CPD; firstly, tutor-tutor interaction in OL; secondly, embedding the social perspective through the use of technology in learning.

According to Elliot (2008), CPD is expected to develop tutors' ability to implement students' communication and collaboration in OL, emphasising the need for tutors themselves to interact and collaborate via social network applications. This point has attracted an argument in the literature regarding tutor-tutor interaction in OL. Zeichner and Liston (2013), Anderson (2008) and Vrasidas and Glass (2004) argued for the importance for online tutors to share their experiences, learn from peers, and collaborate on real world projects. This online collaboration encourages tutors to develop their knowledge in their own subject and within the scholarly community of tutors. Moreover, according to Moore (2013), OL gives a better chance for tutors to interact with each other, develop their skills, and enhance the quality of teaching as a whole through social networks and other applications that facilitate online communication.

On the other hand, Sasikumar (2008) highlighted different types of online interaction between tutor, student and content. It can be observed that tutor-tutor interaction is not considered much in the relevant literature. In the author's view, this lack of focus in the literature is a reflection of its lack in real life. As Weiss and Brigham (2000, p. 243) put it: "We do not know what tutors do in the co-taught class on a daily basis." According to Austin (2001, p. 246), " because a collaborative model is both recommended and used in inclusive classrooms, one might infer that the interaction of co-tutors has been examined extensively and that the criteria for an ideal model have been defined. However, this assumption is unsupported." In summary, CPD may need to engage strategies and approaches to motivate and encourage online tutors to interact with each other.

The second point of interest for CPD is to consider the social view in its objectives and practices. Vygotsky (1986) considers social constructivism in learning and its impact on the community of learning (tutor-student-peers) in constructing its knowledge. Online tutors' personal effectiveness to communicate and collaborate with online students' needs to be focused on in their CPD. Limited knowledge of tutor-student online communication can lead to a struggle to communicate with learners, and consequently disengage them. In OL, different technologies in communication such as email and social network applications facilitate a consideration of the social perspective in learning (Doyle, 2011). Therefore, it is suggested that the use of technology to achieve the pedagogical objectives be weaved into CPD.

3.3.5.3 CPD Barriers

The National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES) (2001) conducted a survey to examine CPD, with the main results as follows:

- 80% of tutors thought that the CPD was not linked (to a great extent) to their teaching activities
- The average number of CPD courses was a day or less every 12 months.
- Only 10%- 15% of tutors reported that they got follow-up materials or activities (Synder, 2002)

More recently in 2007, the National Academy of Science (NAS) listed some potential barriers of CPD as:

- Lack of knowledge about online technology and its affordance.
- Lack of support from administrators.
- Teachers' beliefs and practices about the lack of effectiveness of online technology in learning (Scott, 2008).

The report quoted one tutor as saying: "Many of my colleagues do not take advantage of professional development opportunities because they see it as something that they really don't need or it's not interesting to them" (NATAC (2007), cited in Scott (2008, p.15). This highlights the notion that CPD in general needs to include: tutors' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes (Cruz-Yeh, 2011). Turner-Bisset (2001) added other aspects in her model; they are: Knowledge for self, as it is important in shaping the way that tutors' perceive their identity and critical to reflection on personal teaching practice; Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) which is knowledge of self in relation to subject knowledge and pedagogy; and knowledge of educational aims,

purposes and values (see Table 3-8). The inference of including tutors' beliefs and attitudes in CPD is explained by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2010) as understanding tutors' beliefs and attitudes having an impact on understanding and improving educational processes. In detail, these attitudes are linked to tutors' strategies for coping with challenges in their daily professional life. Consequently, they shape the students' learning environment.

According to Cruz-Yeh (2011), and Vrasidas and Glass (2004), there is missing evidence in literature to provide directions for creating and evaluating CPD. They also argued that CPD has been traditionally formed from the top level (Ministries and departments of education) down (tutors and students). According to Cruz-Yeh (2011), that leads to developing CPD that is not connected to the tutors' contexts of practice and may not achieve individual goals.

In summary, in the author' view, CPD has to help tutors learn the technologies while simultaneously supporting these tutors to use such technologies for teaching and learning and highlight that tutors' knowledge in OL is covering the three aspects that are illustrated in figure 3-5 (pedagogy, technology and content) and the overlap between them.

CPD should focus on clarifying the answers to the following questions for the online tutor:

- Which technologies are you using and what strengths and challenges do they present for online and hybrid course design delivery, assessment, student interaction, and student support?
- What is new pedagogy that incorporates the changes in teaching and learning triggered by online and technology-based learning?

Importantly, follow-up activities should be structured to ensure that the CPD provided is effective.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

This chapter looks at the theoretical background that is relevant to my study. The main theory that is involved in my research is the theory of empowerment. This chapter looks at this theory individually and within the context of my research.

Theory of empowerment

Introduction

According to the literature, such as Thompson (2008); and Magda and Rikers (2008) on learning approaches that have an impact on OL, discussed in section 3.2., many approaches and methods such as Problem Based Learning (PBL), Activity Based learning (ABL), experiential learning, and reflective learning place students at the centre of their learning and foster their skills in critical thinking and problem solving. Moreover, ESU (2010), explained that SCL approaches demand that students are active participants in their learning, as well as autonomous, responsible and accountable. The European Quality Assurance Forum (2014) asserts that SCL requires empowering individual learners, and asks HE institutions to pay particular attention to adopting teaching and learning approaches that empower learners. Since the literature, such as Frankham (2009), addresses the issue of empowerment as a requirement of SCL (see section 3.3.1), the theoretical framework for this study, which focuses on HE tutors' perceptions of SCL, equally addresses the issue of the empowerment of learners. The following sections define the specific framework that I use in analysing and interpreting the collected data. It also serves to facilitate the understanding of concepts and variables such as student control and responsibility according to the definitions of empowerment. The next section offers definitions of the idea of empowerment according to the academic literature, including a discussion of benefits, challenges and the tutor's role in empowering learners. It addresses some known issues such as the student's control and potential resistance to taking this control. Overall, it highlights the issue of learner empowerment in the OL environment specifically.

4.1 Definitions of empowerment

Cornell Empowerment Group (1989) defined empowerment as an ongoing process centred in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation. Zimmerman (1995) further explained the process of empowerment, highlighting its practices, such as shared responsibility, shared resources and shared leadership. Also, Zimmerman (1995) pointed the benefits of these practices, such as gaining access to resources and achieving goals. For Cornell Empowerment Group (1989), the process of empowerment has outcomes, such as, gained control and developing skills, such as self-esteem. Rappaport (1987) adds that when people are empowered, they gain control over their lives and practice democratic participation in their communities. For participants of democracy, this given control is a sign that they have an important role in their communities and can share in decision-making. Benefits of democratic participation for individuals correspond with benefits of Democratic Education (DE) for learners identified by Hecht (2011) and Purkis and Bowen (2004) (see section 3.3.4.1 about the definition of democratic education). Zimmerman (1995) emphasises the social perspective of empowerment, where group members interact and collaborate in order to be able to control their lives. Therefore, Zimmerman (1995) adds that critical understanding of the socio-political environment is a requirement for empowerment, so that one is able to understand the norm of the society in question and play a critical role in it. In a similar vein, Rappaport (1981) views learners' empowerment as both a personal and a social development. Specifically, for him, empowering is a long-term process of learning and developing an individual's rights and abilities, and empowerment is directly related to social structure where individuals communicate, share and collaborate with each other, so that social development and personal development are closely connected (Rappaport, 1981). Confirming this idea of a social perspective of empowerment, Freire (2014) describes what practicing power involves in aspects of mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group-participation/decision-making - here power is an ongoing process, the outcome of which is control. However, as will be explained in the section below, there are requisites for this control in order for this power to be validated and applicable.

In the context of Egyptian culture and HE, the questions to be addressed are: is there democracy in general? Is there democratic education in particular? Riley (2014) explains, in Egypt, after the rebellion of the "Arab Spring" in 2011, the old regime stopped internet services for a limited time due to an assumption that the online social network "Facebook" was the tool used by democratic movements to mobilise and explain their positions. Answers to the previously addressed questions are likely to be "No". Eldawdi (2012) and Farag (2013) explained many reasons behind the difficulty to achieve democracy in Egypt. For Eldawdi (2012), economic recession and low income of the Egyptian citizens are barriers for them to control their lives. As a result, ignoring poverty, unemployment and alienating youth, will lead to neither economic reforms nor democracy. Farag (2013), focused on the role of youth and education to achieve democracy. In detail, giving youth the voice whether liberal discourse, religious or social democratic, encouraging them to brainstorm, discuss and debate can lead policy makers to predict the future that is aligned with their attitudes, ideas and values.

However, as a result of the rebellion, the Egyptian youth in general, and HE students especially, have more control over their lives, and a greater voice in educational institutions. Moreover, they have started now to exercise power over someone else (such as their tutors) rather than simply being recipients of exercised power. For example, according to Eldawdi (2012), students in HE, formed protest movements critiquing the current situation in HE in terms of curriculum, teaching methods, and quality of teaching staff. In other words, if empowerment in learning is a requirement of SCL, Democratic Education (DE) is a requirement of empowerment (see section 3.3.2). Another view about empowerment is that advanced by Maton and Salem (1995), as participation with others to share decision-making and achieve objectives. In my opinion, this view is adding to the tutor's role the need to examine students' learning objectives during the process of empowerment. According to the relevant literature, SCL stems from constructivism, and constructivism is the learner's knowledge construction with the help of others (Rogers, 1994). The prerequisite of this knowledge construction is that learners control their educational process by being more fully embedded in it, and by possessing deeper ownership and empowerment over its mastery. Maton and Salem (1995) list self-management and self-esteem as two examples of social constructs of empowering learners, and for this reason one of the interview questions will

investigate tutor's perceptions about students' abilities and their readiness for self and time management (Appendix A-5).

In summary, theories of empowerment include both processes and outcomes. In the processes, students practice decision making, critical reflection and participate within their communities. The outcomes of these practices are that students gain control and develop their skills in order to be responsible and self-regulated.

4.2 Benefits of students' empowerment

Ziemmerman and Perkins (1995) explain the benefits of empowering learners for both students and tutors; for students, empowerment provides them with opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills; for tutors, it is a shift in a tutor's role from authoritative and decision-making to collaboration with others who are engaged in decision making. The following section discusses these and other benefits of learners' empowerment.

4.2.1 Students' engagement in learning

According to Klein and Karini (2006), engagement in learning is an outcome of empowering learners which is linked positively to desirable learning outcomes such as critical thinking and achieving higher academic grades. The evidence of improvement of academic achievement when students are engaged is discussed by Marx and Blumenfeld (1997) who found that when students initiated tasks and engaged in collaborative interactive tasks, group productivity increased. The key issue here was that students gained a strong sense of ownership and responsibility as they answered their own research questions, and when tasks were student-initiated. According to Redding (1990), when students are empowered and practice this empowerment, they can understand their learning better, as they gain knowledge about which behaviours and attitudes intensify learning and which inhibit it, and can therefore explore how to achieve their learning objectives. Specifically, when students reflect and discuss their learning aims, outcomes and approaches, the understanding gained through these discussions helps them to achieve these objectives. In my view, it is part of the tutor's role in empowering learners to

guide them to be strategic and aware of the link between teaching strategies and learning outcomes.

4.2.2 Responsible citizens

One of the benefits of empowering learners concerns the issue of them as responsible citizens in the community who show respect for others in the society in which they live. According to Glasser (2010), when students take control of their own learning, they become more self-aware, responsible and focused. Cummins (1994) views empowered students as confident in their own cultural identity, as well as knowledgeable in terms of school structures and interactional patterns, so that they can participate successfully in school learning activities. Dewey (2011) links democracy and education, explaining that when education becomes the gate for democratic people in a democratic community, education prepares people for citizenship by teaching them to make their own decisions and to take responsibility for their own lives and communities.

4.3 Challenges to students' empowerment

The following section discusses three challenges which can hinder students' empowerment: firstly, administration of academic institution; secondly, resistance stemming from both students and tutors; thirdly, the cultural challenge when a learner adheres to a set of cultural norms that define what is good or bad.

4.3.1 Administration of academic institution

As Kreisberg (1992) explains, one of the challenges for tutors in empowering students is that tutors themselves are isolated and often powerless. This is discussed by McDaniel (2008), who points to the issue of fear from students as well as fear from the school or institution administration about giving students power, from the point of view of the institutions, there is a danger that students may use this power to challenge and threaten policies and rules. The result of this, as Roger (1994) points out, is that if a tutor then starts to make efforts to give students responsible power, these efforts are likely to be suppressed by the school administration. According to Kreisberg (1992), in

class, the tutor is the central figure of authority and control. In my view, tutors as a central focus of authority, are trapped between empowering their students and being hindered in this by the academic administrations which places them at the centre of power.

4.3.2 Resistance

4.3.2.1 Student's resistance

Academically, according to Albers (2009), many students have grown comfortable with an educational system that constrains and guides them through a process based on external expectations. These students have learned the 'rules' so well that these rules have become internalised and normal. This claim corresponds with the opinions voiced by Walsh (2004), who explains that students sometime resist empowerment in class-based activities, complaining that they are paying tuition to be taught, not to teach themselves (see section 3.2.4.3).

Cognitively, according to Albers (2009) and Crawford *et al*. (1999) students admit that they have become used to a system that calls for 'surface learning' and opportunities to plot a deeper course of study seem time-consuming. Consequently, deep learning increases the time it takes to be involved with the process as an active participant (Albers, 2009; Crawford *et al*. 1999) (see section 3.2.2.3, integration between reflective learning and experiential learning that leads to deep learning).

4.3.2.2 Tutor's resistance

For OL, and specifically for the context of OL in Egyptian HE, El-Shenawi (2005) suggests that tutors are likely to be resistant to the adoption of OL because it empowers students with free choice in their OL environment. Another reason for tutor's resistance to empowering learners is the lack of technological knowledge among tutors, who could not use the academic support that technological tools could provide. According to Maksym (2005), this lack of knowledge can lead to the tutor's resistance to applying this technology. Therefore, any resistance displayed by a tutor for this reason would have disempowering effect on students.

4.3.3 Cultural challenge

According to Abdelnabi (2005), when a learner rigidly adheres to a set of cultural norms that define what is good or bad, such cultural norms may interfere with the learner's ability to acquire new skills. According to Ziemmerman and Perkins (1995), this is especially true where individuals live in an oppressive society and are generally disempowered. This can be the case for the Egyptian context, where some families raise their children in a strict and sanctioned manner (Abdelnabi, 2005). Therefore, the resistance in the Egyptian context is from families, themselves, who are influenced by the culture that may not be fully aware of the usefulness and applicability of empowering their children.

In summary, in empowering learners, there are challenges: for tutors when they are disempowered by academic institutions; for students if they are not responsible to take control of their learning. In the Egyptian context, the challenge is the influence of culture that disempowers the young. As according to Farag (2013), Egyptian youth for a long time were caught up in a negative trend of dependency, and of not wanting to participate in political and social integration. However, according to Mohamed *et al*. (2016), the Egyptian revolution influenced youth where they listen to each other's opinions, share and reflect peacefully.

4.4 The tutor's role in empowering learners

Redding (1990) explains that the tutor's role in empowering learners is to give students the control to make choices with respect to both their learning outcomes and the methods to achieve these. Jagersma and Parsons (2011) discuss in more detail that tutors need to provide their students with the knowledge about approaches being used, and the why and what of their learning. For this reason, in designing the interview questions (see Appendix A-3) care was taken to ask tutors about control given to their students, including the issue of sharing with students how and what to teach. The reason for asking these questions is that, according to Jagersma and Parsons (2011), students have been asked questions for decades, but these particular questions have seldom been posed to students, and this, in effect, means ignoring students' voices. Rudd, Colligan and Naik (2007) add that

maintaining the learner's voice through methods such as brainstorming and group discussion means empowering learners by providing ways to listen to their concerns, interests and needs (see section 3.2.1.1).

4.4.1 Teaching practices that empower learners

Teaching practices need to help enhance member participation as well as manage conflicts that occur between group members (see examples of empowering learners in the implementation of DE in education, section 3.3.4). Thompson (2009) addresses the issue of tutors' knowledge about approaches for empowering students, his research project on student voice in the learning process analysed student and tutor responses to "the principle and experience of consultation about learning" (Thompson, 2009, p. 671). Thompson found that tutors play a significant role in the process, but that educators are not consistent about what student participation should include. For the OL context, Maksym (2005) discusses the use of online tools such as simulations and computer-based models as powerful means to empower students to take control of their education by presenting them with more interactive learning opportunities. Bonk and Zhang (2008, p.5) introduce the "Read, Reflect, Display, and Do" (R2D2) Model for online learners, as illustrated in the following figure:

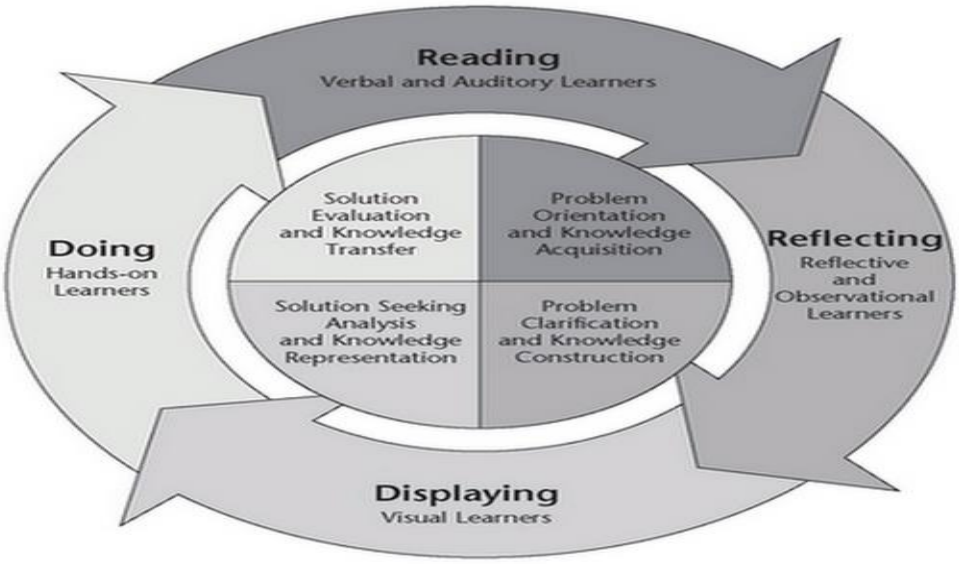


Figure 4-1: "Read, Reflect, Display, and Do" (R2D2) Model for online learners (Bonk and Zhang, 2008, p: 6)

The previous figure explains the different phases necessary for activities to empower students in OL as:

Phase 1 (Read): acquiring knowledge through various mechanism including online readings or podcasts.

Phase 2 (Reflect): reflection on content and self-checking or reviewing that one understands what one has read through methods such as blogging, online practice tests or online discussions.

Phase 3 (Display): the model highlights visual forms of learning including timelines, concept maps, flowcharts, and videos. Here, the learner is forced to create visual representations.

Phase 4 (Do): this last phase is intended to encourage practice or hands-on experimentation with the learned content. In this phase, learners operationalise the learned content by solving cases, solving problems in a simulation, or posting a report.

As all these activities take place, course content and activities become more enriching and personally meaningful for learners. It can be observed that the R2D2 model addresses learning styles to empower learners and that it overlaps with the four styles of learning modalities: Visual, Aural, Read/Write, and Kinaesthetic (VARK) of Felming (2006) (see section 3.2.5).

Another model that includes a discussion of steps to empower learners is that of Kieffer (1984), who constructs a three-stage developmental model to describe the nature of involvement in the process of empowerment (see Figure below).



Figure 4-2: Edited model of involvement in the process of empowerment (Kieffer, 1984)

From both models, Bonk and Zhang (2008) and Kieffer (1984), it can be concluded that, for empowerment, the important steps are reflection and discussion, and then action and reaction. Moreover, empowered students need to be active, and engaged, so that inquiry and problem solving are induced. Students are encouraged to explore, inquire, collaborate and communicate with each other. Overall, the entire process promotes the students' ownership of both the learning material and the learning experience.

A last comment should be made on the type of power given (see section 3.3). Cummins (1994) distinguishes between legitimate power and collaborative relations of power. For Cummins (1994) and (Yukl, 2002) (see section 3.3), legitimate power means that the target person complies because he or she believes the other has the right to make the request and the target person has the obligation to comply. In class, legitimate power subordinates the status of students of diverse backgrounds on the assumption that there is a fixed amount of power, so that the sharing of power with others in the group will necessarily decrease the status of the dominant person. However, according to Cummis (1994), in collaborative relations of power, where power to act is created with others, no individual in the group is put above the other. The nature of relations of power, whether legitimate or collaborative, within the larger society leads to the development of educational structures that shapes the interactions among educators and students in schools. Collaborative power corresponds with Friere's (1968) description of power that involves an aspect

of mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group-participation/decision-making.

4.5 Requirements for students' empowerment

The following section highlights the requirements for students' empowerment from two different perspectives, that of the students (to be active) and that of the tutors (to trust students).

4.5.1 Active students

Aldrich (2009) highlights that students need to be active and responsible to be empowered. Katsuko (2006), similarly focuses on student's learning and knowledge construction to be active, and claims that the difficulty for learners to be active learners has its roots in the traditional learning method of memorising information, and it is important to note that memorisation in learning is a challenge for empowering learners in the Egyptian education system (see section 1.4 and 3.1.4). Rudd, Colligan and Naik (2007) add to the characteristics of active students the ability to maintain their voices - in their view, when students are empowered, they have voices. Examples of furthering students' voices is by providing ways to listen to their concerns, interests and needs, such as brainstorming and group discussion. When learners are able to express themselves, they can develop ideas, articulate in discussions, and advocate change within their learning. However, artificially introduced student voices can actually harm school environments, especially where a history of students being treated with disrespect exists (Rogers *et al*. 2010).

In the Egyptian context, according to Farag (2013), student voice is controlled, as policy makers are the only decision makers for the Educational curricula, strategies and activities. Farag (2012) explained the consequences of centralised decision making in education on students. In details, Egyptian education increases the culture of oppression and rejects pluralism and dialogic approach that consider justice and equal opportunities in discussion. Also, this centralisation is a barrier to develop students' skills in creativity and problem solving.

4.5.2 Tutor-Student Trust

Jagersma (2011) addresses the issue of trust towards students being necessary to engage them in their learning and to construct their knowledge. For example, tutors need to trust their learners to navigate and explore the resources of learning (Jagersma, 2011). Moore and Kearsley (2011) highlighted individualised learning as a learning approach for tutor-student trust, especially in OL where students have different backgrounds or ability levels and therefore need to have the control to select the level that is suitable for them.

Freire (2014) focuses on good student-tutor relationships as a prospective solution for building up tutor-student trust - for him the ‘‘being” of education is to eliminate the apparent contradiction between tutors and students “so that both are simultaneously tutors and students” (Freire, 2014, p. 2). To overcome the depository method of knowledge transmission, Freire believes that education must involve practical problem-solving which incorporates the consciousness and worldview of the learner (Freire, 2014).

Dixon *et al*. (2008) claim that tutor-student trust cannot exit if students are not responsible; they find that because of this responsibility students can be overwhelmed by learning. On the other hand, however, according to Redding (1990), part of empowering learners is to pass on responsibility to learners. Thompson (2009) links these two ideas of student-tutor relationship and student responsibility as, without responsibility or capability, communication breaks down and tutor-student interactions become tutor-controlled. For OL, Rogers et al. (2010) recommended some practices to develop students’ skills to be responsible such as live discussions and making decisions in projects. In OL, forums extend the community that students are engaged in and can be used for online group projects - for OL, technological tools such as emails, video conferences, and online forums are expected to give the students control over their learning and lead them to be responsible for it.

4.6 Empowering online students

According to Klopfenstein (2003), online learners are empowered if they are reflective and self-motivated. This view highlights tutors’ roles in developing the ability of students to be reflective (see Section 3.1.1) and in evaluating

students' abilities to be self-motivated (see interview questions Appendix A-3). According to Horwath and Shardlow (2000), while an OL course may meet the needs of many learners, this is only really the case if it is used appropriately to empower the learner.

The following section discusses the word “appropriately” in this context based on the relevant literature on learning in an OL environment. This discussion entails considering the specific needs of those enrolling in an OL course and identifying approaches (section 3.2) in which their needs can be met through the creation of a positive learning experience, since it is a fundamental tenet of the educational experience to include all those who want to learn, and to provide opportunities for empowerment through education such that individuals are enabled to take effective decisions.

According to Richardson (2011), OL is not just a method or a series of methods, but denotes structures and practices that allow learners to exercise choice about how they learn, when they learn and where they learn, and thus to improve their chances of being successful in learning. Glasser, 2010, p.19 “Choice Theory" explains the objective behind giving students self-control, their motivation is the highest when one can make one’s own choices. Moreover, in education, student control can create an empowering learning environment (Glasser, 2010). Rowntree (1992) focuses on the teaching process itself and addresses the importance of employing the widest possible range of teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of the learner. According to Moore and Kearsley (2011), the use of independent and individualised learning methods, especially, promotes the provision of a wide range of learning opportunities and improves access to online learning resources, and therefore increases the chances of success. Their review suggests that OL is about creating learning opportunities for a broad range of people to enable them and to empower them in the learning process. Learning that is open provides opportunities for people from a wide range of backgrounds and lifestyles who make many different demands on the educational institutions that provide programmes of learning (Lombardi and Oblinger, 2007).

In summary, OL can empower learners. However, this empowerment will only occur if careful consideration is given to assessing the learning needs of the learner and deciding whether open learning is the most appropriate way of meeting those needs. Based on my experience, I suggest open learning can

empower learners who are self-reflective and self-motivated, and who are able to organise their own study strategy - as a start, anyone who can identify their learning needs to be able to organise these strategies. At this point, these requirements can be referred to SCL (see section 3.1) in that SCL can help to empower learners.

4.6.1 Students' control in OL

Diversity encompasses different elements, including but not restricted to "socio-economic, world-view, race, age, cultural, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities, cognitive abilities, life experiences, and developmental stage" (Haring-Smith, 2012, p.8). As a consultant specialising in OL, Kearsley (1986), using a pedagogical approach, stresses the importance of user control, stating that any OL course involving students with different backgrounds or ability levels requires individualised instruction tools, thus catering for different preferences and abilities in online students. Manktelow and Carlson (2013) confirm that, when tutors have information about their learners' preferences, they can make the most of their learning potential. Fröschl (2005) stresses the importance of gathering information about the user before proceeding with authoring any e-learning product, so as to meet the needs and preferences of online students. This knowledge of the learner is complemented by the tutor's need to know learners in order to enable them to present their lessons in a manner that suits all learning styles - Skvorak (2013) emphasises that the tutor's role has to start with knowing the learners.

The following section highlights two main requirements to empower learners in OL: the flexibility of online courses and the students' given control to pursue their learning. According to Rossett and Schafer (2003), online courses have the potential to offer a great deal of flexibility of pace and sequencing, where the user enjoys control of the programme. They point out that OL shifts control from the bureaucracy of the instructor to learner choice (Rossett and Schafer, 2003). Here student responsibility is highlighted, as online learners are committed to initiate and perform various tasks, such as the use of online reading resources, reviewing models, reflecting on exercises, and taking tests (for a discussion of other online teaching practices (see section 4.4.1). In order to perform these tasks, Muller, Farrell, Cebulka and Smith (1992) recommend integrating multimedia systems with OL which requires giving the user some

control over when and how information is presented so as to be able to practice a task. Here, note needs to be taken of concepts such as tutor-student trust and tutor-student relationship and responsibility (as discussed above).

On the other hand, Benyon *et al*. (1997) warn against this control, arguing that giving online students the control can lead the user to become overwhelmed, so that the course content would lose its coherence. Alexander (2014) similarly argues that the use of technology in OL can be overwhelming for learners. Online learners may feel uncomfortable and experience a loss of control with the boundless and flexible online environment. This idea needs to be discussed from two perspectives:

Firstly: there are learning approaches that can be implemented in OL which can help minimise learners' loss of control with the online material, such as PBL and ABL (see section 3.2.4 and 3.2.5). For example, a Wiki has embedded tools to facilitate and record a group's progress, record ideas that are generated, data that is acquired and learning issues that are pursued.

Secondly: by 2004, Web 2.0 had arrived, a term popularised by Tim O'Reilly for an internet which facilitated interactive information sharing, interoperability and user-centred design (O'reilly, 2005). Web 0.2 has paved the way for an informal approach in OL through collaboration and by placing the student at the centre of learning. Therefore, if in democratic education, both tutors and students work together democratically in active participation to create a positive environment Gribble (2005). Consequently, placing students at the centre of their learning cannot be implemented without empowering the learner. In the Egyptian context, Wardany (2009) explained the advantage of OL, as e-learning software can grant the online learner the autonomy to produce self-made content, and may thereby help e-learners to reinterpret and share more resources. On the other hand, there are concerns if online learners are left to their own devices in building their knowledge and also in the way in which they decide to negotiate and share such knowledge with other colleagues or online users (see section 3.1.7). Hence, Piave (2008) highlights the vital role of online tutors in managing and monitoring users' online contributions by denoting that the excess of freedom without previous full consciousness of informal learning implications can reduce individual performance.

In summary it can be said that e-learners should be given control over all elements of their OL product, i.e. control over time and pace of words, videos or graphics (Kearsley, 1986). The benefits of this freedom, as explained by Kruse (2004), are the ability to ease users' anxieties and to thereby maximise their self-confidence. Moreover, in relation to the Web2 technology, to empower online learners, the flexibility of online courses and the control given to students for their learning, are required.

Summary

According to the literature, tutors may find empowering learners a concern. For this reason, using the theory of empowerment as a theoretical framework for my study helps me in my Methodology chapter 5, to articulate the theoretical assumptions of the research study which force the researcher to address questions of why and how. Also, these theoretical assumptions provide guidance when conducting data collection and formulating questions for both interviews and focus group discussions. In my chapters, on Findings Chapter 6 and Discussion Chapter 7, the theoretical framework permits me as a researcher to transition from simply describing the observed tutors' perceptions of SCL to generalising insights about various aspects of that phenomenon. Finally, the Conclusion Chapter 8 highlights the implications of empowerment from previous chapters. The theory of empowerment can thus help me to investigate the significance of experience of OL tutors for SCL in the online learning environment.

Chapter 5: Methodology

5.1 Introduction

According to Wyk (2013), research design reflects the purpose of answering the research question(s) in a study; the main and subordinate research questions are in Section 1.6, which can be characterised as explorative, descriptive, explanatory, evaluative or historical. In this study, the purpose of answering my research questions is explanatory and descriptive. In detail, I (the researcher) investigate and explore the phenomenon as, according to Collis and Hussey (2003), the researcher explores a phenomenon when no data exists before and identifies the boundaries of the environment in which the research problem(s) reside. Meanwhile, I want to investigate and explain in depth this phenomenon as, according to WyK (2013), in descriptive research, the researcher provides an accurate and valid representation of the factors that are relevant to the research question. Applying these claims to my research, I explore tutors' understanding and awareness of student-centred learning (SCL) in OL, while investigating the elements and factors that are behind these perceptions.

5.2 Research Philosophy

Positivism is historically associated with August Comte, who is considered to be the founder of the doctrine of positivism. For Comte, the method of science based on experience and governed by observation and experiment is the method of arriving at knowledge (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2013). By considering Compte's philosophy, the following may be suggested:

1. Social observations should be treated as entities in much the same way as physical scientists treat physical phenomena;
2. The final outcome of social science should be formulated in the form of law, much like natural science, and subsequently,
3. Positivism adopts a quantitative method of research.

In light of the main research question of this study – which is "How do Egyptian tutors perceive SCL as an approach in the OL environment, and what factors influence this?" the main participants are online tutors, and they cannot be

observed in a laboratory environment like physical phenomena. Moreover, since my study investigates human beliefs and experiences, the research therefore cannot be conducted completely objective, fact-based, measurable and value-free. Therefore, I believe that my research philosophy is not positivistic.

In contrast, the interpretivist social researcher seeks to gain evidence through intuition, interpretation of emotions, and self-interpretations of reality as the subject sees it at that moment in time (Cohen *et al.* 2013). The interpretivist social sciences have roots within the work of Max Weber in the 19th century (Neuman, 2011). There were some early influential thinkers such as Weber who believed that there was a necessity to study human beings through different terms of reference to those used within the natural sciences. Weber believed that social science should strive to learn the personal reasoning that causes a person's behaviour and decision making (Neuman, 2011). Therefore, the purpose of social science, from an interpretivist perspective, is to develop an understanding of human behaviour and discover how people construct their own meanings and hence their own reality. The interpretive approach is firstly concerned with gaining an understanding as opposed to testing hypotheses and theories. Humans think and learn, have an awareness of themselves and their past, and possess motives and reasons (Neuman, 2011). Referring to Cohen *et al.* (2013) about positivism and Neuman (2011) about interpretivism, there is a sharp contrast between positivism and interpretivism, as the inference of values within human behaviour is central to the interpretivist perspective. Conversely, positivists believe that behaviour is probabilistic, and that laws can be identified for people within certain situations.

Concerning my study, reality is not objectively measured in the social world, but it is what people perceive. In detail, individuals in society have meaningful social actions and I am trying to interpret these social actions to find an answer for the research questions. In my research, I assess tutors' understanding and perceptions of SCL in OL as a concept, and investigate the affordances and constraints in its implementation. Since elements such as culture, behaviour and background mean different things to each person; an interpretive attitude of thinking which understands meaning and interaction between these elements is an appropriate philosophical perspective for this research.

5.3 Research Method

According to Creswell (2014) and Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), there are numerous different research designs that can be adopted for a qualitative methodology, such as action research, case study research, ethnography or grounded theory. To select the appropriate research design, Creswell (2014) suggests the use of exploratory verbs that convey the language of the emerging design – for example, in a qualitative case study, the questions may address a description of the case and the themes that emerge from studying it. Examples of such verbs are:

- Explore a process (i.e. in a case study)
- Report (or reflect) the stories (i.e. in a narrative research)
- Describe the essence of the experience (i.e. through phenomenology)
- Discover (i.e. in grounded theory)
- Seek to understand (i.e. in ethnography)

My main research question concerns investigating and exploring tutors' perceptions of SCL, their understanding and implementation of it. Consequently, a case study is the most appropriate research design to investigate practices of online tutors in OL and how to engage and communicate with online learners. The following section discusses several examples of how case studies can be used: Yin (2013) defines a case study; Stake (1995) explains how to implement a case study; Shanks (2002) and Yin (2013) focus on the benefits of a multiple case study; Yin (2013) highlights the design of a multiple case study.

5.3.1 What is a case study?

Yin (1994, p: 13) defines the research design of the case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used". Therefore, a multiple case study will be used in order to offer multiple perspectives on this research.

In the particular case of this research, there is a "real-life context" as the study explores online tutors' implementation of SCL in their real life teaching

practice. However, there is an issue with boundaries, as specified in the definition, since boundaries between SCL and the context are not clearly evident, for example tutors' understanding of the differences between SCL in OL and the face-to-face learning environment. My boundary in this example is an element such as:

According to Kearsley (1986), online tutors need to consider individualised instruction tools. These tools promote the provision of a wide range of learning opportunities and improve access to online learning resources. This element defines the boundary within which the theoretical framework applies – see chapter 4: theory of empowerment. According to Shanks (2002), defining the boundary of any theory used in the case study, provides clear and unambiguous definitions of the units and interactions when using this theory. Consequently, in my research, definitions such as: empowerment and control are clearly defined. My boundary is the understanding a specific group of HE online tutors in Northern Egypt have of students' empowerment and giving control to students in OL.

5.3.2 Benefits of a multiple case study in the research

According to Yin (2013), using a multiple case study as a research method enriches and thickens data description obtained through data collection methods and yields more robustness to the conclusions from the study. In detail, interviewing many persons about something, instead of one, increases the number of discussed topics within the boundary, thus saturating data. In this study, the multiple case study design was used to produce detailed descriptions of tutors' perceptions of SCL, extracting themes to order the data to earlier literature. Each case served to confirm or reject the conclusions drawn from the others. In this study, the multiple case study design was used to produce detailed descriptions of the phenomenon extracting themes to order the data and relate to earlier literature. Therefore, use of a multiple case study facilitates the opportunity to answer the research questions.

Yin (1994) emphasised another benefit of using a multiple case study in that it strengthens the results by replicating patterns thereby increasing the validity of the findings. When, saturation of data emerges, there is enough information to replicate the study and further coding is no longer necessary. Therefore, for

Yin (2013), a multiple case study is considered an external validation of the findings. Finally, data saturation can reconstruct a model of pedagogical repertoire that employs a wide range of pedagogical skills and knowledge as according to Shanks (2002), a multiple case study provides clear definitions of important concepts in the study.

5.3.3 Types of case studies: Exploratory, Explanatory and Descriptive

The following section differentiates the three main types of case study research: exploratory, explanatory and descriptive.

An exploratory case study is one which explores any phenomenon in the data which serves as a point of interest to the researcher. A researcher conducting an exploratory case study on an individual's studying process may ask general questions such as, "Are online students able to guide themselves in their online study or are they guided by their tutors ?" Such general questions are meant to open the door for further, more in-depth examination of the phenomenon observed. Explanatory case studies examine the data closely both at a surface and deep level in order to explain the phenomena in the data (Yin, 2003). For instance, a researcher may ask "How do students access computers on campus?"

A descriptive case study, on the other hand, sets out to describe the natural phenomena which occur within the data in question, for instance, "How are a face-to face environment and an online course different for SCL?" The goal set by the researcher is to describe the data as they occur.

In my view, in order to answer my research questions, the exploratory and descriptive dimensions of case studies have to be seen as a continuum, as I start with the exploration of a lived experience, before proceeding to a description and analysis of the experience.

With regard to this, it is important to highlight a challenge that may confront the researcher. According to Flyvbjerg (2006), in a case study, it is challenging to generalise from the evidence of a single case - see my earlier discussion of generalisation as a challenge for a qualitative study (section 5.5.3). However, Flyvbjerg (2006) makes the point that both human and natural sciences can be advanced by a single case, listing the experiments and experiences of famous

scientists and researchers such as Galileo, Newton, Einstein, Bohr, Darwin, Marx, and Freud as examples. He also argues that formal generalisations based on large samples are overrated in their contribution to scientific progress. Another affordance of the case study lies in the fact that it is most useful in the first phase of research to generate hypotheses (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

5.3.4 Design of a multiple case study

Stake (1995) explains the methodology of applying a case study in which the researcher explores a programme, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals in depth. In other words, the exploration and explanation of the phenomenon might not end with generating a hypothesis only, but extending to testing this hypothesis to be either confirmed or rejected. The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2013).

In my study, I explored SCL in depth, including the awareness, understanding and implementation of SCL among university online tutors. Challenges, concerns and limitations of SCL implementation such as tutor-student relationship and student trust, have been emphasised. According to Creswell (2014), when using a multiple case study, a detailed description of each case and themes within the case has to be provided, called a "within-case analysis". The within-case analysis is followed by a thematic analysis across the cases, called a "cross – case analysis". In my research the two steps were followed - see Appendix C-1-2 (an example of within-case analysis is illustrated in steps 4 and 5. An example of cross – case analysis is illustrated in steps 6 and 7). The challenge of complexity in designing a multiple case study is highlighted by Yin (1994). In my research, the complexity was in the cross-case analysis to end up with super themes in the study. However, a multiple case study permits production of rich guides for developing reliable models. Accordingly, the use of a multiple case design in my research developed two models of analysis:

- Model of Discussion framework, extracted from Findings that explains the elements of tutors' perceptions of SCL (figure 6-19).
- Developed model of the pedagogical repertoire of Turner-Bisset (figure 7-5).

5.4 Research Approaches

The approach to my research starts with data collected from the online tutors in order to answer the research questions. After the data collection process, I (the researcher) used the data to build-up a pattern to justify the data that is collected from the tutors explaining their understanding and expectations about SCL. The researcher then formed a tentative hypothesis about the analysed data. Finally, the study concluded with a model/framework to explain the reasons behind these perceptions. This approach is known as the 'inductive approach', which, according to Shrestha (2009), starts by collecting data from participants by observation or interviews, moves to identifying patterns, and then progresses through to generalisation, finally ending up with theory. Moreover, according to Burney (2008), the inductive approach is usually associated with a qualitative methodology, as an appropriate research structure to delve into the human experience and end with a pattern or theory. A comparison is illustrated between the inductive approach, which is my research approach, compared with the deductive approach, in the following diagram (Figure 5-1).

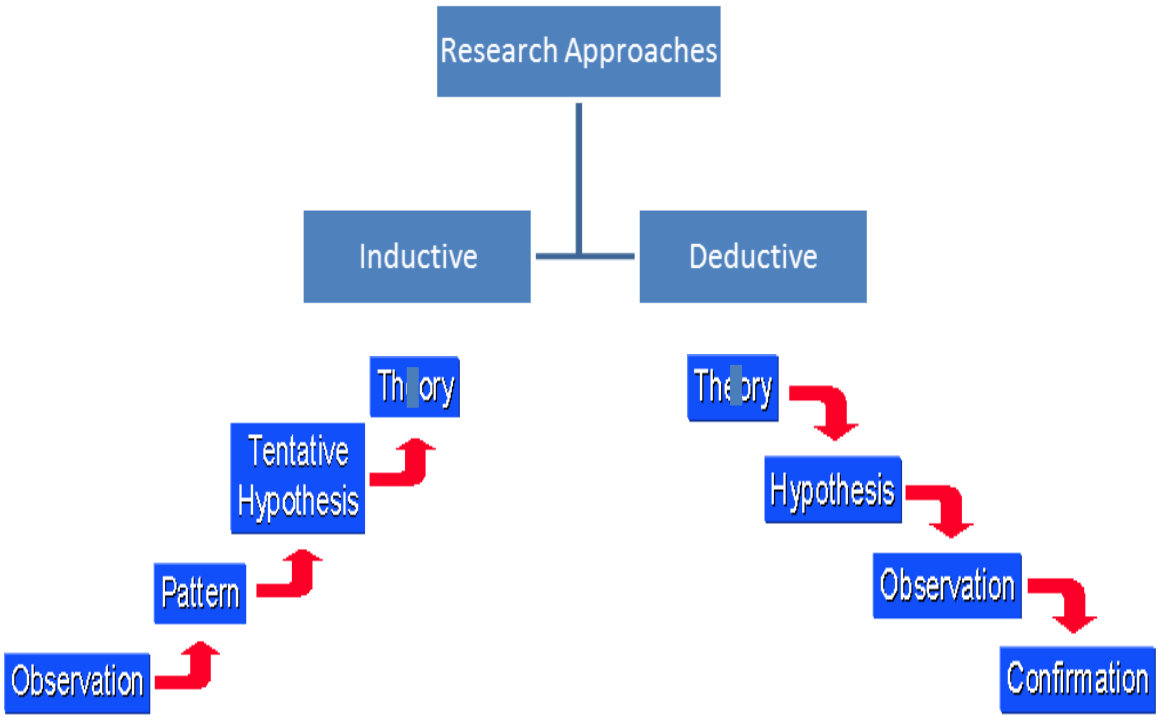


Figure 5-1: Comparison between deduction and induction research approach (adapted from Trochim, 2006)

In the above diagram, I modified Trochim's original diagram, joined the inductive and deductive research approaches in one diagram and labelled them to facilitate the comparison between them. The deductive approach is the reverse process of the inductive approach. The deductive approach assumes that there is a hypothesis or theory as a starting base. For example, if there was a tentative hypothesis of acceptance, rejection or resistance towards SCL by online tutors, the data collected would work to reject or confirm this hypothesis. However, considering the main research question of my study, this approach would not result in an answer to the question of how online tutors perceive SCL. A deductive approach could give an answer for a different research question such as: "Do online tutors accept or reject SCL?", but since this is not the case, an inductive approach is more appropriate to answer my research question.

5.5 Research Methodology

5.5.1 Qualitative Methodology

As mentioned previously, this study is exploratory and descriptive, aiming to study tutors' description, understanding, reflection and interpretation of SCL in online courses. Therefore, the research method is mainly qualitative. The following section highlights three main reasons behind the use of a qualitative methodology in the research design. Firstly, is the suitability of a qualitative methodology in interpreting human experience in general. Secondly, is the appropriateness of a qualitative methodology to answer the research question(s) in my study specifically. Thirdly, is the flexibility of a qualitative methodology, as a research method, in answering research question(s). It should be noted that flexibility in the qualitative methodology is discussed twice in this chapter, once as an advantage in the following section, and then as a disadvantage in a later section. Fourthly, is the time limitation in conducting this research and answering the research question.

This study explores, in detail, data regarding online tutors' perceptions about SCL, including their opinions, beliefs and social contexts. Accordingly, the selected method of a study should uncover and identify patterns or theories which highlight the explored phenomenon which is SCL. Bryman (2012) suggested that a qualitative methodology is a means of enquiry to comprehend what people feel, do and say. It can be presumed that there is no current theory which explains SCL. I am currently investigating tutors’ perceptions of SCL to discover whether they accept, reject, or resist SCL, or are maybe unaware of it, and therefore the theory might still be under development. Consequently a qualitative methodology is appropriate to answer the research questions of this study, as it delves inside the human experience by collecting and interpreting data to construct a theory.

The second reason for selecting a qualitative methodology is related to the main research question in this research. According to Klenke (2008) and Creswell (2012), the selection of the research approach is based on the researcher's understanding and identification of the main research questions. Therefore, fundamental questions that begin with the question word 'how', which is the main research question in my study, lend themselves to a

qualitative methodology. In my view, a qualitative methodology is appropriate to answer a research question(s) exploring human experience because social science research relates to human belief and behaviour.

The third reason for selecting a qualitative methodology is its flexibility. According to Creswell (2012), in studies exploring the human experience, a flexible method is required. The flexibility can help the researcher to tailor the research question(s) to the specific field of study. Additionally, data collection and analysis can be continually adjusted to the emerging findings. This flexibility typically exists in qualitative methodologies. According to Ospina (2004) and Bryman (2012), when exploring social phenomena using qualitative methodology, the researcher can change the design of the whole research to match the dynamics of the evolving research process. For example, as a researcher conducting interviews and moderating focus groups, I am always prepared to engage with and respond to issues in my field research, whenever the occasion should arise. For example, I may change the order of the interview questions, or guide the conversation in a focus group if the participants wander too far off topic or take too much time with their responses. Conversely, if I am conducting a survey, it is not easy to do this alteration in the same manner.

A final reason for using only qualitative methodology for my research, without combining it with any other method, is the time limitation. According to Creswell (2012), the collection and analysis of qualitative data often requires more time than that needed for quantitative data. Specifically, the data collection instruments in my research are semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Each interview was scheduled to take between 40 minutes and one and a half hours. The time allocated for each focus group was approximately the same, between 45 and 90 minutes for each group. The total number of participants, in both interviews and focus groups, was expected to be between 20-25 participants. According to Cohen *et al.* (2013), a sample size of thirty individuals is considered to be the minimum number of cases. The number of participants in each focus group is between five and six. Moreover, more time is needed to do many tasks such as: gaining the approval from the official bodies to conduct the research; meeting participants; data collection; and data analysis. Consequently, considering the advantages of qualitative methodology regarding my study and the allocated time to conduct the research, I suggest

that only using qualitative data collection as a research methodology is appropriate for this study.

5.5.2 Why a Quantitative Methodology Is Not Used

According to Cohen *et al*. (2013) and Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salib and Rupert (2007), a quantitative research approach has various limitations, one being its rigid nature. Since it often generates absolute results, it sometimes fails to accommodate other aspects of uncertainty associated with describing human nature. Moreover, in quantitative approaches, questions are usually closed-ended making unscheduled responses impossible. Therefore, the selection of a quantitative methodology may imply that the research design would become a rigid standard format and all hypotheses expected to generate statistically provable elements (Punch and Punch, 2009).

Considering one of the research questions in my study; How do tutors consider the differences between the SCL model in OL, compared with the face-to face learning environment? The answer is linked to radical social and cultural perspectives; consequently:

- Participants answered the question(s) in accordance with social expectations;
- There was a great diversity in responses among participants, as it is based on various beliefs and background;
- There were diverse interpretations of the same question.

In a quantitative methodology, which is based on a previously determined hypothesis, the research reveals only what is assumed and looked-for in advance. Consequently, there is no possibility of diversity of responses and question modification, and using a quantitative methodology may give inefficient answers in social and humanistic fields of study. The reason given by Janicijevic (2011) is that a quantitative methodology looks at a narrow scope, focusing on a small number of elements which are based on the hypothesis tested.

The second limitation of quantitative methodology concerns its nature - it is derived from the physical objective environment, and looks at structured data

for statistical analysis (Driscoll *et al.* 2007). In my research, data are collected via interviews and focus groups. According to Driscoll *et al*. (2007), verbal data that are collected in interviews are unstructured. Therefore, these data require analysing, coding and deep interpretation of the interaction between different topics and themes within the collected data.

In summary, using a quantitative methodology would most likely give a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer to my research question(s). This kind of answer loses the depth of the interaction inside the person between values, beliefs and knowledge and the interactions between the participants themselves. Therefore, a qualitative methodology is the most appropriate approach to conduct this study, as it gives me explained details about how tutors perceive SCL, either positively or negatively, and the underlying interpersonal assumptions behind this perception.

5.5.3 Limitations of a Qualitative Methodology

Three main limitations of the qualitative methodology are highlighted in the following section; firstly, its ability to be generalised for a wide scale of people in a community; secondly, its flexibility. While in a previous section (see Section 5.5.1), the flexibility of a qualitative methodology is discussed as an advantage, in this section its drawbacks are highlighted. Thirdly, bias as tendency which may prevent unprejudiced consideration of an answer of a question.

Qualitative research has been criticised by the degree to which the findings can be generalised from the study sample to the entire population (Polit and Hungler, 1991). According to Becker (1993), research results are not expected to be based on just sampling of some defined population to which the results can be extended, but on the development of a theory that can be extended to other cases in the same community or other communities. Therefore, qualitative methodology results are suggested to lead to similarity of dynamics and constraints to other situations and universality of the studied phenomenon. In this regard, qualitative methodology general characteristics remain poorly understood and consequently its potential concluded results are not fully developed (Sandelowski, 1986). In my study, the research findings are expected to be transferable to another area in the community which has similar social and cultural conditions. For example, according to UNESCO

(2012), in Egypt, there are similarities between different urban areas regarding social and cultural beliefs, education opportunities and illiteracy percentages. Conversely, in rural areas, there are different socio-cultural beliefs, the illiteracy percentage is higher, and education opportunities especially for girls are less. Therefore, it is expected that the results of my research study can be applied in Egyptian communities that have similar social, economic conditions and geographical locations.

Another limitation in qualitative methodology is pointed out by Driscoll *et al.* (2007) who claimed the flexibility of qualitative methodology may not be effectively used by the researcher, since semi- structured interviews and focus groups are flexible in posing questions and getting responses (Cohen *et al.* 2013). Researchers may also be viewed as intruders in the participants' privacy. Moreover, the presence of the researcher in these settings may elicit bias in the participants' responses.

Final limitation, to minimise the risk of researcher bias in my study, as a researcher, I needed to think of the social processes that keep research honest and enhance its fairness. According to Rajendran (2001), a method to minimise bias is to record detailed field notes which include participants' reflections, and which do not rely on the researcher's self-criticism and judgement. Another method to confirm the dependability and authenticity of study is to provide an explanation of how categories, sub-categories and themes are created in the organisation phase (Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, Utriainen and Kyngas, 2014). For this reason, in order to minimise the researcher's bias, I followed an IPA (Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis) model, in the initial data analysis phase, that is developed by Smith *et al*. (2010) (See Appendix C.1.1). Then, I developed Smith's *et al*. (2010) model (See Appendix C.1.2). More details about data analysis are in Section 5.9. In my view, IPA can help to minimise researchers' bias, as this analysis entails reading and re-reading the data collected with more in-depth analysis in order to link and combine it, ending with categorising these data.

5.6 Access and Setting

Sherman and Webb (1988, p. 5) stated that "The aim of qualitative research is not verification of a predetermined idea, but discovery that leads to new

insights, with a focus on the natural setting". Similarly Creswell (2012) explains that to answer the research questions qualitatively through understanding a social or human problem, one of the main features is that the research is conducted in a natural setting, where participants can practice their daily life, related to SCL as it is the studied phenomenon. Therefore, for this study, I met the participants and used the data collection methods (one-to-one interviews and focus groups) on the university campus where tutors teach their students. The setting for focus group work and interviews was expected to be in one of the tutor's offices. This relatively quiet and private environment can minimise participants' distraction to conduct the interviews and focus groups. Moreover, a tutor's room is the participants' daily working environment; it provides a natural setting with all the essentials that they may need to teach students such as computers, books etc.

5.7 Sampling Participants

5.7.1 Purposive Homogenous Sampling

According to Mack (2005), the three most common sampling methods used in qualitative research are:

- quota sampling, where a population is first segmented into mutually exclusive sub-groups, just as in stratified sampling, and then judgment is used to select the subjects or units from each segment based on a specified proportion.
- snowball sampling, where the researcher collects data on a few members of the target population he or she can locate, and these individuals are then asked to provide information needed to locate other members of that population.
- purposive sampling, where the researcher uses their expert judgment to select participants that are representative of the population. Kerlinger (2000) explains purposive sampling as another type of non-probability sampling, which is characterised by the use of judgment and a deliberate effort to obtain representative samples by including typical areas or groups in the sample. The latter characteristic may lead to researcher's bias (see below for a discussion of this as one of the disadvantages of the method). To apply purposive sampling, the researcher first needs to consider any factors that might influence the population, such as economic status, intelligence, access to education etc.

Then, the researcher purposefully selects a sample that adequately represents the target population on the basis of these variables.
For my research I selected purposive sampling as the most appropriate method for sampling participants, since I focus on the particular characteristics of a population (HE tutors), namely that of interest in and experience of OL, the presence of which best enables me to answer my research questions.
According to Guetterman (2015), there are six different types of purposive sampling, namely

1. Maximal Variation Sampling
2. Typical Sampling
3. Theory or Concept Sampling
4. Homogeneous Sampling
5. Critical Sampling
6. Opportunistic Sampling

The type of purposive sampling selected for my research is that of homogeneous sampling, where certain locations or people are selected because they possess similar characteristics. According to Guetterman (2015), in this strategy the individuals or locations that possess the desired similar characteristics need to be identified by the researcher - for the purposes of this research, the desired individuals' characteristic was that of being online HE teachers practicing and having experience of online teaching in HE, and the location was the Egyptian HE environment.

5.7.1.1 Challenges to Purposive Sampling

The above definition of purposive sampling highlights the fact that the main point of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth analysis related to the central issues being studied, which, according to Kerlinger (2000), may lead to researcher bias. Consequently, Dudovskiy (2016) adds a low level of reliability as another of the disadvantages of purposive sampling. Consequently, to overcome the aforementioned challenge of purposive sampling, validity in this research is based on three main approaches: participants' selection strategy; accessibility to segments of data; and debriefing (see section 5.10.1). Also, saturation of data can demonstrate trustworthiness at the point of cessation collecting information is reached and the researcher starts analysing the collected data. For this reason, researchers

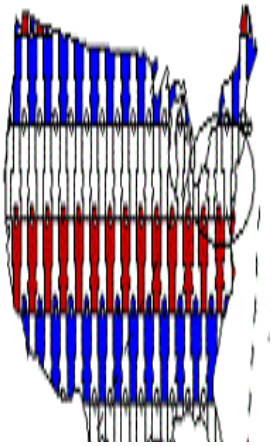
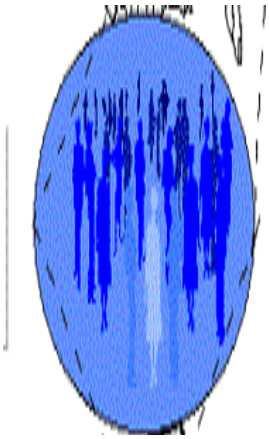
need to strive to make decisions based on accepted criteria, not on what will best support their theory.

5.7.1.2 Advantages of Purposive Sampling

According to Guetterman (2015), purposive sampling with its several different types (such as homogenous sampling, expert sampling, critical case sampling etc.) supports a wide range of techniques. Mack (2005) highlights that qualitative research usually involves a number of different phases. Each phase is building progressively onwards from the first, and explains that these various phases in qualitative research increase the richness and depth of data. For this reason, in this research, I first use typical sampling, which studies a person or a site that is "typical" to those unfamiliar with the situation – a researcher can select a typical sample by collecting demographic data or survey data about all cases. In addition I later use homogeneous sampling, selecting, as explained earlier, certain sites or people because they possess similar characteristics. Data saturation can be added as an advantage of purposive sampling, as it tends to redundancy of new data (Grady, 1998), because no new Insights about the phenomenon/theoretical category are found.

5.7.2 Sampling Steps

According to Elo *et al*. (2014), the research sample has to comprise participants who best represent or have knowledge of the research topic. For my study, this means participants who are HE tutors using e-learning exclusively as a learning environment to deliver the curriculum to their students. To answer my research questions I follow Trochim (2006), who defines four main steps in sampling participants, moving from theoretical population to study population to sampling frame and finally to the sample. The following diagram illustrates the way I have adopted these steps within my study (see Figure 5-2).

Process	Question		Sampling
Theoretical population	Who do you want to generalise to?		Online learning in Egyptian Higher Education
Study population	What population can you get access to?		University tutors who have experience in online learning in Egypt
Sampling frame	How can you get access to them?		By answering the following questions 1-What universities in Egypt deliver online courses? 2-What are the formal procedures that need to be followed in order to get in contact with staff members that deliver these courses?

The sample	Who is in your study?		Tutors who deliver online courses in the Egyptian universities that accredit online courses

Figure 5-2: Sampling terminology, adapted from Trochim (2006)

After designing the methodology for sampling participants, but before actually applying it, the first question that needed to be answered was: "What universities in Egypt offer e-learning courses as a learning environment?" Based on a search in the Supreme Council of Universities (2014) and The National E-Learning Centre (NELC) (2013), it emerged that there is only one single university in Egypt that offers e-learning courses as a learning environment; the Egyptian E-Learning University (EELU) offers long distance education through 24-hour online learning with a vision to be a leading university providing e-learning regionally, nationally, and internationally. Other universities in Egypt offer e-learning courses, though only as a part of the course program. A list of such universities was obtained through reference to the NELC, a building block within the Higher Education Information Centre aimed at promoting and supporting the development of e-learning in Egypt by improving the development of the learning content. The NELC has devised a strategic plan that aims to develop a robust infrastructure at each of the public universities, and has succeeded in establishing e-learning centres at 17 Egyptian universities. These centres are able to develop pedagogically sound e-courses that fully utilise the potential of ICT in an interactive way. Each is staffed by a centre director, instructional designer, e-content developers, graphics designers and subject-matter experts. The NELC monitors the progress of the university centres and develops national standards. The university centres are networked within the NELC through the Egyptian Universities Network (EUN) (Khouly, 2010).

Consequently; the sampling frame for my study was a list of 18 universities:

- 1 purely online university (EELU)

●17 universities that deliver online courses, based on the list of universities for which the NELC developed a robust infrastructure, and whose e-learning systems to deliver online courses are affiliated to the NELC.

After obtaining the list of universities, I emailed the head offices for each online course in these universities to explain my research and enquire about the possibility of conducting research with their online tutors. I received positive replies from only four universities, two of which were then able to accept the proposed timeframe in which to collect the data, while the other two asked to reschedule data collection for a few months later after half term examinations. Because of the alignment of research timeframe, an agreement for data collection was made with faculties from the first two universities. The first faculty is part of the University of Tanta, a city in the North of Egypt. This Faculty has established a department of "Instructional Technology" to educate tutors on how to teach in a virtual learning environment with the ability to communicate with students verbally and visually using online technology. The second faculty is part of the University of Cairo, the capital city of Egypt. The faculty's learning environment is online only for all disciplines.

For the purpose of this thesis, 20 participants (online tutors) were selected from the two faculties as interviewees for both individual interviews and for four focus groups of four to six participants each. The recruitment of the participants was conducted using the following steps:

1. Application for and grant of ethical approval from the home university (March 2014) (See Appendix F).
2. According to the procedures in Egypt to collect data from an educational institution, prior to data collection, a face-to-face meeting with the head of each faculty was held to explain the research and answer all potential questions regarding the data collection process (April 2014 and August 2014).
3. After these meetings, each faculty in turn sent back a list of 10 e-mail addresses of online tutors for contacting. These tutors agreed to take part in the individual interviews and focus groups.
4. The tutors were contacted by me, individually, by email to arrange for a mutually convenient date and time for the individual interviews and focus groups.

5.8 Data Collection

The instruments used for collecting data in this study consist of focus groups, followed by semi-structured interviews.

5.8.1 Focus Groups

According to Morgan (1997), focus groups typically emphasise the interpersonal relationships between participants when they discuss a specific theme or topic. This is typical of what is required in this study – to show how tutors respond to each other's views regarding their perception of SCL, and to establish a viewpoint of the interaction. Bryman (2012) adds to the advantages of using a focus group by explaining that this friendly discussion between groups of people, who are sharing certain experiences, which is online teaching in my study, can evolve new concepts for the research issue.

Therefore, the interaction between participants can encourage them to be responsive, enriches the quality of the data collected, which may generate new ideas or findings within the research.

As discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.6), online education is still in its infancy and its methods not yet standardised. Consequently, online tutors might implement, in their online teaching practices, different plans and techniques. The focus group interviews with these tutors highlight these techniques and plans as they are shared and discussed.

5.8.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Generally, the main reason for using individualised interviews in this study is that the number of participants is relatively small (Punch and Punch, 2009). Another important reason for using semi-structured interviews is that they provide flexible, spontaneous, explicit and immediate responses (Flick, 2006). In this study, there is a need to explain the participants' (tutors') values, beliefs and perceptions towards SCL in-depth and attempt to reveal any hidden agenda in this regard. It is worth mentioning that observation as a tool for data collection is not suggested to be an appropriate method in this study. The reason for this is that the area this study focuses on is the OL environment, where tutors are likely to prepare their work in advance rather than in real time when interacting with their students. In addition, this study focuses on ideas,

beliefs and expectations which are not likely to be observable as a daily practice in individuals.

5.8.3 What did the use of focus group add to the study that is different from one-to-one interviews?

5.8.3.1 Background to focus group research in the Middle East

Focus groups (FGs) have been successfully used as a data collection technique in qualitative research in Western communities for a long time, but have been used only in a limited way in the Middle East. The literature proposes numerous reasons for this limited use in the Middle East (Winslow, Humein and Elzubair, 2002). One reason for the limited use of FGs the difficulty of discussing critical topics related to religious practices or social and political issues (Kulwici, 1996). Another proposed reason is the novelty of using this data collection tool regarding the researcher experience and competence (Thomas, 2008). Referring to my experience in the pilot study of this study, I would add that the interviewees' limited knowledge of a focus group is another reason for its limited use.

Due to this limited use and thus limited familiarity with focus groups, there are two challenges in this research that need to be considered: firstly, the researcher's skills and competence in moderating FGs, and secondly the participants' (interviewees') knowledge about FGs, and the difference between FGs and one-to-one interviews.

According to Thomas (2008), focus groups allow for 'breathing space' for the cultural values and behaviours of the research subjects. FGs emphasise participation, supportive environments, the interaction between group members, and the interaction between researcher (as participant) and group members in a reasonably naturalistic setting, allowing for empathetic collection of deep data from the local context. In the Middle East in particular, FG characteristics align broadly with key cultural characteristics of the Arab culture such as in-group membership, consultation, consensus within a setting, harmony and communication style. Thus there is a strong support for the use of focus groups not just within a Gulf-Arab setting, but across wider Arab contexts and possibly other cultures that share similar collective traits (Winslow, *et al*. 2002). Thomas (2008) highlights the importance of a properly

trained and experienced focus group researcher, moderator and facilitator for the use of FGs in a Middle Eastern culture. It is preferable that the researchers themselves should belong to this culture so as to be able to gather deep and meaningful data and triangulate that data with other research methods.

According to Creswell (2014), the main aim of the FG, as a research technique, is to observe the interaction between participants. It is thus a useful tool for interviewing.

During my research I have observed such interaction in two different situations. Firstly, in the highlighting of contrasting ideas, the argument among the members of the FG underlined a contrasting view, for example between a tutor who supported the view that girls were able to manage their time better than boys, and a tutor who argued against this and requested evidence for this assertion from the first tutor (see Appendix G.1). Such a discussion was common between the members of a focus group, and it seems clear that if this topic was discussed in one-to-one interviews, such contrasting views would not have been revealed.

The second situation concerns the issue of collective remembering and building up ideas, for example, when online tutors each explained what they experienced in the CPD courses they had attended, and where, then, based on what had been mentioned, the whole group compiled a list of challenges to and prerequisites of CPD (see Appendix G.1).

This issue of collective remembering is discussed by Kitzinger (1994), who explores how people talked about AIDS by using participants who know each other, and through this is able to observe interactions as “naturally occurring data” (Kitzinger, 1994: 105).

In conclusion, there are numerous advantages in the use of focus groups because participants can build upon ideas, new perspectives can be brought in, and participants are more likely to be truthful in their responses as opposed to other research methods, which is useful for the moderator and thus a useful tool of research in the social sciences. However, there are two main considerations that need to be taken into account when using FGs in any research in the Middle East, especially if the research concerns cultural, social or religious topics: firstly, the researcher’s own skills and competence; and secondly the need to explain the method used in-depth to the participants,

since FGs as a method may not be familiar to them and the process unclear (Winslow *et al*. 2002).

The following section discusses the three main reasons that justify the use of focus groups as a data collection tool for qualitative data in the Egyptian context.

5.8.3.2 Reasons for using focus groups in additions to one- to- one interviews

5.8.3.2.1 Impact of the 2011 Arab Storm on the Egyptian youth for expressing views

Eldawdi (2012) describes the cognitive and social changes that happened after the so-called Arab Spring in 2011, and explains that ways of thinking and reflecting among Egyptian youth (whether male or female) have changed dramatically after this political event. In general Egyptian youth, started to speak out more loudly about what they need and think about the social, economic and political aspects of their life – they discussed, shared ideas, and managed conflicts. Eldawdi (2012) discusses the consequences of this cognitive change in Egyptian youth mainly with respect to their political and their academic practices.

With respect to the political, the Egyptian revolution influenced youth in the definition of democratic dialogue, which was not known to them before. The basic principles of the Egyptian revolution, seeking "freedom, dignity and social justice", helped them to identify their rights, and how to claim them in a democratic and peaceful atmosphere.

In terms of the academic, the Arab Spring has altered the dynamics of the Arab world and education has been at the heart of the reform spirit of the Arab Spring (Mohamed. *et al* 2016). In detail, the Egyptian revolution affected university youth in the formation of protest movements critiquing the current situation in HE in terms of curriculum, teaching methods, and quality of teaching staff. It is worth noting that these appeals were made in a democratic discussion, where people listened to each other's opinions, shared and reflected peacefully. Eldawdi (2012) confirms that this sort of democratic discussion did not happen in Egyptian universities before 2011.

Farag (2013) claims that the age groups most affected, and most influenced in the way of thinking and reflecting, through the Arab Spring, are the youth segment, to such an extent that before the Egyptian revolution young people were caught up in a negative trend of dependency, and of not wanting to participate in political and social integration. Noticeably, after the Egyptian revolution, the interaction between male and female young people was rather increased. Moreover, there was evidence of good interaction and listening through the work of brainstorming and dialogue, discussion and debate on every conceivable subject. For example, in a focus group discussion in Appendix G.1, a debate between interviewees, men and women, is about whether time-management is a gender-based issue.

5.8.3.2.2 Successful results from other research studies in the Middle East which have used focus groups

According to Winslow *et al*. (2002), particularly in a Middle Eastern culture, FGs can evoke a much higher level of openness and spontaneity from members, providing valuable data not accessible in one-to-one interviews. Women are interested especially in participating in a process that might improve their lives, and are willing to answer questions, discuss topics and explore ideas with other members in the focus group. This point made by Winslow *et al*. (2002) was confirmed for me during my research in an instance of discussion in FG1, in a question about giving control to online students, where the argument came to a point where this was identified as a gender-based view (example explained above in section- 5.8.3.1 Background of focus group research in the Middle East).

On the other hand, Kulwici (1996) explains that sensitive topics for an Arab community, for example any that discuss values regarding honour and shame, can act as barriers to interaction in a discussion. Winslow *et al*. (2002) propose that this is because FG members are not familiar with the approach. For example, in Appendix G.1, there are two examples that highlight how group discussion can enrich the outcome of FG, as follows:

- Example1: discussion about educational websites that can teach online students by attending a virtual lab. In this discussion, interviewees shared their knowledge and experience about virtual labs in different

subjects and the financial limitations that can hinder the benefits of these labs.

- Example2: discussion about the reasons behind tutors' attendance at professional training courses. By the end of the discussion, tutors concluded the need for an evaluation/ assessment to assess tutor's knowledge gained after attending the course.

5.8.3.2.3 Experience gained from the pilot study

With reference to the importance of the researcher's skills in moderating FGs in the Middle East (as discussed above), as well as the importance of understanding the culture in which the research is conducted (see section 5.12.1.9), a pilot study helped to gain some experience of conducting FGs in the Egyptian context. During this pilot study, several issues were highlighted:

- The importance of checking the participants' awareness of instruments used for collecting data (i.e. focus group discussions – see section 5.12.1.9.

- The use of probing questions: to clarify the questions, each one is followed by a simple example explaining it and clarifying the meaning (see section 5.12.2.2).

- Possible challenges of the pilot study (see section 5.12.1).

In summary, the stimulus of group discussion provides insights, ideas, and data. In the Middle Eastern culture, the use of FGs can be challenging because of the novelty of discussing issues that have cultural and/or social aspects in a group. However, with well-trained researchers and the evolving awareness of democratic dialogue that emerged after the Arabic revolution, using FGs in the Middle East can emphasise participation, supportive environments, and interaction between group members (see section 5.12.1.9 about the final recommendations for my main study as a reflection after the pilot study).

5.8.4 Focus group precedes interview

There are two reasons behind conducting the focus group before the individual interview. Referring to the initial reasons for selecting the focus group of facilitating gathering information from a cross-section of the participants' community and getting multiple points of view at one time, brainstorming and

interaction between interviewees are useful where one person may say something that sparks an idea in another member of the group.

Regarding one-to-one interviews as a tool for collecting data, an interview offers the possibility of getting a lot of depth from one person, if he/she is knowledgeable about a specific topic. Furthermore, one-to-one interviews generate insights based on the types of personal perspectives, stories and experiences that are unlikely to be shared in a group discussion.

The first reason behind planning for the focus groups to precede one-to-one interviews is that, from my experience in the pilot study, focus group allows for group participation, brainstorming, and generating new ideas through active discussion. These produced insights, can help me when conducting the semi-structured interview in preparing further questions. For example, one of the tutors in the focus group completely disagreed with the freedom for a learner in OL, and gave the percentage of blended learning of OL and face-to-face as 1:9 respectively. Accordingly, when I was interviewing this tutor, I was keen to investigate the reasons behind this selected ratio, where the tutor explained the fears and concerns regarding giving freedom to learners in OL.

The second reason is that, if the interview preceded the focus group where the interviewee would go in-depth into one of the topics, then, in the focus group, when he/she will be asked to talk about this topic again, speakers and audience may lose their interest in this repeated topic. Consequently, it may decrease the expected brainstorming and interaction of discussion in the focus group between the participants. This losing of interest is explained in a phenomenon known as “semantic satiation”. This psychological phenomenon investigates the temporary influence that may be caused by the repetition of a word or phrase. According to Jakobovits and Lambert (1962) this repetition may lead to loss of meaning and interest for the listener. Furthermore, according to this order, it may be useful for the researcher to observe the participants from the beginning of the session to allow the less confident participants a voice and give them equal participation in all interviews.

5.9 Data Analysis

5.9.1 Analysing Verbal Data in Interviews and Focus Group

The selected approach to analyse the collected data is known as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). According to Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2010), IPA is an approach to analyse data in qualitative research with an idiographic focus, which means it involves the study of individuals. In more detail, IPA tries to locate the universal nature of an experience. It identifies the shared experience among various individuals experiencing shared phenomena, locates the essence of an experience, what was experienced and how it was experienced. Overall, IPA procedures help the researcher to stay close to the data collected in order to focus on the unique characteristics of each individual participant. Moreover, IPA procedures help to develop codes and themes that are based on the actual data item. According to Ratcliff (1995) and Elo *et al*. (2014), for the researcher, staying close to the data can help to increase the reliability. That is evident when following IPA procedures as the researcher has to listen to the audio recordings many times to ensure transcription is accurate and to extract the emergent and superordinate themes. According to Smith *et al.* (2010), emergent themes are noted on the data items, while, superordinate themes are developed from the emergent themes.

The reason behind my selection of this approach was that, according to Smith *et al*. (2010), IPA can be conducted if:

- The research method is case study, where the researcher is attempting to investigate a phenomenon (SCL) within its real-life context (implemented by online tutors);
- Research questions are about people's experiences and perspectives;
- Data are collected via qualitative interviews;
- The sample of respondents is small and homogenous with the idiographic focus.

Therefore, I found that the main criteria for the selection of this approach fit easily with my research.

According to Bailey (2011), the use of IPA as a research tool is still in its infancy within the field of education. The reason behind this can be referred to the disadvantages that are associated with IPA. According to Braun and Clarke

(2006), IPA has two main drawbacks: complexity and inflexibility, as it is overly structured. Regarding IPA complexity, the challenge is when the researcher develops two levels of themes, emergent and superordinate, that may lead to multi-directions of themes which can be a real challenge for novice researchers to group all these themes to include major themes and sub-themes. In the author's view, analysing qualitative data using IPA ends with a framework or model that can be viewed as a theoretically informed framework for how the research was conducted. That may reduce its complexity through following this framework. Secondly, this framework can be replicated in similar research. According to Smith *et al.* (2010), IPA attempts to ensure reliability and validity through largely standardised data collection procedures, documenting, transcription and interpretation to ensure the transparency and coherence of the study. Hence, that enhances the study trustworthiness, as according to Bassey (1999) trustworthiness can be considered to be a measure of validity.

For my research, initially, I had a plan to use the model that is developed by Smith *et al.* (2010) (See Appendix C.1.1). This model provides a comprehensive overview of the philosophical underpinnings of IPA. The model entails the following steps:

1. Transcription
2. Reading and Re-reading the transcription
3. Initial Noting
4. Developing Emergent Themes
5. Searching for Connections Across Emergent Themes

After data collection, I developed Smith's *et al.* (2010) model to entail the following steps:

1. Transcription
2. Reading and Re-reading the transcription
3. Initial coding: by copying meaningful statements of the transcript where large quantities of qualitative data are focused and labelled.
4. Focused coding: where categories are developed to re-examine the initial coding and focus deeper on the data.
5. Summarising the focused coding for each page
6. Main categories and sub categories emerge.

7. Super themes are extracted. (For more details, see Appendix C.1.2)

Noticeably, within data analysis using IPA, in some cases, after I got to the last step to assess whether the themes are supported by sufficient evidence in the participants' actual discourse, I had to go back to the first step to re-analyse it again if there was lack of evidence. In my view, this feedback process acknowledges that data interpretation can be highly subjective and interpretations are evidenced and grounded in raw data.

5.9.2 Non-Verbal Data

To minimise the risk of researcher bias in my study I needed to think of the social processes that keep research honest and enhance its fairness. According to Rajendran (2001), a method to minimise bias is to record detailed field notes which include participants' reflection, and which do not rely on the researcher's judgement. Consequently, with analysing verbal data via interviews and focus groups, I planned to analyse non-verbal data, based on the audio and video recordings of these interviews and focus groups. Another cultural reason for analysing the non-verbal data in this study refers to the context of the research. In detail, my research data are collected from Egypt, one of the Arab countries, and according to the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (2006), non-verbal language includes: body language; gestures; and voice tones which in Arab countries, are distinctly different from Western culture and must be learned in order to effectively reinforce the intended message. This is confirmed by Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran (2009), who explain that interpreting only the text can be extremely problematic. Specifically, the text alone may not provide in-depth information about the degree of agreement and disagreement between participants about the discussed topic.

According to Onwuegbuzie *et al*. (2010), there are four basic models of non-verbal communication; firstly; proxemics, such as the use of interpersonal space to communicate attitude; secondly, chronemic, such as the length of silence in a conversation; thirdly, paralinguistic, such as voice pitch; fourthly, kinesics, such as posture. According to Dimmick (1995) body language such as body movements, gestures, posture, muscle tension, eye contact, skin

colouring (flushed red), makes up 70% of the message and voice makes up 23%.

For my research, there was an initial plan to use facial expression analysis as a data analysis methodology. The analysis for the pilot study was used for one participant only to experiment with the quality of analysis and evaluate the necessary time and effort. Hence, after the pilot study, Facial Analysis Coding System (FACS) was conducted on one interview only to calculate the spent time in using FACS. The final result of time spent on all data analysis for one participant is as follows:

- Verbal data: *IPA* – hours per participant: *8 hours*
- Non-verbal data: *Face Analysis* – hours per participant:*12 hours*

Consequently, after a discussion with my supervisors about the relative merits of IPA analysis alone versus adding the non-verbal analysis in terms of time taken to fully analyse 20 interviews, the final decision was that I use IPA only for the purposes of the PhD. However, in the final data collection, interviews and focus groups were audio/video recorded. The reason behind the video recording refers to some cultural considerations that are discussed later (see Section 5.12).

I had the opportunity to share my experiences of non-verbal analysis and the intensive training I had undertaken (online training by Paul Ekman group see: http://www.paulekman.com/workshops/) for FACS and present them at an international conference (Ismail, Edwards and Kinchin, 2015). Hence, there are a number of avenues of further research which are developed in chapter 8 (see Section 8.5).

5.10 Validity and Reliability

5.10.1 Validity

Qualitative researchers use a variety of techniques to establish validity. Validity refers to the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, validity in this research is based on three main approaches: participants' selection strategy; accessibility to segments of data; and debriefing.

Firstly, participants' selection strategy in my research is based on their knowledge about the issues associated with the study. Bassey (1999) confirmed that sampling participants who are knowledgeable about the research topic confirm trustworthiness of qualitative research. For example, the research participants whose current or previous experience is delivering online courses enabled them to provide opinions or perspectives that are relevant to the study (see Section 5.7 about sampling participants).

Secondly, according to O'Reilly and Kiyimba (2015), validity in relation to interpretation is accomplished by providing access to segments of data. Therefore, when discussing my qualitative data, I use direct quotations from the data so that the participants' claims can be verified by the audience (See Chapter 6).

Thirdly, peer debriefing can ensure the validity of the research. According to Daymon and Holloway (2010) and Elo *et al.* (2014), debriefing requires the researcher to work together with one or several colleagues who hold impartial views of the study. In this research, my supervisors debriefed my interviews. Moreover, the researcher's transcripts, final report and general methodology were examined by my supervisors and feedback was provided to enhance credibility and ensure validity.

5.10.2 Reliability

Joppe (2000) defines reliability as examining the consistency and repeatability of the process and the result of the research. Therefore, reliability in this research is based on four main approaches, checking transcribed interviews by interviewees, using IPA, back-translation and the inter-rater reliability between two coders in analysing the interviews.

Firstly, to achieve reliability, I worked on minimising bias by transcribing the interviews and getting the transcripts checked by the interviewees to ensure accuracy of the content (Cohen *et al.* 2013).

Secondly, according to O'Reilly and Kiyimba (2015), reliability is achieved by having a clear view of how the research was conducted, so the audience is able to see how findings were derived. Moreover, according to Campbell (1996) the reliability of data is achieved when the steps of the research are verified and

consistency is evident through examination of many steps in the research, such as data collection, data analysis and data findings. Accordingly, in this study, IPA gives this descriptive overview for the data analysis process. Another benefit for using IPA in respect of reliability, according to Smith *et al. (*2010), is that IPA can develop a framework that bridges the individual's perceptions for wider interpretive meaning that exists outside of an individual's experience (see Section 5.9.1 and the developed model in Appendix C.1.2).

Thirdly, considering that this research is conducted in a non-English speaking country, back-translation is provided for the data collected. Translation was implemented in four steps as follows:

1. The professional translators translated the transcript from Arabic to English.
2. Then, without the Arabic, they translated their English translation back into Arabic.
3. The final translation of Arabic, which was completed by a different person, was checked to match the original Arabic as closely as possible.

Fourthly, applying the inter-rater reliability between two coders in analysing the interviews. The two coders are: the researcher and another colleague who is a PhD researcher with shared experience in collecting and analysing qualitative data. Both coders, independently, analysed 50 statements from the interviews' scripts to define the problem in behavioural terms, to evaluate and to obtain agreement on the sufficiency and the adequacy of the baseline data. Following Scott's (1955) standards, the coders observed co-efficient of 0.88, 0.87 and 1.00 for control, content and process categories on the Problem Identification Interview (PII) and 0.92, 0.92 and 1.00 in the respective categories on the Problem Analysis Interview (PAI).

5.11 Pilot Study

Piloting is the pre-testing or trying out of a particular research instrument (Baker 1994), which gives the researcher advance warning about where the main research project could fail, and provides ideas about any potential obstacle which might occur in the main data collection phase. In this study, enough time for correction and modification was provided so I was able to conduct a piloting data collection. Interviews and focus groups have been

constructed as a result of extensive research in the related literature. This in-depth research helped me to construct the interview and focus group questions that are relevant to the researched topic. Full details of the pilot study is in Appendix A. The following section explains, in detail, the ethical considerations that emerged after the pilot study.

5.12 Ethical Considerations

As this is a study in the area of social sciences, ethical concerns are considered to be very important (Silverman, 2011). As Flick (2006) explains, in social science, when dealing directly with people and trying to go in-depth into their beliefs and values, ethics should ensure that no potential harm of any kind, for example emotional harm, may occur.

Accordingly, the researcher has submitted the proposal for this project to the Ethics and Research Governance Online (ERGO) at the University of Southampton (see Appendix, F). After the committee was assured that the study would meet all the ethical provisions as laid down in the University's research charter and in other legal provisions, the researcher was allowed to continue. The participants, online university tutors, made an informed and voluntary decision to take part in the study. In the participant information sheet, they were assured that they were free to withdraw at any point during the study if the need arose without penalty. Furthermore, the purpose and intentions of the study were made clear to them to ensure that their participation was voluntary.

5.12.1 Challenges of the pilot study

“The location and position of researchers influence the research process and therefore necessarily affect the final product” (Thapar-Björkert and Henry, 2004, p.365). Heading their warning about the researcher’s location, I used the idea of the ‘Six Thinking Hats’ invented by De Bono (1999). These “hats” are used to look at decisions from a number of important perspectives. This thinking forces us to move outside our habitual thinking style, and helps us to get a more rounded view of a situation. While collecting my data, the “hats” I used were those of: “researcher”; “student”; “colleague” (of the interviewees); and “social advisor”. These hats inspired me to perform these different roles

and helped me to think clearly and thoroughly by directing my thinking attention in one direction at a time.

In my pilot study, there were many challenges: ethical; cultural; social; and professional. I had the opportunity to share my experiences and reflection on these considerations at the New Researchers' Day preceding the British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics (BSRLM) Day Conference (see Appendix E.1). These challenges and my reflections on them are discussed in the following section in the following order:

1. Audio/video recording
2. Respect for the Tutor
3. Classroom setting
4. Questions to the researcher
5. Overriding of male gender in the focus groups
6. Questions with no answer
7. Learning from the interviewees' answers
8. Avoiding bias in research

5.12.1.1 Audio/video recording

Audio/video recording was an issue especially for female interviewees, who hesitated to share in the focus group discussion and the interview after they had been informed that audio or video would be used. This hesitation turned into outright disapproval in two of the participants because of their conservative social and cultural perspective. In this situation, it was necessary for me to build a bridge of trust between me and the participants and to explain how highly privacy and confidentiality of data are valued according to the university regulations. As for myself, I used the researcher's "hat" to reassure the participants.

5.12.1.2 Respect for the tutor

Due to cultural perspectives involving the issue of respect for a tutor, there was a high wall between me and the interviewees. This wall became obvious in

the participants' habit of raising hands before commenting and even standing up to answer a question. The reasons for this behaviour, as explained to me, go back to an old saying in the culture, which I could clearly see is still applicable today: “Stand up for the tutor and respect him, the tutor is nearly a prophet.” (Abdallah and Albadri, 2010, p.17). My solution to this situation was to position myself as a colleague, just another online tutor, towards the interviewees, and assured them many times that I was their colleague and would like to share common experiences in our mutual careers.

5.12.1.3 Classroom setting

Another cultural challenge I was confronted with occurred because of conducting the interviews in a classroom setting. The consequence of this setting was that the interviewees did not interact and discuss freely, which became obvious due to the lack of proxemic or kinesic gestures. As a result, for the actual data collection, I was keen to exchange the classroom for another place in the campus such as a meeting room with a round table.

5.12.1.4 Questions to the researcher

There were a number of questions asked by the interviewees, including:

•"Why would a university in another country be interested in our perception towards a certain issue in education?"

•"Is it acceptable to reveal the truth?"

•"Is it acceptable to declare a problem in our education system in front of others who may not have this problem at all?"

•Can we say that…..? (Silence and hesitation to complete the statement)

In this situation, I felt that we had swapped our roles, and that the participants were now the interviewer and I was an interviewee who had to give the best possible answer or risk failure. Here I used the researcher’s and the social advisor’s “hats”. My answers to the participants focused on three main aspects:

- We all have weaknesses and we tend to try to work on eliminating them.
- It is important to exchange knowledge and experiences (by reminding them of events in the history of Egyptian education where it was in its

best situation due to exchanging knowledge and sending delegates to other nations).

- The existence of globalization processes that involve geographically disparate peoples whose ideas, knowledge, and technologies are disseminated by a variety of technological means over vast distances.

5.12.1.5 Overriding of male gender in the focus groups

An issue that arose while moderating a focus group in Middle Eastern culture was that the women felt they were not fairly treated (for example in matters of recruitment, selection, training and promotion) (Al-Suleimany, 2009). The impact of this issue on the interviewees became obvious in a number of ways, such as:

- Head nodding and acceptance without discussion
- Disagreement without evidence
- Discussions becoming heated due to a difference in gender not in point of view

The “hats” I used in this situation were the tutor’s “hat” and the social advisor’s “hat”. In some cases, the discussion was not easy to moderate. In general, women answered controversial questions before the men did.

5.12.1.6 Questions with no answer

There were two questions in the interview with no clear answer or with only a very generic answer. These questions were:

- "What are your strengths for your position as an online tutor?", and
- "What are your weak points for your position as an online tutor?"

In this situation, I used the researcher’s “hat”, and applied some reading I had done on transparency in Middle Eastern culture. According to Al-Suleimany “If you become honest, sincere and genuine you just get ignored. Actually, you may be targeted and remarked for special raw and rough treatment.” (2009, p.402). In other words, in Arab culture, in some cases such as a job interview, one may need to hide the truth, be more complimentary. Otherwise, he/ she may fail to pass this job interview.

The second step I followed as a researcher was to adapt my questions in the interview and focus groups in a way that could bypass this issue. The questions were thus modified as follows:

- "As an online tutor, what are the differences between your teaching methods and strategies in the face-to-face environment and the OL environment?"

- "Regarding Egypt, describe any constraints you may confront as an online tutor."

5.12.1.7 Learning from the interviewees' answers.

As a researcher, I learned that it is possible to modify any question in the interview in response to the interviewees' answers. For example, I moved all the questions which focused on challenges and barriers in OL to the end of the interview or focus group meeting. The reason is that, talking about the affordances at the beginning would help the interviewees to think creatively and effectively, while talking about the challenges, may lead them to assume that the situation is out of their control and there is nothing they can do to change it.

5.12.1.8 Avoiding bias in research

Another researcher's skill I gained during the pilot study was how to minimise bias in research. One of the questions that I asked in the interview was: "What is the mixing ratio between online learning and face to face learning?"

One interviewee's answer was: "I do not see that online learning is effective at all. I believe that all learning resources have to be hard copies. OL is wasting our students' time and ruining their creativity skills." Considering this answer, as a researcher and that my research is about OL, I may have a different point of view than the interviewee. In this case, if I have difficulty recognising that other people may think differently than I do about a given topic or situation, that may lead me to comment or ask a biased question.

Therefore, I learned that, as a researcher, it is important to understand bias and how it affects research results, and that I need to be aware of my own bias and how this may be expressed.

5.12.1.9 Final recommendations for my main study:

- As a researcher, read about the culture of your participants (even if you are part of this culture)
- Use a variety of 'thinking hats'
- Check the participants' awareness of instruments used for collecting data (i.e. focus group discussions)
- Be flexible
- Be reflexive
- Decrease the number of participants in the study from 30 to 20, since the amount of data collected is rich and the allocated time for data collection and analysis may not allow me to collect data from more than 20 participants.

5.12.2 Challenges of the final data collection

5.12.2.1 Impact of the authority of the team leader (Head of School) on transparency of the answers of team members (tutors)

It was observed in one focus group interview, where the Head of School (leader) was a member in the group, that one of the tutors' viewpoints was influenced by the leader's view point. This observation was based on comparing this tutor's responses in a one-to one-interview with the response to the same question in the focus group, as explained below:

In the one-to-one interview

Researcher: Do you think OL can help to overcome the problem of over-crowded classes in HE?

Tutor: Yes, …. (The tutor justified the answer.)

In the focus group (where the team leader thought that OL is unable to overcome the problem of over-crowded classes)

Researcher: Do you think OL can help to overcome the problem of over-crowded classes in HE?

Same tutor: No, (with no further explanation.)

At this point, I should highlight another added benefit of the focus group preceding interviews (see Section 5.8.3). In this situation, starting with the focus group and finding out each interviewee's way of thinking, later, in one-to one interview, I could probe questions that could go in-depth into the interviewee's views and experience. On the other hand, if I started with the one-to-one interview, then the focus group where the tutor gave a different answer to the same question (like the aforementioned example), there would be no other opportunity to discuss the tutor's answer.

5.12.2.2 Defining terms according to their context

During data collection, it was found that it is important to explain some terms used such as "freedom" and "responsibility" according to the specific educational context to avoid any misunderstanding that can affect the flow of the discussion. For example, when tutors were asked about their views about freedom, some tutors were against it and explained in-depth that freedom in the meaning of "'I am free to do whatever I want", is not accepted. Therefore, as a researcher, I found that an explanation of freedom in the educational context with some examples such as: student freedom to select the type of exam question, could help to minimise similar misconceptions. At this point, as a researcher, I tailored the interview question(s) according to the situation confronted, this flexibility confirms one of the advantages of qualitative methodology (see Section 5.5.1).

5.13 Summary

This chapter is summarised by the diagram below (Figure 5-3), which illustrates the paradigm structure for the methodology that is used in this study.

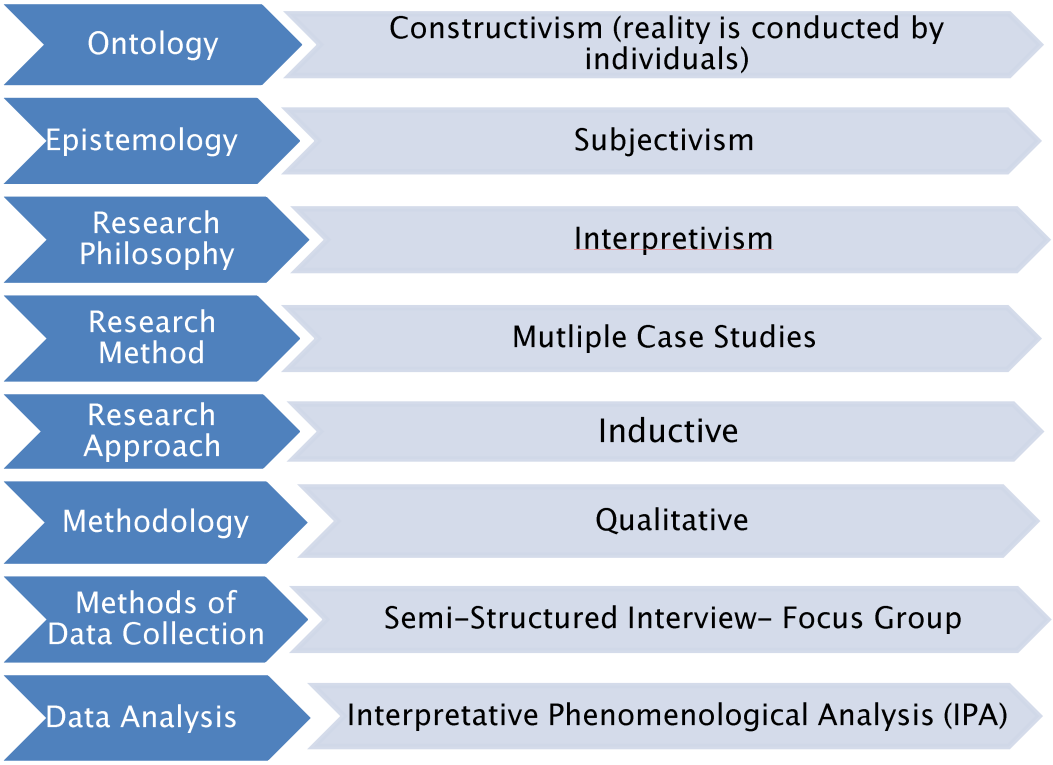


Figure 5-3: Paradigm components of the research

Chapter 6: Data Analysis and Findings

After describing the research methodology which underpinned the study, this chapter presents the tutors' perceptions of Student Centred Learning (SCL) within the online environment. This data analysis and findings chapter is organised around the following major themes:

1. Online students: characteristics and needs
2. Online Tutors: knowledge, characteristics, responsibilities and challenges;
3. For and against online social collaboration
4. Monitoring and guiding feedback
5. Novelty: technology and terminology
6. Education climate
7. Concerns about CPD

Coding Interviewees

In total, 20 tutors participated as interviewees in four focus groups of four to six participants each. In this chapter, interviewees are referenced according to their focus group and the number of their seat in this group, as follows:

FG1 : Int1, Int2, Int3, Int4, Int5, Int6

FG2 : Int7, Int8, Int9, Int10

FG3: Int11, Int12, Int13, Int14, Int15

FG4: Int16, Int17, Int18, Int19, Int20

If findings or remarks from any of the one-to-one interviews are quoted, this is clearly indicated. The purpose of using indicative quotes is to confirm data validity and credibility of the interviewee's argument through demonstrating trustworthiness (Bassey, 1999).

6.1 Online Students: Characteristics and Needs

The main issues that are discussed in this section are: a) Characteristics of OL students, b) Students' power and control, c) Creativity, d) Family impact, d) Students' needs

6.1.1 Characteristics of OL students

Tutors in this section report the main characteristics of online students which they see to be current in their students. These features are: dynamic learners, who are changing their learning objectives and communication; diversity; ability to manage themselves and their time; distraction; and motivation to learn. These characteristics can be summarised as follows (Figure 6-1):

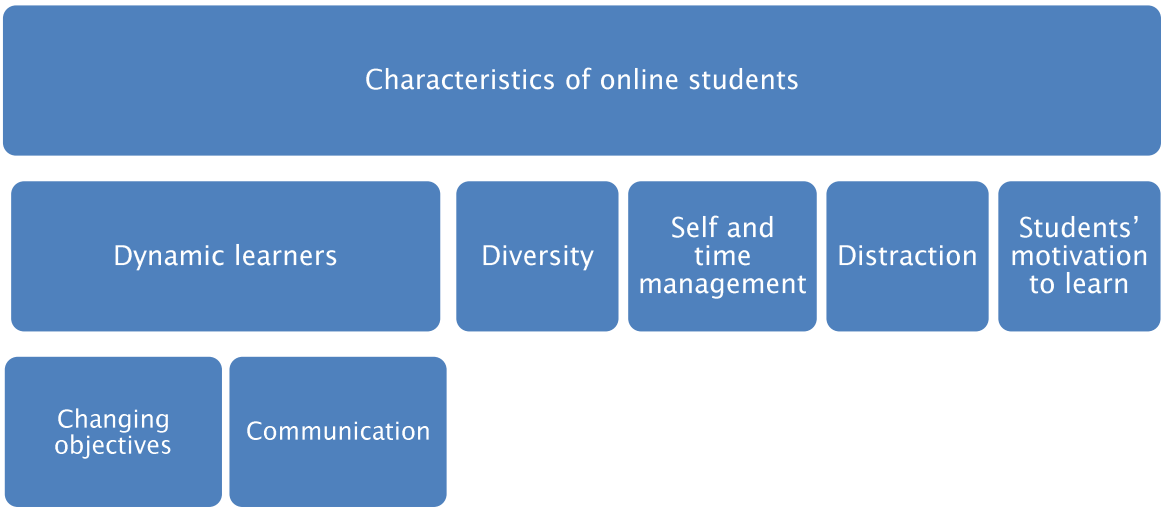


Figure 6-1: Characteristics of online students

6.1.1.1 Dynamic learners

In the individual interview, Int2 from FG1 summarised the characteristics of a dynamic learner as one who "acts, reacts, suggests and discusses". The tutors held two different opinion on the term "dynamic"; some tutors considered a student to be dynamic according to their ability to change their learning aims and objectives throughout the course, for others a dynamic learner was an active and communicative learner.

6.1.1.2 Changing objectives

A number of tutors commented on how online students' aims and objectives change throughout a course. In FG2, two tutors agreed that by looking at the students' feedback from the beginning and from the end of the course it could be determined that some of their aims in studying the course have changed. Another tutor added that sometimes even the students' plans on how to achieve their learning outcomes can change. Similarly in FG3, tutors highlighted the importance of frequent interviews with students to identify any changes in their learning objectives.

6.1.1.3 Communication

Several of the tutors characterised online students as active learners. In FG4 and FG1, tutors mentioned that online students have a wider and better scope of network to interact and communicate with each other than face-to-face students. Int18, in FG4, elaborated on this, claiming that when online students log on to social network sites such as wikis they share by posting, commenting and co-editing. For this tutor, and for Int20 in the same focus group, a communicative learner was a dynamic learner.

6.1.1.4 Diversity

In FG2, Int8 commented that "the flexibility of online education facilitates learning for a larger group of students diverse in culture, background and language." Other tutors in FG2 and FG4 also commented on the link between the characteristics of OL and the diversity of online students in that the variety of OL learning tools and resources matches the diversity of the learners. The issues of the diversity of online learners led several discussions to the issue of individual differences between learners as a result of their diversity. For example, in FG2, two tutors explained that there are sometimes online students who are full-time employees at the same time. Therefore, the learning objectives for these students, such as promoting or moving to a higher paid job, may be different from younger students who have not worked before. As another example of students' diversity, Int12 in FG3 stated,

> "Each learner is different with regard to the time they use to think and reflect, when and how to ask and answer questions, even how to communicate with others."

Some tutors in FG1 and FG2 reworded students' diversity as not "one size fits all" and a number of tutors commented on the differences in the situations of their students which underlined this point. In FG4, Int16 stated, "Some students are independent; others are partially independent, while others need spoon-feeding."

The consequences of students' diversity on tutors' teaching practices were explained as follows; Int9, in FG2, stressed that because of this diversity, a tutor's plan for dealing with students needs to vary according to their individual needs and abilities. In the individual interview the same tutor gave the example of a student who was not meeting her learning target. In this case, the tutor found that it was important to discuss the reasons behind this delay in one-to one tutorial meeting(s). He added that he then developed different individual strategies specifically for this student, and concluded by reporting how this student then went on to achieve very good results. In summary, nearly all tutors agreed on the diversity of online students, referring to a number of different aspects of this diversity such as background, learning motivation, learning styles, and learning objectives after finishing the studied course.

6.1.1.5 Self and time management

Similar to the issue of students' diversity, with regard to students' abilities of self- and time-management, the tutors agreed that these were different because the individual students were different. However, other tutors regarded this skill as not very important, and placed more importance on self- and time-management guided by the tutor. Guidance and support from the tutor was deemed an essential role in helping students manage their time. In contrast, some regarded the students' abilities of self- and time- management highly important; they explained that, in their view, online students are intrinsically motivated and possess the ability to manage themselves and their time.

6.1.1.6 Distraction

Several tutors agreed that one of the characteristics of online students is that they are easily distracted. Tutors showed a range of perspectives on distraction, especially how this happened, why this happened, and the consequences of this distraction. Int3, in FG13, thought that the danger of

distraction was related to each student's individual ability for self- and time-management, and commented:

> “One of my students is all the time distracted by Facebook and I expect that he does the same at home. At the same time another student, during the same session, is fully engaged and unlikely to get distracted."

Int20, in FG4, reported his annoyance with students using their mobile phones during sessions. This tutor asked for the implementation of a rule which meant taking electronic devices away from students before starting the session to minimise this distraction. Another tutor disagreed, instead arguing that an online student needs to use the internet for learning, and confiscating gadgets means taking learning tools away from them. In FG2, Int10 commented that, for some learners, the diversity of resources in OL was a reason for distraction, as they get overwhelmed with too much information and too many options. Two tutors in FG2 and FG4 highlighted the concern that students’ distraction could lead to the students opting out of the course studied. Int19, in FG4, agreed that this was a concern; “Online students get frustrated easily and disengaged. Then, dropping out the course is the first choice for them."

6.1.1.7 Students’ motivation to learn

There were contrasting views among tutors regarding students’ motivation. The majority of tutors claimed that online students can get easily demotivated, although few tutors' views aligned with their claim that online students are already intrinsically motivated and this motivation is sustained. While the majority of the rest considered students’ motivation as a changing state, decreasing and increasing at times.

Several tutors were of the opinion that online students were intrinsically motivated to learn – two tutors in FG2 and FG3 argued that online students do not need to be motivated by their tutors or peers, as they would not have embarked on an online course unless they were already keen and willing to do the course.

However, referring for example to the issue of students’ distraction discussed earlier, Int17, in FG4, stated,

> "The more the student is demotivated to learn, the more disengagement there is, and the more need for spoon-feeding. Conversely, the more the student is motivated to learn, the more engagement and the less need for spoon feeding."

This discussion highlighted the issue of the tutor's role in motivating students. Several tutors in FG1 and FG2 stressed that the tutor's role is not only to motivate students initially, but also to maintain this motivation by observing students throughout the course. Int13, in FG3, concurred, "Some learners may be active and have a serious commitment at the beginning of their study. When I follow up on this, however, this may have changed to the contrary." This issue also impacts on two other topics discussed later, that of student feedback in the "Monitoring and guiding feedback" theme (see Section 6.4), and that of incentives to motivate students, which is examined in "Students' needs" (see Section 6.1.5).

6.1.2 Students' power and control

6.1.2.1 What is empowering learners?

Many of the tutors agreed that empowering learners means to give them authority to do something while learning, such as planning their learning. The debate between tutors in the focus groups was mainly about the means and the timing of empowering students. Int6, in FG1, commented:

> "Empowering learners and giving them control implies giving them freedom. Therefore, commitment and responsibility are the starting point, and these need to be initiated by the learners from the inside."

Few tutors differentiated between the notions of "power" and "control", and many talked about them as interchangeable ideas. For those who could see a clear difference between the two notions, giving "control" meant enabling students to make something happen the way they wanted it, such as selecting their preference in question styles, while "power" meant enabling students to take charge of their learning such as planning their learning objectives.

A number of tutors mentioned that giving power is conditional and based on the students' own level of responsibility. In FG1, Int1 explicitly stated,

> "If the students are responsible and can be trusted to manage their learning they can be empowered; if not, empowering learners is devastating for them".

In the individual interview, Int2 in FG1 explained that to prepare students for responsibility, they need to feel the importance of the topic studied as well as the freedom of selection and decision making, and need to have commitment to study their course.

Several tutors defined empowering students as making the students own their learning, while Int3, in FG1, explained that, for them, empowering learners is a chain which starts with giving them ownership of their learning as a first step, which is followed by giving them control.

6.1.2.2 Benefits of empowering students

Tutors in the four focus groups mentioned a number of benefits of empowering learners –

Int8, in FG2, stressed that students' empowerment is related to their sense of satisfaction. The tutor stated,

> "When I give the students freedom of choice for an assignment topic, they search and make extra effort in searching for creative topics and they work harder on these assignments compared to other assignments than when I decided their topics for them."

Another tutor highlighted that empowerment helps students to think positively when faced with challenges. Int18, in FG4, focused on the benefit of developing students' responsibility, self-confidence and decision making. Int13, in FG3, commented on the impact of giving students freedom and developing their self-confidence, stating; "Empowering learners, giving them independence, making them autonomous and minimising boredom in OL."

6.1.2.3 Characteristics of empowering students

A large number of the tutors in the four focus groups agreed that freedom is not absolute, but has to have limiting features. These limitations are: differentiated freedom; and students' early preparation for freedom.

6.1.2.3.1 Differentiated freedom

A number of tutors agreed that not all students can be given the same degree of freedom and that, in addition, the shift of power to the student has to be gradual. Int20, in FG4, commented, “Freedom needs to be given in very small doses, and tested frequently, to make sure that there is good understanding and implementation of it.”

The majority of tutors explained that, to empower learners, there is a need to know about them in the sense of their understanding of freedom and how they think they can use it. Therefore, these tutors mentioned interviews and monitoring to obtain this knowledge about learners. Int13 and Int14, in FG3, highlighted the importance of face-to-face interviews with students. This interview can be online or face to face in order to get to know them. The majority of tutors reported that even when students are empowered, tutors always need to be monitoring and observing. However, a few tutors disagreed as they thought that constant monitoring contradicted the flexibility and freedom of OL – Int7, in FG2, commented, “Successful OL implies absolute freedom; I agree that students are likely to get distracted, but they will get back soon on their learning track with much learning achieved.”

6.1.2.3.2 Students’ early preparation for freedom

Several tutors in FG1 and FG3 agreed that, before giving students freedom, they need to be prepared for how to use this freedom – Int1, in FG1, commented that, “students are not ready to be empowered and control their learning.” Int19, in FG4, in FG4, mentioned that an online student will not be ready for the use of freedom till 30 years from now. Int5, in FG1, listed freedom in learning as one of the novel aspects of OL that students need to be prepared for (as discussed later in the “Novelty” theme in section 6.6 together with new technology and a new culture.

Int16, in FG4, stated a concern regarding drawing up a list of prohibitions,

> ” Defining rules and prohibiting students from using the internet won't keep them under control as thought to be. As tutors, we need to prepare them first, and then give the freedom.”

6.1.2.4 Aspects of control

Tutors discussed their views about the aspects of control given to students, listing a number of aspects throughout the four focus groups such as a) Selecting topics studied, b) Selecting question styles in examinations, c) Selecting date, time and pace of learning, d) Free navigation of the website, freedom to ask questions, free editing and sharing in online features such as Wikis.

Whether to give full control of these aspects to the students was a point of debate between tutors in FG1 and FG3 - some tutors thought that controlling students could be managed in an online session, but that they were out of the tutor's control at home. Some of the tutors reported that they had found keeping students busy at home with tasks, projects and guided searches could help to solve this problem - in the individual interview, Int8, from FG2, commented, “Timelines and deadlines for each task and project, and also the quality of the submitted work, all these aspects control the student at home.”

6.1.2.5 E-content and students’ control

A number of tutors focused on the role of the e-content when giving the students control of their learning. Several tutors commented on it as an important element over which students can have control and practise their learning. As Int18, in FG4, phrased it, “e-content is the connection between students, their learning, their peers and their tutor.”

Tutors classified the issue of e-content and control according to three different areas:

- University campus, including the Learning Management System (LMS)
- Forums and social networks
- E-content at home

Most tutors agreed that the university server needed to be fully monitored by an authorised approve from the university administration. Int5, in FG1, gave an example of fully monitored websites she had seen in a library which restricted the navigation to a fixed list of websites. (A discussion of forums and social networks is referred to in a later theme “For and against social collaboration” in section 6.3.

Regarding students' freedom with respect to e-content (which can be a pre-developed tutorial website to which they can have access from anywhere), tutors were divided into one of two camps. Int1, in FG1, thought that e-content could help to give control to students and avoid distraction by having, for example, well-developed search engines, dictionaries, or a thesaurus. Int19, in FG4, gave an example from real practice when she gave the students the freedom to embed resources of their choice into the e-content. She asked them to design a project with these resources and to submit the design in groups. According to her, students had control and they used it properly, as they were engaged. Int18, in the same focus group, agreed that if control and freedom are not given, interaction will not happen, as the tutor will be the only source of information. Int6 in FG1 and Int13 in FG3 disagreed with the absolute freedom, and claimed that they had seen that if the student is not monitored and only limited control is given, no successful learning can occur.

6.1.2.6 Concerns about empowering learners

Tutors discussed a number of concerns regarding empowering learners, including the different aspects of control given. The tutors' concerns were from two different perspectives, personal and educational.

6.1.2.6.1 Personal

A number of tutors agreed that empowering students may lead to students' carelessness, a lower level of self- and time-management, and to not achieving the learning objectives.

In the individual interview Int1, in FG1, reported an incident connected to the consequences of giving a student control over editing shared web content,

> "One of my students, when I gave him full permissions on the shared forum, started to remove some peers' comments, and modify others, not knowing that I could track this activity."

An important concern that many tutors referred to was losing control over students as a result of empowering them; this issue is discussed further in the "Online tutors" theme in section 6.2.5.

6.1.2.6.2 Educational

A number of tutors were concerned that empowered students might not achieve their learning objectives as they are stated within the course. These objectives have been stated for the students (by the tutor) within the course/module. Int19, in FG4, reported on his experience with a learner who had been empowered to choose the time and amount of work to do at his convenience. This student could not manage his time and started to fall behind. Int20, in FG4, confirmed this behaviour and added that, when students are given control but lack the ability to manage their time, they may become overwhelmed and disengaged, ending with their course withdrawal. According to Int12, from FG3, some learners who are not motivated may opt out of the course when faced with this kind of challenge, "Students may get bored or drop out from the course or lose the interest to continue to study."

Another concern was raised about the student's freedom of selection of tasks that they need to work on as class or home work. One tutor stated,

> "Some students select "Wikipedia" as an easy, free and quick encyclopaedia, disregarding that it is written by multiple people and anonymously edited by many others."

The tutor commented that students' selection, as they have the free of choice, is based on what is easy for the student to achieve. Int20, in FG4, mentioned that, "a student may make an inappropriate selection such as choosing the right reference and right forum to join but following a wrong path of learning." Int2, in FG1, commented on the issue of wrong choices from the second angle in the individual interview, saying that, when students have the freedom to select, their selection may be informed by the easiest way, not the most appropriate for their learning and the tutor may regard a different selection as more beneficial for them. This notion was also confirmed by Int19, in FG4, who stated that, "students' selection will be based on what they are good at and they will avoid tasks that they are weaker at, as they struggle more with these."

Int16, in FG4, added that a final concern about giving students freedom is that of cheating in examinations using technology. In the individual interview, Int1, from FG1, summed up the problem of control and freedom, "It is an issue of trust between learner and tutor. We, as tutors, need a long time to trust that the learners fully understand what is meant by freedom."

6.1.3 Creativity

Tutors' views on students' creativity in OL varied. Several tutors did not express a clear opinion about students' creativity. Some tutors explicitly agreed that the use of the internet supports creative learning more than face-to-face learning, while others explicitly disagreed with this claim. Two of the tutors in both FG2 and FG4 thought that OL facilitates a diverse use of technological tools and offers unlimited information that can lead to new ideas, knowledge and experience for the student. In FG1, Int3 commented on the positive impact of social collaboration and shared experience between group members that can expand students' knowledge and help them develop their creative skills through group projects. Int7, in FG2, focused on the tutor's role in students' creativity, and explained that, in their view, students' creativity is stimulated by the tutor who can identify students' points of innovation and encourage them. Int9 agreed with Int7 and added that the tutor needs to develop and sustain creativity to keep up with the learners. In a similar vein, Int1 from FG1 stated,

> "The tutor is the key to students' creativity through following up students, challenging them all the time. Surely without the tutor's role this skill is diminished."

Some tutors suggested strategies that could help with developing students' creativity – Int7, in FG2, commented that being overwhelmed in one's online study could be used in a good way. In detail, this tutor stated,

> "[The] student may start with too much information and a lot of ideas, where he/she does not know how to deal with them. Through students' discovery and creativity, this claimed overwhelming can end up with innovative idea(s)".

Two other tutors mentioned competitions as incentives to encourage creativity. These tutors explained that competition can serve as a spark to creativity as students seek out all possible paths to get ahead of others and bring innovative ideas or solutions. By the end, the winner in the competition being prized is an incentive to sustain creativity.

On the other hand, some of the tutors also held the view that OL reduces creativity. In FG1, Int5 explained that the OL environment provides resources

to the extent that students' ability to imagine, innovate and to be creative is minimised. The example this tutor gave was that of writing skills, commenting that the use of OL does not allow this skill to be developed as well as in face-to-face learning.

6.1.4 Family impact

Most tutors highlighted the impact of family, especially that of the parents whose children are the online students. Family impacts on the students at the educational level (e.g. banning an electronic gadget to be used in learning) cultural level (e.g. banning girls to communicate online with peers), social (e.g. devaluing the importance of OL as a learning environment) and economic level (e.g. impact of family income on the affordance to pay for internet service provider).

Tutors from FG3 and FG4 mentioned that, to date, parents are still suspicious about the use of the internet in learning. In FG3, Int13 commented that "many families consider that technology in learning has a negative influence on their children's behaviour and cultural beliefs." The consequences of these concerns were discussed by two tutors in this FG3, Int14 explained that the lack of knowledge about the internet among parents raises questions such as "What will my son learn?", "How will he learn?", "Is it feasible?", and "Isn't face-to-face more useful and informative?" Int13 confirmed that parents' concerns can create fears of anything new and of accepting change in the students. A solution proposed by some of the tutors in FG3 and FG4 was to use the media to prepare parents to perceive OL positively, synthesise the value of the internet in learning, and explain to them simple concepts about the digitalised generation of which their children are a part. Regarding economic affordance, in FG3 and FG4, whose tutors come from universities in rural areas, it was commented that many students cannot afford to own a computer or to be connected to the internet at home. In their view the responsibility to facilitate access to these resources for students lies with the government and educational institutions.

6.1.5 Students' needs

In this section, tutors referred to the needs of online students', from their viewpoints. These needs are, to "think outside the box", incentives, to be

engaged with their learning, to be known, guidance, autonomy and to be ready for the digital generation. A summary of these needs can be found in the following diagram (Figure 6-2):

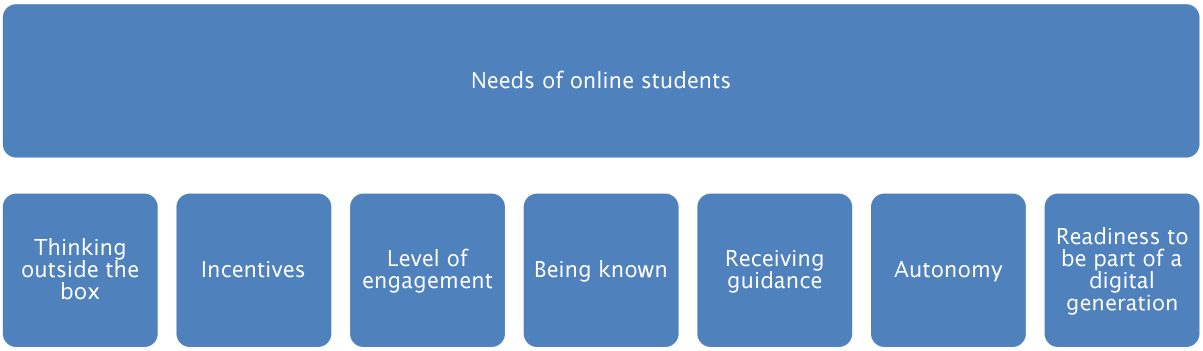


Figure 6-2: Online students' needs

6.1.5.1 "Thinking outside the box"

A few of the tutors highlighted that students need to think out of the box, but emphasised strongly that this issue was a basic student need. Int7, in FG2, explained that each tutor needs to draw their students' attention to what they want to do after graduation and, with this knowledge, enable them to set up their targets for learning. In FG3, Int15 noted that every module studied in the syllabus needs to have an obvious practical application in real life associated with it:

> "While teaching machining processes, I produced a web-based real project in the field of practice in order to address the challenges faced by expertise in this field and how they could confront these challenges."

Int7, in FG2, similarly said that, even while learning, students need to apply for jobs and need a link between the official curriculum and the job market. This topic also highlighted another point about students' learning needs – Int7, in FG2, pointed out that, to begin with, students need to understand that learning does not just mean being able to pass an examination. Int10 agreed with her colleague and listed several other aspects that should be considered in assessing students, such as achievement of initial objectives, the students' plans and actions to achieve these plans, the students' attendance and engagement. Two tutors in FG2 and FG4 suggested adding students' e-portfolio as approved evidence for assessing students, but one other tutor in

FG2 disagreed with this and stressed that, in their view, formative assessment was the only approved method of assessing students. This debate links the issue back to the discussion of the rigidity of the official curriculum and is examined in the theme of "Education Climate" in section 6.7.

6.1.5.2 Incentives

A high number of tutors agreed that students need incentives for learning, though the views on the exact nature and the possible kinds of these incentives varied between tutors. In FG3 and FG4, two tutors agreed that incentives were essential for motivating and engaging students and another tutor added that creativity also needs incentives to be encouraged. Several tutors in FG1, FG2 and FG3 all made a link between SCL and student incentives – Int1, in FG1, stated, "SCL is a commitment for the student where they feel responsibility. Therefore, students need to have incentives to pursue this responsibility." Tutors proposed different types of incentives such as prizes, grades, money, facilitating job opportunities, and online publishing of students' work. However, some tutors in FG2 and FG3 disagreed about these kinds of incentives, and claimed that students' incentives need to come from the inside, and not be offered by tutors or any other outside influence – Int12, in FG3 for example, explained that achieving learning objectives is an incentive for the learner and is supposed to satisfy learners and motivate them to work hard on their course.

6.1.5.3 Level of engagement

Most tutors agreed that online students need to be engaged while studying, and the tutors mentioned a number of reasons for the importance of students' engagement, such as sustaining the motivation to learn, minimising the feeling of social isolation, and minimising the course dropout rate. Tutors mentioned a number of strategies they used to engage students. In FG4, Int20 stated that, "engaging students is challenging them, each according to the individual ability and pace of learning." Int9, in FG2, similarly explained that challenging students means asking students for more than they already know – in the individual interview he gave an example, "I asked the students to submit e-content using Web3 where they know and studied only Web2." Int16, in FG4, explained that students' engagement starts when the tutor's role is to encourage them to follow the trial and improvement method, where the tutor

does not give an answer but only facilitates finding the answer. Int7, from FG2, stated in the individual interview that "overwhelming students with tasks and projects is important for engaging them. I may give them five times more than what my colleagues give them. I think, in OL, engaging students means keeping them busy." This tutor then went on to list other methods for engaging students, such as calling on them randomly by their name, asking them to comment and respond. Int14, in FG3, commented that there are specific tasks that the tutor needs to check on a daily basis to ensure interaction with their learners, such as emails, posts and comments on the social networking sites. Int15, in FG3, highlighted the importance of finding out the reasons if students are disengaged, as these reasons can be personal as well as related to family or administration.

6.1.5.4 Being known

Referring to a number of the students' needs discussed above, tutors commented that knowing one's students well is a starting point for engaging and motivating them or even planning their learning. Int11, in FG3, explained that getting to know learners is not only an issue before the students start the course, but is an on-going task for the tutor. This was agreed by Int15, who linked this to the issue of possible changes in the students' attitudes and their dynamic nature (see Section 6.1.1.1). Regarding what tutors need to know about their learners, tutors mentioned a number of different aspects - in FG3, several of the tutors agreed that a tutor needs to know their students' learning preferences and styles and Int18, in FG4, added the need to know students' learning objectives. On this topic, Int17 commented that some students do not clearly identify their learning objectives and Int20 replied to this objection that, in this case, it was the tutor's task to help the student and to keep on supporting them in staying true to these objectives throughout their course of study.

6.1.5.5 Receiving guidance

Most tutors agreed that students need guidance from the tutor. This became clear mainly when tutors were asked to grade both the students' ability to guide themselves in learning and the students being guided by the tutor. The majority of interviewees rated the tutor's guidance higher than students' self-guidance and, when asked for clarification, a number of tutors replied that the

amount of information available online today is overwhelming students. Therefore, students need tutors' guidance to clarify or help them to select the most appropriate source. However, the terms "facilitation" and "guidance" had different meanings for different tutors. For example, Int17, in FG4, stated that, “tutors guide the learner to the right answer and highlight areas of improvements for the learner,” while Int9, in FG2, had a different view of guidance,

> “Direct instructing is spoon feeding and, in facilitating, the tutor should not assume responsibility or take the lead as these have negative impacts on the student’s feeling of ownership of their learning.”

There was some discussion and debate about how tutors can guide students. Tutors gave some advice on guiding, such as giving tips for successful navigation and recommending forums. For Int18, in FG4, guidance meant constant communication and continuous feedback between tutor and student but the majority of tutors agreed that the tutor does not need to be always there communicating and interacting with the students, in real time or otherwise, and needs to facilitate, not teach.

6.1.5.6 Autonomy

A number of tutors mentioned the idea that, “Students need to own their learning“. In FG2, Int10 explained that a student’s autonomy is like a chain; when learners take control, they feel power and then they own their learning. Int13 added that ownership creates responsibility as well; at this stage, learners will be keen to progress in their study. Int10, in the same focus group, added that a result of students’ autonomy was an improvement in the students' achievements, motivation and engagement.

However, there were also some contrasting views about students’ autonomy – Int17, in FG4, stated that students need to feel the autonomy for their learning at the beginning to be motivated and engaged and that, after this point, the tutor might re-evaluate the student. Another tutor held a further view and commented that no control, power or ownership should be given to the student before tutors know their learners. In the view of this tutor, this knowledge could exist right at the start of the course, depending on the student’s individual ability to afford this responsibility. Conversely, Int7, in

FG2, thought that autonomy needed to exist all the time regardless of the student's ability or preparation for taking on this responsibility.

6.1.5.7 Readiness to be part of a digital generation

A number of tutors agreed that learners need to be ready to deal with the internet in learning. In FG2, Int7 stated, "We need to raise the digital generation." In FG1, Int1 explained that digital preparation for students means to teach students at an early stage, pre-university, about good use of the internet. Tutors in the four focus groups listed many aspects that students needed to be taught in an OL environment: confidentiality; computer crime; copyright issues; and cyber-bullying. In FG2, Int9 explained that it is important for students to understand that the internet is not a value-free zone. It is sensitive to the religious, political and social culture. In FG3, Int11 stated, "When online students learn how to make good use of the internet and make the right choices, they are ready to use it effectively." Another tutor confirmed his colleague's claim and added that, by this stage, students could be fully trusted and did not need to be monitored.

In summary, tutors confirmed that students' power and control are one of the main needs for online students, as addressed in the theoretical framework (see chapter 4). *Student creativity*, was also highlighted since the internet supports creative learning. Also, the tutors' role to stimulate *creativity* was discussed, as tutors can identify students' points of innovation and encourage them. According to tutors' perceptions, *thinking outside of the box* has been highlighted as an important student requirement. For *incentives*, many tutors agreed that students need incentives for learning and they proposed different types of incentives such as prizes, grades, money, facilitating job opportunities. Finally, most tutors agreed that students need *guidanc*e from the tutor such as giving tips for successful navigation and recommending forums. The following diagram summarises the main themes highlighted, and mentioned above.

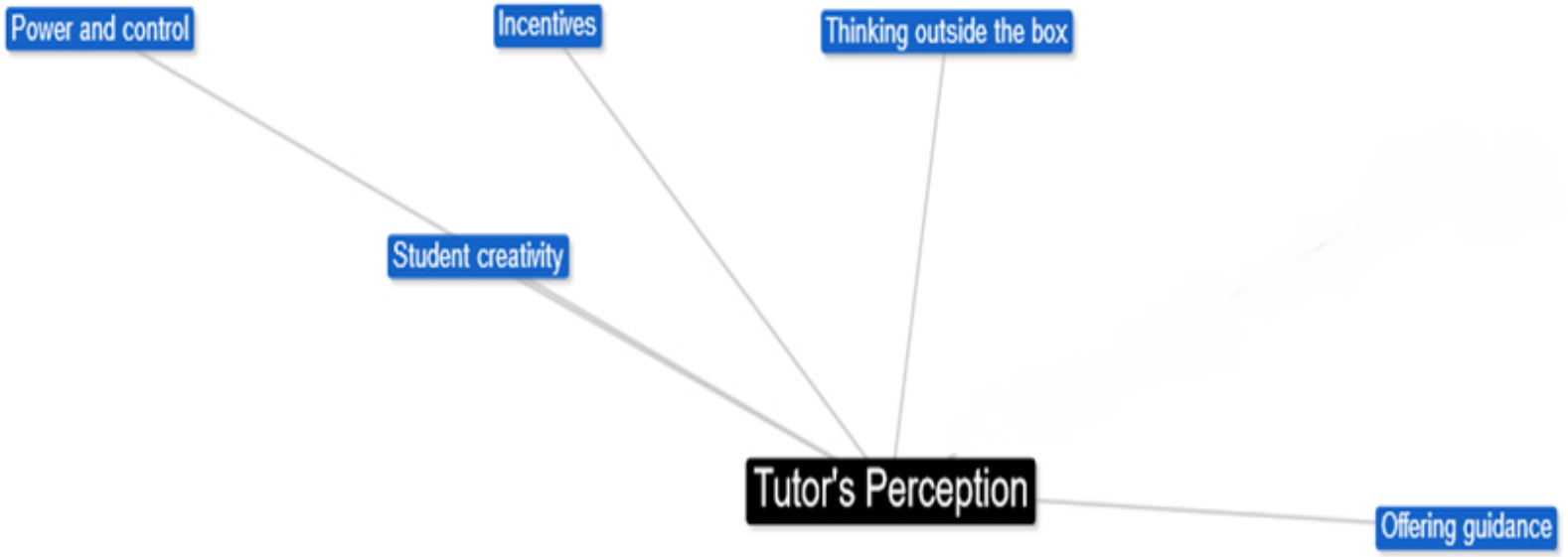


Figure 6-3: Summary of: online Students: characteristics and needs

6.2 Online Tutors: Knowledge, Characteristics, Responsibilities and Challenges

This theme addresses tutors' viewpoints on the issue of online tutors themselves. It will discuss the following issues: a) Online Tutor knowledge, b) Online Tutor characteristics, c) Online Tutor responsibilities, d) Online Tutor challenges, e) Tutors' beliefs.

6.2.1 Online Tutor's knowledge

All tutors in the focus groups agreed that the OL tutor needs knowledge. Tutors commented on different types of necessary knowledge, and different objectives of this knowledge, such as engaging and motivating students. It was observed that the majority of tutors agreed that soft skills, such as communicating and motivating learners and technical knowledge be up-to-date with technological tools for teaching. These two skills are the main requirements for CPD (see Section 6.8 for further details). It is worth mentioning that tutors were asked about these types of knowledge: content; pedagogical; and technological, based on Shulman's TPACK framework (1986) (See chapter 3 Section (3.2.7).

6.2.1.1 Content knowledge

A number of tutors mentioned content knowledge, in terms of their knowledge about the actual subject matter that is to be learned or taught, as a taken-for-granted requirement by any tutor, whether OL or face-to-face. However, a few tutors' viewpoints contrasted between the focus groups. In FG2, tutors agreed that OL does not require in-depth knowledge or preparation by the tutor, and they commented that search engines could help the tutor to find the answers in case of a lack of knowledge. In the individual interview Int2, from FG1, clarified: "In OL, we are behind the screen, and have more freedom to look for the answer and less danger of embarrassment". On the other hand, two tutors in FG4 held an opposite opinion; they argued that in OL the tutor is challenged by the affordance of search engines to find an answer for any question and that they may be asked advanced questions by students. They therefore suggested that in OL more preparation and content knowledge are required.

6.2.1.2 Soft skills knowledge

The tutors discussed soft skills knowledge by employing a number of terms such as “communication skills”, “personal effectiveness to communicate and collaborate”, “easing the session” and “flexibility”. There was an argument between tutors in FG2, where two tutors claimed that communication skills are personal characteristics that need to be pre-existent in the online tutor. On the other hand, two other tutors in the group claimed that they are skills that need to be developed through teaching practices and CPD. These two contrasting viewpoints were also present in the discussion between tutors in FG3 and FG4.

Some tutors in FG1 and FG3 focused on the consequences of tutors’ limited knowledge about soft skills. For example, in FG3, Int12 and Int13 explained that this limited knowledge can lead to a struggle to communicate with learners, and consequently disengage them. Int1, in FG1, even thought that the absence of this knowledge was enough to fail as an online tutor even if the professional content knowledge exists. Int2 and Int6 in the same focus group disagreed with this claim, as they considered both content and soft skills knowledge as complementing each other.

6.2.1.3 Technological knowledge

Many of the tutors agreed that the quality of the online content is essential for the success of any interactive online course, as it is the means of communication between the learner and the studied course. These tutors agreed that a familiarity with authoring tools for online content is an important part of the online tutor's knowledge. In addition the majority of tutors agreed that the tutor's technological knowledge has to be more advanced for the online tutor than for the face-to-face tutor. In the individual interview, Int1 from FG1 stated that “it is very uncommon to find a tutor who is well-trained in the use of the available technology in teaching.”

Tutors in the four focus groups listed various examples of technical knowledge such as presentation skills, familiarity with multimedia, games and simulations. In the individual interview, Int7 from FG2 explained that the online tutor needs to understand virtualisation, the virtual student and virtual content to be able to communicate through various tools. Several tutors focused on the

benefits of the tutor's technical knowledge; specifically, in FG4, two tutors agreed that by developing their internet skills, tutors could browse and answer students' questions in an easy and timely manner. In FG2, Int7 emphasised that there is no way to implement strategies such as engaging and motivating learners without this knowledge.

There was disagreement between online tutors in both FG3 and FG4 on the dependence of developing these skills through official CPD or the tutors' own efforts. It was observed that many tutors who were talking about their advanced IT knowledge agreed that there was a need for self-development which did not depend on official CPD only. Int7, from FG2, further detailed in the individual interview the extra individual efforts needed for tutors to develop and update their technological knowledge. On the other hand, many of those tutors who seemed to be novices in the matter of technology and asked other tutors about these issues listed this knowledge as an essential requirement in CPD.

6.2.2 Characteristics of online tutors

All tutors agreed that there are basic characteristics of online tutors. In this section, tutors referred to these as: flexibility; passion to learn; communication skills; decision making; and creativity. These characteristics are summarised in the following figure (6-4):

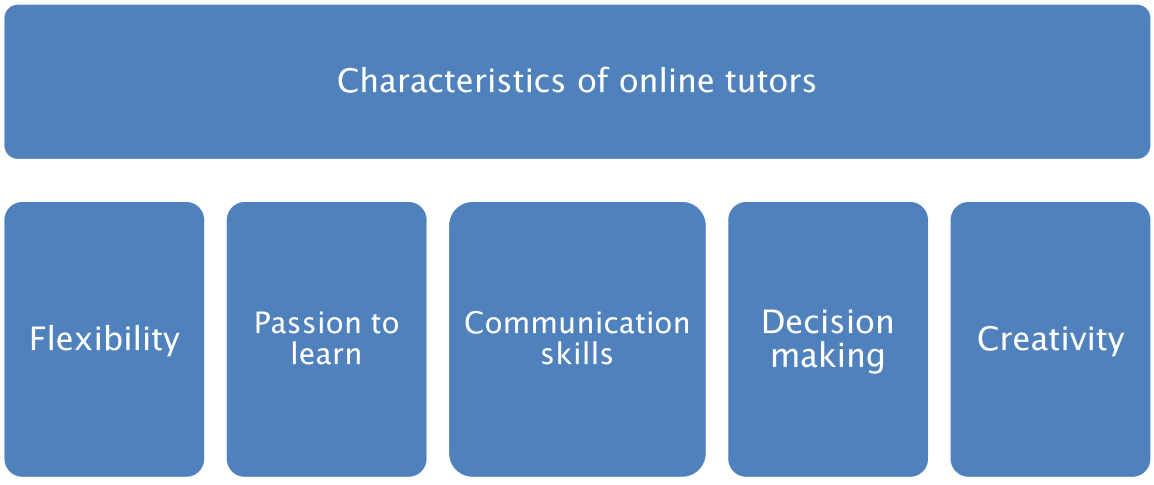


Figure 6-4: Characteristics of online tutors

The disagreements centred on whether a tutor needs CPD to initiate these characteristics, or whether they initially needed to be present in the tutor, then maintained and developed by teaching practices and training programmes.

6.2.2.1 Flexibility

A number of tutors agreed that flexibility is an essential characteristic of the online tutor. Tutors commented on various aspects of flexibility in teaching strategies and approaches, the date and time of teaching, and communicating with students. On this latter point, Int1 in FG1 elaborated:

> "I can receive students' phone calls and respond to their emails in non-office times. I can listen and give advice for any concerns they found while studying".

In FG2, Int7 remarked: "If we agree that OL is a flexible environment, how can its tutor be inflexible?" Another aspect of flexibility that four tutors in FG1 agreed on was that the online tutor sometimes needed to know how to change seats with the students, so the tutor wears the students' hats, to be able to understand their aims and abilities, in order to plan appropriate teaching strategies.

6.2.2.2 Passion to learn

The second characteristic many tutors agreed on was the tutors' passion for learning and development. Tutors mentioned various reasons to sustain learning – in the individual interview Int3, from FG1, for example stated,

> "Sometimes we were asked to teach something that we are not trained for. In this case, I may not quite understand a student's question because of lack of knowledge. Hence, personal efforts for knowledge are the safeguard in this embarrassing situation".

Another tutor highlighted that the near unlimited information of the internet is a big challenge for the online tutor, and that they need to learn all the time to be able to cope. Another reason to sustain learning reported by two tutors was the limitation of CPD opportunities which necessitates individual ongoing learning. Two tutors in FG2 and FG4 confirmed that online tutors needed to be intrinsically motivated to learn, and not try to develop their knowledge because of solely extrinsic reasons.

6.2.2.3 Communication skills

A third characteristic highlighted by a number of tutors was communication skills - two tutors in FG3 agreed that tutors who have a higher level of communication skills can engage learners more easily than others.

6.2.2.4 Decision-making

Two tutors mentioned decision-making as a further characteristic of the online-tutor, though in different contexts - Int3, in FG1, talked about making decisions about a suitable learning mode: blending; synchronous; synchronous for the suitable learner; visual; reader; kinaesthetic, while Int20, in FG4, mentioned the skill as necessary to decide when and with whom to implement a teacher-centred or a student-centred learning strategy.

6.2.2.5 Creativity

Discussion about tutors' creativity did not go in-depth in the four focus groups. Few tutors, in FG2 and FG4, agreed that the online tutor needs to be creative. One tutor only, Int8 in FG2, gave an example of creativity in his teaching practices in the individual interview. This tutor explained that student brainstorming is one of the creative teaching strategies that he uses. He stated,

> "I ask my students to define an issue within the studied topic, diagnose a problem, propose possible solutions and possible limitations to the proposed solutions."

6.2.3 Responsibilities of online tutors

In general there was agreement among the majority of the tutors that the online tutor's work is more difficult than the face-to-face tutor's work. Some tutors in FG3 and FG2 reasoned that this was because the list of responsibilities for online tutors is longer. In detail, online tutors' 'responsibilities included initiating a teaching plan/task/strategy at the beginning, followed by implementing and maintaining these plans and strategies within the course and finally, to evaluate them at the end. In addition some tutors mentioned the tutors' responsibilities with respect to the course time, since there are some tasks to be done before the course starts, for

example; uploading resources before the session; other tasks are within the session such as live discussion with students. Other tasks are after the session such as lesson/course feedback.

There are a number of responsibilities of the online tutor that the majority of tutors agreed on, such as uploading resources, lesson planning, observing, monitoring, engaging and motivating students. These responsibilities are illustrated in the following figure (Figure 6-5)

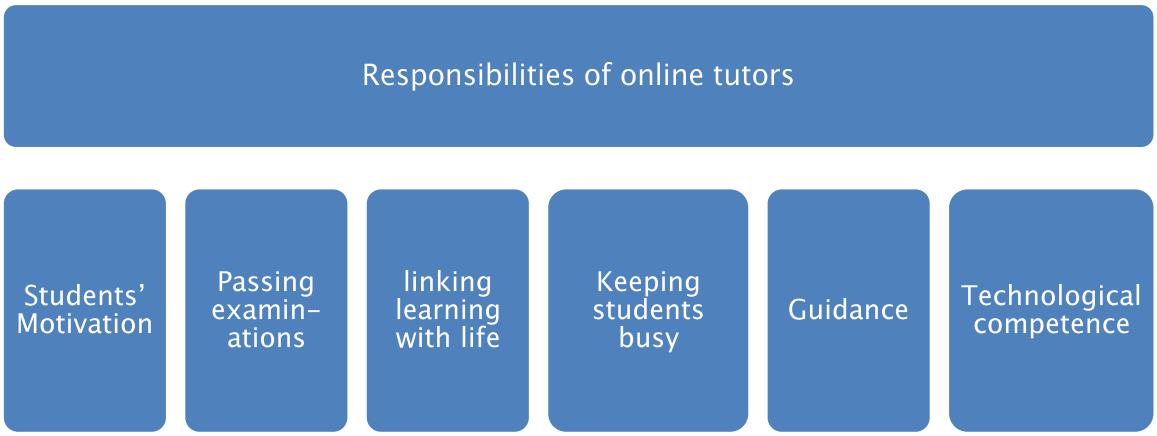


Figure 6-5: Responsibilities of online tutors

6.2.3.1 Students' Motivation

Regarding the issue of motivation, Int8 in FG2 and Int19 in FG4 both added that it is a question of both initiating and maintaining students' motivation throughout the course. The issue of initiating motivation, however, was a point of disagreement between tutors, as some tutors argued that students would not sign up for an online course if they were not initially motivated and engaged to complete the course, and that therefore the tutor's role was restricted to maintaining this engagement throughout the course. On the other hand, other tutors explained that it is the tutor role to initiate this motivate with students. In FG2, Int7 stated,

> "When I see the learner does not have an interest in the subject matter, it is my role to initiate this interest by creating opportunities for interaction between me, student, peers and the content studied "

6.2.3.2 Passing examinations

Tutors in FG1, FG3 and FG4 all commented on the tutors' basic responsibility to teach students and to help them successfully pass their examinations, though again this was a point of disagreement with other tutors.

The first argument was that several tutors were of the opinion that the online tutor does not teach but facilitate. Int7 in FG2 explained that: “OL declares the death of the tutor, being replaced by the bridge of knowledge which is the online tutor.” FG1, Int1 elaborated on this:

> “I should not give all information to my students in one go, one page leads to a diagram, then they click a button to highlight part of the diagram with more details, then they press a button to give the definition and function for each label. This can open the discovery in learning, the curiosity to know more details."

The second argument was that some tutors, in FG16 and FG4, thought that passing examinations should not be considered the student’s main objective of learning. Int19 in FG4 stated, “Passing exam needs to be replaced by achieving students’ learning objectives.”

6.2.3.3 Linking learning with life

In FG2 and FG4, tutors talked about managing students’ learning experiences from A to Z, while in FG4 two tutors mentioned that the online tutor needs to help students to think out of the box and link their learning with their real-life practice after graduation. In the individual interview, Int8 from FG2 added:

> “I help my students to find jobs while learning to know how much what they learn is related to their career. Also, to identify what a workplace looks like for that career.”

6.2.3.4 Keeping students busy

Most tutors agreed that keeping students busy is one of tutor’s responsibilities. In this regard, many perspectives have been reported. One tutor in FG2 summarised the online tutor's responsibility as keeping students busy by assigning tasks and projects. For him, this was the key to student control. Many tutors, in FG1 and FG4, agreed that knowing learners is one of

the main tutor responsibilities. The argument in focus groups was about how to know these learners. Some tutors suggested that it is an ongoing process, while, in FG3, two tutors confirmed that pre-course interviews are important to know learners. In FG2, class work and assigned tasks are referred to as methods to know learners. In FG3, feedback and evaluation were reported as a method to know learners.

6.2.3.5 Guidance

Student guidance was mentioned in relation to a number of different aspects, such as education and personal guidance. In FG1, several tutors agreed that tutors needed to provide guidance for students on how to manage their time, while in FG2 the ideas of guidance towards self-evaluation and team spirit were highlighted. Additionally, many tutors commented that it is the online tutor's responsibility to guide student discovery to search for new information that is based on their interests. At this point, most tutors rated guided discovery by the tutor higher than student self-discovery.

6.2.3.6 Technological competence

A number of tutors discussed technological competence as one of the online tutor’s responsibilities. Int13 in FG3 remarked, in the individual interview, that "when tutors are fully in control of their technological tools, this control helps them to interpret the learning objectives and aims and allows them to select appropriate online tools such as videos or games. These tools help the students to achieve these learning outcomes.” However, some tutors viewed this as a challenge, and suggested that it is not the tutor’s responsibility alone, but one shared by decision makers and school administrators to facilitate the training that enable tutors to become technologically competent. This topic is discussed further in the theme “Concerns about CPD”. A summary of the online tutor's responsibilities can be found in the table below (Table 6-1).

Before	Within	After
Knowing learners Technological competence Preparing resources	Guidance Teaching Monitoring Managing students' learning experiences	Evaluation and feedback

Table 6-1: OL tutor responsibilities applied to the time before, within or after the course

6.2.4 Challenges for Online Tutors

In this section, tutors reported many challenges that they viewed as limitations to undertaking teaching within the OL environment. These limitations are: the physical absence of tutor and student; engaging students; lack of CPD; lack of tutor-tutor communication; lack of incentives; being asked a question by a student that the tutor does not know the answer. The following diagram (Figure 6-6) presents a summary of the online tutor's challenges:

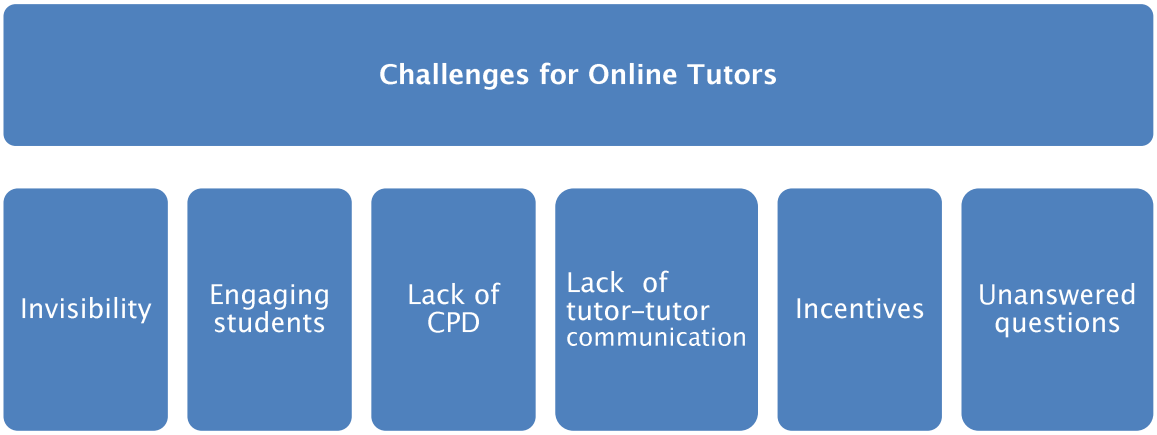


Figure 6-6: Challenges for online tutors

In addition to the challenges discussed below, there are a number of common challenges most tutors agree on which have been discussed as challenges for OL in general, but which also apply to online tutors as individuals, such as over-crowded classes, content coverage, and rigidity of the official syllabus.

6.2.4.1 Invisibility

A number of tutors stated that invisibility of online students led to difficulties to observe, track and control them. The question “How can I guarantee that the work has been done by the student himself?” was asked by two tutors in FG2 and FG4, and was answered by two tutors who applied different strategies. One mentioned developing the student’s skill of self-evaluation to determine what has improved and what areas still need improvement. The second talked about trusting students.

6.2.4.2 Engaging students

Many tutors reported engaging OL students as a challenge, both with respect to the aforementioned invisibility (tutors in FG3 and FG4 asked, again, how to make sure that the students are engaged while they are unable to see them), and with respect to the lack of face-to-face interaction which results in students getting bored, demotivated and disengaged, or dropping out. Even worse, two tutors in FG1 and FG2 reported a concern that a student opting out from a course can lead to enquiries about the tutor's proficiency and ability to engage students.

6.2.4.3 Lack of CPD

This is reported as a main challenge for many online tutors, though two tutors in FG2 and FG4 disagreed, instead stating that it is the online tutors’ responsibility to develop themselves and be technologically up-to-date. In contrast, Int16 in FG4 argued that self-developing cannot be done if there is no CPD provided by the university. Many tutors link this challenge with the difficulty to customise their courses and individualise their teaching strategies especially in connection to the issue of overcrowded classes. This topic is discussed further in the theme “Concerns about CPD”.

6.2.4.4 Lack of tutor-tutor communication and collaboration

It was observed that those tutors who mentioned this as a challenge were the same tutors who previously favoured the use of social networks in learning. These tutors stressed the need to communicate and collaborate with other online tutors worldwide. One of these tutors, in FG2, explained how exchanging knowledge and experience with others is useful for tutors as well

as for students, and a tutor in FG4 emphasised that the novelty of OL means a need to get in touch with others who have more expertise and are more knowledgeable in this area.

6.2.4.5 Incentives

Some tutors mentioned that they needed incentives to be motivated in their work. The exact nature of the incentives discussed among tutors varied, with some tutors considering financial incentives such as a bonus, others certificates of appreciation, while tutors in FG2 only mentioned subscriptions for free training courses as incentives for them.

6.2.4.6 Unanswered questions

Tutors were concerned about being asked a question by a student where they did not know the answer. This was highlighted in three of the focus groups. Int10 in FG2 commented: “We are competing against Google; the student can “Google” anything now and I need to be fully knowledgeable about the course content.” Some tutors in FG1, FG3 and FG4 also revealed their concerns about feeling embarrassed if they were asked a question where they do not know the answer. However, two other tutors in FG4 disagreed that this was a matter of concern; the first claimed that “online tutors are not supposed to answer all questions; this point can be a task for a student to search” (FG4, Int18), while the second claimed: “I do not feel embarrassed about not knowing the answer and declare it to my students. If it happens, I work on it and send the answer straight away as soon as I find it” (FG2, Int8).

6.2.5 Concern about losing control

Many tutors expressed their concerns about losing control in OL, principally related to the control of the students (this issue is discussed in the theme “Online students”). The issue here, however, is that of the tutors' understanding of control. Once again, many of these viewpoints were expressed in the individual interviews rather than in the focus groups.

Tutors commented on the issue of control from three points of view. Firstly, several tutors felt it was important for the tutor to feel in control of a session. In the individual interview one tutor claimed that “No learning can occur if the

student does not feel the tutor's control and feel how strong a personality and power he or she possesses" (Int2, FG1).

Secondly, several other tutors discussed a different understanding of control; these tutors commented that there is no absolute freedom and likewise there is no absolute control. They stressed that giving control needs to be gradual, at a point where the tutor thinks that the student is ready and able to take this control. Another tutor added that it might be necessary to change the concept of control and what is meant by losing power; he looked at control as "understanding others' viewpoints, even if they are different or the topic is controversial, respecting them. Also, what power I have over the learner? How can I practice this power? If we disagreed what I may lose or gain?" (Int9, FG2). It was observed that this tutor raised questions with no answers.

The third view point is where learners' freedom was totally rejected. Two tutors in FG1 and FG4 rejected empowering learners and giving them freedom. However, their rejection was not based on their experience, as they used expressions such as "We all know", "It is obvious" and "The community does not approve". For example, Int15 in FG3, when he was asked about giving control to students, stated,

> "I disagree, as it is well known that students at this age will not be able to use freedom in learning the way that they should do to learn and pass their examinations."

In summary, tutors agreed on *empowering* learners and giving them *control.* However, empowering learners for the interviewees may need understanding about what is meant by control, power and what is gained or lost when students are empowered. It was observed that a few tutors agreed that the online tutor needs to be creative. However, in the previous section about the characteristics of online students, many tutors agreed that student creativity is a prerequisite for them to study online. Therefore, as there is no clear distinction between teaching creatively and teaching for creativity (NACCCE, 1999), tutor creativity is a focused element of the characteristics of an online tutor. Moreover, *losing* control and tutors *respect* are two main concerns for online tutors. Also, invisibility of online students led to difficulties to observe, track and control students. That highlights tutor-student *trust* as element to be discussed. Moreover, tutors agreed that flexibility in teaching strategies and

approaches is important. Therefore, the issue of *resistance* from the perspective that tutors teach as they were taught, needs to be discussed. Finally, tutors highlighted different types of *knowledge* (content, soft skills and technological knowledge) needed and the *CPD* required for each type of knowledge. The following diagram summarises the main themes highlighted, and mentioned above.

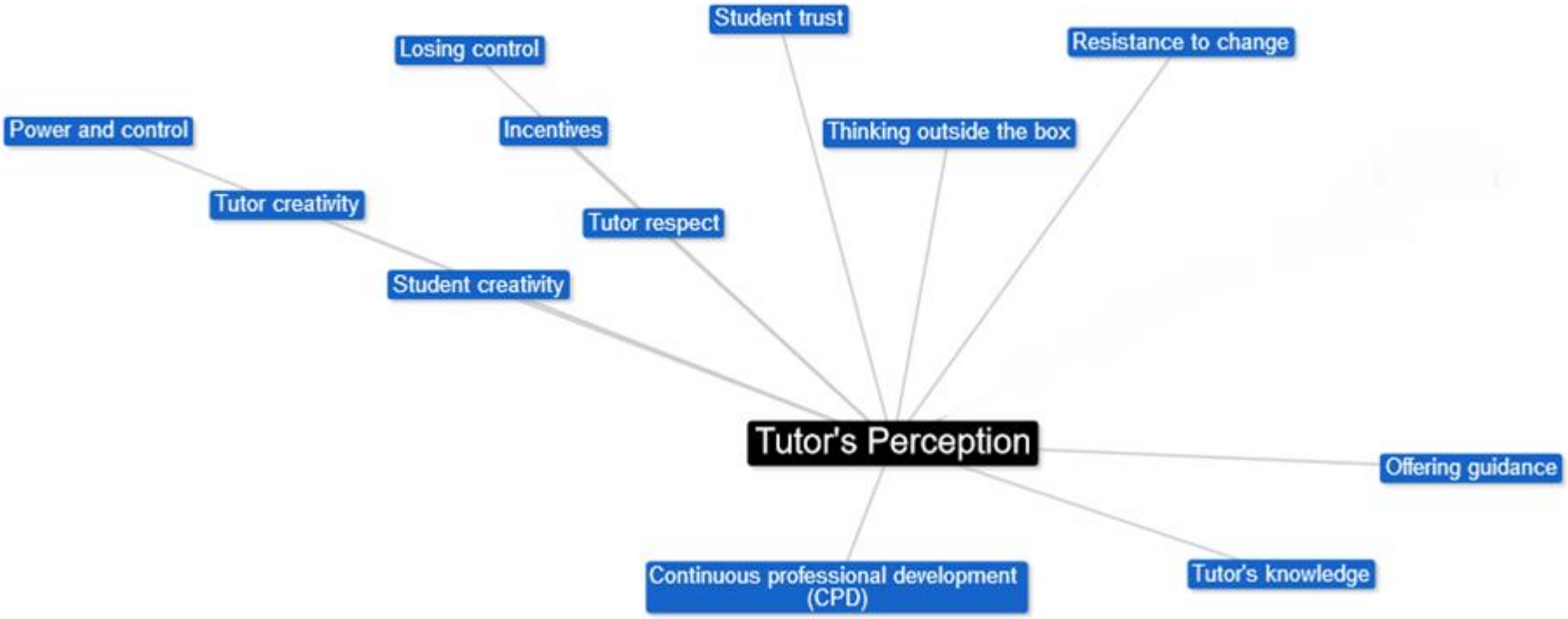


Figure 6-7: Summary of: online tutors: knowledge, characteristics, responsibilities and challenges

6.3 For and Against Online Social Collaboration

This section reports the findings of the super theme “For and Against Online Social Collaboration”. Four different aspects to this issue emerged from the data: a) The impact of OL on social collaboration/isolation, b) Methods of social communication, c) The role of the tutor in encouraging and maintaining social collaboration, d) Advantages and disadvantages of online forums as a proposed method of social collaboration

6.3.1 The impact of OL on social collaboration/isolation

In their focus group discussions, the tutors had a number of different views about social collaboration and social isolation in OL. Some tutors were optimistic about the affordance of OL for social communication and collaboration for online students. Among these optimistic tutors, some confirmed that being "invisible" in the OL learning environment is an advantage for some students who had difficulties in socialising with others. For example, one tutor stated, "One of my students expresses himself better when he is behind the screen than face to face” (FG4, Int17). Three more tutors added that, on the other hand, for students who are socially confident by nature, OL maximises their natural tendencies and widens their social network. Int9 in FG2 commented “OL allows students to explore diverse backgrounds, languages and cultures, to communicate and collaborate with students from these areas.”

In FG4, a gender based viewpoint was mentioned by one tutor, namely that in a conservative community, the undergraduate level is the first stage of education where boys and girls are mixed in one class. Int13 in FG3 stated, “In the face-to-face learning environment, girls are therefore normally shy and try to avoid talking to boys as much as possible”. Another tutor in the same focus group agreed and added that in this case OL provides a better social environment, where boys and girls can work collaboratively with less concerns to be physically viewed. In FG2, two tutors agreed that OL learning provides a good opportunity for girls to socialise and expand their social network; they even considered it better than face-to-face, since the girls can meet friends anytime and anywhere without leaving their homes.

On the other hand, a few tutors strongly expressed their opinion that OL leads to social isolation, discussing this idea both with a view to all students indiscriminately, and to introvert students in particular. Two tutors, in FG1 and FG3 respectively, argued that this was an issue that affects all students; in their view, dealing with the computer screen for a long time deprives students of human interaction and creates virtual substitutes - "Avatar replaces Muhammad," as one tutor (FG1 Int1) put it. In the individual interview another tutor (FG4, Int17) commented that many students preferred checking their friends' Facebook updates or posting messages to them to contacting these friends in reality.

A second viewpoint, offered by tutors, was regarding students who have difficulties with social skills by nature. Several tutors in FG4 stressed that OL would definitely minimise students' ability to socialise. Other tutors in this focus group agreed, and the issue was also highlighted in FG3; the main argument in both FGs, however, was about individual differences in students' personalities. Some tutors linked the issue of social isolation or collaboration to the student's nature rather than the nature of the learning mode (face-to-face or OL). In the end, most tutors agreed that if a student is shy or has difficulties in communicating or socially interacting with others, this student will behave the same in a classroom as online.

6.3.2 Methods of social communication

The second issue to emerge related to the different methods recommended by online tutors for online collaboration. Most tutors in the focus groups tended to recommend social networks, explaining that through these sites students can chat, comment, discuss, and share resources. However, the majority of tutors had a negative opinion of Facebook. For example, Int13 in FG3 stated "Facebook is an open and informal network, so it is unreliable". Several therefore recommended Wikis and Blogs, but others were ambiguous about recommending sites at all. These tutors highlighted their need to use CPD for such programmes in a later section (as will be explained in the theme "Concerns about CPD"). The majority of tutors recommended social forums which are part of the Learning Management System (LMS); some added that they recommend social forums in the LMS on the condition that they are fully monitored by the university server. Indeed, one of the tutors had a restrictive

view on the purpose of social networks, he stated “social networks should be restricted to the topics discussed only, no side topics that allow learners to drift away” (FG1, Int5).

6.3.3 The role of the tutor in encouraging and maintaining social collaboration

A further issue was reported with regard to the tutor’s role. All tutors agreed that it is part of the online tutor's role to maximise and maintain social collaboration between online students. Two tutors suggested that the tutor needs to initiate some activities, sometimes sharing, sometimes commenting. During Fg2, Int9 suggested that the tutor can facilitate the basics of group work on small projects to give an example that students can learn from and follow in other projects. Several tutors mentioned the importance of the tutor’s role in selecting group members to form homogenous groups that work together successfully. In the one-to-one interview, Int9 in FG2 explained that, in some groups, one person is the dominator and others are marginalised. This tutor stated “Some group members monopolise the discussion and impose their ideas on others”. Notably, this was a point mentioned by tutors who had concerns about group work and had had a negative experience with working in groups in the past. Another aspect on which tutors agreed was students need to be observed in online collaborative work.

6.3.4 Advantages and disadvantages of online forums as a proposed method of social collaboration

The fourth and final issues referred to the advantages or disadvantages of online forums. Regarding advantages, several perspectives were reported. One tutor (FG3, Int15) suggested that it means less work for the online tutor when students collaborate and communicate with each other - this tutor explained that as students share the resources together they can get information from each other. Two tutors in FG2 and FG4 were of the opinion that social networks work well to break the ice between students in OL, and another added that, through these social forums, students could stay up-to-date regarding timetables, examinations, and assigned tasks.

Few tutors brought up the idea of student-student interaction in online forums. Members, in FG2, Int8 and Int9 discussed the steps of this interaction,

as online students get to know each other first, then exchange information and experiences with each other. Further, Int10 in the same focus group suggested that, at this point, most probably these students may start thinking together and elaborate on their thoughts together. Student-tutor interaction was mentioned as another type of interaction by Int18 and Int19 in FG4. Int18 commented that interaction is a two-way influence between student and tutor, stating that "there is tutor-student interaction where I get to know my learners through interacting and socialising with them."

Another advantage of social collaboration, mentioned by one tutor in FG4, is that when students socialise, discuss, comment, agree and disagree, they feel that they take part in decision-making. Two other tutors (FG2, Int8 and FG4, Int16) linked shared decision-making with students' feelings of responsibility as well as with students' motivation and being encouraged to study online. Notably, when these tutors mentioned the issues of "shared decision-making and responsibility", two other tutors in the group agreed that this is student-centred learning.

Conversely, there were disadvantages to online social collaboration which caused concerns for some tutors. Two tutors in FG2 and FG4 suggested that they would restrict social collaboration to group projects only. They attributed this to concerns about communicating with anonymous people (as will be discussed in the theme "Novelty"). In FG2, one tutor in a one-to-one interview, confirmed "I recommend social forums but excluding the social aspect from them". When I asked about the meaning of "excluding the social aspect" in social forums, the tutor explained that:

> "If the group is closed, private and members are assigned only by the tutor, this means that this is a socially excluded group".

There were also tutors who believed that online social forums are simply not for learning. In FG1, Int6 described it as "a waste of time". Two more tutors in FG1 and FG4 highlighted their concerns in the form of questions:

> "If a student gives wrong information to another student in an online group work, how can you as a tutor know? How do you correct this wrong information? How can I know what they learn from each other? How can I make sure that what they learn is useful and correct?"

Some tutors repeated what had been said on the role of tutors in guidance and monitoring as discussed earlier, but the tutors who had raised the questions did not seem fully persuaded.

The tutors who had discussed the influence of the individual differences between students in their social collaboration and the issue of isolation highlighted a number of concerns. In FG3 and FG4, a few tutors agreed that, for some students, forums are distractive, claiming students rely on the tutor as the only source of knowledge, and any knowledge from any other source is a distraction. Another concern of losing student's attention was raised by two tutors in FG4, one of them again mentioned that when students work collaboratively, the tutor becomes not the only source of information in the session. Another tutor (FG2, Int8) added that as a consequence maybe a student will not be attentive in listening to the tutor any more, since there are others who can be sources of information instead. Another tutor, who in general had a positive perception of students' online communication and collaboration (FG1 Int1), highlighted that group discussion in group work can end up discussing topics away from the official syllabus. At this point, more tutors started stressing the importance of content coverage and time limitation. In the final debate between advantages and disadvantages of group work, in FG2, two tutors confirmed that group work needs early preparation. Int8 stated "Not all students know how to either criticise others or how to respond to criticism." Finally, in FG1, Int1 in the one-to-one interview, linked the political disagreements between citizens in Egypt in the last few years and discussions between students. Therefore, the tutor suggested that this disagreement may lead to opening similar topics in online forums which he prefers to avoid.

In summary, tutors listed advantages and disadvantages of social collaboration and group work. Advantages are: less work for tutors as students share their knowledge and experience, interaction and communication between students and tutors and between students themselves; developing student skills in decision making. Disadvantages of social collaboration and group work are: the risk of communicating with anonymous people; the diversity of learners, may cause social isolation, distraction and time wasting for some learners. Therefore, *group work* as a separate item is discussed in the next chapter. The

following diagram summarises the main themes highlighted, and mentioned above.

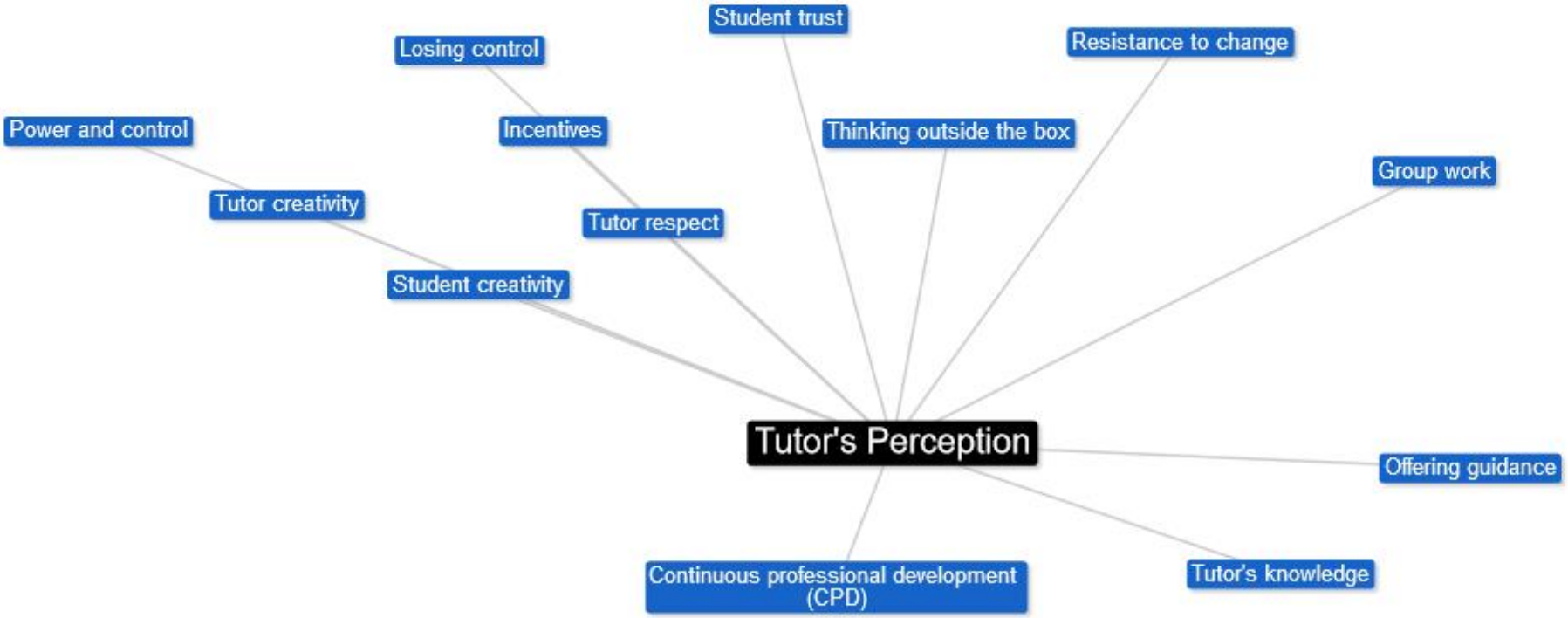


Figure 6-8: Summary of: for and against online social collaboration

6.4 Monitoring and Guiding Feedback

According to the respondents' statements, two perspectives about monitoring students and guiding feedback, can be identified; firstly, tutors report how and why they observe and record students' activities that take place. Secondly, there is the issue of student feedback; here tutors explain how and why they collect information from students so as to be able to use it as guidance.

6.4.1 Monitoring

Tutors stated four different perspectives in this section, Firstly, OL affordance to monitor students, Secondly, impact of tutor's personality in monitoring students. Thirdly, the need to monitor online students, fourthly, benefits of monitoring students.

6.4.1.1 OL affordance to monitor students

When tutors were asked about the differences between OL and face-to-face, more than half agreed that one of the advantages of face-to-face learning is that students can be easily monitored. Many tutors in FG1, FG3 and FG4 reasoned that in face-to-face both student and tutor are physically present. Another tutor (FG2, Int8) added that in face-to-face there are a small number of students in the class, which facilitates monitoring. Regarding OL, tutors' opinions about OL's affordance to monitor students were varied. According to these opinions, tutors can broadly be classified into one of the groups, as discussed in this section.

The first group consists of tutors who highlighted the effective role of innovative technologies when it came to monitoring students. Two tutors in FG1 and FG2 reported that the university server monitors what time the students login and logoff from a session. Another two tutors in FG4, who are familiar with social networks in their teaching, explained that there is a "track changes" feature which can be used in social network sites such as Wikis to monitor students. One of the tutors explained that these tracking features enable tutors to identify who has added, deleted or altered a page, text or picture. Also the date and time of these changes are recorded. Two tutors in FG4 who had not yet mentioned anything about monitoring in social networks,

had a positive reaction to learning about this feature. They asked the tutor who explained initially to give them more details later.

A few tutors of the opinion that monitoring in OL is unreliable, belong to a second group. One tutor stated that "students know very well how to do tricks with this technology" (FG3, Int13), and another tutor (FG1, Int4) gave an example of where students could log in to a session and their login time was recorded on the system while they were not actually in front of the computer. In the one-to-one interview Int20 in FG4 mentioned that she has observed that some students could log in to the required website and be registered as logged in while actually surfing the internet to other websites which can be deemed non-educational.

A final third group consists of a few tutors who think that OL students are more fully monitored than face-to-face students. Specifically they mentioned that voice and camera recording, browsing histories, tracking changes and other technological features can fully record students' activities in a session. There was, however, a point of disagreement - a few tutors asked how one could record students' activities while they are not on campus or at their homes? Some tutors had no answer to this question, but a few suggested the *second* perspective in this section which is the role of the tutor and their personality can facilitate the monitoring of students

6.4.1.2 Impact of tutor's personality in monitoring students

Specifically, Int2 in FG1 stated that "the tutor's personality is the key word" - if the tutor keeps students busy in tasks and assignments and the work was submitted on time, he argued, they do not need any monitoring as it means they can efficiently manage themselves. Another tutor in an individual interview (Int8 from FG2) mentioned that he had his own method of monitoring students in the session - he explained that he could monitor students by listening to their voices to identify who shared and who did not. This tutor provided an example of a session he observed where a student did not collaborate or discuss any topic in the session: "I called this student by name and asked him a challenging question related to what I had mentioned in the session."

This debate between the affordance of technology to monitor students on and off campus, led to discussion of the *third* perception in this section.

6.4.1.3 The need to monitor online students

This perception was conceptualised in FG2 and FG4 in form of a question, the answer to which tutors discussed between themselves: "Do we really need to monitor online students?" The tutors in these two focus groups answered the question in the negative for a number of reasons. One tutor (Int20 in FG4) explained that in OL there is no way of monitoring students, since both tutor and student are invisible. Another reason was given by two other tutors who proposed that online students do not need to be monitored through extrinsic tools such as recording their logs. One of these tutors (FG3, Int12) stated, "Online students need to be intrinsically alert to their time and self-management". In FG2, Int8 agreed that online students are already motivated to learn, and do not need any guidance for monitoring. Int7 in FG2 likewise strongly disagreed with the view that tutors need to monitor students – in his opinion in OL monitoring is too strict; in an environment where flexibility and responsibility are valued, monitoring students contravenes the development of skills such as independence and responsibility. This tutor commented that "only prisoners are monitored," and remarked that if we need to develop students' abilities to use their freedom and be responsible, they should not be monitored.

On the other hand, one of the tutors (FG4, Int19) insisted that students need to be monitored, even if they are not fully monitored in terms of websites visited or tracked changes. Due to the novelty of this free learning (OL), this tutor argued that students need to know that all their activities are monitored and saved on the university server.

6.4.1.4 Benefits of monitoring students

Tutors reported three different benefits. For one, many tutors have concerns about students' affordance of time and self-management; most of these tutors claimed that monitoring students on how they manage their work and time is a good method for information on how to guide them. One tutor stated,

> "If I can know more about my students' attitude towards time and self-management, this knowledge can guide me in helping the student improve." (FG2, Int10)

As mentioned above, several tutors stated that they seldom assign group projects for learning. However, three tutors who did assign group projects explained that monitoring is very important for team work in order to identify the share that each member in the group contributes to the project, so that based on this share, the student can get a mark.

A third benefit for monitoring students related to the cultural perspective; a number of tutors agreed that in Egyptian society both families and tutors are concerned about the students' understanding and use of freedom. Many tutors therefore regard monitoring students as an initial step before giving them this freedom. Similarly, as one tutor explained (FG4, Int19), monitoring is a way to reassure parents that the tutors control their students in their learning.

In summary, tutors' viewpoints about monitoring students are contrasting. Some tutors reported that online students can be easily monitored because of the affordance of innovative technologies, while others argued this claim based on the difficulty of monitoring students in OL because both the tutors and students are not physically present. The third view disagrees on monitoring students in OL, as students are intrinsically motivated to learn and able to manage themselves. Hence, there is no need for monitoring.

6.4.2 Guiding feedback

The following section reports: findings on the importance of student feedback; methods that tutors in this study used to obtain this feedback; and challenges that tutors confronted with student feedback.

6.4.2.1 Importance of feedback

All tutors agreed on the importance of student feedback. In addition, they mentioned a number of different benefits. In general, the main benefit for most tutors with respect to getting student feedback is for student's academic achievement and for support if there is struggle with any topic in the taught lesson. Many tutors stressed that feedback is important in reflecting whether the student has any difficulties or to identify areas for improvement. An example was mentioned by Int9 in FG2, who in the individual interview reported that, in one post-session feedback, one of the students mentioned that she had difficulties with a certain lesson; in response to this feedback the

tutor could identify that she needed a one-to-one tutorial, based on which the student could develop her skills in the formerly problematic area.

In FG4, three tutors agreed on the importance of guiding feedback to identify, maintain and encourage students' creative learning. One of the tutors (FG4, Int17) commented: "In the feedback I can see each learner clearly". Another tutor (FG4, Int20) mentioned that in student feedback the students can freely communicate with tutors. In the one-to-one interview, Int9 in FG3 explained that it was in one of the student's feedback comments after a session that he observed that this student had a specific interest in an advanced topic and had undertaken much research in it, and that he could therefore encourage her to go further. Therefore, he could support this student to present her work in an important conference. Notably, the tutor was very keen to show me (the researcher) the conference brochure where the student's name and her project title were in the conference proceedings.

Two tutors in FG2 (Int8 and Int9) explained that guiding feedback for them was the starting point of any online session. One of them explained: "I go through the last session's feedback and that is my next session's lesson plan." (FG2, Int9).

Another tutor (FG2, Int8) added in his interview that one of the benefits of student feedback was learning about his own area(s) of improvement. He stated, "By the end of each session, I tell my students, please list what you like and what you do not like about me as tutor, as I need to improve myself."

6.4.2.2 Methods of feedback

The second issue that emerged from the debate refers to the methods tutors use to get this feedback from their students, when considering the differences between OL and face-to-face. In FG3, there was an argument as to the approaches each tutor took to get course feedback. Two tutors felt that online surveys could offer sufficient feedback since students could answer the questions from home in a flexible environment. Another tutor added that some students were too shy or embarrassed or not confident enough to express themselves freely with a tutor in a face to face interview. On the other hand, two more tutors disagreed with the view that online surveys reflect the truth of student feedback. They found that in online surveys where students are not visible they are not obliged to tell the truth. One of these two tutors reported:

“Students would fill in the online form in a rush without reading the questions. It is unreliable for me." (FG3, Int13). This tutor confirmed that reliable feedback mainly relies on face-to-face interviews between the student and the tutor, so the tutor can capture both verbal and non-verbal cues. Another tutor in the same focus group (FG3, Int15) confirmed this, and added that in a face-to-face interview as a method for feedback, the tutor has more control over the situation and can keep the student focused and on track to completion. Yet, another tutor in the same FG who was ambiguous on the issue in the beginning concluded the discussion stating that both methods should be used as both face-to-face interviews and online surveys have their individual advantages and disadvantages.

In FG2, Int9 remarked that students' comments and group discussions on social networks such as Facebook could be used as guiding feedback; he explained that in his experience of monitoring their comments, “students' comments reflect spontaneous feedback regarding students’ satisfaction and areas of improvement”.

Regarding the frequency of feedback and how often it needed to be considered, few tutors in FG2 and FG4 commented that students’ learning aims and objectives changed over the duration of the course, and that it was important to know students’ feedback as much as possible.

6.4.2.3 Challenges of feedback

The last perspective of this theme on guidance and feedback concerns the challenges that a tutor can encounter with students’ feedback. Int2 in FG2, explained in the one-to-one interview, that one of challenges for tutors when dealing with student feedback was that this feedback covers all aspects of a student's academic life, whether educational, administrative or financial. He stated,

> "Some aspects in the student feedback may be out of our scope as staff members, and we can do nothing for them; escalating these issues to the dedicated bodies is time consuming and with no benefit most of the time.” (FG2, Int2)

Another challenge, that of obtaining informative feedback, was reported by two tutors in FG2 and FG4 respectively; these tutors linked the issue of large

class size and the difficulty of dealing with feedback. One of the tutors commented that, although really each single point of student feedback needed to be carefully considered, “the more students in the class, the less care we can give about their feedback”.

In summary, tutors listed many benefits of students’ feedback, such as identifying student’s academic achievement and areas of improvement, in this section. This element complements the students ‘needs of being known (see section 6.1.5.4), since when tutors know their students, they will be able to offer the guidance that supports students in staying true to these objectives throughout their course of study. Also, tutors’ viewpoints about monitoring students are contrasting, between the affordance of technology to monitor students and the invisibility of online students that leads to the difficulty in monitoring and tracking students. Therefore, *Monitoring* as a separate item is discussed in the next chapter. The following diagram summarises the main themes highlighted, and mentioned above.

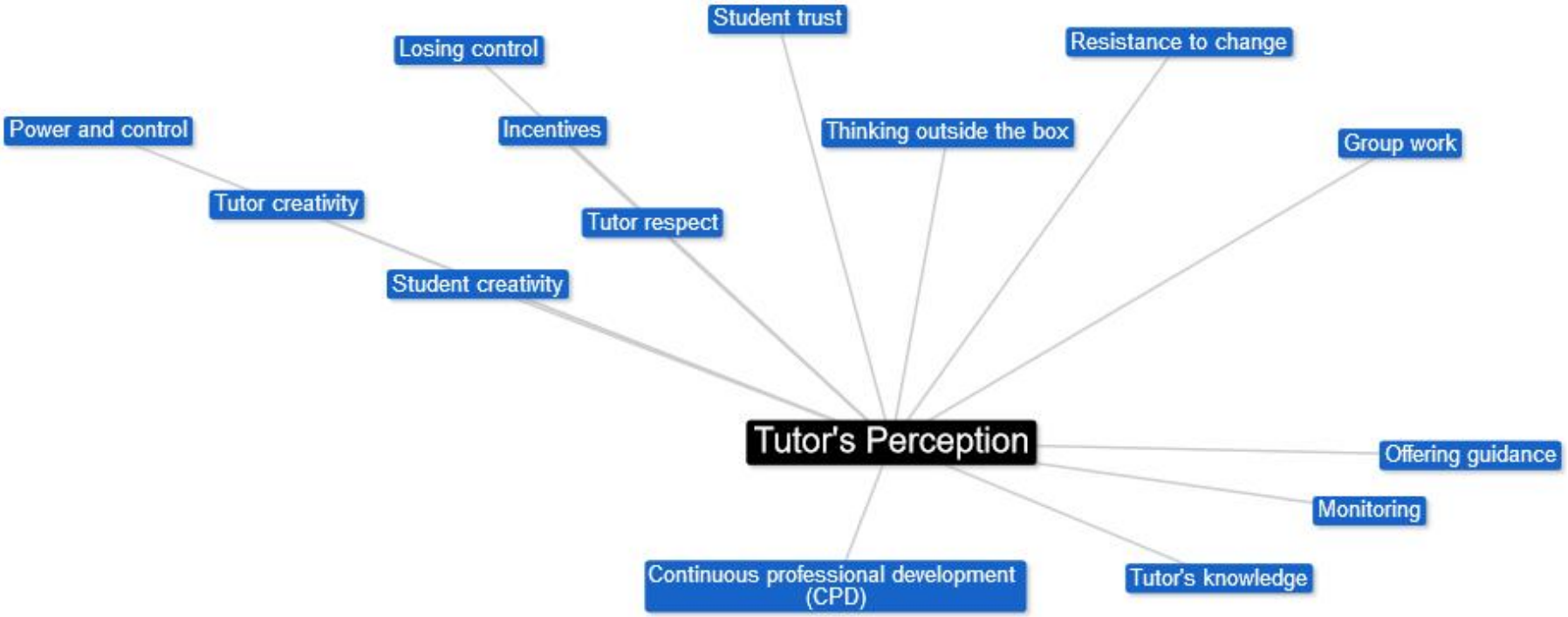


Figure 6-9: Summary of: monitoring and guiding feedback

6.5 Novelty: Technology and Terminology

This section looks at the theme of "Novelty" from three different perspectives: a) the novelty of the use of the internet in learning, b) the novelty of the understanding of freedom, control and group work, c) the novelty of using technological features in OL.

6.5.1 Novelty in the use of the internet in learning

Participants referred to the use of the internet from two viewpoints, namely socially and historically.

Socially speaking, a number of tutors stressed the social perspective of using the internet in learning. Specifically, in FG1, Int1 and Int3 agreed with the idea that since the internet appeared in Egypt, communicating with anonymous people and different communities has been considered a risk to the cultural and social values inherent in the community. Furthermore, in FG3, two more tutors commented that, in the beginning, the internet was only used for entertainment, particularly for social chats with other anonymous users. Compared to now, both agreed that other purposes have been added for the use on internet such as banking and shopping. In FG2, Int7 added that chatting with anonymous users was a hazard for conservative communities as found in Egypt. Another interviewee in FG1, Int2 explained that the internet was deemed to be a gate through which Western values and beliefs, which differ from Middle Eastern ones, could be imported. Another interviewee in the same focus group talked about the impact of the concerns for using the internet in Egypt, she stated, “In many cases the use of the internet was banned for many families and educational institutions” (FG1, Int4). In FG2 and FG3 two tutors explained the attitude towards using the internet in learning today, where each university has its own website which publishes and shares its valuable information. Both tutors confirmed that the use of internet for learning is agreed and considered for the majority of the community. Two tutors in FG1 and FG4 argued this claim and explained that the old fear of a negative impact on values and beliefs led to many families applying restrictions on their children's access to the internet (even if they are university students) and thus their use of the internet in learning.

Only a few tutors agreed that communicating with the unlimited online community has advantages, as it is a good opportunity for students to exchange knowledge and experiences with others from different cultures and backgrounds. Two tutors from FG2 and FG4 mentioned in the individual interview that students in higher education are mature enough to distinguish between which values can be taken and which can be left from different communities.

In summary, from the point of view of many tutors the idea of the internet as a learning environment rather than just a source of entertainment is relatively new. Few agree with the advantages of access to the unlimited online community, and there are still social and cultural fears and concerns about what students can learn from going online.

Historically speaking, few tutors mentioned the historical perspective of the use of internet in learning. Int7 in FG2, who is the oldest of all 20 interviewees, claimed the history of online study from when it first began its use was mainly restricted to non-vocational courses. This tutor explained that students who applied for these courses were either full time employees or students who could not obtain marks that would qualify them to join educational institutions that were officially accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE). The tutor added that “Online courses at that time meant a lower academic level of both staff and students and a non-valued certificate" (FG2, Int8). Some tutors agreed that the community still keeps this image of distance learning courses and devalue its vocational courses, and these tutors concluded that the contribution of distance learning courses to getting accredited and achieving an academically valued certificate is a new one.

In summary, the beginning of embedding online learning in the official curriculum leads to degrading the value of its courses studied and certificates obtained.

6.5.2 The novelty of using technological features in OL

Regarding this aspect, many interviewees listed a number of technological tools where they regarded themselves as novices. Four tutors in FG3 and FG4 explained that they were very much beginners in the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Blackboard or Moodle. Other interviewees

were positive in listening to other tutors talking about the available tools in social networks such as Wikis and Blogs. More inexperienced tutors were initially ambiguous about the use of social networks in learning, and commented that there were many features which were new to them. However, they were positive that these features could help with numerous aspects of teaching such as centralising the source of learning, or monitoring and tracking students. In this regard interviewees could be classified into one of three groups;

Group1 consisted of a few tutors who were aware and tried to practice a number of technological tools. In FG2, Int8 stated “I use all sorts of technological social networks to communicate with students; email, Skype, Facebook, MSN Messenger and Twitter”.

Group2 consisted of the majority of participants, who were aware of the main tools and recognised their main technological features, but they may not have tried them. In FG4, Int18 stated “I know that many social networks have options to create group work and to track changes. I assume this option can help us to check students’ work”.

A few remaining tutors, belonging in FG3, knew very little about technology. These tutors listed the need to learn about these new technological tools as requirements for CPD. In FG1, Int6 stated “I am using pen and paper with my students and ask them to use A3 papers for their posters”.

In summary, the majority of online tutors are novices with technological tools. However, many of them are aware of the existing features and affordance, but theoretically not experimentally.

6.5.3 Novelty of the understanding of freedom, control and group work

All tutors agreed that OL means the use of the internet in learning, which in their views entails open search for information in search engines and social communication in online forums. However, many tutors expressed concerns about the use of the internet in learning. On a number of occasions when topics like “open discovery for learning”, "free navigation” or “online social communication” were discussed, tutors made nearly the same comment, namely “It is new for our learners”. Int1 in FG1 even stated that “This generation is not ready at all to be empowered or given control in their

learning". Similarly, one tutor in FG4 concluded that "This freedom will be misused; it is a new language, and our students never spoke it before" (FG4, Int19). Int2 in FG1 added that the novelty of freedom in learning requires preparation steps beforehand. This tutor suggested that students need to know how to take care of themselves online first; they are novices in being responsible when dealing with the internet. In contrast, two tutors in FG2 and FG4 disagreed with these concerns about the use of freedom; for them OL was associated with concepts like "open learning" (derived from the idea of the internet being "unlimited") and "free learning" (derived from the idea of freedom). They argued that the novelty of freedom did not mean not giving it to students.

Another concept reported as novel by interviewees was "group work". Some respondents were ambiguous about this in the beginning, and several tutors said nothing at all about assigning group projects for their students when other tutors in the groups talked about the benefits of collaborative work where students work in pairs or small groups to discuss concepts, or find solutions to problems. Few tutors felt positively about the suggestion of encouraging students to work in groups, and other tutors highlighted concerns about group work. Int9 in FG2 reflected the views of some tutors who disagreed with the idea that students were ready to work collaboratively online – he argued that "students need early preparation to know the basics of working in groups, listening, and considering different points of view". In FG2, two tutors (Int7 and Int8) provided nearly identical examples about their experience with students working in an online group project. They explained that some of the members in the group had a tendency to compete, and thus waste their time in meaningless arguments and by challenging each other on topics which were not part of the official syllabus. One of these two tutors commented: "working in group wasted students' time to the extent that I struggled to finish the course content in due time". These two tutors did not explain that they avoided assigning group work because of its novelty. However, when Int7 in the same focus group explained that the spirit of team work was a relatively new idea, and that students needed to be prepared for it from an early stage of their education, other tutors agreed on his assumption.

In summary, the majority of tutors who reported their viewpoints highlighted that students need early preparation to use their online freedom and work

collaboratively in groups. Until then, tutors may not empower them to have this freedom or assign group work. So, elements such as: *power, control* and student *trust* are highlighted again in this section. The following diagram summarises the main themes highlighted, and mentioned above.

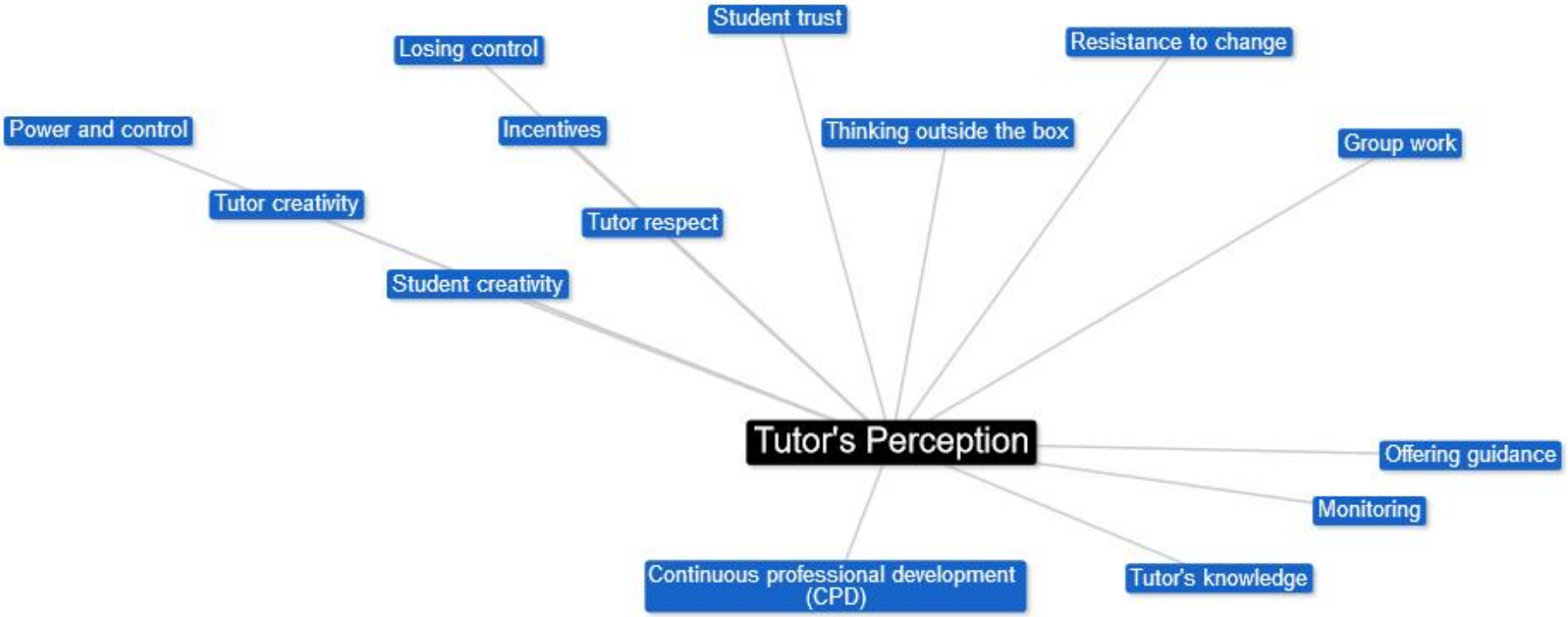


Figure 6-10: Summary of: novelty: technology and terminology

6.6 Education Climate

The findings in this section report on the tutors' viewpoints on several issues connected to the education climate. The individual sections of this theme cover: a) Online learning climate, b) Face-to-face learning climate, c) University climate, d) School climate, e) Governmental climate, f) Economic climate.

6.6.1 Online Learning climate

6.6.1.1 Challenges

In this section, tutors reported three challenges they confronted in the OL climate. They were invisibility, content coverage and limited creativity. Within invisibility, tutors explained two different difficulties, to obtain feedback from students and to observe them.

These challenges of OL are summarised in the following diagram (Figure 6-11):

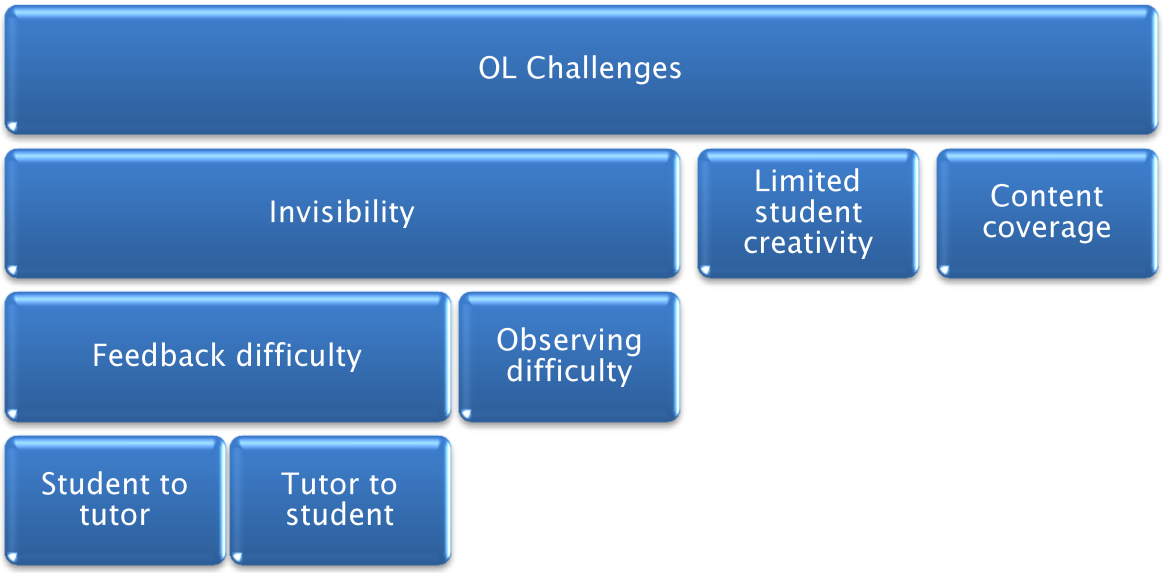


Figure 6-11: Challenges of online learning climate

Looking at the challenges and affordance of OL discussed so far it became clear that some tutors highlighted certain issues as advantages, while other tutors highlighted the same issues as disadvantages of OL. Regarding the disadvantages, a few tutors who consider these disadvantages as resultant

problems proposed solutions for these problems; but it needs to be mentioned that these solutions were discussed in their individual interviews, rather than in focus groups.

Regarding terminology, while most tutors in the focus groups and individual interview talked about the "disadvantages" of OL, Int7 in FG2 debated that while OL does have disadvantages, it would be better to substitute this expression with "challenges". According to him, “the challenges of OL inspire a person to look for opportunities for action and positive change”.

6.6.1.1.1 Invisibility

Most of the tutors regarded the "invisibility" of both tutor and student in OL as a major challenge; they discussed this issue using several different expressions and terms such as "lack of human interaction”,” physical absence”, or “no facial cues”. Tutors discussed several perceived consequences of this invisibility, including feedback, monitoring, social isolation, content coverage, and limiting creativity.

Feedback, is discussed in further detail in the theme “Monitoring and Guiding Feedback”. However, another perspective is highlighted here regarding the difficulty of prompt feedback; this point was the subject of a debate between the tutors in FG1 and FG4. Several tutors in both groups claimed that receiving feedback takes longer in OL as it is based on technology rather than human interaction. These tutors stressed the time it takes to open the Learning Management System (LMS) or read an email, and type in the feedback, and similarly the time it takes the students to check their email and reply with their feedback, if there is any. Other tutors, however, who had earlier discussed their experience with technology, thought that in OL feedback was quicker with the use of technological applications, since for example alerts can be set up that notify the recipient without loss of time. A few tutors did not comment, but in the last theme of “Concerns about CPD” showed an interest to attend courses about technological tools. One of these tutors stated “I have limited experience of information technology”. Several tutors in FG1 and FG4 commented that using technology to overcome the challenge of invisibility entails more work and requires more ongoing tutor training. Another consequence of invisibility in OL that was reported by a number of tutors is the difficulty of observing students at work. Int14, FG3, asked: “How can I make

sure that this student has done his homework on his own, and that nobody helped him?"

6.6.1.1.2 Limited student creativity

Another challenge discussed by several tutors was that OL does not encourage student creativity. In the Individual interview Int6 from FG1 claimed that "When we read a story in a book, we imagine the characters, while OL illustrates them immediately through images or videos. Ultimately, this destroys the learners' imaginative skills, and in turn minimises their ability to be creative."

6.6.1.1.3 Content coverage

The final challenge discussed in FG3 and FG4 was that of content coverage. Int15 in FG3 explained that in OL in the search for a piece of information the student may go beyond it and come back with a question that may take the remainder of the session to answer. However, other tutors reported that they do not consider content coverage to be an issue – in the individual interview, Int8 from FG2 discussed his strategy to manage the time session to cover the main topics, he stated:

> "I upload the lesson study materials for reading and providing lecture outlines prior the lecture. This will help students to prepare any questions that they may have. So, my lecture is answering their questions."

Int13 in FG4 highlighted that it is not the task of the online tutor to cover every single topic in the syllabus.

The result of this discussion on these disadvantages or challenges is that most tutors agreed that they would not recommend a course that is 100% online. Some tutors recommend blended learning for two main reasons; the first of these is the issue of "Novelty" (as discussed in the "Novelty" theme); in FG1, Int1 stated, "We are not ready yet for 100% technological course". The second is the lack of organised use of technology; Int19 in FG4 explained that many teaching strategies that make use of technology are experimental, and in the Individual interview Int18 from FG4 agreed that "everything in technology is random. So we are highly exposed to the danger of wasting the time and the focus of the lesson".

6.6.1.2 Affordances

The affordances of OL were discussed by tutors from three different perspectives; the student's, the tutor's, and that of the learning environment. These affordances are summarised in the following diagram (Figure 6-12):

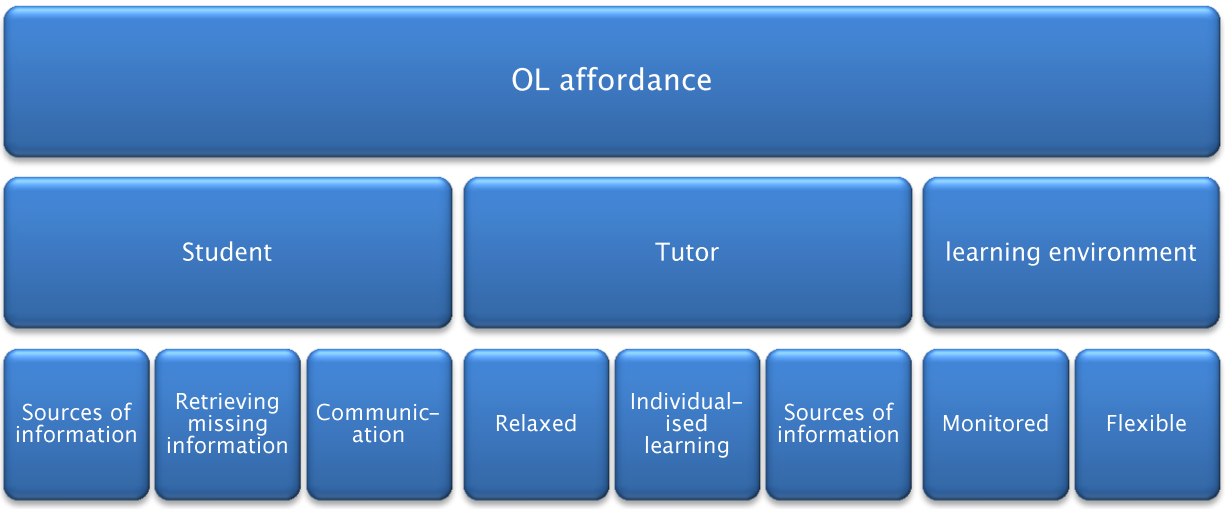


Figure 6-12: Affordances of online learning climate

6.6.1.2.1 Affordances for students

Several tutors in FG1 and FG4 highlighted the various sources of information in OL which enrich the students' knowledge, as opposed to having to depend on one single source of information which is the tutor. A number of tutors mentioned the positive impact of this variety of resources, such as richness in the resources of studied content, variety of activities, a covering of all learning styles, or developing the students' skills. In FG2, two tutors highlighted that the flexibility of OL facilitates teaching a greater number of students in one session than is possible in face-to-face. In FG2, two tutors stressed the benefit of the interaction and communication between students from different parts of the world who exchange experiences and knowledge. In FG4 one tutor added that if students missed any point in the session, they could get back to the recording or uploaded a resource to review. Several tutors disagreed that OL minimises creativity; on the contrary, in FG4, two tutors contended that the unlimited resources of OL increase creativity and develop students' discovery skills.

6.6.1.2.2 Affordances for tutors

A number of tutors who led the discussions about technology confirmed in the individual interviews that OL entails less effort for the tutor, as stated by Int10 in FG2:

> "Unlimited reusability and downloading of online resources save my time and effort. Before using the internet, I had to prepare these resources from scratch every time I need them".

Several tutors in FG1 and FG3 agreed that the tutor's personality in OL comes across as friendlier, and that in general the tutor feels less stress than in face-to-face teaching. Int8 in FG2 added another advantage of OL, namely that search engines such as Google can help the tutor in answering questions. Int2 in FG1 confirmed that search engines reduce the danger of being embarrassed and therefore contribute to the tutor's feeling of relaxation. Int9 in FG2 commented that the online tutor has plenty of tools to play with, to be able to individualise learning for students. In their individual interviews, Int8 and Int9 from FG2 both argued that OL is a student-led environment where students direct their own learning. Therefore, they considered this is one of its main affordances.

6.6.1.2.3 Learning environment affordances

A number of tutors agreed that an OL teaching session is relaxing and flexible in choosing the time and place of learning. Regarding monitoring, some of the tutors in FG1 and FG2 confirmed that OL sessions are generally fully monitored and that everything is recorded even more accurately than in face-to-face teaching. Accordingly, in FG2 all tutors agreed that because of its flexibility OL has the potential to overcome many problems of traditional learning such as over-crowded classes and long working hours for the tutor.

6.6.2 Face-to-face climate

In this section, tutors stated the challenges and affordances of face-to-face learning. Regarding challenges, tutors reported sanctions, rigidity of syllabus, less socialisation and tutor strictness. Regarding affordances, tutors' control over students and content coverage have been reported. Finally, the tutors'

views about similarities and differences between OL and face-to-face have been clarified.

Challenges and affordances of face-to-face learning are summarised in the following diagram (Figure 6-13):

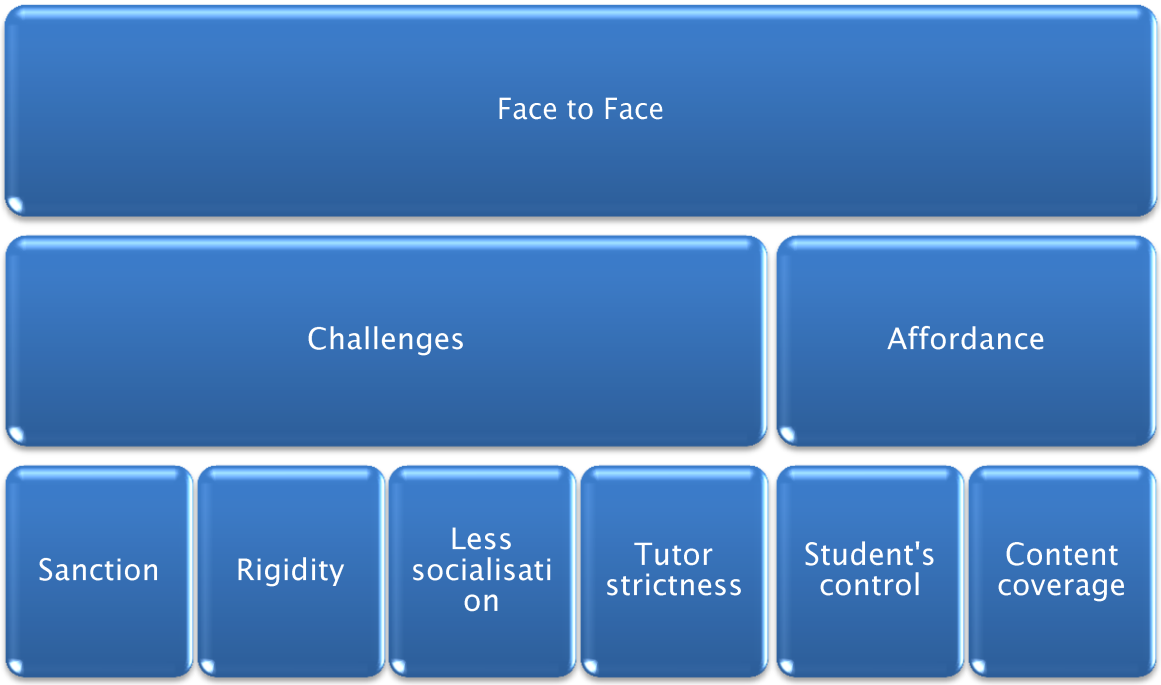


Figure 6-13: Challenges and affordances of face-to-face learning

6.6.2.1 Challenges

Most tutors agreed that sanction (i.e. when students are imposed to stand up for the tutor when he/she enters the class or get a detention) and inflexibility (i.e. rigid topics, rigid orders of lessons and rigid timetable) are the main challenges of face-to-face. In detail, regarding sanction, in FG1 a number of tutors reported fear of punishment or mistreatment are common behaviours and attitudes in classes. Regarding lack of flexibility, several tutors in FG2 mentioned the rigid syllabus and others the time limitation which gives less time for students to ask questions and for the tutor to answer them. Regarding social collaboration and students' interaction, several tutors highlighted this point - in their view students have fewer opportunities to socialise face-to-face because they are fewer in number. In FG4, Int16 added that limited numbers of students limits the students' opportunity to enrich their knowledge by exchanging experience with peers.

The result of the discussion of the aforementioned features led some tutors in FG1 and FG3 to agree that face-to-face is more teacher-centred, where the tutor talks, while the students exclusively listen and during activities, students work alone, and collaboration is discouraged. Specifically, Int7 from FG2 summarised the face-to-face teaching climate in the individual interview in the following statement:

> "The tutor asks, the student answers. The tutor dictates, the student writes. The tutor poses assessments and the student is challenged."

Int1 from FG1 similarly stated in the individual interview that

> "In face-to-face learning there is no choice other than a teacher-centred strategy, as the number of students is too great and there is a difficulty for the tutor to facilitate and identify the individual differences between them."

With regards to the tutor's management style in the class, the majority of tutors agreed that it is stricter face-to-face, since punctuality of place and time is essential, and also more stressful as the tutor needs to be ready to answer any question. In addition it is the tutor's role to complete a number of tasks which in OL can be fulfilled by technology, such as the class register. For these reasons many tutors in FG1 and FG4 agreed that face-to-face demands more responsibility from the tutors. This point raised a debate with other tutors who view that OL demands more responsibility from the tutors.

6.6.2.2 Affordances

Several tutors in the four focus groups agreed that face-to-face gives the tutor more control over many aspects of teaching such as students' attention and students' behaviour. In the Individual interview Int14 from FG3 commented that:

> "Face-to-face is a fully controlled session by tutor and school regulations. Everything is pre-planned, such as session start and finish time, lesson plan, tests and sometimes expected further discussions."

In FG3, Int14 and Int15 added that class work can be easily checked, and that therefore the tutor can be sure that it has been done by the student himself. In addition, content coverage is more controlled. For these reasons several tutors

in FG1 and FG3 agreed that face-to-face means less effort for the tutor in regard of observing students, fixed content and less unexpected questions by students compared with OL.

6.6.2.3 Comparison between OL and face-to face learning

Tutors, when asked to compare OL and face-to-face in some aspects such as class and student management, had different opinions. Some tutors thought that they were completely different. According to these tutors, this difference is a result of the physical absence of student and tutor. Therefore, they explained that different plans and strategies are to be adapted in OL to overcome this absence. Many agreed that they had common objectives but that the methods used were different. For example int4 in FG1 stated,

> " Delivering information is one of the lesson objectives in both, OL and face-to-face. In OL, online search and group projects facilitate this objective, while, in face-to-face, worksheets and tutor observation facilitates this objective".

A few tutors were of the opinion that they are nearly identical, except for the fact that OL has extra resources students can access through the use of the internet.

6.6.3 University Climate

6.6.3.1 Internet facilities

Many tutors in the four focus groups mentioned the limited availability of technological facilities at universities as a main challenge. In FG2, most tutors agreed that there is a need for a reliable internet service, and in FG4 and FG3, which were composed from tutors from rural areas, only a few tutors had worked with LMS and could explain their advantages to the others. In general there was an agreement on the urgent need for a reliable LMS.

6.6.3.2 Learning environment

A number of tutors commented on the organisational learning environment at universities. In FG1 and FG4, the majority of tutors highlighted that there is a lack of clarity in some required teaching strategies such as lesson aims, learning outcomes, and that if they exist they are not strictly applied. Another

lack that was highlighted was that there is no system for the students' register. In their individual interview Int17 from FG4 stressed that lecturing is still the dominant method of teaching, and Int9 in FG2 added that the number of students in lectures exceeds hundreds. Int8 in FG2 stated that for students "University is a big shift, from 100% teacher-centred learning to 100% independent learning". Therefore, several tutors in FG1 and FG3 said that they would prefer university rules and regulations, in all specialities, to be as strict as those of schools, and in FG4 and FG1 there were requests by some tutors for firm university rules and procedures to be applied to facilitate monitoring students. In detail, tutors highlighted that for better learning at university, some aspects with students need to be monitored such as, students' attendance and internet browsing in campus.

6.6.4 Pre-university climate

The issues about school climate are similar to those in face-to-face climate in general with respect to challenges such as sanctions and rigidity (examples are explained above in Section 6.6.2.1). It needs to be added here that some tutors reported that schools have clear and pre-defined timetables for sessions. Several tutors in FG1 and FG3 agreed that time table is useful for students and that they would prefer these timetables to be the same at university to coordinate tutors, students, classrooms and periods. However, this point was disputed by a number of other tutors who thought that the university climate should have more flexibility and freedom of choices for students than schools. Int20 from FG4 added another point in the individual interview, namely that of the tutor's personality; she stated that "at school, the tutor is obeyed and he is considered the God of knowledge."

Int1 from FG1 strongly criticised the school climate in the interview:

> "We need to avoid this closed system, school fence, books and fixed timetables. All have gone, we need to redevelop the school system and make a clear distinction between discipline and chaos, between punishment and evaluation."

Most tutors reported that the use of technology is minimal at school. Some of them indicated that the fear of misusing technology is the reason that minimises its use. Int12 in FG3 stated "Risk of unlimited internet navigation

and concerns about lack of students' time management are examples of misusing technology".

6.6.5 Governmental climate

6.6.5.1 Management and planning

A number of the tutors in both FG1 and FG4 reported that there is a positive attitude towards the use of technology in learning in the governmental bodies (i.e. Ministry of Communication and Information Technology). However, as all tutors in FG2 agreed, the challenge for OL is that it needs to be fully accredited and considered equal to face-to-face by the government, in particular in the issue of the final university certificate. Specifically they mentioned the need to fully digitalise the examinations to be online, or assessing students by portfolios. Several tutors from FG1 and FG4 highlighted in the individual interviews that there is no long-term planning, no framework for OL or standards to measure quality. Int4 in FG1 gave an example of bad planning when the Ministry of Higher Education gave tablet PCs (small portable computers) to students for use in their classes without preparing them by teaching them the basics of computer knowledge and their application in class. In this case, a misuse of these devices was the ultimate result, and the whole project failed.

6.6.5.2 Over-crowded face-to-face classes

When discussing overcrowded classes, tutors focused on three issues, the challenges for tutors, the impact on learning, and possible solutions.

Regarding the challenges for tutors, most tutors commented on this and linked it to the difficulty to facilitate their teaching strategies. For example, in FG3 and FG4, in the discussion of individualising learners and knowing learners, over-crowded classes were mentioned as the main obstacle.

Regarding the impact of overcrowded classes on learning, in the individual interview Int19 from FG4 mentioned that in the social science faculty, students may not even know their classmates well until graduation as the number of the students in a year can exceed 2000. In FG2, two tutors confirmed that the result of more than 10 students in a class is a lower quality of learning and teaching. In FG3, the number mentioned in this context was rather higher,

namely 50 students, but it was still agreed that over-crowded classes lead to a decline in teaching quality and overall student experience. Because of this, several tutors in FG1 agreed that, with the current large numbers of students in class, OL would be useable, but that the results might not be 100% reliable.

Several tutors proposed solutions for the over-crowdedness of classes. In FG2, Int7 and Int8 agreed that OL affordance could overcome the problem of overcrowded classes. In OL, students are able to work more independently while being overseen by an online tutor. On the other hand, OL resources require less funding than class resources. Another solution suggested by some of the tutors in FG2 and FG4 was that of HE privatisation. This suggestion proved to be a point of argument in the group, as the requirements and consequences to achieve this are not applicable in Egypt for the time being.

6.6.5.3 Official curriculum

A number of tutors in the four focus groups described the official curriculum as based on memorisation. In FG1, Int1 said that the impact of a didactic syllabus was that it limited the students' creative thinking. The tutors in the four focus groups reported a number of features of the official curriculum - some commented that it is inconsistent, so that some subjects start with advanced level and then move to elementary and end with beginners. Several tutors described it as out of date, and stressed the need for it to be fully digitalised and less rigid. Tutors actually considered this rigidity as a challenge for them while teaching online, a point discussed at length in the individual interviews of Int3 from FG1 and Int19 from FG4, who both agreed that it is essential for online tutors to organise the content so that it suits the learners' abilities and needs.

Another feature that was reported was the nature of the curriculum, which is theoretical, not experimental. Tutors commented on this point quoting different reasons - in FG1 a tutor explained that it was because many subjects have been imported from other universal educational institutions, which are different from the real fact in Egypt. In FG2 the tutors thought it was because the curriculum is not up to date. In the individual interviews, Int1 from FG1 and Int15 from FG3 both assumed that the curriculum content was theoretical

because it is not based on an analytical job market. Several tutors reported the need for covering the ethics of e-learning in the official curriculum.

6.6.6 Economic Climate

6.6.6.1 National level

The main issue discussed here is the role of the government in facilitating internet service and lab resources. In FG2, Int4 mentioned that the Egyptian government supports technology to a good extent with low prices. The positive side that two tutors in FG2 and FG4 mentioned (Int3 and Int4 respectively) was that in general more funding is dedicated by the government to projects in OL than in face-to-face. In the individual interview Int9 in FG2 stressed that "finding funding is not a problem for OL," and there are many options for this such as the World Bank, TEMPUS, HEEP, or ICTP (these funding bodies are explained in details in Chapter 2).

Int1 in FG1 commented that "the use of the internet and the appeal to use it properly is very promising compared to the last 10 years," and this point was agreed by tutors in FG2, where two tutors mentioned that the internet service has improved to a great extent in the last two years. Another tutor in (FG4, Int17) said that the Egyptian internet connection is one of the lowest-cost ones in the Middle East, though another tutor in that group added that it was "lowest cost and lowest quality as well" (Int18).

Most tutors reported that the lack of resources at university (including the computers themselves) is a big challenge for them in the facilitation of their teaching. In FG2, tutors discussed the need for up-to-date software for authoring e-content to be installed on computers. In FG2, tutors highlighted the issue of maintenance of existing computers, an issue related to technical support. In FG4, Int20 explained that since the number of computers was less than the number of students, this led to several students sharing one computer and a negative impact on their learning. A tutor from the same focus group stated in the individual interview that "it is one of the basics for successful OL that each student needs to have his/her own dedicated computer on the university campus, not only a shared one" (Int19). In FG3 and FG4 the main highlighted issue was the availability of internet service itself – the tutors in these two groups were teaching in rural areas, and reported only

intermittent internet service. The main consequence of the limited availability of technical resources, as tutors in both FG1 and FG2 agreed, was that as long as there is a lack of facilities such as well-equipped computer labs, face-to-face learning would always dominate.

6.6.6.2 Individual level

There are two sides to this issue: firstly there is the point of the tutors' economic affordance, more precisely of whether they are able to afford the cost of self-development. In this aspect, several tutors from rural areas stressed that the government needed to guarantee each online tutor their own personal computer and internet service. Int8 in FG2 requested a plan for funding a tutor's self-development training.

Secondly there is the point of the students' economic affordance. This is a matter of the individual affordance of students to own a personal computer and having a reliable internet service. Tutors in FG2 and FG3 debated the social influence of the economic aspect - in FG1, Int2 commented: "This will lead to gaps between students, between those who can and those who cannot afford the purchasing of a computer." This point was argued differently in the focus groups with tutors who live in rural areas, and in FG1 and FG2 whose tutors live in big cities. However, Int13 from FG3 mentioned that there was a big appeal in purchasing technological gadgets and appliances among students, and that “No student does not have a cell phone with broadband access”. Int14 from this focus group agreed:

> “people in Egypt have a relatively high acceptance for technology and computers. Mobiles exist now in nearly all average classes and they have become a higher priority to be obtained by families.”

In FG2 not a single tutor highlighted this issue, and two tutors (Int8 and Int10) agreed that in private universities students’ economic affordance is higher than among those who are at public universities, and it is unusual to have this concern with students.

In summary, *limited governmental funding* is an important element that is highlighted in this section. For tutors, funds would help online tutors to afford the requirements of technological tools and services that they need in order to pursue their online teaching, such as subscription to or purchase of

multimedia software. Also, *over-crowded classes* are a focus. Tutors focused on the challenges and the impact of over-crowded classes on learning. Also, some tutors proposed OL and its flexibility to overcome the problem of overcrowded classes. The following diagram summarises the main themes highlighted, and mentioned above.

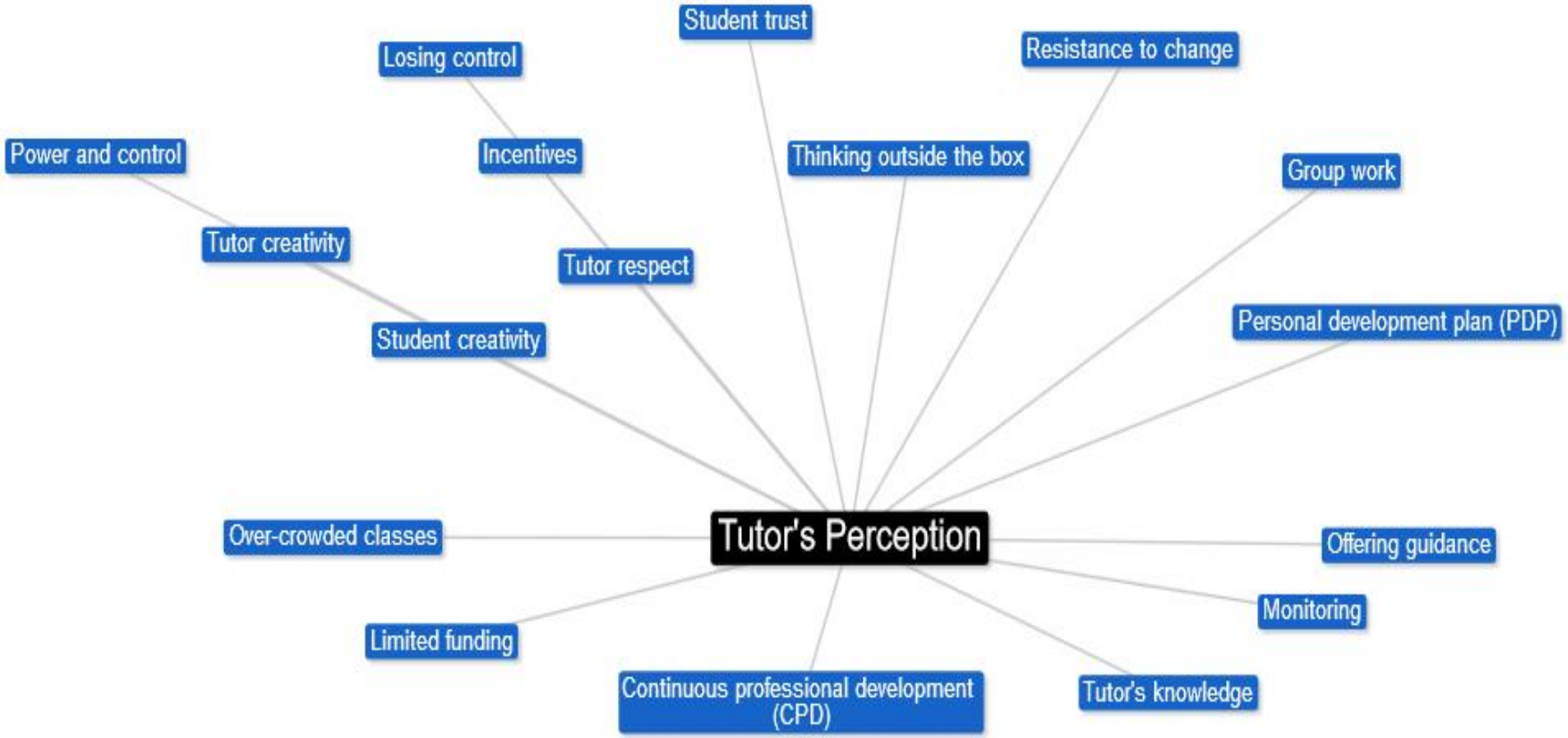


Figure 6-14: Summary of education climate

6.7 Concerns About CPD

The main issues discussed in this section are: a) Successful features of CPD, b) Limitations of CPD, c) Tutors' self-development, d) Required topics in CPD. It is important to clarify that in the section that highlights CPD successful features, tutors reported the characteristics that they believed are important to exist in a successful CPD, while in the section that highlights CPD limitations, tutors reported deficiencies with which they were confronted in the CPD they had attended.

6.7.1 Successful features of CPD

This section discusses some of the characteristics tutors said they believed were important for any CPD to help them to pursue their online teaching; these are workshops, follow-up tutors' learning within the course, course personalisation, CPD planning, course feedback, course assessment, frequency and durations of course timing and tutor's incentives.

The diagram in Figure 6-15 below provides a summary of the characteristics of successful CPD discussed by the tutors.

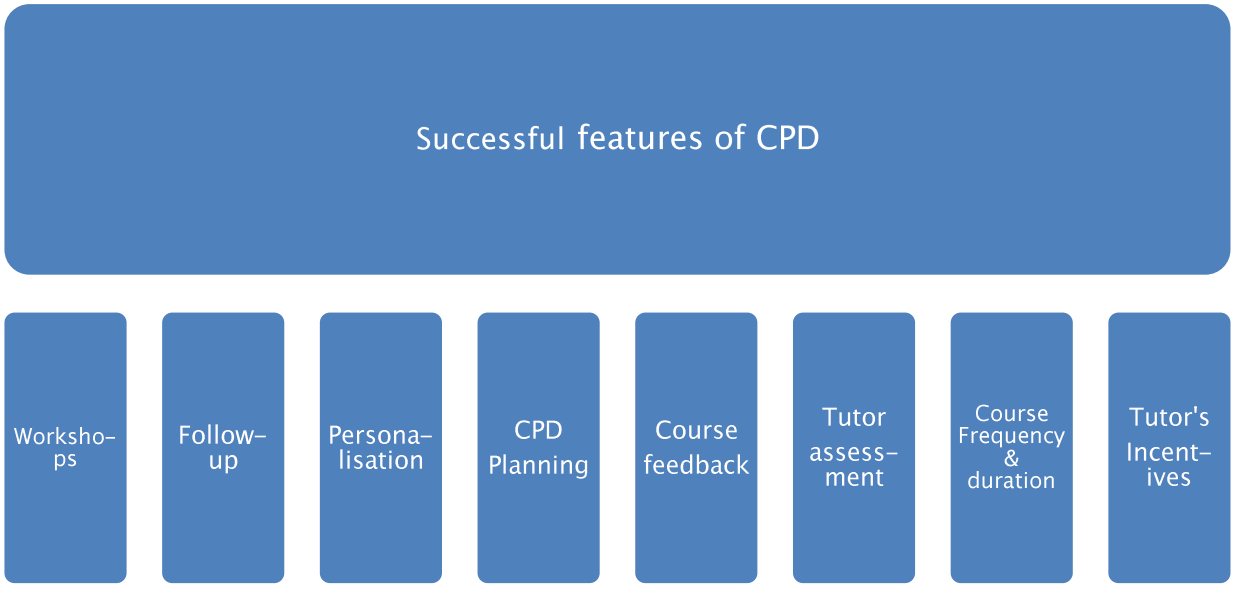


Figure 6-15: Successful features of CPD

6.7.1.1 Workshops

A number of tutors agreed that CPD in the form of workshops was preferable to traditional lecturing. Int15 in FG3 stated, “The CPD workshop was a good experience for me; it was useful to engage with other tutors in intensive discussion and activity on a particular subject or project." Another tutor in FG4 commented that, from a real experience, when he attended a CPD session based on lecturing where the tutor was standing in front of a classroom and presenting the information, he stated “This session failed to help me to develop any skills”.

6.7.1.2 Follow-up

Two tutors in FG3 commented that CPD is not just a session to attend in isolation, but it is on-going training. Int1 stated, “CPD is a process not an event; without follow-up, it is hard to have lasting impact with tutors.”

More precisely, CPD starts to develop skills with the tutor and by following up and receiving further feedback, another or a similar level of the training can be achieved as a further step for the tutor’s professional development. In the individual interview, Int19 from FG4 mentioned an example; she attended a CPD session on authoring tools, namely a piece of software called “Authorware”; but while she learned how to author e-content through this, the lack of follow-up meant she could not develop her skills and now remembers almost nothing about what she initially learned. However, this was a point of debate among tutors, since others considered enriching and updating the knowledge gained from CPD as being part of the tutors’ own efforts to develop themselves. In FG2, Int8 stated “Development of tutors’ skills after a CPD course is self-reliance rather than depending upon extended feedback or support” (see the discussion chapter Section 7.3.5).

6.7.1.3 Personalisation

A common view from tutors was that CPD needs to be personalised and that it is not a "one size fits all". In FG1, two tutors discussed the personalisation of CPD in terms of time availability - some tutors preferred to have CPD sessions in the summer when they have more free time away from teaching. Others stated that free time is a time that is dedicated to their personal life, and would not agree to attend CPD sessions then. In FG2 there was also a discussion

about differences in cognitive abilities among tutors according to age as a reason for the need to personalise any training provided for tutors. In the individual interview, Int2 commented:" We cannot expect that 55-year-old and 35-year-old tutors attend the same training, sharing the same learning objectives and outcomes." Tutors in FG3 and FG4 also agreed that differences in tutors' objectives and expected learning outcomes are reasons to personalise CPD. In addition tutors may have different levels of IT knowledge.

6.7.1.4 CPD Planning

The discussion of personalised CPD leads to another feature that several tutors considered as important, namely that of planning. In FG2, Int8 and Int10 both stressed that successful CPD needs to be pre-planned in sufficient time. Int4 elaborated that training planners need to be informed of the tutors' needs so that they can plan the training based on them. This needs to be a complete overview of the tutors' needs in training such as IT skills or soft skills, as well as the tutor's availability. The concern about timing was identified by several tutors - in FG2, Int8 for example commented: "We are notified of the course time and topic only a few weeks before its starting date." More evidence of this lack of planning, specifically about progression of CPD content and lack of consistency of the training provided was mentioned in the same focus group; Int8 stated,

> "The last authoring CPD course I attended started with "Authorware" as a web authoring tool; then it shifted to PowerPoint on an intermediate level without including an intermediate level for "Authorware"."

In FG2, Int10 summarised the issue of CPD planning: "CPD needs well-defined learning objectives and learning outcomes. It is quality more than quantity which counts."

6.7.1.5 Course feedback

Another feature considered necessary post-CPD is that of feedback. Many tutors discussed the importance of feedback - in FG3, two tutors stressed its importance as an indicator of learner satisfaction and of whether they have achieved their learning objectives. In FG2 most tutors considered feedback to be the basis for planning their continuing learning – Int8 stated, "If I am preparing for a CPD course, I will look at the feedback from a previous course

to build my plan upon it." In FG4, Int17 commented that feedback is important in identifying the level of knowledge that each tutor has achieved, and in revealing any areas of improvement that need to be considered for any further training. In the individual interview, this tutor (who according to his job description is the head of a school) mentioned that he looks at course feedback and assigns further courses for tutors based on the knowledge tutors gained over the CPD course.

6.7.1.6 Tutor assessment

An important feature of CPD which emerged was that of course evaluation. According to them this evaluation should be in the form of a post-CPD test or an individual or group project. A similar issue was also mentioned by Int11 in FG3, namely that some CPD programmes are theoretical and detached from practice:

> "CPD needs to focus on direct implementation in our teaching by applying to developing a teaching strategy, web tool or designing a website."

Int12 in FG3 confirmed that such a post-CPD test or project would reflect the benefit gained by attending the course. This issue links with a remark by two tutors in FG1 and FG3, who claimed that some tutors attend CPD courses only to get promoted and with minimal benefit gained, especially since they know there is no follow-up, feedback or any form of evaluation of the course outcomes.

6.7.1.7 Course frequency and duration

A number of tutors in the four focus groups commented that the total number of CPD sessions provided is low with respect to their work needs. Opinions about the best ideal number of CPD courses varied among the tutors - some thought these should be on a monthly basis, with a recognised schedule and early booking, so that they could easily arrange their schedule according to these courses. Others preferred courses to be scheduled between three and four times over an academic year (but not too close to the mid-term or final examinations). Others favoured courses in the summer holidays, since they preferred to be able to focus on developing their areas of improvement. As far as the duration of CPD sessions was concerned, the majority of tutors agreed

that a full day of training was preferable, though a few considered courses of between 3 and 4 hours maximum to be more useful to them, given their IT knowledge was that of a beginner, needing enough time to absorb new IT skills. Only Int13 in FG3 mentioned that they would be happy for the training to last a few days.

6.7.1.8 Tutor's incentives

The final feature that tutors commented upon concerning CPD is the issue of incentives. Int6 in FG1 stated, "Tutors are not motivated to attend CPD as there is no real benefit in any aspect, whether academic, career-related or financial." Tutors mentioned possible incentives - some requested that tutors get paid after attending a course and passing the test. Others suggested a certificate of participation and their name to be published on the school's website. For a minority, incentives meant getting promoted and being distinguished in their career as opposed to those who did not attend the same course.

6.7.2 Challenges of CPD

Tutors discussed some of the deficiencies with which they were confronted with respect to CPD sessions they had attended in the past. The challenges they regarded as hindering them from achieving satisfying outcomes from attending CPD sessions are examined in this section. For tutors, CPD does not facilitate the basics for the tutors to understand their online learners or to develop their own personal skills. Also, the lack of computer application in CPD sessions and limited tutor's financial affordances are other challenges reported in this section.

The main challenges in the area of CPD that were discussed by the tutors are summarized in the following diagram (Figure 6-16).

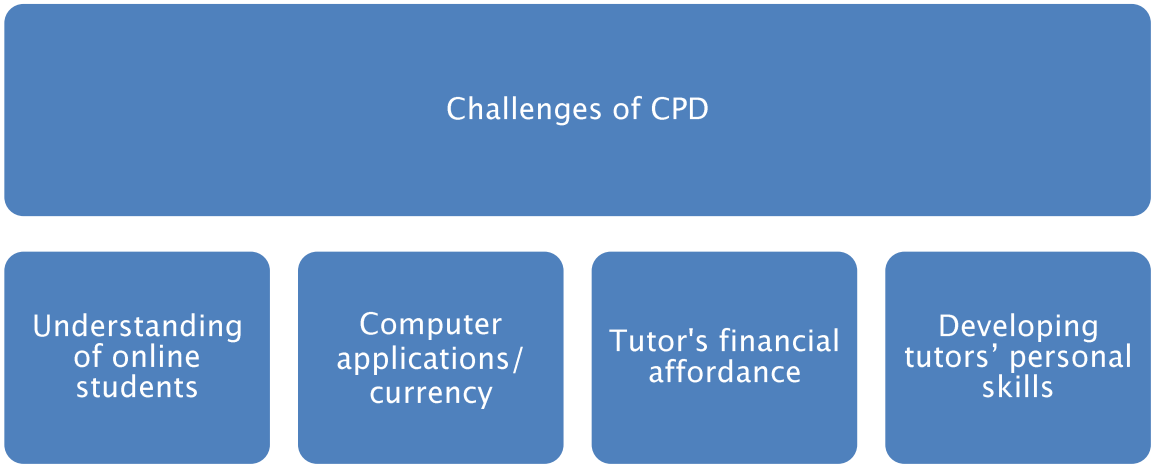


Figure 6-16: online tutors' views about challenges of CPD

6.7.2.1 Understanding of online students

Several tutors reported that professional training provided for online tutors does not help them to understand online learners' needs, abilities and expectations. In FG1, Int2 and Int3 stressed that online learners are different from face-to-face learners, and that tutors therefore need to understand how a distance learner thinks, feels and reacts, as well as how to get them engaged and motivated. Int19 from FG4 stated, "I struggle to make decisions as to what tool to select for which learner and when". Another explained the reason that many tutors avoid using some technological tools by stating:

> "We waste a lot of time searching and trying to find the right tool that achieves the right outcome for the right learner; for many of us it is a waste of time, and we need more time to focus on the content knowledge. Therefore, we may avoid using specific online tools" (Int18, FG4).

6.7.2.2 Computer application/currency

Another challenge reported by tutors was lack of the practical application of computers. In FG1, three tutors confirmed that in training programmes that are based on a certain computer application, habitually there are either not enough computers for all trainees, or the course is entirely based on instruction using a whiteboard, or the applications that were taught were out of date. In FG3, Int13 reported: "The last CPD course I attended was about Web1, but in our

actual teaching we work with Web2, and we really need to be ready for Web3". This issue was a point of considerable debate, as other tutors link this with the lack of funding and limited financial resources provided by government.

6.7.2.3 Tutor's financial affordance

One of the main challenges that many tutors mentioned was the tutor's financial affordance for obtaining a computer or software. In FG3, Int15 stated,

> "I attended useful training on authoring online content, but I didn't have the application installed on my computer or facilities at the University to use it. Most importantly, I did not use what I learned, so after a time I forgot it – if you don't use it, you will lose it, as they say".

This was an issue also raised by Int6 in FG1, who highlighted how the lack of devices at home to apply what was learned on a CPD course minimises the benefit of the course. Therefore, in FG1, two tutors requested the Ministry of Higher education (MHE) to facilitate tablets for online tutors, as it has facilitated similar devices before for online learners in some institutions.

6.7.2.4 Developing tutors' personal skills

A final drawback discussed by several tutors was that CPD does not give enough consideration and focus to developing tutors' personal skills such as effective communication. Int10 in FG2 saw this as a problem on a national level, commenting that "in Egypt and all developing countries, the development of personal skills is not encouraged enough". This was an object of debate with Int9 in the same focus group, who had a different view; he explained that, especially in this environment, online tutors are inducted and oriented and are expected to develop their skills from the very beginning, and if they lack these skills or are not motivated to develop them, this is considered to be an indicator that they do not follow the rules of conduct, and in consequence they may not be recruited or retained as an online tutor in the next term. In the individual interview this tutor gave a concrete example of a tutor whose contract was not renewed for the next term because he did not develop his personal skills.

6.7.3 Tutors' self-development

In general, the issue of tutors developing their skills without relying on what is provided by university programmes was discussed in great detail in some focus groups (FG3 and FG4) and only briefly discussed in others (FG1 and FG2). University tutors from FG1 and FG2 worked in industrial areas, and tutors from FG3 and FG4 from the rural areas. Several tutors from the rural areas commented on the limited internet availability and intermittent service which affected their ability to register for online courses or join online professional forums.

A contrast in knowledge about online resources emerged; in FG2 two tutors mentioned examples of well-known websites for tutor CPD that they were registered with, and whose forums they participate in, whereas in FG3 and FG4, reference to these features was not forthcoming.

Within the four focus groups, tutors' viewpoints on developing themselves varied considerably - some tutors considered what was provided by the university enough and that they did not need more, while several tutors reported that CPD provided by the university is not enough. This inability to cope stemmed from two different issues; the first was a lack of time (mentioned in FG1 and FG4), the second the issue of learning completely new things which they had no idea about before (was mentioned in FG3).

Both Int17 and Int19 in FG4 clearly stated that in their view "self-development is required by each tutor," and tutors who agreed with them mentioned a number of different reasons why they thought tutors' self-development was important. In FG3, two tutors commented that the university as a managing body has its own plan to develop its teaching staff, but that the actual learning and development needs of tutors were different. In this case self-development is essential for tutors to develop skills or acquire knowledge for which there are no courses provided. Int9 in FG2 added that self-development is linked to the issue of individual differences between tutors, whether in areas of improvement needed, pace of learning, or level of IT knowledge, and that therefore each tutor needs an individual learning plan to develop him- or herself.

6.7.4 Required topics in CPD

This section discusses tutors' opinions on what topics and subjects they thought were needed to be dealt with in CPD courses. They are: soft skills, authoring e-content and online tools.

The main disciplines, that tutors thought were needed to be included in their CPD, are summarised in the following diagram (Figure 6-17):

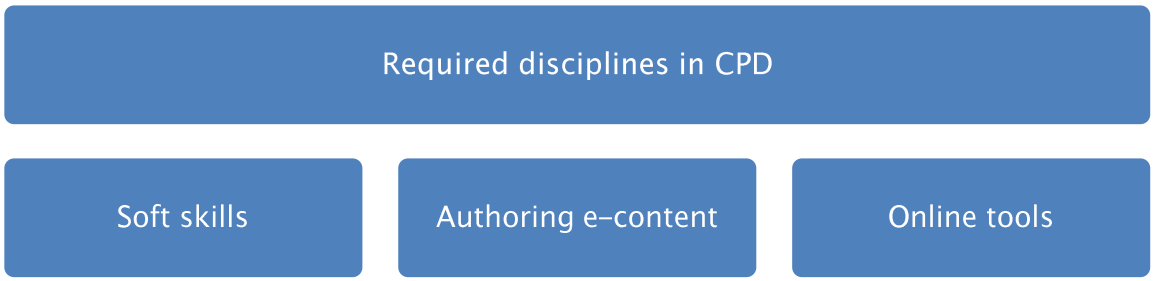


Figure 6-17: Required disciplines in CPD

6.7.4.1 Soft Skills

Most tutors mentioned soft skills as a main content requirement for CPD courses, though when asked to explain what “soft skills” meant, there were a number of different views. Int10 in FG2 for example stated that “soft skills mean the understanding of the online learner, how to understand their language" - following on from this, Int9 in the same focus group commented that the reason behind this lack of knowing learners is that today’s tutors teach as they themselves learned, and that they find that there is a gap between them and their learners. For Int7 in the same FG2, on the other hand, soft skills meant communication and interaction with online learners. Int10 added that soft skills in OL included managing public relations with learners, and in FG4 two tutors understood soft skills as knowing how to make the right decision in teaching online while keeping the student engaged.

6.7.4.2 Authoring e-content

Int8 in FG2 stressed that skills in authoring e-content needed to be included in CPD courses as it can make a great difference to the learning experience. In detail, in FG1, two tutors agreed that e-content incorporates various technological tools such as web pages to be used in pedagogy to deliver the

course content and track students' assignment and records. Int16 in FG4 explained the benefit of authoring e-content, she stated,

> "In authoring e-content, learning tools are integrated to organise information in a meaningful way by creating new links, and generating multimedia objects. Hence, manipulating these elements in flexible information representation, this is a learning experience for me."

In the same focus group Int16 added that in their view authoring content and giving control to the learner to co-author content empowered the learner and gave them the feeling of ownership. In FG3, tutors discussed in detail topics that needed to be included in the area of content authoring, such as co-editing, navigation, commenting and search engines. In FG4 two tutors linked authoring e-content and tutors' creativity; for them, CPD needs to help the tutor to think, plan, and design, publish, and both assign and create tools. Int18 in this group commented that "learning to author e-content needs to guide the tutor towards implementing in the technology in pedagogy and successfully embedding it in learning, so that it is not just clicking a mouse". Int5 in FG1 defined successful embedding as something that attracts and engages learners' attention and minimises the danger of distraction and disengagement.

6.7.4.3 Online tools

Several tutors saw training in the use of social networks and Learning Management Systems (LMS) as desirable topics for CPD courses. Int12 in FG3 stressed the importance of embedding the social aspect of social network in OL. Regarding LMS, Int2 in FG1 explained that most tutorial courses considered LMS from a technological point:

> "Learning Management System has two aspects; technology is only one side of the coin, and CPD also needs to focus on the pedagogical side, the issue of how to engage and motivate learners."

In summary, CPD is highlighted from different perspectives:

- The characteristics tutors said they believed were important for any CPD to help them to pursue their online teaching, such as workshops.
- The deficiencies with which they were confronted with respect to CPD sessions they had attended in the past.
- Tutors' perceptions and affordances in developing their skills without relying on what is provided by university programmes
- Tutors' opinions on what topics and subjects they thought were needed to be dealt with in CPD courses. The final diagram of all the topics discussed is illustrated below.

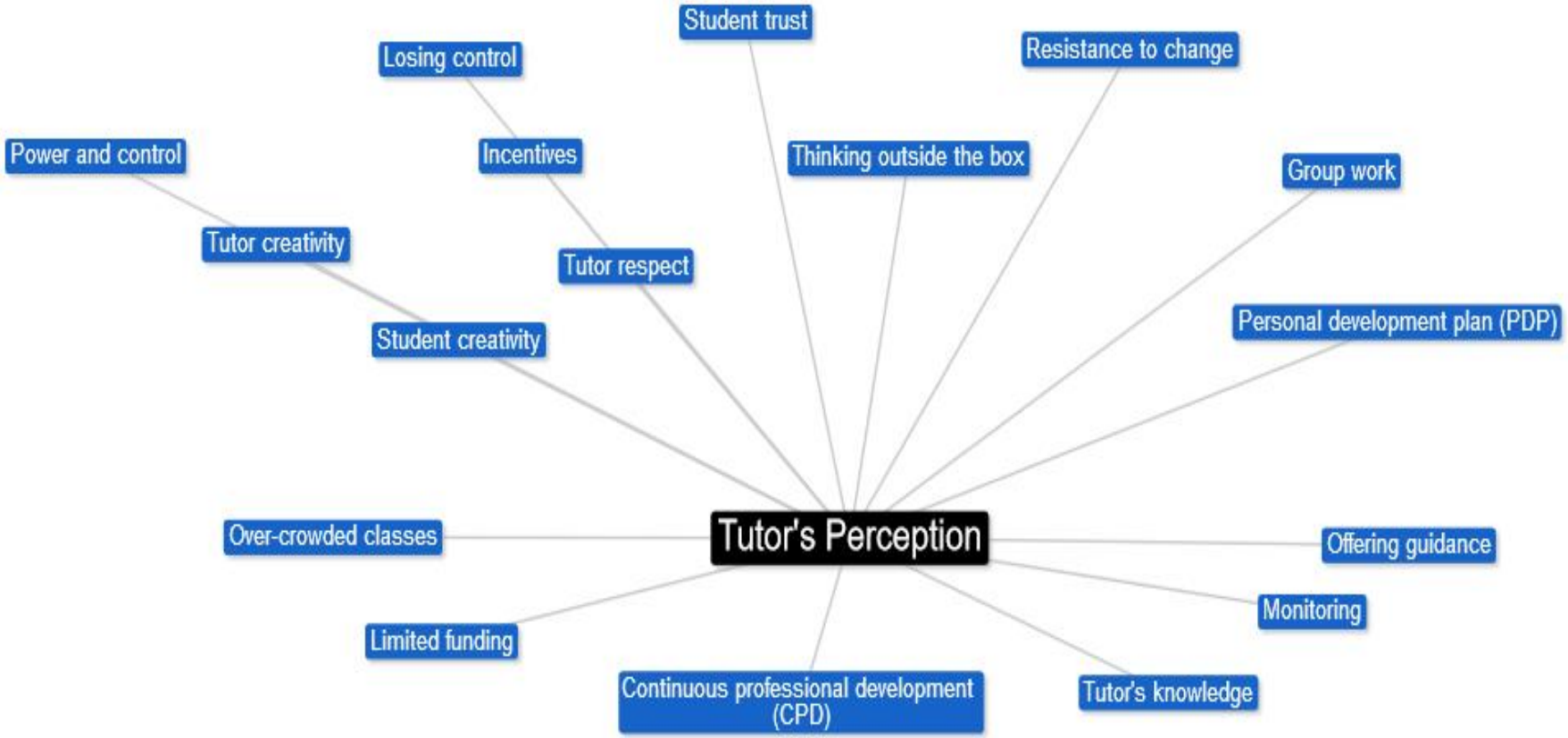


Figure 6-18: Summary of the super themes in the findings

Summary

From the previous diagram, online tutors, in an awareness and understanding that affects their individual interpretation of the world to produce a meaningful experience, demonstrate the following:

- General understanding of concepts such as: power and control; creativity of student and tutor and their beliefs are based on the understanding of these concepts.
- Principles and judgements of Egyptian online tutors about what is important in life such as tutor respect. For them, these are significant values, such as: tutor respect; incentives; losing control
- Attitudes that online tutors express or apply their beliefs and values through their decisions and behaviours, such as: student trust; thinking outside the box; resistance to change; group work; personal development plans (PDPs);
- Processes, where online tutors take actions to achieve their teaching objectives, such as: offering guidance and monitoring
- Skills, that look at what tutors learn which enables them to practise their teaching, such as their knowledge and continuing professional development (CPD).
- Finally, external factors that are driving online tutors' teaching practices to pursue their job role, such as over-crowded classes and limited funding.

Therefore, the final diagram that is discussed in the next chapter is illustrated as follows:

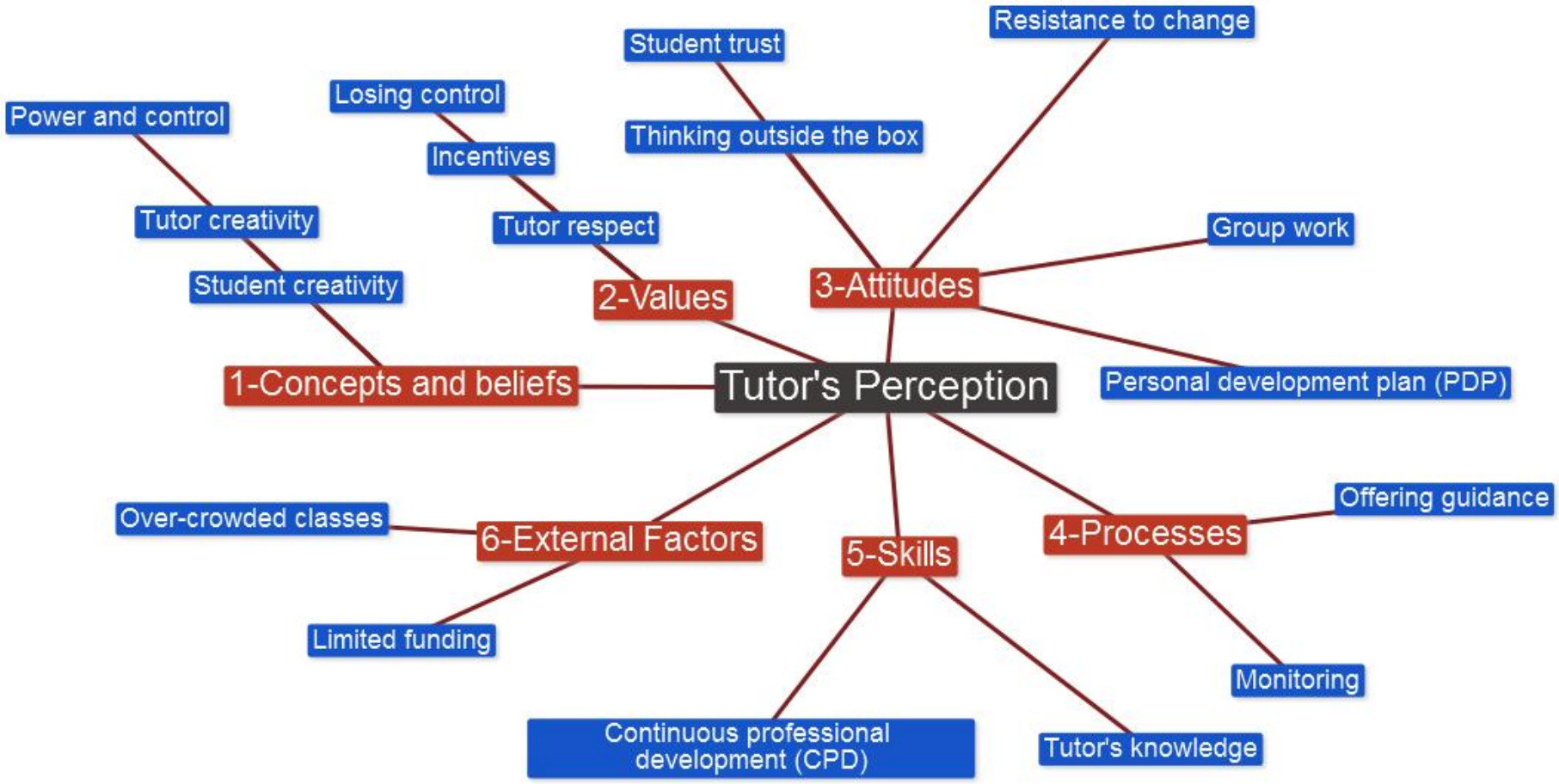


Figure 6-19: Discussion framework: elements of tutors' perceptions of SCL

Chapter 7 : Discussion

Introduction

The main research question that my study aims to answer is how online tutors in Egypt perceive student-centred learning (SCL) as an approach in the online learning (OL) environment, and what influences this. According to Cherry (2010), perception is awareness and understanding that affects individuals' interpretation of the world to produce a meaningful experience. In other words, when tutors, in the study context, are confronted with a situation or stimuli, they interpret the stimuli into something meaningful to them based on their prior interpretation and experiences. Rookes and Wilson (2000) refer to the consequences of the experiences formed, which involves internalised and externalised recognition, and actions in response to this recognition. Therefore, perception does not only create individual experience but allows responses to this experience and the processes within the environment. Based on this definition of perception and the study findings, figure 6-19 illustrates the main topics, related to SCL, to be discussed. These topics will answer the main research question. The following section explains in detail the main elements in this discussion framework. Finally, a proposed development of Turner-Bisset's (2001) pedagogical repertoire is explained, based on the discussion framework.

7.1. Concepts and beliefs

According to the findings of my study, online tutors have a general understanding of concepts such as freedom and their beliefs are based on the understanding of these concepts. These beliefs are tutors' principles and judgements about what is important in life. For example, in the findings, for some tutors, financial incentive is a sign of tutors' perceived respect felt from the academic institutions. Another finding is that tutors sometimes let these concepts serve as their beliefs without sufficient investigation. For example, in the findings, one tutor's belief about group work is that it "is a waste of time for students". This belief refers to this tutor's understanding that in group work students can give wrong information to each other. The reason behind these pre-judged concepts is claimed to be cultural (from community habits and values). For example, according to the findings, some tutors agreed that the community still keeps this old view that OL courses mean a lower academic level than face-to-face courses and accordingly devalue its vocational courses. Moussalli (2012) claims the rapid technological, social and political intrusion of foreign culture into the Arab world through the internet, places the importance of the Arabic culture in jeopardy. He explains that there may be a risk that people who communicate with different cultures and values will fear a loss of their religious and societal characteristics. This concern about losing the religious and social culture is confirmed by the findings in my study, and discussed in the following section with particular attention to tutors' concepts and beliefs about power and control, tutor creativity and student creativity.

7.1.1. Power and control

According to the findings, when tutors were asked about the concept of power, tutors agreed with Schindler's (2009) definition of power as an ability to influence the behaviour and actions of others. Tutors held that there are degrees of strength in practising power from high to low (Hinton and Groves, 2013) that lead to flexibility in distributing power (Frankham, 2009). For example, in focusing on the capability of each learner, tutors may empower a certain student differently from others in a particular lesson and may change the distribution of power between learners. Moreover, according to the findings, tutors detailed many steps to be followed to empower learners. Some tutors started the chain of empowering students by giving the students ownership of their learning. Next, students feel responsibility and then, tutors

trust their students. Based on tutor-student trust, students are empowered and they take control of their learning.

It was observed that practices of students' empowerment such as: shared responsibility and shared leadership (Zimmerman, 1995), were not highlighted. Also, some tutors mentioned students' ownership of their learning as a step in the power chain, while others did not. Nevertheless, many agreed that achieving student responsibility and trust must precede any empowerment. According to the theory of empowerment people need opportunities to become active in community decision making (Zimmerman, 1995). According to this study, opportunities are such as: shared leadership in group projects and shared decision making. Therefore, students need to be given these opportunities to be empowered.

The difference between the literature and the above findings, is that according to French's and Raven's Power Taxonomy, commitment and feeling responsible are the outcomes of empowering students (French and Raven, 1958). In other words, students' empowerment results in their commitment and feeling responsible. French's and Raven's claim (1958), which conflicts with my findings, is explained by Rogers (1994) who confirms that students can be responsible for their learning if they are given control and ownership of their learning. However, according to my findings, in tutors' views, students' feelings of responsibility and trust must precede their empowerment. In other words, empowering students is a conditional action based on their feelings of responsibility and tutors' trust.

Notably, according to the findings, when tutors were asked about examples of their teaching practices to demonstrate empowering learners, their examples were such as students controlling the study content or style of examination questions. According to Wachob (2009), student control and independence in Egypt are not widely practised in schools and universities. Moreover, some students never had opportunities to make decisions in class. That is explained by Eldawdi (2012), as economic recession and low income of the Egyptian citizens are barriers for them to control their lives (see section 4.1). On the other hand, Farag (2013), addressed the issue of giving youth voice whether liberal discourse, religious or socially democratic; encouraging them to brainstorm, discuss and debate can lead policy makers to predict the future that is aligned with their attitudes, ideas and values.

It is worth mentioning that tutors in schools and universities do not empower their students for many reasons. Firstly, they did not experience being empowered as students themselves, which supports the view of Vrasidas and Glass (2004) who justified this resistance from the perspective that tutors teach as they were taught. Secondly, tutors were reluctant to give control to their students because they believe this would affect their cultural image as an authority in the class, which leads to lack of discipline. Consequently, according to Doyle (2011), online tutors may resist sharing this power because they are not used to it. Doyle's conclusion corresponds with Al-Sharhan (2014), that OL with its flexibility and placing the student at the centre of learning, offers a new paradigm of thinking for online tutors in Arab countries. Therefore, online tutors may need to practise sharing power with their students. Wachob (2009) proposed solutions to help face-to face tutors in the Middle East in empowering learners by changing the teaching materials and using a diversity of creative methods in the classroom. Barkley, Cross and Major (2005) suggested collaborative learning to add student creativity and interactivity to the face-to-face and OL environments. An example for a collaborative activity involves two or more students synchronously building and interactively deriving a joint solution to a problem. In OL, Wachob (2009) confirms the OL affordance to facilitate diversity of tools and teaching materials.

Third reason of tutors' resistance to empower students is the lack of technological knowledge among tutors (see section 4.3.2.2). According to Maksym (2005), this lack of knowledge can lead to the tutor's resistance to applying this technology. Therefore, any resistance displayed by a tutor for this reason would have disempowering effect on students. Tutors' skills and knowledge are discussed in section 7.5.

These technological tools support cooperative learning and facilitate the online tutor to promote a reflective classroom (Rogers *et al.* 2010). Hence, Wachob (2009) highlights that tutors needs to facilitate and sustain student control throughout the OL course. It is notable that according to Al-Sharhan (2014) changing tutors' thinking about the OL environment is one of the biggest challenges for OL development and therefore Al-Sharhan focuses on the CPD of online tutors to prepare them for this change. A recommendation that can enhance online tutors expert teaching is to adopt the Tutor Education Model for the 21st Century (TE21), as in the Singapore Model (National Institute of

Education, 2009). This model considers the use of technology in education and confirms the affordances to be embedded in OL. The model covers three different areas in online HE education all of which focus upon preparation for digitalisation: digitalised libraries; a digitalised curriculum; and the technical and pedagogical training of the academic staff to prepare for the digital environment (AlGamny, Ayad and Farhat, 2014). In other words, digitalisation is a triangle with three sides: digital libraries, digital curriculum, and readiness of thinking for digitalising, respectively. The question to be highlighted here is whether online students are ready for the digital environment. It is acknowledged that one of the limitations of my study is that it focuses on online tutors only, rather than including students to assess the third side of this triangle in full, and thus there may not be an answer to this particular question in my study.

7.1.2. Tutor creativity

The Association for Promotion of Creative Learning (APCL) follows a model for creative learning based on seven components (APCL, 2009) (see chapter 3, Section 3.1.6). However, according to Rumpite *et al*. (2007), online tutors may lack the necessary expertise to develop creative learning. Reason(s) behind this claim that online tutors lack the skills to engage learners and embed collaboration between them in the online community. According to the study findings, Rumpite's *et al.* (2007) claim, may explain why the study found that few tutors in the four focus groups highlighted tutor creativity as part of a tutor's role. This is confirmed in the literature from Egypt; Ali (2015) suggested that Egyptian tutors' professional training sessions need to focus on re-developing their way of teaching, specifically to investigate the field of creative teaching to avoid merely replicating their teaching practice. She asserts that the blame for the lack of creativity in teaching does not lie exclusively with tutors; the rigidity of the syllabi and their basis in memorisation are also likely to hinder it. In OL, flexibility of online courses and the students' given control to pursue their learning, Rossett and Schafer (2003), is highlighted as requirement to empower learners (see section 4.6.1). According to UNESCO (2012), the official Egyptian syllabus for the whole educational system is designed to overwhelm students' brains and is based on memorising material. This is unlikely to help tutors' creativity.

As a recommendation that can enhance creativity of online tutors is to adopt the *Tutor Education Model* for the *21st Century* (TE21); this is explained in the previous section. This model represents a promising way to develop tutors' creativity for three reasons; firstly, according to this model, tutors' creative thinking and teaching represents the main pillars of contemporary tutors' needs, which could inform developing creative teaching skills in the study context, Egypt; secondly, this model considers the use of technology in education and confirms the affordances to be embedded in OL; thirdly, in 2014-2015 this model was used to start training 3000 tutors in Saudi Arabia in a strategy for future expert teaching (Alkawari, 2012). Consequently, it would be worth investigating whether this can be implemented successfully in Egypt, due to some close similarity in culture, religion, and language.

7.1.3. Student creativity

Tutors' views on students' creativity in OL varied in the study, and it is noteworthy that several did not express a clear opinion. Others did not cite any activity that showed student creativity. Moreover, few had no opinion on it, either for or against. The reason could be the same as mentioned above (Section 7.1.2) in that limited tutor creativity hinders student creativity. Furthermore, according to Price (2006), rigidity in the official curriculum is an ongoing challenge for students' as well as tutors' creativity. According to Friere (2014) and Price (2006), rigidity of syllabi seems universal in the Egyptian school education system; both authors indicate its negative impact on students' creative responses. The positive impact of flexibility and free of choices on students is explained by Klopfenstein (2003) and Glasser (2010), as when they take control of their own learning, they become more self-aware, responsible, focused, reflective and self-motivated. It is not any different in Higher Education (HE), as according to Fry *et al*. (2014), models of learning in a HE system are driven by rigid content, which is ordered by inflexible standards. In Egyptian HE, the rigidity of syllabi is confirmed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2010).

In the context of my study, student creativity is influenced by an additional factor, namely the impact of the family. This claim is supported by the study findings and literature. According to Abdelnabi (2005), in Arab countries some families raise their children in a strict and sanctioned manner. The children are neither allowed to engage in debate nor given the freedom to express their

opinions or feelings. Consequently, a child who has grown up in such an environment may be expected to be a passive student in class. For example, students lack any creative skills; they do not participate or share ideas with peers. Abdelnabi (2005) explained some of the strategies implemented by face-to face HE and school tutors to help to develop students' creative skills: allowing them to participate in discussions; accepting with an open mind their ideas to encourage them to think more deeply; encouraging them to reflect on all the ideas put forward by their colleagues; and determining the various alternatives to address the problem posed in the session to find a suitable alternative.

Referring to the literature in chapter 3 (Section 3.1.6), Vygotsky (1978) explaining that creativity does not impact on the external world only in the form of the invention of new work. It is reflective for the learners themselves, as it combines the human imagination, concepts and changes. Then, the individual is able to create something new. Schindler (2009) adding flexibility to creative learning which requires learners to learn in a flexible time and place, allowing many types of interaction (tutor-learner-contact-peers). Therefore, the author is of the opinion that students' roles in creative learning are evident throughout the whole learning process and it is mainly a student-centred approach. It starts from their imagination and experience, and then it is developed through their social communication and collaboration. This enables them to critically evaluate their own performance. Therefore, it can be claimed that SCL is a strategy for developing student creativity. In learning in general, a tutor can create a detailed approach to SCL environment that fosters creative thinking and the process of knowledge construction. In OL in particular, technology can play an essential role to demonstrate creative thinking and to develop innovative products.

In summary, both tutor and student creativity can be promoted by developing tutors' skills and knowledge about creative thinking and teaching, and by implementing SCL. More importantly, the role of family in the Egyptian context is highlighted in order to work collaboratively with tutors to develop children's creativity.

7.2 Values

The following section refers to the principles and judgements of Egyptian online tutors about what is important in life such as tutor respect. A

community, like Egypt, treasures culture and values are derived from society and religion (Abdallah and Albadri, 2010). In other words, tutors' values, in light of religion and culture, are their deeply held beliefs about what is appropriate and what is inappropriate.

7.2.1 Losing control

According to the study findings, losing control of the students was an issue highlighted by many tutors. Notably, the majority held the view that control is one of the affordances of the face-to-face learning environment, while student invisibility and its implications for difficulty of student control is one of the main challenges of the OL environment. Therefore, some tutors felt justified in disempowering students because of their concern over losing their own control. According to Prochaska and Prochaska (1999), there are four reasons to resist behavioural change: (1) 'I can't change'; (2) 'I don't want to change'; (3) 'I don't know how to change'; and (4) 'I don't know what to change'. Linking to Section 7.1.1 about "Power and control", it can be claimed that the reason for resistance to empowering students is: 'I resist if I don't want to change'; in the study context, this becomes '*I resist empowering learners*', because of concern about losing control. This claim is confirmed in the literature as, according to McDaniel (2008), when students are empowered to make decisions regarding their learning, the school's or institution's administration fears that students may use this power to challenge or threaten policies and rules. This study offers a further reason: 'I resist if I can't change'. In this context, '*I resist empowering learners'* because of learners' invisibility in OL. The evidence is taken from the literature and the findings, in literature, El-Shenawi (2005), explains that tutors are likely to be resistant to the adoption of OL because it empowers students with free choice in their OL environment (see section 4.3.2.2). Findings show that cheating in online examinations or students doing their homework with the help of others as being invisible by their tutors, are one of the tutors' concerns in empowering learners. Consequently, many Egyptian tutors expressed the need for students' surveillance to become aware of what they do while learning. Also, they addressed the need to keep tracking students' online activities, such as websites visited and the time spent logged onto online tutorial content.

For students, according to Herrary and Torres (2006), losing control is regarded differently with reference to the learning environment of Arab

culture: "Students learn to accept their tutors' absolute authority and control over all aspects of their learning without question" (Herrary and Torres, 2006, p.69). This means that students accept that tutors control them from a cultural perspective, in accordance with the old saying, "Stand up for the tutor and respect him, the tutor is nearly a prophet." (Abdallah and Albadri, 2010, p.17). Referring to students' empowerment (section 7.1.1), this acceptance can be seen as part of the culture and links with students' empowerment as, according to Ziemmerman and Perkins (1995), when individuals live in an oppressive society, they are generally disempowered. In the Egyptian context, this inherited culture seen by Abdelnabi (2005) as a challenge of students' empowerment (see section 4.3.3).

Thus, from the tutors' perspective there is resistance to losing control, and from the students' perspective there is an acceptance of this control. In this regard, it is evident from the study findings, that losing tutors' control is a process that involves the tutor-student relationship. Indeed research from AbdElkader (2015) has stated that these relationships need to be investigated both within the classroom and beyond in an authentic dialogic project. As a solution to an investigation of the tutor-student relationship, Friere (2014) claimed that dialogic learning is the basis for democratic and emancipatory education, and argued against education that treats students as vessels into which tutors and school administration pour information and practise dominant power. This claim agrees with Faour (2011) who claims that, in most of the Arab countries, teaching throughout the whole education system is still guided by the tutor who is, in most cases, the decision maker in the class. In order to correspond between student control and maintaining tutor-student relationship, McAllister and Litvin (2012), who experienced teaching in Arab culture, mentioned that there should be a code of conduct in sessions as a strategy whereby the tutor sets out the rules outlining the norms and responsibilities. Meanwhile, tutors need to communicate socially with students and develop a dialogic approach with them.

In this regard, a dialogic approach and promotion of tutor-student interaction can help tutors to know about their learners. Consequently, a student being invisible in OL may not remain a concern of the tutor, and can help to minimise the tutor's anxiety about losing control of students. From the students' perception, a tutor-student dialogic approach encourages them to explore, investigate and examine different views and perspectives with tutors and

peers. Consequently, they will become able to engage with and reflect on their learning.

7.2.2 Incentives

According to Ledford, Gerhart and Fang (2013), motivation research makes a basic distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation arises from being rewarded after performing a task. Dweck (1999) has demonstrated the importance of praise that recognises effort. In detail, praise that acknowledges strategies and activities are proven to instil and develop a sense of accomplishment or self-fulfilment. The literature such as Dweck (1999) and Tanaka (2010) agree with the study findings; for example when online tutors receive a promotion or bonus, it can boost their feeling of competence and self-determination. According to the findings, tutors cited different examples of what they considered to be incentives: financial incentives; certificates of appreciation; and subscriptions for free online training courses. In the Egyptian context, the first focus is on financial incentives. Taylor (1911) believed that all workers are motivated by money. In the Egyptian context, specifically in OL, tutors may need to attend extra training or purchase software (Richardson *et al*. 2011). In the study findings, tutors highlighted that in the OL environment they need funding more than face-to-face tutors in order to be able to afford the necessary learning resources, such as an internet service and reliable technological devices. Moreover, a few online tutors highlighted that they need to be offered payment for attending training. An explanation may be found in Abdelwahab (2008) that motivating Arab tutors is a big concern because of their low wages. This claim corresponds to Ledford *et al*'s claim (2013) that extrinsic rewards (low wage) diminish intrinsic motivation. Dweck (1999) explained in detail that praise promotes the feeling of belonging and feeling of trust between individuals (online tutors in the study context) in the work place. The literature such as Dweck (1999) and Tanaka (2010) agree with the study findings; for example where tutors expressed their feelings that when they do not receive financial promotion, for them, it is a sign of being devalued or unacknowledged by their academic institutions, whilst, when they receive a promotion or bonus, it can boost their feeling of competence and self-determination. In the study context, according to Tanaka (2010), in Africa, where Egypt is one of its developing countries, tutors' low wages can have a negative impact on tutors' motivation as they need to be acknowledged and feel valued by their educational

institutions. Consequently, tutors facing difficult financial circumstances cannot persevere; no matter how skilled, there is no drive. In this case, the drive is a financial drive.

In summary, this study highlighted that when online tutors receive financial incentives, for them, is a sign of being respected and valued by their academic institutions. Specifically, low wages in Egypt and the lack of grants and training courses can be linked to the importance and value of respect. If tutors were to receive acceptable wages, this lets them know they are a valued investment for their academic institution. Other incentives are indicated by the pyramid of needs (Maslow, 1954):

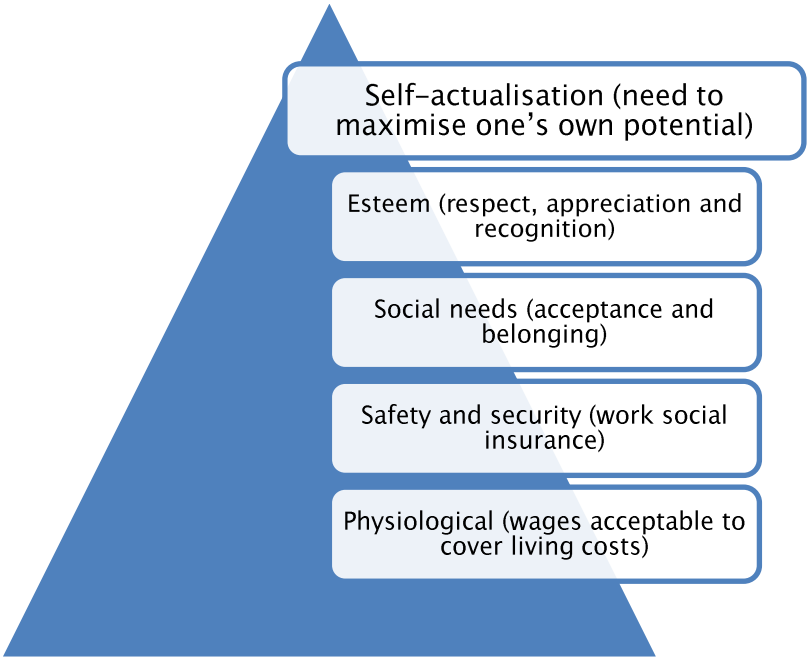


Figure 7-1: Edited Maslow's pyramid of needs, applied to online tutors' needs of incentives

Applied to the study findings, online tutors lack many needs that exist in the pyramid, as follows:

- Physiological need: when tutors receive such a wage to meet the cost of living
- Safety and security need: when tutors are secure in their career and have a governmental system of contribution to be assisted in sickness, unemployment, etc.

- Social need: when tutors feel accepted by the university administration, staff members and students, day-to-day appreciation and respect from the community; also, when they have a positive feeling of belonging to the place in which they work.
- Esteem: when tutors feel respect, appreciation and recognition.
- Self-actualisation: when tutors maximise their potential.

According to Dweck (1999), consequences of satisfying the self-esteem and self-actualisation is getting engaged with others and using the utmost abilities to pursue objectives. In this regard, tutors with low wages, a lack of training and excess bureaucracy cannot cope with challenging conditions alone. They need support, appreciation and respect from their academic institutions and community. These can be demonstrated through attitudes, empathy with tutors and concern for their well-being, realised with assistance from the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) in terms of tutor development and promotion of self-esteem.

In the author's view, tutors' low wages could represent a limitation to their motivation in pursuing their teaching. The authoritative body that can consider overcoming this limitation is the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) (see chapter 2, Section 2.8). MHE is the highest authority that submits and processes all financial decisions. In this regard, according to the bureaucratic and central structure of Egyptian HE, this may lead to a recommendation for more autonomous decisions for universities within the Higher Education Enhancement Project (HEEP), as requested by TEMPUS (2012a).

7.2.3 Tutor respect

The cultural perspective of tutor respect is evidently highlighted as a main concern for many online tutors in the findings. The emphasis on this value can be for two reasons: cultural, and professional. *Culturally*, the attitude towards tutors is linked to the Arabic saying that in terms of position a tutor is almost like a prophet (Abdallah and Albadri, 2010). *Professionally*, according to the Eberly Centre (2014), in some cultures students may not be accustomed to asking professors for clarification, since in these cultures such behaviour can be seen as disrespectful towards the tutor. If students do not ask questions, tutors may assume that they understand the lesson, when in fact they do not. Such a link between class silence and respect is borne out in the findings of my

study, where tutors explain that one of the affordances of the face-to-face environment is to maintain a respectful silence in class. In OL, the environment is different, as there is no physical class where students maintain their silence. Moreover, Agfo (2006) explained that weakening the role of tutors and their instructional supervisory power on their students, is one drawback of OL. The question to be highlighted in this regard is: What are the cues or behaviours that can be considered as signs of tutors' disrespect in OL?

Within the Arabic context, respect for the tutor is a prominent topic (Siddiqui, 2001; Alkawari, 2012). The main question to be discussed in relation to this issue is: Why have students lost respect for tutors? Also, why do some countries respect their tutors more than others, and some tutors feel that their own country, alone, has stopped giving tutors the respect they deserve? According to the Guardian Professional (2013), the Global Guardian survey Teacher Index explores what people across the world think of tutors in their country. The survey was based on 21 countries. Egypt and Greece respect their tutors more than any European or Anglo-Saxon country. Therefore, from the statistical evidence, it could be worth investigating a redefinition of 'power', 'losing control' and 'signs of tutor respect', as they are associated with tutor respect in the literature and culture.

Unlike in the past, when tutors were positioned nearly as prophets and students stood up as a sign of respect, today, online tutors are not physically present yet can be emailed anytime, from anywhere. Therefore, changes may need to take place to aspects of tutor thinking such as criticism and disagreement not being disrespectful, understanding students' viewpoints even if dissimilar or controversial, and the tutor's response to student argument, disapproval or challenge. In OL, the practice of standing up for the tutor no longer exists. Additionally, in OL, there are the three "As", as "anyone" can learn "anywhere" and "anytime" (Rogers *et al.* 2010). Therefore, online tutors have choices in terms of designing ways to run their courses or to apply new ways of teaching implied by the flexibility of the OL environment (ESU, 2010).

Another aspect of tutor respect, referring to the benefits of students' empowerment as being responsible citizens (see section 4.2.2), Cummis (1994) and Glasser (2010), view students when they are empowered are showing respect for others in the society in which they live, as well as

knowledgeable in terms of school structures and interactional patterns, so that they can participate successfully in school learning activities.

Last aspect regarding respect for tutors is accountability of administration. As explained in Maslow's pyramid, there are many practices that represent, for the tutor, signs of being valued and acknowledged by the educational institution. These can be seen as tutor incentives and can be referred to the value of respect. According to AlGamny *et al.* (2014), the strategy of acknowledging online tutors through financial reward was adopted successfully in Egypt in 2007 – online tutors received financial rewards, encouragement and appreciation from their academic institutions for digitalising their course syllabi, as in converting the syllabus to an electronic version. According to AlGamny *et al*. (2014), based on a survey of HE tutors, these rewards had a positive impact on the tutors' enthusiasm and encouraged them to digitalise their course syllabi.

In summary, tutors' value of respect has two different accountabilities: firstly, respect from students; in this regard, respect may need to be defined in a cultural context, as it is not obedience and approval without discussion. Students are free to provoke questions, volunteer answers, challenge the views of their tutors and equally are prepared to be challenged by others without feeling disrespect or insult; secondly, tutor respect from the academic institutions that reflects the tutors' need to be valued and accredited. On the other hand, tutors must receive professional training that develops their skills to develop a dialogic approach in teaching and learning. They must have a sound knowledge of various teaching methodologies and an awareness of student psychology, promoting dialogic learning.

7.3 Attitudes

This section refers to the way online tutors express or apply their beliefs and values through their decisions and behaviours.

7.3.1 Student trust

According to Zimring (1999), it is difficult for tutors and administrators to change their attitudes, share their power and responsibility, and trust the intrinsic motivation of their students to learn. However, according to Doyle (2011), giving students this responsibility provides a feeling of being

considered and valued, since it is based on trust. Teachers may not be willing to give students control unless they trust students to be responsible. This inverse relationship between trust and control is confirmed by many examples in the study findings, such as tutors' doubts whether students have done their homework on their own or with help. Moreover, one of the tutors in the focus groups stated, "If the students are responsible and can be trusted to manage their learning they can be empowered; if not, empowering learners is devastating for them." For this tutor, devastating was explained as the student drifting away from achieving his/her learning objective as planned in the course studied.

The issue here, according to Doyle (2011), is that students' feelings of responsibility give them a sense of being considered and valued, since responsibility is based on trust. Cheesewright (2015) explained student-tutor trust further as tutors cannot trust all students to work independently. Some are more responsible than others. In detail, when students can prove that they are capable of making good decisions, then more freedom should be granted to them. On the other hand, according to the findings, some online tutors pre-judge that students will not take on this responsibility, either because the students lack the necessary early preparation for it or because OL's flexibility of dates, times and sources of information may not be appropriately managed by the student, so they cannot be trusted. In other words, some tutors assume that students are not ready or able to be trusted. According to McBride (2004), in Arab countries, tutor-student trust is a process that requires commitment from students to learn how to be responsible. In other words, it is a learning process from the students' perspective, too. Moreover, as Almahdy (2012) stated, tutor-student trust in HE is termed in "crisis". Almahdy explained that, in HE, students call for tutors to build bridges of communication to identify meeting points between tutors and students.

Teacher-student trust highlights the issue of the importance of a dialogic approach between tutor and student and the interaction between them. In this regard, a series of workshops were conducted in Qatar in 2012 on building trust between tutors and students in HE (The Foundation, 2015). Hence, I suggest planning of a similar programme to run in Egypt. Further, similar workshops that can build tutor-student trust are recommended to be added to the CPD training agenda, and funded by the MHE.

7.3.2 "Thinking outside the box"

According to the findings, few tutors highlighted students' need to "think outside the box". Positive examples cited by some tutors included: encouragement for students to think about what they want to do after graduation; relating to the official curriculum; and job market. According to these tutors, these students value the opportunity to put what they have learned into practice where they can spot the relevance of the course to their prospective career. Moreover, thinking about their career gave the students a sense of purpose and motivation to succeed on their course. This point is linked to the issue of creativity, as it entails teaching students a real-world application of knowledge and the concepts of thinking, imagination, emotional management and communication (Prakash, 2007). It is claimed that challenges to "thinking outside the box", as found in the study findings, include rigid syllabi, assessment, limited budgets, time and content coverage.

OL facilitates more affordance to "think outside the box" by virtue of its flexibility and the diversity of sources of information (Richardson, 2011). In Egypt, the opportunity is greater as, according to Lam (2012), OL is considered a means of alleviating problems in the Egyptian education system, such as dependency on the rigid curriculum of the textbooks. According to Al-Sharhan (2014) interactive books, multimedia, smart boards and video conferencing are relatively "new" tools for the development of creative thinking of learners. These tools give students real experiences and make theoretical concepts learned more meaningful. According to Costantino, Di Gravio, Shaban and Tronc (2012), technological tools such as games and simulations have been widely used to teach different subjects such as business management, nursing, and medicine. Consequently, they prompt the students to "think outside the box". For example, video conferencing brings people at different locations together, and is thus regarded as a method of online communication that can help to develop "thinking outside the box" by showing and exchanging global experiences and interests. Scheduling online video conferences for online tutors can help to exchange this knowledge and these experiences between online tutors locally and globally. Merryfield, Lo, Po and Kasai (2008) describe the idea of "global mindedness" as the interaction between teaching knowledge of global interconnectedness and global issues, developing skills in

perspective consciousness and providing both tutor and students with intercultural experiences.

According to the findings, tutors had a positive attitude to encouraging learners to "think outside the box", implying creative thinking. However, considering tutors' limited skills in creative thinking (see Section 7.1.2), online tutors in their interviews gave few examples that explain their encouragement to students to "think outside the box". The following section explains the steps to "think outside the box" as an attitude and implications for the OL environment. According to (Zollman, 2010) "thinking outside the box" involves two phases of thinking; divergent and convergent. Each phase has many steps as seen in the following figure (Figure 7-4).

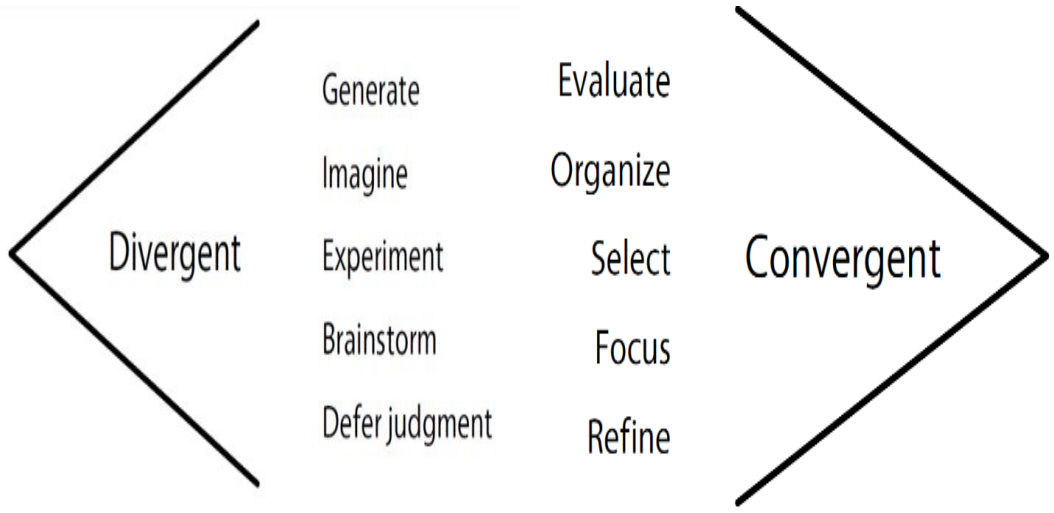


Figure 7-4: Integrating exploration and creativity in problem solving (Zollman, 2010)

In the divergent phase, students discover as many possibilities as they can to generate multiple possible angles on the problem; the main focus is on generation without evaluation. In the convergent phase, all the possible directions generated in the divergent phase are taken and narrowed down to a small number of options. Students in the convergent phase, evaluate and organise ideas, select some options over others and refine the ideas. The illustrated integration in figure (7-5) can benefit online collaborative work as explained by Simonson and Schlosser (2007). They focused on divergent and convergent thinking in online group work when applying problem-based

learning (PBL) where, dialogue, friendly debate and reflection are applied. They recommended that, for online tutors, designing tasks that embed steps of divergent and convergent thinking can increase the effectiveness of the social construction of knowledge.

According to Woodcock (2015), “thinking outside the box” is lateral thinking and involves discarding the obvious, leaving behind traditional modes of thought and throwing away preconceptions. It relies on imagination to challenge assumptions, solving problems by looking at them from unexpected perspectives. Applying the steps in Figure 7-4 to the definition of "thinking outside the box” in OL, it is claimed by Zollman (2010) that OL facilitates a diversity of tools that can help tutors and learners to think laterally or “outside the box”. The following figure (7-5) illustrates a model of divergent and convergent “thinking outside the box“ in OL. This model embeds an example of a technological online tool in each single step in each phase: divergent and convergent.

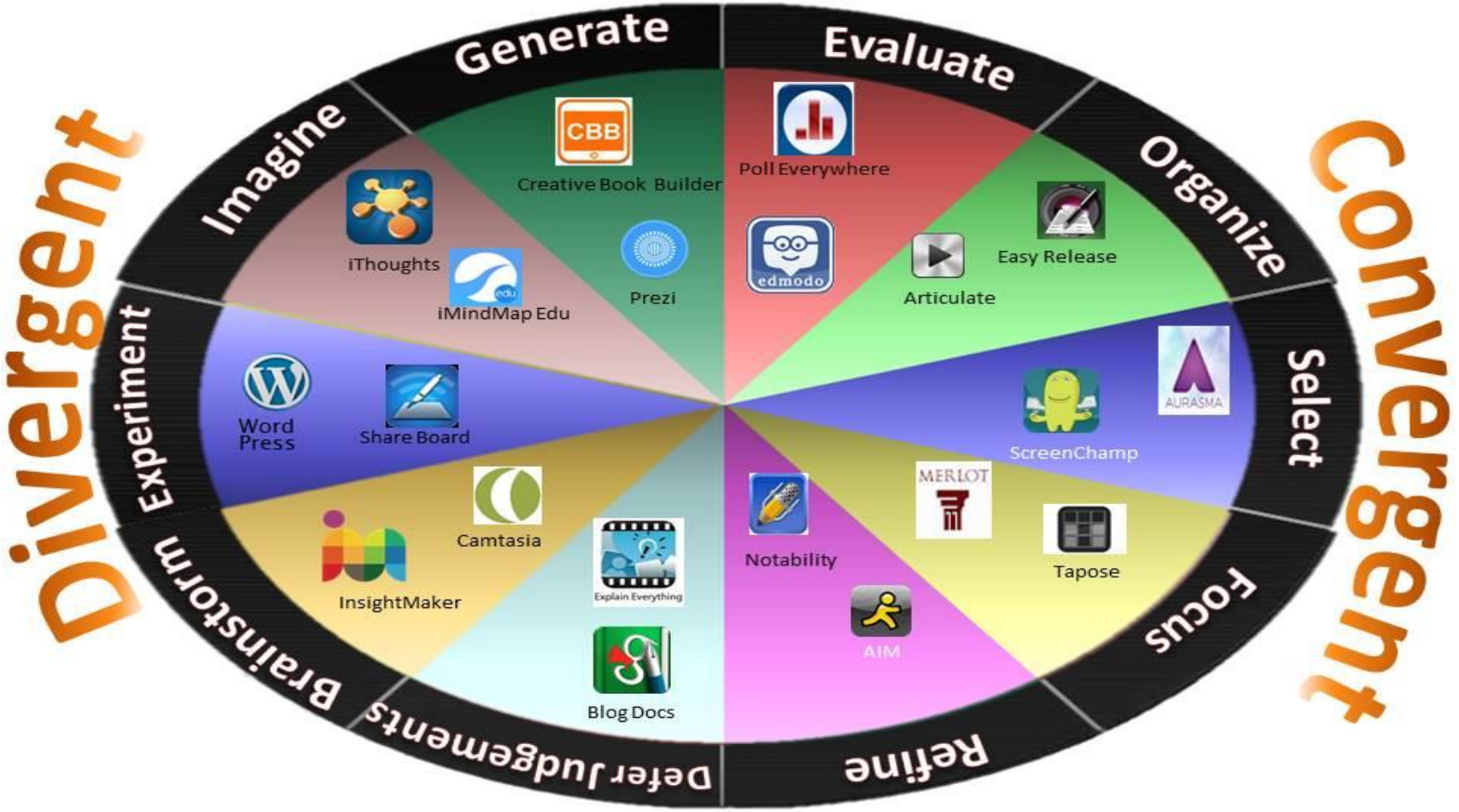


Figure 7-5: Divergent and convergent steps to "think outside the box" in OL

Figure 7-5 explains the OL affordance in its variety of online tools to help learners to “think outside the box ". For example, "iThoughts” as an imagination tool for getting ideas and information into a structured layout, is an example for divergent thinking. "ScreenChamp” as an interactive platform for sharing ideas through videos, is an example for convergent thinking. For further explanation (see Appendix D).

7.3.3 Resistance to change

Prochaska and Prochaska (1999) list four main reasons behind our difficulties in changing our behaviour: (1) ‘I can't change’; (2) ‘I don't want to change’; (3) ‘I don’t know how to change’; and (4) ‘I don't know what to change’. In other words, reasons for resisting change are lack of knowledge about why, what and how to change; thus reasons can be linked to the issue of tutors’ knowledge.

In the educational context, Bromage (2006) highlights that there are two reasons for tutors’ resistance to change; firstly, teaching staff may resist if they do not perceive the value or benefits of the proposed plan in promoting learning. In this case, accurate indicators of student achievement are desirable. Secondly, academic staff may resist if they perceive that the proposed change is an attempt to limit their academic freedom or otherwise disempower them.

The study findings were that tutors indicated many ways to resist change, such as: denying the existence of a problem (for example: the need for a Personal Development Plan (PDP)); confirming the positive side of the current situation; and ignoring the negative (for example: the benefit of sanction and rigidity in face-to-face learning).

Scott and Jaffe (1988) explained the process of resistance to change by focusing on the responses of individuals (tutors) when changes occur, starting with denial, resistance, exploration and commitment (DREC model). If, for example, tutors think that it is not possible that this situation could happen to them, they may avoid the topic as much as possible and act as if nothing new is happening. People at this stage behave as if things will simply stay the same as always. That means they are in a denial phase. If they are feeling overwhelmed and depressed, they refuse to cooperate or become angry at the policy of organisation. Consequently, to minimise resistance to change it is important to understand the level of tutors’ understanding

of the environment around them. Then, the denial of the existence of a problem can be minimised and a shift to the exploration phase is likely to occur.

In the context of Egypt specifically, El-Shenawi (2005) suggested that tutors are likely to be resistant to the adoption of e-learning because it empowers students with free choice in their e-learning environment (see section 4.3.2.2). Abdelraheem (2006) added another point concerning tutors' resistance, namely the difficulty of changing tutors' values and attitudes about what e-learning constitutes. Hargreaves and Fink (2012, p.15) agreed with this:

> "Knowledge workers are paid for their education, experience, and expertise, so it is not surprising that they take offense when someone else rides roughshod over their intellectual territory."

In the Egyptian setting, changing values and attitudes cannot be claimed to be achieved easily, but initial steps can be taken. This change involves raising tutors' awareness of teaching and learning in a positive learning climate. Tutors need to develop their social and civic knowledge, along with skills and values such as active listening, conflict resolution, problem solving, social responsibility and ethical decision-making. Primarily, underlining and developing tutor content and pedagogical knowledge are recommended to be the start of the strategy to minimise resistance (see Section 7.5.1).

7.3.4 Group work

Tutors in my study acknowledged the role of social collaboration in OL, but the majority gave negative feedback about group work and team spirit for various reasons: a) *Cultural,* where OL, students communicate and collaborate with anonymous users; in conservative communities, as found in Egypt, chatting with anonymous users who are different in values and beliefs is a hazard. This concern is confirmed by Wardany (2009) (see section 4.6.1); b) *Novelty* : where tutors believe that students need early preparation to undertake a group work. c) *Professional:* where tutors struggle to identify the individual contribution of each student in group work. Group work addresses the issue of student's power and control (see section 7.1.1), as Zimmerman (1995) emphasises the social perspective of empowerment, where group members interact and collaborate in order to be able to control their lives. In other words, tutors' negative feedback about group work, may

discourages students to collaborate and communicate. Hence, according to Zimmerman (1995) students are not given control on their learning.

Another concern for the tutor is the difficulty to make sure that the work has been done by the specific student rather than another in the group. This latter challenge can be linked back to student trust (see Section 7.3.1). Another professional challenge for tutors is the diversity of learners and the difficulty in selecting heterogeneous members of a group. Cohen and Lotan (2014) explained some of these difficulties such as students' anti-social behaviour that may occur between group members and prevention of dominance. For designing homogenous group work, Cohen and Lotan (2014) focused on both tutor and student perspectives. *For tutors*, they focused on a tutor's training for an intervention that helps effective group functioning. For example, when the tutor needs to pose a question, how should the tutor respond when the group of students are challenged with a problem. *For students*, they focused on preparing to behave in the group work situation without direct supervision. Consequently, students' preparation to work in a group is assumed to help resolve two challenges that have been highlighted in the findings. Firstly, the drawbacks of invisibility in OL where, after students' skills are developed to work in groups as claimed earlier, they can work without direct supervision. Pedersen and Digby (1995) explain that in cooperative learning, students communicate, collaborate, manage, review and share decision making. This leads to less of a burden for the tutor to monitor each single student and to manage large class groups. Secondly, the drawback of social isolation in OL, where students discuss, debate and co-operate in the online groups.

One of the main concerns that are highlighted in the findings for online group work is when students are being exposed to conflicting views. Therefore, some tutors preferred to avoid online group work and instead favoured individual tasks. According to Cohen and Lotan (2014), vigorous disagreement is one of the positive features of cooperative learning, where students realise that there is more than one legitimate perspective for the same problem. Based on this assumption, they explained that different group work requires different cooperative behaviours. For example, one group might need guidance in how can members in the group talk to each other in a constructive way when they are exposed to distress and disagreement, whilst, another group need guidance in how members in a group organise tasks collaboratively between them to achieve a common goal.

As a start to embed collaborative work to overcome the aforementioned challenges, Romero-Frias and Arquero Montaño (2012) addressed a conceptual change that educators need to carry out. This change means that online tutors need to step outside the traditional social interaction between them, which is based on individual competition between learners to achieve a target or high grade, and promote collaboration and team work that achieves a group target. Oakley *et al*. (2004) explained the challenges that tutors confront in group work. Firstly, team work requires students to develop strong communication, coordination and conflict resolution skills, which not all tutors feel qualified to teach. Therefore, Cohen and Lotan (2014) explained that preparing students in these skills requires the tutor to decide which norms and skills are needed for the group setting. Secondly, assessing the group work and the individual outcome may be a challenge for tutors that requires thoughtful consideration of learning objectives and a combination of assessment approaches.

In OL, in the Egyptian context, the opportunity for educational reform in online collaborative work appears promising. According to Lam (2012), OL focuses on piloting to provide innovative solutions for such problems as overcrowded classes, enhancing education by knowledge exchange and experience of the international educational community. This claim entails encouraging online work between students to collaborate locally and internationally to achieve the objectives of knowledge exchange and experience. Another factor that supports online collaborative work in Egypt is the economic situation, since some HE students are at the same time engaged in work and must carry the burden of financial responsibility in their families (EL- Seoud *et al*. 2014). Hence, the OL environment, thanks to its flexibility in the time and place of study and its mechanism for collaborative learning, gives students with multiple work and family commitments immediate access to sources of knowledge to communicate and collaborate with peers when time is available.

7.3.5 Personal development plans (PDPs)

Tutors agreed that a PDP is essential to develop their technical and soft skills, when there are no courses provided. According to Johnson (2009), there are many ways for tutors to develop themselves, including workshops, online forums or individual reading, and several of these methods for continuing professional development (CPD) have been discussed in chapter 3 (Section 3.3.5). According to my study

context, both individual and departmental action for CPD in OL are relatively new research topics in the context of Egypt, and further research is needed here (Lam, 2012). In the study findings, it is observed that some tutors do not consider PDPs or any efforts initiated by themselves to develop their skills. These tutors are reliant on what is offered by the academic institution. This observation highlights an issue: are all tutors aware of the areas of improvement needed in their teaching practices? It is notable that asking interviewees about their areas of improvements in the pilot study was a question that had no clear answer. Therefore, I had to replace this question, in the final data collection, by a more generic question (See Appendix A.4 and A.5).

In respect of limitations of CPD that affect tutors' PDPs, an online source for tutors' continuing professional development (CPD) can be recommended, for example, the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM, 2015) (www.ncetm.org.uk). The objective of this online source is to ensure that all mathematics tutors have easy access to high quality, evidence-based mathematics CPD. One of the positive benefits of this resource is that it has self-evaluation to identify the tutor's successes, weaknesses and areas of improvement. Therefore, this source can help Egyptian online tutors to identify their PDPs. Another benefit is the affordance of this source to facilitate tutor-tutor interaction through online forums and communities. Based on the findings in my study, further aspects which should be focused upon are as follows:

- Repository of online tools: where tutors can add and share their knowledge about online technological tools.
- Scheduled online conferences: on both levels, local and global, where online tutors exchange experience, and peer collaborative projects.
- Linking HE researchers: to share HE research, encourage co-authoring and extend these researchers' outcomes of studies to implement them.

Given the technological revolution, and considering what has been mentioned in chapter 2 (Section 2.4) about the limited availability and accessibility of internet infrastructure and services at some Egyptian universities, especially in rural areas, some academic institutions may have difficulty in providing tutors with up-to-date CPD. Therefore, some personal efforts are required to fill the gap in training. It is of note that the blame for limitations of online tutors' PDPs is placed on the tutors'

low wages by the government; a successful online tutor's development plan entails financial affordance, for example, for obtaining a computer or to subscribe to an online training course. Regarding the role of academic institutions to support tutors' PDPs, according to Frost (2013), these institutions have to make a clear distinction between tutors' PDPs, which sets out long-term aims and priorities and action plans that break the PDP work into stages and address the details of the action to be taken. For Frost, academic institutions need to identify and differentiate both to be able to support the tutor in each.

In the Egyptian context, according to Ibrahim (2011), there is little literature that focuses on CPD that is planned and organised by the academic institution. Also, few studies highlight the concept of a personal development plan (PDP). Some tutors, when given the opportunity to undertake self-evaluation, award themselves full marks. Therefore, any areas of improvement may not be acknowledged.

Therefore, as a starting point, a tutor self-evaluation form is recommended. This could cover many aspects of tutor teaching practice: familiarity with the structure of the course; subject expertise; enthusiasm; and ability to deploy resources effectively. It is notable that a self-evaluation form is a chain of steps that tutors, with the help of their academic institution, use to identify their PDPs. The steps are explained in Figure 7-6.

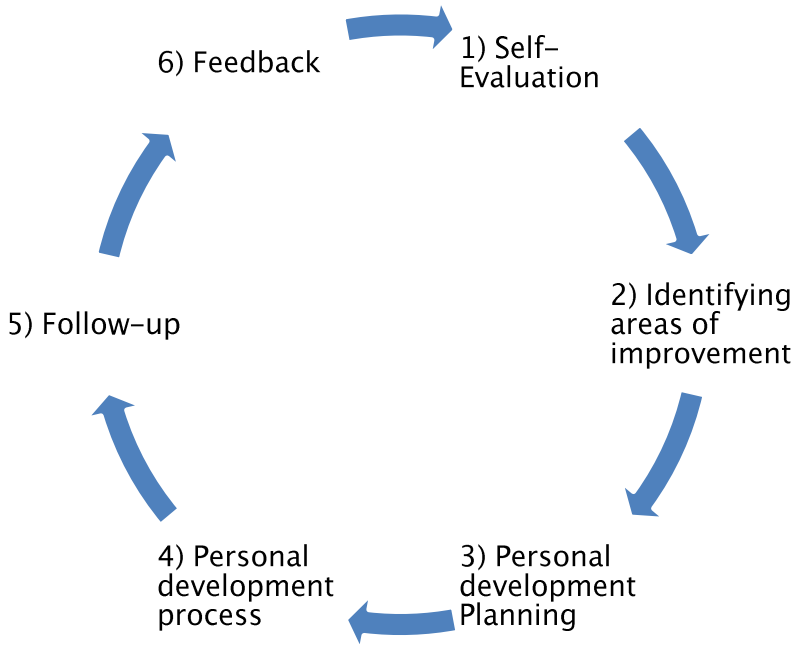


Figure 7-6: Cycle of a personal development plan

In summary, tutors need to identify and acknowledge their skills, learning intentions and outcomes. Based on this knowledge, they can understand and plan which areas need more work and development of their needs. Based on this plan, they can design their professional development, either by their initiated efforts or by the CPD provided. A recommendation with online sources that facilitate their self-evaluation, professional online forums and events can help online tutors to plan, address and implement their PDPs.

7.4 Processes

The following section discusses the steps and actions taken by online tutors to achieve their teaching objectives.

7.4.1 Offering guidance

According to De la Sablonniere *et al.* (2009), tutors in OL have become ‘facilitators’, guiding learners to achieve their learning goals and objectives. According to the findings, in the eyes of online tutors, there is no clear distinction between the terms ’facilitator’ and ‘guide’. Regarding these terms, Elhor and Elrobi (2010) stated, “facilitator" appeared in the Arab modern educational literature to describe the tutor's tasks” (p. 46) and that the two terms are used in the literature interchangeably. This is confirmed by the study findings: during the interviews, conducted almost five years after the publication of the 2010 paper, several tutors used the term “facilitator” to describe the online tutor's role. However, many tutors also described the online tutor's role as a "guide" who helps students to engage and interact in the online environment (although these are roles which can be said to fall under the roles of the tutor as a "facilitator").

The following section looks at the tutor’s role, both as a facilitator and as a guide, highlighting the characteristics of each.

7.4.1.1 E-facilitator

According to Berg (1995), a facilitator helps a group to improve its proficiency in identifying, solving problems and making decisions, yet possesses no decision-making authority. So, when tutors facilitate, they are a ‘guide by the side’, encouraging the sharing of knowledge between students. Salmon (2013) defines online facilitation in OL as focusing on the social perspective in the process of encouraging students’ interaction, supporting their learning activities, and helping

make the use of technology easier in order to foster engagement and learning. In regards to guiding, it is the holistic approach in helping learners to use their own efforts to achieve their potential for self-direction in their online study, but with a need for information from tutors (Osborne, Pittaway and Downing, 2014). According to the study findings, the tutors agreed that they are "guiding", not "facilitating". Moreover, the students' authority in terms of decision-making was not highlighted by the tutors. This teacher-centred approach links to the previous section (Section 7.1.1) which discussed empowering learners and the tutors' concerns about giving over their control. It can be claimed that the tutors' reluctance to allow students self-guidance reflects their reluctance to give control to their students because they think that this may affect their image as an authority in the class.

Regarding the online activities that tutors facilitate, when students exchange information online (in e-tivities), according to Salmon (2013), part of their role is to facilitate the material studied, if asked, and to encourage student participation and sharing knowledge together as a group. Osborn *et al*. (2014) focuses on adapting a SCL approach to teaching, stating that when tutors facilitate online activities, students should be actively involved. In the findings, online tutors did not give specific examples of their online activities, but acknowledged that engaging the students is an essential and challenging part of their role. Hence, it is recommended that using the term "facilitator" is differentiated from "guidance", as this might be useful in indicating the student-centred approach to teaching and highlighting that students should be actively involved in the learning process, rather than passive receivers of information.

7.4.1.2 E-guide

According to the findings, online students need a tutor's guidance for many reasons, for instance, the selection of online resources and group members. Moreover, most tutors in the interviews rated students' skills in self-discovery and self-evaluation, self and time-management lower than when guided by tutors, and therefore favoured tutor guidance more than self-guidance. According to Osborn *et al*. (2014: 4),

> "Students' guidance is a matter of knowing when to push, when to pull, and when to perhaps contact particular students privately to encourage more interaction."

Therefore, online tutors need to know about their learners before guiding them. According to Skvorak (2013), knowing learners enables tutors to present their lessons in a manner that suits all learning styles. In OL specifically, according to Conrad and Donaldson (2012), tutors need to identify the learners' aspirations, barriers to learning, levels of computer literacy and any need for either special or basic skills. Moreover, on the basis of this knowledge, the tutor offering their students attention, approval or genuine interest, is a way to make a positive personal connection between tutor and students. In OL, Conrad and Donaldson (2012) stress that knowing learners is an on-going process that forces tutors to understand the ways in which collaborative learning increases student engagement and communication. Consequently, if tutors are to prepare a learning plan to specify how support will be provided, they need to know their learners throughout all stages of the whole learning process. The following section highlights the differences between this study's findings and the literature with respect to rationales for tutor guidance and the consequences for tutors' practices.

Frenay *et al*. (1998, cited in de la Sablonniere *et al.* 2009), explains that many online students at the beginning of their study are dependent on tutors and peers and need guidance and support from them. The reasons for this dependency and the need for tutor guidance in OL are explained by Bennett, Maton and Kervin (2008):

> "Whilst students are happy to use the internet as part of their studies, there is evidence that this generation of students tends to use a "snatch and grab" approach to information gathering, and have shallow, random and often passive interactions with text"(p: 781)

Additionally, OL students who have never used a particular technology tool, for instance creating a website, signal a need for significant support when they commence their studies (Osborne *et al.* 2014). This explains the online learners' dependency curve (Lowe, 2012) (see Chapter 3, Figure 3-1). Accordingly, Bernstein (2010) and Zaidieh (2012) highlight the importance of tutor guidance for online students. Bicknell-Holmes and Hoffman (2000) explained that in order to deepen learners' knowledge and enhance their skills in Discovery Learning (DL), when learners ask questions, tutors should not answer them directly. Rather they should answer them with additional questions.

As my study's findings shows in the Egyptian environment, technological tools in OL are stressed by online tutors to be a novelty - it was stated by one of the tutors that pen and paper is still used in preparing lessons. This novelty of OL for both tutor and student is reflected in Elwady's (2010) assertion that there is no 100% OL course in Arab countries, but that everything is blended learning. Elwady (2010) further explains that blended learning is a transition phase on the way to the shift to full OL, which, given the economic circumstances and social conditions of many of the Arab countries that implement an OL system, may take a long time.

In the Egyptian context, tutors revealed their concern about students misusing freedom or making inappropriate choices about websites for learning and group members, arguing that they needed their guidance. These concerns might be based on a lack of tutor-student trust, as discussed in Section 7.3.1. Thus, students may not be empowered and given control over their learning and, consequently, for tutors, guidance is more tutor-led than student-led. Most tutors deemed students' competence in self-evaluation and self-discovery low, and guided discovery to be much higher. These findings are corroborated by Faour (2011), who explains that teaching is still, in most Arab countries, guided by the tutor and democratic education is not practised as required. According to him, the result is a failure to encourage free analytical thinking in students and he recommends that tutors' guidance starts with open discussion and confirming active learning, since continuing with tutor-led guidance is unlikely to lead to student engagement. With reference to SCL, there are elements that SCL has in common with Democratic Education (DE), such as, DE's flow and exchange of ideas through students' engagement and participation, critical thinking and problem solving (Okenyi, 2007). According to McCombs and Whistler (1997), SCL similarly helps students to think critically while learning to analyse, evaluate and be reflective towards their own learning. Consequently, as a solution, SCL needs to be implemented, in order to promote students' critical thinking and to develop their skills for self-guidance. According to Doyle (2011) the challenge is that SCL is still not practised, since little literature focuses on what changes are needed to be made to shift from teacher-centred learning to student-centred learning. For the Egyptian context, this is likewise an area where further research is needed. Faour's (2011) call for open discussion between students and tutors, and DE, stresses that students need to receive a type of education that actively engages them as citizens in their schools and communities in order for them to be prepared to understand and implement DE. Gribble (2005) defined DE in its simplest terms as a sharing between tutors and

students. This definition of DE extends the benefits of DE to enhancing the relationship between students and tutors, as both work together democratically in active participation to create a positive environment. Okenyi (2007) stresses the importance of SCL as the most appropriate means of reducing rigidity by fostering DE through learner participation, and promoting knowledge relevant to the learners' social contexts and previous experience.

Drawing on the analysis of the findings of my study about tutors' guidance, it can be summarised that, if online tutors are to guide their students, they need to know their learners enough to identify their requirements in terms of tutor guidance. To do so, they need to bridge the discussion gap between tutor and student by promoting and supporting DE, as recommended by the South Africa Department of Education (Apple and Beane, 2003).

In summary, there is a marked difference in the ideas of tutor e-guidance and e-facilitation. E-guidance is a holistic approach to helping learners to use their own efforts as far as possible in order to achieve their potential for self-direction in their online study, but with a need for information from tutors. E-facilitation focuses on making technology easier for students to work with in order to foster greater engagement and learning. Therefore, in the Egyptian context, as explained above in Section (7.4.1), many tutors used the term "facilitator" and "guide" interchangeably without a clear difference between them, in regard to the tutor's role. Therefore, it is essential to maintain a differentiation between guide and facilitator in order to support students with the practices, activities or approaches associated with the role. Another issue is that there is a need for radical change in the objectives behind online tutor guidance to promote various practices that support SCL and increase student engagement.

7.4.2 Monitoring

The literature indicates that tutors need to monitor students in OL through teaching strategies such as Activity-based Learning (ABL) (Hariharan, 2011), creative learning (NACCCE, 1999) and online collaborative learning (Palloff and Pratt, 2007), in order to facilitate students' learning and observe student progress towards their learning objectives. On the other hand, according to the study findings, many tutors believe that monitoring is a part of OL and needs to be implemented in all learning approaches. According to the interviewees, monitoring is the observation of student behaviour. In OL, monitoring concerns students' online communicating with peers,

and those visited websites for their course. Alsabbah (2015) describes many examples of tutor concern about the lack of monitoring of online students, such as hacking the system and cheating in online examinations. These concerns correspond to some tutors' lack of trust that was evident in the findings, specifically that homework had been done without the help of others (see chapter 6, Section 6.7.1). In addition, the importance put on being able to monitor students in OL to overcome their invisibility explains why many tutors preferred face-to-face learning to OL, since the physical presence of students means ease of monitoring them.

In the Arabic literature, there are contrasting views about monitoring students in OL. According to Hassoun (2009):

> "One of the solutions to assist in the development of e-learning in HE is the strict monitoring and full control of technology, which keeps the academic trust between tutor and student". (p.9)

From the findings, it can be seen that many tutors agree with the necessity of monitoring online students. On the other hand, according to Elrayes (2011), the online monitoring of HE students is totally rejected as it widens the gap between students and HE tutors and decreases students' feeling of ownership of learning, and thus independence. Few tutors in the study findings agreed with this claim. Their contrasting views presented in the findings highlight the question: Do we need to monitor HE online students? The importance of monitoring online students is confirmed by Juan (2009) and Daradoumis, Juan, Lera-López and Faulin (2010), for example, to anticipate students with problems such as disengagement and to identify any internal conflict between group members. Also, monitoring could provide the tutor with significant clues as to how to improve course material and communication between tutors, students and peers. Moreover, according to Daradoumis *et al*. (2010), monitoring online students can have a significant positive influence on student motivation, as well as a positive impact on their final performance. Specifically, students receive commendations for good learning experiences and detailed suggestions based on their earlier activities.

Hence, there are two conditions for a positive outcome from monitoring students. Firstly, students should have access to the reports regarding their performance. Secondly, these reports need to be up-to-date, to keep up with the students' progress during the course. The question here is whether these two conditions are met in the study context. As mentioned earlier, it is one of the study's limitations

that it focuses mainly on the tutors' perspectives, not the students'. Therefore, it may not be possible for the first part of the question to be answered in my study. Regarding the second part of the question about up-to-date reports, there is a centralised and bureaucratic structure in Egyptian HE (OECD, 2010), and there is evidence that reports, if they exist, may not be as up-to-date as is recommended.

7.5 Skills

The following section looks at what tutors learn which enables them to practise their teaching, such as their knowledge and CPD.

7.5.1 Tutor's knowledge

In interviews and focus groups, tutors discussed their knowledge of the TPACK framework developed by Shulman (1986) and the Turner-Bisset model of types of tutor knowledge (2001) (chapter 3, Figure 3-5 and Table 3.1). According to the findings, the majority of tutors agreed on the need for technical knowledge to be embedded in the CPD agenda. Regarding content and pedagogy knowledge, their views are discussed in the following section.

Regarding content knowledge, the majority of online tutors did not discuss or highlight the importance of content knowledge. This is confirmed by the literature in the Egyptian context. According to both Sukariyah (2010) and Maharat (2013), tutors' content knowledge, in terms of their knowledge about the actual subject matter, is mandatory for any vocational course that is preparing tutors. In the sense of professional preparation, content knowledge is the focus during both undergraduate pre-service study and in-service training, as it is the main criterion for qualifying as a tutor. According to the findings of this study, tutors agree with Sukariyah (2010) and Maharat (2013) that their knowledge about the subject matter is a requirement taken for granted by any tutor. However, Maharat (2013) highlights two important implications of this focus on content knowledge. Firstly, that Egyptian tutors look at pedagogical preparation and the application of the subject matter as additional knowledge, while the main focus is on content knowledge. Consequently, little interest is paid to pedagogical knowledge by either the tutor or the academic institution. Secondly, when tutors start applying their content knowledge later, they discover a gap between theory and practice. According to Shouk and Saeed (1995), this gap reflects negatively on tutors' professional teaching in the class, as tutors struggle to communicate with students and apply

their knowledge by focusing only on reading their books. Another implication of this gap is that the MHE has to adopt another strategy in hiring university tutors, other than the strategy that is explained in chapter 2 (Section 2.6); tutors who master the practical knowledge in their area of expertise, can be hired. In other words, academic qualifications are no longer a requirement for hiring university tutors. According to Maharat (2013), the faculties in Egyptian HE have become a mix between professionals and non-professionals. A recommendation to solve this issue would be that academic institutions issue standardised systems for preparing HE tutors, with standards which demand accredited measures and qualities for tutors' proficiency that are approved by all universities in Egypt.

Regarding pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), the tutors in the study did not highlight it at all. This is explained by Maharat (2013) as tutor's preparation in HE being based on three main perspectives: content, which is theoretical knowledge focused on the subject matter; pedagogy, which is the application of teaching practices; and culture, which facilitates tutors' exploration of values, beliefs, and behaviours in the culture. However, Shulman (1987) and Turner-Bisset (2001) emphasise the importance of PCK. They argue that PCK is more than content knowledge plus knowledge of general principles of pedagogy. For Shulman (1986), it is knowledge that guides the tutors' actions and reasoning in their teaching practices. For Turner-Bisset (2001), PCK is not a separate element in tutors' knowledge and cannot be reduced to sets of facts or isolated propositions, but is knowledge of self in relation to subject knowledge and pedagogy, and knowledge of educational aims, purposes and values (see Figure 7-2 below).

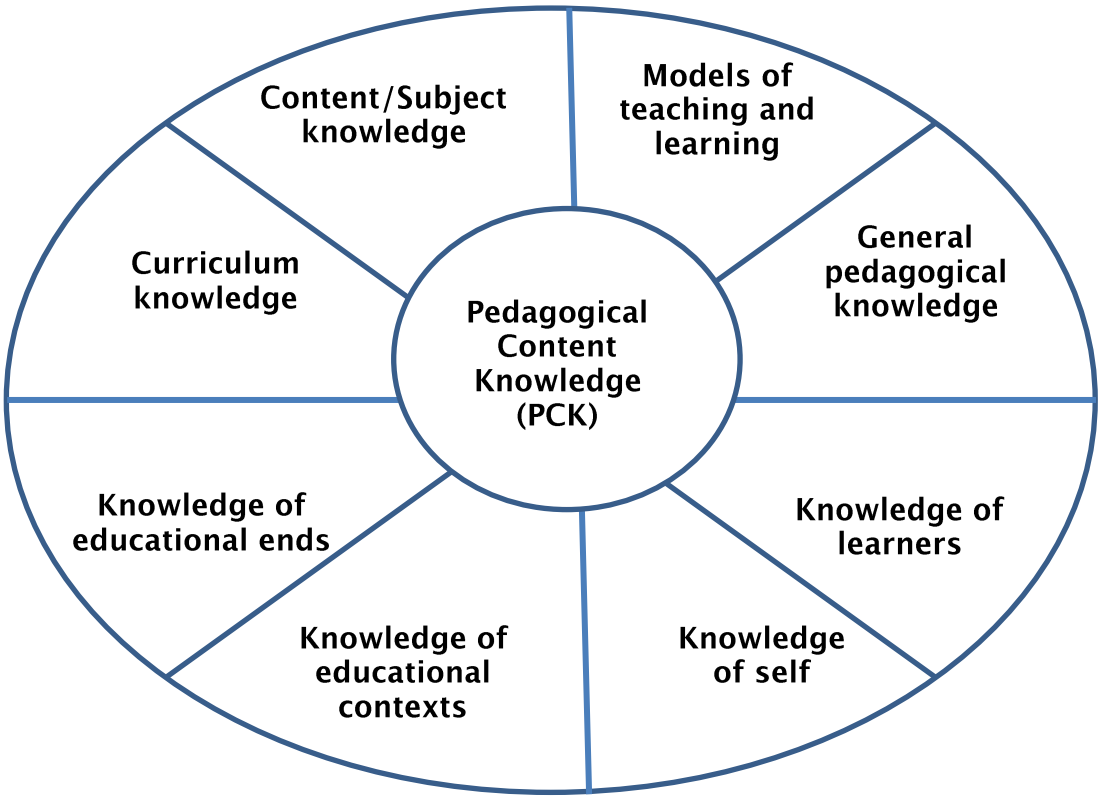


Figure 7-2: Knowledge bases for teaching adapted from Turner-Bisset, 2001

Moreover, for Turner-Bisset, without PCK, tutors are unable to help learners to learn when, where and why to use their content knowledge. Notably, although cultural knowledge is mentioned by Maharat (2013) as the main focus of CPD for HE tutors, it is not mentioned explicitly in either Shulman's or Bisset's work. Bisset (2001) highlighted culture as part of tutors' beliefs as it relates to the way in which they understand the history and purpose of the subject or discipline. In the Egyptian context, knowledge of culture is an important element of three aspects (content, pedagogy and culture) in tutor training (Maharat, 2013), defining the cultural framework of society, tutors' political, religious and historical beliefs, and informing tutors' educational trends. According to the findings of my study, tutors discussed the features and characteristics of pedagogical content which were under the name of "soft skills". Pedagogical content knowledge, as a separate identity, was not mentioned at all. The recommendation is therefore that PCK in OL needs to be examined in further work - as it was absent from the tutors' discussions; there is clearly a gap in tutors' understanding.

To summarise, tutors' knowledge in the Egyptian context, combining Shulman's TPACK framework and Bisset's model of tutor knowledge with the study findings, I developed the following diagram (Figure 7-3).

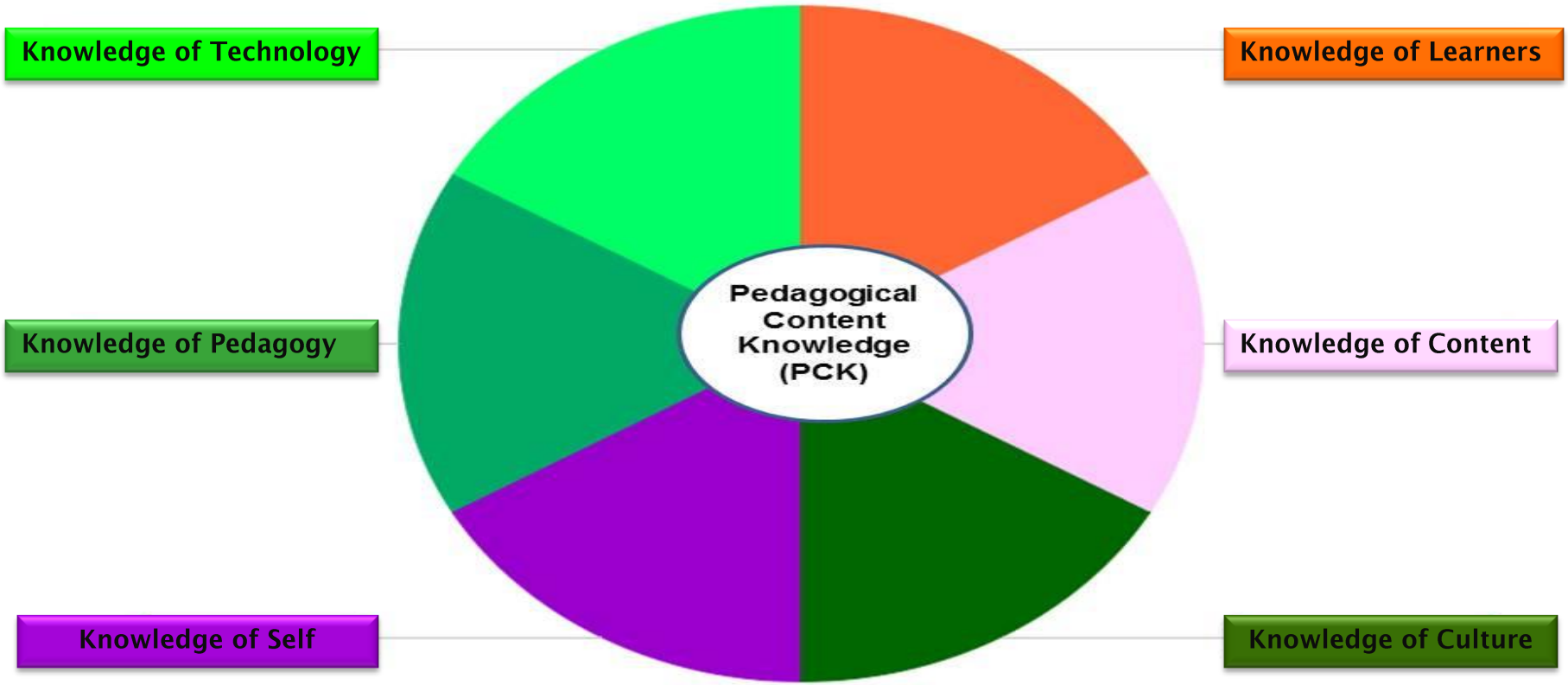


Figure 7-3: Knowledge of online tutor adapted from knowledge bases for teaching model (Turner-Bisset, 2001) and TPACK Framework (Shulman, 1986)

The diagram shows PCK is a separate entity of knowledge; it combines both content and pedagogy. Meanwhile, it is a central focus in the tutor's knowledge. Also, tutors' knowledge of self is incorporated into the diagram, as it reflects the way in which online tutors perceive their identity, where tutors set the characteristics by which they are recognisable or known. According to Woodward (2004), identity requires awareness on our part to identify our traits and characteristics. Moreover, identity suggests an active engagement on our part, as we choose to identify with a particular identity or group. These requirements of identity are critical for online tutors in order to be able to reflect on their personal teaching practices, and an addition of this knowledge will help a tutor's personal development plan (PDP) (see the discussion in Section 7.3.5). Additionally, a tutor's knowledge of their learners includes empirical knowledge related to age, social nature and behavioural patterns, providing an overview of the full diversity of online learners. It includes the cognitive knowledge of learners, where the tutor contextualises the knowledge of learning theories and how a particular group of learners respond and behave. Based on the previous claims about the precedence of content knowledge over pedagogy knowledge, and the need to develop only tutors' PCK, there may consequently be a need to acquire this knowledge of identity and develop a practice that is different from what tutors themselves experienced as students, thus requiring learning opportunities for tutors that are more powerful than simply reading and talking about new pedagogical ideas.

In UK universities, in some courses, work placements are compulsory in order to achieve the university degree, while on others students can opt to do a placement as one of the modules studied. A work placement gives students the chance to gain hands-on experience of the chosen career (Graduate Prospects, 2014). Another route, for those who already have a degree in a subject which they want to teach, is the Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE), currently the most popular route into teaching in the UK. This route combines substantial school placements with studying the theory behind teaching and learning (Graduate Prospects, 2015). Consequently, graduates of these extended programmes combine theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Other HE professional development modules that offer the opportunity for university lecturers to enhance their academic practice are affected by the Institute for Learning Innovation and Development (ILIAD). Most UK universities provide such modules for new lecturers (University of Southampton, 2015). Applying such models in Egyptian HE would mean that tutors look at learning from multiple perspectives and use this knowledge to become sensitive to

variation, be more aware of what works for what purposes and in what situations, and to reach diverse learners. Accordingly, this can help to minimise the gap, mentioned above, between theory and practice for tutors.

7.5.2 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

According to Sukariya (2010) and Maharat (2013), there are many issues concerning CPD for HE tutors. There are planning and organisational shortcomings in the number of training programmes and courses provided for tutors, and they are inflexible regarding course times and modules, lacking planning and clarity of objectives. The educational challenges include how many CPD courses are based on direct instruction, not on interaction between tutors and trainers. Moreover, the main modules are theoretical, without aspects of real teaching practice. According to my study findings, tutors agree that there is a lack of planning and interactive delivery in the training sessions. Moreover, tutors also listed further challenges such as that CPD does not help them to understand the online learners' needs, abilities and expectations and a lack of the practical up-to-date application of computers. Additionally, tutors highlighted that if they want to overcome these challenges by paying themselves to subscribe or attend online courses as a PDP, the limitations of their financial affordance is an obstacle to achieve their development plan.

Consequences of the aforementioned limitations, explained by the interviewees, are that these hinders in CPD leading to reluctance by tutors to attend training courses and missing any sense of the importance to the development of their technical skill. Moreover, some interviewees added that tutors need to be paid as an extrinsic incentive to attend training. Tanaka (2010) explained that poor wages are a factor that contributes to a lower degree of commitment to the profession in African countries, indicating that tutors need incentives for professional development. Oxford University Press English language teaching (2012) highlighted the enquiry, in an online forum, about whether tutors should be paid to attend CPD sessions. Many tutors from different European countries such as Malta, Greece and Ukraine, replied "Yes". Some in this forum highlighted that some tutors do not seem to realise that organising training consumes time, finance and human resources. On the other hand, others explained that CPD is a win-win agreement for both administration and tutors whose professional career knowledge and experience are enriched by CPD.

In response to this need for tutors to be paid to attend CPD sessions, Sukariyah (2010) explains that the government in Egypt is offering scholarships, teaching grants and job guarantees to boost the number of applicants on preparation programmes. In addition, some universities such as the University of Damietta offer CPD courses known as "University Teacher Preparation Courses" for HE tutors, and the university administration considers these courses as prerequisites for hiring and promoting tutors. Surprisingly, however, tutors need to pay to attend this kind of training (Electronic Gate, University of Damietta (2015).

Another factor that can help tutors to invest more of their time in their professional development is to reduce the teaching hours. According to Bennell and Mukyanuzi (2005), a reduced burden of teaching hours for tutors helps to motivate them to develop themselves and embrace change in the workplace. Therefore, for further research, it is recommended to investigate how online tutors in Egyptian HE realise time to embrace upgrading in their professional career. For this current study, it can be suggested that tutors' increased salaries can motivate them to develop their professional career through CPD, as confirmed by Bennell and Mukyanuzi (2005) in a study in Tanzania, in which financial incentives determine the level and patterns of motivation among tutors. Therefore, increased financial incentives could motivate those tutors who see compulsory tutor development as time they cannot spend on earning a living. What I would suggest would be to specify the number of CPD hours a tutor should attend to maintain their salary level. Those who are keen on professional development and exceed the specified number should be rewarded by rises in their salaries.

With reference to the model of Cruz-Yeh (2011) and Kennedy's nine models of CPD (2005) (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.5.1), the literature confirms how tutor training and development in Egypt is still in its infancy (see Section 2.6). In the study findings (see Section 6.8), it is evident that CPD for online tutors in Egyptian HE needs reform. It is evident in the literature that common features of successful CPD include a variety of methods, confirmed by Simoncini, Lasen and Rocco (2014). CPD is no longer comprised of short courses; tutors need opportunities to reflect, engage in professional dialogue, work with students, and engage in peer observation, coaching and feedback. According to Moore (2013) and Kale (2011), OL technology affordances, such as access to emails and online forums, offer a possible, promising method to improve teaching practices, since online discussion and sharing projects facilitate tutors to exchange knowledge and experiences.

According to Morrison (2013), CPD is only a first step for professional development; reflection on practice is the next. Specifically, Zeichner and Liston (2013) define CPD as an ongoing, cyclical process of self-directed learning that encompasses planning, action, evaluation and reflection. *In the planning stage*, tutors need to determine what they need to know, and identify weaknesses and strengths in skills and knowledge. In the pilot study for this research project, tutors did not give a clear answer when asked about their strengths and areas where improvement was needed in their teaching (see Appendix A). *In the action phase,* tutors need to identify how to learn or develop their skills. According to the findings of my study and based on the planning stage, many tutors found CPD to be an essential method to develop their professional skills. *In the evaluation stage*, tutors need to associate learning outcomes with learning objectives. Here the majority of tutors in the study were able to list clear learning objectives for their CPD. However, many of them also listed the challenges and limitations of CPD on the way to achieving these objectives. In addition some tutors, who were dependant on CPD only, without focus on a PDP, could not associate learning outcomes with learning objectives. *In the reflection stage*, tutors need to integrate knowledge into teaching, sharing with others and embedding creativity. According to the findings of the study, limited creativity can minimise reflection on training.

In the authors' view, Egypt needs projects similar to Teaching for Improved Learning Outcomes in Education (TILO) (See section 3.2.7.2.1). These projects would focus on CPD provided for tutors and include the use of technology with theories of learning behind this technology. Egypt may need a number of such projects over a longer period of time, and each project would be divided into phases. By the end of each phase, feedback and evaluation would be the basis of the following phase.

Another point to be highlighted here is that many tutors in the study considered CPD as a solution to the various challenges confronting their teaching practice. For example, many highlighted the need for CPD on the basis of online communication between tutor and student. According to Morrison (2013), attending CPD only for tutor professional development is a 'fixed mind-set'. Dweck (2012) explains that this term reflects the belief that people's basic qualities, such as their intelligence, are fixed traits. Therefore, they spend their time detailing these traits instead of developing them, and regard their most basic abilities as being determined by these fixed qualities. In the study findings, it emerged that many tutors believed that CPD

can overcome challenges. According to Dweck (2012), growth in mind-set leads to a change of thinking, as people believe that basic qualities can be developed and intelligence is just a starting point. At this point, they can recognise the other options.

Applied to the study findings, many tutors believed that their knowledge about topics such as enhancing tutor-student online communication is based on CPD that facilitates this kind of training. Other options such as reading or taking part in research on online collaborative work are another choice, and it can be claimed as a growth in mind-set. There are many challenges that tutors can overcome. For example, building dialogic approaches between tutor and student is recommended to enhance tutor-student online communication. As Al-Suleimany (2009) and Business Sweden (2015) explain, in the Egyptian setting the tutors' shift from fixed mind-set to growth mind-set is not an easy task. The reason behind the difficulty is the radical political and educational changes that need to occur first - both these areas need more freedom, flexibility and less bureaucracy. According to Business Sweden (2005), for a change in mind-set in education, the educational systems need to be re-organised from the ground up, and their philosophy, curricula and methods brought into line with the requirements of the age.

A final point about CPD is that according to Zeichner and Liston (2013), in CPD, tutors need to apply research to develop their teaching practice and to share this with others. These two ideas of *"research"* into and *"sharing"* of professional development practices are recommended for the Egyptian situation. The reason behind this is that these two ideas of "research" and "sharing" of professional development practices, or any similar ideas, were not mentioned at all by the tutors interviewed for my study. That these ideas were not mentioned could be either because of the limited knowledge about their importance for online tutors' professional development practices, or because of existing limitations to implementing them.

With reference to research, Afifi and Wahab (2010) link the idea of research to HE tutors' limitations to conduct expensive research, and cite the increased burden of teaching hours and the importance of content coverage as reasons for the limited contribution to research by HE tutors. Zu'bi (2011) mentions financial incentives and reducing teaching hours for HE tutors who conduct academic research, in order to motivate them in this aspect. According to Lages, Pfajfar and Shoham (2015), research is regarded as unimportant by academic institutions in Africa. In detail,

universities in Africa focus on teaching and providing consultancy; research is a low priority. They spotted two reasons behind the paucity of academic literature in the region; limited financial incentives for researchers, which is explained earlier, and the low interest of editors and reviewers of highly ranked journals in publishing local research about Africa. In Lages *et al*'s views (2015), the reasons behind this low interest are: firstly, inapplicability of generalisation of the African papers' results; secondly, editors and reviewers have limited knowledge about the region.

According to my study, interviewees did not discuss the benefits of research, so the findings do not offer any evidence for either a presence or absence of knowledge on the issue, and further research on the matter is recommended. However, establishing a model that can develop teaching practices for online HE tutors in Egypt based on the benefits of academic research is certainly a thought to be considered. Morrison (2013) discusses the Teacher Effectiveness Programme (TEEP), a model to develop effective teaching and learning based on both research and best practice. Similarly, institutions or workshops can manage, facilitate, and increase tutors' contributions to academic research and embed the research outcomes into teaching practices.

With reference to sharing of professional development practices among tutors, according to Alnouh (2006) limited team spirit and co-operative activities between university tutors are significant challenges to collaborative work among staff members. According to Miller and Burden (2007), tutor-tutor interaction and communication is not an area discussed extensively in the literature, and there is a surprising lack of descriptive research on the elements actually occurring during such collaboration. According to the literature, the reasons for the lack of research on this issue lie in three distinct areas. Firstly, tutors lack the training to know how to work, communicate, and collaborate with each other (McCormick *et al.* 2001). This corresponds to Wilkens' (2011) call for a new emphasis by schools on education and tutor training in Arab countries on building partnerships to advance reform. A reform which focuses on further training and online collaborative workshops in OL can boost and support tutor-tutor interaction and collaborative practice. Secondly, with regards to the work environment, tutors are used to working in a relatively isolated environment (Anderson, 2008). Thirdly, concerning the educational institution in which the tutors work, the school or college managers need to train, supervise and monitor tutors to practise such interaction with each other (Anderson, 2003 and Zu'bi, 2011).

In the Egyptian context, the starting point for communication and collaboration among staff members is recommended to be the formation of committees to address the issues associated with the needs of society, through research teams headed by a faculty member who provides advice and guidance to team members in order to address the problems of the community. Activities that run in the committee meetings and seminars can initiate, enrich and sustain the interaction between HE tutors. Specifically for the case of OL, Moore (2013) finds this is an environment which presents better opportunities for tutors to interact with each other and develop and enhance their teaching skills than the face-to-face environment. It is notable that, according to Zu'bi (2011), there is a role for government in supporting HE tutors' collaborative work, namely that of implementing the theory (collaborative research results) into practice (implementing research results on decision-making and problem solving) as well as in providing funding and financial support for scientific research in general and educational research in particular.

7.6 External factors

The follow section looks at the factors that are driving online tutors' teaching practices to pursue their job role, such as over-crowded classes and limited funding.

7.6.1 Over-crowded classes

According to the literature, large classes are one of the main challenges in Egyptian education (World Bank, 2013). According to Gibbs and Jenkins 1992, large class numbers present a problem for effective communication between tutor and student, as the student may feel unable to raise issues or questions. In Egyptian HE, students may not even know their classmates well until graduation as the numbers per year may exceed 2000. According to Gibbs and Jenkins (1992), tutors in large classes find it difficult to organise sessions. Bahanshal (2013) explained that a consequence is that SCL is almost impossible, so a teacher-centred learning approach is likely to be implemented instead.

As a result of this overcrowding, it is hard to get to know learners and manage classes, and some tutors in my study agreed that OL is a solution since online students are able to work more independently while still being overseen by their tutor. The literature further explains the management of overcrowded classes;

Gibbs and Jenkins (1992) explain the strategic options for managing large classes face-to-face, focusing on discussion, reflection and independent learning guided by tutors yet centred on students. Orellana (2006) suggests that placing the OL student at the centre of learning and encouraging social collaboration can help to improve the decline in teaching quality and overall student experience.
According to Orellana (2006) and Lowe (2012), there are three main perspectives to be considered when managing large online class size. These perspectives are: economic; tutor; and student.

7.6.1.1 Economic benefit of large online class numbers

According to Orellana (2006), there is a saving for institutions in using online programmes with large numbers of students. For example, a class size of 40 students as opposed to 30 may have a positive financial implication through instructor salaries. This economic saving is important, adding to the benefits of OL in Egypt, as limited funds are a major challenge to the Egyptian education system in general and for OL in particular.

7.6.1.2 Tutor perspective

According to Orellana (2006), instructors stress the necessity for smaller classes. He quotes, from one paper, the idea of the 'more work myth', alleged as a reason for the small class size among distance educators (p. 232). In other words, large class size does not necessarily imply more work to be done by tutors. Factors influencing the 'more time needed' may be due to the extra hours required for course development and the learning time required for teaching in a new mode. Another point highlighted by Orellana (2006) is that small classes are not always appropriate for courses that emphasise collaborative and group learning. In other words, large class size, which is the norm in Egyptian HE, facilitates more affordance for collaborative work between students.

7.6.1.3 Students' perspective

Lowe (2012) considers the view of large online class size and recommends that tutors make an immediate response to questions, as a delayed response can discourage students and even increase levels of stress, for some. In the Egyptian context, as explained by tutors, large class size can be a challenge to making prompt individualised feedback. Therefore, it is recommended by Gibbs and Jenkins (1992) to develop students' independent learning skills and autonomy. In OL,

according to Lam (2012), it is desirable to develop collaborative work, which is closely related to inquiry learning, constructivist learning and peer review so that group members can evaluate each other. Moreover, students who learn in collaborative settings both learn and retain 1.5 times as much as students who learn individually (Johnson *et al*.1991). The benefit of collaborative work in terms of information retention can help students in the specific Egyptian context as well - according to Afifi and Wahab (2010), a comparison of the amount of information with the number of learning hours in Egypt shows that students have difficulties in retaining the amount of information in a limited period of time. According to The National Association of Geoscience Teachers (NAGT) (2015), in OL, making use of technology, such as online discussion, is one of the basics to manage large classes. In this regard, given that large class size are one of the problems in Egyptian HE, it is recommended that specific tutor training and funding from the government are dedicated to this issue. Training and funding would provide HE tutors with the technological affordances to manage large classes - NAGT (2015), for example, discusses providing tutors with time- and effort-saving technologies proven to be effective in teaching large classes, both through online support and face-to-face workshops. In addition the technologies offered range from low-tech (a chalkboard) to high-tech (a 3-dimensional interactive visualisation).

As a further research recommendation from the students' perspective of online class size, according to Orellana (2006) undergraduate students found that medium-sized classes promoted more social presence than small, while graduate students found the opposite. In the Egyptian context, a further comparative study is recommended, focussing on differences between large class numbers of students in rural and urban areas. According to the study findings, there were different views from the two groups on aspects such as gender-based acceptance of freedom.

7.6.2 Limited Funding

As an important issue, the limited funding allocated to education learning resources and tutors' wages is discussed both in the relevant literature (World Bank, 2013) and in the findings for my study, here in connection to the fact that OL resources require less funding than face-to-face class resources. Hence, this inadequate funding is a limitation for:

7.6.2.1 Student creativity

Students may need to run advanced laboratory experiments or need specific facilities as part of an idea in their creative learning. With the financial constraints present in Egypt, lack of funding and training to provide the necessary flexibility for creative learning is an obstacle. For more details about student creativity see Section 7.1.3.

7.6.2.2 Tutor's motivation

According to both the relevant literature and the findings of my study, Egyptian tutors are the lowest paid compared to other sectors in the Egyptian context (compared to GDP per capita) (World Bank, 2013). In addition, the online tutor's job entails more responsibilities compared to that of the face-to-face tutor, so that wages should, in fact, be higher. For more details about tutors' incentives see Section 7.2.2.

7.6.2.3 Tutors' professional development

A limited budget influences tutors' affordances for to purchasing learning resources that they need to practise their learning in the software and computer programmes they have been taught. For more details about tutors' PDPs see Section 7.3.5.

.

7.7 Proposed development of Turner-Bisset's Pedagogical Repertoire

7.7.1 Introduction

The following section discusses Turner-Bisset's pedagogical repertoire with regard to expert teaching. In addition, it explains the area of this repertoire which is applicable to my research, and justifies any changes that needed to be made to the original repertoire in order to fulfil its purpose in my discussion. The last part of this section explains the implementation of the pedagogical repertoire developed in my study.

7.7.2 The Turner-Bisset pedagogical repertoire

According to Turner-Bisset (2001), tutors need to employ a wide range of pedagogical skills and knowledge, a pedagogical "tool box", as it is termed by Turner-Bisset, which includes techniques, strategies, skills, and ways of working. Thus her pedagogical repertoire presents a framework for reflecting on practice and for analysing professional development needs, as illustrated in the following figure (7-4).

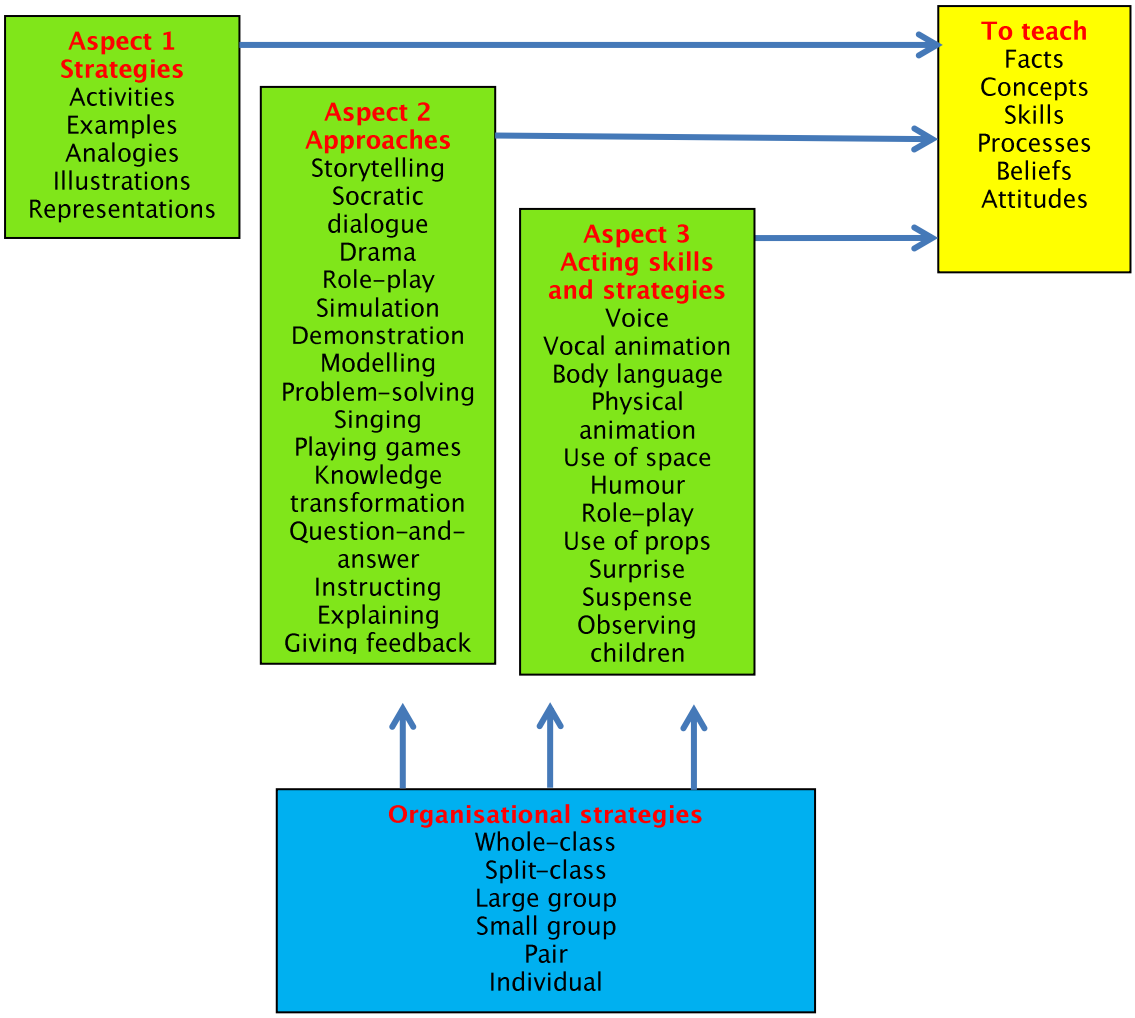


Figure 7-4: The pedagogical repertoire (Turner-Bisset, 2001, p: 70)

According to Turner-Bisset, the repertoire consists of three "aspects" and several "organisational strategies": Aspect 1, includes a general repertoire of approaches, activities, examples, and analogies; Aspect 2, includes a wide range of teaching approaches such as problem solving and giving feedback; Aspect 3, includes acting skills and strategies such as student observation. The three aspects lead to what is taught in terms of facts, concepts, skills, processes, beliefs and attitudes. The last box is the Organisational Strategies including issues such as small/large groups or individuals.

7.7.3 What areas from this repertoire do I consider in my research?

According to Garrison (2000), OL is a multifaceted and complex area. Utilising the various models of learning such as Kolb's model of reflective learning (1984) and Wenger's (2006) the communities of practice, online tutors apply many approaches and strategies. One of my research questions addressed whether the implementation of SCL requires a model of pedagogical repertoire. The answer to this questions is illustrated in the figure below (7-5) that combines Turner-Bisset's model of pedagogical repertoire and my own findings (the yellow box in the lower left corner of the figure) on the factors that influence tutor implementation of SCL.

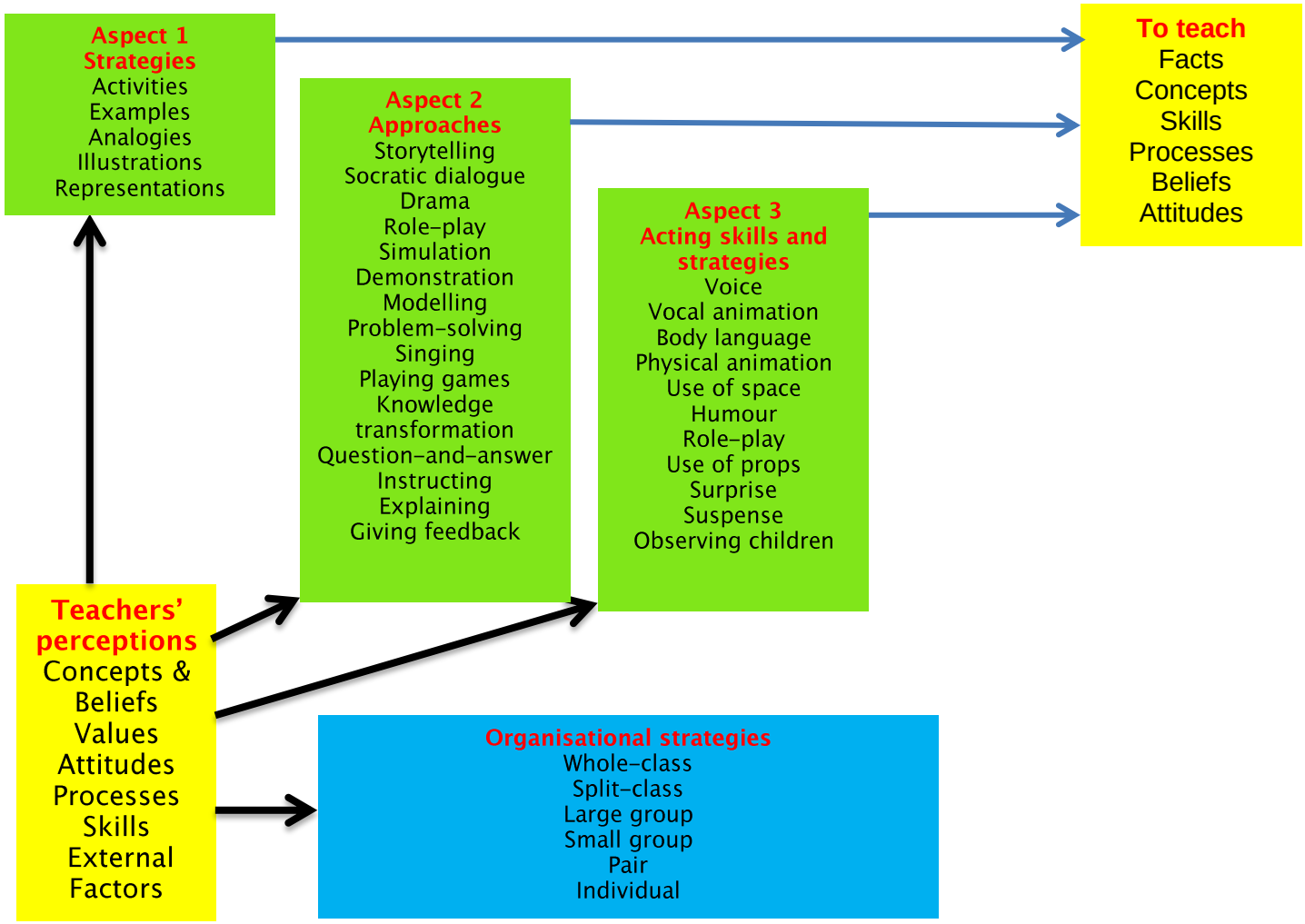


Figure 7-5: Pedagogical repertoire further developed from Turner-Bisset (2001)

Figure 7-5 illustrates tutors' pedagogical tool box that contains approaches and strategies (Bisset's model) and the precursors and predeterminants for this tool box (my own model). In other words, the tutor's facts, concepts, skills, processes, beliefs and attitudes are predetermining elements for the tutor's strategies, approaches, acting skills and organisational strategies.
Notably, Turner-Bisset's pedagogical repertoire focuses on face-to-face class strategies and activities only and since the research question focuses on tutors' perceptions of SCL in OL, the strategies applied are different. To be specific, teaching strategies can use different learning approaches such as experiential learning, creative learning, and problem-based learning in the OL environment (see Chapter 3 Section 3.1). Within the application of these strategies, students can adopt and implement activities despite the tutor's physical absence, depending on self-discovery and self-guiding in some activities.

7.7.4 Implementation of the pedagogical repertoire developed in my study

Figure (7-5) acts as a precursor to tutors' perceptions towards a certain experience (SCL in this study), and illustrates reflection on this experience and processing within the learning environment. For example, applying to my study, the tutor's selection of teaching strategies to adopt varies according to their beliefs and values. For example, in my study, tutor's beliefs about group work and the value of collaborative work had an influence on the presentation and implementation of their teaching strategies. For example, some tutors recommended affordance of OL for social communication and collaboration for online students. Consequently, they adopted sharing online projects between students as a strategy for collaborative learning. On the other hand, other tutors expressed that online social collaboration is a waste of time and distractive for students, as it distracts them from achieving the learning objectives of the studies courses. The next chapter is the "Conclusion" chapter. This chapter answers the research questions and indicates what can be concluded from the thesis. It also proposes any limitations inherent in the research procedures. Moreover, it highlights the implications and further research that have been drawn from the study results.

Chapter 8: Conclusions, Recommendations, Implications and Limitations

The purpose of this research is to investigate tutors' perceptions of student-centred learning (SCL) as an approach in the OL environment in Egyptian Higher Education (HE), as well as the factors that influence these perceptions. This chapter presents answers to the research questions based on the literature review in Chapter 3, the academic discussion throughout this work, and the empirical evidence given by interviewees. It makes recommendations based on these answers, presents a discussion of the implications and limitations of this study, and concludes with some recommendations for future research.

8.1 Answer to research questions

8.1.1 Main Research Question:

8.1.1.1 How do Egyptian tutors perceive student-centred learning as an approach in the OL environment, and what factors influence these perceptions?

Online tutors perceive SCL as an approach to be implemented in OL as possessing four main aspects: *prerequisites*; *challenges*; *concerns;* and *solutions*. *Prerequisites* are required as a prior condition for the implementation of the approach and are maintained for the duration of the period of the students' study. For example: empowering students, student trust, tutor respect, tutor's knowledge, as well as the early preparation of students for some elements such as freedom and responsibility. *Challenges* can be problems or obstacles that prevent or hinder SCL implementation, such as students' invisibility in OL, the novelty of OL as a learning environment, rigidity of curriculum or limited funds. *Concerns* are what may lead some tutors to resist or reject the implementation of SCL, such as losing control of the students and content coverage. *Solutions* are used to overcome limitations,

such as group work which can help minimise the problem of students' invisibility and maintain and increase student trust or a dialogic approach between student and tutor which has a positive influence on many aspects such as tutor knowledge about the student and trusting them. The four perspectives are illustrated in the following diagram (Figure 8-1).

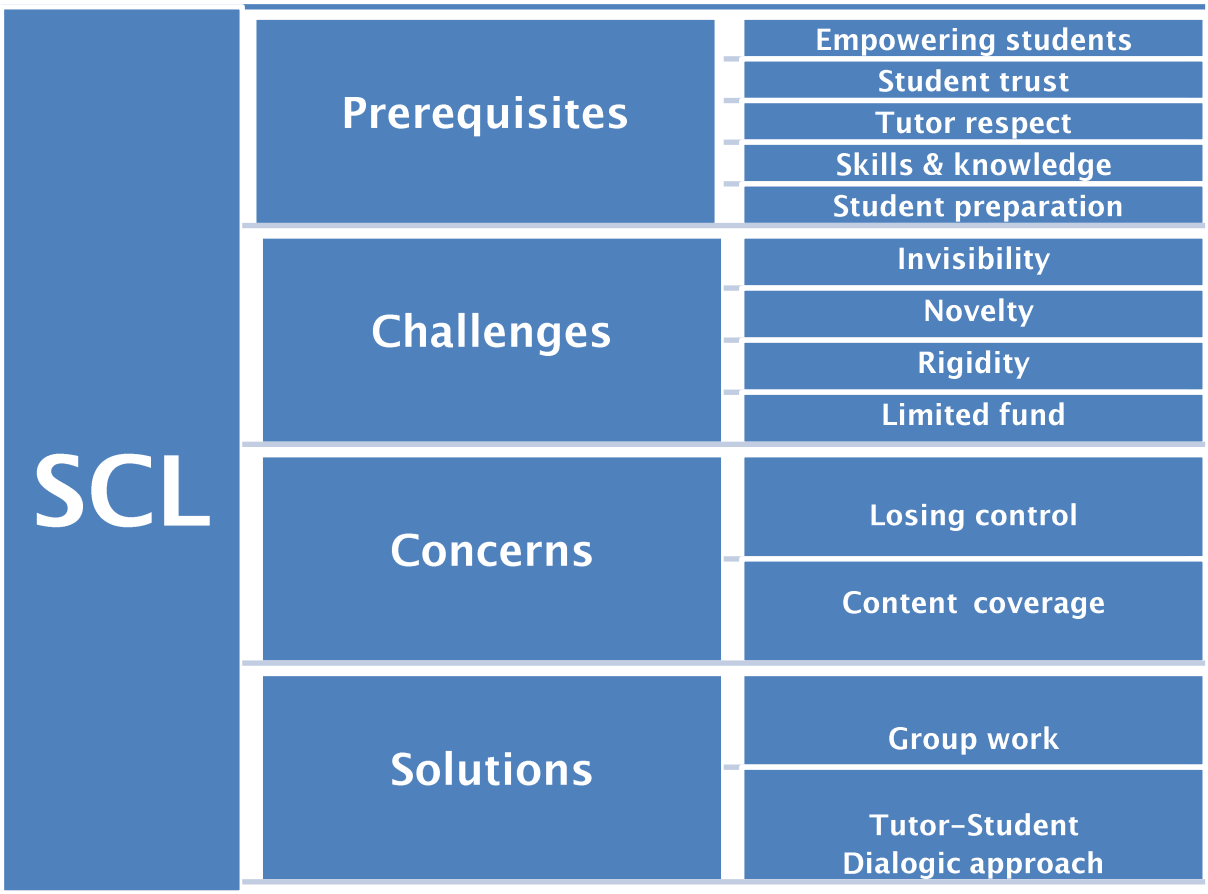


Figure 8-1: Egyptian HE tutors' perceptions of SCL in OL

8.1.1.2 Factors that influence these aspects

This study concludes that the factors that influence tutor's perceptions of SCL in Egyptian HE are:

- *Concepts and beliefs:* deal with the general understanding of tutors' concepts such as empowering students and their beliefs that are based on their understanding of these concepts.
- *Values:* define for the tutor what is important for them in their teaching situation, such as losing control, incentives, or tutor respect.

- *Attitudes:* refer to the way online tutors express or apply their beliefs and values, such as student trust, "thinking outside the box", resistance to change, group work, or a Personal Development Plan (PDP).
- *Processes:* refer to the steps and actions taken by online tutors to achieve their teaching objective, such as offering guidance as an e-guide and e-facilitator, or monitoring students.
- *Skills:* refer to what tutors learn which enable them to practice their teaching, such as tutors' knowledge or Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- *External factors:* influence online tutors' teaching practices, such as over-crowded classes or limited funding.

8.1.2 Subordinate Research Questions:

8.1.2.1 What is tutors' understanding of student-centred learning?

Tutors in this study deemed SCL as a learning approach that implies empowering students and giving them control over their learning. However, the implementation of SCL is conditional on the student's understanding and their readiness for a rational use of freedom in learning and taking responsibility for their own learning. Moreover, tutors recognise in this study that SCL has many recommendable aspects in an online situation, for example students working collaboratively online. Hence, in order to implement this approach, continuing education programmes that can orient tutors towards SCL and enhance their creativity need to be provided.

8.1.2.2 How do tutors consider the differences between the SCL model in OL, compared with the face-to face learning environment?

Tutors identified many differences between OL and face-to-face learning with regards to affordances and challenges. OL for example has many affordances; for students OL facilitates various sources of information and better communication within a social network, while for tutors OL is a more relaxed environment with respect to preparing and answering students' questions. However, the invisibility of online students was a main challenge for online tutors, and for this reason some tutors found that it was easier to control and

monitor students in face-to-face learning than in OL. Furthermore, the analysis of the data in this study shows that, online tutors deemed the flexibility of time, place and resources of study in OL can help minimise some of the limitations of face-to-face teaching - for example, online social networks can minimise students' isolation and online flexibility can encourage and maintain students' cooperation and engagement. Finally, tutors identified large class size as a main challenge in Egyptian HE, with the inherent difficulty of students' isolation. Here OL can contribute to overcoming this challenge. According to Abdelhai, Yassin, Ahmad and Fors (2012), large enrolment numbers in Egyptian HE limit students' discussions and interaction with tutors in traditional face-to-face classes. Consequently, online courses with activities for interaction between students and tutors and amongst students can overcome that educational drawback encountered in large classes and enhance student's learning, thus overcoming the pit-falls of traditional learning.

8.1.2.3 What are tutors' beliefs about the relationship between the tutor and the student?

Tutors highlighted three main issues in this regard: student trust; dialogic approach; and democratic education. On the issue of student trust some tutors thought that online students needed early preparation to be able to study online. These students might therefore not be trusted by their tutors, and consequently may not be given control over their learning. The answers to the question of tutor-student trust highlight two important recommendations: firstly the importance of a dialogic approach between tutor and student; secondly, the implementation of Democratic Education (DE) to encourage exchanging ideas through students' engagement and participation, critical thinking and problem solving.

8.1.2.4 How are tutors provided with professional training and development to implement student-centred learning?

Tutors highlighted many concerns about the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) provided. There are limitations of quantity such as a shortfall of the number of training programmes provided as well as limitations of quality, such as a lack of planning to make CPD fit tutors' professional

needs. Consequently some tutors were not motivated to attend the CPD programmes provided. Two issues that can help overcome these concerns need to be highlighted: tutors' incentives and Personal Development Plans (PDPs).

With regards to incentives, it is clear that tutors need to invest more of their own time in their professional development. The government in Egypt is offering scholarships, teaching grants and job guarantees to boost the number of applicants for CPD courses, but several tutors stressed the need for tutors to be paid to attend CPD sessions. Moreover, a reduced burden of teaching hours for tutors would help to motivate them to develop themselves and embrace change in the workplace.

The analysis of the data in this study clearly shows that tutors need to be aware of the areas of improvement in their teaching practices. Hence, self-evaluation helps to identify and acknowledge their skills, learning intentions and outcomes. Based on this knowledge about themselves, they can understand which areas need more work and plan the development of their needs. Based on this plan, they can design their professional development, either through their own initiative or through the CPD provided. Online resources that facilitate self-evaluation, professional online forums and professional events can help online tutors to plan, address and implement their PDPs. Limitations in the issue of PDPs in Egyptian HE are the insufficient tutor wages and limited funds to achieve their development plan when it comes to paying for subscriptions or attending online courses.

8.1.2.5 What are the affordances/constraints of using student-centred learning in OL in Egyptian Higher Education?

Affordances:

According to the tutors in this study, SCL can help overcome one of the main challenges in Egyptian HE, the large class size, through incorporating collaborative group work in learning. Group work enhances education through knowledge exchange and experience of the international educational community. Another benefit of group work is that students' work is more visible. According to the findings, online tutors clearly demonstrate a lack of student trust, specifically that homework had been done without the help of others. These tutors link being unable to monitor online students to their

invisibility. On the other hand, tutors acknowledged the role of social collaboration in OL and peer review so that group members can evaluate each other. According to Johnson and Johnson (2009), collaborative group work provides effective leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication and conflict-management between group members. Pedersen and Digby (1995) highlighted that cooperative learning helps to build up and maintain long term student-tutor relationships. Consequently, group work can enhance tutor-student trust, since students communicate, collaborate, manage, review and share decision making (Freire, 2014). This leads to less of a burden for the tutor to monitor each single student and to manage large class groups.

Constraints:
A further conclusion of this study is that there were three main barriers in the implementation of SCL in Egypt. Firstly there are the *administrative barriers*; SCL requires flexibility in many aspects such as students' freedom to study anytime and anywhere, and thus also requires the flexibility to customise the official syllabus and tutors' strategies in teaching. The bureaucracy and central administration of policy makers in the MHE in Egypt can hinder the implementation of SCL. Secondly there is a *financial barrier*; limited funds influence the quantity of CPD provided and tutors' wages, which in turn hinder tutors in implementing their PDPs. Thirdly there is the *cultural barrier*; their family's culture impacts on the student in some topics such as freedom in learning and tutor-student trust.

8.1.2.6 Does implementing SCL require a different model of pedagogical repertoire?

Figure 7-5 earlier combines Turner-Bisset's model of pedagogical repertoire and my own findings on the factors that influence tutor implementation of SCL. This figure illustrates the pedagogical tool box needed for the implementation of SCL (Turner-Bisset's model) and the necessary precursors and predeterminants for this tool box (my own model). In other words, the tutor's facts, concepts, skills, processes, beliefs and attitudes are predeterminants for the tutors' strategies, approaches, acting skills and organisational strategies. In summary, figure 7-5 acts as a precursor to a tutor's perception towards a

certain experience (SCL in this study), and illustrates reflection on this experience and processing within the learning environment.

8.2 Conclusion and Recommendations

8.2.1 Power and Control

Conclusion

This study concludes that student control is not widely practised in Egyptian universities. Aspects of student control are such as: making sure that students have choice in what they learn and how they learn, asking their opinions and listening to them. Also, according to the tutors, some students never had opportunities to make decisions in class.

Practices of students' empowerment such as: shared responsibility and shared leadership (Zimmerman, 1995), were not highlighted. However, many of the tutors interviewed agreed that online students need to be empowered and given control of their learning. Hence, when tutors were asked about examples of their teaching practices to demonstrate empowering learners, their examples were such as controlling the study content or style of examination questions. For these tutors, power is conditional based on student trust and the student's readiness to take responsibility for their own learning. Reasons behind a lack of practicing empowering learners are either because tutors teach as they learned, or because tutors think that empowering learners may lead to losing their control and affect their cultural image as an authority in the class. Hence, tutors in this study clearly demonstrate some concerns about empowering their online students, as explained in the next section.

Concerns about empowering students

In this research it is evident that the main two concerns in empowering learners are the loss of *tutor respect* and *students' invisibility* in OL, both of which in turn lead to the tutors' concerns over losing control in the class. Furthermore, some interviewees demonstrate that the Egyptian HE administration shares this concern due to fears that students may use their power to challenge or threaten policies and rules.

- **Tutor respect**

The analysis of the data in this study shows that the cultural and professional value of tutor respect is highlighted as a main concern for many online tutors. For example, some tutors showed that silence in the class is evidence for tutor respect. Consequently, in some cultures, students may not be accustomed to asking professors for clarification; they approve tutors' instructions without discussion, since in these cultures, students' discussion or asking questions can be seen as disrespectful towards the tutor. Therefore, the findings of this research show that, for effective implementation of SCL, reconceptualisation of "Respect" in a cultural context needs to be addressed. In detail, students are free to ask questions, volunteer answers, or challenge the views of their tutors, and are equally prepared to be challenged by others without feeling disrespect or insult. In this respect, the development of a dialogic approach in teaching and learning and the promotion of tutor–student interaction are recommended. In addition, there needs to be a move towards raising tutors' awareness of teaching and learning that supports skills such as active listening, conflict resolution, problem solving, social responsibility and ethical decision-making. It is recommended that tutors receive professional training that develops these skills for a dialogic approach in teaching and learning.

- **Invisibility**

Many tutors agreed with the necessity of monitoring online students to overcome their invisibility, a factor that they feared might lead to losing control over their students. Measures to reduce this anxiety can be recommended in more than one aspect – as mentioned above in the discussion on monitoring, student trust, group work, and the use of technological tools can facilitate student surveillance. If technological tools can help minimise student invisibility, this means less concern about losing control, and more readiness to empower students (see section 4.6.1 about students' control in OL). Examples of such tools are history tracking in Wikis and login details for Learning Management Systems (LMS), both of which can help the online tutor to know which student has done what and when. Moreover, real time questions to students in online sessions can confirm for the tutor whether the student has done their work through their own efforts or through the help of others. Again, CPD can help online tutors to learn the use of these tools.

Resistance to change as an implication of tutors' concerns about empowering students

Tutors are likely to be resistant to empowering students since such a move implies the freedom of choices in their e-learning environment (see section 4.3.2.2). Reasons for resisting change are a lack of knowledge about why, what and how to change; these reasons can thus be linked back to the issue of tutors' knowledge. It should be acknowledged that a change in values and attitudes cannot be achieved easily, but initial steps can be taken. The starting point is developing the tutor's content and pedagogical knowledge as well as raising their awareness of teaching and learning in a positive school climate. Such a climate supports the development of social and civic knowledge along with skills and values such as active listening, conflict resolution, problem solving, social responsibility and ethical decision-making.

Recommendations

- ***Structural change***: As OL offers a new paradigm of thinking for online tutors in Arab countries, Democratic Education (DE) needs to be part of this paradigm to encourage the dialogic approach between tutors and students. Since DE is a requirement for empowerment (see section 3.3.2), placing students at the centre of their learning cannot be implemented without empowering the learner (see section 4.6.1).
- ***Re-conceptualisation:*** The idea of respect and signs of tutor's respect need to be defined in a cultural context, since respect does not mean obedience and approval without discussion. In the context of SCL, students should be free to ask questions and even question their tutor's views. Moreover, there is a need to redefine the ideas of "power" and "losing control".
- ***Role of the Administration***: Flexibility in the curriculum is needed to implement this new freedom for students. For example, students' assessments could be based on group projects rather than on passing a specific examination. Additionally, more flexibility in the modules studied and the grading system is recommended to empower learners in their learning. Examples of giving control to students are the freedom to select the course studied, units within the selected course, the method of assessment, and finally to select the type of examination questions.

- ***Dialogic approach***: This is vital in building bridges of communication between tutor and students, helping tutors to get to know their learner and identify their goals, objectives and obstacles and form a better view of their students.
- ***Student trust***: With regards to this, I suggest planning a series of workshops that focus on building trust between tutors and students in HE. Such workshops on building trust between students and tutors should be added to the CPD training agenda, and funded by the MHE in Egypt.

8.2.2 Tutor Creativity and "Thinking outside the Box"

Conclusion

According to the findings, tutors have a positive attitude towards encouraging learners to "think outside the box" and think creatively. Tutors acknowledged that OL offers more opportunity than face-to-face for creativity and "thinking outside the box" however, examples of practicing creativity were limited and few tutors could give details about students' creativity. Furthermore, tutors were unable to identify activities/strategies that would encourage students' creativity. Such limited tutor creativity can lead to limiting student creativity. In this regard, the study found that a rigid curriculum is one of the hindrances behind limited tutor creativity. It is worth mentioning that according to the tutors, family and parental care can be another hindrance to students' creativity when parents raise their children in a strict and authoritative manner.

Recommendations

The Singapore Model (National Institute of Education, 2009) presents a promising way to develop tutors' creativity for expert teaching (see Chapter 7, Section 7.1.2). It should be noted that limited funds dedicated to support tutors' creativity (such as subscribing to computer programmes that embed creative skills) is one of the main limitations highlighted in the issue of developing tutors' creativity. Tutors made reference to the limited funds as they stressed that the government needs to guarantee each online tutor their own personal computer and internet service, otherwise they pay for themselves to get them.

8.2.3. Group Work

Conclusion

While the tutors in this study acknowledged the important role of social collaboration in OL, some tutors gave negative feedback about their experience with group work and team spirit for various reasons. *From a cultural perspective* it is the concern that, in OL, students communicate and collaborate with anonymous users who might have different values and beliefs. *From a social perspective* the concerns are about managing conflicting ideas among students and the rise of vigorous disagreement. *From a pedagogical perspective*, tutors highlighted some concerns about the difficulty to identify and assess the individual contributions of each student in a group project. Group work offers promising opportunities for educational reform in online collaborative work in Egyptian HE, particularly with respect to problems such as overcrowded classes (explained in Subordinate Research Questions "f"). Moreover, students' empowerment is directly related to the social structure where students communicate and collaborate (see section 4.1). From the student's perspective, group work helps them to become more independent and responsible as they share responsibility. The way to achieve the positive implications of group work is to form, sustain and maintain group work situations where students communicate, collaborate, plan, synthesise and evaluate their work.

Recommendations

This study concludes that, for the implementation of group work, a number of aspects need to be considered. *Tutors* need to step outside the traditional social interaction between learners, based on individual competition between learners to achieve a target or high grade, and promote collaboration and team work that achieves a group target. S*tudents*, according to the tutors, need early cultural and academic preparation to work effectively in an online group. *Academic institutions* need to implement CPD plans that focus on the strategies, approaches and technological tools that online tutors need to know and embed into their teaching for successful group work. In summary, effective group work implies autonomous, self-guided and self-monitored learners, flexible learning, and a social, collaborative online learning environment. In other words, group work puts the student at the centre of

learning. Moreover, it is a solution not only for over-crowded classes, but also for issues of monitoring, trust, and invisibility in OL.

8.2.4. Over-Crowded Classes

Conclusion

In this research it is clear that large class size is one of the main challenges in Egyptian HE. Some of the tutors in this study agreed that OL offers one possible solution. For these tutors, OL facilitates students to work more independently. Especially with large classes, it is difficult to get to know each individual learner and manage classes, but for OL, the use of technology to manage large classes is one of the basic advantages. Accordingly, this study concludes specific tutor training and funds by government are dedicated to train tutors for these kinds of technological tools to manage large classes. Furthermore, OL is an effective solution for over-crowded classes for many reasons, not least with regard to the savings for institutions by using online programmes with large numbers of students. Such savings largely come from a reduced demand on faculty time or the substitution of less expensive instructional assistance, such as graduate assistants or peer tutors.

Recommendations

In order to manage over-crowded classes in OL, this study concluded that SCL is recommended to develop students' independent learning skills and autonomy and to initiate collaborative group work between students. It is to note that managing large class numbers is a three sided issue of: embedding technology; autonomous learning; and collaborative learning environment.
For embedding technology; recommended examples are such as online discussion and emails, where students can receive prompt individualised feedback from their tutors.
For autonomous learning; effective implementation of SCL is recommended by addressing strategies such as empowering students, reflexivity, and creative learning.
For collaborative learning; encouraging students to communicate, collaborate, manage, review, and share decision making.

8.2.5. Offering Guidance

Conclusion

The tutors in this study used the terms "e-guide" and "e-facilitator" interchangeably, but according to the literature, there is a marked difference between the ideas of tutor e-guidance and tutor e-facilitation. Also, tutors rated students' self-guidance lower than tutors' guidance. According to the findings, self-guidance is linked to issues of student trust and empowering learners. In other words, if students are empowered and trusted by tutors this may lead to the student's self-guidance being ranked at a higher grade than is currently the case. Therefore, the findings of the study conclude that, students should be actively involved in the learning process, rather than being passive receivers of information.

Recommendations

This study recommends maintaining a differentiation between "guide" and "facilitator" in order to support students with the practices, activities or approaches associated with the different roles. Another recommendation is to encourage the dialogic approach for offering guidance in online learning. If online tutors are to guide their students, they need to know their learners well enough to identify their requirements, and to do so they need to bridge the discussion gap between tutor and student by promoting and supporting DE and placing the student at the centre of learning.

8.2.6. Tutor Knowledge

Conclusion

The Egyptian online tutors in this study looked at pedagogical preparation and the application of the subject matter as additional knowledge, while the main focus was on content knowledge in their areas of expertise. The majority of online tutors did not highlight the importance of content knowledge since it is considered to be mandatory for any vocational course preparing tutors. The issue of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) (Shulman, 1986 and Bisset, 2001) was likewise not acknowledged by tutors. As a consequence of this absence, a gap between theory and practice which influences both students and tutor is likely to occur. For students this means that tutors struggle to communicate with them, so that students apply their knowledge by focusing

only on reading their books. For tutors, this gap has an impact on the general proficiency of HE tutors; HE institutions have started a different strategy to hire their staff members. This strategy implies that tutors who master the practical knowledge in their area of expertise can be hired. Thus, tutors in Egyptian HE have become a mix of professionals and non-professionals. Recommendations for the matter of tutor knowledge are related to the implications of this study (see Section 8.3).

8.2.7. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Conclusion

Tutors acknowledged the importance of CPD in gaining the professional skills, knowledge and experience they need to pursue their work. There are four aspects that need to be addressed with regard to this aspect. *Firstly*, many tutors in the study considered CPD as a solution to various challenges with which they are confronted in their teaching practice. *Secondly*, tutors need to do research to develop their teaching practice, but in the context of Egyptian HE, research is a low priority for several reasons such as the high burden of working hours, the limited funds dedicated to research, the difficulty of publishing or a limited awareness of the important of research for HE tutors to develop their teaching practices. *Thirdly*, tutors need to share professional development practices amongst themselves.

Recommendations

For Egyptian HE, this study recommends creating starting points for communication and collaboration among staff members in two ways - through the formation of committees to address the issues associated with the needs of society, and through seminars for research teams, headed by a faculty member who would provide advice and guidance to team members in order to address the problems of the community. Activities that occur in such committee meetings and seminars can initiate, enrich and sustain the interaction between HE tutors. *Fourthly*, a PDP, as explained above (Subordinate Research Questions “e”), is the starting point for CPD. Other recommendations for this issue are again addressed in the section in the implications of this study (see below under "Implications of the research"). In addition, the author recommends the establishment of a professional association for those who are concerned with advancing education through the appropriate use of

information and communications technology (ICT), such as the National Association of Advisors for Computers in Education (NAACE) in the UK. NAACE members from the education sector including tutors, school managers, and curriculum leaders, and all who share the same interest in embedding the effective use of technology into teaching, learning and school management (www.naace.co.uk). Also, Egypt needs projects similar to Teaching for Improved Learning Outcomes in Education (TILO) (see Section 3.2.7.2.1). These projects would focus on CPD provided for tutors and include the use of technology with theories of learning behind this technology.

8.2.8. Incentives

Conclusion

Tutors cited different examples of what they considered to be incentives, such as financial incentives, certificates of appreciation, or subscriptions for free online training courses. Because of the low wages for tutors in Egypt, financial incentives are deemed a high priority, and would have significant impact in three different ways:

- Tutors feel they are invested in and acknowledged by the administration.
- Tutors are motivated to work; a consequence of satisfying the self-esteem and self-actualization of tutors is getting engaged with others and using their utmost abilities to pursue objectives.
- Tutors are offered the financial affordance to develop themselves (PDP), and can afford necessary learning resources such as an internet service or reliable technological devices.

On the other hand, academic institutions can also help to motivate their tutors by giving incentives which do not require large funds, and can be achieved with the available limited budget. Examples of such incentives are software subscriptions for technological tools for tutor training to implement these tools. In general the facilitation of a reliable internet service and access to technological devices for tutors is also highly recommended.

Recommendations

This study concludes that more funding is recommended to support HE tutors for their professional development.

8.2.9. Novelty

Conclusion

The analysis of the data in this study clearly shows that novelty is an issue which appears in many aspects of the discussion. Tutors in this study demonstrate many examples of novelty such as the novelty of OL as a learning environment in the Egyptian community, the idea of freedom in learning, teaching methods such as group work, or the use of technological tools – a number of the tutors still use pen and paper in the preparation of lessons. This novelty of OL for both tutor and student is most probably the reason that there are no 100% OL courses in Arab countries, but that everything is blended learning (Elliott, 2002 and Elwady, 2010). For many tutors in this study, blended learning is a transition phase to full OL, given that barriers may take a long time to move to fully OL:

- *Cultural* barrier (i.e. students' early preparation on how to use freedom in OL);
- *Professional* barrier (i.e. tutors' CPD provided);
- *Social* barrier (i.e. family acceptance for their children to use internet in learning);
- *Economic* barrier (i.e. limited fund).

Recommendations

In this research it is clear that changing values and attitudes towards some topics such as freedom in the Egyptian setting cannot be claimed to be achieved easily, but initial steps can be taken. The aspired change involves raising community awareness about the OL environment to support the development of skills and values such as active listening, conflict resolution, problem solving, social responsibility and ethical decision-making.

8.3 Implications of the research

According to the outcomes of the findings, the implementation of SCL in OL has many implications, most notably for policy and the tutor's experience.

8.3.1 Policy

This section concentrates on the actions and procedures that need to be addressed by the government or the MHE in order to support online tutors in the implementation of SCL in their teaching practices.

- The Egyptian MHE needs to provide online tutors with CPD programmes that meet the online tutors' quantitative and qualitative requirements.
- The highest authority that processes all financial decisions for Egyptian HE is the MHE. Considering the bureaucratic and centralised structure of Egyptian HE, a recommendation for more autonomous decisions for universities within the Higher Education Enhancement Project (HEEP) is being made.
- Establishing a model that can develop teaching practices for online HE tutors in Egypt based on the benefits of academic research. Institutions or workshops can manage, facilitate, and increase tutors' contributions to academic research and embed the results of the research into teaching practices.
- As incentives for online tutors to contribute and participate in CPD, I suggest a scheme that specifies the number of CPD hours that tutors should attend to maintain their salary level. Those who are keen on professional development and exceed the specified number should be rewarded by increased salaries.
- According to this study, many aspects that affect HE tutors are influenced by students' preparation in the early stages of their schooling. A partial merging between the two ministries is recommended to recognise the overlap between schools and universities. A complete separation between MHE and MOE is not constructive.
- Limited governmental funds to facilitate CPD and online tutors' low wages are hindrances for tutors to develop themselves professionally. Therefore, more funding is recommended to be dedicated to online tutors' PDPs. Such funds would help them to afford the requirements of technological tools and services that they need to pursue their online teaching, such as subscription to or purchase of multimedia software. The benefit of such funding would be reflected in two different ways. One, it would help tutors in their personal development plan and increase the feeling of positive acknowledgement and could thus help

motivate them. Two, a PDP is the starting point of CPD, and good a PDP means that tutors and administrations can plan for CPD sessions that consider the tutors' existing skills and real needs.

- The rigidity of curriculum needs to be investigated, since it is an obstacle for many aspects of SCL implementation such as the inherent creativity, "thinking out of the box", and the shift from fixed mind-set to growth mind-set, and group work. Notwithstanding the tutors' knowledge, ability and readiness, the rigid syllabus is a challenge which completely contradicts OL flexibility. For students, likewise, the rigidity of the syllabi and their basis in memorisation are likely to hinder creativity and the tutor's ability to customise learning according to the individual learners' needs.
- There is a role for the government in supporting HE tutors in their collaborative work, namely that of implementing the theory (collaborative research results) into practice (implementing research results on decision-making and problem solving) as well as in providing funding and financial support for scientific research in general and educational research in particular.
- Egyptian tutors in HE have become a mix between professionals and non-professionals. A recommendation for solving this issue would be for academic institutions to issue standardised systems for preparing HE tutors, with standards which demand accredited measures and qualities for tutors' proficiency that are approved by all universities in Egypt. Another recommendation to minimise the gap between theory and practice is to apply a work placement model similar to that in the UK to Egyptian HE - through such work placements, tutors become more aware of what works in teaching for what purposes and in what situations, and learn how to reach diverse learners.

8.3.2 The tutor's experience

- Because of the common idea that "we teach as we have been taught", online tutors need to progressively practice sharing power with their students. They also need to develop their knowledge about technological tools that empower students to collaborate and communicate with others, brainstorm, edit and co-author with peers -

the most powerful advantage of the implementation of SCL in OL is that it offers learners the freedom and autonomy borne of trust to learn however, whenever, and wherever they wish to learn.

- Changing fixed mind-sets to growth mind-sets means a change in thinking, an acknowledgement that people's basic qualities are not fixed traits but that they can be developed, and to recognise other options.
- Tutor-tutor interaction and communication in online forums and social network helps them to share experiences and knowledge between themselves, both locally and globally, and encourages creativity and "thinking outside the box".

Findings of this thesis contribute to the area of research into SCL on matters such as the term's definition, tutors' approaches to understanding the concept, and its practical application in OL. The study investigates the pedagogical repertoire tutors need to implement SCL, and describes approaches and strategies applied in SCL. These results can be used to offer support and guidance to tutors in order to facilitate their students' on-going learning processes, leading to high quality, flexible and more individually tailored education paths. The study findings indicate that online tutors approach the issue of SCL in OL with reference to four main aspects: prerequisites; challenges; concerns; solutions

8.4 Limitations of the research

Although this research was carefully designed, there are some limitations.
1. The research was conducted at two educational institutions in the North of Egypt, but it cannot be claimed that these two institutions are representative of all other similar institutions in Egyptian HE sector - altogether there are 27 public and 28 private universities in Egypt, and it could thus be argued that although the data obtained from interviewees in this research reflect their perceptions of SCL, this may not be the same for other universities in Egypt. Moreover, the study reflects a significant cultural influence from the tutors' perceptions for Northern Egypt. In the southern parts of the country, there are communities which follow more conservative values in many areas of life such as clothing or views of the status of women. Therefore, caution must be

exercised in generalising these Northern Egyptian tutors' perceptions of some topics such as freedom and responsibility, and the cultural differences here should be considered as a topic for further investigation.

2. My research focuses on tutors' perceptions of SCL. However, there are a number of elements that relate to the students, such as their readiness for digitalisation or their acceptance of the tutors' authority. These elements reflect on and affect tutors' perceptions of other elements in the study. For example, students' preparation for accepting concepts such as freedom of learning may be reflected in tutors' willingness to empower these learners. Consequently, an investigation into students' perceptions of these elements, which was not be possible in this study due to the constraints of time and wordage, could help to triangulate the study's findings and answer further related questions that might emerge.

3. Facial Analysis Coding System (FACS) to detect emotions in interviewees is acknowledged to assist in improving the reliability of qualitative data collected by providing information from facial expressions that supplements the verbal message. Because of the time limitations, the use of FACS was not possible for all interviewees, though it was applied for experimenting purposes on one interviewee of the 20 online tutors in this study. I had the opportunity to share my experiences with FACS and present these at an international conference (Ismail, Edwards and Kinchin, 2015). Hence, there are number of avenues of further research which are developed in the next section (see Appendix C).

8.5 Contribution

This study has three aspects of contribution: firstly, a conceptual contribution regarding the SCL definition; secondly, social and cultural perspectives within the implementation of SCL; thirdly, the use of the facial analysis coding system (FACS) as a nonverbal data analysis methodology, and data saturation in a multiple case study.

8.5.1 Conceptual

This study contributes to the area of research into SCL on matters such as the definition of SCL, tutors' approaches to understanding the concept, and its practical application in OL. The study investigates the pedagogical repertoire tutors need to implement SCL, describes approaches and strategies applied in SCL, and highlights results which can be used to offer support and guidance to tutors in order to facilitate their students' on-going learning processes, leading to individually tailored and flexible education paths. The study findings indicate that online tutors approach the issue of SCL in OL with reference to four main aspects: prerequisites, challenges, concerns and solutions. *Prerequisites* are required as a prior condition for the implementation of the approach and are maintained for the duration of the period of the students' study, for example: empowering students, student trust, tutor respect, tutor's knowledge, as well as the early preparation of students for some elements such as freedom and responsibility. *Challenges* can be problems or obstacles that prevent or hinder SCL implementation, such as students' invisibility in OL, the novelty of OL as a learning environment, rigidity of curriculum or limited funds. *Concerns* are what may lead some tutors to resist or reject the implementation of SCL, such as losing control of the students, and content coverage. *Solutions* are used to overcome limitations, such as group work which can help minimise the problem of students' invisibility and maintain and increase student trust or a dialogic approach between student and tutor which has a positive influence on many aspects such as tutor knowledge about the student and trusting them.

8.5.2 Social and cultural perspectives within SCL

Previous studies in the Middle East highlighted SCL from the students' perspectives measuring their satisfaction and readiness for SCL (Marwa Ahmed AE, *et al*. 2014) and tutor's professional perspective such as CPD (Hamza, 2013). My study adds, in addition, the understanding of SCL from social and cultural perspectives.

In detail, factors such as power relations between tutor and student, student control and independence were a focus. Moreover, the study contributed to highlighting concerns of online tutors when empowering students such as: losing control, losing tutors' respect and the invisibility of online students for monitoring them. One of the benefits of empowering learners concerns the issue of them as responsible citizens in the community who show respect for others in the society in which they live. According to Mohamed, *et al*. (2016), an active learner will produce an active citizen. Hence, for Mohamed, *et al*. (2016), this is the dilemma for the Arab region, as the essence of critical thinking and active learning need to be fostered. According to my study, empowering learners and fostering democratic education can help to develop an active citizen. In details, this study focuses on the tutor's responsibility to empower students in learning maintaining the learner's voice through methods such as brainstorming, group discussion and listening to their concerns, interests and needs. On the Arab national level in Egypt, there is a call for colleges and universities to reform their pedagogical approaches and curricula that place an emphasis on educating students to be self-directed and empowered through intellectual and practical skills, informed by knowledge and ways of knowledge construction.

Moreover, the research found that student trust is an issue that needs to be resolved. For tutors, tutor-student trust is a process that requires students' early preparation to learn how to be responsible. The study found that social collaboration in OL offers promising opportunities for educational reform in Egyptian HE, particularly with respect to problems such as overcrowded classes. Furthermore, tutors acknowledged the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in gaining the professional and experiential skills that they need to develop their teaching practices. This study contribution regarding CPD within SCL focused on soft skills; online tutors

need to know their learners, interact and communicate with them and, importantly, to know how to make the appropriate decisions in online teaching to keep the student engaged. Economically, another contribution of this study refers to the low wages for tutors in Egypt; financial incentives have a significant impact on tutors' feelings that they are invested in and acknowledged by their academic institutions. Consequently, tutors are getting engaged with the learning community and using their utmost abilities to pursue their work.

8.5.3 Methodological

8.5.3.1 Facial Analysis Coding System (FACS)

Using Facial Analysis Coding System (FACS) as a nonverbal analytical approach is a methodological contribution of this study. FACS to detect emotions in interviewees is acknowledged in assisting in improving the reliability of qualitative data collected by providing information from facial expressions that supplement the verbal message (Onwuegbuzie, *et al*. 2010). Using FACS can help to minimise the risk of researcher bias in this study; data were collected on the participants' non-verbal communication using audio and video recordings of the interviews and focus groups. The method of this study focuses on the analysis of six facial expressions which correspond to distinct universal emotions: disgust, sadness, happiness, fear, anger, and surprise. Cues for facial expression are generalised, as suggested by Ekman (2006), using only "macro" facial expressions which usually last between half a second and four seconds. The benefits of using FACS extends from the study context in Egypt and the research perspective, are explained in the following section.

8.5.3.2 *Benefits of FACS:*

8.5.3.2.1 In the study context

In detail, my research data are collected in Egypt, one of the Arab countries, and according to the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (2006), non-verbal language includes: body language; gestures; and voice tones which in Arab countries, are distinctly different from Western culture and must be learned in order to effectively reinforce the intended message. This is confirmed by Onwuegbuzie *et al*. (2009), who explain that interpreting only the

text can be extremely problematic. Specifically, the text alone may not provide in-depth information about the degree of agreement and disagreement between participants about the topic discussed.

8.5.3.2.2 In research

According to Rajendran (2001), a method to minimise bias is to record detailed field notes which include participants' reflection, and which do not rely on the researcher's judgement. Therefore, I found in my study that, FACS minimises the risk of researcher bias, enhances the research fairness and keeps its honesty.

FACS can assist in research to improve the reliability and trustworthiness of data by providing information from facial expressions that supplements the verbal message. This is particularly important in analysing affective dimensions of engagement in some subjects. However, despite efforts towards evaluation conformity, there is still a need for more standardised evaluation procedures. Due to the constantly increasing interest in applications for human behaviour analysis, and technologies for human-machine communication and multimedia retrieval, this is a rapidly growing field of research to which this study makes a contribution.

8.5.3.3 Data saturation of multiple case studies

Another methodological contribution in this study is data saturation as a benefit of using a multiple case study as a research method. Multiple case studies yield more robustness to the conclusions from the study (Yin, 2013). In details, interviewing many persons about something instead of one person, increases the number of subjects within a phenomenon. Each case served to confirm or dispute the conclusions drawn from the others. In this study, the multiple case study design was used to produce detailed descriptions of the phenomenon, extracting themes from the data and relating these to earlier literature. Therefore, multiple cases strengthen the results by replicating patterns, thereby increasing the robustness of the findings. Then, saturation of data emerges, when there is enough information to replicate the study and further coding is no longer required. Finally, data saturation can reconstruct a model of pedagogical repertoire that employs a wide range of pedagogical skills and knowledge.

8.6 Further research

The findings of this research have led to recommendations for further research. The main areas of suggested further research are as follows:

- This research suggests that reducing the burden of teaching hours for tutors could motivate them to develop themselves and embrace change in the workplace. It is therefore recommended to explore the online tutors' time distribution between actual teaching, lesson preparation, administrative tasks and further enriching activities such as learning new technological tools.
- The interviewees' showed evidence of knowledge about the benefits of academic research and of online communication and collaboration between online tutors for their professional development practices. However, there is no direct evidence in the findings that can confirm or disprove the exact content or extent of their knowledge about the benefits of these two ideas: academic research and tutors' online communication. The reason behind this can be seen to lie in the small sample, or possibly in other reasons that could be investigated in further research. Another thought to be considered is research that explores how online HE tutors in Egypt can develop teaching practices based on the benefits of conducting academic research.
- The tutors in this study identified content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge as two separate entities. PCK was not highlighted as an aspect of tutor's knowledge at all, even though PCK is recommended in the literature as an area of tutor's knowledge which entails knowledge of self in relation to subject knowledge and pedagogy, and knowledge of educational aims, purposes and values. Consequently, the idea of PCK in OL needs to be examined in further work. For example, I recommend research that investigates how tutors relate their pedagogical knowledge that is based on what they know about teaching, to their subject matter knowledge that is based on what they know about what they teach. Furthermore, research that explores how online tutors develop is recommended. This research illustrates how the tutor's content knowledge of a particular discipline is transformed for communication with learners.

- Group work and the encouragement of learners to work collaboratively are recommended in my study to support SCL in OL. There are three perspectives in this which need to be considered for further research in this regard: firstly, research which investigates the design and management of collaborative learning in Egyptian online HE; secondly, research that investigates the strategies, challenges and obstacles that confront the online tutor in managing heterogeneous group in OL, as existing research in Egypt indicates how much pressure large class size place on tutors, which in turn affects the quality of teaching and learning. Therefore, for the current situation in Egypt, to counter this, tutors should be trained to be able to deal with large numbers of students in the class; and thirdly, research that explores the CPD provided that embeds practices and creative ideas to manage and engage collaborative online learners in group work.
- According to my study, there is evidence that cultural aspects significantly guide tutors' perceptions of SCL. Since this study examined universities in Northern Egypt only, which can differ culturally from those in southern Egypt, a further comparative study which correlates this aspect between northern and southern Egyptian communities is recommended, with a focus on tutors' views on topics related to SCL such as freedom, social networks in OL, and the implementation of collaborative group work with respect to cultural aspects such as gender-based perspectives.
- With respect to the limitations of CPD that affect tutors' PDPs, it is recommended that tutors strive to identify and acknowledge their own skills, strengths and areas of improvements. Based on this knowledge, they can understand and plan which areas need more work and development of their needs. Consequently, research on the development and use of online resources for tutors' CPD are recommended, similar to the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM) in the UK (www.ncetm.org.uk). As a pre-determined outcome of this research, this online resource would be to provide tutors with an accessible self-evaluation tool to identify their successes, weaknesses and areas needing improvement, and thus help Egyptian online tutors to identify their PDP needs. An added benefit of this would be the

facilitation of tutor-tutor interaction through online forums and communities connected to this resource.

- With respect to online students' perceptions of SCL, further research is suggested to investigate their understanding and readiness to be at the centre of their learning.

These proposed topics for further investigation will establish the basis of my future research, and hopefully help in bringing a more profound understanding to the subject of student-centred learning. The research undertaken for this study has certainly opened my mind to many potential factors that can characterise and influence online tutors' perceptions of SCL in Egyptian HE in particular and in HE in general.

List of References

Abdallah, S. and Albadri, F. (2010) *ICT Acceptance, Investment and Organization: Cultural Practices and Values in the Arab World*. New York: Hershey.

AbdEl-Gawad, T. (2011) *Investigating the Efficacy of E-Learning for Egyptian Higher Education*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Southampton.

Abdelhai, R., Yassin, S., Ahmad, MF. and Fors UG. (2012) An e-learning reproductive health module to support improved student learning and interaction: a prospective interventional study at a medical school in Egypt, *BMC Med Educ*, 12(11). [Online]. Available at: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22433670 (Accessed: 10/09/2015).

AbdElkader, N. (2015) Dialogic multicultural education theory and praxis: dialogue and the problems of multicultural education in a pluralistic society, *Dialogic Pedagogy*. 3. [Online]. Available at: http://dpj.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/dpj1/article/view/71(Accessed: 10/09/2015).

Abdellah, G., Taher, S and Abelrahman, M. (2007) Recent developments in Egyptian engineering education through competitive projects, *Formal Egyptian Government report.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.heepf.org.eg/pdf/research/Recent Developments in Egyptian Engineering Education Through Competitive Projects.pdf (Accessed: 25/05/2014).

Abdelnabi, E. (2005) How the tutor lead role in the development of thinking and creativity skills?, *Alwaseet*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.alwasatnews.com/1127/news/read/497956/1.html (Accessed: 07/02/2016).

Abdelraheem, A.Y. (2006) *The Implementation of e-learning in the Arab Universities: Challenges and opportunities*. [Online]. Available at: http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.115.2809&rep=rep1&type=pdf (Accessed: 07/05/2015).

Abdelwahab, A. G. (2008) Modelling students intention to adopt e-learning: A case from Egypt*, Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education(TOJDE),* 9(1): 157-168.

Afifi, G. (2011) E-learning as an alternative strategy for tourism higher education in Egypt, *Quality Assurance in Education*, 19 (4): 357-374.

Afifi, G. and Wahab, S. (2010) Analysing the Egyptian tourism higher education scheme: an external competitive benchmarking study*, Anatolia: An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 21(2): 363-78.

Albers, C. (2009) Teaching: From disappointment to ecstasy, *Teaching Sociology*, 37(3): 269-282.

Aldrich, C. (2003) *Simulations and the Future of Learning: An Innovative (and Perhaps Revolutionary) Approach to E-Learning*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.simulearn.net/pdf/Leadership%20Footnotes.pdf (Accessed: 21/05/2013).

Aldrich, C. (2009) *Learning Online with Games, Simulations, and Virtual Worlds: Strategies for Online Instruction*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Alexander, K. (2014) *E-Learning: Challenges and Solutions*. [Online]. Available at: http://elearningindustry.com/e-learning-challenges-and-solutions (Accessed: 21/02/2016).

Agfo, A. (2006) Arab e-learning: Reality and challenges, *Organigramme de l Open Universiteit Holland*. [Online]. Available at: http://tecfaetu.unige.ch/staf/staf-e/julien/staf13/ex1/ (Accessed: 07/09/2015).

AlGamny, M., Ayad, L. and Farhat, R. (2014) The reality of e-learning in the Arab world and its development, *Conference of Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Arab countries*, Riyadh, KSA.

Alghannam, N.I. and Basheoh, H.A. (2011) *Requirements of the Settlement of a Culture of Learning and e-learning, and the Challenges of Adoption between Fear and Necessity in the Arab World.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.abegs.org/Aportal/Blogs/ShowDetails?id=5319 (Accessed: 10/10/2013).

Ali, N. (2015) The relationship between the Egyptian English teachers' practices and university students' motivation, *International Journal of Humanities and Management Sciences (IJHMS*), 3(2). [Online]. Available at: http://www.isaet.org/images/extraimages/P315020.pdf (Accessed: 11/04/2016).

Alkawari, S. (2012) Building trust between tutor and student, *Alrayah*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.raya.com/news/pages/e2623a6d-df8c-4938-a040-7acc283cdb5d (Accessed: 08/05/2014).

Allen, I.E., Seaman, J. and Garrett, R. (2007) Blended. In: *The Extent and Promise of Blended Education in the United States*. London: Facet Publishing.

Almahdy, A. (2012) Crisis of teacher-student trust in higher education, *Future Makers*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.paaet.edu.kw/FutureMakers/FutureMakers26/FM5-26-2011/12.html (Accessed 29/08/2015).

American University in Cairo (AUC). (2014) *American University in Cairo Moodle*. [Online]. Available at: http://moodle.aucegypt.edu/ (Accessed: 20/08/2014).

Alnouh, M. (2006) Teaching the tutors' colleges in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia problems, *Journal of Arab Gulf Message,* 98: 1-98.

Alsabbah, Y. (2015) Does e-learning provide secure electronic exams (free of fraud), *Open Learning Centre*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.qou.edu/newsletter/exams.jsp (Accessed: 27/08/2015).

Al-Sharhan, S. (2014) Open learning and distance education in the Arab world: towards development and innovation, *ALECSO - League of Arab States - Congress of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Arab World*, Riyadh, KSA. March, pp.38-65.

Al-Suleimany, M.S. N. (2009) *Psychology of Arab Management Thinking*. Canada: Victoria. BC.

Anderson, T. (2003) Getting the mix right again: An updated and theoretical rationale for interaction, *The International Review of Research in Open*

and Distance Learning, 4(2). [Online]. Available at: http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/149 (Accessed: 19/10/2015).

Anderson, T. (2008) *Toward a Theory of Online Learning In Theory and Practice of Online Learning*.2nd edn. Edmonton. Canada: Athabasca University Press.

Andolina, M.W., Jenkins, K., Zukin, C. and Keeter, S. (2003) Education for life and work: Developing transferable knowledge and skills in the 21st century, *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 36(2): 151-170.

Andrews, R. (2011) Does e-learning require a new theory of learning? Some initial thoughts, *Journal for Educational Research Online*, 3(1): 104-121.

Andrews, R. and Haythornthwaite, C. (2011) *Introduction to E-learning Theory, the Sage handbook of e-learning Research*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/bitstream/handle/2142/8974/INTRODUCTION%20FINAL%202%20-%20CH01.pdf?sequence=2 (Accessed: 20/06/2013).

Anyanwu, J. and Erhijakpor, A. (2007) *Education Expenditures and School Enrolment in Africa: Illustrations from Nigeria and other SANE Countries.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.afdb.org (Accessed: 19/10/2013).

Apple, M. W. and BeaneJ. A. (2003) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 1&6 associations for the development of education in Africa (ADEA). Pedagogical renewal and tutor development in sub-Saharan Africa: *A thematic synthesis.* Document prepared for ADEA Education Review, 44 (2).

Argyris, C. and Schön, D. A. (1978) *Organizational learning*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU). (2002) Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College: National Panel Report, *American Association of Colleges and Universities*, Washington, DC 62 p.

Association for Promotion of Creative Learning (APCL). (2009) *Association for Promotion of Creative Learning*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.creativelearning.in/(Accessed: 25/06/2013).

Atherton, J. (2010) *Constructivist Theory.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/constructivism.htm (Accessed: 20/08/2013).

Austin, V.L. (2001) Teachers' beliefs about co-teaching, *Remedial and Special Education*, 22(4): 245-255.

Australian Curriculum Studies Association. (1996) From alienation to engagement: Opportunities for reform in the middle years of schooling, *Belconnin, ACT: Australian Curriculum Studies Association Inc*, 1(3).

Baden, S.M. (2007) *A Practical Guide to Problem-based Learning Online*. London: Routledge.

Badham, B. and Davies, T. (2007) Leading and managing work with young people. In R. Harrison, C. Benjamin, S. Curran, & R. Hunter (eds.), *Leading Work with Young People*. Maidenhead: Open University Reader.

Bahanshal, D. (2013) The effect of large classes on English teaching and learning in Saudi secondary schools, *Canadian Center of Science and Education,* 6(11). [Online]. Available at: http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/elt/article/view/31107 (Accessed: 20/08/2016).

Bailey, S.(2011) Taking up the challenge: An interpretive phenomenological analysis of tutors' perceptions regarding the presence of asylum seeker and refugee pupils (ASR) within mainstream primary schools in the Midlands, and the implications this may hold for educational psychologists' practice. PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham.

Baker, T.L. (1994) *Doing Social Research*, 2nd edn. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Balım, A., G. (2009) The Effects of discovery learning on students' success and inquiry learning skills. Egitim Arastirmalari-*Eurasian, Journal of Educational Research*, 35: 1-20.

Barab, S. A. And Duffy, T. (2000) From practice fields to communities of practice. In D. Jonassen, & S. M. Land. (eds.). *Theoretical Foundations of Learning Environments* (pp.25-56), Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Baraka, M. A.(2005) *Geoinformatics E-Learning in Egypt.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.fig.net/pub/cairo/papers/wsva_02/wsva02_01_baraka.pdf (Accessed:4/09/2013).

Barkley, E. F., Cross, K. P., and Major, C. H. (2005) *Collaborative Learning Techniques, A Handbook for College Faculty*. Jossey-Bass, pp.300.

Barr, R. and Tagg, J. (1995) From teaching to learning: A new paradigm for undergraduate education, *Change*, November/December, pp.13-25.

Bart, M. (2010) The benefits of making the shift to student-centred teaching, *Faculty Focus,* 23. [Online]. Available at: http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-teaching-strategies/the-benefits-of-making-the-shift-to-student-centered-teaching/ (Accessed: 26/01/2014).

Bassey, M. (1999) *Case Study Research in Educational Settings*, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Bauer, W. I. (2014) *Music Learning Today: Digital pedagogy for creating, performing, and responding to music*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Beard, C., Wilson, J.P. and McCarter, R. (2007) Towards a theory of e-learning: experiential e-learning, *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 6(2): 3-15.

Bearne, M., Jones, S. and Sapsford-Francis, J. (1994) *Towards Usability Guidelines for Multimedia System.* [Online]. Available at: https://uhra.herts.ac.uk/dspace/bitstream/2299/4855/1/CSTR%20186.pdf (Accessed:4/09/2013).

Becker P.H. (1993) Common pitfalls in published grounded theory research. *Qualitative Health Research,* 3(2): 254-260.

Beetham, J. and Boyle, K. (1995) *Introducing Democracy: 80 questions and answers*. London: Polity Press/UNESCO.

Benett, Y. (1999) The validity and reliability of assessments and self-assessments of work based learning. In P. Murphy Ed, *Learners, Learning and Assessment.* London: Open University Press.

Bennell, P. and Mukyanuzi, F. (2005) *Is there any tutor motivation crisis in Tanzania?*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/PDF/Outputs/policystrategy/3888teacher_motivation_tanzania. pdf (Accessed: 20/02/16).

Bennett, S., Maton, K., & Kervin, L. (2008) The digital natives' debate: A critical review of the evidence. *British Journal of Educational Technology*,39 (5): 775-786.

Benyon, D., Stone, D. and Woodroffe, M. (1997) Experience with developing multimedia courseware for the world wide web: The need for better tools, *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 47(1): 197-218.

Berg, Z.L. (1995) Facilitating computer conferencing: Recommendations From the field, *Educational Technology*, 15(1): 22-30.

Bernstein, D. A. (2010) *Essentials of Psychology*, 5thedn. Linda Shreiber: USA.

Bhaskar, S. K. (2013) *How Teachers Collaborate with Students Using Facebook Groups.* [Online]. Available at: http://edtechreview.in/news/news/trends-insights/insights/494-tutors-collaborate-with-students-using-facebook-groups (Accessed: 22/08/2015).

Bicknell-Holmes, T. and Hoffman, P.S. (2000) Elicit, engage, experience, and explore: Discovery learning in library instruction, *Reference Services Review*. 28(4): 313-322.

Blaschke, L.M. (2014) Using social media to engage and develop the online learner in self-determined learning, *Research in Learning Technology*, Vol.22. [Online]. Available at: http://www.researchinlearningtechnology.net/index.php/rlt/article/view/21635/html (Accessed: 22/01/2016).

Bonk, C. and Zhang, K. (2009) *Empowering Online Learning: 100+ activities for Reading, Reflecting Displaying and Doing*. New York: Jossey-Bass.

Blass, E. and Davis, A. (2003) Building on solid foundations: Establishing criteria for e-learning development, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 27(3): 227-245.

Bonwell, C. C. (1998) *Active Learning: Energizing the Classroom.* Green Mountain Falls, CO: Active Learning Workshops.

Bonwell, C, C. and Eison, J. A. (1991) Active learning: creating excitement in the classroom, *AEHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 1*. Washington, D.C.: Jossey-Bass.

Bosch, A. (2009) Introducing learning technologies into Egyptian schools: Where there is demand there is a way. *Journal of Education for International Development*, 4(2): 1-8.

Boud, D, Keogh R. and Walker D. (1985*) Reflection: Turning experience into learning*. Kogan Page, London.

Boud, D. and G. Feletti. (1997)*The Challenge of Problem Based Learning*. London: Kogan Page.

Boud, D. and Walker, D. (1998) Promoting reflection in professionals' courses: The challenge of context, *Studies in Higher Education*, 23(2): 191-206.

Bradbury, H. (2010) *Beyond Reflective Practice: New Approaches to Professional Lifelong Learning.* London: Routledge.

Bransford, J.D., Brown, A.L. & Cocking, R.R. (1999*) How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Braun, V, and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 3(2): 77-101.

Bringle, R. G. and Hatcher, J. A. (*1999*) *Reflection* in service-learning: Making meaning of experience, *Educational Horizons*, 77(4): 179-185.

Brockbank, A., Ian McGill, I. and Beech, N. (2002) *Reflective Learning in Practice*. UK: Gower Public Limited.

Brockbank, A. and McGill, I. (2006) *Facilitating Reflective Learning through Mentoring and Coaching.* London: Kogan Page.

Bromage, A. (2006) The management of planned change: an interdisciplinary perspective. in L. Hunt, A. Bromage and B. Tomkinson (Ees). *The Realities of change in higher education: interventions to promote learning and teaching,* pp. 1-14. London: Routledge.

Burnard, P. (1999) Carl Rogers and postmodernism: Challenged in nursing and health sciences*, Nursing and Health Sciences*, 1: 241-247.

Bruner, J. S. (1961) The act of discovery, *Harvard Educational Review*, 31 (1): 21-32.

Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods*, 4th edn. Oxford University Press.

Brunet, P. J., Oumarou Tiemtoré. and Marie-Claude Vettraino-Soulard. (2004) *Ethics and the Internet in West Africa: Toward an Ethical Model of Integration*. NJ: Africa World Press.

Burnard, P. (1999) Carl Rogers and postmodernism: Challenged in nursing and health sciences, *Nursing and Health Sciences*, 1: 241-247.

Burney, A. (2008) *Inductive & Deductive Research Approach.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.drburney.net/INDUCTIVE%20&%20DEDUCTIVE%20RESEARCH%20APPROACH%2006032008.pdf (Accessed: 25/01/2014).

Business Sweden. (2015) Egypt entrepreneurship study, *Business Sweden Dubai*, August 2015. [Online]. Available at:http://www.swedenabroad.com/ImageVaultFiles/id_35371/cf_347/Business_Sweden_Egypt_Entrepreneurship_Study.PDF (Accessed 20/02/16).

Cabinet of Egypt Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC). (2013) *Statistics in Egypt.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.idsc.gov.eg/ (Accessed: 30/10/2013).

Cairo University. (2009) *Open Education Centre.* [Online]. Available at: www.ou.cu.edu.eg/NewsDetails. aspx?NewNumber¼138 (Accessed:20/04/ 2013).

Campbell, T. (1996) Technology, multimedia, and qualitative research in education, *Journal of Research on Computing in Education*, 30(9): 122-133.

Carini, R.M., Kuh, G.D., and Klein, S.P. (2006). Student engagement and student learning: Testing the linkages. *Research in Higher Education,* 47 (1), 1-33. doi:10.1007/s11162-1850-9

Carl, A. (2004) *Teacher Empowerment Through Curriculum Development*.2nd edn, Lansdowne: Juta & Co..

Carlile, O. and Jordan, A. (2005) It works in practice but will it work in theory? The theoretical underpinnings of pedagogy. In S. Moore, G. O'Neill, and B. McMullin (eds.), *Emerging Issues in the Practice of University Learning and Teaching.* Dublin: AISHE.

Carr, W. and Hartnett, A. (1996) *Education and the Struggle for Democracy: The politics of educational ideas*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Castronova, J. (2002) *Discovery Learning for the 21st Century: What is it and How Does it Compare to Traditional Learning in Effectiveness in the 21st Century?*. [Online]. Available at:http://www.ukessays.co.uk/essays/education/discovery-learning-environment.php (Accessed: 30/06/2013).

Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics. (2015) *Total number of students enrolled in public universities of higher education*. [Online]. Available at: http://website.informer.com/visit?domain=capmas.gov.eg (Accessed: 05/01/2016).

Chambers, D. W. (1971) Putting down the discovery learning hypothesis, *Educational Technology*, 1(3): 54-59.

Cheesewright, K. (2015) Adolescents ought to have the right to make autonomous medical choices, *Adolescent Medical Autonomy(AMA*). [Online]. Available at: http://bfi.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/BFI-Adolescent-Autonomy-LD.docx. (Accessed; 20/09/2015).

Cherry, K. (2010) *The Everything Psychology Book: An Introductory Guide to the Science of Human Behavior*, 2nd edn. MA: Adams Emdia Corporation.

Children and Young People's Workforce (CYPW).(2011) *Promote creativity and creative learning in young children: Unit CYPOP.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/SiteImages/f3/f3966925-d0a6-4de8-ac77-6c10066e762d.pdf (Accessed: 05/07/2013).

Chris, D. (2005) *Learner-Centred Activities*. [Online]. Available at: http://tefl.tutor.pagesperso-orange.fr/learner_centred.htm (Accessed: 17/10/2013).

Clark, R.W., Threeton, M.D. and Ewing, J.C. (2010) The potential of experiential learning models and practices in career and technical education & career and technical teacher education, *Journal of Career and Technical Education*, 25(2): 46-62.

Cobb, P. (1999) *Where is the Mind?* In P. Murphy (ed.).*Learners, Learning and Assessment.* London: Open University Press.

Cohen. E. and Lotan, R. (2014). *Designing Group Work: Strategies for the heterogeneous classroom*, 3rd edn, New York: Teachers College Press.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2013) *Research Methods in Education.*7thed. Routledge: London.

Collis, J. and Hussey, R. (2003) *Business Research: A practical guide for undergraduate and postgraduate students, 2nd edn*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Conole, G., Dyke, M., Oliver, M. and Seale, J. (2004) Mapping pedagogy and tools for effective learning design, *Computers & Education*, 43(1-2): 17-33.

Conole, G., Dyke, M., Ravenscroft. A. and De Freitas, S. (2007) Learning theory and its application to E-Learning. In*:* Conole, G. and Oliver, M. eds. *Contemporary Perspectives in e-learning Research: Themes, methods and impact on practice,* part of the Open and Distance Learning Series, F. Lockwood,(ed), Routledge Falmer: London. pp. 82-92.

Conole, G.(2010) *Review of pedagogical models and frameworks*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.slideshare.net/grainne/pedagogical-models-and-their-use-in-elearning-20100304 (Accessed: 31/07/2015).

Conrad, R., and Donaldson, J. (2012) *Continuing to Engage* the *Online Learner*: *More activities* and *resources* for *creative instruction*. San Francisco*, CA:* Jossey-Bass.

Coomey. M. and Stephenson, J. (2001) *Teaching and Learning Online: New pedagogies for new technologies, Creating Success,* 4, London: Kogan, pp.39-50.

Cornell Empowerment Group.(1989) Empowerment and family support, *Networking Bulletin*, 1(2): 1-23.

Costantino, F., Di Gravio, G., Shaban, A. and Tronc, M. (2012) A simulation-based game approach for teaching operations management topics, proceedings of the 2012 Winter Simulation Conference, University of Rome "La Sapienza", Via Eudossiana, Roma, Italy.

Craik, F. I. M. and Endel, T. (1975) Depth of processing and the retention of words in episodic memory, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 10(4): 268-294.

Crawford, B. A., Krajcik, J. S., & Marx, R. W. (1999) Elements of a community of learners in a middle school science classroom, *Science Education*, 83(6): 701-723.

Creswell, J. W. (2012*) Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Designs*.3rd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2014) *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 4th edn, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Croft, N., Dalton, A. and Grant, M. (2010) Overcoming isolation in distance learning: Building a learning community through time and space. *Journal for Education in the Built Environment*, 5(1): 27-64.

Cruz-Yeh, A.D. (2011) Facilitating Teacher Professional Development In Online Learning Environments: A Study Of Taiwanese English Teachers In Private Language Supplementary Schools. PhD thesis, University of Birmingham.

Cummins, J. (1994) From coercive to collaborative relations of power in the teaching of literacy. In B.M. Ferdman, R-M Weber, & A. Ramirez (Ees.) *Literacy across languages and cultures*. (pp. 295-331). Albany: SUNY Press.

Curaj, A., Scott, P., Vlasceanu, L. and Wilson, L. (2012) *European Higher Education at the Crossroads: Between the Bologna Process and National Reforms.* Springer: New York.

Daradoumis, T., Juan, A., Lera-López, F. and Faulin, J. (2010) *Using Collaboration Strategies to Support the Monitoring of Online Collaborative Learning Activity*. In Lytras, *et al.* (eds.), Technology Enhanced Learning: Quality of Teaching and Educational Reform, pp. 271-277 (Springer Series in Communication, vol 73). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Darling-Hammond, L. and McLaughlin, M. W. (1995) Policies that support professional development in an era of reform, *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76(8): 597-604.

Daymon, C. and Holloway, I. (2010) *Qualitative Research Methods in Public Relations and Marketing Communications*. England: Routledge.

De Bono, E. (1999) *Six Thinking Hats*, New York: Back Bay Books.

De la Sablonniere, R., Taylor, Donald, T. M., Sadykova, N. (2009) Challenges of applying a student-centered approach to learning in the context of education in Kyrgyzstan, *International Journal of Educational Development*, 29(6): 628-634.

Derbyshire County Council.(2013), Derbyshire Creativity Strategy introduction. [Online]. Available at: http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/education/teaching/inspire_creativity/default.asp (Accessed: 28/06/2015).

Dewey, J. (1916) *Democracy and Education*. London: Macmillan.

Dewey, J. (1938), (1997 edn) *Experience and Education*. New York: Touchstone.

Dewey, J. (1956) *The Child and The Curriculum and the School and Society*, Chicago: University Press.

Dewey, J. (2011) *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. USA: Indo-European Publishing.

Diaz, D. P. (2002) *Online drop rates revisited*. [Online]. Available at: http://technologysource.org/article/online_drop_rates_revisited/ (Accessed: 28/01/2016).

Dimmick, S. (1995) *Successful Communication Through NLP: A Trainer's Guide*. England: Gower Publishing Limited.

Dixon, R. C., Dixon, K. C. and Axmann, M. (2008) Online student centred discussion: Creating a collaborative learning environment, *In Hello! Where are you in the landscape of educational technology*, Melbourne: Deakin University.

Doyle, T. (2008) *Helping Students Learn in a Learner-centered Environment: A Guide to Facilitating Learning in Higher Education*. Stylus Publishing: USA.

Doyle, T. (2011) *Learner-centered Teaching: Putting the Research on Learning Into Practice*. Stylus Publishing: USA.

Driscoll, D. L.,Appiah-Yeboah, A.,Salib, P. and Rupert, D. (2007) Qualitative and quantitative data in mixed methods research: How to and why not, *Ecological and Environmental Anthropology,* 5(3): 19-28.

Dudovskiy, V. (2016) *The Ultimate Guide to Writing a Dissertation in Business Studies: A Step-by-Step Assistance*. Jonathan, Pittsburgh, USA.

Dweck, C. S. (1999) *Self Theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality, and Development*. Hove: Psychology Press, Taylor and Francis Group.

Dweck, C. S. (2012) *Mindset: How You Can Fulfil Your Potential*. London: Little, Brown Book Group.

Dyke, M. Conole, G. Ravenscroft, A. (2007) *Learning theory and its application to e-learning in Contemporary Perspectives in E-Learning Research:*

Themes, Methods and Impact on Practice. ed. G. Conole, M. Dyke and Martin Oliver. London: Routledge: pp. 82-97.

Eberly Center. (2014) Teaching in an Increasingly Multi-Cultural Setting: A Guide for Faculty*. Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Intercultural Communication Center*. Carnegie Mellon University.

Eby, M. (*2000*) Understanding professional development. In A. Brechin, H. Brown and M. *Eby* (eds) *Critical Practice in Health and Social Care*. London: Sage.

Economist. (2009) *Waking from its sleep - a special report on the Arab world*. [Online]. Available at: www.economist.com/ specialreports/ displayStory.cfm?story_id¼E1_TQDNSGJR (Accessed: 28/04/2015).

Educational Initiative Centre (EIC). (2004) *What is student-centred learning?.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.wmin.ac.uk/pdf/WhatIsSLC.pdf (Accessed: 16/08/2015).

Egyptian and Education Initiative (EEI).(2011) *Learning and Technology Policy Framework*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.eei.gov.eg/ (Accessed:23/04/ 2013).

Elo, S, Kaariainen M, Kanste O, Polkki T, Utriainen K, Kyngas H. (2014) Qualitative content analysis: A focus on trustworthiness, *SAGE Open*., 4(1):1-10

Ekman, P. (2006) *Darwin and Facial Expression: A Century of Research in Review*. Los Altos, CA: Malor.

Egypt State Information System (ESI). (2009) *Education in Egypt*. [Online]. Available at: http://new.sis. gov.eg/En/LastPage.aspx?Category_ID¼731 (Accessed:27/04/ 2015).

Electronic Gate, University of Damietta. (2015) University Teacher Preparation Programme Rules*, University Development centre*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.du.edu.eg/centers/dudc/u/CatView.aspx?n=9 (Accessed: 03/11/2015).

Eldawdi, M. (2012) Egyptian revolution and change of mentality "Is there a miracle?, *A study from the other's point of view for us before and after the revolution*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.sis.gov.eg/Newvr/34/5.htm (Accessed: 25/08/2016).

El-Gamal, S. (2014) An investigation of electronic learning in higher education: The Egyptian context, *University of Northumbria at Newcastle*, School of Health, Community and Education. [Online]. Available at: http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/21416/1/el-gamal.sarah_phd.pdf (Accessed: 01/01/2016).

Elhor, A. and Elroby, H (2010)*Theoretical framework proposal for the construction of an educational format is based on the partnership between the student and the tutor in the classroom*. [Online]. Available at:http://www.abegs.org/sites/Research/DocLib2/97.doc (Accessed: 27/09/2015)

Elliott, D. (2007) Recent trends in online teacher training*, IATEFL CALL Review*, Summer 2007, pp.11-18.

Elliott, D. (2008) *Internet technologies and language tutor education*. In Thomas, M. (ed.) *Handbook of Research on Language Acquisition Technologies: Web 2.0 Transformation of Learning.* Hershey, Pennsylvania: IGI Publishing.

Elliott, M. (2002) Blended learning: The magic is in the mix, in Rossett, *The ASTD. E-learning Handbook,* McGraw-Hill, New York, pp 58-63.

Elrayes, S. (2011) *Imposing Monitoring is The End Of Freedom*. [Online]. Available at:http://sabq.org/w1afde (Accessed: 27/09/2015.)

El-Seoud, S., Taj-Eddin, I., Seddiek, N., Ghenghesh. P. and El-Khouly, M. (2014) The impact of e-learning on egyptian higher education and its effect on learner's motivation: A case study, *Computer Science and Information Technology*, 2(3): 179-187.

El-Shenawi, N. (2005) *E-learning, challenges and opportunities: The case of Egypt*. [Online]. Available at: http://medforist.grenoble-

em.com/Contenus/Conference%20Tunisia%20IEBC%202005/papers/June24/10.pdf (Accessed:08/05/2015).

Elwady, B. (2010) E-learning - between novelty and development, *Eldostour Youth*. [Online]. Available at: http://kenanaonline.com/users/ashaq/posts/124071# (Accessed: 31/10/2015).

eMarketer, & American Marketing Association. (2015) Number of social network users worldwide from 2010 to 2018 (in billions), *In Statista - The Statistics Portal*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-social-network-users/ (Accessed:08/02/2016).

eMarketer, & American Marketing Association. (2015a) *US Social Media User Statistics for 2015*. [Online]. Available at: http://socialmedialondon.co.uk/us-social-media-stats-2015/ (Accessed:08/02/2016).

Erwin, J.C. (2004)*The Classroom of Choice: Giving Students What They Need and Getting What You Want*. USA: Association for Supervision Curriculum and Development (ASCD).

European Quality Assurance Forum (2014) Changing education – QA and the shift from teaching to learning, *University of Barcelona, Barcelona*, Spain, 13-15 November 2014.

European Student Union (ESU). (2010) *Student Centred Learning An Insight Into Theory and Practice.* [Online]. Available at: http://download.ei-ie.org/SiteDirectory/hersc/Documents/2010%20T4SCL%20Stakeholders%20Forum%20Leuven%20-%20An%20Insight%20Into%20Theory%20And%20Practice.pdf (Accessed: 29/08/2015).

Faour, M. (2011) *Education and Democracy in Arab Countries*. [Online]. Available at: http://carnegie-mec.org/publications/?fa=46068 (Accessed: 28/08/2015).

Farag, I. (2012) Curriculum after the revolution of January 25 , *A working paper submitted to the Supreme Council of Culture in Cairo*. [Online]. Available at: http://kenanaonline.com/files/0052/52388/Document1.pdf (Accessed: 02/09/2016).

Farag, I. (2013) *Students' attitudes towards a culture of citizenship in Egypt*. [Online]. Available at: http://carnegie-mec.org/2013/11/06/ar-pub-53516 (Accessed: 20/08/16).

Farid, W. (2013*)* Egypt has the largest number of Facebook users in the Arab world, *Daily News.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/09/25/egypt-has-the-largest-number-of-facebook-users-in-the-arab-world-report/ (Accessed:20/10/2013).

FAST-US-5 United States Education Survey. (2010) *Grades and Credits in U.S. Higher Education*. [Online]. Available at: http://www15.uta.fi/FAST/US5/REF/gpa.html (Accessed: 05/09/2015).

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). (2009) *Aviation Instructor's Handbook*. US: Skyhorse.

Fitzgerald M. (2011) *Combining Constructivist and Empowerment Theories in the Preparation of Educational Leaders*. St. Lawrence, University, Institute for Learning Centered Education.

Fleming, N. D. (2006) *V.A.R.K Visual, Aural/Auditory, Read/Write, Kinesthetic*. New Zealand: Bonwell Green Mountain Falls.

Flick, U.(2006) *An introduction to qualitative research*. Oxford, Blackwell press.

Flyvberg, B. (2006) Five misunderstanding about case-study research, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2): 219-245.

Foundation. (2015) *The First Steps of Education*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.qf.org.qa/content/the-foundation/issue-82/the-first-steps-of-education (Accessed: 25/01/2016).

Frankham, J. (2009) Partnership Research: A review of approaches and challenges in conducting research in partnership with service users, *ESRC,*

National Centre for Research Methods. [Online]. Available at: http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/778 (Accessed: 20/09/2015).

French, J. and Raven, B. (1958) Group support, legitimate power, and social influence, *Journal of Personality,* 26:400-409.

Friere, P. (2014) *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th anniversary edition.* New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc.

Fröschl, C. (2005) User modeling and user profiling in adaptive e-learning systems. Masters thesis. Austria, Graze: Institute for Information Systems and Computer Media (IICM) http://www.iicm.tu-graz.ac.at/thesis/cfroeschl.pdf (Accessed:11/09/2015).

Frost, D. (2013) Developing teachers, schools and systems: partnership approaches in C. McLaughlin, *Teachers Learning: professional development and education,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Froyd, J. and Simpson, N. (2010) *Student-Centered Learning: Addressing faculty questions about student-centered learning.* [Online]. Available at: http://sueidasakz.blogspot.co.uk/2011/11/student-centered-learning-addressing.html (Accessed: 19/08/2015).

Fry, H, Ketteridge, S and Marshall, S. (2014) *A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Enhancing Academic Practice*. 4th edn. London: Routledge.

Gahin, G. H. (2001) An investigation into EFL tutors' beliefs and practices in Egypt An explanatory study, PhD thesis, school of Education, *University of Exeter.*

Gallagher, S. A (2015) The role of problem-based learning in developing creative expertise, *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 16(2): 225-235.

Garrison, R. (2000) Theoretical challenges for distance education in the 21st century: A shift from structural to transactional issues, *International Review of Research in Open and distance Learning*, 1(1): 1-17.

Gibbons, M. (2004) Fitting systems to people. In *Personalised Learning: A special LDR supplement*. Nottingham: NCSL.

Gibbs, G. and Jenkins, A. (1992) *Teaching Large Classes in Higher Education: How to Maintain Quality with Reduced Resources.* London: Kogan Page.

Gillen, J., Staarman, J.K., Littleton, K., Mercer, N, and Twiner, A. (2007) A learning revolution ? Investigating pedagogic practice around interactive whiteboards in British primary classrooms, *Learning, Media and Technology*, 32(3): 243-256.

Giorgi, A. (1994) A phenomenological perspective on certain qualitative research methods, *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 5(25): 190-220.

Glasser, W. (2010) *Choice Theory in the Classroom*, New York: HarperCollins

Graduate Prospects. (014) *Teacher Training: PGCE*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.prospects.ac.uk/pgces.htm (Accessed: 14/11/2015).

Graduate Prospects. (2015) *Work Experience and Internships* [Online]. Available at: http://www.prospects.ac.uk/work_experience_work_placements.htm. (Accessed: 14/11/2015).

Grady, M. E (1998). *Qualitative and action research: A practitioner handbook*. Bloom- ington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Graves, I.(2006)*Directory of Democratic Education*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.sudval.com/archives/dsm8/2149.html (Accessed: 14/09/2013).

Gray, A.(1997) *Constructivist Teaching and Learning.* [Online]. Available at: http://saskschoolboards.ca/research/instruction/97-07.htm (Accessed: 22/09/2015).

Greer, T., and Dunlap, W. P. (1997) Analysis of variance with Ipsative measures, *Psychological Methods*, 2: 200-207.

Gribble, D. (2005) *Democratic Education*. [Online]. Available at:http://www.davidgribble.co.uk/democratic-education-u/democratic-education-u3.htm (Accessed: 22/10/2013).

Guardian Professional. (2013) *How tutors are rated in 21 countries around the world*. [Online]. Available at:http://www.theguardian.com/tutor-

network/tutor-blog/2013/oct/03/tutors-rated-worldwide-global-survey (Accessed: 01/09/2015).

Gusky, T. (2000) *Evaluating Professional Development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Guetterman, T. (2015) Descriptions of Sampling Practices Within Five Approaches to Qualitative Research in Education and the Health Sciences, *Forum: Qualitative Research* (FQS), 16(2).

Hai-Jew, S. (2008) Scaffolding discovery learning spaces, *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 4(4): 535-548.

Hamdy, A. (2007) *ICT in education in Egypt.* [Online]. Available at: www.infodev.org (Accessed: 02/05/ 2013).

Hammerness, K., Darling-Hammond, L., Bransford, J., Berliner, D., Cochran-Smith, M., McDonald, M., & Zeichner, K. (2005) *Preparing tutors for a changing world: what tutors should learn and be able to do.* pp. 390-441. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hamza, RA. (2013) Evaluating Teachers' Perceptions of Student Centered Learning in Ministry of Health Institutes in Oman, Kufa. *Journal for Nursing Science* 2(1), 42-57.

Harasim, L. (2012) *Learning Theory and Online Technologies*. New York/London: Routledge.

Hargreaves, A. and Fink, A. (2012) *Sustainable Leadership*. San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass.

Haring-Smith, T. (2012) Broadening Our Definition of Diversity, *Liberal Education*, 98(2), 6-13.

Hariharan, P. (2011) Effectiveness of activity -based learning methodology for elementary school education, *Paper Submitted for National Child Rights Research Fellowship 2010*, cry.org.

Harrington J. and Oliver R. (2002*) Designing for reflection in online courses*. [Online]. Available at:

http://elrond.scam.ecu.edu.au/oliver/2002/HerringtonJ.pdf (Accessed: 27/06/13).

Hart, R. (1997) *Children's participation, the theory and practice of involving young citizens in community development and environmental care,* London: EarthScan Publications Ltd.

Hassoun, F. (2009) Education-mail and traditional education: A comparative analysis, *Baghdad College of Economic Sciences University,* 19.

Hatton, N. and Smith, D. (1995) *Reflection in Teacher Education: Towards Definition and Implementation. The University of Sydney: School of Teaching and Curriculum Studies.* [Online]. Available at: http://www2.edfac.usyd.edu.au/LocalResource/Study1/hattonart.html (Accessed: 20/06/2015).

Hawkins, P. (1997) What is Learning? A review of learning theories (Chp 3). In a Brockbank A & McGill I (1998) *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education.* Buckingham: SRHE/Open University Press.

Hecht, Y. (2011) *Democratic Education*. USA: Bravura Books.

Helal, H. (2011) Impact of the TEMPUS programme on Egyptian Higher Education, *TEMPUS @20*, Belgrade, 29-30 March.

Herrary, L. and Torres, C.A. (2006) *Cultures of Arab Schooling*: Critical Ethnographies from Egypt, Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

Higher Funding Council for England (HEFCE). (2005) *HEFCE Strategy for E-Learning 2005/12*. Bristol, UK, Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). [Online]. Available at: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05_12/ (Accessed: 27/06/2015).

Hinton, R. I. and Groves, L. L. (2013) *Inclusive Aid: Changing Power and Relationships in International Development*. UK: Earthscan.

Hodgson, V., Dirckinck-Holmfeld, L., and McConnell, D. (eds.). (2012) *Exploring the Theory, Pedagogy and Practice of Networked Learning*. New York: Spring.

Hooks, B. (1994) *Teaching to Transgress*. New York: Routledge.

Horwath, J. and Shardlow S. M. (2000) 'Empowering learners through open (distance) programmes: An evaluation of a practice teaching Programme: An evaluation of a practice teaching programme', *Social Work Education*, 19(2): 111-123.

Hrastinski, S. (2008) *Asynchronous and Synchronous E-Learning*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.educause.edu/ero/article/asynchronous-and-synchronous-e-learning (Accessed: 25/02/2014).

Huba, M.E. and Freed, J.E. (2000) *Teacher-centered vs. learner-centered paradigms*. [Online]. Available at: http://assessment.uconn.edu/docs/TeacherCenteredVsLearnerCenteredParadigms. pdf (Accessed: 13/02/2016).

Hurn, B. J. and Tomalin, B. (2013) *Cross-Cultural Communication: Theory and Practice.* UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hyde, G. D. M. (2013) *Education in Modern Egypt.* New York: Routledge.

Ibrahim, A. (2011) *How do tutors evaluate themselves*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.halaween.net/articles.php?action=show&id=9101. (Accessed:20/09/2015).

ICT Trust Fund. (2012) *ICT for Illiteracy Eradication and Smart Schools Network.* [Online]. Available at: www.ictfund.org.eg/ (Accessed:20/04/2013).

Ismail, N. (2011) *Interaction: A Key Component to Successful Online Learning: An Investigation of Interaction and a Course of Online Learning*. Master thesis. University of Southampton.

Ismail, N., Edwards, J., and Kinchin, G.D. (2015) Facial expression analysis as a data analysis methodology, *12th International Conference on Technology in Mathematics Teaching (ICTMT12)*, 24-27 June, Faro, Portugal.

Jacques D. (2003) Teaching small groups. In: Cantillon, P, Hutchinson, L and Wood, D. (eds) BMJ, *ABC of Learning and Teaching in Medicine*, pp.19–21. London: BMJ Publishing Group.

Jagersma, J.and Parsons, J. (2011) Empowering Students as Active Participants in Curriculum Design and Implementation, *New Zealand Journal of Tutors' Work,* 8(2): 114–121.

Jakobovits, L.A. and Lambert, W.E. (1962) Semantic satiation in an addition task. *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, 16: 112–19.

Janicijevic, N. (2011) Methodological approaches in the research of organizational culture, *Economic Annals*, 46(189): 69–100.

Jarvis, P. (1995) *Adult and Continuing Education. Theory and practice* 2e, London: Routledge.

Jeffrey, B. and Woods, P. (2003) *The Creative School: A framework for success, quality and effectiveness*. London: Routledge/Falmer.

Johnson, D., Johnson, R. and Smith, K. (1991) *Cooperative Learning: Increasing college faculty instructional productivity,* ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 4, Washington, DC: The George Washington University.

Johnson, J. (2009) *Ways to continuing professional development*. [Online]. Available at:http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/ways-continuing-professional-development(Accessed:20/05/2015).

Johnson, D.W., & Johnson, F. (2009) *Joining together: Group theory and group skills* (10th edn.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Jones, B. D. and Skaggs, G. (2012) *Validation of the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation Inventory: A measure of students' motivation in college courses*. Research presented at the International Conference on Motivation 2012. Frankfurt, German.

Jones, L. (2007) *The student-centred classroom*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Joppe, M. (2000) *The Research Process*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.ryerson.ca/~mjoppe/rp.htm (Accessed: 12/11/2015).

Jordan, J. (2013) *MOOC Completion Rates: The Data*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.katyjordan.com/MOOCproject.html (Accessed: 17/10/2015).

Juan, A. (2009) *Monitoring and Assessment in Online Collaborative Environments: Emergent Computational Technologies for E-Learning Support: Emergent Computational Technologies for E-Learning Support*. New York: Hershey.

Kale, U. (2011) Online Communication Patterns of Teachers, *Journal of Interactive Learning Research* 22(4), Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE), Chesapeake, VA.

Katsuko, H. (2006) Review of the literature on information skills instruction, *Education*, 126 (3), 518.

Kearsley, G. (1986) *Authoring - A guide to the design of instructional software,* Addison-Wesley, Reading, Massachusetts, pp. 24-48.

Kelly, R. (2012) *Five Factors that Affect Online Student Motivation.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/five-factors-that-affect-online-student-motivation/ (Accessed: 05/09/2015).

Kemmis, S. (1985*)* Action research and the politics of reflection. In D. Boud, R. Keogh, & D. Walker (eds.), *Reflection: Turning experience into learning*, pp. 139-163. London: Kogan Page.

Kennedy, A. (2005) Models of continuing professional development: A framework for analysis. *Journal of In-Service Education*, 31(2): 235-250.

Kerlinger, F.N. (2000). *Foundations of behavioral research* (4th edn). New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

Khan, B, H. (2007) *Flexible Learning in an Information Society.* USA: The George Washington University.

Khan, B. H. (2012) *E-Learning Framework.* [Online]. Available at: http://asianvyu.com/bk/framework (Accessed: 08/ 03/2013).

Khouly, M. E. (2010) E- learning in Egypt. In U. Demiray, E-learning practices (pp. 107-131). Turkey: Anadolu University

Kieffer, C. (1984) Citizen empowerment: A developmental perspective. In (eds.) J. Rappaport, C. Swift and R. Hess. *Studies in Empowerment: Steps toward understanding and action.* Binghamton: The Haworth Press.

King, J. R; Danforth, S., Perez, S. and Stahl, N.S. (1993) Is resistance empowerment? Using critical literacy with teachers, *Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Reading Forum* (Sanibel Island, FL, December 12).

Kitzinger J. (1994) The methodology of focus groups: the importance of, interaction between research participants , *Sociology of Health*, 16 (1): 103-21.

Klenke, K. (2008) *Qualitative Research in the Study of Leadership*, UK: Emerald Group.

Klopfenstein, B. (2003), *Empowering Learners: Strategies for fostering self-directed learning and implications for online learning*. Unpublished Master of Education thesis. University of Alberta.

Kohn, A. (1999) *From de-grading to degrading. High School Magazine*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.alfiekohn.org/teaching/fdtd-g.htm (Accessed: 05/09/2015).

Koh, G. C., Khoo, H. E., Wong, M.L. and Koh, D. (2008) The effects of problem-based learning during medical school on physician competency: a systematic review. *CMAJ,* 178 (1): 34-41.

Kolb, D. (1984) *Experiential Learning as a science of learning and development.* Engelwood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Koo, A. C. (2008) Factors affecting tutors' perceived readiness for online collaborative learning: A case study in Malaysia. *Educational Technology & Society*, 11(1): 266-278.

Kreisberg,S. (1992) *Transforming Power: Domination, Empowerment, and Education*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Kring, A. M. and Sloan, D. (2007) The Facial Expression Coding System (FACES):Development, validation and utility, *Psychological Assessment*, 19: 210–224.

Kruse, K. (2004) *The benefits and drawbacks of e- learning* [Online] Available at: http://www.corebiztechnology.com/software_article_elearning_d.htm (Accessed: 01/10/2016).

Kulwicki, A .(1996) An Ethnographic Study of Illness Perceptions and Practices of Yemeni-Arabs in Michigan, *Journal of cultural diversity*, 3(3):80–9.

Lages, C., Pfajfar, G. and Shoham, A. (2015) Challenges in conducting and publishing research on the Middle East and Africa in leading journals, *International Marketing Review*, 32 (1): 52–77.

Lam, P. (2012) *ICEL2012- 7th International Conference on E-Learning: ICEL2012*. Auk: Academic Publishing International Limited.

Lombardi, M and Oblinger, D. (2007) *Authentic Learning for the 21st Century: An Overview*. Online [Available at:] https://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI3009.pdf (Accessed 25/08/2016)

Lea, S. J., Stephenson, D. and Troy, J. (2003) Higher Education Students Attitudes to Student Centred Learning: Beyond 'educational bulimia', *Studies in Higher Education* 28(3): 321–334.

Leach, J., Patel, R., Peters, A., Power, T., Ahmed, A. and Makalima, S. (2004) *Deep Impact: A study of the use of hand-held computers for tutor professional development in primary schools*. [Online]. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/ (Accessed: 03/05/2015).

League of Arab States (2015) *University Guide in Egypt*. [Online]. Available at: http://goo.gl/FBFxoU (Accessed: 02/01/2016).

Leathwood, C. (2006) G*ender, equity and the discourse of the independent learner in higher education, Higher Education*, Vol(52): 611–633.

Ledford, G. E., Gerhart, B., & Fang, M. (2013) Negative effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation: More smoke than fire, *Word at Work Journal*, 1, pp. 1-13.

Lehmann, K and Chamberlin, L. (2009) *Making the Move to eLearning: Putting Your Course Online.* USA; Rowman and Littlefield Education.

Levin, P. (2007) *The Future of Democracy: Developing the Next Generation of American Citizens.* USA: University Press of New England.

Lindsay, J. (2009) *Web 2.0 and Learning.* [Online]. Available at http://julielindsay.wikispaces.com/Web2+and+Learning (Accessed: 08/09/2013).

Liquid Africa. (2014) Egyptian e-government initiative moving forward, *Telecom, Internet and Broadcast in Africa*, Vol(173), [Online]. Available at: http://www.balancingact-africa.com/news/en/issue-no-174/computing/egyptian-e-governmen/en (Accessed: 07/01/2016).

Liu, M. and Pedersen, S. (2003) Teachers' beliefs about issues in the implementation of a student-centered learning environment, *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 51(2): 57-76.

Lowe, S.D.(2012) *Strategies for Online Instruction: How-to support the Dependent Learner*. [Online]. Available at:http://onlinelearninginsights.wordpress.com/2012/08/24/strategies-for-online-instruction-how-to-support-the-dependent-learner/ (Accessed: 22/10/2015).

Loyens, S. M. M., Magda, J.and Rikers, R. M. J. P. (2008) Self-directed learning in problem-based learning and its relationships with self-regulated learning, *Educational Psychology Review,* 20, (4): 411-427.

Liberal Arts and Sciences College (LAS). (2010) *Teaching Loads and Compensation for Lecturers*. [Online]. Available at: www.las.iastate.edu/wp.../uploads/LecturerCompensationLoad2010.pdf (Accessed: 20/05/2015).

Lynch, J., Modgil, C. and Modgil. S. (1997) *Education and Development: tradition and innovation, Innovations in Delivering Primary Education,* Vol 3, London: Cassell.

Mack, N (2005) *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide.* Research Triangle Park. NC: Family Health International.

Mader, S. (2008) *What is a wiki and how does it work?.* [Online]. Available at: http://kibesa.wikispaces.com/Definition+of+a+wiki (Accessed:14/09/2015).

Maharat. (2013) *The experience of the Arab Republic of Egypt in the preparation of tutors.* [Online]. Available at: http://t-p-uqu.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/blog-post_8.html (Accessed: 28/08/2015)

Maksym, L. (2005) *Technology as a Medium for Learning, Empowering Learners*. **[**Online**]** Available at: http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/sci_edu/edtech04/expanding/ed225s05/maksym.html. (Accessed: 05/10/2016).

Maloney, P. (2007) Blogs, reflective practice and autonomous learning in graphic design communication*, Paper presented at the 14th International Conference of the Association for Learning Technology*, Nottingham, England.

Manktelow, J & Carlson, A.(2013) *Understanding your learning prefe*rence. [Online]. Available at: http://www.mindtools.com/mnemlsty.html (Accessed: 09/09/2016).

Mansour, N. (2006) The mediating factors between Egyptian science tutors' beliefs and practices concerning teaching science through Science-Technology-Society (STS): Implications for tutor education. A paper presented at the British Educational Research Association (BERA) annual conference, Warwick University, UK, September 6-9.

Martin, P. (2007) Creative Inquiry: A crucial addition to ways of learning in higher education, Annual Conference of the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) December. 648-008-9082-7.

Martin, P., Morris, R., Rogers, A., Martin, C. and Kilgallon, V. (2009) Encouraging Creativity in Higher Education; The Experience of the Brighton Creativity Centre – presented at the Annual Conference of the Group for Learning in Art and Design (GLAD) 2009.

Marwa Ahmed AE, Wagdy TY, Refaat AH, El- Din Ahmed RAG (2014) Measuring students' satisfaction with implementing a student centered seminar at problem-based learning, Faculty of Medicine – Suez Canal University. *Intel Prop Rights* 2:111.

Marx, R. W., Blumenfeld, P. C., Krajcik, J.S., & Soloway, E. (1997) Enacting project-based science: Challenges for practice and policy, *Elementary School Journal*, 97, 341-358.

Maslow, A. (1954*) Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper.

Maton, K. and Salem, D. (1995) Organizational characteristics of empowering community settings: A multiple case study approach, *American Journal of Community Psychology,* 23(5): 631.

Mayer, R. (2004) Should there be a three-strikes rule against pure discovery learning? The case for guided methods of instruction, *American Psychologist*, 59 (1): 14-19.

McAllister, A. and Litvin, K. (2012) Cultural values of Gulf Arabs in the classroom, *TESOL conference presentation*.

McBride, D. (2004.) Becoming more culturally aware in the university classroom: Advice from a faculty member teaching in the Gulf Region. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives*, pp1-5. [Online]. Available at:http://www.zu.ac.ae/lthe/vol1/lthe01_02.pdf (Accessed: 28/08/2015).

McCormick, L., Noonan, M.J., Ogata, V. and Heck, R. (2001) Co-tutor relationship and program quality: Implications for preparing tutors for inclusive preschool settings, *Education and Training in Mental Retardation*, 36(2): 119-132.

McCombs, B.and Whistler, J. S. (1997) *The Learner-Centered Classroom and School: Strategies for Increasing Student Motivation and Achievement*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

McCrorie, P (2006) *Teaching and Leading Small Groups.* Association for the Study of Medical Education, Edinburgh.

McDaniel, R.G. (2008) *Implications and perceptions of students and tutors participating in two ninth grade success academies during the year of implementation*. USA: ProQuest LLC.

Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT). (2010) *Egyptian Education Initiative, official report for the Egyptian Ministry of Communication and Information Technology*. [Online]. Available at:www.mcit.gov.eg/Publications.aspx?ID¼&currentindex¼H1aVkriO4/g¼&pagenum¼aUtGjcydRv8¼&selectedpage¼5yBwBgþoqQY¼&Cname¼&all¼0&p (Accessed: 01/05/2013).

Megahed, O.A.and Salah, R. (2006) The reality of higher and university education in Egypt: Descriptive study, in Osama Megahed (Ed), *Higher Education in Egypt: The present and the future.* The 18th annual conference of policy research, Center for Political Research and Studies, Faculty of Economics and Political Sciences, Cairo University, Egypt.

Meighan, R. (1981) *A Sociology of Education*. London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Merryfield, M., Lo, J., Po, S. and Kasai, M. (2008). World-mindedness: Taking off the blinders, *Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, 2(1): 6-20.

Messiou, K. (2012) Collaborating with children in exploring marginalisation: An approach to inclusive education, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 16(12). [Online]. Available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/ (Accessed: 14/02/2015).

Ministry of Higher Education (MHE). (2011) *Establishment*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.egy-mhe.gov.eg/english/index-e.html (Accessed: 28/04/2015).

Miller, M. and Burden R. (2007) Teacher-tutor collaboration, *Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education,* 2(1), Winter/Spring.

Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT). (2008) *The Year at a Glance.* [Online]. Available at: http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:a4jPeEaGB2oJ:www.mcit.gov.eg/Upcont/Documents/MCIT_YEARBOOK_08200961713331.pdf+&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk (Accessed: 28/04/2015).

Mizell, H. (2010) *Why Professional Development matters*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

Mohamed, E., Gerber, H. and Aboulkacem, S. (2016) *Education and the Arab Spring Resistance*, *Reform, and Democracy.* Netherland: Sense Publishers.

Mohamad Nordin, N. and Klobas, J. (2010) Wikis as collaborative learning tools for knowledge sharing: *Shifting* the education landscape. In Z. Abaset al. (eds) *Proceedings of Global Learning*, pp.331-340.

Montgomery, J. (1992) *The Development, Application, and Implications of a Strategy for Reflective Learning from Experience*. Miami: Florida International University.

Moon, J.A. (2000) *Reflection in Learning and Professional Development*. London: Kogan Page.

Moon, J. A. (2013) *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice*, New York: Routledge-Falmer.

Moore, M.G and Kearsley, G. (2011) *Distance Education: A Systems View of Online Learning*, 3rd edn, USA: Wadsorth.

Moore, M.G. (2013) *Handbook of Distance Education*.3rd edn. New York: Rutledge.

Morgan D.L. (1997) *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*. 2nd edn. London: Sage.

Morrison, G. (2013) *The Guardian, Professional development for tutors: How can we take it to the next level?* [Online]. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/tutor-network/tutor-

blog/2013/jan/29/professional-development-tutor-training-needs(Accessed: 17/01/2016).

Moussalli, M (2012) Impact of Globalization, *Daily Star*. [Online]. Available at: https://middleeasttribune.wordpress.com/impact-of-globalization/ (Accessed 18/08/2015).

Muller, M. J., Farrell, R. F., Cebulka, K. D. & Smith, J. G. (1992) Issues in the usability of time-varying multimedia. In M. Blattner, & R. B. Dannenberg, eds, *Multimedia Interface Design*, pp. 7—38. New York, NY: ACM Press.

National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE). (1999) *The published an outstanding piece of work entitled, All our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education*. [Online]. Available at: http://sirkenrobinson.com/pdf/allourfutures.pdf (Accessed: 15/06/2015).

National Center For Education Statistics (NCES). (2001*) Digest of Education Statistics*.[Online] Available at: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001034.pdf (Accessed: 25/05/216).

National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM) (2015) [Online]. Available at: https://www.ncetm.org.uk/ (Accessed: 07/09/2015).

National Institute of Education (2009) A Teacher Education Model for the 21st Century, *A Report by the National Institute of Education*, Singapore.[Online]. Available at: http://www.nie.edu.sg/files/TE21%20online%20version%20-%20updated.pdf(Accessed: 07/10/2013).

National Association of Geoscience Teachers (NAGT). (2015) *Teaching Large Classes* [Online]. Available at: http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/earlycareer/teaching/LargeClasses.html (Accessed: 03/11/15).

National Training Laboratories.(1997) *The Learning Pyramid*. Bethel, ME: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishers.

National College for School Leadership (NCLS).(2005) *Learning-centred Leadership: Towards personalised learning centred leadership*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/lcl-towards-personalised-lcl.pdf (Accessed: 17/10/2013).

National E-Learning Centre (NELC). (2013) Introduction. [Online]. Available at: http://www.nelc.edu.eg (Accessed at:27/04/ 2013).

Neuman, W.L. (2011) *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* 7th edn. Pearson Education Inc.

Neville, A. J. (2009) Problem-based learning and medical education forty years on. A review of its effects on knowledge and clinical performance, *Medical Principles and Practice*, 18: 1- 9.

Nichols, M. (2003) A Theory for ELearning, *Educational Technology and Society*, 6(2): 1-10.

Oakley, B., R. M. Felder, R. Brent, & I. Elhajj.(2004) Turning student groups into effective teams, *Journal of Student Centered Learning*, 2(1): 9-34.

Okenyi, S. (2007) *Achieving Democratic Education in Africa Through Learner-Centred Pedagogy: The Challenge of Transition*. PhD thesis, Dept. of Educational Psychology, Kigali Institute of Education, Kigali, Ewanda. [Online]. Available at: http://www.wesoeduonline.com/journals/approaches/Achieving%20Democratic%20Education%20in%20Africa%20Through%20Learner.pdf (Accessed: 16/09/2015).

O'Neill, G. and McMahon,T. (2005) *Student-centred learning: What does it mean for students and lecturers?*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.aishe.org/readings/2005-1/oneill-mcmahon-Tues_19th_Oct_SCL.html (Accessed: 15/02/2014).

O'Reilly, T. (2005) *What is Web 2.0: Design patterns and business models for the next generation of software*. [Online] Available at: http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html(Accessed: 12/08/2016)

O'Sullivan, M. (2003) The reconceptualisation of learner-centred approaches: A Nambian case study, *International Journal of Educational Development*, 24(6): 585-602.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Dickinson, W. B., Leech, N. L. and Zoran, A. G. (2009) A qualitative framework for collecting and analyzing data in focus group research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* 8(3): 1-21.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Leech, N. L. and Collins, K. M. T. (2010) Innovative qualitative data collection techniques for conducting literature reviews/ research syntheses. In M. Williams & W. P. Vogt (eds.), *The Sage handbook of Innovation in Social Research Methods* (pp. 182-204) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

O'Reilly, M. and Kiyimba, N. (2015) *Advanced Qualitative Research: A Guide to Using Theory.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Orellana, A. (2006) Class size and interaction in online courses, *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 7(3): 229-248.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2015) A skills beyond school review of Egypt, *OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training*, OECD Publishing.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2010) *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Higher Education in Egypt 2010*. [Online]. Available at*:* http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/reviewsofnationalpoliciesforeducationhighereducationinegypt2010.htm (Accessed: 31/05/2013).

Osborne, P., Pittaway, S.and Downing, J. (2014) *Guidelines for Online fFcilitation*. Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania.

Ospina, S. (2004) Qualitative research. In Goethals, G. Sorenson, G and MacGregor,J. (eds.) E*ncyclopaedia of Leadership.* London: Sage.

Oxford Business Group. (2010)*The Report: Algeria 2010*. UK: Oxford Publisher.

Oxford University Press English language teaching. (2012) *Should tutors be paid to attend teacher training sessions?*. [Online]. Available

at:http://oupeltglobalblog.com/2012/05/03/should-tutors-be-paid-to-attend-tutor-training-sessions/ (Accessed: 07/12/2015).

Palloff, R.M. and Pratt, K. (2007) *Building Online Learning Communities: Effective strategies for the virtual Classroom*, 2nd edn. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pang, L. (2009) *Application of Blogs to Support Reflective Learning Journals*. [Online]. Available at: http://deoracle.org/online-pedagogy/teaching-strategies/application-of-blogs.html (Accessed: 20/06/2013).

Pedersen, J.E., and Digby, J.E. (1995) *Secondary schools and cooperative learning: Theories, models, and strategies*. New York: Garland.

Perkins, D. and Zimmerman, M. (1995) Empowerment theory, research, and application, *American Journal of Community Psychology,* 23: 569-580.

Phoenix Education Trust. (2014) *Democratic Education*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.democraticeducation.co.uk/(Accessed: 25/02/2016).

Piaget, J. (1967) *Construction of Reality in the Child.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Piaget, J. (1973) *To Understand is to Invent*. New York: Grossman.

Piave, N, A. (2008*) Rapid e-Learning, as an informal educational tool for advanced students*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media14908.pdf (Accessed:15/09/2015).

Polit, D. and Hungler, B. (1991) *Nursing Research: Principles and methods*. New York: JB Lippincott.

Pollard, A. and Collins, J. (2005) *Reflective Teaching*. 5thed. Oxford: British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data.

Population Council (2012) *Challenges facing the Egyptian education system.* [Online]. Available at: http://popcouncil.org/pdfs/2012PGY_SYPEPolicyBrief2.pdf (Accessed: 25/10/2013).

Prain, V., Cox, P., Deed, C., Edwards, D., Farrelly, C., Keeffe, M., Lovejoy, V., Mow, L., Sellings, P., Waldrip, B. (eds.). (2015) *Personalising Learning in Open-Plan Schools*. Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Prakash, V. (2007) *Creative learning a Handbook for Teachers and Trainers*. New Delhi: VivaBooks Private Limited.

Prakash, V. (2007) *Creative Learning: A Handbook For Tutors and Trainers*. New Delhi: VivaBooks Private Limited.

Price, A. (2006) *Creative Maths Activities for Able Students: Ideas for Working with Children Aged 11-14*. London: Paul Champagne Publishing.

Prochaska, J. O. and J. M. Prochaska (1999) *Why don't continents move? Why Don't People Change? New Perspectives on Resistance and Noncompliance*. H. Arkowitz. New York, Guilford Press.

Punch, K. and Punch, K. (2009)*Introduction to Research Methods in Education.* Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications Inc.

Purkis, J and Bowen, J. (2004*) Changing Anarchism: Anarchist Theory and Practice in a Global Age.* UK: Manchester University Book.

Rajendran, N. S. (2001) Dealing with biases in qualitative research: A balancing act for researchers, *Qualitative Research Convention 2001, Navigating Challenges*, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia 1-15.

Rappaport, J. (1984) 'Studies in empowerment: Introduction to the issues. In J. Rappaport, C. Swift, & R. Hess (eds.); *Studies in Empowerment: Steps toward understanding and action* (1-7). New York: The Haworth Press.

Rappaport, J. (1987) Terms of empowerment/exemplars of prevention: Toward a theory for community psychology, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 15(2): 121-148.

Ratcliff, D. (1995) *Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Research.* [Online]. Available at: qualitativeresearch.ratcliffs.net/Validity.pdf (Accessed: 27/02/ 2014).

Raven, B. H. (1990) Political applications of the psychology of interpersonal influence and social power, *Political Psychology*, 11(3): 493-520.

Ravitch, D. (2011) *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How testing and choice are undermining education*. New York: Basic Books.

Redding, N. (1990) The Empowering Learner project, *Educational Leadership*, 47(5): 46-48.

Rheingold, H. (1993)*The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*. USA: Addison-Wesley.

Richardson, J. W. (2011) Challenges of adopting education in less developed countries, *Comparative Education Review*, 5(1): 8-29.

Richardson, J. W., Finholt-Daniel, M., Sales, G. and Flora, K. (2012) Shifting pedagogical space: Egyptian educators' use of Moodle, *International Journal of Education and Development using ICTs*, 8(2): 92-106.

Riley, S. (2014) Social media one key to the Arab Spring IT-savvy population: IT played bigger role in Tunisia, Egypt than in Libya, Yemen, some say, *Investor's Business Daily* Oct 31 2011. ProQuest. Web. [Online]. Available at: http://campchamparabspring2014-2.blogspot.co.uk/2014/04/grassroots-activism-internet-and-arab.html (Accessed: 26/02/2016).

Robinson, C.and Taylor, C. (2007) Theorizing student voice: Values and perspectives, *Improving Schools,* 10(1): 5-17.

Rogers, C. (1994) *Freedom to Learn for the 80s*. 3rd edn. New Jersey: Upper Saddle River.

Rogers, P., Berg, G., Boettcher, J., Howard, C. and Justice, L. (2010) *Encyclopaedia of Distance Learning*, 2nd edn. USA: Information Science Reference.

Romero-Frias E. and ArqueroMontaño, J. L. (2012) *Exploring the use of Social Network Sites on accounting education: A social constructivist approach*. [Online]. Available at: http://personal.us.es/arquero/jornada/docs/25.pdf (Accessed: 18/04/2014).

Rookes, P. and Willson, J. (2000) *Perception. Theory, development and organisation. Routledge Modular Psychology Series*. London: Taylor & Francis Group.

Rosen, L.D. (2011) *Social Networking's Good and Bad Impacts on Kids*. [Online]. Available at: www.apa.-org/news/press/releases/2011/08/social-kids.aspx (Accessed:9/09/2014).

Rossett. A. and Schafer, l. (2002) *What can we do about e-dropouts?*. [Online]. Available at:http://edweb.sdsu.edu/courses/edtec644/rossett_Schafer_ElrnrDropou.pdf (Accessed:9/09/2014).

Rowntree, D. (1992). *Exploring Open and Distance Learning*. London: Kogan Page.

Rudd, T., Colligan, F. and Naik, R. (2007) *Learner Voice: A Handbook*. Bristol: Futurelab.

Ruder, D.B. (2008) *The Teen Brain*. Harvard magazine. [Online]. Available at: http://harvardmagazine.com/2008/09/the-teen-brain.html August-September 2008 (Accessed: 14/09/2014).

Rumpite, D., Zuga, B., Ritins, G. (2007) Development of Online Course Design and Development Approach in Creative Learning of English for Specific Purposes. In: D. Rumpite and T.Siek-Piskozub et. al. (eds.) *Research papers of the International Nordic- Baltic Conference of the World Federation of Language Teacher Associations (FIPLV) Innovations in Language Teaching and Learning in the Multicultural Context*. Riga: IzglitibasSolji, pp. 298-308.

Ruth, R. Houghton, L. (2009) The wiki way of learning, *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology,* 25(2): 135-152.

Said, M.E. (2001) *Higher education in Egypt. Ministry of Higher Education Projects Implementation Unit*. [Online]. Available at: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/higher/egypt.pdf (Accessed: 28/04/2015).

Salmon, G. (2004) *E-moderating: The key to teaching and learning online*. 2nd edition. London: Routledge Falmer.

Salmon, G. (2013) *E-tivities: The key to active online learning* (2nd edn). London and New York: Routledge.

Sandelowski, M. (1986) The problem of rigor in qualitative research, *Advances in Nursing Science,* 8(3): 27-37.

Sasikumar, M. (2008) *E-learning: Opportunities and Challenges*. [Online]. Available at: http://thelittlesasi.wikidot.com/e-learning (Accessed: 09/04/ 2011).

Saunders, D. M. (1999) *Developing student-centred learning within higher education through simulation gaming and innovation*. University of Glamorgan: UK.

Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P.and Thornhill, A. (2012) *Research Methods for Business Students.* Pearson: England.

Sawahel, w. (2014) *Eight-year Egyptian plan for higher education*, University World News, Vol 332. [Online]. Available at: http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140829120505683 (Accessed: 021/01/2016)

Sawahel, W. (2015) E-Learning university launches new MOOCs platform, *University World News*, 150. [Online]. Available at: http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20150416161201119 (Accessed: 01/01/2016).

Schacter, J. and Fagnano, C. (1999) Does technology improve student learning and achievement? How, when, and under what conditions, *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 20(4): 329-343.

Schindler, J. (2009) *Transformative Classroom Management: Positive Strategies to Engage All Students and Promote a Psychology of Success*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

SchoolScape and SSA-Tamil Nadu. (2008) *Activity Based Learning: Effectiveness of ABL under SSA* June 2007-April 2008. Report by SchoolScape and SSA-Tamil Nadu.

Scott, B. (2008) *The role of tutor epistemology in integrating student-centred instructional software: A case study in social studies education*. Auburn University. Committee member.

Scott, C.D. and Jaffe, D.T. (1988) Survive and thrive in times of change, *Training and Development Journal*, April, pp.25-7.

Scott, W.A. (1955) Reliability of content analysis: The case of nominal scale coding, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 19(3): 321-5.

Semple, A. (2000) Learning theories and their influence on the development and use of educational technologies, *Australian Science Teachers Journal*, 46(3).

Severiens, S. H. and Schmidt, H, G. (2009) Academic and social integration and study progress in problem based learning, *Higher Education*, 58(1): 59-69.

Shanks, G. (2002) Guidelines for Conducting Positivist Case Study Research in Information Systems , *Australasian Journal of Information Systems*, 10(1): 76–85.

Shedroff, N. (1999) *Interaction Design Course Syllabus*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.nathan.com/thoughts/course.html (Accessed: 25/03/2014).

Sheppard, A. L. (2013) Learning styles and motives of postgraduate distance learners undertaking a United Kingdom professional doctorate. *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 1(1).

Sherman, R. R. and Webb, R. B. (1988) *Qualitative Research in Education: A focus* (pp. 2-21) London: The Falmer Press.

Shouk, M. and Saeed, M. (1995) *Teacher Training For the Twenty-First Century*. Riyadh: Alobaykan.

Shrestha, P.B. (2009) *Research Paradigm an Overview.* [Online]. Available at:http://www.scribd.com/doc/18326060/Research-Paradigms-An-Overview (Accessed: 15/01/2016).

Shulman, L. S. (1986) Those who understand: knowledge growth in teaching, *Educational Researcher*, 15: 4-14.

Siddiqui, O. (2001) *Why students have lost respect for tutors?.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.arabnews.com/node/211579 (Accessed:21/07/2015).

Silver, C.E.H. (2004) Problem-Based Learning: What and How Do Students Learn?, *Educational Psychology Review*, 16(3): 235-266.

Silverman, D. (2011) *Interpreting Qualitative Data: A Guide to the Principles of qualitative Research* 4th edn. London: SAGE.

Simon, B. (1999)*Why no pedagogy in England?* In J. Leach and B. Moon (eds.), Learners and Pedagogy. London: Sage Publications.

Simoncini, K., Lasen, M. and Rocco, S.(2014) Professional dialogue, Reflective practice and teacher research: Engaging early childhood pre-service teachers in collegial dialogue about curriculum innovation, *Australian Journal of Teacher Education,* 39(1): 27-44.

Simonson, M. and Schlosser, C. (2007) Reflective outcome of divergent and convergent group tasking in the online learning environment, *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 8(1): 97-107, Information Age Publishing.

Skvorak, M. (2013) *Resistant students: Reach me before you teach me*. Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Smith, C. (ed.). (2012) Teaching assistants and intervention programmes in primary mathematics, *Proceedings of the British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics (BSRLM),*32(2) Proceedings of the day conference, University of Sussex, UK, June 9, 2012. London: British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics (BSRLM): 40-45.

Smith, J. A., Flowers, P. and Larkin, M. (2010) *Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*. London: Sage.

Smith, J. and Oliver, M. (2000) The implementation of a national framework for academic development in the use of C&IT, *EFFECTS report,* no.4, University of North London.

Smith, K.T. (2006) Early attrition among first time e-learners: a review of factors that contribute to drop-out, withdrawal and non-completion rates of adult learners undertaking elearning programmes, *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 2(2): 73.

Smith, M. K. (2010) *David A. Kolb on experiential learning, The encyclopaedia of informal education.* [Online]. Available at: http://infed.org/mobi/david-a-kolb-on-experiential-learning/ (Accessed: 03/08/2013).

Smith, P.and Cockburn, T. (2014) *Impact of Emerging Digital Technologies on Leadership in Global Business.* Canada: Business Science Reference.

Stake, R.E. (1995) *The Art of Case Study Research: Perspective in Practice*. London: Sage.

State Information Egypt (SIS). (2013) *Egypt seeks to benefit from Malaysian development experience*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Templates/Articles/tmpArticles.aspx?ArtID=56575 (Accessed: 01/07/2015).

Sukariyah, M. B.(2010) Teacher preparation: Issues and trends in international and Arab frameworks. In Bechir, L. (ed.), *Arab Regional Conference on Higher Education* (Cairo, May 31, June 1-2 2009). Towards an Arab Higher Education Space: International Challenges and Societal Responsibilities (pp.274-264). Beirut: UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States.

Supreme Council of Universities (SCU). (2014) *Information and Communication Technology in Egypt.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.scu.eun.eg/wps/portal/!ut/p/c0/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os_gg40ALD2czYwN3f0tXA09v1zBXIxcTI3dzQ_3g1Dz9gmxHRQAzAPVu/ (Accessed: 15/02/2015).

Suydam, M. and Higgins, J. (1977) *Activity -based Learning in Elementary School Mathematics: Recommendations from Research.* Columbus, Ohio: ERIC Clearinghouse for Science, Mathematics and Environmental Education.

Sweller, J. (2006) The worked example effect and human cognition, *Learning and Instruction,* 16(2): 165–169.

Synder, T.D. (2002) *Digest of Education Statistics 200.* [Online]. Available at: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/2002130.pdf (Accessed: 22/09/2013).

Tanaka, C. (2010) *An exploration of tutor motivation: A case study of basic shool tutors in two rural districts in Ghana*. Doctoral thesis (DPhil), University of Sussex.

Taylor, F. (1911) *The Principles of Scientific Management,* New York: Harper.

Taylor, P. G. (2000) Changing Expectations: Preparing students for flexible learning*, International Journal of Academic Development* , 5(2): 107-115.

Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy (TEAL). (2010) *Student-Centred Learning Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy.* [Online]. Available at: http://communitycolleges.wy.edu/Data/Sites/1/commissionFiles/abe/training/abe-ntt/mod-6-articles/ntt---module-6---fs-6-teal-center-student-centered-learning-fact-sheet-air-logo-11-18-11-(1).pdf (Accessed: 25/04/2013).

Teoh, B.T., Preechaporn, W. and Leong, C. K. (2012) Problem-based learning in the 4 Core Areas (PBL4C) in the search of excellence in mathematics instruction, Paper presented at 5th EARCOME Conference.

Thapar-Björkert, S. and Henry, M. (2004) Reassessing the Research Relationship: Location, Position and Power in Fieldwork Accounts, *Social Research Methodology*, 7(5): 363.

Thomas, A. (2008) Focus groups in qualitative research: culturally sensitive methodology for the Arabian gulf, *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 31(1).

Thomas, M. (2011) *Online Learning.* UK: Sage.

Thompson, M. (2008) *Experiential Learning*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.businessballs.com/experiential_learning.htm(Accessed: 10/07/2015).

Thompson, P. (2009) 'Consulting secondary school pupils about their learning', *Oxford Review of Education*, 35(6), 671-687.

Tomkins, A. (2009) *Developing Skills in Critical Reflection Through Mentoring Storie*s, University of Gloucestershire. Subject Guide HLST Higher Education Academy.

Toohey, S. (2000) *Designing Courses for Higher Education*. Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press.

Trans-European cooperation scheme for higher education (TEMPUS). (2012) *Higher Education In Egypt*. [Online]. Available at: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/overview/egypt_tempus_country_fiche_final.pdf (Accessed: 07/05/2015).

Trans-European cooperation scheme for higher education (TEMPUS). (2012b) *State of Play of the Bologna Process in the TEMPUS Partner Countries, A TEMPUS Study,* No 9, April 2012, EACEA, Brussels.

Trochim, W. M. K. (2006) Deduction & Induction. [Online]. Available at: http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/dedind.php (Accessed: 2013/08/15).

Turner-Bisset, R. (2001) *Expert Teaching - Knowledge and Pedagogy to Lead the Profession*, London: David Fulton.

U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. (2006) *Arab Cultural Awareness: 58 Factsheets*. USA: Create Space Independent Publishing Platform.

UCD Centre for Teaching and Learning. (2005) *Course Design*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/good/cou3.htm (Accessed : 17/10/2015).

UNESCO. (2012) *World data on education*, 7thedn. [Online]. Available http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Egypt.pdf (Accessed : 17/10/2015).

UNESCO. (2013) *The Intel Teach Program helps Egyptian Teachers Bring technology to the classroom.* [Online]. Available at:*www.unesco.org/iiep/PDF/pubs/Egypt.pdf* (Accessed: 10/10/2015).

University of Cape Town (UCT). (2007) *ICTs and higher education in Africa.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.cet.uct.ac.za/files/file/egypt.pdf (Accessed: 22/04/2015).

University of Southampton. (2015) *Professional Development.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.southampton.ac.uk/iliad/bridge-pages-to-external-links/professional-development-index.page? (Accessed : 27/12/2015).

University of Windsor. (2013)*What is the schedule like in law school?*. [Online]. Available at: http://www1.uwindsor.ca/law/student-services-office/frequently-asked-questions (Accessed: 07/09/2015).

Ur, P. (1997*) Teacher Training and Teacher Development: A Useful Dichotomy?* In The Language Teacher. [Online]. Available at: http://www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/files/97/oct/ur.html (Accessed: 07/09/2015).

Urdan, T. and Weggen, C. (2000) *Corporate e-Learning: Exploring. A New Frontier*. San Francisco, CA: WR. Hambrecht CO.

Vanner, C. (2013) Navigating Children's Participation Rights in Education in Low-Income Countries. *Literacy Information and Computer Education Journal* (LICEJ), 4(2). [Online]. Available at: http://infonomics-society.ie/wp-content/uploads/licej/published-papers/volume-4-2013/Navigating-Childrens-Participation-Rights-in-Education-in-Low-Income-Countries.pdf (Accessed: 20/10/2013).

Venter, K. (2003) Coping with isolation: The role of culture in adult distance learners' use of surrogates, *Open Learning*, 18 (3): 271-287.

Vince, R. (1998) Behind and beyond Kolb's learning cycle. *Journal of Management Education, 22*: 304-319.

Vrasidas, C. and Glass, V. (2004) *Online Professional Development for Teachers*. USA: Information Age Publishing Inc.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1986) *Thought and language.* A. Kozulin (ed.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978) *Mind in Society.* Cambridge. MA: Harvard University Press.

Wachob, P. (2009) P*ower in the EFL Classroom: Critical Pedagogy in the Middle East*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, chapter 5, pp.76-91.

Walsh, A. (2005)*The tutor in problem based learning: a Anovice's guide*. Hamilton: McMaster University.

Wardany, Y. (2009) *Youth culture between the challenges of the Internet and the inability of the State*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.alwaref.org (Accessed: 20/10/2013).

Weimer, M. (2013) *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice*. Second edn. USA: John Wiley & Sons.

Weiss, M.P. and Brigham, F.J. (2000) Co-teaching and the model of shared responsibility: What does the research support? In T.E. Scruggs and M.A. Mastropieri (eds.), *Educational Interventions: Advances in learning and behavioral disabilities* (pp. 217-245). Stanford, CT: JAI Press.

Welsh, E., Wanberg, C., Brown, K. and Simmering, M.E-l.E. (2003) E-learning: emerging uses, empirical results and future directions, *International Journal of Training and Development*, 7(4): 245-58.

Wenger, E. C. (2006) *Communities of Practice: A brief introduction*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.ewenger.com/theory/index.htm (Accessed : 27/07/2015)

Wenger, E. C. (2006) *Communities of Practice: A brief introduction*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.ewenger.com/theory/index.htm (Accessed : 27/07/2013).

West, J. and West M. (2009) *Using wikis for online collaboration: The power of the read -write web*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

White, C. (2003) *Language Learning in Distance Education*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Wilkens, K. (2011) Higher Education Reform in the Arab World. *Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic world. The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2011/8/education%20reform%20wilkins/08_education_reform_wilkins.pdf (Accessed : 27/04/2016).

Winslow, W., Honei, G, Elzubeir MA. (2002) Seeking Emirati women's voices: the use of focus groups with an Arab population, *Qual Health Res,12(4):566-75.*

Wold Economic Forum. (2009) *Egyptian Education Initiative.*(EEI)*Global Education Initiative Annual Report 2009*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.weforum.org/pdf/GEI/GEI_Annual_Report_2009.pdf (Accessed: 07/05/2015).

Wolter, K., Avritzer, A. and Vieira, M. (2012) *Resilience Assessment and Evaluation of Computing Systems*. New York: Springer.

Woodcock, B. (2015) *Lateral Thinking Skills*. [Online]. Available at:http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/sk/lateral.htm (Accessed:21/08/2015).

Woodward, K. (2004) *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity*. London : Routledge.

World Bank. (2013) *Egypt Overview.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/egypt/overview (Accessed: 20/10/2015).

Wright, Robert. (2014) *Student-Teacher Interaction in Online Learning Environments*. USA: Information Science Reference.

Wyk, B. V. (2013) *Research design and methods Part I*. [Online]. Available at: www.uwc.ac.za/Students/Postgraduate//Research_and_Design_I.pdf *(Accessed:* 02/08/2015).

Yin, R., (1994) *Case study research: Design and methods,* 2nd edn., Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishing.

Yin, R. (2013) *Case study research: Design and methods*, 5th edn., Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishing.

Yukl, G.A. (2002) *Leadership in Organizations*. 8th edn. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

Zaidieh, J.A.Y. (2012) The Use of Social Networking in Education: Challenges and Opportunities. *World of Computer Science and Information Technology Journal (WCSIT)*, 2(1): 18-21.

Zain, S. F., Rasidi, F. E. and Abidin, I. I. (2012) Student-Centred Learning In Mathematics – Constructivism In The Classroom, *Journal of International Education Research*, 8(4): 319-328.

Zeichner, K. M. and Liston, D. P. (2013) *Reflective Teaching: An Introduction*. United Kingdom: Routledge.

Zimmerman, M. (1995) Psychological empowerment: Issues and illustrations, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 23: 581-600.

Zimring, F.(1999) Carl Rogers, *UNESCO: International Bureau of Education*, 3(4): 411-22.

Zollman, D. (2010) *How to think outside of the box, Technology Student Association National Conference*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.slideshare.net/dzollman/how-to-think-outside-the-box (Accessed: 15/08/2015).

Zu'bi, T. (2011) Educational research from the standpoint of the faculty problems In educational science faculties at the Jordanian public universities, *Studies of educational sciences*, 38(4). [Online]. Available at: https://journals.ju.edu.jo/DirasatEdu/article/view/2680 (Accessed : 27/02/2016).

Zuhal, C. (2012) Teachers' evaluation of student-centred learning environments, *Education Resource Information Centre*, 133(1). [Online]. Available at: https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-302463831/teachers-evaluation-of-student-centered-learning (Accessed : 11/05/2016).

Zull, J. (2002)*The Art of Changing the Brain*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

Appendices

- Appendix A: The Pilot Study
- Appendix B: Correlation Between the Research Questions and Interview and Focus Group Questions
- Appendix C: Data Analysis
    - C.1 Analysis of Verbal Data : Transcript Analysis (IPA)
    - C.2 Analysis of Non- Verbal Data: Facial Action Coding System (FACS)
- Appendix D: Divergent and Convergent Steps to "Think Outside The Box" in OL
- Appendix E: Conference Proceedings and Presentations
- Appendix F: Ethical Approval
- Appendix G: Sample of Data Collected
    - G.1 Translated sample of a focus Group (FG1)
    - G.2 Translated sample of a sample of an interview (Int1)
- Appendix H: Sample of Guiding Questions
    - H.1 Guiding questions in one-to-one interviews
    - H.2 Guiding questions in focus groups

Appendix A: The Pilot Study

A.1 Initial Plan for Piloting

My whole pilot study lasted nearly two weeks, from the 8th of April to the 22nd of April 2014. It was conducted in the Faculty of Education in one of the ancient universities in Egypt. The faculty is located in a quiet city, 50 miles north from Cairo, the capital of Egypt. My facilitator in the faculty is a former colleague who had finished his postgraduate degree in the University of Southampton and he is a senior lecturer in the School of Education in this faculty now. My pilot study was supposed to be conducted with 5 online tutors, who were the participants in both the focus group and the semi-structured interviews. The focus group lasted nearly an hour and each interview lasted between 45 minutes to an hour. The focus group was on the first day and interviews were held on the following consecutive days. There were 2 interviews on the same day, but the rest of the interviews were on separate days. All interviews and focus group were audio and video recorded. That was after obtaining an informed consent form from the participants, which would cover issues such as confidentiality, right to withdraw, etc.

It is worth mentioning that the time between each interview helped to give me enough time to have feedback from the participants. I asked the participants to reflect on the entire discussion and then offer their opinions on the asked questions. Consequently, I was able to reflect on this feedback in the next interview. An example of this reflection will be explained in the professional considerations section.

My first visit to the faculty was a non-official meeting with the participants. The purpose of this non-official meeting was to introduce myself to them and explain the purpose of my research. In this meeting, I emphasised the common ground and shared experience with them to create a friendly environment with the participants. That is confirmed by Hurn and Tomalin (2013), who stated "With Arabs, getting to know the members of the other negotiating team, thus establishing trust and helping to break the ice". (p.178). in my culture, a researcher from another country can open the gate to a lot of questions and enquiries. Examples of the questions I was asked at the beginning of the focus group were like:

•Why would a university in another country be interested in our perception towards a certain issue in education?

•Is it acceptable to reveal the truth and declare a problem in our education system in front of others who may not have this problem at all?

Consequently, clarifying these enquiries with participants can help to break the ice and enrich the collected data.

A.2 Translation of Interview and Focus Group Questions and Transcripts

The translation has been completed by a professional office. The process by which the translation was done was double-back to recheck the accuracy of the translation to improve its trustworthiness.

Steps were processed as follows:

First, the translators would translate the transcript from Arabic to English. Then, without the Arabic, they would translate their English translation back into Arabic. The final translation of Arabic, which is completed by different person, was supposed to match the original Arabic as closely as possible.

Although the proficiency and experience of the translators were very good, but there were some professional terms and statements such as: student-centred learning and focus group, did not efficiently give the meaning that I meant. Therefore, I had to amend them myself and seek advice from Arabic speakers, at the end, to make sure that these statements would lead to the exact meaning that I wished to convey.

A.3 Changes in the Real Piloting Study

1. Number of participants increased to 6 participants in the focus group.

2.Focus group and Interview settings comprised in a small classroom, as it was away from the noise and was available at the requested times.

3. Moreover, because of changes in the tutors' timetable, there was no day dedicated for the non-official meeting. Alternatively, it was an early morning meeting with them, lasted nearly an hour, on the same day of the focus group,

where my colleague presented me to them and we had tea together before starting the focus group.

A.4 Initial Interview Questions

1. As an online tutor, what are the differences between your teaching methods and strategies in the face-to-face environment and the OL environment?
2. Describe your teaching style when working in an online setting. **Changes:** Q2 is merged with Q5 to be: What plans do you make before teaching an online course? Give examples of your teaching styles, such as using multimedia, games, simulations...
3. What are your strengths for your position as online tutor? Deleted and replaced by a more generic and less personal question; the reason behind this deletion is explained in the paragraph below this table.
4. What are the challenges that online tutors may face in teaching? (reworded and reordered) **Changes:** The question has been reworded into asking the interviewee to give an example of a challenge which they have been confronted within teaching. This question is followed by Q 20, where the participant will talk about the challenges on a national level.
5. What planning do you undertake before teaching an online class? **Changes:** Merged with Q2
6. Tell me about the materials you use in online teaching. **Changes:** Deleted
7. How would you handle a student who is not engaged in the course?
8. How would you handle a student who is not self-motivated?
9. Rate the students' average ability to do the following :

Time management – self management– self–discovery– guided discovery– self evaluation Note: rating is from 1– 5 (1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest)
10. How do you guide your students in their online search, within the studied topic? Give an example.
11. How do you encourage your students to be creative?
12. If one of the students suggested a new topic to be included in the course syllabus that was not directly related to the main topic, how would you respond to this?
13. What is your definition of empowering learners? Give examples where you seem to empower your learners while teaching them.
14. What are the benefits of empowering learners?
15. What are the concerns about empowering learners?
16. Which aspects of control do you give your learners? Give an example. **Changes:** Questions 7– 16 remained the same and were appended with "Give an example from your real teaching practices."
17. What have you done to improve your knowledge as an online tutor in the last few months/ years?
18. How often do the training courses dedicated to online tutors you have attended take place? How would you evaluate them?
19. How ready do you think Egyptian Higher Education Institutes are for OL? **Changes:** Appended by a question asking to give more details about missing resources or facilities that the online tutors have been confronted with and was considered to be an obstacle to do their jobs.
20. Regarding Egypt, describe any constraints that can be obstacles to applying any of the topics we have discussed.

Changes: This question now follows Question 4, since in answering Q4 the tutor started to talk about personal challenges and then moved to talk about the challenges on the national level.
21.Questions added about authoring the online content

Table A-1: Initial Interview Questions

Why has Question 3 been deleted?

The reason behind this is a matter of cultural perspective - in general in Middle Eastern culture on the topic of careers and professionalism, it may not be completely acceptable to declare one's personal strengths, as a person can be accused of arrogance if they talk about points of strength. Conversely, talking about personal weak points may negatively affect a professional evaluation report or lead to missing an opportunity to pass a job interview. This is confirmed by Al Suleimany (2009, p.402), who notes, focusing on the Arab culture: “If you become honest, sincere and genuine you just get ignored. Actually, you may be targeted and remarked for special raw and rough treatment." Consequently, the dominant cultural belief is that being completely honest and truthful does not work in the work force, but rather you have sometimes to hide your feelings or pretend to feel something else to get noticed and promoted. In the pilot study, when I asked Question 3 ("What are your strengths for your position as online tutor?"); answers were very short or unclear. Therefore, Question 3 was replaced by Question 1, were the interviewees highlighted the affordances of online tutor as compared to the face-to-face tutor in general.

Why has Question 6 been deleted?

Due to the limited technological resources in Egypt (Abdullah and Albadri, 2010), most tools and programmes that were been mentioned were basic and identical, and answers were lacking in rich information. It is noteworthy that although this pilot study was conducted in 2014, the limitation of resources noted by Abdullah and Albadri (2010) still exists though is gradually decreasing

A.5 Final Interview Questions

1. As an online tutor, what are the differences between your teaching methods and strategies in the face-to-face environment and the OL environment?
2. What plan do you undertake before teaching an online course? Give examples for your teaching styles: such as: using multimedia, games, simulations.....
3. How would you handle a student who is not engaged in the course? Give an example from your real teaching practices
4. How would you handle a student who is not self-motivated? Give an example from your real teaching practices
5. Rate the students' average ability to do the following : Time management - self management- self-discovery- guided discovery- self evaluation Note: rating is from 1- 5 (1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest)
6. How do you guide your students in their online search, within the studied topic? Give an example from your real teaching practices
7. How do you encourage your students to be creative? Give an example from your real teaching practices
8. If one of the students suggested a new topic to be included in the course syllabus that is not directly related to the main topic, how do you respond to it?
9. What is your definition of empowering learners? Give me examples where you seem to empower your learners while teaching them.
10. What are the benefits of empowering learners?
11. What are the concerns about empowering learners?

12. Which aspects of control do you give your learners? Give an example.
13. What have you done to improve your online tutor knowledge in the last few months/ years?
14. How often are the training courses you have attended, that are dedicated for online tutors? How would you evaluate them?
15. How ready do you think Egyptian Higher Education Institutes are for OL? Give more details about certain missing resources or facilities that you have confronted and it was considered to be an obstacle to do your jobs.
16. Regarding Egypt, describe any constraints that can be obstacles to applying any of the topics we have discussed.
17. What are the main tools that are suggested to be provided in an online course design?
18. What is the degree of freedom and flexibility that you may give the online student in the online content? For example freedom of navigation, changing the page style, editing the content….

Table A-2: Final Interview Questions

A.6 Reflections on the Pilot Study

In general, while conducting the pilot study I wore many "hats" and kept changing them according to the situation. These hats were for the roles as tutor, student, social advisor, colleague and researcher; the different roles are explained in more detail in Section (5-12).

A.7 General recommendations in relation to the professional perspectives

- To clarify the questions, each one is followed by a simple example explaining it and clarifying the meaning that I wanted to approach.
- Adding questions about authoring the online content requires more in-depth reading from me about authoring and implementing student-centred learning in the online content.

- The researcher's main references and reading are in English. Therefore, data analysis will start by translating the whole scripts. Then, I will analyse the data from the translated scripts.

- In the focus group, no change will take place regarding to the topics that will be discussed; only the professional considerations that are mentioned above will be considered. It is worth mentioning that I have to be skilful with probing questions, in case the discussion moves away from the main topic. In this case, I have to choose a word or a statement from the discussion and rephrase it into a question. Though this question may not be listed in the original questions script, it will help to answer the research questions without losing the evolving discussion.

- When I watched the recording of the first interview, I observed that I was less cautious in revealing some preconceived ideas. Therefore, in the next interviews, despite having prior knowledge of the research topic, I was cautious not to reveal any bias on the topic.

- Finally, it was highly appreciated after collecting the data that I gave the participants a pen with pictures of famous historical places souvenir from the UK; although they were not expensive (50p), the present had a positive effect and was much appreciated.

7.1 Non-Verbal Communication

I analysed the non-verbal data using the audio/voice recording. The analysis for the pilot study was for one participant only to experiment with the quality of analysis and evaluate the necessary time and effort. Details for the conducted procedures are as follows:

- Facial Action Coding System (FACS), online training by Paul Ekman group (http://www.paulekman.com/workshops/)

7.2 Time calculation for data analysis for one participant

IPA	Face Analysis
8 hours	12 hours

Summary

In summary, the main changes that for the final data collections are as follows:

1. Changes in the interview questions will be made as explained above.

2. It will be more beneficial to change the interview setting from the classroom to a more social setting, such as a social space in the campus. Since interviewing in the classroom did not help to break the ice with the participants and it did not help me to wear any "hat" except that of researcher and tutor. Furthermore, a change in venue may also help with the analysis of the non-verbal communication in the research.

3. For the document analysis, analysing the tutor's documents (hard copy) will be replaced by analysing their software authoring. Consequently, further reading on the issues of authoring online content, online content flexibility, and user usability is required.

4. With regards to the theoretical framework, the pilot study confirmed that the use of constructivism and social constructivism are the appropriate theories that can support my study, as they define the kinds of variables that I want to look at.

5. Regarding the data analysis, in my research proposal and the methodology chapter the plan was to follow the thematic analysis, but after collecting the data of the pilot study, it was found that using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is expected to be more appropriate to analyse the data collected in this study (See Appendix C.1.1).

6. The collected data that to be analysed consists of

- Interview scripts (in Arabic, to be translated into English)
- Focus group scripts (in Arabic, to be translated into English)
- Document analysis (authoring online content)
- Interview voice analysis
- Focus group non-verbal communication analysis

Therefore, the number of participants is expected to be reduced from 30 to 20, since the amount of collected data is rich and the allocated time for data collection and analysis may not allow me to collect data from more than 20 participants.

7. Because of time limitation, it was agreed by me and my supervisors to use IPA only for the purposes of the PhD.

Appendix B: Correlation between the research questions and interview questions

Main Research Question:

1. How do Egyptian tutors perceive student-centred learning as an approach in the OL environment, and what factors influence this?

Subordinate Research Questions:

a. What is tutors' understanding of SCL? **10**[1]**, 13, 14, 15, 16**
b. How do tutors consider the differences between the student-centred learning model in OL, compared with the face-to face learning environment? **1, 2, 3**
c. What are tutors' beliefs about the relationship between the tutor and the student? **7, 8, 9, 11, 12**
d. Does implementing SCL require a different model of pedagogical repertoire? **4, 5, 6**
e. How are tutors provided with professional training and development to implement SCL ?**17, 18**
f. What are the affordance/constraints of using student-centred learning in OL in Egyptian Higher Education? **19, 20**

---

1. As an Online tutor, what are the differences between your teaching methods and strategies in the face to face and OL environment? **(b**[2]**)**
2. Describe your teaching style when working in an online setting? **(b)**
3. What are your strengths for your position as online tutor? **(b)**
4. What are the challenges that online tutors may have in teaching? **(d)**
5. What planning do you undertake before teaching an online class? **(d)**
6. Tell me about the materials you use in online teaching? **(d)**
7. How would you handle a student who is not engaged in the course? **(c)**
8. How would you handle a student who is not self-motivated? **(c)**

[1] Numbers: 1-20 questions in the interviews and focus groups
[2] Letters: a-f research questions (see chapter 1, section 1-6)

9. How do you encourage your students to be creative? **(c)**
10. Rate the students' average ability to do the following :
    - Time management
    - Self-management
    - Self-discovery
    - Guided discovery
    - Self-evaluation

Note: rating is from 1- 5 (1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest). **(a)**

11. How do you guide your students in their online search, within the studied topic? Give me an example. **(c)**
12. If one of the students suggested a new topic to be included in the course syllabus that is not directly related to the main topic, how do you respond to it? **(c)**
13. What is your definition of empowering learners? Give me examples where you seem to empower your learners while teaching them. **(a)**
14. What are the benefits of empowering learners? **(a)**
15. What are the concerns about empowering learners? **(a)**
16. Which aspects of control do you give your learners? Give an example.**(a)**
17. What have you done to improve your online tutor knowledge in the last few months/ years? **(e)**
18. How often are the training courses you have attended, that are dedicated for online tutors? How would you evaluate them? **(e)**
19. How ready do you think Egyptian Higher Education Institutes are for OL? **(f)**
20. Regarding Egypt, describe any constraints that can be obstacles to applying any of the topics we have discussed.**(f)**

Appendix C: Data Analysis

C.1 Analysis of Verbal Data: Transcript Analysis (IPA)

C.1.1 Model of IPA (Smith *et al.* 2010)

Step 1 – Transcription	Transcription of the semantic content of each individual interview based on audio recording
Step 2 – Reading and Re-reading	Immersion in the data, active engagement with the data, searching for richer, detailed sections. Shafting from generic to specific in accounts and patterns.
Step 3 – Initial Noting	.Identify specific ways participant talks about an issue. An unstructured commentary. Describe what matters to participant and the meaning of those things.
Step 4 – Developing Emergent Themes	Based on Step 3. Reducing volume of data but capturing complexity. Mapping interrelationships, connections and patterns.
Step 5 – Searching for Connections Across Emergent Themes	Mapping how the themes appear to fit together and related to research questions.

Table C-1: Overview of the philosophical basis of IPA (Smith et al. 2010)

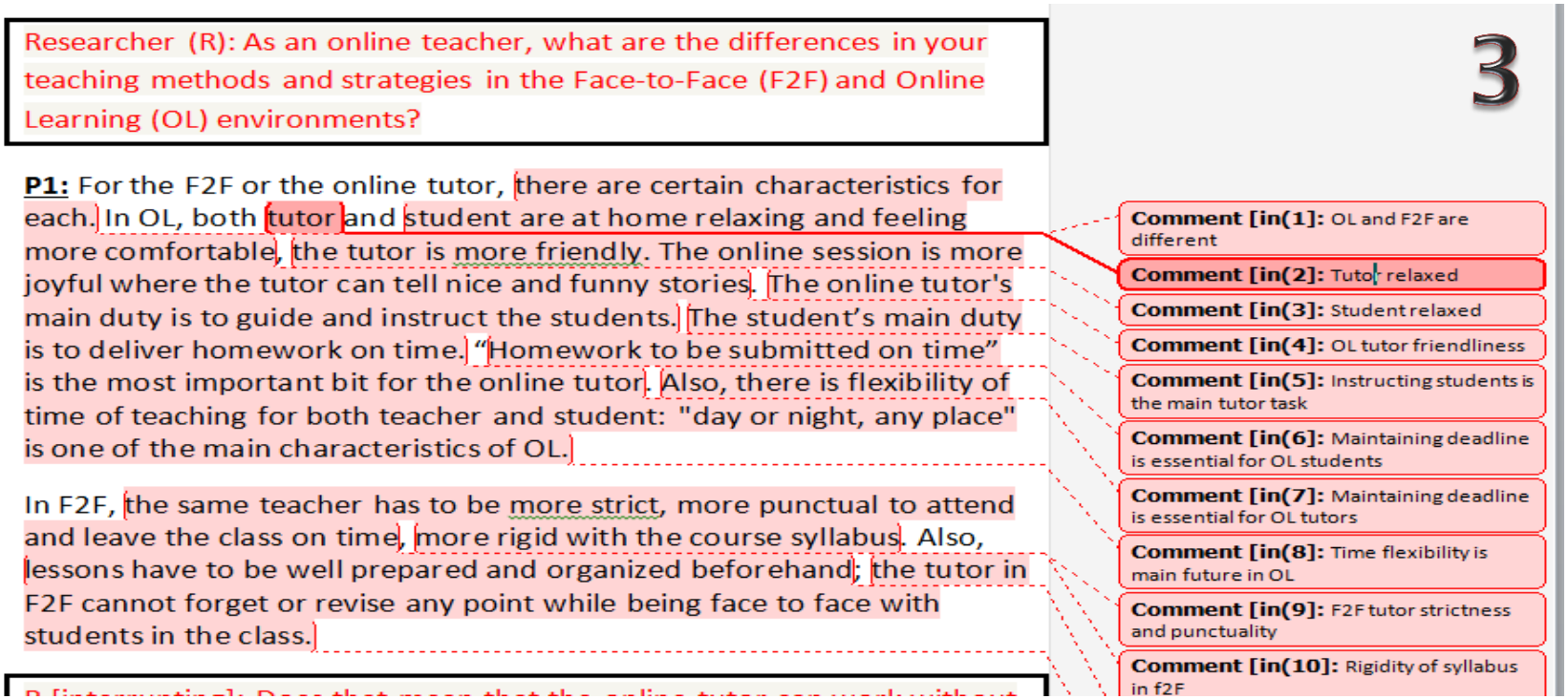
C.1.2 Developed model for extracting themes from focus groups using IPA

1. Transcription

2. Reading and Re-reading the transcription

3. Initial coding phase 1

Initial coding: large quantities of aw qualitative data are focused and labelled where meaningful statement of the transcript are copied.



4. Initial coding phase 2

Focused coding, category development, it re-examines level1 codes and further focuses on the data

Focus group 1

No	Comment
1	OL and F2F are different
2	Tutor relaxed
3	Student relaxed
4	OL tutor friendliness
5	Instructing students is the main tutor task
6	Maintaining deadline is essential for OL students
7	Maintaining deadline is essential for OL tutors
8	Time flexibility is main future in OL
9	F2F tutor strictness and punctuality
10	Rigidity of syllabus in f2F
11	F2F lessons are planned before session
12	Tudor's knowledge of the lesson is necessary(unforgettable)

4

Coding
Different
Relaxed
Relaxed
Friendliness
Students' teaching
Maintaining deadline
Maintaining deadline
Ol flexibility
F2F rigidity
F2F rigidity
F2F rigidity
Tutor's knowledge
OL preparation

5. Summary of focused coding for each page. It is useful to do this for the first focus group and try to recall the repeated ones in the following focus group(s)

P1

Planning and preparation

Tutor knowledge/qualification

Climate differences

Helpfulness/distraction

Focus Groups Initial Coding

Focus group 1

No	Comment	Coding
1	OL and F2F are different	Different
2	Tutor relaxed	Relaxed
3	Student relaxed	Relaxed
4	OL tutor friendliness	Friendliness
5	Instructing students is the main tutor task	Students' teaching
6	Maintaining deadline is essential for OL students	Maintaining deadline
7	Maintaining deadline is essential for OL tutors	Maintaining deadline
8	Time flexibility is main future in OL	Ol flexibility
9	F2F tutor strictness and punctuality	F2F rigidity
10	Rigidity of syllabus in f2F	F2F rigidity
11	F2F lessons are planned before session	F2F rigidity
12	Tudor's knowledge of the lesson is necessary(unforgettable)	Tutor's knowledge
13	Routinely, no lesson preparation	OL preparation
14	Full content is uploaded pre-session	OL preparation
15	Preparing lessons is normal task for students	OL preparation
16	Students discuss topic pre-session	Students'' discussion
17	Google answers any question for the tutor	Google helpfulness
18	Less chance of tutor's embarrassment for lack of knowledge	Embarrassment
19	Search engines answer any question promptly	Google helpfulness
20	Invisibility facilitates tutor's search for information	Advantage of Invisibility
21	Communication tools provide answers post-session	OL communication
22	Diversity between OL learners	Individual differences
23	Financial constraint	Financial constraint
24	Individual differences	Individual differences
25	Irresistibility of social network	Social network
26	Distraction of surfing the internet	OL distraction
27	OL does not meet student's learning objectives	No learning objectives
28	Tutor's lack of professional qualification	Professional qualification
29	Tutor's lack of academic qualification	Professional qualification
30	Tutor's lack of technical qualification	Professional qualification
31	Inability to answer a question	Tutor knowledge
32	Moving beyond the syllabus is a concern for the tutor	Tutor knowledge
33	Tutor requires in-depth knowledge	Tutor knowledge
34	Not answering a question is embarrassing	Embarrassment

5

6. Categorising

Main categories and sub categories are extracted

Categories of Focus Groups

6

Main Categories	Sub Categories
1. **Tutor's responsibilities in OL**	• Students' motivation • Guidance in discovery • Guiding students' time and self- management • Maintaining of students' motivation and engagement • What/When/To whom (content- teacher-student) is centred?
2. **Personal characteristics of online tutor**	• Flexible • Open minded • Creative • Responsive • Motivated to learn • Self- development
3. **Required knowledge of online tutor**	• Technical knowledge • Soft skills knowledge • Pedagogical knowledge • Knowing learners
4. **Knowing learners**	• Wearing students' hat • Frequent online interviews • Face to face interviews
5. **Disagreement of the natural or acquired students' ability to:**	• Be centred in learning • Socially involved/isolated in OL • Motivated/engaged • Self and time management
6. **Tutor's role: pre-course**	• Knowing learners • Uploading resources
7. **Tutor's role: following up**	• Continuous students' interviews • Feedback • Assigning tasks • Monitoring

7. Super theme

Main super themes have been extracted, it is useful and informative to differentiate between the focus group and Interviews sub categories

7

Super Theme	Main Categories	Sub Categories
(1) Online Tutors: knowledge, characteristics, responsibilities and challenges	1. **Online tutor responsibilities- prior the course**	**Knowledge:** • Technical knowledge • Soft skills knowledge • Pedagogical knowledge • Sustainable self-development (ongoing) • **Knowing learners:** o Wearing students' hat o Frequent online interviews o Learning styles'/ objectives/preferences o Drowning/waver/sailor o Face to face interviews **Tasks:** • Uploading resources • Social network layout • Lesson objectives/plan/mind map • deadlines
	2. **Online tutor responsibilities- within the course**	• Students' motivation • Facilitation not teaching

C.2 Analysis of Non-Verbal Data: Facial Action Coding System (FACS)

These data are based on verbal-communication with respondents via interviews and focus groups. To minimise the risk of researcher bias in this study, data were collected on the participants' non-verbal communication using audio and video recordings of the interviews and focus groups. To analyse this non-verbal data a three step structure was followed to analyse facial expressions as explained by Kring and Sloan (2007).
The first and second steps are based on the use of online technological aids, such as nViso and eMotion, while the third step is based on a facial expression analysis; this is according to the general approach to automatic facial expression analysis (AFEA) (Kring and Sloan, 2007).
The method of this study focuses on the analysis of six facial expressions which correspond to distinct universal emotions: disgust, sadness, happiness, fear, anger, and surprise. Cues for facial expression are generalized, as suggested by Ekman (2006), using only "macro" facial expressions which usually last between half a second and four seconds. The software used for extracting and representing these cues is nVISO. Generally, the use of FACS involves four stages: face acquisition, facial data extraction, and representation, and facial expression recognition. A Faces Coding Sheet (FCS) created by Kring and Sloan (2007) was used to recognise facial expressions. This sheet is based on the following steps:

- Expression (the result of first and second step)
- Frequency
- Valence (positive or negative feeling)
- Intensity (low-Fairly low- Medium-Fairly high- High).

Frequencies and durations of expressions were totalled and recorded according to Kring's and Sloan's (2007) method. An example of the applied method is explained in the next figure (Appendix-1).

Example

Below is an example of initial FACS for a question-response situation.

Researcher's question: "What are your concerns as online tutor?"

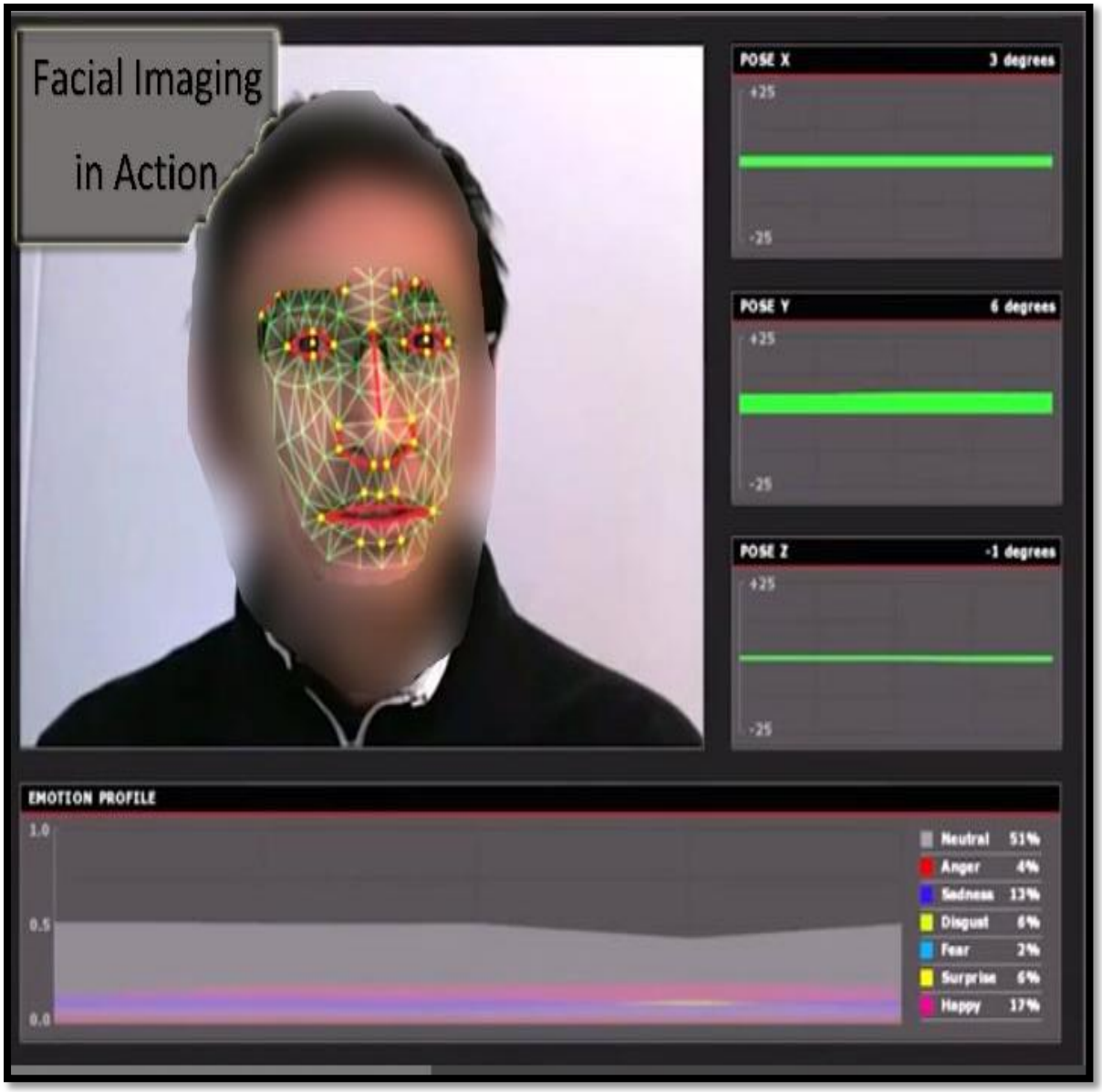


Figure Appendix-1: FACS in action using nVISO software

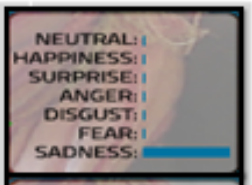
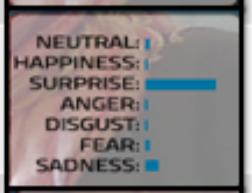
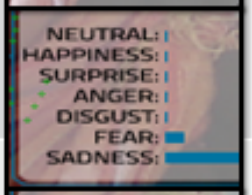
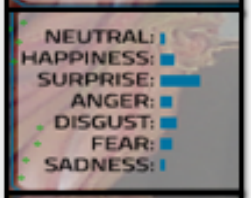
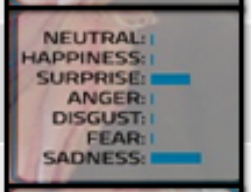
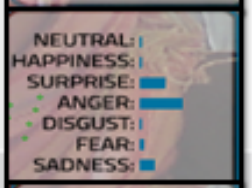
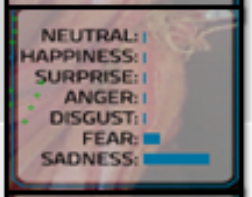
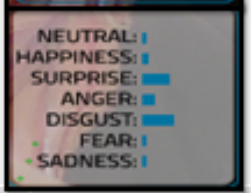
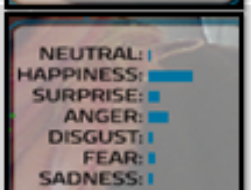
A: Interviewee (online tutor):	Extracted Emotions	
I am always thinking of what is coming	Sadness	
that being asked by my students a question	Surprise	
that I have no answer	Sadness Fear	
Simply, I will reply	Surprised Disgust Anger Fear	
Guys, I do not know the answer	Surprise Sadness	
Tomorrow, early morning	Anger Surprise Sadness	
I will email it to you	Sadness Fear	
I do not sleep till I search for the answer	Surprise Disgust Anger	
and email it to them in due time.	Happiness Anger Surprise	

Figure Appendix-2: Extracted emotions in FACS using nVISO

Facial Expression Summary Sheet

Participant-(x) Clip-1

What was the predominant emotion being expressed throughout the clip?

1.Neutral. 2. Anger 3. **Sadness** 4. Disgust 5. Fear 6. Surprise 7. Happiness

What is the overall level of expressiveness for this person for this clip?

1.Low 2.Fairly Low 3. Medium 4.**Fairly High** 5.High

- Number of positive expressions

2 _(surprise, happiness)

- Number of negative expressions

4_ (sadness ,disgust, anger, fear)

- Duration of positive expressions __15__(in seconds)
- Duration of negative expressions __45__ (in seconds)
- Mean intensity--positive __7.5___
- Mean intensity--negative

__11.25__

Results:

This script lasts for about a minute. It extracts a tutor's feelings about being asked by students a question for which he does not know the answer. Facial Expression Summary Sheet shows that:

- This is a predominant negative feeling of sadness.
- The highly frequent positive feeling is surprise, in short duration (<50% of bar length).
- Happiness is extracted once, in short duration (nearly 50% of bar length), when the tutor emailed the answer to students in due time.

FACS CODING SHEET

Participant _____ Film # _____ Rater _____ Page _____

Time start _____ Time end _____ Duration _____

Valence: Positive ____ Negative ___

Intensity: low medium high very high
1 2 3 4

Time start _____ Time end _____ Duration _____

Valence: Positive ____ Negative ___

Intensity: low medium high very high
1 2 3 4

Time start _____ Time end _____ Duration _____

Valence: Positive ____ Negative ___

Intensity: low medium high very high
1 2 3 4

Time start _____ Time end _____ Duration _____

Valence: Positive ____ Negative ___

Intensity: low medium high very high
1 2 3 4

Time start _____ Time end _____ Duration _____

Valence: Positive ____ Negative ___

Intensity: low medium high very high
1 2 3 4

FACS SUMMARY SHEET

Participant _____ Film # _____ Rater _____

Please rate the degree to which the participant expressed each of the following emotions using the scale below:

Not at all = **1** slightly = **2** somewhat = **3** moderately = **4** quite a bit = **5** very much = **6**

Interest ___ sadness ___ happiness ___ anger ___ fear ___ amusement ___ disgust ___

What is the overall level of expressiveness for this person for this film?

low	fairly low	medium	fairly high	high
1	2	3	4	5

Number of positive expressions_____ Number of negative expressions _____
Mean positive intensity _____ Mean negative intensity _____
Duration of positive expressions _____ Duration of negative expressions _____

☹☺☹☺☹☺

FACS FINAL SHEET

Participant _____ Rater _____
Clip # _____

What was the predominant emotion being expressed throughout the clip?

A. Interest
B. Sadness
C. Anger
D. Surprise
E. Fear/Disgust
F. Neutral/Indifferent
G. Happiness

What is the overall level of expressiveness for this person for this clip?

low	fairly low	medium	fairly high	high
1	2	3	4	5

Number of positive expressions _____

Number of negative expressions _____

Mean intensity--positive _____

Mean intensity--negative _____

Duration of positive expressions _____ (in seconds)

Duration of negative expressions _____ (in seconds)

Appendix D: Divergent and Convergent Steps to "Think Outside The Box" in OL

No	Application Name	Logo	Definition
1	WordPress		Is an online, open source website creation too. it's an easy and powerful blogging and website content management system
2	Share Board		It connects users to share and collaborate one single page in real time, using different colouring pen.
3	IThoughts		Mind Mapping tool, (getting ideas and information into a structured layout)
4	Aurasma		Application allows the user to create Augmented Reality (Real life such as video with extra info added such as scanned poster)
5	Creative Book Builder		Creating books in s digital format. The final digital book allows all of the media to be preserved and available for readers to interact with.
6	Prezi		Is a presentation tool that can be used as an alternative to traditional slide making programmes such as PowerPoint
7	Notability		Is a note-taking tool that can take PDF annotation, sound recording and handwriting. Also, it has powerful categorising tool.
8	Camtasia		Is software used to record onscreen activity, audio and web cam video and narrate existing PowerPoint presentations. It allows sharing the final

			produced Video
9	Articulate		It is e-learning authoring tool to create interactive courses
10	EDOMODO		It is social network enables tutors to share content, distribute quizzes, assignments, and manage communication with students, colleagues, and parents.
11	AIM		Social network allows free text messaging, group conversations and media sharing.
12	ScreenChamp		A recordable whiteboard allows creating, annotating over pictures and sharing.
13	MERLOT		Multimedia Educational Resource ,more than 40,000 online learning materials, for Learning and discovering, using, and sharing Open Educational Resources (OER) for the use of technology-enhanced Online Teaching.
14	Tapose		A game-changing mobile application replacing paper notebooks with a multi-media interactive digital notebook.
15	poll everywhere		Audience response system that uses mobile phones, twitter, and the web. Responses are displayed in real-time on charts in PowerPoint.
16	Easy Release		An application creates and manages model and property releases.
17	Blog Docs		An application for managing documents online. Documents such as spreadsheets, documents, forms, and presentations can be shared and co-edited.

18	Explain Everything		An interactive whiteboard tool designs, screencasts, and allows annotation, animation, narration, import, and export various types of documents and multimedia.
19	Insight Maker		Allows expressing thoughts using rich pictures and causal loop diagrams. It then lets you turn these diagrams into powerful simulation models.
20	ImindMap Edu		Mind Mapping tool, designed to encourage creative thinking for tutors and for students, boost memory and enhance engagement.

Appendix E: Conference Proceedings, Presentations and Publications

E.1 Conferences

- Ismail, N and Taylor, M. J. (2016) Gamifying On-Line Course Leadership, Opposites Attract Collaboration Challenge Showcase, University of Southampton, Friday 27 May 2016.
- Ismail, N. (2015) Game Metaphor: Implementation of Teaching Sustainability Using Wiki, The digital university and its contributions to a sustainable future, Nottingham Trent University, Thursday 19 November 2015.
- Ismail, N., Edwards, J., and Kinchin, G.D. (2015) FACIAL EXPRESSION ANALYSIS AS A DATA ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY, 12th International Conference on Technology in Mathematics Teaching (ICTMT12), 24-27 June, 2015 – Faro, Portugal.
- Ismail, N. (2015) The Middle East North Africa (MENA) Development Conference, Cairo, Egypt, March 17 and 18, 2015. Investigating Teachers' Resistance to the Implementation of a Student-Centred Learning Approach in the Online Environment.
- Ismail, N., Edwards, J., and Kinchin, G.D. (2014) 'Reflections on My Pilot Study for the Thesis titled (Teachers' Perception to Student- Centred Learning in Online Environment). Presentation presented at the New Researchers' Day preceded the British Society Research Learning Mathematics (BSRLM) Day Conference, University of Southampton, Southampton, 14th June
- Ismail, N., Edwards, J., and Kinchin, G.D. (2014)' Teachers' Perception to Student- Centred Learning in the Online Environment in Higher Education in Egypt'. Presentation presented at the PGR Conference, University of Southampton, Southampton, 23rd May
- One of the committee organizers in the PGR Conference, University of Southampton, Southampton 23rd May
- Ismail, N., Edwards, J., and Kinchin, G.D. (2014)'Correlation Between Different Learning Styles and the Use of Wiki in Learning'. Presentation presented at Problem@Web International Conference, Algarve, Portugal 2 – 4 May, 2014
- Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) Competition on 19th March 2014: developed by the University of Queensland, which challenges postgraduate researchers to explain their research project to a non-specialist audience in just three minutes.

- Ask the expert in Social Media, National Association of Advisors for Computers in Education (UK) (NAACE) in The British Educational Training and Technology (BETT) Show on Friday and Saturday 10th and 11th January2014, as a NAACE member I was available on the stand in the BETT show to discuss any questions around social media.
- Ismail, N (2013).' Wiki Implementation between Pedagogy and Technology'. Presentation presented at The INFOMESR conferences : WCEEENG, WCPEE, WCMS and WCSIT, Cairo 15-19 December 2013
- Ismail, N (2013).'Wiki moderators' contributions to enhance the pedagogical implementation of Wiki', Journal of Education Culture and Society. No.2_2013, Wroclaw, Poland, 2013
- Ismail, N (2013). 'High Drop-Out Rate in Online Learning: Problem and Solution'. Presentation presented at the Symposium of Social Sciences and Humanities PhD Students' Education Culture and Society- Nowadays Challenges, University of Wroclaw (Poland) on October 15-18, 2013
- Ismail, N (2013). 'Interaction: a Key Component to Successful Online Learning'. Poster presented at the 11th International Conference on Technology in Mathematics Teaching ICTMT11 in Bari (Italy) on July 9-12, 2013
- Academic poster in Southampton University Showcase titled "Interaction a Key Component in Successful Online Learning" University of Southampton, Southampton January, 2013
- Public Engagement and Outreach Skills presentation for 13-14 year olds, presentation titled " Teachers' Perception to Student- Centred Learning in the Online Environment University of Southampton, Southampton 16th, Nov, 2012

E.2 Taught Assignments

- Philosophy of Social Science Research (attendance and submitted an assignment- 67% Pass grade)
- Participatory and Emancipatory Research (attendance and submitted an assignment- 60% Pass grade)
- -Qualitative Methods 1 (attendance and submitted an assignment- 60% Pass grade)
- Research Design and Practice (attendance and submitted an assignment- 76% Pass grade)
- Quantitative Methods 1 (attendance only)
- Analysing Secondary Data from Schools (attendance only)

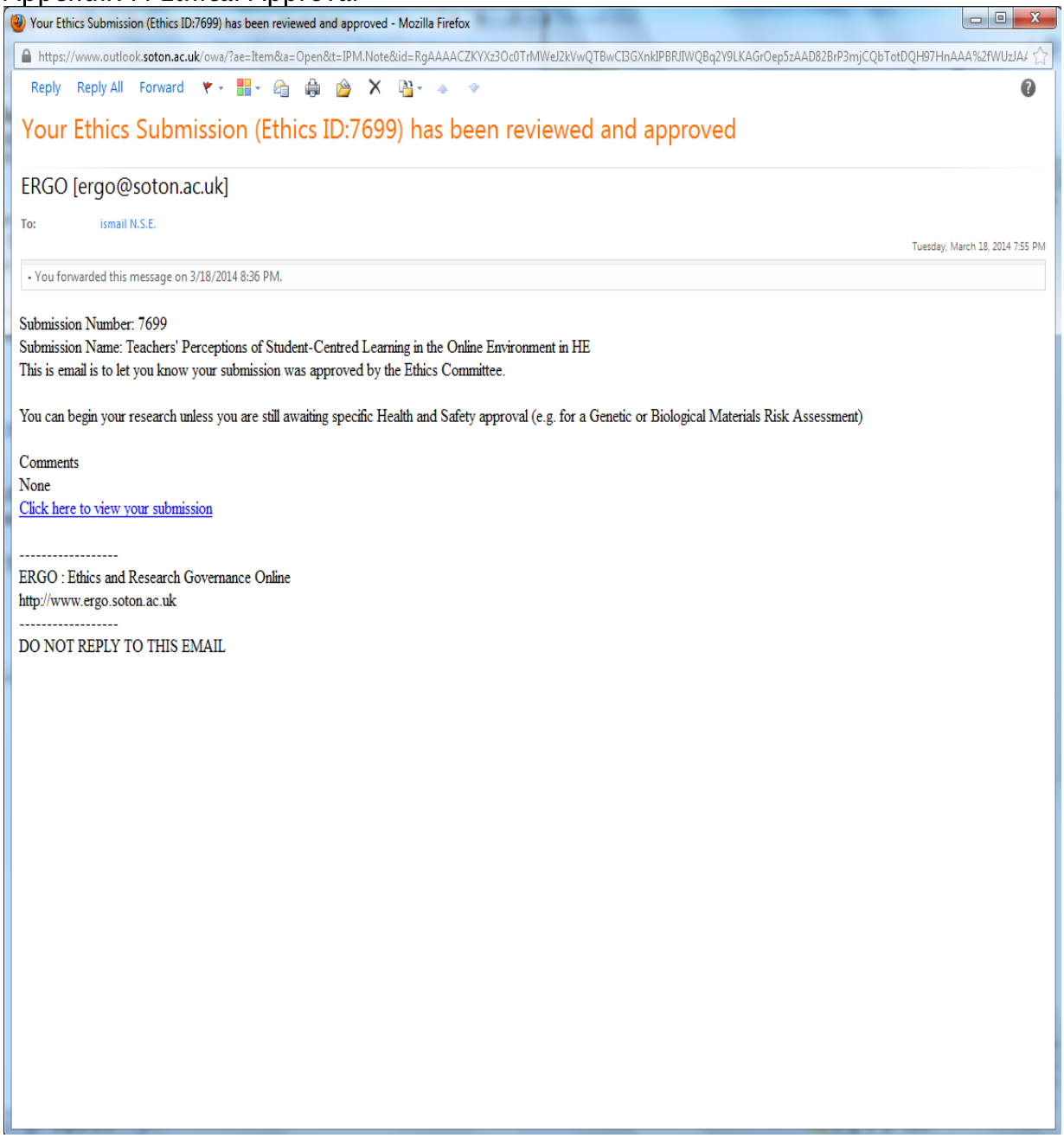
E.3 Courses/Workshops

- Introduction to Learning and Teaching for Researchers (ILTeR), May (2016), Learning Innovation and Development (ILIaD), University of Southampton.
- Tyler-Jones, M. And Ismail, N. (2016) 'Presentation of Prototype an Application For Tutors and Course Leaders That Gamifies the Objective of Creating Online Community of Practice Among Their Students', Opposites Attract' Collaboration Challenge, Public Engagement with Research, University o0f Southampton, 27 May 2016.
- N. Ismail. (2016) Challenges of Moving Students from Passive to Active Learners in Using Wiki in Learning, Technology-Enhanced Learning in the Social Sciences, Mathematics & Sciences Learning Centre , University of Southampton, Thursday 28 January 2016
- N. Ismail. and M, Tomlinson M.B. (2015) Presenting research through posters and conference papers workshop, University of Southampton, 2nd Dec, 2015
- Introduction to Teaching Skills for Postgraduates (ITSPG) Part One (February 2015)and part 2 (July 2015)
- British Council and the University of Hull, Researcher Links workshop in Egypt on education technology, Cairo, 9 – 13 February 2015.
- Doing research Inclusively, Doing Research Well Thursday 7th & Friday 8th February 2013
- Writing Skills for Humanities, Social and Human Sciences, , 14-Dec-2012
- Critical Thinking Part 1, , 07-Dec-2012
- Presenting Your Research, , 03-Dec-2012
- Public Engagement and Outreach Skills, , 16-Nov-2012

E.4 Publications

- Ismail, N., Kinchin, G. and Edwards, J. (2016) 'Investigating Continuing Professional Development Provided for Egyptian Higher Education Online Tutors', *International Journal of Enhanced Research in Educational Development (IJERED)*, Vol. 4, Issue 2, MARCH-APRIL, March, 2016.
- Ismail, N. (2012) 'Wiki moderators' contributions to enhance the pedagogical implementation of Wiki', *Journal of Education Culture and Society* , ISSN 2081-1640, Vol 2.

Appendix F: Ethical Approval



Your Ethics Submission (Ethics ID:7699) has been reviewed and approved - Mozilla Firefox

https://www.outlook.soton.ac.uk/owa/?ae=Item&a=Open&t=IPM.Note&id=RgAAAACZKYXz3Oc0TrMWeJ2kVwQTBwCI3GXnkIPBRJIWQBq2Y9LKAGrOep5zAAD82BrP3mjCQbTotDQH97HnAAA%2fWUzJA/

Reply Reply All Forward

Your Ethics Submission (Ethics ID:7699) has been reviewed and approved

ERGO [ergo@soton.ac.uk]

To: ismail N.S.E.

Tuesday, March 18, 2014 7:55 PM

• You forwarded this message on 3/18/2014 8:36 PM.

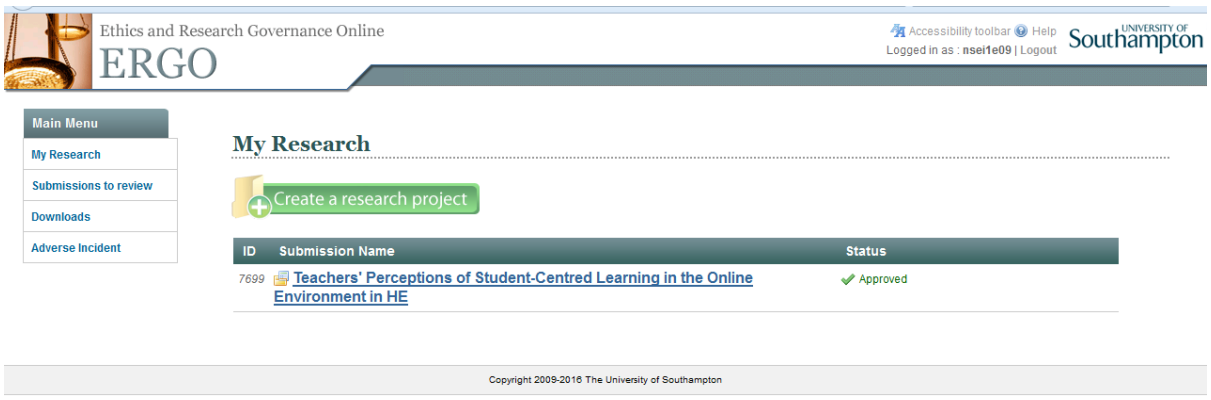
Submission Number: 7699
Submission Name: Teachers' Perceptions of Student-Centred Learning in the Online Environment in HE
This is email is to let you know your submission was approved by the Ethics Committee.

You can begin your research unless you are still awaiting specific Health and Safety approval (e.g. for a Genetic or Biological Materials Risk Assessment)

Comments
None
Click here to view your submission

ERGO : Ethics and Research Governance Online
http://www.ergo.soton.ac.uk

DO NOT REPLY TO THIS EMAIL



Ethics and Research Governance Online
ERGO

Accessibility toolbar Help
Logged in as : nsei1e09 | Logout
University of Southampton

Main Menu
- My Research
- Submissions to review
- Downloads
- Adverse Incident

My Research

Create a research project

ID	Submission Name	Status
7699	Teachers' Perceptions of Student-Centred Learning in the Online Environment in HE	Approved

Copyright 2009-2016 The University of Southampton

Appendix G: Sample of Data Collected

G.1 Translated sample of a focus Group (FG1)

In this session there were 6 interviewees: Int1, Int2, Int3, Int4, Int5, and Int6. The discussion lasted for nearly an hour and it was audio recorded.

Researcher: as an Online teacher, what are the differences between your teaching methods and strategies in the face to face (face-to-face) and Online (OL)) environment? How each is likely should be?

Int1: for face-to-face tutor, there are certain characteristics for each. In online, both tutor and student is at home relaxing and feeling more comfortable. For tutor he is friendlier, joyful meeting, or tells nice and funny stories. Online tutor main duty is to guide and instruct the students. Student's main duty is to deliver homework on time. (Repeating) homework on time is the most important bit for the online tutor. Also, flexibility of time of teaching for both teacher and student: day or night, anyplace is one of the main characteristic of OL. Personally: I can receive students' phone calls and respond to their emails in non-office times. I can listen and give advice for any concerns they found while studying.

In face-to-face, the same teacher has to be more strict, rigid with the course syllabus and punctual. Also, the lesson should be well prepared and organized, tutor in face-to-face is not suggested to forget or revise any point while being in the class.

Int3 and Int4- nearly at the same time repeating: Punishment and mistreatment are common behaviours and attitudes in classes.

In4: Similarities is that delivering information is one of the lesson objectives in both, OL and face-to-face. In OL, online search and group projects facilitate this objective, while, in face-to-face, worksheets and tutor observation facilitates this objective.

Researcher: interfering: does it mean that online tutor can work without preparation?

Int1: confirmed in a louder voice: Yes for sure and normal to occur, as the content is already uploaded and fully explained prior to the lesson. Normally, the online tutor gives it as a task to students beforehand to prepare the lesson before the online session a weak or so to give time to think and prepare for discussion. In this case, if the students asked the online tutor a question that

he does not know, he/she can Google it for an answer while the session is on. In OL, tutor is less exposed to any embarrassment by being asked by the student a question that he does not know, he can use search engine immediately looking for an answer (as he is not seen by the student) or even answering later in an online forum or by email.

Researcher: What are the challenges for online tutor?

Int2: They are the diversity between learners according to their affordance as follows:

(1) Many students may not afford financially to own a computer or being connected to the internet at home.

(2) Individual abilities of self and time -management and self-control. I know that many of my students cannot resist leaving Facebook and go to study the online content and focus on the studied course. They are excited to browse the internet for other sites than the studied course.

(3) Personal preference: online course itself, according to its environment, does not meet all students' objectives and interests.

(4) Tutors themselves may be not professionally qualified to teach online from the academic and technical side, as in OL, the competence of online tutor to be asked advanced questions and getting out of the studied topic, by the student, is challenging. In this case, tutor has to be fully professional and learned in-depth about the content and have enough information or he will be an embarrassing situation.

Int3: These challenges give responsibly that has to be shared between both teacher and student.

For OL tutors, they have to be fully equipped for the online teaching pedagogically and technically. Also, well prepared e-content is important. E-content has to be prepared in a way to be ready for nearly most of the prospective questions. For example, adding search engine in the e-content.

For the student: to be prepared for the responsibility of e-learning environment, building the commitment for time and freedom, learn for the sake of learning not because of fear of losing marks or being punished. In this environment there is no direct physical contact between the teacher and the student. Therefore, less fear from punish or mistreating (which may happen in face-to-face). In this case, it important to motivate the learner to engage them and enjoy their learning.

Int1: SCL is a commitment for the students where they feel responsibility. Therefore, students need to have incentives to pursue this responsibility.
Int5: To be ready for all questions is a challenge. Sometimes we were asked to teach something that we are not trained for. In this case, I may not quite understand a student's question because of lack of knowledge. Hence, personal efforts for knowledge are the safeguard in this embarrassing situation.
Int2- commenting on ***Int5***: Search engines reduce the danger of being embarrassed and therefore contribute to the tutor's feeling of relaxation
Int4: A student opting out from a course can lead to enquiries about the tutor's proficiency and ability to engage students.
Int1 and ***Int2*** confirming: This rule is applied only in private universities not public universities.
Int4: but is it is a concern for some online tutors.
Int5: using technology to overcome the challenge of invisibility entails more work and requires more on-going tutor training.
Researcher: how to prepare students in OL?
Int2: Students need to know how to take care of themselves online first; they are novices in being responsible when dealing with the internet
Int1: Students to be the centre of their learning is a commitment for the student where they feel responsibility. Therefore, students need to have incentives to pursue this responsibility. In my view, students are not ready to be empowered and control their learning. To teach students at an early stage, pre-university, good use of the internet is novel for them.
Int5- commented: Freedom in learning as one of the novel aspects of OL that students need to be prepared for
Int4: The issue can be explained from many perspectives:
Firstly, people in Egypt, as developing country, are novice in using technology. Honestly, not all of us tutors or students are familiar to use its tools. Therefore, the student may does not fully understand how, when and why to use them. Consequently, misusing technology is the unavoidable result.
Secondly, in face-to-face interaction and communication between tutor and student is in real time. While in OL, it can be through other situations such as, comment boxes in forums for text, image or video. Creating this meeting environment is considered to be real difference for the tutor. Thirdly, in face-to-face, teacher may apply the new theories in learning, such as strategies that

help students to play an active and dynamic role in their learning in the class. In this aspect, we (tutors Egypt I mean) have challenges which are the limited available resources in the classes, regarding technology to apply these strategies. On the other hand, in OL, resources are unlimited and it is all by clicking a button. In other words, online environment helps learning to become faster and wider.

Int5: In OL, student has to be dynamic and communicative with tutor and peers; he has a lot of flexibility in learning such as the freedom in selecting date, time and pace of learning. Also, instant feedback is important, where tutor provides the learner with the right answers and highlights the areas of improvement for the learner.

Int2: If I agreed with controlling students in an online session, but at home, how can you control them?

Int1: Keeping students busy at home with tasks, projects and guided searches could help to solve this problem motivate students initially, but also to maintain this motivation by observing students throughout the course

Int2– commenting: No learning can occur if the student does not feel the tutor's control and feels how strong a personality and power he or she possesses. So, students need to feel this control to learn.

Int6: I agree that no control, no learning. So, I prefer university rules and regulations, in all specialities, to be as strict as those of schools, to facilitate monitoring students

Researcher: What do you think about collaborative group work for online students?

Int1: The political disagreements between citizens in Egypt in the last few years and discussions between students. Therefore, the tutor suggested that this disagreement may lead to opening similar topics in online forums which he prefers to avoid.

Int3: I agree and disagree, agree that social collaboration and shared experience between group members that can expand students' knowledge and help them develop their creative skills through group projects. Also, disagree as my concern that since the internet appeared in Egypt, communicating with anonymous people and different communities have been considered a risk to the cultural and social values inherited in the community

Int2: I agree with ***Int3***: that internet was deemed to be a gate through which Western values and beliefs, which differ from Middle Eastern ones, could be

imported. However, online student who acts, reacts, suggests and discusses. In my view, this is the student who can work in a group safely.

Int4: online students have a wider and better scope of network to interact and communicate with each other than face-to-face.

Researcher- directing the question to Int6: what do you think?

Int6: I think that the number of students and the opportunity for exchanging experience and knowledge. In OL, scope of social network is broader as the number of students is more and the opportunity to share and exchange knowledge and experiences is wider. While in a face-to-face class the number of students is limited and restricted to the students who exist in the same class.

Int5- commented promptly: In OL, social networks should be restricted to the topics discussed only, no side topics that allow learners to drift away from the main topic.

Researcher: All these are responsibilities for the student, are there any responsibilities for the tutor?

Int5: For the tutor: giving a guided freedom, where tutors are following-up the students' progress, assessing the learner and making sure that he/ she has been moved forward for the next step in their learning. Also, considering the individual differences between learners, as not all of them may have the same degree of self- control and time management. In this case, online tutor needs to follow up, guide indirectly (each learner differently).

Researcher: directing the question to ***Int6***: What do you think?

Int6: In OL there are the social network and social forums such as wiki, where students communicate with their tutor and peers, they share their knowledge between each other. So their knowledge will become wider and more extensive. While in face-to-face, limited time in the class session may not enable the students to ask the questions that are in their mind, search and go deeper in the studied content.

Int1: Teaching strategy in OL is one of the responsibilities: stimulus and response to engage learners. I should not give all information to my students in one go, one page leads to a diagram, then they click a button to highlight part of the diagram with more details, then they press a button to give the definition and function for each label. This can open the discovery in learning, the curiosity to know more details.

Int2: The tutor's personality is the key word – if the tutor keeps students busy in tasks and assignments and the work was submitted on time, he argued, they do not need any monitoring as it means that they can efficiently manage themselves.

Researcher: do you think online tutor should have certain preparation professional development that is different from face-to-face teacher?

Int1: The main focus in CPD for both; OL and face-to-face tutor has to be focused entirely on the ability to deliver information successfully.

Int2, *Int3*, ***Int6***– almost together at the same time: No difference at all

Int4 and *Int5*: they are typically the same, except the technological knowledge, it has to be more advanced for online tutor.

Researcher: talking about the given freedom and control for the students. How online tutor has to react towards this?

Int1: I like the example of one of the biggest public library in Alexandria, everything is fully controlled by the server, library regulations allow users to search and navigate for specified sites, quite extensive list of sites but users cannot browse for any website out of this list. Personally, I tried to open my Facebook there and the server did not allow me to login. Therefore, I recommend for controlling the online navigation by being monitored by the University server. I see this can guarantee the student is unable to wander away from the studied course.

Int6: I agree with my colleague that this freedom should be given in a limited way, has a lot of restrictions to its use from Server side, what to open, what to read. When students have the freedom to select, their selection may be informed by the easiest way, not the most appropriate for their learning, and the tutor may regard a different selection as more beneficial for them.

Int3: In this case, before giving this freedom, it is the tutor's_personality to build the trust with learners, by first of all gaining wide knowledge in the subject. Paying effort to motivate and engage learners. I assume in this case, learners can be given more freedom in E-learning.

Int4: To differentiate the given freedom. First in the campus, everything has to be fully restricted from the server side, even social network should be restricted for the discussed topics only, limiting even websites that to be browsed. At home, where there are no limits for browsing. In Egypt specifically, as we are novice with technology, I do confirm that learning experience may not be totally positive. In detail, the risk and concerns that students are unable

to manage themselves. Therefore, the tutor's personality to motivate and engage learners is a key word; I suggest that the whole country gives more care for restricted severs not to make it open. So we can use e-learning in campus comfortably and guarantee that learners have no freedom in web browsing.

Int5: I found that there are good examples of fully monitored websites in a library that restricts the navigation to a fixed list of websites. Also, I would like to add that preparing a well-organized and useful online content that engages the learner and minimises these risks for wasting time in any other website, such as multimedia, to attract the learners' attention.

Int2: to organise all these tools: student- tutor – content. I want to add that it is easy to play with the server rules. For example, some students may appear to the server that they have logged in to the website and spent time as the timer counter is counting, in fact, they just logged in and at the same time they were browsing other sites by any other gadget they have in the campus. In words, the use of freedom, commitment start from inside and monitoring is not the best solution in my point of view.

Researcher: ate the students' average ability to do the following: time management and self-management.

Int1: It depends on the gender: boys have less time and self- management abilities than girls, boys have less interest to use internet for learning. They are mainly using it for entertainment and social chat. I know that some learners who login to the server just to show that they are online, so they log to the server and surf internet in other websites away from the course website. For girls, they are more careful for studying, have more commitment and feeling responsible.

Int2- commenting in a louder voice: How did you judge this?

Int1: Stereotype and it is confirmed.

Int2: I strongly contraindicate **Int1**'s claim, it all depends on the individual difference and personal objectives for each student. In my point of view, if the student lacks this skill of time and self-management in OL, the responsibility here lies on the university. In detail, the problem of bad time management starts from the university itself (in Egypt). For example: If the course time is three months, we all just start to attend and study seriously in the last month, where studying hours may exceed 15 hours per day to catch up with the

wasted two month. So the culture of wasting time is already built by the University lack of organised time table.

Int3: I believe this is not a gender-based issue, I find this responsibility lies on the tutor more than the university, as teaching strategy of university teachers is not applied strictly and punctually to follow up like primary school teachers do. So, it is the tutor's role to follow up and prepare a clear time line for the students from the beginning of the course time and keep guiding and following up.

Int1- **c**ommenting: What about the individual interest of the students themselves if they do have this commitment and feeling responsible, will you wait for the teacher to organise you?

Int3: No, in this case, it is the student, mmm, that confirms my claim, and it is to change the culture and beliefs of time management.

Int2: So, it is not a boy or a girl difference

Int1: immediately replying: But I have many stories as evidence that confirm that boys have less time and self- management than girls.

Researcher: in this case, how online tutor should react/respond?

Int1: In this case, teaching basics of using internet in learning and the best use of it. Also, one to one interview before the course to start, tutor can prepare the student and evaluate him according to their potentials of self and time-management.

Int4: That highlights an important part which is the importance of personal communication between tutor and student is (online or face-to-face meeting if possible), trying to develop the value of time and personal commitment towards learning.

Int2- confirming: ***Int4***'s claim: Tutor- learner pre-course interview is very important to build up an idea about the learner. Also, it should be frequent to do a follow up and record any occurring changes. As learners sometimes give an impression in the first meeting which does not reflect the truth. For example: some learners may pretend active and have serious commitment in their study, later on and during the academic year, the truth may reveals differently.

Int5:I do not rely entirely on the first interview, the following interviews are more reliable. In my teaching experience, I found that at the beginning of the course, learner may give fake impression for the teacher about his learning abilities, the continuous interviews can confirm or reject the first interview.

Researcher: which holds more responsibility for the tutor: OL or face-to-face?

Int1: face-to-face

Int2: Online

Int3: face-to-face

Int4: Online

Int5: Online

Int6: Online

Int1: more responsibility for face-to-face. Tutor in the class has less freedom than online tutor. In OL, tutor may attend or not, may fully explain the lesson or not. In face-to-face, all these issues are monitored and documented.

Int6: If this is the case, technology and programmers can improve monitoring feature to set the date and time to sign in and out, and record the whole session: audio and video.

Int5: I disagree with Int1, as more responsibility for online Also, more effort is required from the online tutor to author the content providing simulations, games, and activities that can achieve all the previously explained features and at the same time engage and motivate learners, and teach the content successfully from beginners to advanced kevel,

Int2: Online, I confirm my colleague: more responsibility as how online tutor affects the behaviour and attitudes of learners, learning is not just pouring information in students' brain, to affect students' reaction and attitudes, developing skills. IT means more responsibility will be for the online tutor to compensate these missing in form of continuous feedback, individualized learners, to know learners, engage, follow-up

Int4: Online In this case, I cannot say that online tutor is unable to do it, but it requires more effort and in-depth understanding for learners, more responsibility

Int3: More responsibility for face-to-face I confirm my point of view, that there are certain skills cannot be developed or guided in OL and face-to-face can do it, Therefore, more responsibly exists for the face-to-face tutor.

Int6: Online tutor can developing programs can support and facilities to compensate the physical lab. It may mean more work but by the end learning objectives are achieved.

Researcher: How do you encourage your students to be creative/ innovative?

Int1: It depends on the Individual differences, if he is shy, has socially isolated nature, he/she can achieve this and develop his creative skills in OL,

as he may not feel comfortable to deal with others on face-to-face base. If he is more active, social and likes to socially communicate with others, it may not help him in this case.

Int6: Generally speaking, internet definitely supports creative learning than face-to-face. In the internet online facilities, technology tools, open search can lead him to the same result. However, maybe traditional class with limited resources such as whiteboard can limit these creative skills

Int2: It is conditional, as lack of technical and pedagogical knowledge about the available resources and tools in the internet can hinder to develop these skills, such as browsing, login, downloading. It is like a habit, the learner needs to get used to do it since he was a child.

Int3: the existence of some factors such as group projects and online simulations are important in the online content. They help to engage learners and develop their creative skills.

Int4– Commenting: ***Int2*****'s** claim: The challenge is the lack of experience to deal with technology and its impact on learning. An example for a real experience, when tablet was given by Ministry of Higher education to students to be used in the classes without preparing them for the basics of computer and its applications. In this case, misusing these devices was the ultimate result and the whole project failed.

Int5: In my point of view, I totally disagree with the claim that OL can improve innovation and creation. It is one of the main barriers in OL that it kills some basic skills for e-learners. For example imagination skills, ,_when we read a story (a physical book between hands) we imagine the characters, while OL illustrates and figures them immediately in video for example, that ultimately killing their imagination skills, in turn their ability to be creative. Also, lab work and writing skills cannot be done in OL. Therefore, I confirm that there is no 100% OL course. I am using pen and paper with my students and ask them to use A3 papers for their posters

Int1: The tutor is the key to students' creativity through following up students, challenging them all the time. Surely without the tutor's role this skill is diminished. That the impact of a didactic syllabus was that it limited the students' creative thinking. The curriculum content was theoretical to be blamed for lack of student creativity.

Researcher: Is there a 100% successful online course in Egypt?

Int1: 50% for OL and 50% for face-to-face, there is no entirely online course, face-to-face should exist.
Int2: 50% for OL and 50% for face-to-face
Int3: face-to-face is a requirement to develop skills such as reading and writing skills. Also, as long as there is a lack of facilities such as well-equipped computer labs, face-to-face learning would always dominate.
Int1: I think that we are not ready yet for 100% technological course: This generation is not ready at all to be empowered or given control in their learning.
Int6– commenting: Empowering learners and giving them control implies giving them freedom. Therefore, commitment and responsibility are the starting point, and these need to be initiated by the learners from the inside.
Int1: Replying to ***Int6***: If the students are responsible and can be trusted to manage their learning they can be empowered; if not, empowering learners is devastating for them.
Int4: I disagree with **Int1:** there are 100% online courses, in a limited scale still, but there are. For me, this is a sign of success.
Int5: not for all subjects
Researcher: what may happen if we are in a position that the learner is unable to attend the class and all the course will be studied OL?
Int1: Learning will happen but will not be successful.
Int2: Depends on the subject (theory only such as history) can work but others never will work depending on OL only.
Int3: I disagree as even for labs, there are websites even lab work can guide and help the learner
Int2: Could you email me some examples of these websites, please?
Int3: Ok, I will do
Int1–commenting: I doubt that these websites can be suitable for all subjects
Int2: But how can the learner touches the chemical substances in Chemistry for example? That will have a negative impact on the learners'' skills
Int1, *Int3*, ***Int5***: 70% success rate if OL only
Int5– adding: Students could log in to a session and their login time was recorded on the system while they were not actually in front of the computer
Int5– adding: in my area, internet service is not efficient enough for these labs.

Int4: This grade can be improved, if the tutor's role is increased by applying all what we have mentioned previously regarding engaging and motivating learners.

Researcher: what are the available and frequency CPD for online tutors?

Int1: We need training for authoring e-content that makes learning experience different for the learner. We need courses that train us how to author the content that is able to engage learners, provided with media. This software has to consider the student such as: planning for navigation, flexibility, control and the given freedom in changing some aspects in the content. All that has to be designed, implemented by the tutor, who is the only person who can decide these points.

Int2: Timing of these courses. We need them to be twice a year and during holidays only. Number of taught authoring software needs to be few but in depth and gives continuous training with feedback. It is the quality of these applications not the quantity.

Int1: Also, considering the learners' ease of use for this application, and train them for using them. As if the student struggles in using these apps, that is enough reason to disengage him from learning online.

Int3: I require using multi-media and a regular follow up that the CPD has certain objectives and these objectives have been achieved. Not for the favour of attendance or get promoted by attending a CPD. Regulation and commitment to attend and get the benefit of the training. I know some training courses, tutors attend them just to get the certificate that qualify them for a promotion

Int2- Directing speech to ***Int3***: do you mean attendance to tick the box only?

Int3: Yes

Int2- Commenting: This has never happened; we attend professional training to get the full benefit from it

Int2: No, it happened

Int5- Interfering in the discussion: At this point, there is a need for an evaluation after the course to assess the tutor's knowledge after attending the course.

Int4: all aspects have to be considered: soft skills: develop technology perspective, teaching skills, communication skills especially in OL

Int1: The absence of soft skills is enough to fail as an online tutor even if the professional content knowledge exists.

Int1: CPD has to cover many perspectives: like technological or pedagogical and each one will be notified with the date and time enough time before and it should have well-defined learning objectives and outcomes. It is quality more than quality

Int6: But the problem in these training courses is how to use technology in learning, and making sure that the tutor has the devices to apply on at home, as in some cases lack of devices at home to apply what we learn minimises the benefits of the course.

Int1: It is the lack of fund from government to facilitate these CPD and lack of fund for tutors to afford applying what they learned in these courses.

Int2- commenting: Can Ministry of Higher education (MHE) facilitate tablets for online tutors?

Int1- replying: I doubt.

Int4: We can request this in the next meeting with the head of department in the school of Education.

Int5: Assessment for the tutor and feedback, follow up to know if there is development or not (like the student)

Int6: I would like to add that tutors are not motivated to attend CPD as there is no real benefit in any aspect, whether academic, career-related or financial.

Int2: learning Management System has two aspects; technology is only one side of the coin, and CPD also needs to focus on the pedagogical side, the issue of how to engage and motivate learners.

Int4- commenting: Learning Management System is not applied with poor internet service

Int2: but as online tutors we need to learn about it

Int4-replying to *Int2:* If it exists only.

Researcher: Regarding Egypt, describe any constraints that can be obstacles to applying any of the topics we have discussed.

Int5: Facilitating well equipped computer labs to compensate the lack of computers at homes, in some cases, for tutors. As long as we lack this, still face-to-face is the dominator till the resources become fully available.

Int5: students in HE are not well prepared to study online, new technology, new culture, and new concepts such as freedom in learning.

Int2: To prepare students for responsibility, they need to feel the importance of the topic studied as well as the freedom of selection and decision making, and need to have commitment to study their course. The use of e-learning

needs to start at school from primary school and it can increase gradually to HE, as skills such as self-management and time can be developed since they are young.

Int3: Empowering learners is a chain which starts with giving them ownership of their learning as a first step, which is followed by giving them control. For the role of Ministry of Higher education it should give high interest to computing as a subject and return it as a vocational course in compulsory curriculum in senior school.

Int4: E-content, consistency of curriculum, sometimes it is inconsistent. For example, we teach: advanced HTML, then PowerPoint and then basic Expressions Web. We need an authoring content that engages the students and motivate them to study online.

Int6: Before everything, we need to prepare the student to use technology in learning. According to student motivation, it is the tutor's responsibility. Concepts such as why we learn, passing the exam main objective, technology for the favour of using it only. In this case, other concepts will be developed such as self- management and guided freedom.

Int2: Availability of internet resources is main key to fill the gap between different levels of students according to their economic affordance. In more details, students who cannot afford purchasing the PC, its availability in the educational body facilitates using and practicing it. This will lead to a gap between students, between those who afford and those who do not afford the purchasing of computers

Int2: Policy maker's decision is more supportive for hard copy than technology. For example, more budgets are dedicated for posters and books than budget that is dedicated to online content and multi- media.

Int3: Training for both teacher and student for the use for interactive content.

Int1: No doubt that the use of the internet and the acceptance to use it properly is very promising compared to the last 10 years. I would like to add the issue of trust between learner and tutor as a challenge, we, as tutors, need a long time to trust that the learners fully understand what is meant by freedom.

Int2: We need to add student limited financial affordance. There are students who can and those who cannot afford the purchasing of a computer or even subscribe to internet service.

G.2 Translated sample of an interview (Int1)

Researcher: What is your strategy in teaching online?

My strategy that: I should not give all information to my students in one go, one page leads to a diagram, then students click a button to highlight part of the diagram with more details, then they press a button to give the definition and function for each label. This can open the discovery in learning, the curiosity to know more details.

I can see the difference that: in face-to-face learning there is no choice other than a teacher-centred strategy, as the number of students is too great and there is a difficulty for the tutor to facilitate and identify the individual differences between them.

We need to avoid this closed system, school fence, books and fixed timetables. All have gone, we need to redevelop the school system and make a clear distinction between discipline and chaos, between punishment and evaluation.

Researcher: So, do you follow certain steps to prepare for an online course?

First of all I need to know about my learners. Decide my learning objectives and the skills I will concern to develop in OL, Discovery, experiential; try to achieve that in easy and self -guided pattern. Also, considering when designing and authoring the cost to be affordable or

Researcher: How do you assess your online student?

There are many methods such as: formative assessment. Survey, observation form

Researcher: What do you think about group work?

In my view, group discussion in group work can end up discussing topics away from the official syllabus. At this point, content coverage and time limitation will be an issue for the tutor.

Researcher: What are challenges in OL?

Not one size fits all. Non punctuality for the student, as being used to class and tutor physical presence. Limited availability of resources, social isolation is a challenge. If he is introvert will increases and if extrovert can may become introvert as because of the social isolation in OL. Conversely, for introvert student and the student who feel shy to communicate with others in the class. OL can break this barrier as the student feels more freedom and less shy to talk behind the screen than face-to-face.

Then the tutor role here is highlighted to understand learners and manage their individual differences.

Researcher: what about social perspective for students in OL?

OL leads to social isolation, dealing with the computer screen for a long time deprives students of human interaction and creates virtual substitutes – "Avatar replaces Muhammad".

Researcher: What is the given percentage for the freedom of online learners?

Tutor control 70 % and student 30%. In general, in our culture , no learning can occur if student does not feel the tutor's control and feel how strong personality and power he// she has . In many cases losing power can devastate the whole learning and leads to no productivity for the learning

Unless the learner is really enthusiasm and motivated to learn

Researcher: How would you handle a student who is not self-motivated?

I need to develop an interactive and engaging content that motivate the learner, multimedia, simulations, games. Stimulus and response are essential to engage learners. For example: one page leads to a diagram, then students clicks a button to highlight part of the diagram with more details, then they press a button to give the definition and function for each label. This can open the discovery in learning, the curiosity to know more details.

Researcher: What planning do you undertake before teaching an online course?

It is exactly the same way as face-to-face with more efforts for the previous

Researcher: How to encourage the OL learner to be creative and innovative?

We need to avoid this closed system, school fence, books and fixed timetables. All have gone, we need to redevelop the school system and make a clear distinction between discipline and chaos, between punishment and evaluation. Open programming to open the gate for imagination and creation, start for the flow chart, and give example for a new shape (calculator), new examples to see I YouTube to go from there. How to create always something new not traditional

Researcher: Rate the following according to the student affordance:

time management

8/10

Researcher: Concentration

8/10

Researcher: Self-discovery

5/10. There are limitations in internet to develop some skills such as communication skills

Researcher: self-confidence

OL cannot develop self-confidence

Researcher: Self -evaluation

10/10 (tutor guided feedback)

Researcher: Guided discovery

6/10

But for all the previous, it depends on tutor personality, as not all teachers in OL are able to do this. In face-to-face, a teacher may have limited knowledge, but with good communication skills with the students they can achieve good results, but in OL where the tutor's physical absence. OL tutor should have better communication skills than face-to-face. With the challenge if invisibility in OL, In this case there are other factors are highlighted to overcome this absence, such as online content that engages the learner, develops learners' behaviour skills, hence, if tutor technological knowledge is limited, this can be a challenge.

Researcher: What are the suggested selection criteria for online tutors?

- Effective communication skills
- IT knowledge
- Mastering authoring tools
- How to interpret the learning objectives and aims into selecting online tools : video, games that are able to achieve these learning objectives

That means there are other topics to be added to our studied course as tutors, which is the how to understand, communicate and engage learners, not based of the knowledge of the course only

Researcher: Which aspects of control do you give your learners?

It should start from the beginning of school years not in university to grow up with the right concepts about freedom. As I mentioned, I confirm that our students are not ready yet.

Researcher: What are the concerns of empowering learners?

Mainly, lack of responsibility, carelessness, not achieving the learning objectives. If the students are responsible and can be trusted to manage their learning they can be empowered; if not, empowering learners is devastating for them. Students are not ready to be empowered and control their learning. One of my students, when I gave him full permissions on the shared forum, started

to remove some peers' comments, and modify others, not knowing that I could track this activity. I have an experience related to the consequences of giving a student control over editing shared web content: one of my students, when I gave him full permissions on the shared forum, started to remove some peers' comments, and modify others, not knowing that I could track this activity.

Researcher: So, what is the problem of giving freedom to your learner in your view?

It is an issue of trust between learner and tutor. We, as tutors, need a long time to trust that the learners can fully understand what is meant by freedom

Researcher: What are the aspects of giving control?

Researcher: to select the studied topic

Yes

Researcher: lessons order

No, (away from bureaucracy) we change it from the official educational bodies, but based on tutor's decisions, as it is based on the understanding of tutors to students not their own choices they may select them according to the easy—difficulty while the tutor see them linked in different way

Lesson times (if possible) Yes (as some students are more productive at night others in the day)

Researcher: Questions styles

No (each question style develops certain skills). It all starts with student preparation, digital preparation for students means to teach students at an early stage, pre-university, about good use of the internet. Tutors in the four focus groups listed many aspects that students needed to be taught in an OL environment: confidentiality; computer crime; copyright issues; and cyber-bullying

Researcher: What do you think about CPD that are dedicated for online tutors you have attended?

As a CPD style, workshops are more preferable then traditional lecturing. CPD is a process not an event; without follow-up, it is hard to have lasting impact with tutors. Online tutor should do a lot of efforts (more than face-to-face) for self-developing, even reading researches in that field about online teaching strategies, technologies, new authoring tools.

Researcher: How important is tutor' knowledge of soft skills and technological competence?

Tutors' knowledge of soft skills is enough to fail as an online tutor even if the professional content knowledge exists. Int2 and Int6 in the same focus group disagreed with this claim, as they considered both content and soft skills knowledge as complementing each other.

For technology: it is very uncommon to find a tutor who is well-trained in the use of the available technology in teaching.

Researcher: What are the challenges that online tutos may have in teaching?

Sometimes we were asked to teach something that we are not trained for. In this case it is more self-developing that scheduled training. So it starts with the tutor him/herself. However, limited fund can be a barrier to educate ourselves and attend extra courses other than those that are scheduled by university administration

Appendix H: Sample of Guiding Questions

H.1 Guiding questions in one-to-one interviews

1. As an Online teacher, what are the differences between your teaching methods and strategies in the face to face and OL environment?

2. Describe your teaching style when working in an online setting?

3. What are your strengths for your position as online teacher?

4. What are the challenges that online teachers may have in teaching?

5. What planning do you undertake before teaching an online class?

6. Tell me about the materials you use in online teaching?

7. How would you handle a student who is not engaged in the course?

8. How would you handle a student who is not self-motivated?

9. How do you encourage your students to be creative?

10. Rate the students' average ability to do the following:

Time management - self management- self-discovery- guided discovery- self evaluation

Note: rating is from 1- 5 (1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest)

11. How do you guide your students in their online search, within the studied topic? Give me an example.

12. If one of the students suggested a new topic to be included in the course syllabus that is not directly related to the main topic, how do you respond to it?

13. What is your definition of empowering learners? Give me examples where you seem to empower your learners while teaching them.

14. What are the benefits of empowering learners?

15. What are the concerns of empowering learners?

16. Which aspects of control do you give your learners? Give an example.

17. What have you done to improve your online teacher knowledge in the last few months/ years?

18. How often are the training courses you have attended, that are dedicated for online teachers? How would you evaluate them?

19. How ready do you think Egyptian Higher Education Institutes are for OL?

20. Regarding Egypt, describe any constraints that can be obstacles to applying any of the topics we have discussed.

H.2 Guiding questions in focus groups

Questions in focus group are slightly the same as the questions in the semi-structured interview, the flow of the questions depends on the interaction between participants. Worth mentioning that, the main research themes are considered, examples of guiding questions in focus groups are:

- Online learning affordances/ challenges
- Teaching strategies/resources in online learning
- Students engagement, motivation, autonomous and empowerment in online learning
- Professional development for tutors in online learning