

**THE PERCEPTIONS OF VARIOUS ROLE PLAYERS ON THE
TRAINING AND INSTRUCTIONAL BEHAVIOUR OF TUTORS IN A
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION**

by

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(B.Ed; B.Ed Hons)

DISSERTATION

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DECLARATION

- (i) I, Wiets Botes, declare that the Master's Degree research dissertation that I herewith submit for the Master's Degree qualification in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State is my independent work, and that I have not previously submitted it for a qualification at another institution of higher education.

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Wiets Botes

Date: 29 June 2016

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Thank you to the A_STEP team and the Centre for Teaching and Learning for your collaborative support throughout the duration of my study.

Finally, a special thanks to the research participants that shared their stories that formed the core of this dissertation.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to the Teaching and Learning Office in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State.

I also dedicate this study to the A_STEP team, Unit of High-Impact Practices in the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

Finally, I dedicate this study to my mother and father.



President John F. Kennedy was fond of telling a story about the French Marshall Louis Lyautey. When the marshal announced that he wished to plant a tree, his gardener responded that the tree would not reach full growth for more than one hundred years. “In that case,” Lyautey replied, “we have no time to lose”. We must start to plant this afternoon. “Administrators and faculty intent on improving teaching also have no time to lose. They, too, must start to plant this afternoon” (Seldin, 1995:7)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------------|--|
| AA | Academic Advising |
| A_STEP | Academic Student Tutorial and Excellence Programme |
| CHE | Council on Higher Education |
| CTL | Centre for Teaching and Learning |
| DD | Difficult Dialogues |
| DHET | Department of Higher Education and Training |
| FoE | Faculty of Education |
| HE | Higher education |
| ICT | Information and communication technology |
| LCT | Lecturer-centred learning |
| NMMU | Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University |
| SCL | Student-centred learning |
| SoTL | Scholarship of Teaching and Learning |
| SI | Supplemental Instruction |
| TLC | Teaching and learning coordinator |
| UFS | University of the Free State |
| UMKC | University of Missouri-Kansas City |
| UG | Undergraduate Studies |
| USD | Unit for students with disabilities |

CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY

The following concepts are defined to clarify their meaning in the context of this study:

Active learning: A teaching strategy whereby students engage in meaningful learning through activities such as reading, writing, group discussions and problem solving to promote better understanding of module and class content (Kitchen, 2012; Newton & Ender, 2010).

Collaborative learning: An educational approach to teaching and learning that involves individuals (tutees) to work together in a learning setting (tutorial) to achieve a lesson outcome (Arendale, 2010; Dillenbourg, 1999).

Dysfunctional group dynamics: An instance where group learning in an educational environment is no longer sustainable and effective for purposeful learning to take place between individuals (Felps, Mitchell & Byington, 2006).

e-Portfolios: A collection of electronic evidence that derives from various digital platforms (word processing programmes, video and audio clips) which is assembled and managed by the user (Chau & Cheng, 2010).

Facilitative learning: Learning that takes place when tutors encourage tutees to take control of their own learning processes (Rogers, 2008; Biggs & Tang, 2007).

Guided learning: A learning approach where tutees discover knowledge either on their own or with the help of their peers (Mcguire, 2007).

High-order cognitive skills: Thinking skills that include critical, logical, reflective, metacognitive and creative thinking. These thinking skills require deeper levels of thinking rather than just a restatement of facts (Metzler & Woessmann, 2012).

High-risk module: An academically underperforming module that shows evidence of non-optimal student throughput in an academic year (Luck, 2010).

Interactive learning: A teaching strategy that encourages individuals (tutees) to form part of the lesson pedagogy rather than being passive observers of the lesson (De Smet, Van Keer, De Wever & Valcke, 2010).

Massification: A term used to express the increased number of students in higher education (Wisker, Exley, Antoniou & Ridley, 2013).

Mentorship: A developmental relationship whereby a more experienced (knowledgeable) individual assists a less experienced (knowledgeable) individual (Wisker et al., 2013; Keup & Shook, 2012).

Mini-lecturing: A teaching strategy characterised by learning facilitators (tutors) utilising a lecturer-centred teaching approach in a tutorial setup with limited elements of collaborative and interactive learning among peers (Draskovic, Bulte, Bolhuis, Holdrinet & Van Leeuwe, 2004).

Observer: An individual responsible for monitoring and evaluating another individual's teaching behaviour (Bell & Mladenovic, 2008).

Observee: An individual being monitored and evaluated by another individual (Bell & Mladenovic, 2008).

Peer education: The establishment of a student-to-student (tutor-to-tutee) learning environment that fosters collaborative learning among peers in a group setting (Wisker et al., 2013; Keup & Shook, 2012; Biggs & Tang, 2007).

Reflective learning aids: A learning aid that allows individuals to reflect and write on their progress and experience of learning with the hope of improving their future performance (Kitchen, 2012).

Supplemental workshops: Additional and supplemental training and developmental opportunities for tutors to develop themselves as facilitators of learning (Smith, 2008).

Supplemental Instruction (SI): An academic support model that utilises peer-assisted study sessions to improve student retention and success within targeted historically difficult courses (Blanc & Martin, 2012).

Student attrition: A student's inability to successfully complete his/her study (Steenkamp, Baard & Frick, 2012).

Student-centred learning: This learning approach is also identified as learner-centred education and broadly encompasses methods of teaching that shift the focus of instruction from the lecturer to the student (Bell & Mladenovic, 2008).

Student throughput: The number of students who successfully complete and progress their studies to the next academic year (Sondlo, 2013).

Student retention: Students in a higher education environment that remain enrolled in their studies until graduation (Sondlo, 2013).

Tutor: An individual, also identified as a learning facilitator, who have previously excelled in a specific learning area and incorporates a student-centred learning approach in a small group setting with the goal to enhance the learning experiences of peers (Underhill, 2012).

Tutee: A student being tutored by the tutor (Kitchen, 2012)

Teaching and learning coordinator: An individual that supports, guides and coordinates learning facilitators (tutors) to ensure the sustainability and efficiency of a tutoring programme as a supportive learning measure for students (CTL A_STEP tutor manual, 2014).

Zone of proximal development: The space between what a student can achieve for him- or herself and the next level of potential achievement or development, which is attainable through the needed assistance of a more experienced individual (tutor) and/or with the collaboration of others (tutees) (Vygotsky, 1978).

CHAPTER ONE OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT LITERATURE PERSPECTIVES

The throughput rate of students is a key challenge and indicative of academic success and the quality of an institution (Strydom, Mentz & Kuh, 2010). Throughput is defined by Tinto (1975) as the number of successful module credits earned by students enrolled for a degree at an institution of higher education. Mcguire (2006:4) maintains that *[c]olleges and universities can no longer be content simply to offer courses taught by faculties in a variety of disciplines; they must ensure that students' learning outcomes and optimal throughput rates are being met, ultimately enabling them to pursue their future careers.* In the Faculty of Education (FoE) at the University of the Free State (UFS) tutoring with the aim of supporting students by means of a student-centred learning approach and peer facilitation, is one of the mechanisms harnessed to ensure that this outcome and an optimal throughput rate are achieved.

According to Goodlad and Hirst (1989) the facilitative teaching behaviour demonstrated by the tutor¹ play a decisive role on the tutee's² learning process. It is also confirmed by Leary, Walker, Shelton and Fitt (2013) that a tutor should show elements of student centeredness. Leary et al. (2013) state that tutors should create and promote self-directed learning, integrate previous knowledge, as well as interact and guide the learning process. Similarly, Kitchen (2012) argues that if students do not engage in a student-centred learning approach, whereby the tutor plays the facilitative and supportive role, it might not lead to a positive learning experience. Tutees should be actively engaged in collaboration with one another, by sharing ideas

¹ **Tutor:** An individual that provides facilitative instruction to a small group of students.

² **Tutees:** Individuals being tutored by a tutor or facilitator.

and interacting with one another. Kitchen (2012) states that only then a tutee's learning experience can be improved.

At the UFS, the idea of tutors letting tutees interact with one another and share ideas on how to make learning easier in a collaborative manner, resonates with what literature describes as the essence of tutoring. Tutors are primarily responsible for making the learning process easier for tutees by organising challenging modular content in such a manner that tutees gain, step by step, a better and more complex understanding of the material (Biggs & Tang, 2007). This could be achieved by dividing challenging modular content into smaller “chunks” of information that will be easily explored and sufficiently digested by the tutees (Lakey, 2010). Apart from making the learning process easier, tutors need to be primarily responsible for learning facilitation and they should have little to no involvement in lecturing, or assessment design (Bell & Mladenovic, 2008). Falchikov (2001:4) explicitly states that ... *tutors are not teachers, they do not have a professional qualification*. In the same vein, Dolmans, Janssen-Noordman and Wolfhagen (2006) agree that tutors should neither be too directive, nor too passive. An experienced tutor should create a perfect environment for learning and discussion for his/her peers³, without the need of didactic teaching and lecturing (ibid.).

Tutors thus play a crucial role in developing the learning experiences of their peers, but they may worsen the process if they do not use the correct tutoring principles as postulated, inter alia by Chau and Cheng (2010). These researchers reason that if tutors are not equipped with the deemed tutoring principles of a student-centred learning approach and peer facilitation, obtained through adequate tutor training, tutorials might not be effective at all.

At the UFS, the concern in the Faculty of Education (FoE) is that their tutors may not be coping with what is ultimately expected from them – being a tutor. This may result in no valuable contribution being made to improving student learning. According to research done by Leary et al. (2013) tutors from Utah State University converted small group sessions into lectures, resulting in tutees losing interest in

³ **Peer:** An individual that shares the same social standing with other individuals.

tutorial sessions. A very similar situation has been identified by the researcher, while personally observing and evaluating tutorial-sessions conducted in the FoE. A dominating, non-facilitative, 're-lecturing' approach was evident in most instances. 'Re-lecturing' is used here to refer to a repetitive session of the original lecturing session, which in this case would be hosted by the tutor. Such a situation evokes doubt about the effectiveness of the training tutors have had.

In this study, the researcher, in his capacity as teaching and learning coordinator will undertake a personal journey with tutors over the course of 12 months to gain insight into what "worked" and what did not so as to provide a local evidence base on which to act to improve the quality of tutoring in the FoE. The overarching aim is to better understand why tutors choose to engage in a non-facilitative, 're-lecturing' approach with their peers. It is deemed necessary to conduct this study because if 're-lecturing' is not addressed in the FoE, it might, as indicated in the literature, lead to student withdrawal during sessions.

1.2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study in higher education (HE) falls within the theoretical theme of "Teaching and Learning" as specified by Tight (2012). This theme makes provision for addressing tutees' learning needs by means of tutorial participation aimed at improving their learning experience.

The aim of this study is to explore and describe the training and instructional behaviour of tutors in order to promote effective tutoring in the FoE. Exploration and description of social behaviour of this kind is deeply rooted in a qualitative research approach within the paradigm of constructivism. According to Biber and Leavey (2011) the focus of qualitative research within a constructivist paradigm is to identify the social meaning of individuals' experiences, descriptions and situations. Similarly, Tight (2012:180) refers to qualitative research within a constructivist paradigm, as being ... *concerned with exploring a particular phenomenon, in the context of* (higher education), *using respondents' own words through measurements of* (interviews,

surveys, observations, evaluations and reflective journals), *without making prior analytical assumptions*.

Various other literature perspectives confirm that a qualitative research approach informed by constructivist theory will help the researcher understand the thoughts, feelings and experiences of individuals coping with a certain condition in a given setting (Merriam, 2002). Work done by Guba and Lincoln (1994) in the late nineties, for example refers to a qualitative research process whereby realities and perceptions are captured by the researcher in the form of socially and experientially-based constructions. They argue that a researcher using a constructivist paradigm ... *sees knowledge as created in interaction among the investigator and respondents* (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:111). Almost a decade later, Breckenridge, Jones, Elliott and Nicol (2012) support Guba and Lincoln's statement by defining the epistemological stance of constructivism as knowledge only to be created through interaction of individuals. In the context of this study, these "individuals" are the tutees, tutors, lecturers and teaching and learning coordinators.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The key problem on which this study will focus is a concern that tutors at the FoE at the UFS may be engaging in a non-facilitative 're-lecturing' approach with their peers. If this is the case, the possibility exists that no valuable contribution to collaborative learning may occur (Kitchen, 2012). Such an approach may negatively impact tutees' perception of tutorials in general and may also affect the effectiveness of the tutorial programme at the Faculty.

1.4. AIM

To explore and describe the training, development and instructional behaviour of tutors in the FoE, UFS in order to plan and implement strategies and approaches that will promote effective tutoring.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question for this study will be:

How can the training and development of tutors in the FoE be enhanced to support them in adopting a facilitative rather than a “re-lecturing” approach?

The secondary research questions of this study are:

1. How are tutors trained and developed by teaching and learning coordinators in other parts of the world, nationally in other South African Universities, and specifically in Faculties of the UFS? (Literature review / individual interviews)
2. What challenges do tutors encounter during their tutorial sessions that might stifle their facilitative teaching practice with their peers? (Literature review / reflective journals)
3. What are the characteristics of the tutoring style and approach used by tutors in the FoE? (Personal observations)
4. What are tutors’ perceptions of the tutor training provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning? (Reflective journals)
5. How do lecturers in the FoE perceive the tutoring provided by tutors? (Individual interviews with a sample of lecturers)
6. What are the tutees’ perceptions of the tutorial programme in the FoE? (Semi-structured questionnaire survey)
7. How do tutors perceive their overall experience of being a tutor in the FoE? (Reflective journals on a semester basis)

1.6. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The objectives of this study are:

1. To establish, by means of a literature study, the characteristics of tutor training and development, as it is conducted internationally, nationally and locally, thus creating a theoretical foundation for this study.

2. To determine, by means of a literature study and a review of tutors' reflective journal entries, the challenges tutors encounter that might hinder their tutoring practices.
3. To investigate, by means of a series of personal interviews, how tutors are being trained and developed in other faculties of the UFS in order to identify key factors influencing the effectiveness of tutoring.
4. To explore and understand, by means of personal observations, and analysis of reflections, how tutors in the FoE perceive and act on the training they have to undergo at institutional and Faculty level.
5. To investigate, by means of a series of personal interviews, how lecturers in the FoE perceive tutoring provided by the tutors.
6. To assess, by means semi-structured questionnaire surveys, whether tutees are satisfied with the quality of tutoring they receive in the FOE.
7. To assess tutors' in the FoE overall experience of being a tutor by studying their reflective journal entities.

1.7. RESEARCH APPROACH

1.7.1. Type of research

The natural setting of tutor training at the UFS forms the basis of the investigation, with the focus on unravelling the complexity of the process as it exists in the FoE. A qualitative, case study methodology situated within a constructivist paradigm, will be followed (Tight 2012).

1.7.2. Research participants

The participants that form part of the study will include:

- a) Tutees in the FoE at the UFS;
- b) Tutors in the FoE at the UFS;
- c) Lecturers in the FoE at the UFS;
- d) Teaching and Learning coordinators employed in other Faculties of the UFS.

1.7.3. Data gathering methods

Qualitative data will be captured from the following sources:

1. A series of personal interviews with teaching and learning coordinators, to provide feedback on how tutor training is done in their respective Faculties.
2. Tutors' reflections on the challenges they experienced in tutorials, as reflected in journal entries submitted at the end of each semester in the FoE.
3. Personal observations of FoE tutors' instructional behaviour in tutorials.
4. Tutors' perceptions of the tutor training provided by the teaching and learning coordinator of the Faculty, as reflected in journal entries submitted at the end of each semester.
5. Tutors' reflections on their tutoring careers, included in their reflective journals at the end of each semester.
6. A semi-structured survey through the use of tutor evaluation sheets will provide tutees with the opportunity to voice their opinions on the quality of tutoring sessions.
7. Personal interviews with a sample of lecturers in the Faculty, to obtain feedback on how they perceive the tutoring provided by the tutors in the FoE.

1.8. ENSURING METHODOLOGICAL RIGOUR

In doing qualitative research one should be fair, balanced and complete (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The authors state that it is essential that qualitative research meets this goal. If met, the research is known to be rigorous and trustworthy because the research methods and design are credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; also *vide* Patton, 1999).

Patton (1999) defines these terms in the following manner. *Credibility* is regarded as the believability of the research. *Confirmability* refers to an alternative researcher's ability to obtain the same results from the study as the researcher. *Transferability* refers to the generalisability of the results to other populations and

contexts. *Dependability* refers to the reliability of the study based on the assumption of repeatability.

Chapter 3 will provide the reader with an in-depth discussion on the various concepts required in ensuing methodological rigour. Thereafter, an overview on the criteria used to ensure trustworthiness in a qualitative study will be offered.

1.9. VALUE OF RESEARCH

Taking into consideration that through the years extensive research has been done on the development and improvement of tutorial programmes (Beizer & Bauer, 2013; Leary et al., 2013; Kitchen, 2012; Underhill, 2012; Ning & Downing, 2010; Bell & Mladenovic, 2008; Jung, Tryssenaar & Wilkins, 2005; Solomon & Crowe, 2001), this study does not aspire to contribute novel theoretical perspectives. More importantly, the study aims to create awareness about the importance of the training, mentoring and supporting role that a teaching and learning coordinator should play in shaping and developing the novice tutor. As a result, this study may change the approach to tutorial practice in the FoE.

1.10. SUMMARY

This chapter highlighted the context and premise of the research. It outlined the rationale and necessity of incorporating peer education, in the form of student-centred tutorials in a HE environment. It also indicated that some tutors still struggle to adapt their teaching style to that of learning facilitators', which in turn affects the quality and purpose of tutorials. Most would agree that the effectiveness of a tutor programme is narrowly linked to the development of its tutors (Elkader, 2011). Therefore, in chapter two an effort will be made to identify and analyse tutor developmental strategies by consulting relevant literature on the training and development of tutors from a HE perspective. Chapter two will also provide the theoretical framework of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

TUTOR DEVELOPMENT: THEORIES, PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to provide the reader with an overview of various tutor developmental processes which, according to the relevant literature, are deemed essential in equipping and preparing tutors for their tutoring role. The literature review starts off by defining tutoring in a HE context and thereafter explores the tutorial theory in general. The chapter also gives an overview of peer-assisted tutoring in the international, national and local arenas.

The next step in the literature review is to identify how HE institutions prepare and develop tutors by unpacking the following aspects of tutor development: a) generic training as a first step towards comprehensive tutor development, b) faculty-specific tutor orientation, c) tutor training seen as a continuous developmental process, and d) factors that affect the continuous development of tutors.

Although great effort goes into the development and training of tutors, that in itself, cannot prevent tutors from encountering challenges that pose a threat to their facilitative practice in general. Therefore, at the concluding stages of this chapter, efforts will be made to identify the possible challenges tutors face in the HE environment that might stifle their facilitative practice.

2.2. DEFINITION OF TUTORING

Falchikov (2001:3) defines tutoring as a learning process where ... *students* (tutors and tutees) *learn with and from each other, normally within the same class or cohort*. This learning process is characterised by specific role taking, where the more knowledgeable and experienced student fulfils the role of the tutor while the less knowledgeable and experienced student fulfils the role of the tutee (ibid.). It is seen as a form of small-group learning where role-players (tutors and tutees) collaboratively

work and learn together (Keup & Shook, 2012; Underhill, 2012; Biggs & Tang, 2007). It is a teaching and learning process that provides students with an opportunity to form part of each other's intellectual and social development (Underhill, 2012; Falchikov, 2001). Falchikov (2001) adds that tutorial interaction among tutors and tutees can further result in the enhancement of both individuals' subject knowledge levels and understanding. Unlike a traditional lecture situation, tutoring always allows for frequent response and feedback. Tutoring is also identified as active learning which is characterised by students constructing their own knowledge by engaging in collaborative learning processes (Wisker et al., 2013). Tutees that are actively engaged learn better than inactive tutees (Biggs & Tang, 2007).

In order to achieve an active learning environment a tutorial should include the following four characteristics, as postulated by Lakey (2010): stimulus material, learning activities (such as work along exercises, one minute essays or concept maps), moments of airing and sharing (to enable tutees to talk about their own constructions of meaning or interpretation) and tutor feedback (to establish whether tutees' learning is still relevant to the tutorial outcomes). Biggs and Tang (2007) add that an active learning environment is known to heighten tutees' physiological arousal in their brains which results in better learning performance. Any tutorial that lacks any of these characteristics are not considered to be a true tutorial (*ibid.*). A distinct element of tutoring, is that each tutee is held accountable for his/her own mastering of relevant module material (Keup & Shook, 2012).

Tutoring as a concept is widely acknowledged and well-documented (Goodlad & Hirst, 1989). The application and implementation thereof, however, differs widely in different contexts (Evans & Moore, 2013). This might be due to the different theoretical tenets informing tutor programmes in higher education.

2.3. THEORETICAL TENETS OF TUTORING

There is an extensive range of tutoring models, underpinned by various theories that are applied in the design and evaluation of tutor programmes. Informed by these

theoretical perspectives on tutoring it may be concluded that tutoring is undisputed for having positive effects on the attitudes and academic performance of both tutors and tutees. A review of some these models reveal that there are also various types of tutoring, requiring particular instructional strategies, depending on the context.

2.3.1. Vygotsky's theory on the zone of proximal development

As a starting point, tutorial pedagogy is best understood when cognitive development is seen through the lens of Vygotsky's theory. According to this theory, students learn best through social interaction and engagement with other, more experienced peers. Under the guidance of a peer tutor, tutees can reach what is described by Vygotsky (1978) as the zone of proximal development. Vygotsky (ibid.) defines the zone of proximal development as the space between what a student can achieve for him- or herself and the next level of potential achievement. The latter becomes possible and attainable through the assistance of a more experienced individual (tutor) or with the collaboration of others (tutees).

One might thus reason that tutors may also reach their own zone of proximal development through engaging in tutorial practices. For instance, in a tutorial, a tutor learns through the process of reformulation, which enables them to fill possible gaps in their own knowledge (Underhill, 2012). An example of reformulation includes tutors simplifying content into more practical and understandable context for themselves as well as their peers.

More recently, Gordon (2008) adds that, linked to this idea of social interaction between more and less experienced peers, the types of learning activities used within the social learning environment also affects tutees' learning experiences and developmental processes. The learning activities within a social environment should thus be designed in such a manner that it caters for tutees' diverse learning needs since they either learn ... *through their ears (auditory), their eyes (visual), their bodies in motion (kinesthetic) or by making a gut-level connection with the information and the group (emotional)* (Lahey, 2010:2). It is also possible that some tutees might use a combination of these learning styles to learn effectively.

2.3.2. Bandura's theory of social learning

In 1977 Bandura developed a social learning theory. This theory claims that modelling is integral to the learning process of students. Bandura (1977) explains that individuals will observe behaviour taking place with the intention to adopt and model similar behaviour in their own contexts. In the context of peer education, tutors will observe and adopt the facilitative teaching behaviour practiced by the teaching and learning coordinator in the tutor training process, with the intention to model the observed behaviour with their peers in tutorials.

Turner and Shepherd (1999) add that successful adoption of modelled behaviour will require tutors to practise that behaviour in their tutor sessions. They furthermore claim that the extent to which tutors are influenced by modelled behaviour during the training process largely depends on the quality of the instruction. Similarly, tutees observe and learn from tutors' facilitative teaching behaviour (Turner & Shepherd, 1999; Bandura, 1977). Tutors thus serve as role models when they provide peers with tutoring in an innovative manner, rather than just restating facts (Turner & Shepherd, 1997). Tutors should thus be cautious in modelling acceptable facilitative teaching behaviour.

2.3.3. Sabin and Allen's role theory

Another theory that informs tutor programmes is the role theory developed by Sabin and Allen (Turner & Shepherd, 1997). This theory is based on social roles and expectations. The idea with Sabin and Allen's theory is that individuals will behave according to an assigned role (*ibid.*). Application of this theory within a tutoring environment will mean that tutors adapt to the role and expectations of a learning facilitator and will, as they gain more teaching experience, develop a better understanding and commitment to their role as tutors.

2.4. DEVELOPMENT OF PEER-ASSISTED TUTORING IN INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL ARENAS

Student attrition, according to Newton and Ender (2010), is believed to be a worldwide phenomenon in many HE institutions. Given this tutoring is widely promoted in higher education to encourage learning and to prevent at-risk students from dropping out.

2.4.1. International examples of tutor programmes

Tutoring as a form of peer learning has been practiced in various curriculum areas and in different contexts of application beyond school (Topping, 2005). In higher education, particularly, the aim of tutoring is either skills development of students (Topping, 2005), provision of academic support to students with learning and physical disabilities (Chen & Liu, 2011), catering for students' academic needs in complex, long distance environments (Evans & Moore, 2013), or reducing student dropout in historically challenging modules (Blanc & Martin, 2012). Table 2.4.1 summarises the different types, focus areas and features of tutor programmes as practiced in a selection of higher education institutions across the globe.

Table 2.2: Variations of tutor programmes in higher education

| Type | Focus area | Features | Institution |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Skills development (Topping, 2005) | A simplistic form of tutoring that specifically focuses on the skill development of students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tutors are assigned by module lecturers on the basis of their academic performances – No formal tutor training required, however, regular consultations with module lecturers are essential – Tutorials take place in a group setup – Tutors utilise a “drill and skill” approach in sessions (e.g. it is expected from tutees to complete paper-based activities to help them master certain academic skills – reading and writing skills) | Faculty of Education, University of Virginia |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tutors take on an authority-figure in monitoring the work and developmental progress of tutees – Tutorial attendance can be either voluntary or compulsory, dependant on module lecturer preference | |
| Specialised cross-aged tutor support (Chen & Liu, 2011) | Students with learning and physical disabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tutors assigned by module lecturers on the basis of recommendation and academic performance – Intensive tutor training required – Tutorials take place on a one-on-one consultation basis | National Formosa University, Taiwan |
| Online peer-assisted tutor support (Evans & Moore, 2013) | Academic support of students in complex, long-distance environments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Online tutors assigned by module lecturers on the basis of academic performance – Tutor training on utilising online technological features – Tutorials take place within an online virtual environment (e.g. interactive forum discussion and online video capturing) – Online virtual environment complemented by computer-aided software (e.g. online tests and interactive activities with immediate feedback) – Tutorial participation can be either voluntary or compulsory, dependant on module lecturer preference | Department of Chemistry, University of Illinois; Arizona State University |
| Supplemental Instruction (Blanc & Martin, 2012) | Peer-assisted study sessions to improve student retention and success within historically difficult courses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tutor appointment process is highly structured (e.g. tutor appointments include application, selection and interview process) – Intensive tutor training with on-going developmental opportunities – Tutors assigned as learning facilitators tasked to incorporate student-centred and collaborative teaching and learning strategies in sessions | University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tutorials to support various teaching and learning purposes (e.g. small group learning environments, support for students with learning and physical disabilities, learning communities, integration of technology to support students in the online environment) – Tutorial attendance is voluntary | |
|--|--|---|--|

According to the features of tutorial programmes outlined above, the Supplemental Instruction (SI) programme has a more intentional approach in utilising all channels of academic support for students. This does not seem to be the case with the other tutor programmes listed in the table. The SI model, for instance, provides cross-aged tutor support to promote both skills development (writing, reading and learning skills) and content enrichment. The SI programme also provides academic support for students with or without learning or physical disabilities. It further targets historically challenging modules to better student throughput and aims to support students through online distance learning. This explains why the UMKC is recognised as the trendsetter with the introduction of SI with its focus on establishing academic support to health science students in “at-risk” modules through the incorporation of collaborative learning strategies and approaches (Blanc & Martin, 2012). Since then, the model was modified and enhanced to support various teaching and learning purposes (e.g. establishment of learning communities, the integration of learning and technology and the support of distance learning support). To date, SI has been utilised in more than 3 500 HE institutions in at least 30 countries worldwide (The International Center for Supplemental Instruction, 2014).

2.4.2. National imperatives for tutor support in SA higher education institutions

In SA there is a dire need for student support (Letseka, Cosser, Breier & Visser, 2010). Steenkamp, Baard and Frick (2012) define student attrition as a student’s inability to successfully complete his/her studies. A study done by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) confirmed that although South Africa showed significant

growth in the enrolment of students and learners in both the schooling and HE sectors since 1994, the graduate output could not keep up with the pace of the country's needs (CHE, 2013). In fact, high student attrition rates and low graduation rates are predominantly evident in many South African HE institutions (Sondlo, 2013).

Most recently, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) had brought forward alarming evidence showing that the South African HE sector was in a state of disarray (CHE, 2013). According to the CHE study, only one in four students would graduate from their undergraduate study careers in regulation time (i.e. taking three years to complete a three-year degree). The CHE further reported that only 35% of the total intake of undergraduate students would graduate within five years. More alarming was the fact that the first-year attrition rate was set at 33%. Finally, it was further found that 55% of undergraduate students would never graduate.

Acknowledging the current situation with regard to high attrition and low throughput and graduation rates, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) proposed in the *'Ministerial Statement on Student Enrolment Planning for Universities 2014/15 – 2019/20'* report, that South African HE institutions should rethink strategies for providing academic support to undergraduate students. In this report the DHET insisted that HE institutions should ensure that measures be put in place to improve the overall level of student throughput while downscaling student attrition (DHET, 2014).

In response to the DHET proposal, tutor programmes have been identified as a powerful mechanism to improve student throughput by catering for the diverse and evolving student profile in potential "at-risk" modules in national HE arenas (Davids, 2014; Duncan, 2012; Keup & Shook, 2012; Steenkamp, Baard & Frick, 2012; Underhill, 2012; Solomon & Crowe, 2001). The increased number of students in the HE environment (also referred to as 'massification'), and students' diverse backgrounds, experiences and abilities, mean that the traditional methods of teaching and learning in HE will no longer be effective (Wisker et al., 2013). Various factors contribute to modules being "at-risk", such as overcrowded lecture sessions and lecturers' lack of teaching experience (Davids, 2014). It has also been documented that students' lack of academic preparedness for the HE environment seriously affects

their throughput and in many cases leads to student dropout (Davids, 2014; Newton & Ender, 2010; Steinert, 2010).

2.4.3. Local initiatives to promote tutor support

Tutor programmes have over time manifested in various forms such as, one-on-one tutoring, small group tutoring, and online-tutoring (*vide par.* 2.4.1). However, the aim of tutoring, which is to enhance a student's learning experience, stayed the same (Leary et al., 2013; Duncan, 2012). One reason for the implementation of tutor programmes in HE institutions is that lectures taking place on a weekly basis, are not seen as the only and ideal mode of delivery for optimal student learning. Underhill (2012) explains that the general lecture session usually results in students being overwhelmed and bombarded with content information. This approach could lead to students experiencing difficulty processing and applying the information obtained from the lecturer. Apart from this, the lecturer's mode of delivery (lecturing) is in some instances depersonalised and lecturer-centred which leaves limited space for interactive and student-centred learning (Sadler, 2012). Biggs and Tang (2007) argue that the flow of information in a lecture is predominantly 'one way' and that students are in most cases limited to questions and requests regarding the clarification of modular content. This form of instruction contrasts with the interactive nature in which tutorials take place. A tutorial provides students an opportunity for ... *participative learning, immediate feedback, swift prompting, and greater student ownership of the learner process* (Topping, 1996:325).

Against this as a background, the UFS has opted for a peer tutoring programme titled the Academic Student Tutorial and Excellence Programme (A_STEP). A peer tutor, also known as a learning facilitator, is in this case a student who has previously excelled in a specific learning area. The programme promotes a student-centred learning approach in small-group settings with the goal of enhancing the learning experiences of students (Letseka et al., 2010). The A_STEP primarily focuses on creating an innovative, academic support network for all Faculties (Health-Sciences, Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences, Humanities,

Education, Theology and Law) on both the main and Qwa-Qwa campuses (CTL A_STEP tutor manual, 2014) and also makes provision for students with disabilities.

The UFS A_STEP is deeply rooted in the UMKC model of SI. In 1993 the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University launched a SA version of the SI model. The video-based version of the UMKC model (Martin & Blanc, 1994) was implemented in the UFS Faculty of Health Sciences in 1995 (Nel, Beylefeld & Nel, 1997).

The A_STEP and SI programmes share the same focus of providing academic support with the goal to enhance academic performance and retention (Ning & Downing, 2010), and both programmes adhere to the following four core principles, as postulated by Blanc and Martin (2012):

- a) tutorials are proactive rather than reactive, in other words, tutorials commence at the start of each semester before tutees encounter academic difficulty later in the semester;
- b) tutorials are directed towards historically challenging modules, also identified as modules “at-risk”;
- c) tutorials are designed to promote a high-level of tutee interaction through collaborative learning processes;
- d) tutors are required to share their session feedback with the module lecturer on a continuous basis.

Although the A_STEP and SI programmes share common pedagogical elements, some differences between the two models are evident, which categorises the A_STEP as a hybrid model. The first contrasting difference is that the SI model requires all tutors to attend lectures. This ensures that tutors share a common understanding of the module content to be tutored (Blanc & Martin, 2012). The A_STEP, on the contrary, takes on a more lenient approach by not requiring tutors to attend lectures. This decision was made due to tutors’ academic obligations and responsibilities at the UFS (CTL A_STEP tutor manual, 2014). The A_STEP, however, does advise tutors to have regular meetings with their respective lecturers on a weekly-basis to discuss modular matters that are seen to affect future tutorials, since a lack of collaboration between the tutor and lecturer may compromise the quality of

tutorials (Falchikov, 2001). The second contrasting difference is that attendance of SI tutorials are voluntary, whereas with the A_STEP tutorial attendance can be either voluntary or compulsory, depending on the lecturers' preferences and expectations (ibid.).

This section affirmed tutoring as a supportive mechanism that may be harnessed to improve students' learning experience and to address modules considered to be "at-risk" (Davids, 2014; Keup & Shook, 2012; Lakey, 2010; Gordon, 2008; Galbraith & Winterbottom, 2011; Solomon & Crowe, 2001). However, as will be pointed out in the paragraphs that follow, the vibrancy and effectiveness of tutor programmes depend largely on the quality and intensity of the tutor orientation and training.

2.5. CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TUTOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Documented research provides comprehensive evidence that the overall quality of tutor training has a great effect on tutors' perceptions and preparedness for the facilitation process (Davids, 2014; Calma & Vista, 2012; Underhill, 2012; De Smet et al., 2010; Rogers, 2008; Falchikov, 2001). Tutor training of high quality enables tutors to create optimal learning environments in which guided learning may take place among their peer-tutees (Mcguire, 2007). Guided learning as a concept, here refers to the facilitation of tutees' learning in a way that enables them to take responsibility and control of their own learning processes (Rogers, 2008). De Smet et al. (2010) report that if such a learning environment is established, the learning experience for tutees appears to be more purposeful.

The question that remains, is what is meant by "quality" tutor training, since supplemental learning in the form of tutoring vary from institution to institution (Roger, 2008) and may be characterised in a variety of ways (Falchikov, 2001). This variance in the environments in which tutor training and development take place, explains why

the processes of tutor training is referred to by some as “fuzzy genres” (Hays, 2006:41).

What complicates the matter even further, is that findings on and reports about tutor training ... *are largely anecdotal, relying mainly on subjective impressions and informal observation made by administrators and coordinators* (Mcguire, 2007:624). In the same vein, Hays (2006:14) reasons that ... *researchers have not put enough effort and time investigating tutor training practices*. Against this as a background, an in-depth analysis was done on how HE institutions locally and abroad proceed with preparing their tutors for their role as facilitators of learning. What surfaced, was a conviction that the following subsections of tutor training and development, discussed in broader detail throughout the remainder of this chapter, are essential in preparing tutors for their tutoring role in a faculty:

- 2.5.1. Generic orientation training as a first step towards comprehensive tutor development (Wisker et al., 2013; Elkader, 2011; Rogers, 2008; Hays, 2006; Falchikov, 2001).
- 2.5.2. Faculty-specific tutor orientation (Kitchen, 2012; Underhill, 2012; De Smet et al., 2010; Rogers, 2008; Roscoe & Chi, 2007).
- 2.5.3. Continuous tutor development (Elkader, 2011; Jung, Tryssenaar & Wilkins, 2005; Kofod et al., 2008).

Components forming part of the continuous development of tutors:

- 2.5.3.1. Peer observation as a mechanism for promoting tutor development (Robinson 2010; Bell & Mladenovic, 2008; Rogers, 2008; Jung, Tryssenaar & Wilkins, 2005).
- 2.5.3.2. The influence of learning spaces on tutor development (Calma & Vista, 2012; Rogers, 2008; Azer, 2005).
- 2.5.3.3. Mentoring support for novice tutors (Wisker et. al., 2013; Davis, 2010; Van Louw & Waghid, 2008; Roscoe & Chi, 2007; Holcomb, 2006; Gay & Stephenson, 1998).
- 2.5.3.4. The role of reflection in the development of tutors (Housego & Parker, 2009; Gardner & Aleksejuniene, 2008; Rickards, Diez, Ehley, Guilbault, Loacker, Hart & Smith, 2008; Biggs & Tang, 2007).

These components, according to a wide scope of literature, as mentioned above, are seen as imperative for adequately preparing tutors to act as facilitators of learning, capable of sustaining an effective tutor programme.

2.5.1. GENERIC ORIENTATION TRAINING AS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS TUTOR DEVELOPMENT

As indicated earlier on in par. 2.4.2. the HE environment is currently experiencing a shift from the traditional, directive means of teaching (such as lecturing) to teaching and learning methods that encourage students to work together collaboratively in group settings to achieve intended learning outcomes (Wisker et al., 2013).

For tutors to be able to utilise a student-centred teaching approach requires a set of techniques that will enable them ... *to 'model', advise and facilitate' the learning process of tutees rather than addressing the curriculum directly through direct instruction* (Biggs & Tang, 2007:118). It has been documented that students are often selected to tutor, based on their proficiency in subject matter and not their teaching techniques (Rogers, 2008). Aligned to the view of Biggs and Tang (2007) that good teaching is not a matter of how much the educator knows, but rather how well he/she can get students engaged in the learning process, a tutor's lack of teaching skill can be potentially detrimental to the intellectual growth of a tutee. Hays (2006) furthermore explains that unless instructors (e.g. teaching and learning coordinators) orientate novice tutors on ways to enhance the learning experiences for tutees, the latter will continue to have the same academic difficulties that brought them to tutorials in the first place. Therefore, to ensure that tutors have the necessary skills to achieve the goal (establishment of a meaningful learning experience for tutees) and purpose (student-centred learning environment) of tutorials, they need to undergo training which emphasises the imperativeness of generic training as a first step. Training methods such as 'modelling', 'role-playing and observations', and 'activities and learning games' are most commonly used in a generic tutor orientation session (Bell & Mladenovic, 2015; Kitchen, 2012; Gosling, 2000; Robinson, 2010; Rogers, 2008; Hays, 2006). These methods are briefly explained below:

2.5.1.1. Modelling

During the generic tutor orientation process, the interaction between the teaching and learning coordinator (instructor) and the tutors become valuable models for beginner tutors. The format in which the instructor presents information reinforces the behaviour of the novice tutor (Robinson, 2010). Modelling, according to Rogers (2008), enables tutors to observe and adopt some of the instructor's behavioural elements for their own future tutorial practice. It is therefore crucial that the instructor's teaching behaviour is inspiring, if it is to elicit imitation by the tutor (ibid.).

Rogers (2008) and Gosling (2000) confirm that the instructor's teaching behaviour, during generic tutor orientation, should include skills such as interpersonal, communication and facilitative teaching skills. It is therefore important that the instructor models positive interactions by means of exhibiting patience, showing respect and having a general positive attitude throughout the orientation session, thus establishing a supportive learning environment for the novice tutor (Bell & Mladenovic, 2015). Such an environment can only be achieved if the instructor displays a genuine interest in the tutor's learning process (Gosling, 2000).

2.5.1.2. Role playing and observation

Tutor programmes also utilise role-playing activities in their training sessions because such activities provide novice tutors with an opportunity to practise what they have learned in a safe environment (Kitchen, 2012; Rogers, 2008). Kitchen (2012:5) adds that role-playing ... *encourages students (tutors) to rehearse their ultimate roles* (i.e. facilitative practices). An example of role-playing includes novice tutors participating in 'mock tutorials'. The instructor will purposefully design the 'mock tutorial' activity in such a manner that it represents a practical tutorial scenario and environment. A possible advantage of role-playing is that the activity provides beginner tutors with a glimpse of a true tutorial experience (Kitchen, 2012).

An observation, in turn, enables a tutor to observe and analyse the 'mock tutorial' scenario during the orientation session. The observation is done with the

intention to start discussions among the tutors on how the session could have been conducted better or differently. These discussions usually result in tutors learning from one another's tutoring practice and behaviour. Rogers (2008:22) reasons that such ... *exposure to potential problems and examples of potential solutions are vital to a tutor's success*. However, over and above observations and role-playing, other activities and learning games are also key to tutor development during orientation (Hays, 2006).

2.5.1.3. Other forms of teaching strategies and learning games

Although tutor programmes in general support role-playing and observations as developmental strategies, the idea is opposed in some circles. Hays (2006), for example, argues that role-playing fails to present a true tutorial environment and as a result creates a false perception of true facilitative practice among beginner tutors. The author (ibid.) instead suggests the incorporation of teaching strategies and learning games as possible strategies to better develop tutors for their future tutoring role. Examples of such teaching strategies are captured in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.2: Teaching strategies and definitions

| Teaching strategies | Definition |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Redirecting questions | A teaching strategy where questions are directed and re-directed to a broader audience of individuals without the presenter providing the answer. |
| Probing questions | A teaching strategy where a question is asked in such a manner that stimulates group interaction, critical reflection and practical application of knowledge between group members. |
| Paired problem solving | A teaching strategy where tutees work together in pairs to solve content related matters or issues. |
| Visual techniques | A teaching strategy where content knowledge is taught through visual stimulation. |

Teaching strategies and learning games, are useful in transferring theory into practice in an active and engaging manner. Michel, Cater and Varela (2009) explain that training programmes include teaching strategies and learning games to help teach

novice tutors the skills they need to promote student-centred learning. It is thus a good idea if the instructor intentionally establishes a productive and stimulating classroom experience to convince tutors that tutees learn best when they are actively engaged in group-orientated learning activities (Michel, Cater & Varela, 2009; Hays, 2006).

2.5.2. FACULTY-SPECIFIC TUTOR ORIENTATION

Apart from generic orientation, faculty-specific tutor orientation within a faculty's academic context seems to have a significant impact on tutors' facilitative skill development and instructional behaviour. It is confirmed by De Smet et al. (2010) that peer tutoring activities and sessions are less effective if teaching and learning coordinators neglect to fundamentally orientate tutors to fit and meet a faculty's educational context. The authors reason that a faculty-specific orientation process provides tutors with a platform to be informed on their duties and responsibilities in a faculty. With that said, further exploration of the possible effects that a lack of faculty-specific orientation might have on the effectiveness and sustainability of a tutor programme and its tutors in general needs to be done.

Researchers in some instances criticize teaching and learning coordinators for not providing novice tutors with fundamental learning opportunities through the use of faculty-specific orientation sessions. Teaching and learning coordinators often simply assume that tutors are sufficiently skilled and informed and therefore need not partake in orientation of this kind (Kofod et al., 2008). To address this issue, the authors suggest that ... *it is critical to create a positive shift in attitudes with respect to tutoring practices not only among tutor trainees but within discipline coordinators as well* (ibid.:2). Teaching and learning coordinators need to accept responsibility for orientating tutors to their role as facilitators of learning in a particular faculty. This means that they have to strictly monitor tutors' instructional behaviour in order to identify possible weaknesses in their tutorial behaviour (Roscoe & Chi, 2007).

A study done by Kitchen (2012:3) on ways of identifying and encouraging student learning in a Medical Faculty at Birmingham University, revealed that ... *medical students acting as tutors, [were] facilitating sessions with their peers without*

having received formal faculty orientation. These tutors facilitated sessions merely based on their own experience and common sense. The possibility of tutees' finding such tutorial sessions unsatisfactory seems inevitable, since tutees' expectations of engaging in a meaningful learning process might be hindered because of a lack of tutor skill and competence (Rogers, 2008).

A similar scenario is described in a study done in a Faculty of Science at New South Wales University (NSWU) in Australia by researchers Kofod et al. (2008). Their research, aimed at establishing the value of faculty-specific tutor orientation, showed that sessional staff (tutors) in their Faculty did not demonstrate any interest in either completing faculty-specific orientation sessions. Their non-compliance to participate was attributed to academic pressure and poor time management. Elkader (2011) highlights the value of a highly structured tutor developmental programme to accommodate tutors who encounter academic constraints and pressures of this nature.

Another study, conducted at the University of Delaware in the United States, indicated that comprehensive faculty-specific orientation sessions for tutors, in addition to generic tutor orientation, were critical to the success of a tutor (Elkader, 2011). This is so because certain aspects of the tutoring role would not always be made explicit through generic tutor orientation interventions (Jung, Tryssenaar & Wilkins, 2005). A comprehensive faculty-specific tutor orientation of optimal quality, according to De Smet et al. (2010), would involve all relevant faculty / departmental role-players and stakeholders in informing novice tutors on their future tutoring roles and responsibilities within the broader faculty context. This process, according to Kofod et al. (2008), is seen as crucial for making tutors aware of certain faculty needs with respect to teaching and learning.

The value of including relevant role-players is also emphasised by Calma and Vista (2012) when they say that novice tutors should fully understand that the nature and context of teaching and learning differ from module to module in a faculty. For this reason, lecturers need to be present at faculty-specific orientation sessions. They add experiential value to orientation sessions by making tutors aware on how their tutoring role aligns with the overall structure of the lecturers' module (Elkader, 2011; Falchikov

(2001). The process of providing tutors with module-specific guidelines during these orientation sessions are also advocated by De Smet et al. (2010). They claim that lecturers' participation in tutor orientation sessions lead to more adequate tutoring behaviour and greater confidence in their own tutoring competences.

Finally, researchers confirm that the quality of orientation meetings has a direct influence on tutors' perceived need for further skill development (Calma & Vista, 2012). One way in which this may be achieved is by continuously developing tutors for their role as learning facilitators.

2.5.3. CONTINUOUS TUTOR DEVELOPMENT

A well-structured developmental programme, according to Elkader (2011), should consist of, not only generic training, but also a combination of on-going developmental opportunities. Researchers such as Newton and Ender (2010), Jung, Tryssenaar and Wilkins (2005) argue that tutor training should not be seen as a once-off training session, but rather as a continuous developmental process which should be evident throughout the tutor's tutoring career. The rationale for a continuous developmental process is to develop and tailor the tutor's facilitative skills on an on-going basis throughout the course of his/her tutoring career with the objective to cater for peer-tutees' shifting learning needs (Elkader, 2011; Lakey, 2010).

Continuous development is thus seen as an important prerequisite for keeping tutors up to date with effective tutoring skills, especially since the facilitation role does not come naturally to every tutor. A study done by Jung, Tryssenaar and Wilkins (2005) at McMaster University in Canada, provides evidence that inexperienced tutors need enhanced support in the form of continuous developmental opportunities, prior to, and throughout tutors' tutoring careers. Similarly, Beizer and Bauer (2013) explain that a once-off training session has a limited and inconsistent influence on the instructional practice of a tutor. According to these researchers, a once-off training session may contribute to tutors not being fully aware of what tutoring entails and thus may result in tutors showing a lack of preparedness in a tutorial setting. This, in turn, may have a negative influence on the effectiveness of tutorials.

Tutor improvement as a product of continuous developmental interventions, is not only perceived positively from a teaching and learning coordinator's or tutor's perspective, but also from the tutee's perspective. According to a study done at the National Formosa University in Taiwan by researchers Chau and Cheng (2010), tutees at their institution identified tutorial sessions to be more purposeful if their tutors partook in various continuous developmental interventions.

The following components, all of which enhance tutors' capacity to best meet tutees' learning needs and expectations in a tutorial setting, will now be discussed: peer observations, availability of learning spaces, mentoring support and self-reflection. These components will, according to a wide array of studies listed in sections 2.5.3.1. – 2.5.3.4., play a decisive role in the continuous development of tutors.

2.5.3.1. Peer observation as a mechanism for promoting tutor development

This section illuminates key underpinning concepts, implications and issues related to peer observation and the influence thereof on the development of tutors' facilitative behaviour and skills in a HE environment.

Effective tutoring is not simply a matter of applying general facilitative learning principles according to the rule. A tutor's facilitative teaching behaviour needs to be adapted to their own personal strengths and tutoring context (Biggs & Tang, 2007). What distinguishes an excellent tutor from the ordinary is ... *their willingness to collect feedback on their own facilitative behaviour from their peers, in order to see where their facilitative learning approaches could be improved* (ibid.:41). One way to provide feedback to a tutor with the intention to improve his/her facilitative practices is through peer observation.

Peer observation, is defined by Robinson (2010) as a developmental process whereby tutors, acting as either observers⁴ or observees⁵ have the opportunity of collaboratively supporting each other's facilitative practice, by providing constructive feedback and engaging in critical reflection on possible ways of improving. Peer observation, according to Jung, Tryssenaar and Wilkins (2005) plays a decisive role in improving tutor's facilitative behaviour continuously throughout their tutoring careers. At the University of Sydney Australia, Bell and Mladenovic (2008) found it to be a useful strategy for monitoring novice tutors' instructional behaviour. The use thereof helps to determine whether novice tutors are indeed practising what they have learnt during generic orientation sessions (Rogers, 2008).

Not only does peer observation attempt to make tutors aware of their own facilitative processes, but it could also be to the teaching and learning coordinator's advantage as it can ensure that facilitation is practised effectively on a continuous basis. Gosling (2000) explains that peer observation may potentially reduce the need for teaching and learning coordinators to carry out comprehensive tutorial evaluation and observation themselves. Lomas and Nicholls (2006) add that when tutors regularly engage in peer observation among themselves, the effectiveness of tutorials is enhanced.

Although peer observation in HE institutions shows numerous benefits for tutor development, the practice also elicits critique (Rogers, 2008). Lomas and Nicholls (2006), for example, explain that peer observation, if not practiced in an informal and supportive learning environment, might negatively affect tutor confidence and halter tutor development. A supportive learning environment refers to a context within which tutors feel at ease with receiving feedback on possible ways of enhancing their own facilitative behaviour (ibid.). This view is echoed by Surgenor (2011) who stresses that peer observation should have a developmental rather than a judgemental character.

⁴ **Observer:** An individual responsible for monitoring and evaluating a peer tutor's instructional behavior.

⁵ **Observee:** An individual being monitored and evaluated by a peer-tutor.

A second challenge that may impact the effectiveness of peer observation is the level of relatedness that might exist between the observer and observee. Robinson (2010) cautions that if the observer and observee are in any way related in terms of friendship, it could affect the validity of the observation process. The author reasons that because of their relatedness, the observer might not provide true reflective and constructive feedback on the facilitative behaviour of the observee. Jung, Tryssenaar and Wilkins (2005) thus stress that the peer observation process should be displayed in a spirit of fair-mindedness and honesty between the two role-players and that the possibility of emotional bonds should not in any way affect the peer observation process.

A third challenge to be considered when dealing with peer observation as a tutor developmental strategy is the negative effect thereof on the human psyche, if not practised with sensitivity. Robinson (2010), for example, notes that peer observation might cause anxiety for both observer and observee. The author explains that much of the anxiety that exists during peer observation is caused by a lack of understanding and clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the two parties. This points to the necessity of the pre-, actual- and post-observation phases to be thoughtfully considered and implemented (*ibid.*).

2.5.3.1.1 Pre-observation phase

The pre-observational phase commences before the actual tutorial takes place and is regarded as the first step in the three-stage peer observation process (Robinson, 2010). It involves the observer and observee engaging in meaningful discussions on the purpose of the observation and what the observation should entail. In essence, it provides clarity on the role and responsibilities of both the observer and observee during this practice (Surgenor, 2011).

In addition, Robinson (2010) points out that the discussion should urge to clarify topics such as tutorial planning, learning objectives, and certain tutoring strategies to be used within the tutorial. The author reasons that these topics affect the quality of the tutorial and should be discussed before the session commences. The pre-

observational phase thus ensures that the observee is well informed on the topics deemed essential for an effective tutorial.

2.5.3.1.2. Actual observation phase

The actual observation is the second phase of the three-stage peer observation process (Robinson, 2010). During this phase, the observer is required to monitor the observee's facilitative behaviour in a tutorial. This is done to identify possible areas that are in need of improvement (Surgenor, 2011). During the actual observation, the observer should, according to Gosling (2000:5), focus on the following aspects of the tutorial ...

opening and closing of session, planning and organization, methods and approach, the different learning strategies used, delivery and pace, tutor's level of content understanding, tutee participation, use of appropriate learning resources, tutor's style and ambience regarding communication and acknowledgement of tutees' learning needs.

To determine whether the aspects mentioned above are indeed implemented and sufficiently monitored would require some form of a checklist. Surgenor (2011) explains that the checklist should stipulate the concepts to be monitored by the observer. This would prevent the observer from relying entirely on subjective interpretation, thus ensuring a valid and genuine observation.

To ensure that the actual observation is beneficial, both role-players need to be adequately informed by their teaching and learning coordinator on the do's and don'ts of peer-observation. Surgenor (2011) stresses that the observer and observee should respect each other's role/s in this tutor developmental process. Only then peer observation becomes a tool which focuses primarily on tutor development rather than on assessment of the tutor's instructional behaviour (Gosling, 2000).

2.5.3.1.3. Post-observation phase

The post-observation phase is the concluding phase in the peer observation process (Robinson, 2010). Gosling (2000:5) defines this phase as a ... *debriefing session among [sic] the observer and observee that follows the proceedings of the actual observation*. Debriefing in this context refers to the interaction that takes place when the observer provides the observee with constructive feedback. According to Robinson (2010), the aim of constructive feedback within a session like this is to provide the observee with an opportunity to reflect on his/her own facilitation and to learn from previous experiences. As noted by, Kitchen (2012:5), ... *the best learning takes place once you can learn from your own experiences*.

Jung, Tryssenaar and Wilkins (2005) are of the opinion that if an individual is in the fortunate position to learn from previous experiences it leads to a practice of self-diagnosis. During self-diagnosis, the observee attempts to identify possible weaknesses within his/her own session. The observee then has the opportunity to reflect and comment on his/her own facilitative practice and behaviour. As indicated by Biggs and Tang (2007), one of the characteristics of excellent tutors is that they continuously reflect on how to tutor even better. The expectation is that the observee will focus on addressing issues that were identified by the observer by ... *using adapted facilitative behaviour in a tutorial, using different tutoring techniques or using additional learning materials or resources in the session* (Gosling, 2000:5).

In this section it was evident that tutor practice and instructional behaviour should be monitored continuously by relevant role-players such as teaching and learning coordinators or peer-tutors. This is done to identify areas of improvement in the tutor's facilitative practice. Once areas of improvement have been identified, tutors would also have the opportunity to further enrich their facilitative skills through participating in various supplemental workshops (Calma & Vista, 2012).

2.5.3.2. The influence of learning spaces on tutor development

Chen and Liu (2011) state that a tutor's facilitative behaviour should be on-going and developmental. Developmental in this sense means that the tutor should continuously learn and grow cognitively (Rogers, 2008). However, what tutors learn should be relevant to their expertise. Azer (2005:676) explains that ... *what tutors learn should move them in a specific direction where they are able to master different sets of tutoring skills*. In order to achieve a state where tutors are free to develop new cognitive skills on a continuous basis would require the availability of additional learning opportunities such as supplemental workshops.

A study done at the National Famosa University in Taiwan, by researchers Chau and Cheng (2010), motivate that administrators (teaching and learning coordinators) should provide extra learning spaces in the form of periodic workshops. These workshops, according to the authors, typically utilise the services of experts in the field of facilitative learning and tutoring to train tutors. Skills to be developed range from bettering facilitative practice to practical ways of enhancing student learning (Chau & Cheng, 2010).

A similar tutor developmental approach is followed at the University of Melbourne Australia. Calma and Vista (2012) report that the implementation of additional tutor developmental workshops at this institution contributes to the sustainability and effectiveness of their tutor programme. The authors explain that not only do additional developmental workshops positively affect the sustainability of the tutor programme, but they also play an essential role in further developing tutors' facilitative skills. According to the authors the focus of these workshops is on crucial elements that have a significant effect on the effectiveness of tutorials. Some of the elements include: how to better plan, structure and facilitate a tutorial, how to incorporate different teaching strategies and how to encourage tutee participation in tutorials.

Both scenarios illustrate the importance of learning spaces, in the form of supplemental training initiatives. It is therefore essential for teaching and learning coordinators to use their discretion in identifying areas in the tutors' instructional

behaviour which are in need of improvement and offer stimulating learning spaces in the form of continuous workshops.

Apart from the provision of supplemental workshops, some tutors require the guidance and support of more experienced tutors. This could be achieved through the process of mentoring which is also seen as a supportive and developmental measure for tutors (Wisker et al., 2013; Holcomb, 2006).

2.5.3.3. Mentoring support for novice tutors

The purpose of this section is to explore the influence of peer mentorship on the continuous development of tutors within the boundaries of higher education. Efforts are made to delve deeper into the underlying concepts of peer mentoring, to uncover the rationale for the use of peer mentors⁶ in a tutor environment, and to establish why literature describes mentoring as a supportive and developmental mechanism harnessed to ... *keep tutors on their toes* (Roscoe & Chi, 2007:535).

Peer mentoring has been identified as yet another strategy to assist beginner tutors in adapting to the tutoring environment (Davis, 2010; Van Louw & Waghid, 2008; Holcomb, 2006). Peer mentoring, usually characterised by seniority (Wisker et al., 2013), is a term generally used to describe the existence of a relationship between a less experienced and an experienced student. To align this to a peer educational and tutorial context, an experienced tutor will take on the role as a mentor, while the novice tutor takes on the role as the mentee. The aim of peer mentoring in this context is for less experienced tutors to gradually attain facilitative skills through the assistance and guidance of experienced tutors (Wisker et al., 2013; Van Louw & Waghid, 2008; Gay & Stephenson, 1998).

As attractive as peer mentoring sounds, Davis (2010) cautions that there is more to effective mentoring than just pairing a mentor to a mentee and hoping the two

⁶ **Mentor:** An experienced person in an educational institution who trains and counsels less experienced students.

role-players will work together effectively. A mentor should strive towards establishing a learning environment in which knowledge is made easily accessible to the mentee. In some instances tutors show a lack of content knowledge of the module they are tutoring. To address this challenge, Davis (ibid.) suggests that regular consultations between the two role players should take place in order to update and refresh the mentee's content knowledge levels.

Metzler and Woessmann (2012) and Falchikov (2001) also stress the importance of tutors possessing thorough subject knowledge on the particular module they are tutoring, saying that the tutor's level and understanding of subject knowledge has a significant impact on the accuracy and effectiveness of the information presented in a tutorial. In addition a mentor should assist a mentee with various pedagogical processes that are deemed to influence the effectiveness of a tutorial (Davis, 2010). Holcomb (2006) explains that the provision of this type of assistance requires thorough knowledge and understanding of the different pedagogical processes such as the tutor's ability to identify and integrate learning strategies that are believed to have an influence on tutee learning (ibid.).

Other than these requirements for an effective mentor-mentee relationship, elements of trust and respect should also exist between the mentor and mentee. Davis (2010) explains that these elements will ensure that the learning experience is positively perceived. This will however require a mentor to have a thorough understanding of the mentor's role and responsibility as a supportive and developmental process. As noted by Holcomb (2006:27), mentors should be fully informed on their role as ... *role model, motivator, communicator, resource person, counsellor, supporter, advisor and guide.*

Furthermore, peer mentoring creates a space for both role-players to share ideas, thoughts and experiences of tutorial processes (Zambrana, Ray, Espino, Castro, Cohen & Eliason, 2015; Johnson & Kardos, 2005). The sharing process not only enables them to learn from each other's experiences, but also tends to alleviate tension associated with tutorial practices (Davis, 2010).

In making provision for a mentor's role as a supportive and developmental measure, Smith (2008) stresses the importance of a teaching and learning coordinator to thoroughly plan and consider the implications involved in the implementation of a mentor programme within a tutorial set-up. The author explains that the use of mentors in a tutor programme is complicated and therefore requires a whole system of training and support mechanisms concerning the socialization of tutors into accepting different mentoring roles and responsibilities. The acceptance of these roles and responsibilities can only be successful if there is a strong relationship among the teaching and learning coordinator and mentors (Colvin & Ashman, 2010). It is thus important that the implementation of mentors as an initiative to support novice tutors should be wisely approached by the teaching and learning coordinator. However, a discussion of how mentor tutors should be prepared for their role of supporting the development of novice tutors falls outside the scope of this study.

As outlined in the preceding paragraphs, developmental initiatives such as additional workshops, peer-observations and even the use of peer-mentors have the potential to greatly enhance the development of tutors. For this to happen, tutors need to look back and reflect on their past tutoring careers to learn from those experiences (Kitchen, 2012).

2.5.3.4. The role of reflection in the development of tutors

As is evident from the literature perspectives outlined above, various role-players such as lecturers, teaching and learning coordinators and even tutors acting as peer-mentors are seen to have a significant influence on the skill development of tutors. However, emergent research reveals that reflective learning, specifically in an electronic format, also has some potential in contributing to tutor skill development (Rickards et al., 2008).

Reflective learning aids, specifically e-portfolios⁷, have been identified as an essential learning tool for developing tutors as facilitators of learning (Rickards et al.,

⁷ **ePortfolio**: A portfolio created in an electronic format by the user.

2008; Gardner & Aleksejuniene, 2008). In fact, Housego and Parker (2009) reason that institutions have been using ePortfolios for many years simply because the use thereof has a substantial impact on the personal skill development of tutors. An ePortfolio is defined as an electronic system which facilitates the development, collection and management of digital resources such as graphical word processing programmes and digital multimedia programmes (Chau & Cheng, 2010). Peacock, Gordon, Murray, Morss and Dunlop, (2010:828) explain that ePortfolios ... *enable tutors to engage in reflection, self-evaluation, action planning and goal setting which contribute to tutor retention and personal skill development*. Similarly, Gardner and Aleksejuniene (2008) agree that ePortfolios are useful for engaging tutors in facilitating the development, collection and management of their own learning experiences over a period of time.

An example where ePortfolios are used in a higher educational context can be found in a study done by Peacock et al. (2010) at the Queen Margaret University in Edinburg Scotland. This study on tutors' perceptions of ePortfolio use revealed that tutors at this institution experienced the compilation and completion of their ePortfolios positively. They explain that ePortfolios contributed to tutors having a reflective approach towards their own tutoring practice, which in turn had an effect on how they planned and practised future sessions. One might therefore argue that if tutors are afforded an opportunity to reflect on their current practice of learning facilitation, with a view to improve their tutorials, a contribution is being made towards their personal development.

Conversely, in spite of all the positive outcomes of ePortfolio use, reflective learning of a technological nature occasionally poses significant pedagogical and technological challenges in an academic environment, all of which should first be considered before implementing it at university or college level (Housego & Parker, 2009). Aligned to this view, Peacock et al. (2010), refer to the danger that tutors may not show sufficient understanding and readiness when a decision is taken to move from paper-based portfolios to an ePortfolio system. In order to address this concern, Gardner and Aleksejuniene (2008) propose that technological support at institutional level should be readily available to assist tutors with queries related to the operation and functionality of ePortfolios.

Another general concern to be dealt with before implementing ePortfolios as a developmental learning strategy would be the anticipated availability of ICT⁸ services and resources to tutors. It should be noted that ePortfolios require tutors to continuously reflect on their own facilitative practices over a period of time (Peacock et al., 2010). Tutors will therefore be tasked to work on their ePortfolios using available ICT services. However, as argued by Mdlongwa (2012) the majority of students at HE institutions have ICT access at their respective institutions, but only a small number of students are fortunate enough to have access to ICT at their personal residences.

In summary, it is evident that ePortfolios have advantages when it comes to involving tutors in self-reflection. However, not all aspects of the initiative are flawless. If teaching and learning coordinators were to make use of e-Portfolios as a tutor developmental tool, then factors such as the availability of ICT services to tutors, as well as tutors' understanding and readiness for ePortfolio use should be thoughtfully considered.

2.6. POSSIBLE CHALLENGES OF TUTORING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Although thorough tutor training and development are seen as essential for empowering tutors, they still experience challenges, regardless of their level of development. In this section an attempt is made to uncover some of the potential challenges tutors may encounter and the effects thereof on their facilitative behaviour in a HE environment. After an analysis of relevant literature, the following aspects were identified as possible hurdles known to affect facilitative practice in general: *mini-lecturing* (Houlden, Collier, Frid, John & Pross, 2001); *dysfunctional group setups* (Kerr, Rumble, Park, Ouwerkerk, Parks, Galluci & Van Lange, 2009); *large group tutorials* (Smith & Cardaciotto, 2012) and *tutors' lack of content expertise* (Kleickmann, Richter, Kunter, Elsner, Besser, Krauss & Baumert, 2013). These challenges will be further elaborated on throughout the remainder of this chapter.

⁸ ICT: Information and communication technology

2.6.1. MINI-LECTURING

As promising as it may sound when tutees take control of their own learning, recent research indicates that peer tutors sometimes ... *tend to steer tutoring sessions rather than to act from a student-centred perspective* (Berghmans, Dochy, Neckebroeck & Struyven, 2012:705). Tutors more often than not find themselves in a position of having a teacher-centred learning approach, rather than the preferred student-centred learning approach in tutorials. This results in tutors getting too involved in the tutees' learning processes which in turn, suppresses the tutees' ability to cooperatively engage in active learning.

Tutors who assume a didactic stance in a tutorial are often novice / beginner tutors (Sullivan, Johnson, Owens & Conway, 2014). Azer (2005:676) reports that beginner tutors ... *usually feel that it is not that easy to change their teaching style to a facilitative format*. Based on a study done in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Queens University in Canada, Houlden et al. (2001) identified non-facilitative behaviour as *mini-lecturing* or simply 're-lecturing'. This form of non-facilitative learning could potentially result in tutees losing interest in attending tutorials and engaging in passive learning throughout the tutorial. Azer (ibid.) reasons that novice tutors are sometimes unsure about their role as tutors and what learning strategies to follow which leaves them with no other option than to adopt a didactic style resulting in passive learning. Passive learning, according to Michel, Cater and Varela (2009:397) is ... *a learning process where tutees are passively receiving information from the tutor while trying to internalize it through some form of memorization*. When this happens, the sole purpose of tutorials, which is to engage tutees in active learning with their peers, is defeated.

2.6.2. DYSFUNCTIONAL GROUP DYNAMICS

Apart from tutors engaging in non-facilitative practices, some other factors might also prohibit active learning in a tutorial environment. Research identifies dysfunctional group dynamics as a challenge which tends to influence the effectiveness of the facilitation process (Houlden et al., 2001). Kerr et al. (2009) define

dysfunctional group dynamics as a phenomenon in which group members act non-cooperatively towards an instructor's teaching practice to the extent where group learning is no longer sustainable.

For a tutorial group to reach the stage where group learning is no longer possible in most cases requires only a single negative group member who has a powerful, detrimental influence on his fellow group members' behaviour (Felps, Mitchell & Byington, 2006). The authors report that a difficult group member is known to negatively influence the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of his/her fellow group members and is generally seen as someone ... *who wishes to chronically display behaviour which asymmetrically impairs group functioning* (Markant & Gureckis, 2014:2). Kerr et al. (2009) refer to this scenario as the "bad apple effect". Kerr et al. (2009) explain that a negative, non-cooperative group member might even provoke other group members to show signs of retaliation which include motivational intervention, rejection and defensiveness. This means that, a cooperative group member might attempt to change his fellow non-cooperative group member's negative behaviour (motivational intervention), reject or ignore the non-cooperative member's negative behaviour (rejection) or protect him/herself from the non-cooperative member's negative behaviour (defensiveness) in order to sustain a cooperative learning environment which forms the essence of a tutorial. In such an environment where tutees fail to learn and cooperate, group learning tends to fail. According to Felps, Mitchell and Byington (2006) a dysfunctional group setup can demotivate a tutor to the extent that he/she experiences social anxiety.

2.6.3. LARGE-NUMBERED TUTORIAL GROUPS

Another significant factor which tutors in a HE context consider as a pitfall in establishing an effective tutorial, is large-numbered tutorial groups (Smith & Cardaciotto, 2012). In a study done by Luck (2010) it was found that if a tutorial setting surpasses 20 tutees, it results in tutors experiencing a loss of facilitative control, leading to anxiety. Ekundayo (2012:35) refers to such a setup as the "overcrowding phenomenon" and defines this phenomenon as an academic environment (tutorial) where a given population (tutees) exceeds the capacity of the instructor (tutor) to

effectively cater for them. Other studies similarly reveal that overcrowded tutorial sessions have the tendency to affect both teaching and learning activities (Davids, 2014). Not only does the lack of one-on-one attention between the tutor and tutee impact negatively on tutees' level of involvement and engagement, but it also reduces their depth of thinking and the overall evaluation rating of the tutor's facilitative instruction (ibid.).

To determine what the optimal class size for student learning is, seems to be a challenging task for many researchers. Hall, Binney and Kennedy (2006) report that the class size debate has been a subject of much contention for more than 70 years and that it is still far from conclusive. Similarly, Blatchford and Lai (2010) explain that previous research has not had designs strong enough to draw reliable conclusions on what an optimal tutorial group estimate should be. In the same vein, Ekundayo (2012:20) argues that *... when a researcher attempts to determine what effect tutorial size has on tutees' learning experience, he/she will not be able to observe and take in account all the other factors that might influence the tutees' learning process, such as tutees' effort and motivation to learn in the session, tutees' temperament, tutees' thoughts and emotions, teaching quality provided to the tutee, etc.*

It can thus be concluded that researchers should not attempt to generalise the size of a tutorial and the effects thereof on the tutee's learning process or experience since the effects of class size and tutee numbers are seen to be too complex and contextual.

2.6.4. LACK OF CONTENT EXPERTISE

From the preceding paragraphs it is evident that the composition and behaviour of tutorial groups, on the one hand, greatly affect tutors' facilitative practice. On the other hand, researchers reveal that tutors' lack of content expertise might also be a potential challenge (Kleickmann et al., 2013). Kirschner (2014) cautions that a tutor's lack of relevant subject knowledge causes more harm than good in an educational environment. Tutors will only be able to produce quality learning opportunities if they

possess adequate subject knowledge of the module they are tutoring (Berghmans et al., 2012).

The tutor's role and responsibility in a tutorial is primarily to assist tutees in improving and mastering modular content knowledge in certain learning areas. For this to materialise, tutors should be able to assist tutees in building on what they already know by filling gaps in their prior knowledge and correcting conceptual errors and misconceptions they might have regarding modular content (Graesser, D'Mello & Cade, 2011). In order for tutors to accomplish this, they should possess sufficient content knowledge (Kleickmann et al., 2013). Content knowledge, as defined by Kleickmann et al. (2013), refers to the tutor's own general understanding of subject matter. Metzler and Woessmann (2012) emphasise that peer educators' level of content expertise is seen to be a determining factor in student learning. They refer to a study done at the University of Munich in Germany which concluded that when tutees are tutored in two different academic subjects they perform significantly better in the module where the tutor's content knowledge is better.

In addition to tutors possessing relevant and sufficient content knowledge literature furthermore reveals that the way in which content knowledge is presented largely impacts the way in which tutees learn. Azer (2005), for instance, mentions that group facilitation is more about the process than about the content. Tutors thus need to show pedagogical content knowledge as well. Ben-Peretz (2011) defines pedagogical content knowledge as the way in which subject matter is made accessible to tutees during tutorials. However, content knowledge is a prerequisite for pedagogical content knowledge. This means that a tutor should first show sound knowledge and understanding of subject matter before attempting to make it accessible to tutees. Content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge need to be intertwined to form "tutoring knowledge" which Berghmans et al. (2012:709) define as *... a body of knowledge that encompasses both knowledge of general pedagogical principles and knowledge of subject matter to be taught and learnt*. In some cases tutors lack this kind of knowledge.

It is furthermore essential that tutorial instruction is of optimal standard, because tutees' experience and perception of the tutorial are closely tied to certain

emotional triggers (Luck, 2010). Furrer, Skinner and Pitzer (2014) explain that a large majority of tutees participate in tutorials because they are either underprepared, struggle with modular content, or experience severe academic pressures due to academic workload. Others attend tutorials while harbouring extreme feelings of fear and anxiety, aggravated by financial, health-related and self-imposed stressors in their social environment (Misra & McKean, 2000). The tutor has to take these factors into account in order to meet tutees' learning needs (Lakey, 2010). It stands to reason that if tutors wish to effectively manage tutees' learning expectations, they need to have sufficient tutor knowledge (Berghmans et al., 2012). If tutors were to show a lack thereof, tutees might show a lack of interest in the tutorial. This reaction, according to Kerr et al. (2009), is a form of tutee retaliation originating in the tutor's incompetence to demonstrate acceptable levels of content knowledge. Tutees might even pose challenging behaviour in the form of defensive and antagonistic behaviour and criticism (Bridges, 2013).

In order to address this challenge, Metzler and Woessmann (2012) advise teaching and learning coordinators to intentionally focus on the tutor's level of subject knowledge before initially recruiting the tutor. This implies thorough inspection of novice tutors' subject knowledge by including subject-related questions in tutor interviews. Additionally, lecturers should also be present in the interview to voice their opinion on the suitability of the applicant.

Ultimately, teaching and learning coordinators should investigate applicants' academic achievements to obtain some form of clarification on their academic performances with regard to the module they will take responsibility for. This must be done before the applicant is invited to the interview. Once appointed, tutors' should be supported to sustain adequate levels of content knowledge. What this implies, is that teaching and learning coordinators should provide regular opportunities for tutors to acquire and develop knowledge related to subject matter (Kleickmann et al., 2013). This could be done through the provision of tutor learning spaces in the form of additional developmental workshops, as previously explained in this chapter.

2.7. SUMMARY

As teaching and learning coordinator in the FoE, opportunities for training novice tutors to prepare them for their role as facilitators of learning frequently arise. Throughout the training process, I often ponder on novice tutors' capability of mastering and retaining the great amount of information shared with them during the gruelling \pm 8 hours of tutor orientation. I entertain this thought, especially because it is confirmed in the literature that tutors often feel overwhelmed by the huge quantities of information they are bombarded with. As a result, they find it difficult to process and retain the information (Beizer & Bauer, 2013). As it was argued in par. 2.5.3, such once-off tutor training sessions may impact negatively on tutors' preparedness for the facilitative role which, in turn, may impact their instructional behaviour and tutoring practice in general. According to current research, as expanded on in the preceding paragraphs, it is clear that tutor development should be an on-going process rather than a once-off training session, confirming that my concern regarding the learning gains of tutors during their initial training period, is justifiable.

In this chapter I provided an overview of the various training and developmental processes that need to be in place for the effective preparation and professional development of tutors for their facilitative teaching roles. The literature inquiry was guided by the following research question: What are the characteristics of tutor training and development, as practiced internationally, nationally and locally? Informed by the plethora of literature perspectives, I realised that various factors play a decisive role in tutor preparedness and effectiveness. In the first instance it is imperative that tutors are familiarised with the tutoring process. This is usually done through generic tutor orientation. Secondly, tutors need to be introduced to a faculty's teaching and learning context to make them realise and understand how their tutoring role aligns with the needs of a faculty. Thirdly, tutor practice and instructional behaviour should be monitored and evaluated by their peers in order to identify areas of improvement. In the fourth place, tutors should be exposed to supplemental workshops with the aim of further enriching their facilitative skills. Pen-ultimately, some tutors require the guidance and support of more experienced tutors in the form of mentoring. Finally, tutors should be given the opportunity to reflect on their facilitative practices at the end

of their tutoring careers to learn from past experiences. Figure 2.1 is a graphic representation of how I made meaning of these insights.

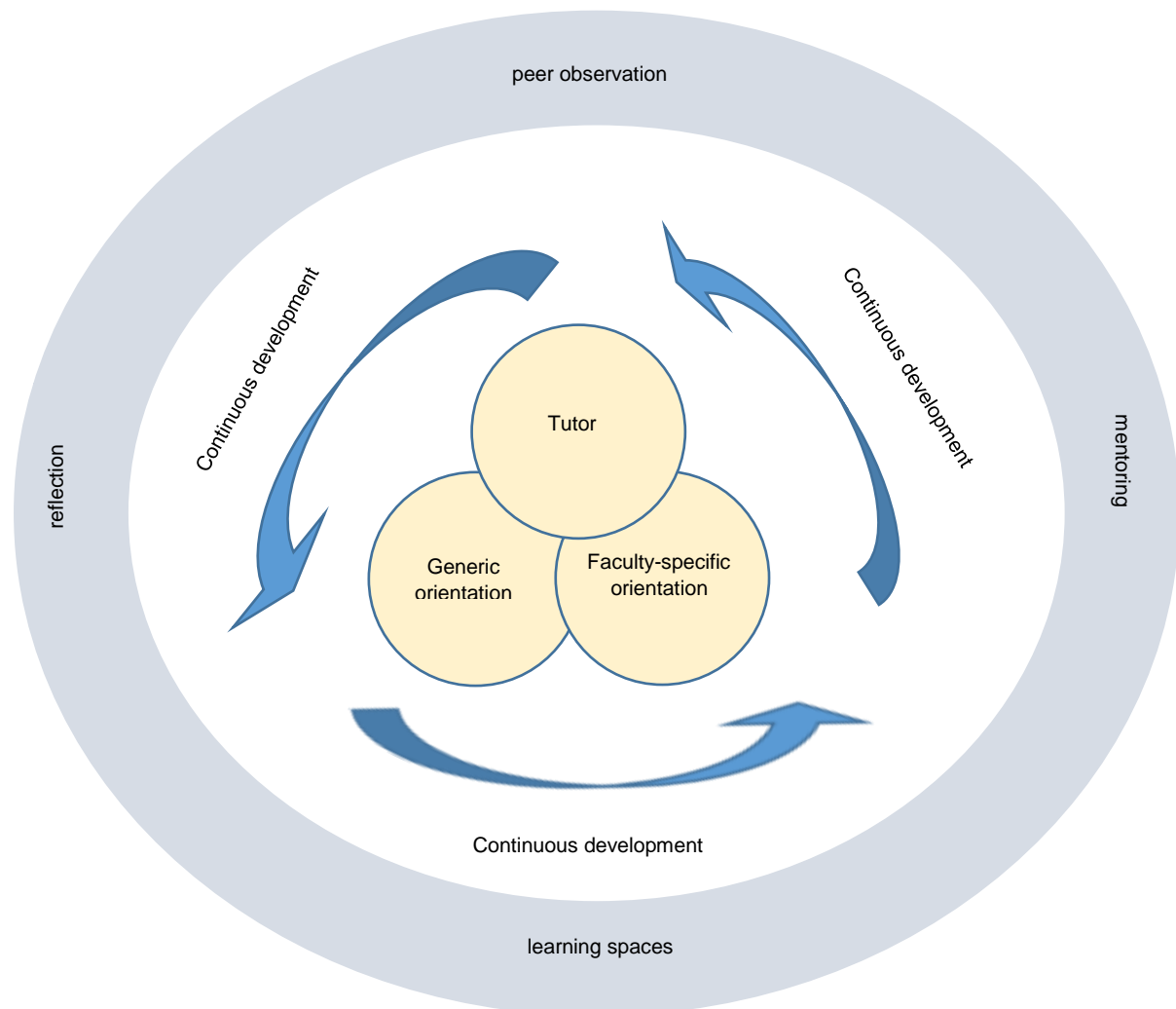


Figure 2.1: Components of tutor training and development processes

During the course of the literature inquiry, I further realised that the level of tutor competence will not necessarily prevent a tutor from encountering challenges. Hence, in response to research question two: ‘What challenges do tutors encounter during their tutorial sessions that might stifle their facilitative teaching practice with their peers?’ this chapter also outlined a variety of factors that might stand in the way of truly facilitative practice.

In Chapter 3 I will describe the methodological framework employed to capture empirical data to respond to the additional research questions, as outlined in par. 1.5.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides details of the following methodological aspects of the study: a) research approach, b) research design, c) data collection and analysis, and d) ensuring methodological rigour. These methodological aspects will then form the framework for the remainder of this chapter.

3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH

The study follows a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research includes some kind of direct encounter with the world whether it is in a form of everyday-life situations or interactions within a selected group of individuals (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Underhill, 2012). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) explain that qualitative research is concerned with the way in which individuals, construct, interpret and provide meaning to different experiences in a social setting. It offers a pathway to confront 'messy facts' of social life in order to make meaning and sense from individuals' social perceptions (Flick, 2015; Gerson & Horowitz, 2002). Qualitative research, with its emphasis on words rather than numbers, is suitable for this study because the perceptions and experiences as shared through stories by various participants and role-players in the study (tutees, tutors, lecturers and teaching and learning coordinators), will be considered (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Merriam, 2002).

The ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning this study are constructivist in nature. Ning and Downing (2010) explain that if a researcher intends to obtain knowledge in order to understand a certain phenomenon, specifically from the participants' point of view, that in itself, is referred to as constructivism. Constructivists claim that the truth is relative and dependent on an individual's own perspective (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Merriam, 2002).

Constructivism builds upon the premise of a social construction of reality (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Zainal, 2007). According to Flick (2015) and Sondlo (2013) constructivists acknowledge the richness of individuals' perceptions, viewpoints, values and understanding of a particular phenomenon associated with a social construct of meaning and discourse.

Working within a constructivist paradigm, permitted the researcher to closely collaborate with the participants (Zainal, 2007). During such collaboration participants have the opportunity to tell and share their stories either verbally or non-verbally (ibid.). Story telling enables participants to describe and express their own unique views and opinions of their social constructs (Bruno, 2004). It results in the researcher having a better understanding of the participants' actions and feelings towards a certain phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Merriam, 2002).

The wide variety of data sources used in this study in order to respond to the series of research questions posed in par. 1.5, called for the utilisation of multiple data collection methods (Palmer, O'Kane & Owens, 2009). Data collection methods thus included: interviews, personal observations, reflective journals and open-ended questionnaire surveys.

Table 3.1 presents an overview of the data-collection methods that were used, each of which will be discussed in greater detail in par. 3.4.3.

Table 3.1: Overview of data collection methods and study events

| Time-frame | Data-collection methods | | | | |
|------------|--|--------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Teaching and learning coordinator interviews | Observations | Reflective journals | Lecturer interviews | Tutee questionnaire surveys |
| Jun 2015 | | | | | X |
| Jul 2015 | | X | X | | |
| Aug 2015 | | X | | | X |
| Sep 2015 | | X | | | |
| Nov 2015 | | | X | | |
| Feb 2016 | X | | | | |
| Mar 2016 | | | | X | |

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

This investigation utilises a case study design. McClurkin (2004:53) describes a case study as a research design where ...

the researcher has the opportunity to explore a programme, an event, a process, or one or more individuals in-depth. The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and the researcher collects detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time.

A case study, according to Baxter and Jack (2008), enables the researcher to study a complex phenomenon within a specific real-life social context. This is done to gain an in-depth understanding of a situation and its meaning for those involved (Flick, 2015). For this particular study, the case included the training, development and instructional behaviour of tutors. The case will be holistically analysed and described by relevant role-players (tutees, tutors, teaching and learning coordinators and lecturers) from different angles bounded within the A_STEP in the FoE over a period of 18 months. Both Flick (2015) and McClurkin (2004) reason that when a case study is applied, it becomes a valuable 'tool' for researchers to evaluate programmes and develop interventions. Opting for what Robson (2002, in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007) refers to as analytical rather than statistical generalisation, this particular case of tutor training and development in one of the seven Faculties of the UFS has the potential to help other researchers to understand similar cases and contexts.

The aim of this study, as explicated in par. 1.4, was thus to describe the training, development and instructional behaviour of tutors with a view to implementing strategies and approaches that will promote effective tutoring practices in the A_STEP in the FoE. Such an approach is also referred to as applied research because it forms part of the researcher's job, with the intention to use the findings of the investigation to improve the effectiveness of a programme (Neuman, 2011).

3.3.1. Role of the researcher

Patton (1999:1198) states that ... *because the researcher is the instrument in qualitative research, a qualitative report must include information about the researcher.* In this investigation, I do acknowledge my 'researcher-as-instrument' role by functioning as a human data collection tool in a naturalistic manner. In other words, my focus will be to analyse tutors' instructional behaviour while they are in the process of practicing facilitative teaching with their peers during tutorials in the Faculty.

As a researcher and teaching and learning coordinator in the FoE, I am fully aware of the merits as well as the drawbacks of the A_STEP. Having worked with several role-players (teaching and learning coordinators, tutors and tutees) and stakeholders (lecturers) in the Faculty over a period of two years, I had some predispositions towards what makes a tutor programme effective.

I do believe that tutors require adequate facilitative training that is complemented by on-going developmental opportunities throughout their tutoring careers within the FoE. I also believe that a tutor's success is largely dependent on the support of his/her peers, teaching and learning coordinators and lecturers in the Faculty. I also think it is imperative that a tutor's facilitative teaching behaviour is evaluated, not only by the teaching and learning coordinator, but also by his/her peers (tutors and tutees) in order to identify areas for improvement in the tutor's facilitative teaching practice.

3.3.2. Limitations of the research design

My aim with this study was to plan and implement strategies and approaches that will promote effective tutoring in the Faculty, which categorises the study as applied research (Patton, 1999). Some authors argue that the utilisation of an applied case study research design might affect the reliability of the study's results. Eichler (2009) reasons that when applied research is performed with the intention to evaluate and improve a programme, it tends to result in the researcher struggling to maintain objectivity within the study. In the same vein, Coetzee (2007) cautions that if the

researcher cannot maintain objectivity, it may lead to biased behaviour because the data collection relies heavily on the researcher's own opinion instead of those of the participants.

In this study, biased behaviour comes into play - though not intentionally. My familiarity with the literature on facilitative teaching and learning practices as well as my involvement in the design and implementation of the A_STEP might have impacted on the findings and conclusions that were reached. However, in the next section I will describe the processes as provided by – Tracy (2010); Shenton (2004); Guba and Lincoln (1994), that I have used to ensure objectivity and hence reduce the bias of the study in terms of data collection.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

As indicated in par. 3.2 of the study, this investigation adopted a qualitative research approach that yielded qualitative data mediated by the researcher as the human instrument of data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative research is known for its usefulness in studying individuals' behaviour (tutors' instructional behaviour) and experiences (lecturer, tutor and tutee experiences) in a naturalistic setting (in the FoE) (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In the next section I will be discussing the selection process and the different research participants utilised in this study.

3.4.1. Selection

This study employed a purposeful selection strategy to explore and describe the training, development and instructional behaviour of tutors in the FoE at the UFS. Participants who are either staff or students in the FoE, were purposefully selected to partake in the investigation on the basis of their knowledge and experience of tutorship related-processes in the Faculty.

3.4.2. Participants

In this investigation, the following individuals served as research participants: tutors, tutees, teaching and learning coordinators and lecturers. Paras 3.4.2.1 – 3.4.2.4 will provide a brief description of each participant's role in the study.

3.4.2.1. Tutors

The first important source of data was the thirty tutors employed in the FoE. Their participation in the study consisted of reflective journal submissions made on a semester basis during the 2015 academic year. These journal submissions served as an end-reflection on their tutoring careers in the FoE.

Journal entries served to illuminate the following (*vide* Appendix A):

- a) tutor perceptions of the tutor training provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL);
- b) tutor-related challenges that might have stifled their facilitative teaching practice in tutorials;
- c) tutor perceptions of their overall tutoring experience in the FoE at the end of their tutoring careers.

3.4.2.2. Tutees

Two hundred tutees in a variety of tutor modules in the FoE participated in this study. Surveys that included check box items and open-ended questions (*vide* Appendix B) were administered at random intervals during the first and second semester of 2015 to tutees in the FoE to gain insight into their perceptions of the A_STEP. It was made clear that their participation in the study was completely voluntary and anonymous.

3.4.2.3. Teaching and learning coordinators

Three teaching and learning coordinators participated in the study. The three individuals were chosen based on their experience of the A_STEP. The intention was for them to provide information, by means of personal interviews, on how they go about training and developing tutors in their respective Faculties (*vide* Appendix C). Their participation was also completely voluntary and anonymous.

3.4.2.4. Lecturers

Five FoE lecturers were randomly selected to form part of this study. The five lecturers were chosen based on their availability and experience of the A_STEP. The intention with their participation was to identify what their perception of tutor support within the Faculty was. This was achieved through individualised interviews (*vide* Appendix D).

In this study all ethical clearance protocols were followed throughout the data collection process. Full consent from all participants involved in the study was obtained (*vide* Appendices A - D).

3.4.3. Methods

As indicated in par. 3.4.2, teaching and learning coordinators, tutors, tutees and lecturers all served as data sources. The following methods of data collection were used to obtain qualitative feedback for answering the research questions in the study: interviews, reflective journal entries, questionnaire surveys and personal observations. Table 3.2 provides an overview of how the data collection methods correspond to the research questions. Subsequently focal theoretical perspectives on each of the methods are discussed.

Table 3.2: Research questions and data collection methods

| Research question | Data collection methods | Participants |
|--|----------------------------|--------------|
| 1. How are tutors trained and developed in other Faculties of the UFS by their teaching and learning coordinators? (Objective 3) | Individual interviews | TLCs |
| 2. What challenges do tutors encounter during their tutorial sessions that might stifle their facilitative teaching practice with their peers? (Objective 2) | Reflective journal entries | Tutors |
| 3. What are the characteristics of the tutoring style and approach used by tutors in the FoE? (Objective 4) | Personal observations | Tutors |
| 4. What are tutors' perceptions of the tutor training provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning? (Objective 4) | Reflective journal entries | Tutors |
| 5. How do lecturers in the FoE perceive the tutoring provided by tutors? (Objective 5) | Individual interviews | Lecturers |
| 6. What are the tutees' perceptions of the tutorial programme in the FoE? (Objective 6) | Questionnaire surveys | Tutees |
| 7. How do tutors perceive their overall experience of being a tutor in the FoE? (Objective 7) | Reflective journal entries | Tutors |

3.4.3.1. Interviews

The interview process is identified as a very effective qualitative data collection measure (Vincent, 2013). The purpose of making use of semi-structured interviews in this study was two-fold: in the first instance, to unravel the complexities of how teaching and learning coordinators at the UFS go about preparing and developing tutors for facilitative practices at their respective Faculties, and secondly, to obtain a better understanding on how lecturers perceive the tutoring provided by their tutors in the FoE.

Interviews, as a method for data collection, provide a researcher with a 'lens' to observe, analyse and understand the participants' own unique social contexts (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002). The assumption is that it is possible to investigate a social setting by allowing participants to talk. Underhill (2012) explains that discussions provide participants with an opportunity to voice their experiences, perceptions and motives of a certain relevant point of interest from their point of view.

A semi-structured interview process makes use of open-ended questions. Open-ended questions require discussions, between the interviewer and interviewee, which are relevant to the inquiry (Underhill, 2012). The intention with this approach is to allow both interviewer and interviewee to move beyond surface talk to more rich discussion of thoughts and feelings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Underhill (2012) cautions that open-ended questions should focus on the research questions of the study and should be prepared well in advance, before the initial interview process commences. Several questions (*vide* Appendix C) were posed to teaching and learning coordinators to generate evidence on possible factors known to influence the effectiveness of tutoring in the A_STEP - research question one. Regarding the interview process with lecturers, certain questions (*vide* Appendix D) were also posed to them to determine how they perceived the tutoring provided by their tutors - research question five.

A concern with utilising semi-structured interviews is the potential of causing anxiety between the interviewer and interviewee (Rohde, Lewinsohn & Seeley, 2006). This was however not the case in this study. Since the researcher (interviewer) and teaching and learning coordinators (interviewees) had been working together for a sustained period of time, a relationship of trust and commitment was established between the two parties (*ibid.*).

The same goes for the interviews that were held between the researcher and the sample of lecturers. During the interview process both lecturers and the researcher were familiar with the processes involved in the tutor programme. This resulted in both parties being at ease during the interview process. Information from the interview process was captured via a recording device.

3.4.3.2. Personal observations

Personal observations as a data collection method was used to examine tutors' instructional behaviour during tutorials. These observations enabled the researcher to analyse, evaluate and comprehend the research participant's own unique individualised facilitative teaching behaviour (Underhill, 2012; Richards & Farrell,

2011). The data obtained through observations thus provided the researcher with a first-hand experience of the phenomenon of interest, namely tutors' facilitative behaviour practiced during tutorials thus responding to research question three of the study.

A distinct feature of an observation is that data are gathered "naturally" from occurring situations or practices (Richards & Farrell, 2011; Zainal, 2007). This allows the researcher to consider everyday behaviour of the participants that might otherwise go unnoticed (Richards & Farrell, 2011). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) explain that observations provide a certain form of 'freshness' to the data which may be denied by other forms of data collection methods such as questionnaire surveys. The authors add that observations enable the researcher to collect data in a physical setting (the environment wherein the tutorial takes place), a human setting (the relationship between the tutors and tutees in a tutorial), an interactional setting (tutors' and tutees' engagement in interactive and collaborative learning) and also a programme setting (tutoring, as an integral part of teaching and learning processes in the FoE) (ibid.).

Furthermore, it should be noted that an observation can either be unstructured, semi-structured or highly structured (Richards & Farrell, 2011; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). During an unstructured observation the researcher has a limited indication of what to observe. Richards and Farrell (2011) explain that the researcher goes into the observation and first observes the process and thereafter decides what the significance of the observation was. A semi-structured observation allows the researcher to use an agenda to evaluate certain aspects of the observation (ibid). A highly-structured observation, in turn, takes place when the researcher knows exactly what to look out for in the observation (Underhill, 2012). This study utilised a highly-structured observation to examine tutors' instructional behaviour. Appendix E provides the reader with the observational protocol that was used.

3.4.3.3. Questionnaire surveys

To respond to research question six of the study, questionnaire surveys were used to obtain feedback from the tutees on whether they were satisfied with the level

of tutoring received in the Faculty. The questionnaire was designed to yield relevant information regarding key objectives and concepts of the study. To this end, questions were formulated in a manner that would allow tutees to comment critically on the tutor's facilitative abilities and approaches in a tutorial. Appendix B provides an overview of questions asked to tutees.

Another crucial feature of a questionnaire survey is its design. The questionnaire used in this study had a semi-structured design and utilised open-ended questions. The use of open-ended questions, according to various literature sources, enable participants to provide their own unique responses and opinions to certain questions (Underhill, 2012; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013; Brace, 2008). It also motivates the respondents to thoroughly complete the survey because of its personalised and individualised approach (Gillham, 2000).

3.4.3.4. Reflective journals

According to Beyliefeld, Nena and Prinsloo (2005) reflection on learning intention, behaviour and practice enhances an individual's learning and skill development. One of the key responsibilities of tutors in the FoE is to compile a reflective journal on a semester basis that serves as an end-reflection of their tutoring careers. The intention with tutors' reflective journal writing was to engage them in a ... *process of reviewing and focussing on the understanding and interpretation of learning experiences* (ibid.:150). A reflective journal, as a method for data collection, has the potential to ... *record experiences, facilitate learning from experiences, develop critical thinking, encourage meta-cognition, increase involvement in and ownership of learning, increase the ability in reflection and thinking and, enhance reflective practice* (Eichler, 2009:101). In other words, learning appears to be more meaningful if the individual has the opportunity to reflect on his/her own past experiences (Azer, 2007).

The view that the ability to write, whether it is formal writing (assignments or well-constructed essays) or informal writing (reflective journal entries), has a significant impact on the learning processes of on an individual, has been well researched and documented (Eichler, 2009; Azer, 2007). Aligned to this view, the

requirement to make regular journal entries enables tutors to make use of cognitive processing through both learning to write and writing to learn (Eichler, 2009). Bazerman (2009) explains that cognitive processing enables an individual to synthesise knowledge based on their past experiences through the process of reflection and writing.

For reflective journal writing to be purposeful, Bazerman (2009) suggests that the topics in the reflective journal should be relevant to the respondent's social context, expertise and practice and that the reflective journal should complement discussions (O'Connell & Dymont, 2011). Beylefeld, Nena and Prinsloo (2005:150) add that ... *reflective writing can be promoted through using a real-word experience as stimulus, and a framework for guiding students' thoughts*. Against this background, reflective writing was used in this study: to identify tutors' perceptions of the tutor training that they had received - research question four; to make tutors think critically about their experiences of being a learning facilitator in the FoE - research question seven; and finally, to identify possible challenges tutors encountered that could have hindered their facilitative behaviour in a tutorial setting - research question two.

Finally, reflective journal writing also creates a space for discussions to take place in a non-verbal manner. Hanby (2000) explains that some individuals feel more at ease to reflect in writing than to speak-up in a social group setting. This then makes reflective journal writing an obvious choice as a data collection tool for this particular study. The tutor portfolio outline, which served as a framework for guiding the tutors' reflective thinking, is attached as Appendix A.

It should be noted that the tutor portfolio outline (Appendix A) was adapted from the generic A_STEP tutor portfolio (Appendix F) that featured in the A_STEP tutor manual (CTL A_STEP tutor manual, 2014).

3.4.4. Data collection process

Data collection in this study spanned a period of 12 months. The number and scope of data collection episodes are summarised in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3: Number and scope of data collection episodes

| Data collection method | Data sources |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Personal interviews | 3 teaching and learning coordinators 5 Lecturers |
| Personal observations | 5 tutor sessions |
| Reflective journals | 30 portfolios |
| Questionnaire survey | 200 tutee respondents |

Content analysis is commonly used by researchers to analyse visual, verbal or written information, to search for patterns, trends and consistencies in the data (Patton, 1999). In this study, I analysed visual information (instructional behaviour of tutors through personal observations), verbal information (personal interviews with teaching and learning coordinators and lecturers) and written information (end-reflections of tutors in their reflective journals) to search for trends and consistencies in the data. This was done to secure meaning from the respondents' feedback and to provide a broad description of the phenomenon under study (ibid.). The aim of the data analysis was to ensure that the data obtained from the different data sources corresponded to the research questions posed in par. 1.5 of the study (Dympna, 2003).

I recorded all interviews by means of a sound recording device and thereafter drafted the recordings in the form of written transcripts. I also analysed transcripts of interviews, observations, reflective journal entries and open-ended questionnaire surveys through a combination of open and axial coding methods with the assistance of a data analysis software package, Nvivo⁹. Initially, I read through the transcripts of the various data sources several times so that I could familiarise myself with the data. Thereafter, I generated categories through an open coding approach (see Appendix G as an example). This approach allowed codes to emerge freely from the participants' own experience, rather than the researcher forcing data into preconceived categories (Moore, 2009). By using Nvivo software I was able to search for patterns among

⁹ **Nvivo**: A text based qualitative data analysis software designed by QSR international and is known to make the analysis of qualitative data more efficient.

responses captured from the different data sources to examine the relationships between the categories, and also to keep count of the particular codes that occurred within the various transcripts. It should also be noted that all names of the participants were withheld to ensure confidentiality (*vide* Appendices A - D). All information were kept confidential and locked up in my office.

3.5. ENSURING METHODOLOGICAL RIGOUR

Renowned educational anthropologist, Frederick Erickson (1985:149), believes that the aim of social research is ... *to persuade the audience that an adequate evidentiary warrant exists for the assertions made and that patterns of generalization within the data set are indeed as the researcher claims they are.* Erickson's views confirm that the data analysis of a study should focus on explaining evidence and identifying disconfirming evidence. This section focuses on the scientific measures that are used to ensure quality (trustworthiness) within this study. The trustworthiness of findings obtained in a qualitative study, is the extent to which the researcher can prove that the results make sense and provides evidence of what it is supposed to prove. An outline is given in table format (Table 3.4) of how the different aspects of trustworthiness were attended to.

Trustworthiness, however, can be defined in various ways and can function differently based on different epistemological and theoretical variations (Koro-Ljunberg, 2010). In this study, Guba and Lincoln's (1994) classic model of naturalistic inquiry was used as the primary measure to determine the trustworthiness of the findings. The authors believe that the following four components: 1) credibility; 2) applicability or transferability; 3) consistency or dependability; 4) neutrality or confirmability decisively influence the trustworthiness of a qualitative study (*ibid.*).

3.5.1. Credibility

Credibility is a term that is used to refer to the believability of research. Credibility demonstrates whether the findings of a study were accurately identified and

described by the researcher (Tracy, 2010; Shenton, 2004; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Guba and Lincoln (1994) recommend a couple of methods that may be used to enhance the credibility of qualitative research. These include: 1) having a prolonged engagement and being a persistent observer in the field as researcher, and, 2) utilising triangulation of research participants.

Additionally, Shenton (2004:64) adds the following methods to Guba and Lincoln's list: 3) *random sampling of participants to serve as informants*; 4) *tactics to ensure honesty of informants' responses*; 5) *iterative questioning*; 6) *the researcher's reflective commentary*; 7) *background, qualifications and experience of the investigator*; 8) *member checks*; 9) *detailed description of the phenomenon under study*. The practical application of these methods is reflected in Table 3.4.

3.5.2. Transferability

Transferability refers to the ability of a researcher to demonstrate that the findings of a study can be applied to a wider population. The lack of generalizability is often identified as a "weakness" of qualitative research (Coetzee, 2007). However, as explained by Shenton (2004), the findings of a qualitative project are usually limited to a small number of specific individuals and environments. As such, the intention is not to generalise the findings and conclusions of a specific study to the contexts of other situations and populations.

To counter this "weakness", Guba and Lincoln (1994) propose triangulation through the use of multiple sources of data to enhance the transferability of the study. Binder and Edwards (2010:240) define triangulation as ... *the use of different techniques for data collection and analysis to study the same phenomenon from different perspectives*. Triangulation was practiced in this study through the use of various data sources as well as a variety of data capturing methods and techniques, as portrayed in Table 3.2.

3.5.3. Dependability

Guba and Lincoln (1994) refer to dependability as the assumption of replicability or repeatability. Coetzee (2007) defines dependability as the level of certainty that the findings of a study can be replicated if the study were to be repeated with the same research participants in the exact same research setting. One way in which dependability in qualitative research can be obtained, is to examine a phenomena from different perspectives (ibid.).

3.5.4. Confirmability

Confirmability is the degree to which the results that were obtained in a study can be confirmed by others (Coetzee, 2007). One way to ensure confirmability in qualitative research is to “check” and “recheck” the end results of an investigation (ibid.). Apart from incorporating this particular approach, the author further proposes that an audit trail of the findings should be available as evidence and confirmation.

Table 3.4 provides a description of how the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were adhered to in this study.

Table 3.4: Criteria for ensuring trustworthiness in a qualitative study

| Aspects of trustworthiness | Application in the study |
|----------------------------|---|
| Credibility | <p>1) Prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field: As researcher, I engaged and interacted with various role-players (teaching and learning coordinators, tutors, lecturers and tutees) in the A_STEP in both the FoE and other Faculties (Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences and Humanities) at the UFS. I also had an observer role in monitoring the instructional behaviour of FoE tutors (par. 3.4.3.2).</p> <p>2) Triangulation: A variety of research participants (tutors, tutees, lecturers and teaching and learning coordinators) were used in this study (par. 3.4.2). The participants’ different viewpoints and experiences were verified against</p> |

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| | <p>one another which resulted in a comprehensive illustration of participant behaviour and experiences.</p> <p>An example of such verification is the evaluation of tutors' facilitative teaching behaviour from two different perspectives: the researcher's perspective (personal observations) and the tutees' perspective (tutee evaluations).</p> <p>3) <i>Random sampling of participants to serve as informants:</i> Interviews were arranged with a random sample of lecturers that were familiar with the A_STEP in the FoE, based on their availability (parr. 3.4.2.4 & 3.4.3.1). Similarly, a random sample of tutees in the FoE were given the opportunity to participate in open-ended questionnaire surveys (par. 3.4.3.3.).</p> <p>4) <i>Tactics to ensure honesty of informants' responses:</i> Participation by tutors, tutees, lecturers and teaching and learning coordinators in this study was voluntary and anonymous. The participants also had the option to refuse to partake in the study (Appendices A - D).</p> <p>5) <i>Background, qualifications and experience of the investigator:</i> As researcher and teaching and learning coordinator in the FoE, I have extensive background knowledge and experience of tutorial processes in the FoE (par. 2.7) and (par. 3.3.1).</p> <p>6) <i>Detailed description of the phenomenon under study:</i> Review of the literature provided a comprehensive picture of tutor training and developmental processes which are seen to impact tutor's facilitative teaching behaviour (par. 2.1).</p> |
| <p>Transferability</p> | <p>To compensate for a possible weakness in a particular data-gathering method, I made use of triangulation:</p> <p>1) By studying the same phenomenon, namely tutors' facilitative teaching behaviour, from both researcher's perspective (par. 3.4.3.2) and a tutees' perspective (par. 3.4.3.3).</p> <p>2) By evaluating the quality of tutor training and developmental processes from both a literature perspective (par. 2.1) and a teaching and learning coordinator perspective (par. 3.4.3.1).</p> |

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Dependability | As researcher I made use of multiple data-collection methods to examine tutoring as a social phenomenon from different angles. (i.e., tutor observations and questionnaire surveys among tutees). |
| Confirmability | In order to verify the confirmability of the study, I created an audit trail of all data collection sources (interview transcripts, reflective journals, tutor evaluations forms and surveys). All of these are available upon request to assess the fairness and accuracy of the data analysis and conclusions of the study. |

3.6. SUMMARY

This chapter described the location of the study in a constructivist paradigm. I explained how I used a case study design to explore and describe the training, development and instructional behaviour of tutors in the FoE. The methods that were used for collecting qualitative data, namely interviews, personal observations, reflective journal entries and questionnaire surveys were discussed against the background of theories that informed the study. I further discussed how the qualitative data were analysed and measures for ensuring quality were considered.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

As indicated in par 3.3., this descriptive qualitative study adopted a case study research design. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) define a case study research design as an intensive, holistic analysis and description of a bounded system. The training, development and instructional behaviour of tutors in the Faculty of Education represent the bounded system in this case. It provides namely a unique example of how tutors develop and behave specifically in the Faculty of Education, thus enabling the researcher to understand how the ideas and abstract theories underlying the A_STEP fit together in a real faculty context (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis and interpretation of the findings in response to the research questions posed in Table 3.2. The findings are graphically portrayed in several figures and tables throughout the remainder of the chapter. *Verbatim* quotations are also included to ratify the researcher's interpretations of participants' responses. *Verbatim* responses are furthermore complemented by a narrative description and explanation against the background of relevant literature perspectives.

The presentation of data is organised according to the different data collection methods that were used (*vide* par. 3.4.3). In the first instance, findings derived from both teaching and learning coordinator (TLC) and lecturer interviews are provided, followed by comprehensive feedback on tutors' observed facilitative behaviour. Thereafter, an analysis of tutors' end-reflections in their reflective journals are done, followed by, an assessment and evaluation of semi-structured questionnaire surveys conducted to obtain tutees' perceptions of the A_STEP.

4.2. INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHING AND LEARNING COORDINATORS

In response to research question one (How are tutors trained and developed by teaching and learning coordinators in other parts of the world, nationally in other South African Universities, and specifically in Faculties of the UFS?), this section reports on how teaching and learning coordinators (TLCs) train and develop tutors that form part of the Academic Student Tutorial and Excellence Programme (A_STEP) in their Faculties at the University of the Free State (UFS). The investigation, which took place during the month of February 2016, consisted of semi-structured interviews with three TLCs employed in different Faculties at the UFS, each of whom had a minimum of two years' experience. Questions posed to the TLCs generated feedback on possible factors known to influence the effectiveness of tutoring in the A_STEP. Table 4.1 provides a general overview of the most salient themes and categories that emerged.

Table 4.1: General overview of findings from semi-structured interviews with TLCs

| ASPECTS DISCUSSED DURING INTERVIEW | THEMES | CATEGORIES |
|--|---|---|
| Mission of the A_STEP | Academic support structure | a) Bridging educational gap BE and HE b) Establishing conducive learning environments c) Improve academic success of students |
| TLC role | Duties and responsibilities | a) Recruitment and training of tutors b) Monitor tutor facilitative teaching behaviour |
| Factors determining tutor competence | Tutor competency | a) Tutor preparedness b) Module content specialist c) Innovative teaching approach |
| Training and developmental opportunities | Training opportunities | a) A_STEP mass-training b) Faculty-specific tutor training |
| | Developmental opportunities | a) Aim of developmental opportunities b) Forms of developmental opportunities |
| | Challenges encountered with the implementation of both training and developmental opportunities | a) Students' academic schedules |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Evaluating tutor performance and behaviour | Analysis of tutors' instructional behaviour | a) TLC observations b) Peer observations c) Challenges experienced with TLC and peer-observations |
| Role of research in tutor training and development | Factors affecting A_STEP research opportunities | a) Administrative duties and responsibilities b) Lack of research experience |
| Strengths of the A_STEP | TLC team spirit Tutor impact | a) TLC support b) TLC innovation a) Innovative tutors b) Academic improvement |
| Weaknesses of the A_STEP | TLC innovation Lack of institutional resources to support tutors | a) Implementation of innovative teaching strategies b) TLCs not informed on innovations a) Growing tutor numbers b) Lack of tutorial venues |

4.2.1. Mission of the A_STEP

The mission of the A_STEP was unmistakably recognised by all three interviewees as the academic support structure that it was intended to be. It was namely credited for.

- a) bridging the educational gap between basic and higher education;
- b) establishing conducive learning environments;
- c) improving the academic success of students.

A comment from TLC 1, serves as an example of how the TLCs perceive first-year students who are not academically prepared for the HE environment to benefit from the A_STEP:

I think A_STEP is there to ... how can I say ... meet students in the middle. Especially if you're talking about a first year's student perspective, to help to bridge the gap between their school work and university work and also to ... just basically to help the students because they are very unprepared when they come to university.

TLC 1

TLC 2 further elaborated on the academic support tutors provide through the establishment of conducive learning environments:

Our mission is closely aligned to that of CTL ... providing support. But how do we do it? With A_STEP of course is that peer learning environment and that conducive learning environment to assist the student to perform in that module at that specific time, all for the purposes of academic success. **TLC 2**

The fact that TLCs emphasize the potential impact of the A_STEP on the academic success of students, corresponds with a wide array of studies claiming that peer education, in the form of student facilitated tutorials, provides a conducive learning environment and ample opportunities for intellectual interaction that may lead to high-order cognitive skill processing for both the tutor and tutee (Wisker et al., 2013; Rogers, 2008; Hays, 2006).

4.2.2. TLC role in the A_STEP

When TLCs were asked what their role in the A_STEP was, their perceptions of their duties and responsibilities, regarding a) recruitment and training of tutors, and b) observing and evaluating the facilitative teaching practices of tutors, were most prominent.

Both TLC 1 and 2 highlighted the importance of training:

My role as a TLC was obviously the training of the tutors and all the admin that goes with it and the A_STEP in the Faculty and also to develop our tutors. **TLC 1**

It was required from me to run the tutor programme and also the training of the tutors and appointments. **TLC 2**

These views resonate with work done by, De Smet et al. (2010), who state that peer tutoring activities and sessions are less effective if TLCs neglect to fundamentally train tutors to fit and meet a faculty's educational context.

It further became clear that TLCs held their duty to monitor and evaluate the instructional behaviour of tutors in high regard, as is evident from the following responses:

... to observe them, to make sure they practise their sessions effectively ... yeah so basically to run the tutorial programme in our faculty. **TLC 2**

... but my role is to get them to reflect on their own practice through the observations I did. **TLC 3**

In this respect, Biggs and Tang (2007) state that the distinguishability between an excellent and an ordinary tutor is his/her willingness to collect feedback on their own facilitative teaching practice from a TLC, in order to realise where facilitative teaching approaches could be improved.

4.2.3. Factors determining tutor competence

TLCs were asked to elaborate on the possible factors that effected tutor competence in the A_STEP. The theme designated to ensuing responses was simply titled "tutor competency" complimented by the following categories: a) tutor preparedness, b) module content specialist and c) innovative teaching approach. All of these aspects were seen to play a decisive role on the learning experiences of tutees.

TLC 1 and 2 stressed the importance of tutors being prepared for their tutorials:

From my point of view, tutor competence is a tutor that is prepared and if the tutor gets into a session he/she will be able to handle any situation, let's put it that way. So our faculty lecturers are supposed to tell our tutors, okay this is

what you need to do for the week, or, this is the section that was covered for the week. The tutor then needs to prepare the section should a student come and have a question about the previous week's work. The tutor must be able to you know ... explain the work. **TLC 1**

As a tutor you need to work with whoever comes to the tutorial, for instance, if I'm differently abled, you should then be able to assist me no matter what.

TLC 2

TLC 2 further stipulated that a tutor's ability to be knowledgeable on modular content formed part of tutor competence:

Tutor competence is derived from the fact that the tutor has passed the module well. **TLC 2**

Aligned to the views of Underhill (2012) and Wisker et al. (2013) that a tutor's ability to make use of innovative teaching approaches is the essence of tutoring, all three TLCs expressed the need for tutors to be skilful in terms of incorporating innovative teaching strategies and approaches in their tutorials:

... to be able to think on their feet and to be able to come up with student engagement activities so that at the end students feel that they understand something and they feel content once they leave the session. So I think a competent tutor is someone who knows and have the skills to be able to assist students where they need help. **TLC 1**

... and is the student able to facilitate the learning process of his peers. **TLC 2**

For me tutor competence would surely be if the tutor can help students pass difficult modules in a different manner. Remember that the tutorial is much different from a lecture. So we train tutors to use different teaching strategies and to be innovative and if they manage to pull it off by using a different teaching approach and then make students pass that for me is a competent tutor.

TLC 3

Underhill (2012) confirms that the different TLCs responses, categorised as tutor preparedness, tutors being module content specialists and tutors utilising innovative teaching approaches, have a great impact on the learning experience of a tutee. In the first instance, the lack of tutor preparedness can be potentially detrimental to the intellectual growth of a tutee (also *vide* Hays, 2006). The author explains that unless tutors are prepared to enhance the learning experiences for tutees, tutees will continue to have the same academic difficulties that brought them to tutorials in the first place (*ibid.*).

Metzler and Woessmann (2012), in turn, stress the importance of tutors possessing thorough subject knowledge on the particular module they are tutoring. The authors have found that the tutor's level and understanding of subject knowledge has a significant impact on the accuracy and effectiveness of the information presented in a tutorial (*ibid.*).

4.2.4. Training and developmental opportunities

When TLCs were asked to provide details on the types of tutor training and developmental opportunities available to tutors in the A_STEP, three notable themes emerged from the discussion: a) training opportunities, b) developmental opportunities, and c) challenges encountered with the implementation of both training and developmental opportunities.

With regard to the availability of training opportunities, two topics, namely A_STEP mass-training, and Faculty-specific tutor training dominated the discussion. The A_STEP mass-training session that was compulsory for all tutors, was described by TLC 3 in the following manner:

This year we used a variety of things for instance, the mass-training is one day and the faculty-specific training is the next day. With the mass-training we usually do the do's and don'ts of tutoring, we include tutor roles and responsibilities and we try and make the training session very interactive by using SI and all of that. So, it's almost like a real tutorial session, we want to

show students what tutoring is all about. We try really hard to do it in another manner because tutoring is different from lecturing you know, so yes ... mostly active learning and so on.

TLC 3

The way in which TLC 3 described the A_STEP mass-training session shows that it meets the requirements of a generic tutor training session, which, according to Hays (2006), ensures that tutors develop the necessary skills to achieve the goal (students' academic success) and purpose (conducive student-centred learning environment) of tutorials.

The manner in which this person described the Faculty-specific training that followed the A_STEP mass-training session indicates that he/she instinctively realises the need for fine-tuning tutor training to different Faculty contexts:

Okay so after the mass-training, which is obviously a must for all tutors, the faculty-specific training takes place in the same week. During this specific training session we try and get relevant people in the faculty involved like the lecturers and so on and yes basically this training session will be all about how we can fine tune our tutors to meet the needs of the faculty because tutoring obviously differs from faculty to faculty... modules in Natural and Agricultural Sciences are different from modules in Humanities and the same applies for the types of students.

TLC 3

This finding corresponds with the view expressed by De Smet et al. (2010) that peer tutoring activities and sessions are less effective if TLCs neglect to fundamentally orientate tutors to fit and meet a faculty's educational context. The authors reason that a Faculty-specific training process provides tutors with a platform to be informed on their duties and responsibilities in a Faculty.

The idea that a once-off tutor training session should be supplemented with Faculty-specific training, as well as on-going development opportunities for tutors throughout their careers, is well documented (Newton & Ender, 2010; Jung, Tryssenaar & Wilkins, 2005). Similarly, the question on the availability of

developmental opportunities elicited comments on the format and importance of developmental opportunities.

TLC interviewees differentiated between tutor training (A_STEP mass-training / Faculty-specific training) and additional developmental opportunities. TLC 1, for example, elaborated on the meaning of development, as opposed to training:

I think tutor development is more than just training tutors, we taught them tutor skills in the mass training and they can go and use these skills and strategies in their sessions. Tutor development I think is more about the development of the tutor and them basically improving themselves as a person and not just training them on tutoring skills but where they could actually use the skills to develop themselves as an academic. So I think there is a difference between just tutor training and tutor development. Tutor development is more of a continuous process.

TLC 1

TLC 2 went one step further in identifying the different forms of developmental opportunities available to tutors in the A_STEP:

The USD [Unit for students with disabilities], DD [Difficult Dialogues], [AA] Academic Advising and Finer Arts of Facilitation workshops would probably fall under the developmental structure of tutors... I think with tutor development the human element comes in and plays a role you know.... It really feels like the more we give these guys [tutors] training and additional support the better they get.

TLC 2

Alongside feedback on the availability and necessity of training and developmental opportunities, the challenges related to the implementation thereof was also discussed. TLC1, for example, expressed the view that although developmental opportunities (AA, USD and DD) were available to all tutors, their busy academic schedules prevented them from attending these interventions:

... there always seem to be some problem with what that is concerned so [tutors] never get to go to the UDL trainings. Other training initiatives have been

offered but it has not really realised and a lot of tutors have not been able to attend due to their hectic academic schedule and timetable especially in the Science Faculty. It is quite packed so for them just to get free time to go to trainings even on the weekends are challenging, especially, for the Biochemistry students because they have their practicals on the weekends. So it's hard for them to actually attend these sessions. **TLC 1**

This particular challenge experienced by TLC 1 seems to have wider relevance in the broader HE context. Kofod et al. (2008), for instance, argued that tutors in the Faculty of Science at the New South Wales University (NSWU) in Australia did not demonstrate any interest in either completing developmental sessions, or in undertaking it at all. Their non-compliance to participate was attributed to academic pressure and poor time management. In the same vein, Elkader (2011) highlights the value of a highly structured tutor developmental programme to accommodate tutors who encounter academic constraints and pressures.

4.2.5. Evaluating tutor performance and behaviour

Latching on to the discussion of the duties and responsibilities of TLCs, interviewees were asked to comment on the manner in which they monitored and evaluated the facilitative teaching behaviour of tutors. Three categories of responses, relating to: a) TLC observations, b) peer-observations and c) challenges experienced with both TLC and peer-observations, were identified.

Roscoe and Chi (2007) state that TLCs should strictly monitor tutors' instructional behaviour in order to identify possible weaknesses in their facilitative teaching practices. Rogers (2008) similarly reasons that a lack of monitoring by TLCs, might greatly affect the quality of tutorials and, eventually, the efficacy of the tutor programme. The degree to which the TLC observations lived up to these expectations became evident when TLCs 1 and 3 reported that he/she observed the instructional behaviour of tutors on a single occasion only by using a tutor evaluation instrument, such as a marking sheet:

... usually we do that [evaluate tutors' instructional behaviour] through observation. So we try to observe the tutors once to see how they actually do their tutorial sessions and usually we use a marking sheet to evaluate them.

TLC 1

We use observations to evaluate tutor sessions. How it works is that we go later in the semester and use the tutor evaluation sheet and just check the tutors' tutoring styles and so on. After the tutorial we also try and meet with them and in some cases give some suggestions on how they could improve their teaching.

TLC 3

Both TLCs expressed the wish that they had observed tutors more often. They attributed their lack of observations due to the growing number of tutors in their Faculties, their administrative obligations and responsibilities, as well as time constraints due to work-related matters:

Like I said, I try to observe everybody once but because of all the capturing and administration in the office, I sometimes don't get the time to observe all the tutors again. That is really an area to improve on.

TLC 1

It would be ideal to observe them more than once but because of the A_STEP that is growing and I'm using so many tutors it is very difficult to observe everybody more than once.

TLC 3

Apart from observations undertaken by the TLCs themselves, they further reported on the use of peer-observation as an additional strategy to monitor tutors' instructional behaviour:

... then also we have peer-observations, where we ask their peers [other tutors] to observe them [tutors] and they also have to hand in an observation sheet.

TLC 1

Although peer-observations were perceived to be a strategy that ensures quality within tutorials, it mostly yielded negative feedback from TLCs. TLC 1, for instance, questioned the validity of the strategy:

I honestly think the peer observations don't really work because you know ... it is sometimes a friend observing a friend, there is no ... how can I say ... you don't actually know if the tutor has actually observed or just filled in the form, it feels as if the tutors are not evaluating or observing another tutor effectively. So I don't really think it works.

TLC 1

This 'friend observing a friend' phenomenon is also seen as a challenge which greatly affects the effectiveness of peer-observations in wider circles. Robinson (2010), for example, cautions that if the observer and observee are in any way related in terms of friendship, where both role-players share an emotional/friendship bond, it could affect the validity of the observation process. The author reasons that because of their relatedness, the observer might not provide true reflective and constructive feedback on the facilitative behaviour of the observee.

Finally, the fact that all three TLCs raised concerns about the peer-observation strategy might be indicative of tutors not being informed on their role and responsibilities as observers or observees (*vide par.* 2.5.3.1). Therefore, to ensure that the actual observation is beneficial, both role-players need to be adequately informed by their TLCs on the do's and don'ts of peer-observation. Surgenor (2011) stresses that the observer and observee should respect each other's role/s in this tutor developmental process. Only then peer-observation becomes a tool focusing primarily on tutor development rather than on assessment of the tutor's instructional behaviour (Gosling, 2000).

4.2.6. The role of research in tutor training and development

TLCs were asked whether research played any role in the training and development of tutors in the A_STEP. In response, they confessed that certain work-related factors prohibited them from doing research. The two most predominant

aspects which affected research opportunities in the A_STEP were, a) administrative duties and responsibilities, and b) lack of research experience, as is evident from the direct quotations below:

... well not so much the research part because the admin part of the TLC job gets quite hectic so I was mostly sitting and entering registers. **TLC 1**

When I did start reading up there were some things I tried to implement or ask tutors to try out especially where student engagement activities were concerned but most of the time it wasn't possible because there wasn't any time to do research. **TLC 2**

You know this year we started to look at some research of better teaching strategies and so on but we are all still new to the research thing. So at the moment, we are not really researching tutor stuff. **TLC 3**

The lack of research done by TLCs could be considered as a possible flaw in the A_STEP. One might question the effectiveness of tutor training and development if TLCs themselves show a lack of awareness regarding facilitative teaching and learning strategies practiced in the HE environment.

4.2.7. Strengths of the A_STEP

The pen-ultimate question on the interview protocol asked TLCs to elaborate on the possible strengths of the A_STEP. Two overarching themes surfaced from their responses, namely a) the TLC team spirit and b) tutor impact. The TLC team spirit refers to support rendered and innovation initiated by TLCs. Tutor impact, on the other hand, refers to positive outcomes of their innovative teaching strategies.

The main strength, according to TLC 1 was the team spirit among TLCs. Apart from the team functioning as a unit, TLCs 1 and 2 further reported on the team's ability to be innovative in terms of improving the A_STEP continuously:

You know when I look at A_STEP and the team it just feels like we have grown so much over the last couple of months, if you think about all the new things added to the programme that didn't exist in the past. **TLC 1**

I think the TLCs work quite well together, they are very innovative. I like the idea where they have strategic planning for the year to come because that is one of the positive things of the A_STEP programme and that they manage to have all these innovative ideas and try to implement them. **TLC 2**

All three TLC respondents commended the tutors for the positive impact they have on students' academic success:

TLC 1 reported that tutors were innovative in terms of providing students with academic assistance:

... with the tutors I think every year we get better tutors that are willing to go the extra mile. You know it is actually amazing to see what the tutors are doing and how they are trying to be innovative with the students so I think that is very exciting with the A_STEP programme. **TLC 1**

TLCs 2 and 3, in turn, seemed to be confident in the knowledge that tutors were making a tangible contribution to government's imperative to put measures in place to enhance student throughput (DHET, 2014):

What really stands out for me is that we can actually see the impact that tutors have on students and how the students perform. The reports have shown that it works, even if you look at the tutors themselves they enjoy it. **TLC 2**

... the strengths of the tutor programme will probably be the effect of the programme on students and how they perform with a tutor and without a tutor. I really feel that tutors help students improve their marks and you know the reports also shows that. So yes, most definitely the impact tutors have on their [tutees] academics. **TLC 3**

4.2.8. Weaknesses of the A_STEP

As the interview process came to a close, TLCs were asked whether they could identify any weaknesses in the A_STEP. Paradoxically, TLC innovation which TLCs previously reported on as a strength (*vide par.* 4.2.7) was mentioned as a weakness. They further reported that the lack of venue availability for tutorials negatively impacted on the effectiveness of the A_STEP.

TLC 1 expressed frustration with the way in which innovative ideas were put into practice:

A weakness for me is the fact that we do have these innovative ideas but I think sometimes we implement them too fast and not gradually and that for me is the only real weakness with the programme. **TLC 1**

This approach also resulted in TLCs not being thoroughly informed on what the innovations entailed:

... not everybody is on par with the latest happenings you know. The team pushes a lot of new things and in some cases we don't really think things through it makes things feel a bit inconsistent. **TLC 2**

Ultimately, TLCs 1 and 3 referred to the growing rate of tutor numbers in the A_STEP and the adverse effects thereof on the UFS, in terms of venue availability:

I think sometimes we have too many tutors and limited venues for them. This is really a big challenge for NAS [Natural and Agricultural Sciences] to get everybody settled in a venue to have tutorials. I usually struggle for weeks to get everybody venues that suits them and they also get annoyed with this process. **TLC 1**

... then it's not really necessarily a weakness in the A_STEP programme, I just think it's a university problem because the amount of students that we have ... the venues can't accommodate all the students. **TLC 3**

4.2.9. Concluding comments

The objective of this sub-investigation (par. 4.2) was to determine the factors that were seen to affect the quality of tutoring in the A_STEP. From the TLC's point of view, tutoring of high quality should meet the following requirements: a) tutors should have sound content knowledge of the modules they tutor; b) they should partake in the different training and developmental events catered for by the A_STEP; c) once in the field of tutoring, tutors' facilitative teaching practice should be monitored.

On the downside, TLCs raised the following concerns: a) lack of tutorial venues; b) lack of tutor observations done; c) challenges with the peer-observation process; d) lack of research done by TLCs; e) low level of continuous development done by tutors.

4.3. INTERVIEWS WITH LECTURERS

In response to research question five (How do lecturers perceive the tutoring provided by tutors?), the purpose of this section was to investigate, by means of a series of interviews, how lecturers in the FoE perceived tutoring provided by the tutors. The investigation took the form of semi-structured interviews with five lecturers familiar with the A_STEP. The respondents were randomly selected, subject to their availability in the Faculty. Various open-ended questions were posed to the lecturers (*vide* Appendix D), and their responses were recorded. Verbatim transcription, followed by content analysis, rendered the conceptual map portrayed in Figure 4.1 which served to support the interpretation of the findings.

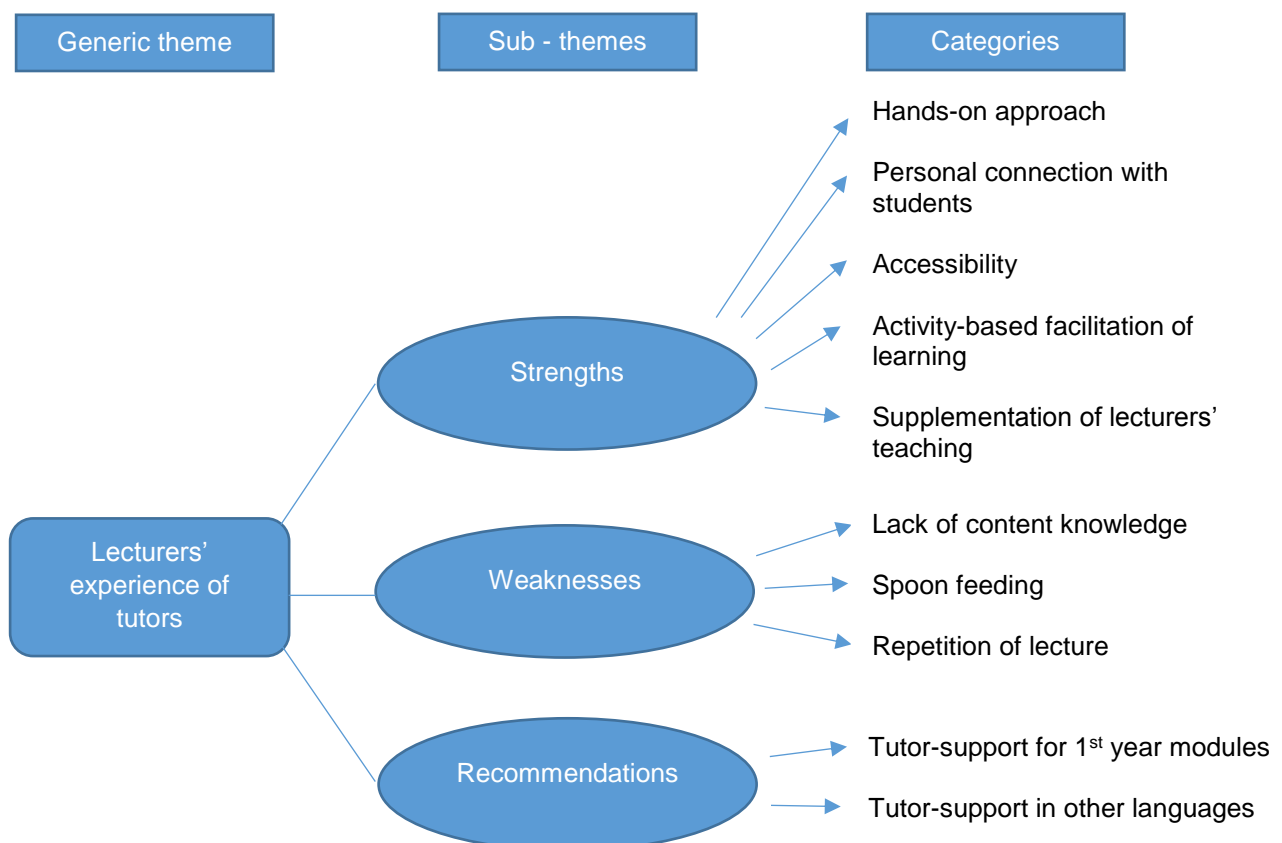


Figure 4.1: Findings from semi-structured interviews

4.3.1. Lecturer experience of tutor use

Lecturers were asked to discuss their experiences of tutor use in their modules. The following factors affected their experience of tutor use in their various modules: a) misconception of tutor support, b) tutors' facilitative teaching and learning approach, and c) concerns with teaching and learning support.

Lecturer 2 narrated how a misconception about the purpose of tutorials caused a slow-start:

Die ervaring het baie stadig gekom in die sin van dit [tutoriale] begin maar met 'n 'trail-and-error run' om rede dit iets nuuts was, so ek't eers in die begin gedink dis nou 'n herhaling van my klas, of module. Ek het half gedink, hoekom is dit nou nodig om dieselfde inligting vir studente te herhaal? So dis eers hoe ek dit ervaar het, half onnodig aan die begin.

[The experience came very slow in terms of it [tutorials] starting off as a 'trial-and-error' run, reason being that I initially thought it's going to be a repeat of my class, or module. I thought, why should it be necessary to repeat the same information for the students? So, that is how I experience it, rather unnecessary initially.]

Lecturer 2

This comment confirms some lecturers' lack of knowledge regarding tutor pedagogy. In future the TLC should prioritise making lecturers more aware of the differentiation between lecturer and tutor roles in the A_STEP. However, after becoming more familiar with the process of using tutors, this respondent realised the uniqueness and value thereof:

... so ek het heeltemal 'n wanpersepsie gehad en gedink dit is 'n herhaling van die module en lesing en later het ek besef hulle [tutors] kan eintlik baie breër gaan. Ek het opgemerk dat hulle aanbiedings baie anders is as ons sin.

[... so I entirely had a misconception of tutorials and thought it was a repeat of the module and lecture and only later did I realise that they [tutors] can actually go much deeper. I realised that their presentations are different from ours.]

Lecturer 2

Other respondents had similar experiences to report:

What I find valuable about the tutors is their teaching approach. I was initially under the impression that tutorials are a repeat of the lectures for students that struggled or missed classes but that was not the case. They [tutors] bring something else to the table and they engage on the students' level of learning.

Lecturer 3

... what I like about their [tutors] teaching approach, is that they don't repeat the lecture session ... I think they interact more on the students' level.

Lecturer 4

After acknowledging tutors' different teaching approaches, they further reported on the teaching strategies used to complement the learning experience of students:

Hulle [tutors] is ook baie meer 'savvy' as dit kom met tegnologie ensovoorts. Die tutor wat ek gehad het bring baie meer video's en internet bronne in en sy is ook baie selektief oor wat sy gaan bespreek. Sy weet presies wat om te kry van die internet af, watter bronne en video's om te gebruik om die module te 'enhance', dis eintlik great.

[They [tutors] are also savvy regarding technology-use etc. The tutor that I had made use of much more videos and internet sources and she was very selective about what she was planning to discuss. She knew exactly what to use from the internet, what sources and videos to incorporate to enhance the effectiveness of the module, it's actually great.]

Lecturer 2

However, apart from an overall positive response regarding the tutor's facilitative teaching approach, lecturers also raised a concern that tutors provide 'too much' academic assistance to students in their undergraduate studies. They contemplated the effects thereof on their future academic development, suggesting that tutoring might border on spoon-feeding and the breeding of dependent learning behaviour:

Mense is somtyds net bang, hoe kan ek se, die feit dat die studente so 'dependant' raak op hulle [tutors], in die sin dat studente altyd weet daar is daai 'support mechanism' wat mens nie altyd weet of dit baie goed is nie want nou kom hulle by 'M-s' [M-Studie] en 'D-s' [PhD-Studie] en daai 'support' is nie daar nie dan val hulle plat.

[One need to be cautious, how can I say, the fact that students get so dependent on tutors, in terms of students knowing that tutor support is always available and I don't know if that is good because if it comes to their Master Studies and Doctoral Studies, that support might not be there and then they fail.]

Lecturer 2

I do however have a concern with the spoon-feeding of information. Students in their 3rd year should take responsibility for their own learning. That is perhaps the only thing bothering me with the tutoring support, because it makes students lazy.

Lecturer 3

4.3.2. Tutor impact on academic success of students

When asked whether tutors contributed to the academic success of students, all five lecturers responded positively. The various factors to which they contributed the academic success of students are summarised in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Tutor-related factors which, according to lecturers, contribute to students' academic success

| Student / tutor behaviour that contributes to academic success | Qualifying verbatim responses |
|--|---|
| 1. Students are more at ease with tutors | <p><i>... hulle is meer gemaklik om tutors vrae te vra as vir my.</i> <i>[they are more comfortable asking tutors questions than asking me.]</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Lecturer 1</p> |
| 2. Tutors' focus on problematic content areas as pointed out by lecturer | <p><i>... wat dit ook 'nice' maak is dat ek partykeer vir tutors vra om na sekere gedeeltes van die teorie te kyk, as hul [studente] byvoorbeeld drooggemaak het in die toets, sodat tutors dit net weer bespreek op 'n ander manier.</i></p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <i>[What is also meaningful, is that I sometimes ask them [tutors] to focus on certain sections of the theory, for instance when they [students] struggled in their tests, so that the tutor can explain the theory again in a different manner.]</i> Lecturer 1 |
| 3. Tutors' hands-on teaching Approach | <i>... hulle 'teaching approach' is verseker meer 'hands-on'. [Their teaching approach is definitely more hands-on.]</i> Lecturer 2 |
| 4. Tutors' use of a variety of teaching strategies | <i>... veral wat die oefeninge betref is dit baie belangrik, hul doen baie aktiwiteite met die studente en dit help baie. [The exercises being done are very important, they do a lot of activities with the students and it helps.]</i> Lecturer 5 |
| 5. Mutual benefit for both students and tutors which creates a positive attitude towards the subject | <i>... hulle [tutors] leer ook van die module meer en ontwikkel 'n passie vir die vak. [They [tutors] also learn more about the module and develop passion for the module.]</i> Lecturer 1 |

All of these insights are well known and documented in the literature (*vide* Davids, 2014; Calma & Vista, 2012; De Smet et al., 2010; Powel, 1997). The first-hand experience of how tutorials positively impact student learning, however, caused lecturers in the FoE to look differently at tutorials as a support mechanism, as is evident from their comments.

4.3.3. Recommendability of tutorials

In response to the probe whether they would recommend tutor support to their colleagues in the Faculty, all five lecturers once again responded positively. Table 4.3 is a summary of reasons that were provided.

Table 4.3: Reasons provided by lecturers for recommending the use of tutorials

| Reason | Verbatim responses |
|--|--|
| 1. Provision of assistance and support | <i>... takes the burden off your shoulders</i> Lecturer 1 |
| 2. Ability to use ICT | <i>... they are technology savvy</i> Lecturer 2 |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3. Variety of teaching approaches | <i>... They bring something different to the table</i> Lecturer 3 |
| 4. Personal bond with students | <i>... they know the students</i> Lecturer 4 |
| 5. Impact on students' academic success | <i>... I can see how students are academically benefitting</i> Lecturer 5 |

4.3.4. Complications experienced with tutorials

Lecturers' feedback on the question whether they could single out difficulties related to the utilisation of tutor support, revealed various challenges as summarised in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Challenges related to the use of tutorial support

| Problem areas | Verbatim responses |
|---|---|
| 1. Students complain when more than one tutor are used to provide assistance in a particular module | <i>... die oomblik wanneer jy twee tutors het doen hulle dit verskillend en dan kan die studente begin sukkel en kla.</i> <i>[The moment when you have two tutors they do things differently and then the students start to struggle and complain.]</i> Lecturer 1 |
| 2. Spoon-feeding makes students lazy | <i>... nog 'n ding is dat ek nie wil hê dat hulle die studente moet 'spoon-feed' nie, ek wil nie hê sy [tutor] moet te veel gee nie want onse onderwysstudente is regtig baie bederf.</i> <i>[Something else that I don't want is that they shouldn't spoon-feed the students, I don't want her [tutor] to give them too much because our education students are really spoiled.]</i> Lecturer 2 |
| 3. Attendance of tutorials instead of lectures | <i>... I don't know why but they [students] sometimes miss very important information if they skip my classes but that is not my problem.</i> Lecturer 3 |
| 4. Poor attendance of tutorials | <i>... If students don't pitch for tutorials it frustrates the tutor, because ideally tutorials are for the students and</i> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <i>I know the tutor prepares for the sessions and if no one pitches the tutor feels disappointed. Lecturer 4</i> |
| 5. Insufficient / flawed content knowledge confuses students | <i>... 'n probleem wat partykeer 'n rol speel is as studente nie so vertrou is met die module inhoud nie, dit verwar die student. [A problem that sometimes play a role is when tutors are not so familiar with module content, this confuses students.] Lecturer 5</i> |

4.3.5. Future suggestions and recommendations for the A_STEP

Finally, when lecturers were asked if they could provide any future suggestions and recommendations regarding the improvement of the A_STEP, four constructive responses deserve to be mentioned:

- compulsory tutor support for 1st year UG modules
- tutor support in African languages as well, and not only in Afrikaans and English
- tutor attendance of lectures to enhance their knowledge of module content
- maintenance of an optimal tutor : tutee ratio

The practical implementation of suggestions such as these, is future music, given current realities at the UFS such as financial sustainability, the danger of exclusion when languages other than English (currently recognised as the lingua franca at the UFS) are used, time-table clashes and the availability of enough suitable qualified tutors.

4.3.6. Concluding comments

The purpose of this sub-investigation (par. 4.3) was to understand how lecturers in the FoE perceived tutor support. Lecturers' responses rendered mostly feedback on the role of tutors as an academic support structure for students. They also agreed that tutors had the potential to positively impact the academic success of students. They felt positive about the innovative teaching strategies utilised by tutors. What concerned

them, however, was the potential negative effect of intensive assistance on the academic development of tutees. They also suggested that tutor support should be made available in different languages (e.g. English, Sesotho, Afrikaans) in all 1st year undergraduate modules in the Faculty.

4.4. PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS OF TUTORS' FACILITATIVE BEHAVIOUR

In response to research question 3 (What are the characteristics of the tutoring style and approach used by tutors in the FoE?), personal observations of ten FoE tutors took place during the months of July, August and September 2015 to determine the characteristics of the tutoring style and approach used by tutors.

In order to conduct a thorough observation, an observation sheet (*vide* Appendix E) adopted from the SI leader training manual used at the Utah State University was used (Blanc & Martin, 2012). The items comprising the observation sheet enabled the observer (TLC) to focus on certain facilitative teaching features demonstrated by the tutors, such as teaching strategies, student participation and interaction, and teaching materials. At the end of the session, tutors were also given an opportunity to verbalise their perceptions of how well they had facilitated the session and to make suggestions for improvement.

4.4.1. Teaching strategies used by tutors

As discussed in chapter 2 (*vide* par. 2.5.1.), tutors were introduced to various teaching strategies (modelling, role playing, redirecting questions, probing questions, paired problem solving and visual techniques) by the TLC during the generic tutor orientation session. The frequency with which various teaching strategies were employed, was determined on the basis of how many tutors actually used a particular strategy. The graphic portrayal of the findings in Figure 4.2 shows that the use of redirecting and probing questions was most common, followed by paired problem solving and visual techniques. Engaging students by means of incomplete outlines and informal quizzes was rare. According to Michel, Cater and Varela (2009) the use of redirected and probing questions is more common because unlike incomplete

outlines and informal quizzes which require a certain amount of preparation and planning by the facilitator well in advance, they are more executable.

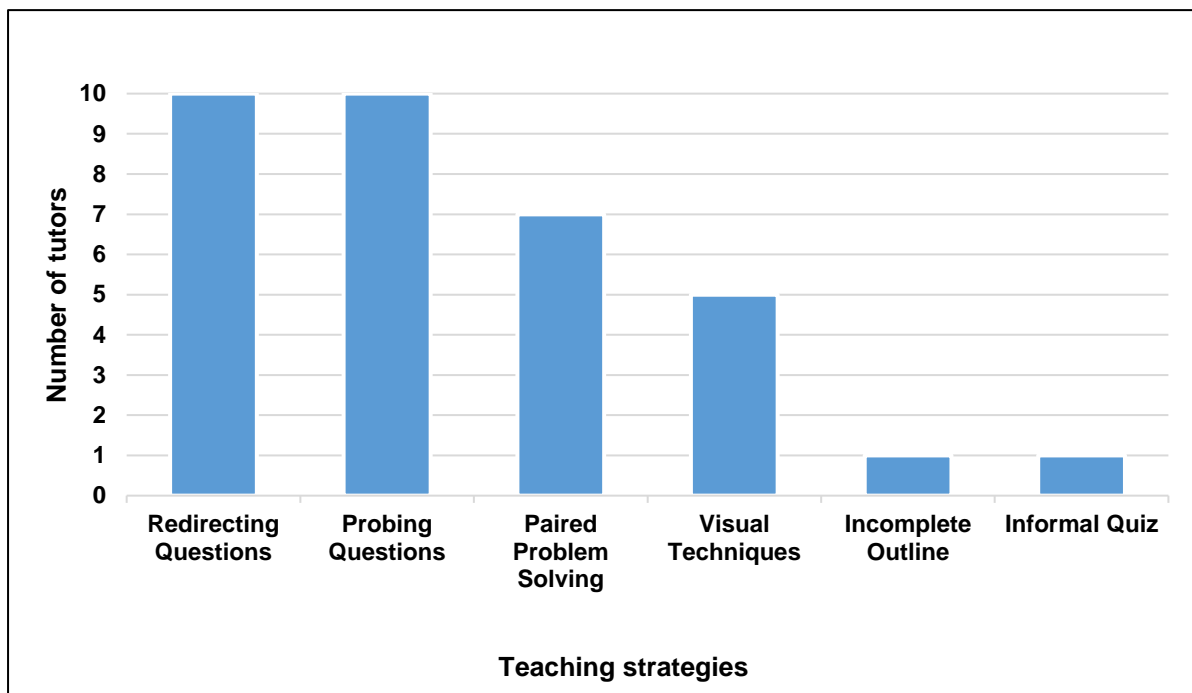


Figure 4.2: Most common teaching strategies used by tutors

4.4.2. Teaching materials used by tutors

The second step in the tutor observation process was to identify the most preferred teaching materials used by tutors in tutorials. What surfaced from the observations was that all the tutors made use of ICT (information and communication technology) resources such as desktop computers and data projectors, that were available in venues. They used programmes such as Microsoft Office PowerPoint or Prezi Presentation Software to display visual and auditory information (multimedia) in the form of presentations. A small number of tutors also made use of worksheets and lecture notes in their sessions as displayed in the illustration below (Fig. 4.3).

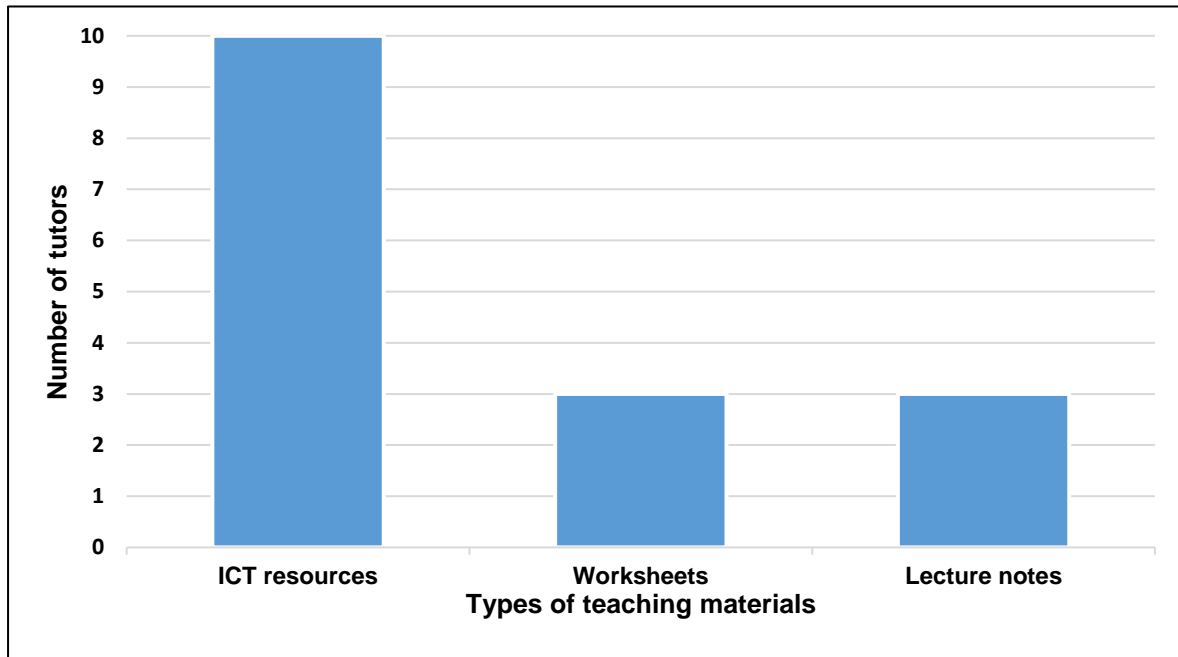


Figure 4.3: Preferred teaching materials used by tutors

4.4.3. Factors that had a positive impact on tutorial practice

An analysis of tutors’ own reflection on the quality of their facilitative behaviour revealed that they were aware of what they previously had identified as key to the mission of the A_STEP (*vide par.* 4.2.1.), namely the creation of a learning environment that is conducive to collaboration. The majority of their responses included words and phrases such as: ‘everybody participated in the session’; ‘worked together’; ‘tutees being interactive and participating’; ‘group engagement was great’ and ‘tutees providing own ideas’.

4.4.4. Suggestions for improved tutorials

Zeichner and Liston (2013) suggest that peer educators be made aware of the value of critical self-reflection and the potential positive effects thereof on their own teaching practices. The final section of the observation sheet thus focussed on the factors tutors felt were in need of improvement regarding their own facilitative teaching. The suggestions that were made included very little self-criticism. Most of the feedback centred around tutee behaviour and technical difficulties. Only twice it was mentioned

that students' attendance of tutorials left room for improvement, and even caused tutors to doubt themselves:

... I really wish more tutees could attend my sessions **tutor 2**

... they don't attend regularly, and this makes me feel that I'm not doing enough
tutor 3

The lack of tutee engagement in tutorials was clearly a major concern:

... they [tutees] need to participate more in the session, they are very shy
tutor 1

Apart from tutees being shy and withdrawn, some tutors also found it particularly challenging to motivate them to participate and engage in cooperative learning activities:

... [tutees] are sometimes lazy to participate in the session **tutor 4**

... [and] it sometimes take a lot of effort to get them going **tutor 9**

In a similar tone, three of the ten tutors voiced frustration due to technical and logistical obstacles they had to overcome:

... I had a problem with the display screen and had to move to different venue
tutor 2

... the projector did not work **tutor 6**

... [the] screen was faulty in the previous venue, so I then had to move to LG 6
tutor 9

4.4.5. Concluding comments

The objective of this sub-investigation (par. 4.4) was to explore how tutors act on the tutor training they had to undergo. What surfaced from the ten observations that were made was that all the tutors went out of their way to create a conducive learning environment for their peers by using different teaching strategies in their sessions. This teaching approach ultimately led to a high level of collaborative learning among tutees. Apart from the positive learning experiences, tutors also shared concerns regarding certain factors (lack of tutee attendance and engagement and technological difficulties) known to effect tutorial practice.

4.5. TUTORS' REFLECTIVE JOURNAL ENTRIES

One of the key responsibilities of tutors in the FoE is to compile a reflective journal that serves as an end-reflection on their tutoring careers (*vide* Appendix A). However, since reflective journals are supposed to ... *enhance the integration of theory and practice, to facilitate reinforced learning through re-visitation of experiences and to help students deal with problems* (Mezirow, 1998 cited in Beyliefeld, 2002:173), tutors can decide whether they were willing to open up the content of their journals for research purposes or not. In 2015 the following prompts served to give structure to their reflections:

- Identify and record the challenges which you believe affected your facilitative teaching practice.
- Give your opinion on the generic A_STEP training session conducted at the beginning of the year.
- Write about your overall tutoring experience.

A total of 30 reflective journals were voluntarily submitted for analysis during the 2015 academic year. All 30 reflective journals were analysed with the intention to address research question two (What challenges do tutors encounter during their tutorial sessions that might stifle their facilitative teaching practice with their peers?), four (What are tutors' perceptions of the tutor training provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning?), and seven (How do tutors perceive their overall experience of being a tutor in the FoE?) of the study (*vide* par. 1.5).

4.5.1. Challenges experienced by tutors

The challenges experienced by tutors (*vide* Fig. 4.4) manifested in five main areas related to: tutees, tutors, module content, logistics and lecturers. The sub-categories related to each of these 5 main themes will now be discussed.

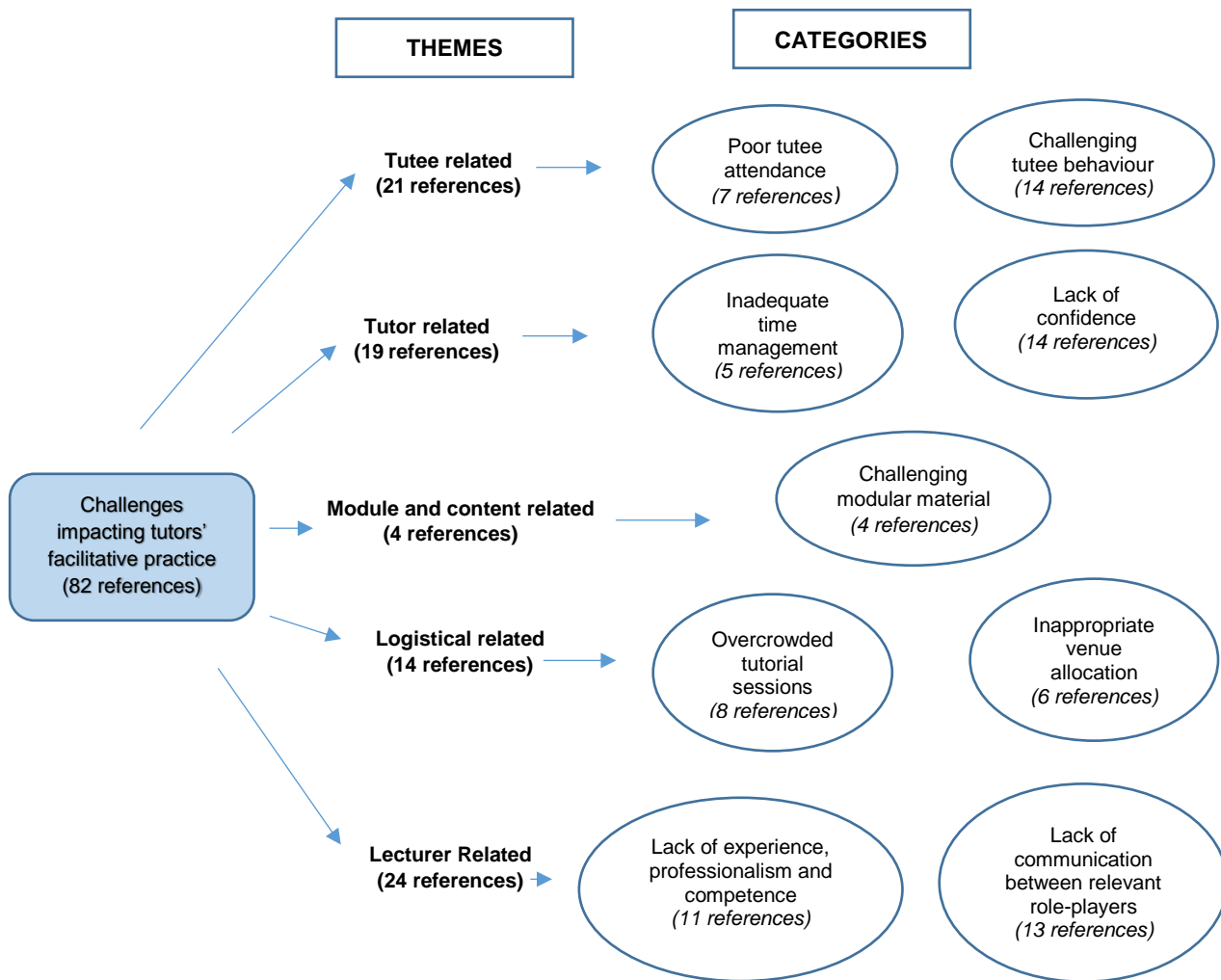


Figure 4.4: Schematic illustration of the challenges experienced by tutors

4.5.1.1. Tutee-related challenges

Poor attendance and challenging behaviour posed a challenge for a significant number of tutors. Seven times it was mentioned that attendance was problematic. Comments such as the following point towards the emotional effect thereof on tutors:

At the beginning I had difficulties with my sessions, firstly my tutees never showed up for their first and second tutor classes. I felt like I never marketed myself properly to the class.

Tutor 11

A small number of tutees in my Friday sessions, made me doubt myself and level of work I delivered.

Tutor 6

It should be noted here that the terms and conditions of the A_STEP, noted in the form of a tutor manual (CTL, 2014), stipulate that tutorial attendance is voluntary. This is also the case with the SI programme modelled nationally at NMMU and internationally at UMKC (Blanc & Martin, 2012). One might thus reason that if tutorial attendance is left to tutees' own discretion it could affect tutee attendance figures, highlighting the need to strengthen the hardiness level of tutors during training.

On the other hand, tutors should realise that the quality of their facilitative teaching behaviour may have an impact on tutee attendance. Houlden et al. (2001) stress that if tutors take a didactic, lecturer-centred stance in their sessions, tutees lose interest in tutorials as an academic support measure. Hays (2006) furthermore explains that unless instructors (TLCs) train tutors on ways to enhance the learning experiences for tutees, tutees will continue to have the same academic difficulties that brought them to tutorials in the first place.

Challenging tutee behaviour elicited no fewer than 14 comments containing emotional words and phrases such as: 'bad behaviour', 'annoyed me', 'triggered an emotional response', 'not serious enough', 'arrived late', 'did not want to learn together', 'spoon fed', 'not doing their work', 'discouraged' and 'abuse my time'. Elements of challenging tutee behaviour were captured in the following responses:

Students with very bad behaviour has always been one thing that ever annoyed me in the tutorials.

Tutor 13

They didn't want to engage with in the sessions, but rather be spoon fed, which I feel is wrong on so many levels.

Tutor 20

Maintaining order was very challenging especially if what one tutee said had triggered an emotional response on others.

Tutor 17

With them I found that the ladies who needed help were not serious enough

about the correct help. They would arrive a half hour late, or just write everything I did without taking in the content.

Tutor 21

Apart from tutees posing challenging behaviour towards the tutor's facilitative teaching practice, their lack of engagement and participation in tutorial activities also negatively impacted on tutors' emotional state as tutors quoted in their reflective entries:

One of the challenges was that few students would participate in the group discussion and most of the students would not say anything or participate. During the initial stages I felt discouraged because people didn't want to participate and when it is like that learning does not take place.

Tutor 11

The fact that the tutees were not asking questions and end up doing what is not required to do challenged me indirectly and this made me feel like I am not doing my job.

Tutor 29

Judged by what Houlden et al. (2001) and Sullivan et al. (2014) have to say about tutees' non-cooperative behaviour, these responses, which reveal signs of demotivation, could be indicative of dysfunctional group dynamics. Kerr et al. (2009) define dysfunctional group dynamics as a phenomenon in which tutees act non-cooperatively towards the tutor's instruction to the extent where group learning is no longer sustainable. The danger of dysfunctional group dynamics is thus real, demanding special attention during tutor training sessions.

4.5.1.2. Tutor-related challenges

Apart from experiencing challenges with tutee behaviour, tutors also confessed to personal factors affecting their tutorship. Lack of confidence (14 references) and improper time management (5 references), were the two most salient aspects that were mentioned.

Signified by words such as: 'scared', 'shy', 'intimidated', 'nerve-wrecking', 'what if they don't like me' and 'they are much older than me', tutors' lack of confidence became evident. They reported that their initial sessions were coupled by feelings of intimidation, uncertainty and low levels of confidence:

During the first tutorial I felt slightly unsure as to how to approach the module, and I felt intimidated by the students. At first I was afraid that no students were going to come to the tutorials and it took a while to feel confident talking in front of the class.

Tutor 26

On my first day as a tutor, I was very scared and shy at the same time, at first I did not know what to do or say to the tutees.

Tutor 29

Furthermore, age seriously compromised tutors' levels of confidence:

Having tutees with whom I attend most of my lectures and were my age was challenging. The challenge with this was when I had to reprimand them, it felt like there was a personal effect and I felt like I was losing a friend more than helping the class.

Tutor 6

All the students who had the module were students in my year group which made it a bit more challenging to be their tutor and not only their classmate.

Tutor 9

Some of the students were older than me and I had no idea of what am I going to do should they try to disrespect me. I kept asking myself "what if they don't like me" or "what if I can't answer the questions that they pose", what will I do then. This experience reminded me of when I was still in my first year and had to present a lesson to the grade 12s for the first time in my life. I was very nervous and wasn't sure of what to expect.

Tutor 18

Tutors experiencing low levels of confidence due to peer intimidation is considered an experience every freshman educator (tutor) goes through (Jung, Cho

& Ambrosetti, 2011). These authors reason that tutors' low level of confidence may be due to a lack of tutoring experience. They further add that tutor confidence is set to increase with regular training opportunities, exposure to similar problematic situations in learning spaces (tutorials), improved knowledge of their peers (tutees), and through the utilisation of different teaching approaches in their sessions (ibid.).

The second personal factor tutors believed to negatively impact their facilitative teaching practices was their inability to effectively practice time management in their sessions.

I felt overwhelmed and hopeless because the time per student was restricted.

Tutor 27

My session was not as long as I anticipated, as I spoke far too quickly.

Tutor 20

... [I] withdrew from ETG112, as it was too time consuming

Tutor 21

This finding is not new and resonates with the work of Paquette and Rieg (2016:51) who argue that peer educators new to the tutoring experience ... *[might] experience the student teaching setting to be exciting, as well as challenging at the same time*. Tutors often begin tutorials with feelings of excitement with the goal to make a difference in the learning experience of their peers. However, as noted by Chaplain (2008), this eagerness sometimes affects tutors' classroom management skills which includes proper time management.

4.5.1.3. Challenges related to modular material

The controversial and sensitive nature of module content triggered emotional responses from both tutors and tutees, as is evident from the following quotes:

... [b]eing comfortable with discussing controversial issues such as race or religion considering the history of South Africa. It was hard to handle misperceptions and control emotional reactions of the tutees because most of

the time when debating controversial issues people tend to think emotionally rather than rationally.

Tutor 17

Maintaining order was very challenging especially if what one tutee said had triggered an emotional response on others, I therefore had to remain neutral in the discussion and this was really difficult because at times I would also say something and realise later that it was in fact insensitive and bias.

Tutor 26

The module content challenged my prejudices and judgements. The content of the module was extremely emotional and when some students felt triggered I also felt triggered and therefore could discuss their opinions and beliefs with them because I could associate with them and their experiences.

Tutor 24

In this respect, the importance of close cooperation between lecturer and tutor, to empower the latter with appropriate knowledge and skills to defuse potentially “explosive” situations, cannot be over-emphasised.

4.5.1.4. Challenges related to logistics

In 8 instances overcrowded tutorial sessions and in 6 instances inappropriate venue allocation were mentioned as factors which restricted student-centred learning. Comments, including words and phrases such as ‘overwhelming’, ‘confusion’ and ‘impossible to access groups’ underscore the view of Hall, Binney and Kennedy (2006) that overcrowded tutorial sessions have the tendency to affect both the teaching and learning of students. Over-crowdedness is also seen as a pitfall to establishing an effective facilitative learning environment where student-centred learning is pivotal (Smith & Cardaciotto, 2012). Luck (2010) explains that if a tutorial group surpasses 20 tutees it tends to have a negative effect on the tutor’s instructional behaviour which might explain why tutors felt that the “large classes” challenged them from establishing a student-centred teaching approach.

Current practical realities in the Faculty of Education do not afford tutors the “luxury” of tutoring the optimal number of students. The situation is exacerbated by another logistical challenge, namely inappropriate venue allocation. The tutor’s frustration is tangibly expressed in their own words:

... we had to live with the challenge of not having a suitable venue for group work in the Faculty of Education. At the beginning of the semester we had our EDUB 1613 classes in the Mabaleng building and the EBW auditorium, which really did not work because we were not able to do group work. **Tutor 10**

The students have to buy clipboards to write on because they only have a chair to sit on and are sitting in circles. It so happens that sometimes students have to move their chairs around to be able to watch a video. **Tutor 15**

The ‘*Ministerial Statement on Student Enrolment Planning for Universities 2014/15 – 2019/20*’ report has indicated the growing need for academic support for UG students in HE institutions (DHET, 2014). In turn, the growing need for academic support might trigger factors such as over-crowdedness and limited venue availability which is a reality in the FoE. As a way of addressing this challenge, some lecturers started experimenting with using local residence spaces such as “gazelles” for tutorial sessions, which brings with it a financial implication for the Faculty. However, this aspect of tutoring falls outside the scope of this study.

4.5.1.5. Lecturer-related challenges

The fifth and final challenge that emerged from tutors’ reflective entries was lecturer related. A total of 24 comments were captured. What stood out was that several lecturer-related issues hampered, and in some instances even prevented tutorials from taking place. These issues were grouped in two distinct categories, namely lecturers’ lack of experience, professionalism and competence (11 references) and insufficient communication among relevant role-players (13 references).

With reference to the lack of experience, professionalism and competence demonstrated by lecturers and the effects thereof on their tutorship, tutors used words such as: 'unnecessary', 'disorganised', 'unsure', and 'inexperience', to express their feelings. The following direct quotations are examples of serious indictments, coupled with negative consequences for the tutor:

I feel that the module has been exploited as being unnecessary and disorganised because of the failure of professionalism of the lecturer. The module content was interesting and very assertive to attaining Lifelong Learning Skills. However, the content was not presented in a successful manner. The majority of students failed to attend classes because of the fault in the organisation of the content of the module by the lecturer. **Tutor 24**

... the students did not know how to use the study guide and some of them still don't. The lecturer would give them a new activity that is not in the study guide and is not yet uploaded onto Blackboard therefore they have absolutely no framework to do it from. I was really challenged because I wanted to go to the microphone and start telling the students how to read their study guide and that they can start with the activity once they received the framework on Blackboard, but that was not in my power. **Tutor 10**

The lecturer who taught the module was also new to the module and unsure about some of the content, which made my planning more complicated.

Tutor 9

The miscommunication between relevant role-players (lecturers, tutors and tutees) and the challenges thereof on tutorial processes elicited responses that teemed with words such as: 'lack of communication', 'frustration', 'uncertainty', 'confusion', 'miscommunication between lecturers, tutors and tutees' and 'lecturers not on the same path'.

In some instances the miscommunication happened between lecturers of the same module teaching the Afrikaans and English classes:

This module was a major challenge for me, as there were two new lecturers that were giving the module this year and no longer Mrs Otto. This made a huge difference. I found that there was a lot of miscommunication between the English and Afrikaans classes.

Tutor 20

We also found that there was a lot of confusion amongst the students, and us, about the different ways that the two lecturers of the module presented and taught the content. The English class was taught one way and the Afrikaans class was taught another way.

Tutor 26

In other instances, tutors expressed their frustrations because lecturers failed to transmit adequate and correct module content-related information to their students:

I was really challenged because I wanted to go to the microphone and start telling the students how to read their study guide and that they can start with the activity once they received the framework on Blackboard, but that was not in my power.

Tutor 10

I withdrew from ETG 112, as there was too much miscommunication between the lecturers and students because the lecturer always explained the drawings wrong and that confused them [students].

Tutor 21

Frustration also arose when lecturers were not available or willing to discuss module-related information:

I also felt discouraged when I prepared for the session only to find out that half of the information I had put on my slides, they were told was not important

Tutor 8

At first we were experiencing big communication gaps between the tutors and the lecturer. Our lecturer did not meet with us on a weekly basis and did not inform us on anything that was going to happen in class the upcoming week. This really frustrated me because the students had no idea what to do and I was not able to assist them with anything because I was not

informed about the activities. I believe that communication is the key to any working relationship. Therefore, I will always make use of as many possible communication methods to talk to my students, fellow teachers/ tutors/ lecturers as well as my boss. **Tutor 10**

One tutor specifically referred to an instance where a tutorial was cancelled by the lecturer without the tutor being aware of it:

During the first week that we were supposed to run our tutoring sessions, we had prepared a lesson, but when we got to the venue nobody had shown up. We then found out that the lecturer of the subject had cancelled our tutorial for that week and we were not notified. This was a little disheartening. **Tutor 26**

The negative experiences related by tutors resonate with the work of De Smet et al. (2010) who highlight the importance of faculty / departmental role-players (lecturers) fully informing tutors on their tutoring roles and responsibilities in a faculty context. In the same vein, Kofod et al. (2008) caution that tutors should at all times be aware of faculty needs with respect to teaching and learning in particular modules.

4.5.2. Tutor’s perception of the generic A_STEP training

In response to research question four (What are tutors’ perceptions of the tutor training provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning?), the second section of the reflective journal focussed on uncovering tutors’ perceptions of the A_STEP tutor training session held at the start of their tutoring careers in February 2015. By analysing 30 reflective journal entries tutors’ perceptions could be demarcated in 4 different phases of the training session: “before”, “during”, “at-the-end” and “after”. Comments pertaining to the different phases yielded a total of 145 references which, when analysed, resulted in 11 categories corresponding to 6 main themes that are summarised in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Tutor perceptions of generic A_STEP training session

| Phase of training | Themes | Categories | Frequency of references |
|----------------------------|---|--|-------------------------|
| Before session | Initial expectations of training session | a) Negative pre-perceptions | 10 |
| During session | Experiences of training session pedagogy | a) Cooperative learning among tutors | 17 |
| | | b) Informative nature of training | 16 |
| | Development of facilitative teaching skills | a) Student-centred teaching and learning strategies | 46 |
| | | b) Practicing a non-lecturing approach | 12 |
| Team spirit | a) Unity in tutor group | 19 | |
| Final stages of session | Concluding thoughts and experiences | a) Satisfaction with training session | 15 |
| | | b) Motivation to start tutoring | 14 |
| End reflections on session | Critique of training session | a) Lack of content briefing | 7 |
| | | b) Discrepancies between training principles and modules to be tutored | 5 |
| | | c) Lack of technology preparation | 4 |
| Σ | 6 | 11 | 145 |

4.5.2.1. “Before” phase: Initial expectations of training session

Initially, tutors voiced their negativity towards attending the training session by making comments that included words such as: ‘discouraged’, ‘reluctant’, ‘uncertain’, ‘nervous’ and ‘scared’. Their negative expressions are summarised in Table 4.6:

Table 4.6: Initial expectations of tutor training

| Initial expectations | Verbatim responses |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Tutors’ negative pre-perceptions | <p><i>When we received the email regarding the training session and I saw the duration of the training I immediately was discouraged. I just assumed it was going to be extremely boring and we were going to sit for hours and listen to a lecture.</i> Tutor 8</p> <p><i>I thought the training would be a daunting task. I was very reluctant to attend.</i> Tutor 14</p> <p><i>I must admit hearing about the training session and especially the duration of it made me feel negative.</i> Tutor 23</p> |

Negativity in anticipation of a training session is a common feature in HE institutions, locally and abroad. As noted by Kitchen (2012), as well as Kofod et al. (2008), tutors in many instances fail to demonstrate any interest in either completing their training sessions, or in undertaking it at all.

4.5.2.2. “During” phase: Real-time experiences

As the training session progressed, tutors’ feelings seemed to shift from a negative to a more positive slant.

4.5.2.2.1. Tutors’ experiences of session pedagogy

Tutors elaborated on the meaningful learning environment established by the presenter of the session and the effects thereof on their learning experiences. They

referred to the interactive nature of the session 33 times. According to their responses, as portrayed in Table 4.7, the interactive learning environment was key in their acknowledgement of their facilitative roles and responsibilities as tutors in the Faculty.

Table 4.7: Tutors' perception of training session pedagogy

| Session pedagogy | Verbatim responses |
|--|--|
| <p>Cooperative learning among tutor group</p> | <p><i>The training session was unique because of the interactive activities and the energetic hands-on approach of the conductor of the training session.</i> Tutor 12</p> <p><i>The tutor training had an atmosphere where everyone got engaged with the discussions and tasks at hand.</i> Tutor 9</p> <p><i>The training session consisted of mostly group work. This helped me to interact with my fellow tutors and understand the importance of group work in classes.</i> Tutor 25</p> |
| <p>Informative nature of training session</p> | <p><i>The training session allowed me to actually understand what is required from us, a step-by-step guide of what was to be expected from us.</i> Tutor 15</p> <p><i>... was very informative especially for me because this is my first time tutoring.</i> Tutor 7</p> |

These responses echo Vygotsky's (1978) cooperative learning theory that students learn best through social interaction and engagement with other students. A tutor training session demonstrating this idea thus creates a powerful platform for tutors to be informed on their tutor duties and responsibilities (De Smet et al., 2010).

4.5.2.2.2. Development of facilitative teaching skills

Tutors furthermore expressed appreciation for the fact that the session had enabled them to practice a non-lecturing teaching approach (12 references) with their peers by utilising student-centred teaching and learning strategies (46 references). See Table 4.8 for typical responses in relation to each of these two aspects that characterised the mode of delivery during the training session.

Table 4.8: Facilitative teaching skills developed by tutors

| Skills developed | Verbatim responses |
|---|---|
| <p>Practicing a non-lecturing approach</p> | <p><i>I see a tutor as someone who brings something different to the table when it comes to learning. A tutor should never re-lecture. Tutor 15</i></p> <p><i>I was taught not to be a tutor who uses the teacher-centred approach. I learned that we should be facilitators and not the only source of knowledge in the class. Tutor 10</i></p> <p><i>The tutor training was definitely focussed on getting all of us tutors to think about how we can tutor in a holistic way that does not involve “re-lecturing”, but rather, reinforcement. Tutor 22</i></p> |
| <p>Student-centred teaching strategies</p> | <p><i>It is especially in tutor classes where you have time to use different approaches to learning such as picture discussions, posters, debates etc. I wanted to incorporate different kinds of methods in my tutor sessions regarding the work. Tutor 14</i></p> <p><i>I learnt that you can not only use slides and assume that they understand, but probing questions, informal quizzes and activities, end of the session cards etc. can be used to see if they understood what you taught. Tutor 17</i></p> <p><i>... students learn better through discussions, whereby they state their different perspectives and exchange ideas through dialogue. Tutor 2</i></p> |

In order to establish a meaningful learning environment for their peers, tutors should opt essentially for a facilitative, rather than a lecturing-centred teaching approach (Sullivan et al., 2014). The modelling of this behaviour during the generic training session, as evidenced by tutors’ feedback, was thus commendable.

4.5.2.2.3. Team spirit

Apart from tutors reporting on the pedagogy of the training session, they also commented 19 times that the tutor team spirit present in the group boosted their ability to function as a single entity in the Faculty. Calma and Vista (2012) suggest that the presenter of a training session should facilitate the session in a manner that will

provide attendees with an opportunity to brainstorm ideas and have discussions on how to achieve optimum success in their own tutorial sessions. The interactive nature of the generic training session, as reflected in the exemplar responses listed in Table 4.9, evidently sparked a sense of unity and mutual respect among the tutor attendees. In a Faculty where diversity and respect are mentioned as core values in its mission statement, this finding rang a positive note.

Table 4.9: Team spirit among tutors in the session

| Skills developed | Verbatim responses |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <p>Unity among tutors</p> | <p><i>We were able to build relationships that would allow us to interact and assist each other where help was needed.</i> Tutor 14</p> <p><i>This was special to me because I was able to function as part of a unit and trust other tutors.</i> Tutor 15</p> <p><i>I made new friends and we exchanged phone numbers to keep communicating with each other via WhatsApp throughout the tutor experience.</i> Tutor 10</p> |
| <p>Respect for others</p> | <p><i>... this was special to me because I was able to function as part of a unit and trust other tutors as well regardless of race, ethnicity and social class. This made me realise my own weaknesses and I was also very conscious of my own biases, this helped me not to judge the others negatively.</i> Tutor 15</p> <p><i>... people who are willing to know each other better regardless of the cultural background that they are coming from and actually learning and working together as a tutor group.</i> Tutor 2</p> <p><i>... learning about respecting each other was very special to me.</i> Tutor 25</p> |

4.5.2.3. “At-the-end” phase: Concluding thoughts and experiences

As the training session drew to a close, tutors voiced their overall experience of the session. Their concluding thoughts, as illustrated in Table 4.10, signified

satisfaction with the training (15 references) and determination to start their tutoring careers in the FoE (14 references).

Table 4.10: Tutor team mind-set after session

| Session outcomes | Verbatim responses |
|--|---|
| Satisfaction with the training session | <i>... it was truly an amazing experience and very helpful.</i> Tutor 8 |
| | <i>The tutor orientation at the beginning of the year was an experience of a life time.</i> Tutor 11 |
| Motivation to start tutoring | <i>After the training session I was not scared anymore, but instead I felt quite excited about the three subjects that I was assigned to tutor.</i> Tutor 10 |
| | <i>After the training I was well equipped and motivated on what laid ahead and it was through the facilitator's efforts. I think the way that they approached the training session was very effective. It was well organised and structured.</i> Tutor 2 |

Although the training session yielded mostly positive feedback, the session was not considered to be flawless. Subsequently, tutors expressed the need to provide recommendations and suggestions for the improvement of future training sessions.

4.5.2.4. "After" phase: Critique of the training session

Tutors' critique of the generic training session centred around (a) their need for more information regarding the content of modules they were supposed to tutor, and (b) the discrepancy between the modes of delivery advocated in the training session and the pedagogical demands of the modules they were to tutor (*vide* Table 4.11).

Table 4.11: Critique towards training session

| Critique provided | Verbatim responses |
|--------------------------|---|
| Lack of content briefing | <i>The tutor training session should also include content briefing of the different modules.</i> Tutor 5 |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p><i>... there should be enough time where the tutor and the lecturer would sit down and discuss the content and the objectives of the module.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Tutor 11</p> |
| <p>Discrepancies between training principles and tutor modules</p> | <p><i>I found it hard to relate my module (TTK 124/224) and the way it functions with the way in which the tutor training was given across.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Tutor 3</p> <p><i>In some instances the training did not align with my module because the module that I was tutoring was a very practical subject where learners had to prepare experiments and do laboratory work.</i> Tutor 23</p> |

Tutors' need for module-specific guidance and preparation is distinctly what De Smet et al. (2010) advise TLCs not to neglect. These authors emphasise the importance of fundamentally training and developing tutors to fit and meet a faculty's educational context, by involving lecturers in the training procedures. Lecturers' involvement provides a platform for them to voice their expectations of tutorship support (Kofod et al., 2008).

What also bothered tutors was the fact that they were not informed on the various ICT services (PowerPoint Presentation software, Prezi Presentation Software and BlackBoard) and resources (desktop computers, data projectors, and electronic whiteboards) available to them:

Some venues have interactive boards that can be very useful in sessions, but we were unsure how to use them.

Tutor 21

... maybe they could teach us how to use Prezi as it is a fantastic way to stimulate students' learning.

Tutor 17

... [he] should also show us how Blackboard works because some learners need to upload documents on Blackboard.

Tutor 14

In the current day and age teaching without technological aids is unthinkable. The lack of sufficient skilling in this regard is a serious indictment of the generic training session. Given that not all students are equally skilled in the use of technology

because of limited access at their homes (Mdlongwa, 2012), it becomes all the more important not to neglect this aspect of tutor training.

4.5.3. End-reflection on the overall tutoring experience

In response to research question seven (How do tutors perceive their overall experience of being a tutor in the FoE?), the third and final section of the reflective journal focussed on unravelling tutorship experiences in the FoE over a period of 2 semesters in 2015. A frequency count revealed that tutors referred 95 times to experiences they had had respectively during the early (47 references) and the more advanced (48 references) stages of their tutoring careers. The extent to which their emotions and self-critique tainted these experiences will now be discussed.

4.5.3.1. Early-stage experiences

Emotions, whether positive or negative, are ... *intimately involved in virtually every aspect of the teaching and learning process* (Chang, 2013:799). Tutors participating in this study experienced mixed emotions regarding their first tutorials. Comments containing emotional words included: 'doubt', 'intense', 'exciting', 'anxious', 'scared', 'fun', 'uncertain', 'nerve wrecking' and 'disappointed'. The following verbatim responses succinctly depict their uncertainty:

... [I] must admit I was very nervous and didn't know what to expect. Some of the students were older than me and I had no idea of what am I going to do should they try to disrespect me. I kept asking myself "what if they don't like me" or "what if I can't answer the questions that they pose", what will I do then?

Tutor 18

Initially in my first tutorial I was nervous and I did not know how things will turn out.

Tutor 17

On the contrary, some tutors perceived their first tutorials in a more positive light:

My first encounter with the tutees was intense and also exciting at the same time, intense in the sense that I did not know how they [tutees] would react to my presence and I also did not know what to expect from them since it was my first time facilitating. However, it was exciting because I had been waiting for this day to come for so long and it was much easier than I had anticipated.

Tutor 2

My first tutorial session with the tutees was insightful and a positive experience. I was not nervous to talk to them. They were very open towards me in asking questions or talking about the work they struggled with.

Tutor 9

Similarly, mixed emotions regarding their own facilitative teaching approach characterised the early beginnings of their tutorship. Words and phrases included: 'boredom', 'disengagement', 'great cooperation', 'struggled', 'unable to manage discussions', 'made learning easier' and 'spoke too quickly'. On the one hand, positive self-regard is evident in the following responses:

... they were very open towards me in asking questions or talking about the work they were struggling with.

Tutor 9

... most of the students were willing to complete the activities during the sessions and many were friendly.

Tutor 27

On the other hand, some tutors entertained negative thoughts about their tutoring approach:

... in my head all I could think about was whether I was making learning easier for them by using the teaching method that I was using. It felt like I could not get them going in having discussions in groups. I wanted them to feel free to talk about controversial issues such as racism and prejudice.

Tutor 17

... about ten minutes into the presentation I realised that I had lost my group or it was merely boredom setting in because I was in fact "re-lecturing". There was a sense of complete disengagement and lack of true and meaningful learning.

These negative tutoring experiences resonate with what Berghmans et al. (2012) have to say about tutors who, more often than not, find themselves in a position where they struggle to adopt a student-centred teaching approach in tutorials. This then results in tutors getting too involved in their peers' learning processes, which in turn suppresses students' ability to cooperatively learn together (ibid.). Tutors should thus be prepared during training that it is normal to doubt their own facilitative ability. Simultaneously, they should be cautioned not to abandon these very facilitative practices.

4.5.3.2. Advanced-stage experiences

Feedback on the more advanced stages of tutoring revealed that tutors' negative emotional state evolved to a more positive one as they became more familiar with the tutoring process. This discovery resonates well with the role theory referred to in par. 2.3.3. Words such as: 'confident', 'in control', 'familiar', 'comfortable', 'relaxed', 'enthusiastic', 'proud' and 'motivated' bear witness of this changed state of mind. The following direct quotations depict their positive mind-set towards their own facilitative teaching approaches:

... once I became familiar with the process, I became confident, and I was not nervous of them [tutees] asking a lot of questions anymore. I respected my tutees and I got the same in return from most of them. **Tutor 17**

... as time went on I became more confident. This made me feel proud and motivated to carry on and better my work. Now I come into my classes and my students are already there and I always have a smile on my face. I am very motivated and passionate about my career and my work. **Tutor 20**

Their positive emotions also triggered a more positive outlook and experience of their own tutoring approach:

... my role was clearer to me because at this point I understood that my responsibility as a facilitator was to manage the learning processes and to focus on their learning. It became clear to me that there is a difference between facilitating and lecturing.

Tutor 17

... they all sat at the round tables and worked efficiently and socialised now and again. It was during this mere moment that I had realised my teaching philosophy had needed a lot of intervention. After coming to the conclusion that learning is more valuable and easily obtained in an environment promoting inclusive, invitational and social education, I quickly adapted my style of facilitation to encourage a student-focussed approach which enabled students to almost “self-learn”.

Tutor 8

Even though greater self-confidence is an expected outcome of prolonged practice, it was encouraging to note that the tutors in an advanced stage of tutorship had not become complacent, but rather more dedicated to the goal of facilitation and the cultivation of independency among tutees.

4.5.4. Concluding comments

The objective of this sub-investigation (par. 4.5) was to analyse tutorship experiences in the FoE over a period of one academic year (2015). Analysis of tutors' journal entries first of all revealed that lecturer-related challenges were considered to be the most problematic, followed by tutee- and tutor-related challenges. Logistical and module-related challenges were the least commented on. Secondly, it was found that tutors were at first negatively inclined towards attending the generic training session. However, as the session progressed, they encountered feelings of satisfaction regarding the manner in which the session was conducted. They also expressed concerns regarding the lack of lecturer presence in the training session, as well as not being thoroughly informed on how to utilise ICT in their tutorials. Furthermore it became clear that tutors had mixed emotions regarding the impact of their facilitative teaching practices during the early stages of their tutoring careers.

These feelings of doubt, however, seemed to change as they got more familiar with the tutoring process.

4.6. QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEYS AMONG TUTEES

In response to research question six (What are the tutees' perceptions of the tutorial programme in the FoE?), an evaluation sheet (Appendix B), comprising check-box items and open-ended questions, was administered to 200 tutees at random intervals during 2015. The structured items were analysed by means of descriptive statistics, while open-ended feedback ensured an in-depth description of tutees perceptions of the A_STEP.

First tutees had to indicate on the Likert scale which of the following factors, portrayed in Figure 4.5, played a role in their tutorial attendance.

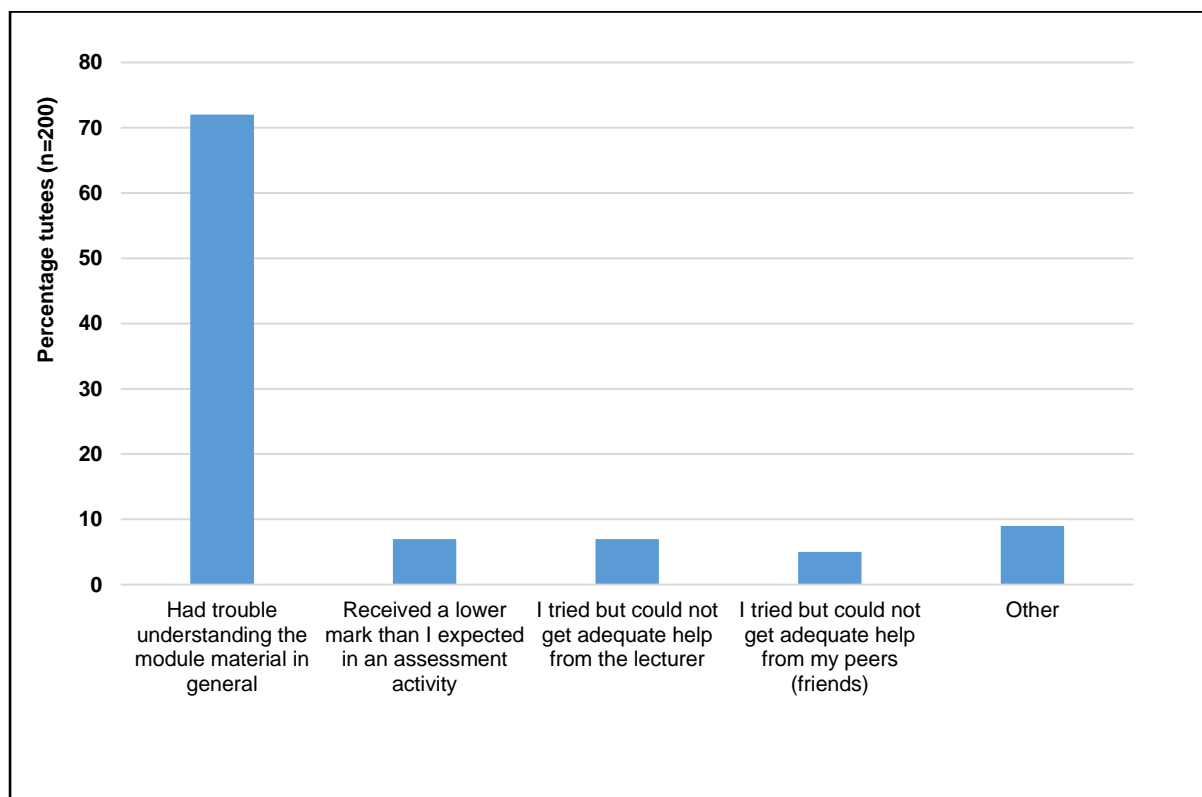


Fig 4.5: Motivation for attending tutorials

Unsurprisingly a large number (72%) of tutees sought tutorial support based on the challenging nature of their modules. This finding aligns perfectly with the aim of the A_STEP, namely to serve as an academic support structure for students who struggle with historically challenging modules (CTL, 2014). Other factors (low assessment marks and lack of lecturer or peer assistance) did not significantly impact (less than 10% response per item) their pattern of attendance.

It was further found, as depicted in Figure 4.6, that tutorials did in fact improve the majority of tutees' (79,5%) understanding of modular material. Only a small number (less than 10%) of tutees were uncertain or disagreed with this statement.

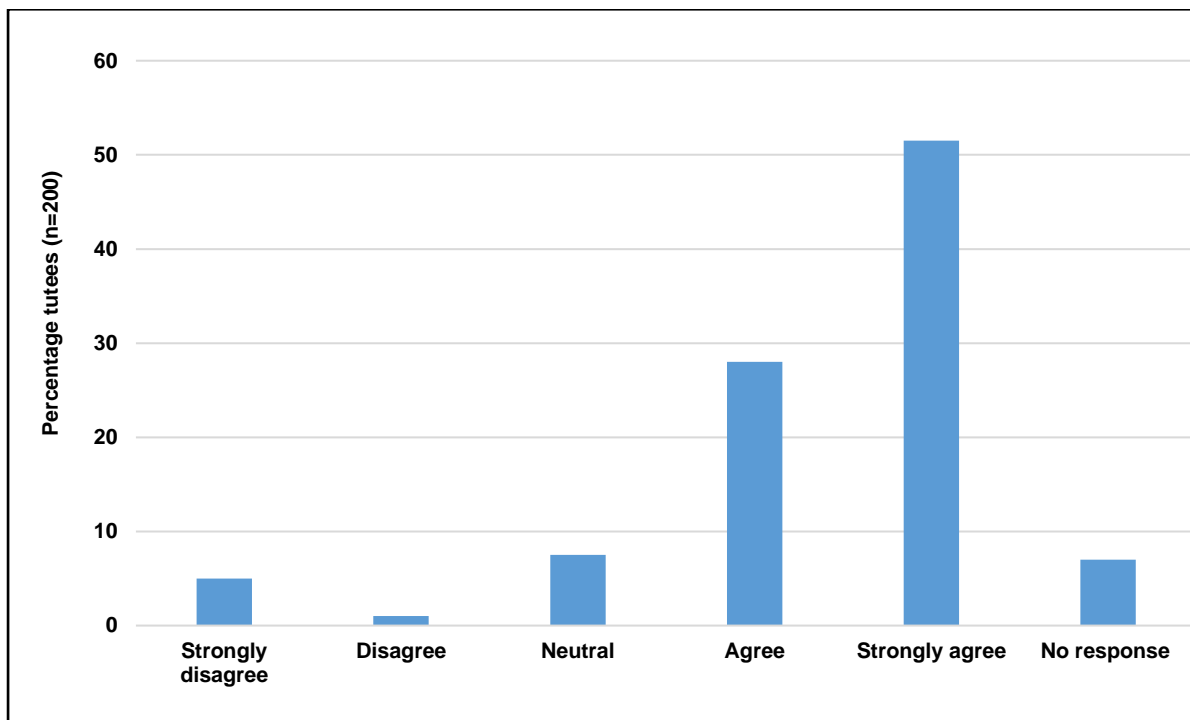


Figure 4.6: Degree of agreement on the positive impact of tutorials on tutees' understanding of module material

The majority of tutees (60%), admitted that tutorials had had a positive impact on their academic performance, as seen in Figure 4.7. A very small number of respondents (less than 10%) were of the opinion that tutorials had no impact on their academic performance whatsoever.

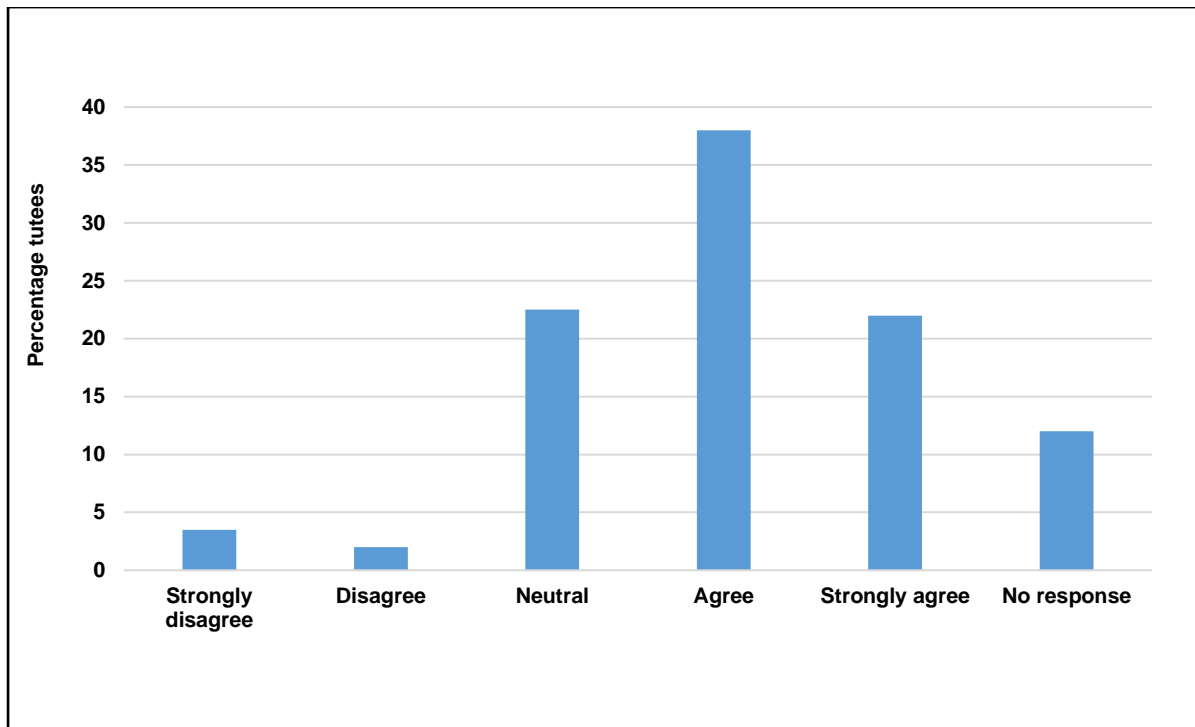


Figure 4.7: Degree of agreement on the positive impact of tutorials on academic performance

4.6.1. Tutee feedback on tutors’ facilitative teaching practice

In response to the open-ended questions tutees had to indicate whether tutors displayed any significant teaching approach that contributed to their learning experience in tutorials. Figure 4.8 graphically portrays the main facilitative attributes of tutors that were experienced positively by tutees.

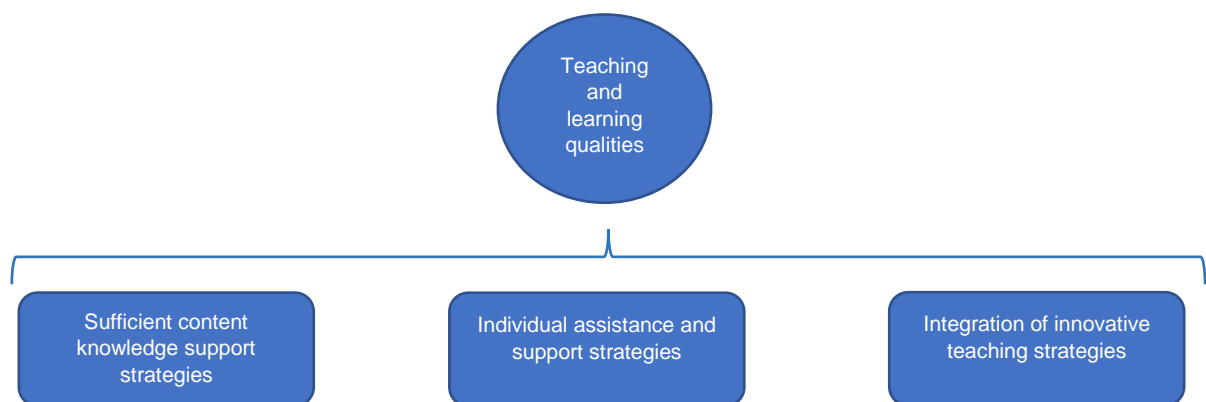


Figure 4.8: Facilitative attributes of tutors

In the first instance, tutees found it valuable that tutors had thorough knowledge of the module that they tutored:

- *she [tutor] was a source of information;*
- *tutor was able to explain step-by-step;*
- *he [tutor] made work more understandable*

This finding correlates with literature perspectives (Metzler & Woessmann, 2012) and also with the view expressed during the interview with TLCs that knowledgeability on modular content forms part of tutor competence (*vide par.* 4.2.3).

Secondly, the tutors' willingness to provide individual assistance to tutees was also mentioned:

- *the tutor worked with us individually;*
- *she attended to all our individual problems;*
- *the tutor provided individual assistance*

Fulfilment of the need for personal attention explains why tutees seek academic support in the form of tutorials in the first place. During the interview with lecturers it was also mentioned that tutorials create a learning space for a one-on-one interaction between the tutor and tutee (*vide parr.* 4.3.2 & 4.3.3). This kind of interaction is also known for boosting the learning process of tutees. Sadler (2012) argues that a tutorial should set the scene for one-on-one academic engagement between the tutor and tutee because such an approach is not always possible in regular lecture sessions where the flow of information is predominantly 'one way' (Biggs & Tang, 2007).

Another facilitative teaching and learning quality identified by tutees was the manner in which tutors incorporated teaching strategies in their sessions:

- *tutor used different teaching approaches and it really helped;*
- *using different engaging activities in order to strengthen my perception and knowledge of module content;*
- *interactive class with group work, questions and videos were useful*

This finding, once again, correlates well with the views expressed by other research participants (*vide* the reflective journal entries of tutors, Table 4.8). Lecturers, too, commented on the positive impact innovative teaching strategies had on the academic performance of students (*vide par.* 4.3.2).

4.6.2. Suggestions and recommendations for improved tutorial practice

Apart from commenting on facilitative teaching and learning qualities, tutees also made suggestions and recommendations for improved future tutorial practice, as depicted in Figure 4.9.

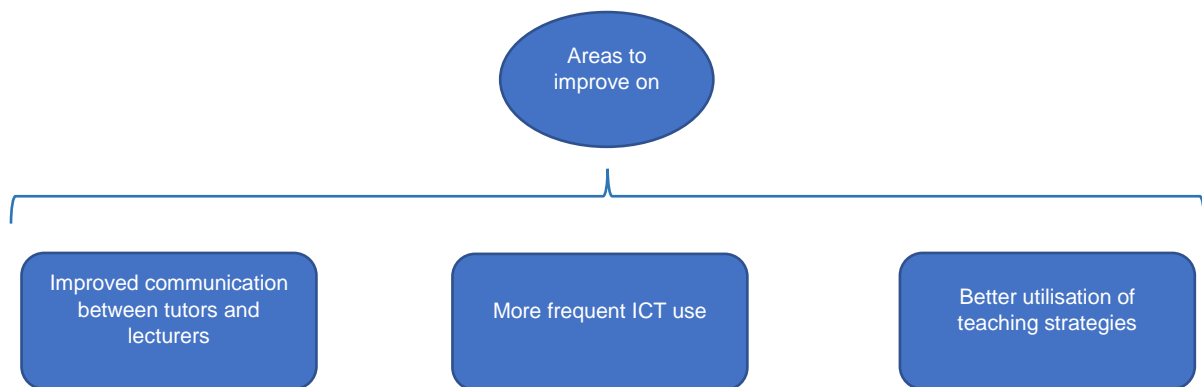


Figure 4.9: Suggestions and recommendations made by tutees

In the first instance tutees recommended improved communication between tutors and lecturers. Their responses included signs of confusion due to the lack of communication that existed between tutors and lecturers. Apparently the confusion stemmed from discrepancies between modular discussions held between tutors and students (tutees) in tutorials and lecturers and students in lectures:

- *The tutor and the lecturer are not on the same level and that's confusing;*
- *Sometimes the tutor does other work that is not the same as the lecturer's work;*
- *I get confused between the lecturer and the tutor classes, the work is different.*

De Smet et al. (2010) state that it is crucial for lecturers to fully inform tutors on their tasks and responsibilities. Contrary to this view, it was found that the communication between lecturers, tutors and tutees in the FoE leaves much to be desired. The following comments attest to a sub-optimal situation:

- *... we were experiencing big communication gaps between the tutors and the lecturer*
- *... the lecturer never told us about the tutorials so we didn't know about the tutor*

In the light of these responses, communication between relevant role-players (tutees, tutors and lecturers) in the A_STEP is indeed an area to improve on because the lack thereof is seen to have a ripple effect on the effectiveness and functionality of the programme as a whole.

Tutees also felt the need for more frequent ICT use in sessions:

- *make use of more slides [PowerPoint presentations];*
- *Use more videos and media to explain the work;*
- *Show us more videos on the work it really helps.*

This resonates with comments made by tutors in their reflective entries where they suggested that TLCs should in future training sessions better instruct them on ICT use in general (*vide par.* 4.5.2.4).

Tutees earlier pointed out how effective they found the tutors' ability to use innovative teaching strategies as part of their session pedagogy (*vide par.* 4.6.1). Some, on the other hand, still felt that it was an area that tutors could improve on:

- *The tutor must make activities more fun;*
- *Tutors should be more active in group discussions to help us understand more;*
- *We need more classroom activities in tutorials.*

These suggestions and recommendations confirm the diverse learning profiles of students. Vygotsky (1978) explains that some tutees are either, kinaesthetic learners (i.e., learn through bodies in motion – tutee engagement in role-playing activities), visual learners (i.e., learn through visual stimulation - incorporation of PowerPoint presentations, Prezi Software presentations and multimedia as a strategy to explain content), auditory learners (i.e., learn through hearing – tutee engagement in class discussions on content related matters), or emotional learners (i.e., group interaction on content related matters) (ibid.). Some tutees might even find it comforting by learning through a combination of the above (Lakey, 2010). Diversification of teaching and learning strategies should therefore be the hallmark of tutoring.

4.6.3. Concluding comments

The purpose of this sub-investigation (par. 4.6) was to identify tutees' general perceptions of the A_STEP. It was found that their need for tutorial assistance was sparked by the challenging nature of their modules in the Faculty. They believed that the tutors' possessed facilitative teaching and learning qualities that not only improved their understanding of modular material, but also their academic performance. They also believed that tutorials in the Faculty were not flawless and that the utilisation of teaching strategies and incorporation of ICT in sessions were areas to improve on.

4.7. SUMMARY

In this chapter the case of tutor training, development and instructional behaviour was holistically analysed and described from various angles by the research participants (tutors, tutees, lecturers and TLCs). Their in-depth feedback untangled core operational processes within the A_STEP, as well as an array of internal influences known to support or threaten the sustainability and effectiveness of the programme. In response to the aim of the study, the next chapter proposes possible strategies and approaches to address these influences.

CHAPTER 5

PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS AND END-REFLECTION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In this study I investigated the training, development and instructional behaviour of tutors from both a theoretical (*vide* par. 2.1) and an empirical perspective (*vide* par. 4.1). The investigation was done to find out how tutors in the Faculty of Education can be better trained and developed so that they adopt a more effective facilitative teaching approach with their peers (*vide* primary research question, par. 1.5).

What motivated me to do the study was the observation that although tutors receive formal training, they still revert back to adopting a non-facilitative “re-lecturing” approach in their sessions. In this chapter, I will respond to the primary research question by suggesting possible strategies and approaches that will address the trend of re-lecturing to enhance the quality of tutoring in the Faculty of Education.

The chapter is structured in the following manner: In the first instance, an overview of various internal influences known to affect the quality of the A_STEP is provided. Suggestions on the operationalisation of teaching excellence among A_STEP tutors follow. Thereafter, the value of creating a conducive environment to stimulate the development of tutors as potential scholars of teaching and learning is described. Finally, recommendations for promoting a scholarly approach to tutoring and for future research on tutor training and development are made.

5.2. INFLUENCES THAT AFFECT THE QUALITY OF TUTORIALS

Responding to the aim of the study (*vide* par. 1.4) requires an awareness of the influences known to affect the quality of tutorials, as perceived by the research participants. Relevant empirical findings as described in Chapter 4, were merged into

Table 5.1. By categorising the different influences as either positive or negative, the table highlights the two core processes (tutor training and development and tutor instructional behaviour) impacting the sustainability of the core A_STEP processes.

Table 5.1: Influences impacting the core A_STEP processes

| Core processes | Positive influences | Negative influences |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Tutor training and development</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Informative training content ➤ Cooperative learning among tutors ➤ Acquisition of facilitative teaching skills ➤ Team spirit among tutors ➤ Motivation to start tutoring careers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of lecturer involvement and support ➤ Limited ICT preparation ➤ Lack of module content briefing on modules to be tutored ➤ Discrepancies between pedagogical principles promoted during training and modular demands |
| <p>Facilitative teaching behaviour of tutors</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ability of tutors to develop a conducive learning environment for peers ➤ Tutors' attendance of training and developmental opportunities ➤ Student-centred teaching approaches utilised in sessions ➤ Interactive and personal character of peer learning ➤ ICT integration in tutorials ➤ Tutors' thorough module content knowledge ➤ TLC observations ensuring effective facilitative teaching practice ➤ Tutors' use of innovative teaching strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Not all tutors are able to attend training and developmental opportunities ➤ Tutors' inability to integrate ICT in sessions ➤ Low-level of tutor observations and evaluations done by TLCs ➤ Lack of communication between tutors and lecturers ➤ Over-crowded tutorial sessions ➤ Tutors' lack of module content knowledge ➤ Tutors' spoon-feeding approach ➤ Lack of venue availability for tutorials ➤ Challenges with the peer observation system ➤ Challenging modular content ➤ Low-level tutor confidence |

Apart from impacting day-to-day tutorial activities, these influences are also interrelated. This means, for example, that the lack of lecturer involvement or support in a tutor training event at the beginning of the year negatively affects both the quality of tutor preparation and the level of communication between lecturer and tutor. Similarly, the facilitative teaching skills which tutors acquire during the training events affect their competency and confidence levels and therefore also their performance in their own tutor sessions.

The interrelatedness among different influences impacting on the core processes of the A_STEP presents a challenge when it comes to making recommendations for improvement. This realisation emphasised the significance of

Gibbs' (2010) suggestion that enhancing the effectiveness of a tutor programme requires an intentional and well-structured approach. Possible corrective measures and practice implications (strategies and approaches to improve the quality of tutoring) should thus be considered thoughtfully and strategically. This is precisely what suggestions for strengthening the personal and professional development of tutors, as outlined in the next two paragraphs, aim to do.

5.3. PROMOTING SCHOLARSHIP AMONG TUTORS

The demand for academic support through peer-facilitated tutorials is steadily gaining magnitude (DHET, 2014) which means that tutors, just like other academic staff members, need to remain motivated for sustained and improved performance (Sutherland & Gilbert, 2013; Bell, 2007). One way in which the personal and professional development of tutors may be strengthened, is by introducing them to the concept of scholarship. Martin (2007:1) sees scholarly academics as educators who *... consult literature, select and apply appropriate information to guide the teaching and learning experience, conduct systematic observations, analyse the outcomes, and obtain peer evaluation of their classroom performance*. A scholarship approach also depends heavily on intrinsic rewards such as responsibility, self-respect and a sense of accomplishment (Seldin, 1995).

Tutoring as a form of teaching also includes a scholarly focus and is known for its potential to trigger the academic aspirations of tutors (Sutherland & Gilbert, 2013). A study done by these authors (ibid.) at a New Zealand University revealed that tutoring played a key role in the academic career development of tutors. They further found that tutoring also enhanced their level of academic commitment. For these reasons tutor programmes should cater for tutors' scholarly standards by allowing tutors to set tutor goals, thoroughly prepare for tutorials, utilise effective teaching strategies and approaches, present meaningful presentations, highlight significant results and reflect critically on their own facilitative teaching practice (Sutherland & Gilbert, 2013; Glassick, Huber, Maeroff & Boyer, 1997). This approach ensures that tutors are encouraged to focus on what is meant to be scholarly, how to transmit

scholarly teaching into their own facilitative teaching practice and how to adapt a scholarly teaching approach in future career possibilities (Hall & Sutherland, 2013).

A teaching portfolio approach is credited for not only promoting such a scholarly attitude, but also for monitoring the quality of tutoring (Hall & Sutherland, 2013; Seldin, 1995). Unlike the generic tutor portfolio currently used in the A_STEP with its focus on tutors' end-reflections of past tutoring experiences (*vide* Appendix F) and no intent of asking tutors to analyse their current tutor behaviour, an evidence-based teaching portfolio will allow tutors to reflect, evaluate, document and communicate the outcome of their tutorial practice to others. Table 5.2 comprises suggested portfolio items and the kind of evidence that may be included in such a tutor teaching portfolio (Austin & Braidman, 2008; Rickards et al., 2008; Bell, 2007).

Table 5.2: Suggested portfolio items and evidence for inclusion in a tutor teaching portfolio

| Items | Evidence for verification |
|---|--|
| Conceptual understanding of tutoring and practical implementation of facilitative practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Personal goals for tutoring ➤ Evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – their level of preparedness for tutorials – teaching strategies utilised in sessions – presentations made in sessions |
| Preparation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Personal reflection on tutor training and developmental opportunities ➤ Plans and strategies for supplementing modular content |
| Analyses of tutorial impact on academic success of students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proof of peer evaluations (e.g. tutees evaluating tutors' teaching practices) ➤ Records of consultations with module lecturers to obtain information on the academic progress of students |
| Identification and steps taken to address factors impacting negatively on the quality of tutoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Details of how obstacles were addressed (e.g. how they clarified communication gaps that exist between them and the lecturers) ➤ Examples of innovative measures taken to improve tutoring in the Faculty (e.g. tutors marketing their tutorials to promote tutee attendance) |
| Tracking and monitoring tutee attendance and success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recordkeeping (e.g. tutees' "muddiest points" in a session; what tutors should do more of / less / stop doing) ➤ Databases (e.g. results of formative assessments, tutee attendances) |

| | |
|--|---|
| Collaboration and engagement with others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Peer (tutors / tutees) involvement in the planning of future sessions ➤ Details of how tutees and other tutors were consulted in planning for future sessions ➤ Outcome of a collaboration with tutors from other Faculties (e.g. sharing of ideas to improve tutorial effectiveness, addressing challenges tutors encountered in their sessions) |
| Critical reflection on performance and personal values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reflection based on feedback from student evaluations and classroom observations to identify internal and external factors conducive to, or inhibiting innovation (e.g. Who am I? How do my peers value me? How do I value myself? What can I do to improve my tutorial practice?) |
| Showcasing tutoring innovation (to be submitted for annual tutor awards) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proof of regular consultation with module lecturers on innovative teaching methods implemented in sessions ➤ Examples of 'best practice' (e.g. innovative teaching strategies that worked particularly well) ➤ Illustration of outstanding tutorial presentations |

The implementation of an evidence-based tutor teaching portfolio holds the promise of enhancing the quality of tutoring in the FoE. However, as Gibbs (2010) asserts, there is no single pathway to make change happen. Conditions that may contribute to an environment deemed fit to promote scholarly tutoring, will now be discussed.

5.4. CREATING A CONDUCIVE TUTORING ENVIRONMENT

For tutors to achieve scholarly standards, holistic support from academic staff is a pre-requisite (Hall & Sutherland, 2013). Coggshall, Rasmussen, Colton, Milton and Jacques (2012) suggest that the creation of a climate of change with regard to scholarly teaching and learning in a HE environment requires a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches. Applied to the A_STEP context, this would mean that encouraging a scholarly approach to tutoring by requiring tutors to build a teaching portfolio will not have the desired effect, unless other relevant role players and stakeholders (TLCs, lecturers, Faculty Management, CTL) synergise their efforts to create a culture of trust and an environment that is conducive to the personal and

professional development of tutors. Substantiated by literature perspectives, as well as suggestions and comments generated throughout the study, a clear picture of practice implications emerged (Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014; Coggshall et al., 2012; Bell, 2007). Table 5.3 provides a list of conditions identified as crucial for cultivating such a supportive developmental environment for tutors.

Table 5.3: Conditions essential for cultivating a supportive developmental environment for tutors

| Conditions | Practical implications |
|---|---|
| (a) Culture of trust within the Faculty | ➤ Human values such as respect, trust and openness should be displayed at Faculty level among relevant role players and stakeholders of the A_STEP (<i>vide</i> par. 2.5.3.3) |
| (b) Communication network for tutors | ➤ Tutors should have ample opportunities to communicate with their lecturers, peers and TLC on a regular basis (<i>vide</i> par. 2.4.3) |
| (c) Lecturer-tutor content discussions | ➤ Regular brief content discussions between lecturers and tutors to take place prior to every tutorial session (<i>vide</i> par. 2.5.2) |
| (d) Coaching and support structures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ TLC to be responsible for the mentoring and coaching of tutors (<i>vide</i> par. 1.9) ➤ TLC to play a supportive role in monitoring tutors' facilitative teaching behaviour, and should also be able to provide constructive evidence-based feedback on tutors' facilitative teaching practice (<i>vide</i> par. 4.2.5) ➤ Lecturers to provide tutors with module-related support and continuous feedback on modular expectations (<i>vide</i> par. 4.5.2.4) ➤ Experienced tutors that are familiar with the A_STEP should be assigned as mentors to support first-time tutors with the planning and execution of tutorials (<i>vide</i> par. 2.5.3.3) |
| (e) Ample opportunities for benchmarking with relevant role-players | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ TLCs to establish opportunities for tutors to analyse and reflect on their own teaching practices in the presence of their peers and module lecturers (<i>vide</i> par. 2.5.3.1) to pave the way for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – sustained collaborative learning among tutors – scaling-up innovative teaching approaches – brainstorming student engagement techniques – determining potential pitfalls and challenges that affect the quality of tutorials |

| | |
|---|---|
| (f) Availability of resources to promote tutorial effectiveness | ➤ ICT services and resources for use in tutorials should be made accessible to tutors (<i>vide par. 4.4.2</i>) |
| (g) Continuous developmental opportunities in the form of workshops on UDL, DD, etc | ➤ TLC to flexibly schedule additional developmental opportunities or events for tutors to enable them to still meet their academic obligations (<i>vide par. 2.5.3</i>); (<i>vide par. 4.2.4</i>) |
| (h) Strategic planning | ➤ TLC and tutors to anticipate challenges through: a) institutional research, b) regular tutor meetings, c) tutorial observations |
| (i) Celebration of success through tutor awards | ➤ Scrutiny and evaluation of tutor teaching portfolios to award success fairly and appropriately |

5.5. PLAN OF ACTION TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF TUTORING IN THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

The researcher has a decisive role to play in establishing the kind of conducive environment outlined in Table 5.3. As TLC, responsible for managing the day-to-day A_STEP activities in the FoE, I am also the custodian of quality assurance. Part of the quality assurance will include a constant review of the tutor training and developmental processes currently used in the A_STEP. To improve the quality of tutorials in the Faculty, the proposed training and developmental initiatives described in chapter 2 of the study will be tabled at appropriate fora for consideration by relevant decision-makers. My study has helped me in both these respects by confirming that the key to successful tutoring rests on the two pillars:

- (a) Tutors who are well trained, developed and valued as upcoming scholars and therefore mindful and appreciative of the vital role they play in enhancing students' learning experiences and academic success (see Figure 5.1, inner circle).
- (b) Supporting institutional and Faculty structures that permit tutors to supplement classroom teaching meaningfully by practicing truly facilitative teaching behaviour (see Figure 5.1, outer circle).

Figure 5.1 graphically portrays these two dimensions, comprising different components of an action plan that will henceforth be used to direct all processes related to the preparation, training and development of tutors in the FoE.

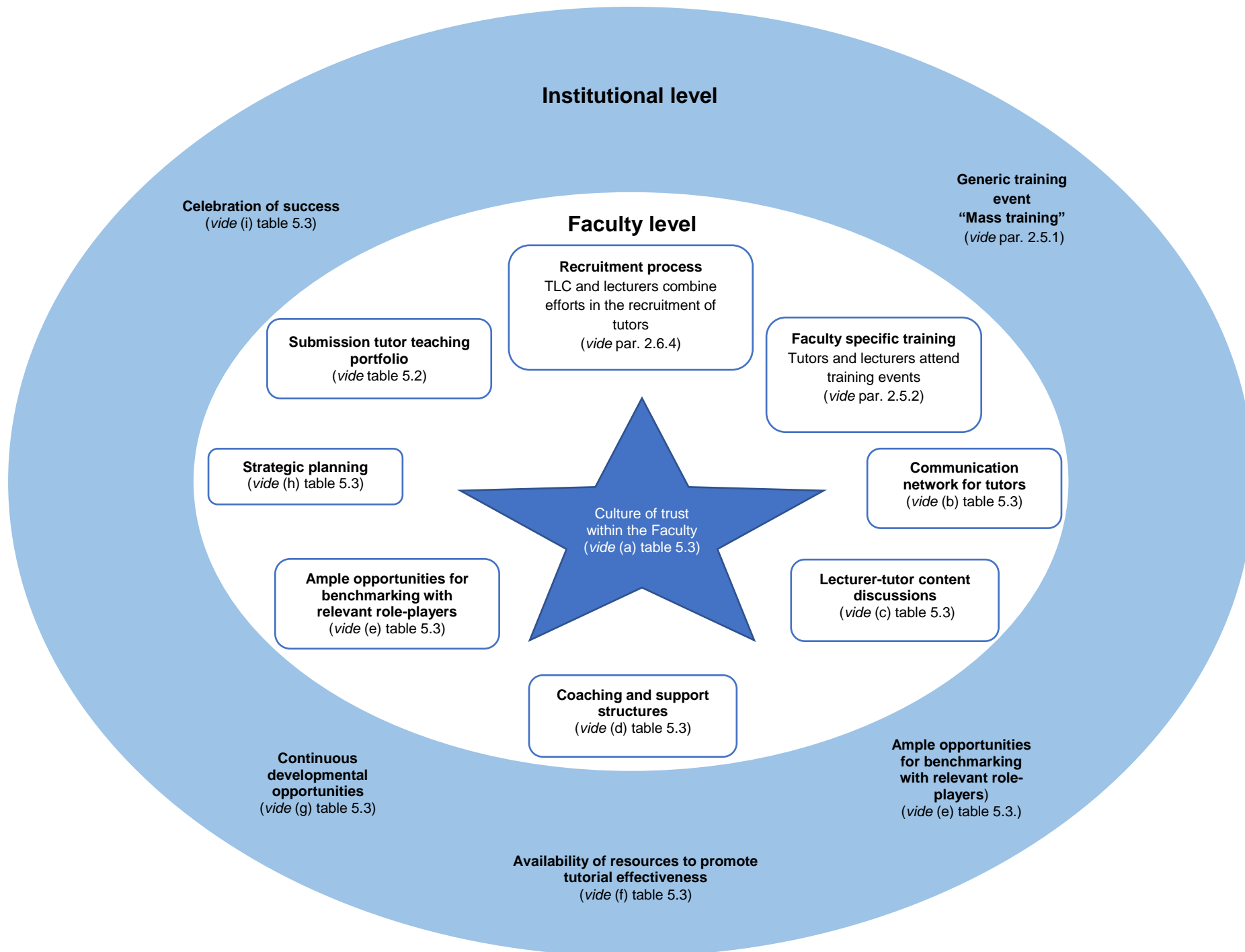


Figure 5.1: Components of action plan for enhancing the quality of tutoring in the FoE

5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND CONCLUDING COMMENT

True to the purpose of interpretive research, namely to improve the world through more informed action (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002), generalisation of findings to a wider audience was never the intention of this small-scale, case-based study. However, the understanding and insights gleaned from the investigation lead to a rethinking of tutoring as a phenomenon. As such the documentation of the researcher's meaning-making process may be of value to a larger circle of TLCs in other Faculties and even beyond Faculty borders in similar contexts at institutional level, such as the CTL. The action plan for the FoE plotted in Figure 5.1 is intended to help the researcher to, in the words of Lincoln (1998:18), ... *leap from understanding to action*, and will hopefully also probe other stakeholders in the Faculty to action.

The action plan culminates in the submission of a tutor teaching portfolio. It is well documented (Gunn & Fisk, 2013; Coggshall et al., 2012; Austin & Braidman, 2008; Rickards et al., 2008; Glassick, Huber, Maeroff & Boyer, 1997) that a teaching portfolio has the potential to enhance the quality of tutoring. With a view to further research, it will be interesting to determine whether the portfolio does indeed contribute to better quality tutoring. To this end, it will also be valuable to capture tutors' perceptions of the teaching portfolio as a tool for personal and professional development.

Tutors may be seen as the "next generation of future academics" (Huang, Yellin & Turns, 2005:1). In the FoE there are already a few examples where former tutors have been employed in junior-lecturer positions. In future, the existence of a tutor teaching portfolio may serve to strengthen such initiatives. Faculties, therefore, have no time to lose in growing their own timber. Borrowing from President John F. Kennedy, ... *[we] too must start to plant this afternoon*.

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SUMMARY

At the University of the Free State tutoring is one of the mechanisms that are used to enhance students' throughput rate. A literature study, followed by extensive empirical investigations among lecturers, tutors, tutees and teaching and learning coordinators has confirmed that unless tutors are equipped with the principles of student-centred learning and peer facilitation, obtained through adequate training and development, tutoring might not be effective at all.

At institutional level the CTL provides generic tutor training by means of the A_STEP. In the Faculty of Education, various initiatives have been launched over the past two years to supplement and enrich the generic training programme. Despite these Faculty-specific initiatives the researcher, in his capacity as teaching and learning coordinator, identified a serious shortfall in the quality of tutoring in the sense that tutors revert to re-lecturing instead of learning facilitation.

This study consulted a variety of data sources in order to explore, gather evidence and consider perceptions in order to understand how the quality of tutor training and development in the Faculty of Education could be enhanced. Faculty-specific tutor training features that demand modification were highlighted, and suggestions were made on how to create a conducive environment to hone and maintain tutor skills, thus putting greater emphasis on their professional development as aspiring academics.

OPSOMMING

Aan die Universiteit van die Vrystaat is tutoriale een van die meganismes wat gebruik word om studente se deurvloei te verbeter. 'n Literatuurstudie, gevolg deur 'n uitgebreide empiriese ondersoek onder dosente, tutors, tutees en onderrig-en-leer koördineerders het bevestig dat tensy tutors deur middel van voldoende opleiding en ontwikkeling toegerus word met die beginsels van student-gesentreerde leer en eweknie-fasilitering, tutorsessies as onderrigbenadering geheel en al kan faal. .

Institusioneel voorsien die Sentrum vir Onderrig en Leer (SOL) generiese tutoropleiding deur middel van die sogenaamde "A_STEP". In die Fakulteit Opvoedkunde is daar gedurende die afgelope twee jaar verskeie inisiatiewe geloods om dié generiese program aan te vul en te verryk. Ten spyte hiervan het die navorser, in sy hoedanigheid as onderrig-en-leer koördineerder 'n ernstige tekortkoming in die gehalte van tutoriale geïdentifiseer in dié sin dat tutors geneig is om mini-lesings te gee in plaas daarvan om leer te fasiliteer.

Hierdie studie het 'n wye verskeidenheid van databronne geraadpleeg om die terrein te verken en persepsies te oorweeg met die oog daarop om te verstaan hoe die gehalte van tutoriale in die Fakulteit Opvoedkunde verbeter kan word. Fasette van fakulteitspesifieke tutoropleiding wat verandering noodsaak is uitgelig en voorstelle is gemaak vir die daarstel van 'n omgewing wat bevorderlik is vir die opskerp en instandhouding van tutorvaardighede, om sodoende groter klem te plaas op die professionele ontwikkeling van tutors as aspirant-akademici.

KEY TERMS

Student throughput

Facilitative teaching

Active learning

Lecturer-centred teaching approach

Student-centred teaching approach

Re-lecturing

Peer-education

Conducive learning environment

Tutor training and development

Scholarly attitudes

APPENDIX A - OUTLINE FOR TUTOR PORTFOLIO

INFORMED CONSENT:

Dear Participant

I would like to invite you to take part in a research project, titled:

The perceptions of various role players on the training and instructional behaviour of tutors in a faculty of education at a higher education institution.

This study is about identifying the perceptions of various role players on the instructional behaviour of tutors in a faculty of education at a higher education institution.

We would like you to participate in this research because you are well placed to explain in the form of a portfolio what your overall experience of being a tutor in the FoE was.

The reason we are doing this study is to obtain a better understanding on why tutors in the Faculty of Education sometimes engage in a non-facilitative (re-lecturing) approach with their peers. Feedback on your experiences as a tutor will help to improve the tutor training programme.

This survey doesn't include any elements that are harmful to your human dignity. All information regarding this survey is **kept confidential** and the researcher **will not reveal details of any personal information about you as participant.**

While I greatly appreciate your participation in this important study and the valuable contribution you can make, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and **you are under no obligation to take part in this study.** If you do choose to take part, and an issue arises which makes you uncomfortable, **you may at any time stop your participation with no further repercussions.**

If you experience any discomfort or unhappiness with the way the research is being conducted, please feel free to contact me directly to discuss it, and also note that you are free to contact my study supervisor (indicated below).

Researcher: Wiets Botes

T: +27(0)51 401 9252

Promoter:

Prof Adri Beylefeld

T: +27(0)51 401 3125

Yours sincerely,

Wiets Botes



Please Note:

Information regarding research questions 2, 4 and 7 (*vide par. 1.5.*) will be obtained from sections A, B and C of the tutor portfolio (Appendix A). The following three questions will be used as prompts to elicit the data:

- What are tutors' perceptions of the tutor training provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning?
- What challenges do tutors encounter during their tutorial sessions that might stifle their facilitative teaching practice with their peers?
- What are tutors' overall experience of tutoring in the FoE at the end of their tutoring careers?

OUTLINE FOR TUTOR PORTFOLIO

VERY IMPORTANT:

Please structure your portfolio strictly according to the Sections A – C, Questions 1 – 10 and nr's 1.1 – 10.1 as illustrated in the outline below

.....

SECTION A

(INITIAL TRAINING AND CONTINUOUS TUTOR DEVELOPMENT)

QUESTION 1

TUTOR ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

- 1.1 Reflect on your experiences of the tutor orientation / training session that you attended at the beginning of the semester. (What did you identify as the key aspects of tutor training? / What was special about the training session? / How did you feel after the training session?)
- 1.2 Did the training session set the tone for a specific Faculty of Education context and setting? (Motivate – e.g. Were you able to align what you've learned at the training with the module that you will tutor?)
- 1.3 Do you feel that the training session prepared you to practise facilitation by means of creating a student-centred learning approach with your peers? (Motivate your answer...)

- 1.4 Following the training session, what were your goals and objectives that you wanted to pursue and achieve in your tutorials this semester/year?
- 1.5 Any recommendations or suggestions for the improvement of tutor orientation / training?

QUESTION 2

LEARNING SPACES FOR CONTINUOUS TUTOR DEVELOPMENT

(Additional workshops and follow-up sessions)

- 2.1 Reflect on your experiences of any of the follow-up training sessions and workshops that were presented throughout the semester/year as part of your continuous development. (What happened during these follow-up training session? / What did you learn from these sessions that you did not know before? / How did you feel after attending the session?)
- 2.2 How has being a tutor affected your own personal development during the course of the semester/year? (e.g. Have you become better at time management? / Have you learned new interpersonal skills, etc.)
- 2.3 Any recommendations or suggestions for the improvement of continuous tutor development?

QUESTION 3

INFORMATION AND EVIDENCE RELATED TO YOUR PERSONAL TUTOR SESSIONS

- 3.1 Reflect on your tutorial experiences with the tutees. (What was your initial reaction facilitating your first tutorial? / What did this experience remind you of? / Once becoming more familiar with the process, how did that make you feel?)
- 3.2 What do you think got the tutees most engaged in your sessions?
- 3.3 File here all copies of worksheets / session planning and any other materials you may have used during the sessions.
- 3.4 Being a tutor for the first time is not always easy. (What challenges did you encounter that hindered your sessions? / How did these challenges make you feel? / How will this encounter shape you in going into teaching practice one day?)
- 3.5 Any recommendations or suggestions for the improvement of your own tutorial sessions?

**SECTION B:
(ELEMENTS FOR OPTIMAL TUTOR FUNCTIONING)**

QUESTION 4 MARKETING

- 4.1 Marketing your very own tutorial is crucial in sustaining tutee attendance. (What did you do to market your sessions? / Why was it important to market your sessions? / Did you learn anything valuable about marketing tutorials that you might find valuable for your teaching practise in the near future?)
- 4.2 File here all copies of materials used for marketing purposes. (posters, hand- outs, timetables, overheads etc.)
- 4.3 Discuss whether or not you had high or low attendance. (If it was low, do you know why? / Was there a lecture clash? / Was the session too late/early?)
- 4.4 Any recommendations or suggestions for the improvement of tutorial marketing?

QUESTION 5

AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCE TOOLS

- 5.1 Using the Blackboard interface for tutor discussions among other tutors has its ups and downs... (What was your experience of using BB for these discussions? / Did you find the Blackboard interface helpful or not? Motivate / What impact did BB eventually have on you as tutor?)
- 5.2 What resource tools (e.g. tutor manual or additional documents) were made available to you as tutor and how did you use these tools in your tutorials? (Elaborate...)
- 5.3 Any recommendations or suggestions for the improvement of resource tool allocation to tutors?

QUESTION 6

PEER – AND TLC EVALUATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

- 6.1 During the course of your tutoring career one of your peers had the opportunity to observe your session/s. (What was your reaction on the idea of being observed? What was special about the observation? How did you feel after the observation?)
- 6.2 Observing one of your fellow tutors provided you with the opportunity to give

valuable feedback for improvement. (What was your initial reaction observing another tutor? / How did that make you feel? / Did you learn anything valuable from the experience?)

6.3 Attach the necessary 'peer- and TLC evaluation and observation surveys'
(Ask TLC for copies)

6.4 Any recommendations or suggestions for the improvement of peer- and TLC evaluations and observations?

QUESTION 7

ANNUAL TUTOR MEETINGS

7.1 Reflect on your experience of the annual tutor meetings held throughout the semester/year. (What happened during these meetings? / Did you find the meetings helpful or not, motivate? / Did the meetings have an impact on your future tutor sessions?)

7.2 Any recommendations or suggestions for the improvement of annual tutor meetings?

SECTION C

(THE INFLUENCE OF VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS AND ROLE-PLAYERS ON THE TUTOR PROGRAM)

QUESTION 8

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING COORDINATOR (TLC) IN SUPPORTING AND COMMITTING TO TUTOR DEVELOPMENT

8.1 The TLC forms the foundation in ensuring the optimal functioning of a tutoring programme in a Faculty. (What role did the TLC play in your tutoring career at the FoE? / Did the TLC's support and commitment in any way lead to your own development as a tutor? motivate / If any, what did you learn from the TLC that you'll take into your future teaching practise?)

8.2 Did you encounter any problems with the TLC that had a direct influence on your tutorship?

8.3 Reflect on the tutor programme as a whole. (What comes to mind, once you think

of the tutor programme on campus? / What do you think should happen to improve the tutor programme on campus? / Five years from now, what ideas would you take into the teaching practise that might influence your own classroom learning environment?)

8.4 Any recommendations or suggestions for the improvement of TLCs' support and commitment throughout a tutor programme?

QUESTION 9

THE IMPORTANCE OF TUTORS LIAISING / COOPERATING WITH DEPARTMENTAL STAFF

9.1 Liaising and cooperating with departmental staff like lecturers greatly influence the tutorship of a tutor. (How did you experience the meeting/s? / What did this meeting remind you of? / How did you feel after the meeting/s with the lecturer?)

9.2 Was the lecturer/s helpful in supporting you with the tutor module? (Motivate your answer)

9.3 Did you meet with the lecturer/s at regular intervals and if so on what basis?

9.4 Any recommendations or suggestions for the improvement of tutors liaising / cooperating with departmental staff?

QUESTION 10 OVERALL COMMENT

10.1 Are there any other recommendations that you have for the tutoring team on how we can improve the programme as such?

APPENDIX B – TUTOR EVALUATION SHEET

INFORMED CONSENT:

Dear Participant

I would like to invite you to take part in a research project, titled

The perceptions of various role players on the training and instructional behaviour of tutors in a faculty of education at a higher education institution.

This study is about identifying the perceptions of various role players on the instructional behaviour of tutors in a faculty of education at a higher education institution.

We would like you to participate in this research because you are well placed to explain in the form of a survey what your perception of the tutorial programme in the FoE are?

The reason we are doing this study is to obtain a better understanding on why tutors in the Faculty of Education sometimes engage in a non-facilitative (re-lecturing) approach with their peers. Feedback on your experiences as a tutor will help to improve the tutor training programme.

This survey doesn't include any elements that are harmful to your human dignity. All information regarding this survey is **kept confidential** and the researcher **will not reveal details of any personal information about you as participant.**

While I greatly appreciate your participation in this important study and the valuable contribution you can make, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and **you are under no obligation to take part in this study.** If you do choose to take part, and an issue arises which makes you uncomfortable, **you may at any time stop your participation with no further repercussions.**

If you experience any discomfort or unhappiness with the way the research is being conducted, please feel free to contact me directly to discuss it, and also note that you are free to contact my study supervisor (indicated below).

Researcher: Wiets Botes

T: +27(0)51 401 9252

Promoter:

Prof Adri Beylefeld

T: +27(0)51 401 3125

Yours sincerely,

Wiets Botes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Botes', is centered below the typed name. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'W'.

TUTOR EVALUATION SHEET

Please note: Your answers in this survey will be kept entirely confidential.

SEMESTER:

TUTOR NAME:

COURSE: (eg. ELE 114)

1.1 Motivation for attending tutorials (check all that apply):

| | |
|---|--|
| I was having trouble understanding the module material in general | |
| I received a lower mark than I expected in an exam, test or assessment activity | |
| I tried but could not get adequate help from the lecturer | |
| I tried but could not get adequate help from my peers (friends) | |

Other:

(Please give other reasons, or elaborate on what motivated you to attend the tutorial)

1.2 Where did you hear about the faculty's tutorial sessions? (check all that apply):

| | |
|---|--|
| From the lecturer | |
| From fellow students | |
| From the Faculty Facebook page / Blackboard interface | |
| From the tutor | |
| From an advertisement | |

Other source:

(Please elaborate or indicate any other sources that informed you about the tutorials)

1.3 Tutoring improved_my understanding of module material:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Strongly disagree | |
| Disagree | |
| Neutral | |
| Agree | |
| Strongly agree | |

1.4 Interaction and collaboration among the tutor and students that took place during the session improved my learning and understanding of modular material:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Strongly disagree | |
| Disagree | |
| Neutral | |
| Agree | |
| Strongly agree | |

1.5 The tutorial helped me improve my module mark:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Strongly disagree | |
| Disagree | |
| Neutral | |
| Agree | |
| Strongly agree | |

1.6 The tutorial (check all that apply):

| | |
|--|--|
| Clarified module concepts | |
| Increased my confidence and abilities to engage in group discussions | |
| Strengthened my problem solving skills | |
| Helped me in discovering different ways to master modular content | |

Other:

(Please give other reasons, or elaborate if needed)

Was there a specific approach or strategy that the tutor used during this session that you found particularly helpful/meaningful?

1.7 Was there a specific approach or strategy that the tutor used during this session that you found particularly helpful/meaningful?

1.8 Improvement of the tutorial:

What could the tutor have done to make the session more meaningful?

1.9 Improvement of the tutor programme:

Do you have any suggestions on improving the program as a whole?

1.10 Rate your overall experience of the tutorial session:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

1 = very poor

10 = excellent

FINAL COMMENTS:

(Please provide any additional comments on the program or your experience of this particular session)

APPENDIX C – SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH TLCs

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

Research title:

The perceptions of various role players on the training and instructional behaviour of tutors in a Faculty of Education at a higher education institution.

I agree to participate in a research project led by Wiets Botes from the University of the Free State. The purpose of this document is to specify the terms of my participation in the project through being interviewed.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project has been explained to me and is clear.
2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. There is no explicit or implicit coercion whatsoever to participate.
3. The interview will last approximately 15 minutes. I allow the researcher to take written notes during the interview. I also may allow the recording (by audio/video recording) of the interview.
4. I have the right not to answer any of the questions. If I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to withdraw from the interview.
5. I have been given the explicit guarantees that, if I wish so, the researcher will not identify me by name or function in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.
6. I have been given the guarantee that this research project has been reviewed and approved by the FoE Ethics Committee with ethical clearance number (UFS-EDU-2015-003).
7. I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
8. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

Participant's Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wiets Botes', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Researcher's Signature

For further information, please contact:

Wiets Botes

072 596 3593

Date

Date

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH TLCs

Research Question:

How are tutors trained and developed in other Faculties of the UFS by their TLCs?

1. Can you briefly discuss what you think the mission of the A_STEP at the UFS?
2. What is your role as a TLC in the A_STEP?
3. How do you determine tutor competence?
4. What training and developmental opportunities are available to your tutors?
5. How do you evaluate your tutors' instructional behaviour?
6. To what extent has research played a role in tutor training and development in your Faculty?
7. What do you identify as the main strengths of the A_STEP?
8. What do you identify as the main weaknesses of the A_STEP?

APPENDIX D – SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH LECTURERS

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

Research title:

The perceptions of various role players on the training and instructional behaviour of tutors in a Faculty of Education at a higher education institution.

I agree to participate in a research project led by Wiets Botes from the University of the Free State. The purpose of this document is to specify the terms of my participation in the project through being interviewed.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project has been explained to me and is clear.
2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. There is no explicit or implicit coercion whatsoever to participate.
3. The interview will last approximately 15 minutes. I allow the researcher to take written notes during the interview. I also may allow the recording (by audio/video recording) of the interview.
4. I have the right not to answer any of the questions. If I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to withdraw from the interview.
5. I have been given the explicit guarantees that, if I wish so, the researcher will not identify me by name or function in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.
6. I have been given the guarantee that this research project has been reviewed and approved by the FoE Ethics Committee with ethical clearance number (UFS-EDU-2015-003).
7. I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
8. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

Participant's Signature

Date

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wiets Botes', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Researcher's Signature

Date

For further information, please contact:

Wiets Botes

072 596 3593

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH LECTURERS

Research Question:

To investigate, by means of a series of personal interviews, how lecturers in the FoE perceive tutoring provided by the tutors.

1. What was your experience of tutor-use within your module?
2. Do you feel that they contributed to students' academic success in any manner?
Elaborate.
3. Would you recommend tutorial support to other lecturers in the Faculty?
Elaborate.
4. Did you encounter any complications with tutor-support in your module?
5. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for the improvement of the A_STEP? Elaborate.

APPENDIX E – TUTOR OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION SHEET

TUTOR SESSION OBSERVATION

TUTOR: _____ **OBSERVER:** _____ **DATE:** _____

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Beginning of session - Introduction | | |
| Welcome & Introduce self | | Other feedback: |
| Introduce observer | | |
| Attendance register | | |
| Agenda | | |
| Prioritize agenda items | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|-----------------|
| During the session | | | | | |
| Student agenda followed | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Other feedback: |
| Good use of strategies | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| Tutor well-prepared | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| Appropriate session tone | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| Scale: 4=strongly agree 3=agree 2=neutral 1=needs discussion | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|-----------------|
| End of session – Conclusion | | | | | |
| Summarise discussion | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Other feedback: |
| Check student understanding | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| Check agenda items | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| What to prepare for next session | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |

| Strategies used | Student Participation | Student Interaction | Materials |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Redirecting Questions | Low | Low | Data projector |
| Probing Questions | Average | Average | Overhead projector |
| Informal Quiz | Good | Good | Board |
| Visual Techniques | Feedback: | Feedback: | Flipchart |
| Models of Organisation | | | Worksheet |
| Incomplete Outline | | | Textbooks |
| Paired Problem Solving | | | Lecture notes |
| Note Cards | | | Other: |
| Time Lines | | | |
| Vocabulary Activites | | | |
| Mnemonic Devices | | | |
| Lecture Review | | | |
| Note Review | | | |
| Any other: | | | Feedback: |

Sosiogram¹⁰ (check if applicable):



¹⁰ A **sociogram** is a graphic representation of the social links and interpersonal relations in a group situation.

Observee's thoughts on things that could have been better regarding the session:

Observee's thoughts on things that were great regarding the session:

Suggestions:

General comments:

Signature observer

Signature observee / tutor

TEACHING AND LEARNING COORDINATOR

A_STEP Outline for Tutor Portfolio 2015

SECTION A:

1. A_STEP Training

Discuss here your experiences of the A_STEP Training.

2. Marketing

Write a small description on how you introduced the A_STEP to students in your class. (What did you do to market your A_STEP sessions? What strategies did you use? How did you attract students to your sessions?) File here all copies of material that you used: posters, handouts, timetables, overheads etc. (You are welcome to make a video and get creative)

SECTION B:

1. Planning Meetings

Discuss briefly your experiences of the planning meetings: were they helpful? Were your problems addressed? Was the meetings held on a regular basis?

2. Follow up training sessions

Discuss a little bit of your experiences at any of the follow up training sessions that was presented during one of the two semesters.

3. A_STEP sessions

Discuss your experience with the students in your sessions: Were they actively involved? Did they participate? How did you deal with students who were shy, rude or difficult etc?

4. The A_STEP Team: CTL office, Coordinators, Assistants, Departmental Staff (lecturers etc.), Tutors

Were they available? Were they helpful? Did you encounter any problems? How did you solve these problems? Was the support sufficient?

SECTION C:

1. Expectations

Were your expectations met after the first two sessions of tutorial? Please discuss.

2. Experiences

Discuss a little about your experiences of the A_STEP during the course of the semester/year?

3. Attendance of A_STEP sessions

Discuss whether or not you had high or low attendance. If it was low, do you know why? Was there a lecture clash? Was the session too late/early?

4. Personal Development

How has being an A_STEP Tutor affected your own personal development during the course of the semester/year? e.g. Have you become better at time management? Have you learned new interpersonal skills, etc.

5. Recommendations

Are there any recommendations that you have for the A_STEP team on how we can improve the programme?

Please note: You will be required to submit your portfolio through the A_STEP Site on Blackboard. Be as creative as possible!!!!

APPENDIX G – EVIDENCE OF CODING PROCESS

| QUESTION | VERBATIM | | | THEME | CATEGORY | Frequency |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|-----------|
| | TAMSON TLC 1 | TIBI TLC 2 | NINA TLC 3 | | | |
| Mission of the A_STEP | I think A_STEP is there to uhm how can I say meet students in the middle especially if you're talking about a first year's student perspective to help to bridge the gap between their school work and university work and also to uhm what word can I use now just basically to help the students because they are very unprepared when they come to university so I think A_STEP is also there to bridge that gap and also with if you're talking about your second and third years bridging the gap between the lecturer and students uhm cause most students don't necessarily go to the lecturer or they feel intimidated by the lecturer so A_STEP is there to help the students with that is concerned with regard to the implementation of the new language policy in future A_STEP will also be there to assist with that, if English becomes medium of instruction to assist all the other students with | Our mission is closely aligned to that of CTL providing support, but how do we do it, with A_STEP of course is that peer environment and that conducive learning environment to assist the student to perform in that module at time for the purposes of the academic success but also going about training our tutors and getting them at the right level to support other students by helping other students learn and achieve academic success. The use of students are really important. Our mission is definitely you know the use of the student what we have, the resources what we have on campus by using our student resources to assist our students. Assisting students with tutor support. The human element can't be removed from peer education. | I think the mission of the A_STEP is probably to help students obtain better marks and results in certain modules, ja let me explain it like this, and usually we work on the basis of modules coming in which are identified as problematic modules where students really struggle to pass. Those modules in most cases forms part of the tutor programme we will then get tutors in place for those modules to provide support to students in those modules. So ja really I think the mission of the A_STEP is ideally to help students pass modules and also make their learning easier you know. | Academic support for underprepared students TLC 1,2,3 | Bridging gap between BE and HE learning environments | 2 |
| | | | | | Improving students academic success | 2 |
| | | | | | Establishment of a conducive learning environments for all students TLC 1,2 | 2 |
| | | | | | Cater for modules "at-risk" | 1 |
| | | | | | Learning support to students affected with the adapted language policy | 1 |

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| | <p>whenever we could have meetings we'll have like a little mini session where if I found something on graphic organisers for instance to suggest that to students or mention that there is a one minute paper that would have happened sometimes in meetings but training usually twice a year so once at the beginning of a semester.</p> | <p>for all tutors the faculty specific training takes place in the same week and during this specific training session we try and get relevant people in the faculty involved like the lecturers and so on ... and yes basically this training session will be all about how we can fine tune our tutors to needs of the faculty because tutoring obviously differs from faculty to faculty... modules in NAS are different from modules in Humanities and the same applies for the type of students.</p> <p>They will all also get invites for additional training sessions like the UDL and BB training or even the write site. So you see there are various training opportunities for them, the problem is just that they are really packed with other academic pressures and so but we do manage.</p> | <p>really pushed with their schedules and practicals and all of that but some of them manage to attend the trainings.</p> | <p>Challenges related to training opportunities TLC1,2,3</p> | <p>opportunities from the CTL - UDL, BB, AA, CUADS</p> <p>Timetables clashes academic pressures</p> | <p>3</p> |
| <p>Topics and methods utilised in tutor training</p> | <p>Training methods uhm basically includes what we were taught when we went for Supplemental instruction. Usually we use SI training and then uhm methods in our training session we try to get it pretty much uhm to have a student</p> | <p>Everything based on SI with the A_STEP and of course you know the peer environment the peer learning environment to I uhm... I haven't based it naturally on every other but these are the core of all the developmental</p> | <p>This year we used a variety of things uhm... for instance the mass training is one day and the faculty specific training is the next day. With the mass training we usually do the do's and don'ts of tutoring... we include tutor roles and</p> | <p>Tutor training pedagogy TLC1,2,3</p> | <p>Supplemental instruction Student engagement Peer learning environment</p> | <p>3 3 3</p> |

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| | <p>engagement approach in our training sessions so that there is actually involvement or participation in the training session between the tutors so that is the types of methods we use. I mean SI methods and student engagement methods and then obviously we use these methods in the training session to show the tutors how they could use the methods, skills and strategies that they've learned or being given in their tutorials based on the way we train in the training session.</p> | <p>interventions it's basically what you know ja.</p> | <p>responsibilities and we largely make the training session very interactive incorporating SI and all of that almost like a real tutorial session so that the students can see what tutoring is all about. We try really hard to do it in another manner because tutoring is different from lecturing so ja mostly active learning and so on.</p> | <p>Training topics TLC3</p> | <p>Align SI and student engagement in training session</p> <p>Do's and don'ts of tutoring, roles and responsibilities</p> | <p>2</p> <p>1</p> |
| <p>Determining a well-trained tutor</p> | <p>Uhm a well-trained tutor would be somebody that actually uses the skills or strategies that we have given them and tries to use them in their sessions and also you know goes the extra mile to use things (strategies) that we haven't really give them to try and have more student engagement or try to help students learn the content for their specific module.</p> | <p>You know we've got our mass training and faculty specific training so what's important for me is if the tutor can practice what they learnt in the tutor training session. Can they practice facilitation, can they practice student centred learning and of course we need to check up on them to make sure they are doing all of these things you know.</p> | <p>Okay so what really stands out for me is when a tutor uses the stuff that we taught them in their own sessions. In the training session we really encourage them to be learning facilitators and not just have a lecturing approach. They shouldn't just go teach the module again. So yes the important thing for us is that they use a different teaching method and approach you know the active peer learning and so on.</p> | <p>Characteristics of a well-trained tutor TLC1,2,3</p> | <p>Utilises facilitative teaching and learning skills and strategies obtained in training</p> <p>Establishes student-centred learning environments</p> <p>Peer learning</p> | <p>3</p> <p>2</p> |

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| Distinguishing between tutor training and tutor development | I think tutor training is more of just tutor training I mean giving the student the tutor skills for instance here is strategies and skills so use them, tutor development I think is more about the development of the tutor and them basically improving themselves as a person and not just training them on tutoring skills but where they could actually use the skills to develop themselves as an academic so I think there is a difference between just tutor training and tutor development. Tutor development is more of a continuous process. They are supposed to receive UDL trainings uhm but there is always some problem with what that is concerned so they never get to go to the UDL trainings. Other training initiatives have been offered but it has not really realised and a lot of tutors have not been able to attend due to their hectic academic schedule and timetable especially in the Science Faculty is quite packed so for them just to get free time to go to trainings even on the weekends are challenging especially for the Biochemistry students because they | The UDL, DD and AA would probably be under the developmental structure of tutors and the training will be more of a structure where tutors get trained on how to tutor which happens during the mass training. Uhm I think with tutor development the human element comes in and plays a role you know. It really feels like the more we give these guys training and additional support the better they get. | Ja I think so, if we talk about the mass training at the start of the year, that is more structured and basic tutoring stuff and so on... For me the developmental things come in where tutors attend workshops on a sometimes voluntary basis like the UDLs and AA workshops. So ja I think there is a difference between plain tutor training and development. | Tutor training related factors TLC1,2 | Skills and strategies Forms of tutor training – Mass training | 3 |
| | | | | Tutor development related factors TLC1,2 | Individual development Human element Voluntary and continuous process | 3 |
| | | | | | Forms of tutor development – UDL, AA, DD | 2 |
| | | | | Challenges related to tutor development | Students' academic schedule | 1 |

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| | <p>have their practicals on the weekends. So it's hard for them to actually attend these trainings.</p> | | | | | |
| Evaluating tutor instruction | <p>Usually we do that through uhm through observations so uhm we try to go to observe the tutors to see how they actually do their tutorial sessions and usually we have and use a marking sheet to evaluate them and then also we have peer observations where we ask their peers to observe them and they also have to hand in an observation sheet. I honestly think the peer observations don't really work because you know it is sometimes a friend observing a friend there is no how can I say you don't actually know if the tutor has actually observed or just filled in the form, it feels as if the tutors are not evaluating or observing another tutor effectively. So I don't really think it works. I think maybe different faculties should observe other faculties so that there is no buddy-buddy influence or effect.</p> | <p>Ja, ja we use the format provided by the CTL which is our observation and A_STEP evaluation processes besides students coming in and complaining about a tutor that opts for an investigation so ja usually we use tutor observations. I do however think that we also need to add the lecturer's voice to, we should maybe think of also giving them an opportunity to look at our tutors and provide advice on where they could better their tutoring or so you know. We started using lesson plans to push tutors in the direction of actually planning their sessions before hand, I think it will also be good if the tutor look at their sessions and reflect and think what worked and what didn't work you know... This is also for me a way of evaluation.</p> <p>We also have peer observations with me watching you and you watching me and so on... But I don't know, maybe I didn't market it enough to get everybody involved in this.... The past two months</p> | <p>We usually use observations to evaluate tutor sessions. How it works is that we go later in the semester and use the tutor evaluation sheet and just check the tutors tutoring styles and so on. After the tutorial we also meet with them and some cases give some suggestions on how they could improve and so on, ja it really works but it's difficult to get hold of everybody because this year have so many tutors and to observe everybody is not always possible.</p> | <p>Evaluating tutor performance and behaviour TLC1,2,3</p> | <p>TLC observations</p> | 3 |
| | | | | <p>Suggestions and recommendations with overall evaluation of tutors TLC2</p> | <p>Lecturer's voice Lesson plans</p> | 1 |
| | | | | <p>Challenges related to peer observations TLC1,2</p> | <p>Trustworthiness Students' academic schedule</p> | 3 |
| | | | | <p>Suggestions and recommendations for peer observations TLC1</p> | <p>Tutors from different Faculties to observe each other</p> | 1 |

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| | | we really struggled to get them involved in this. I really question this approach, I just feel there are more challenges to this than anything else, students are really too busy to go out and observe others, they are super super busy and we should also think of that you know. | | | | |
| Tutor evaluation opportunities | Well last year the first semester I actually managed to observe my tutors twice and then when the second semester came it was just too short so I could only observe every person once. I would be ideal to observe them more than once but because of the A_STEP that is growing and I'm using so many tutors it is very difficult to observe everybody more than once. | Okay this year I tried to observe certain department tutors once but I must say the week we lost in Feb really made things difficult. I'll try and observe them again in the new term. | Like I said, I try to observe everybody once but because of all the capturing and administration in the office I sometimes don't get the time to observe all the tutors. That is really an area to improve on. Maybe we can manage the tutor to tutor observations better then everybody can be observed more. | Number of tutor evaluations | Once | 3 |
| | | | | Factors affecting the observation process | TLC schedule Administrative duties Large number of tutors Time management Attendance capturing | 3 |
| The role of research in tutor training and development | Well not so much the research part because the admin part of the TLC job gets quite hectic so I was mostly sitting and entering registers. When I did start reading up there were some things I tried to implement or ask tutors to try out especially where student engagement activities were concerned | I think we need to spend more time to do some research you know, we as TLCs need to look at other institutions and see how they do things we need to learn from each other's. | You know this year we started to look at some research of better teaching strategies and so on but we are still new to the research thing. So at the moment we are not really researching tutor stuff. | Factors affecting research within the A_STEP TLC1,2,3 | Administrative duties Lack of research experience Time management | 2 |

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| | | something that didn't take place in the past. | | | | |
| The weaknesses of the A_STEP | <p>The weaknesses for me is the fact that we do have these innovative ideas but I think sometimes we implement them too fast and not gradually and that for me is the only real weakness with the programme and then uhm it's not really necessarily a weakness in the A_STEP programme I just think it's a university problem because the amount of students that we have uhm you know the venues can't accommodate the all the students, the timetable can't accommodate all the students it would have been nice to actually have tutorials programmes for every module but just to get a one hour timeslot for students to go to tutorials is a problem and if you look at the evaluation forms students can't attend tutorials because of clashes so as I said it's not a A_STEP problem, it's more of a university or institutional problem.</p> | <p>I think sometimes we work in silos and not everybody are on par with the latest happenings you know. The team pushes a lot of new things and in some cases we don't really think things through it makes things feel a bit inconsistent.</p> | <p>I think sometimes we have too many tutors and limited venues for them. This is really a big challenges for NAS to get everybody settled in a venue to have tutorials. I usually struggle for weeks to get everybody venues that suits them and they also get annoyed with this process.</p> | <p>TLC team and programme structure TLC1,2</p> <p>Lack of institutional resources</p> | <p>Implementation process of new innovations</p> <p>TLCs working independently TLCs not on par with innovations</p> <p>Venues</p> <p>Large number of tutors</p> <p>Large number of tutees</p> <p>Timetable clashes</p> | <p>2</p> <p>2</p> |