

Retention or Therapy? The Role of Personal Tutoring in a Further Education College.

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Abstract.

This thesis focuses on personal tutoring and pastoral support and guidance in a Further Education College. In this study, I explore the relational dynamics and social construction of the role of the personal tutor and reveal alternative discourses concerned with the emergence of the ‘therapeutic’ in the sector. Within the current audit culture of Further Education, new pedagogies of practice are emerging in response to Government policy, regulation and control and I illuminate their impact upon the sector, noting the sites of conflicts for personal tutors engaged in the labour process as they mediate the ‘emotional learning agenda’.

The research includes interview data from twenty personal tutors and nine senior managers (senior tutors), and also includes data from two focus groups. The twenty personal tutors are representative of a breadth of courses across the institution from Foundation Degree to Special Needs, teaching a range of subjects from Marine Science to Performing Arts. The focus groups represent new full-time and part-time trainees to the profession attending the Initial Teacher Training Course. The data was collected over two years from 2006, in a Further Education College in the South West of England called ‘Pendene’. Policy documents including Ofsted reports were also incorporated into the study as secondary data sources.

In this research, I reveal that personal tutors at Pendene College were investing time and energy in the emotional lives of their students, in response to policy and practices related to retention and achievement which challenges the arguments from Ecclestone (2004), Furedi (2003) and Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) concerned with the expansion of therapy culture in Further Education. This significantly suggests a paradigmatic shift in the culture of pastoral care within the post-compulsory sector, one driven by the economics of retention. However, not all students were engaged in pastoral support and guidance and this study reveals a group labelled the ‘untutored’ who emerge as separate from those ‘needy’ students whom personal tutors support. Personal tutors were also ‘actors’ taking on different roles and analysing this process illuminated their propensity for engagement in emotional labour and labour processes within the hegemonic culture of Further Education.

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Chapter 1

Personal tutoring in Further Education

1.1. Introduction

In this chapter I shall outline the focus of this thesis on personal tutoring in Further Education (FE) and provide the rationale for the research. The major prompt for this research was the observation of emerging practice in the pastoral system. I witnessed, from its embryonic stages in previous years to its present stage of development, a schism developing within the personal tutor system and latterly in subject domains, as a response to several paradigms within education. The most prominent is encapsulated in the Every Child Matters agenda (DfES 2004b) with its emphasis on ‘personal and emotional growth’ and the ‘emotional learning agenda’. These concepts reflect the growth across education sectors of what Ecclestone and Hayes refer to as ‘the therapeutic turn’ (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009, p.3; see also Ecclestone and McGivney 2005). Furedi (2004) draws upon the idea of the ‘diminished self’ to refer to the possible debilitating aspect of the reliance upon and increasing use of therapy. This aspect of institutional practice is currently cause for concern as the process of referral and intervention leads to students’ lives being institutionally dissected.

The thesis privileges the positioning of the role of the personal tutor not only within the institution, but as a central and dominant actor and performer in the wider context of pedagogies of practice within the post-compulsory sector. This centrality of the personal tutor is critical to an understanding of the expansion of therapeutic education. In researching this role this study makes an important contribution to the small but growing body of knowledge concerned with pastoral support and the wider field of support and guidance.

1.1.2. The meaning of personal tutoring

The use of the term personal tutor is widely established in post compulsory education and refers usually to an academic member of staff who has responsibility for an individual students’ welfare. The Oxford Dictionary has no citation for the term ‘personal tutor’ but provides reference to; ‘the origin of the word tutor: ‘late Middle English: from Old French *tutour* or Latin *tutor*, from *tueri* ‘to watch, guard’ (online July 2012).

Across the sector, personal tutors are engaged in support and guidance of their students and Avis, Fisher and Thompson (2010, p.142) note that ‘pastoral support will be one of the key roles of the personal tutor’ adding that ‘pastoral support will also include one-to-one supervision requiring the tutor to establish a supportive and trusting relationship with their students’. Within an institution the personal tutor can perform several roles and Thomas and Hixenbaugh (2006, p.22) add that ‘personal tutoring can be seen to fulfill a number of roles for students: information about higher education processes, procedures and expectations; academic feedback and development, personal welfare support; referral to further information and support; a relationship with the institution and a sense of belonging’.

However this relationship may prove to be far from ideal and with the increase in student numbers problems arise for institutions facing financial challenges and reduction in staffing. Thomas and Hixenbaugh (2006, p.16) add that ‘personal tutors and other departmental staff are in a unique position for spotting a student who is experiencing difficulties at an early stage’; however time constraints and increased workloads within the sector may alter this ‘unique position’.

1.2. Personal background and interest

I have worked in the post-compulsory sector as a lecturer and personal tutor, completing what Gleeson (2005) terms ‘the long interview’ before becoming a fulltime lecturer in a FE college teaching social sciences. During the last ten years I have witnessed a number of changes in the sector including the ‘privatisation’ of the sector and the development of an increasingly managerialist and audit driven culture.

I currently work at Pendene College which is a large ‘dual-sector’ institution with a raft of further education (FE) and higher education (HE) programmes (Bathmaker et al 2008, p.125). I teach across full-time and part-time teacher training courses and post-graduate degree programmes. As a senior member of the faculty my role involves the monitoring of lesson observations within each faculty. I have a particular responsibility to the teacher training and the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) which is the mandatory teaching qualification for the sector. With a team of colleagues I also deliver behaviour management training sessions for cross-college department groups. Tutor groups meet regularly and timetabled sessions centred on the delivery of personal, social academic and health issues are covered. This may include

the provision of outside speakers with follow up sessions with personal tutors on a range of diverse session topics such as, Chlamydia; developing your CV; and job applications. Some sessions will be delivered by personal tutors and the structure of these sessions are devised and planned by the Senior Tutors who have responsibility for the welfare of students in their department and the delivery of pastoral support within Pendene College. Senior Tutors also oversee the work of the personal tutor in monitoring and tracking student attendance and academic progress within Pendene College. The provision of group tutorials with its emphasis on personal, social, health and emotional topics mirrors the work in schools as part of the Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) curriculum and reflects the integrated curriculum.

During the last decade I have become increasingly interested in how my colleagues and new entrants to the profession have mediated policy and practice in their roles as personal tutors and subsequently began to consider the development of the pastoral role in the post-compulsory sector. These changes began to impact upon my work with students in providing support and guidance as they journeyed through their studies. The substance and nature of personal tutoring was undergoing change. Within the literature Ecclestone and McGiveney (2005) were debating the issue of self-esteem and the ‘therapeutic turn’ in the post compulsory sector. The issues resonated with my own experience as a personal tutor in the FE sector and further fuelled my interest in researching personal tutoring and the role of the personal tutor. Concepts such as therapy culture and the diminished self illuminate the development of interventions in the pastoral support and guidance system fuelled by the demands of a dominant audit culture (Morley 2003). In charting the development of the audit culture and the situating of skills within the sector, I build upon this work and introduce Goffman’s (1969) concept of performativity and Hochschild’s (2003) concept of emotional labour to inform the research design and provide alternative explanations for the social agency and interaction current in the personal tutor role.

In embarking on this research I discovered a paucity of empirical research documenting personal tutoring in the FE sector. The trajectory of the personal tutor in current literature is noticeably absent and this study seeks to redress this and provide empirical data related to the prominence and positioning of the personal tutor. It reflects my personal interest in the therapeutic turn and therapy culture and I explore orthodoxies related to the rise of therapy culture, by identifying how individual tutors ‘trapped

between relentless targets, auditing, repeated restructuring and growing numbers of students who do not want to be in education but have little alternative' (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009, p.84), mediate policies, endure and perform their role as a personal tutor. This study focuses on 'practice' and highlights the contentious relationship between the politics of educational reform enshrined in the Widening Participation Agenda of the Labour Government (Archer 2007) and the politicisation of emotions. By illuminating practice, the research centres on discourses about guidance and support and addresses the following overarching question - what is shaping the role of the personal tutor? In exploring related issues about the social and political privileging of emotions within the FE curriculum, I examine the positioning and structuring of the role of personal tutor as a key 'performer' (Goffman 1969) in the shifting terrain of the post-compulsory sector.

In the next section I introduce the three models of personal tutoring (Thomas and Hixenbaugh 2006) and identify how the models are continuing to evolve as part of structural developments within FE.

1.3. Models of personal tutoring

The three different models of personal tutoring are;

- the pastoral model
- the professional model
- the integrated curriculum model

outlined by Thomas and Hixenbaugh (2006) based on the original work of Wheeler and Birtle (1993). The most common is the pastoral model where tutors provide support and guidance on personal and academic issues to individual students who are assigned to them, usually for an academic year. However, in problematising this model, Thomas and Hixenbaugh note that 'in reality some students may make greater use of tutors than others, as personal tutoring provision is not integrated into the curriculum but is additional support that can be accessed by students some tutors may be perceived to be better than others' (2006, p.25).

In addition to the pastoral model, the integrated curriculum model (with its emphasis on embedding personal and social skills in the curriculum) has surfaced in many FE colleges as a response to combating the numbers of students leaving courses. This has meant that students attend compulsory sessions and the process of developing a sense of

belonging and integration in the institution are managed within introductory course modules.

Traditionally the third model, the professional model of pastoral support, has been dominant in higher education, and Thomas and Hixenbaugh (ibid) state that the 'professional models of personal tutoring are centred around the provision of welfare and academic student services by professionally trained staff who undertake this role on a full-time basis' (p.26). They add that 'this may therefore not contribute to integrating the student into the higher education institution' (p.26) and although hybrid models have developed the model still is reactive, 'and relies upon students identifying their problems and accessing support' (p.26).

During the last six years individual tutorial provision has also been established in the college with tutors required to book at least one tutorial per term for each student. Personal tutors are expected to maintain a dialogue with students about factors affecting their progress on courses and to provide suitable guidance and support. Lecturers appointed to Pendene College are automatically assigned the role of personal tutor. Thus conflict can arise within this role allocation as expressed by tutors in Wootton's research on 'Changing practice in tutorial provision within post compulsory education' who feel that they 'entered teaching to teach their subject specialism and are not comfortable with the additional responsibility of counseling or mothering' (Wootton 2006, p.124).

The development of individual tutorials reflects the pastoral model of personal tutoring but with the inclusion of group tutorials and a specific curriculum to follow, a hybrid model emerges which merges the pastoral and the integrated curriculum models. Personal tutors at Pendene College engage in group tutorials; deliver a curriculum aligned to PSHE; provide personal tutorials and within the remit of guidance and support, give support and feedback on academic progress. How they mediate and respond to this engagement with practice and support students is pivotal to the development of this research study.

1.4. The research question

Personal tutors are now expected to manage a range of activities which have become dominated by distinctive policies reflecting a more politicised agenda of pastoral support and guidance, and one focused on emotional learning. They are now tasked to provide support and guidance which is managed within a pastoral system rooted in shifting politics of the self where emotions are no longer privatised but become critical in the management of learning, achievement and success. This positioning of ‘emotions’ within current education practice across the sectors is evidenced in humanistic concepts concerning student-centred learning. The belief in the happiness and welfare of individuals as the ultimate good (Carr A 2007) appears to be sustaining and underpinning student support and learning and this became a pivotal theoretical construct to inform the development and context of the thesis (Rogers 1981). Student learning is an important discourse because central to the tutor’s role is the success of the student.

The overarching question of the thesis is to identify ‘what is shaping the role of the personal tutor?’ There are three research questions which are posed in this study -

1. What is the role of the personal tutor in FE?
2. What are the major influences, internally and externally, shaping this role?
3. What are the personal tutors’ perceptions of the role of the personal tutor and the perceived needs of their students?

The research study uses a range of methods to explore the three key research questions. By combining semi-structured interviews and focus groups, a closely woven set of qualitative data was collected from the participants in this study. There are three types of participants researched in this study – the senior tutor team, the personal tutors and ‘trainee tutors’. The participants in the study are as follows and the inclusion of participants within the study is fully discussed in the methods chapter.

Table 1. Study participants

Participants.	Number.
Staff	
Senior tutors	9
Personal tutors	20
Students – trainee teachers	
PGCE – fulltime	10
PGCE – p/time	10
Total	49

In order to address this subject in this thesis I report on a qualitative study in FE of personal tutors and their managers using semi-structured interviews which were undertaken in 2005/2006. I extended the collection of qualitative information about personal tutoring by conducting a range of focus groups including new and experienced personal tutors across a range of vocational and academic courses within a large FE college, collating their views about the role of the personal tutor and their work with different student groups. In making sense of the data, I investigated Ofsted Reports about these issues given the role of Ofsted in driving the issues forward.

1.5. Overview of the thesis

This thesis is organised into seven chapters. In chapter two I consider the development of directives shaping personal tutoring at local and national level. This includes an exploration of policy initiatives directly affecting the work of the personal tutor. Chapter three provides a review of current research and literature which informs this thesis and includes a focus on therapeutic discourses, emotional well-being and emotional labour. In chapter four I introduce the methods and consider symbolic interactionism and the work of Goffman (1969) as the research framework for this thesis.

Data from the interviews of personal tutors and senior tutors are analyzed and discussed in chapters five and six, and in the final chapter I consider how the performative orientation of personal tutoring is applied to the role of the personal tutor in Pendene College.

In the next chapter I contextualise the work of the personal tutor by exploring the policies at national and local level which inform and shape pastoral care in FE and in Pendene College.

Chapter 2

The FE context of personal tutoring

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter I outline the context of this research study by identifying provision in FE and establish links to policy and the rise of the ‘emotional learning’ agenda. I examine the national and local policy directives currently shaping personal tutoring and identify and consider the social and emotional needs of students. The chapter is organised into three main sections. In the first section I discuss the role of FE and issues related to external policy developments. In the second section I address the lexicon of student need and its implications for practice in FE. In the third part of the chapter I address policy and practice issues at a local level within Pendene College. By doing this I identify how policy and national directives merge to shape practice and inform the role of the personal tutor.

2.1.1. External policy developments and how they shape the FE sector

In this first section of the chapter I shall overview the role of FE and discuss some key policy developments at a national level.

FE as a sector serves a local community and also the needs of a wider community of respective groups and has expanded across the decade with ‘4,264,900 learners ... in some form of government-funded further education (excluding schools) in the 2010/11 academic year’ (BIS 2012, p.5). Recent policies and targets set for FE (Ofsted 2008,) reflect the government’s expectations that FE will accommodate the shifting social needs of the nation and address the need to re-skill the workforce in an economic downturn. FE continues to expand and this is partially explained by the growth in numbers of those who now appear there by default in response to a shrinking labour market; the casualties are increasingly young people. In addition, FE encompasses a remedial role in plugging the gaps in educational achievement of those leaving school with few or no qualifications. It also provides for -

- Industry qualifications
- HE courses
- Community learning

and courses which meet the needs of those with specific learning needs embodied in the new Foundation Learning programme for entry level one. In order to address provision for different groups FE has expanded and a significant development in the last twenty years is the emergence of the 14 -19 group with FE addressing the function of remedial schooling for those disenfranchised by the schooling system.

There are several key debates about the role of FE and these are mainly focused on four major areas;

- Government control and regulation
- Meeting the needs of employees
- Funding
- the professionalisation of the FE workforce

Each of these debates underpins a series of challenges for those who work in the sector. For example one of the current roles of FE in the UK is to meet the needs of employers (Foster 2005) by providing a skilled workforce. This has proved challenging because of the centralisation of government controls and the ever changing curriculum qualifications. Government control of the curriculum is for example evidenced in the development of the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for all sectors of UK industry and is implemented in government designed training programmes and qualifications provided in FE. As a result the emphasis is on a competencies driven curriculum within vocational education. This produces a work-related qualification system rooted in evidencing competencies across a myriad of measured learning outcomes. This competence based model 'has served to make the curriculum less stimulating and enjoyable for the students' (Wallace 2005, p.17). The instrumentalist development of education in meeting the needs of employers places emphasis on the acquisition of skills, however the Wolf Report (2011) notes the failing of FE in that it is 'mis-aligned with the job market in some key respects, and failing to offer clear progression routes within education to a sizeable number of students '(Wolf 2011, p.96).

The issue of funding in FE has been especially problematic. Following the incorporation of colleges in 1992 and the move from direct funding from local authorities, to funding by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), the regulation of teaching and programme costs were standardised. The FEFC was then replaced by the Learning and Skills Council and up to 2009 they managed the college funding system and funding for

independent training providers. Government control has meant the sector has been affected by policy initiatives embodied in reports identifying the needs of the economy (Foster 2005); the needs of employers (Leitch 2006) and the need to restructure vocational education, with the Wolf report (2011, p. 90) noting the affect of the funding mechanisms for vocational courses for 16 – 19 year olds whereby colleges are -

paid by qualification rather than by programme, and, to varying degrees, the payment is contingent on whether or not the qualification is passed. Obviously, the easier the qualification, and the closer to passing it someone is when they are first enrolled, the lower the risk and the higher the probability of profit.

Further changes have meant the ‘split of education responsibilities between two different departments of state (currently DfE and BIS),’ (Wolf 2011, p.64) and the development of two new funding bodies for the sector, the Young People’s Learning Agency (YPLA) and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) providing for adults aged 19+. However both funding bodies, Wolf notes are

...extraordinarily complex. Individual students do not have a standard, or indeed a weighted, funding allocation which could follow them. But at the same time, the total amount of money an institution receives depends on the details of each individual student’s separate qualifications, characteristics and success rates. (Ibid, p.62)

The issue of funding repercussions is exemplified for example, in the issue of student’s low attainment in Maths and English. Wolf (2011, p.82) conscious that ‘maths and English are of critical importance in securing progression within education and the labour market’ notes that, ‘funding incentives and government targets have conspired to prevent many young people improving their maths and English skills, even though these fall far short of what employers desire’ adds that this has occurred because ‘funding incentives have deliberately steered institutions, and, therefore, their students, away from qualifications that might stretch (and reward) young people and towards qualifications that can be passed easily ‘(p.83). As a consequence students are not entered for GCSE maths or English but take ‘Key Skills’ - an online computer programme. The delivery of the Key Skills programme has also raised questions about the need for qualified staff to deliver this qualification (Wolf 2011).

The FE workforce is as diverse as its student population and recruits staff from the vocational and academic sector to ensure delivery of courses from plumbing and floristry to HE programmes. The sector has previously lacked a professional identity but within the last ten years the government has sought to address this with the introduction

of mandatory teaching qualifications for all in the sector. However changes continue at a fast pace as successive governments implement initiatives and the sector continues to reshape and respond to directives and these are discussed in the following section.

FE has been affected by an ethos of inclusive practice reflecting broader social and cultural movements such as the Widening Participation agenda and underpinned by economic necessities such as the development of the skills agenda. This in turn, generated a burgeoning bureaucracy permeating the post-compulsory sector with the emphasis on support and guidance steered by target setting, tracking students' achievements and encouraging students to remain on courses. The detailed monitoring of students' attendance, motivation, and well-being were driven by policy development at a national level within FE heralded by Foster (2005) with the prominence of the FE sector as the 'economic engine' for economic prosperity and the new direction in driving the Skills Agenda. FE became pivotal to economic wealth and the well-being of individuals as Foster notes,

The need for an outstanding FE college network is not just about national prosperity. It is also about how far countless individuals in this country value themselves, enjoy being who they are and have fulfilling and enjoyable lives.

(Foster 2005, p.1)

To accomplish this aim of increased 'national prosperity' and the development of the 'countless individuals', the remit and workload of personal tutors expanded. The level of support and guidance for individuals has increased within the sector. In addition, an emerging role as arbiters of quality mechanisms, and their importance for 'improving significantly the lives of many and the prosperity of all' (Foster 2005, p.4), illuminates the positioning of the role of the personal tutor and their increasing importance within the sector.

2.1.2. National policy determining professional identity

The professional identity of lecturers in FE is undergoing rapid change and the diverse workforce is now moving towards a coherent professional status. The changes are both in work practices, and as a direct result of government initiatives (Dearing 1996, Tomlinson 2004, Lumby and Foskett 2005, Foster 2005). This is evidenced in the development of the new teacher training qualifications for the renamed FE sector as the Lifelong Learning Sector and the increasing demands of policies centred on

‘personalised learning’ (Campbell et al, 2007) and ‘sustainability’ (Avis, Bathmaker and Parsons, 2002; DfES 2005, Martin et al 2007).

The individualised learner is a key figure in the discourse of staff development officers. Such a learner is the object upon which lecturers labour. However the learner is construed of as infinitely diverse, having a particular range of learning needs and styles that the lecturer should address in their day to day practice and for which it is crucial the latter are prepared. Part of such a preparation could be delivered by ensuring that lecturers are appropriately qualified to teach in the sector

(Avis, Bathmaker and Parsons 2002, p.29)

The momentum and pace of change is also heralded by a new professional governing body for the sector – The Institute for Learning (IfL), implemented by a government agency called Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK). FE lecturers now have a new government agency LLUK (which replaces FENTO) and an Institute (IfL) for membership. All lecturers in the sector were requested to register with the IfL by the end of March 2008. However subsequent government changes affected the development of IfL with the announcement in the White Paper, *Skills for Growth* (BIS 2009) to:

Expect the regulatory body for teaching and learning professionals, the Institute for Learning, to become self-financing.

(BIS 2009, p.63)

As a result, in 2011 the IfL membership became a fee based mandatory commitment for all who teach in the FE sector. Further negotiations with union representatives and the department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) took place to agree the status of professional membership and this in turn has shaped both professional status and the professional identity of those who teach in the sector (IfL 2011). Although IfL is relatively embryonic in its emergence as a governing body for the FE teaching profession the ‘licensing’ of tutors has had the greatest impact on shaping professional identity these also include codes of practice.

The ‘IfL’s code of professional practice has six core principles or behaviours’ (Wood and Dickinson 2011, p.93.). The use of well being surfaces in the third principle and states that ‘members will take reasonable care to ensure the safety and welfare of learners and comply with relevant statutory provisions to support their well-being and development’ (ibid). Failure to comply with the ‘code’ will result in four sanctions beginning with a ‘reprimand’ and finishing with ‘expulsion’ (ibid).

In addition there are several categories of membership status producing a hierarchy within the profession. This includes the grade of ‘fellow’ attributed to those with breadth of experience and qualifications linked to education (IfL 2007). The IfL also monitor the registration of members through the process of providing ‘a licence’ to teach on completion of a record of thirty hours of annual continuing professional development.

It seemed as though the ‘Cinderella’ service was not trusted to act as a profession with definite values, a code of ethics, a body of knowledge and professional autonomy. Only now, with the introduction of the Institute for Learning, is this being addressed.

Martin et al (2007, p.356)

2.2. Government directives informing personal tutoring

In this section I examine the development of government directives impacting upon personal tutoring which include ‘The National Skills Agenda’; funding changes and the provision of Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for FE students.

2.2.1. The Nationals Skills Agenda.

Currently FE as a ‘service’ has shifted with an increasing dominance of ‘skills’ replacing the currency of knowledge:

When skills are considered a component of ‘human capital’ to be invested in by individuals and the government in order to secure financial return, they become commodities with an appropriate exchange value’

(Williams 2008, p.154)

The Skills Agenda shapes government policy (Spours 2007, Foster 2005) and from the inception of Curriculum 2000, tutors in FE became recipients of new practices (Edward et al 2007, Finlay et al 2007, Beck 2009). The 14 -19 initiative has had the greatest impact within colleges, and ‘at present the 14 -19 system in England is conceived nationally and delivered institutionally’ (Hodgson and Spours 2006, p.340) with staff now teaching students much younger than the traditional FE student. Tutors who teach these groups are often confronted by challenges to their practice as they balance the traditional andragogical practices of teaching adults (Knowles 1970, Kolb 1984) to the more traditional pedagogic practices of the compulsory sector (Piaget 1963, Bruner 1966, Vygotsky 1986). As a result tutors are often working with diverse groups of students who have yet to engage with the andragogical practices of learner autonomy and self-reliance. This again shapes practice and the presence of this cohort in an FE

college also raises questions about supervision and safety. Thus tutors are concerned about supervision of groups outside of class time and the normal duties associated with supervising school pupils throughout the day: this has been raised by staff associations (NUT/UCU 2008) within the post-compulsory sector. However, the overriding issue related to working with the 14 – 19 cohorts has been one of pay, and the pay differential debate between schools and FE continues to rebound within the sector.

2.2.2. Funding changes in FE

Changes in funding have meant considerable changes to the cultural dimensions of education within society. Within the duration of this study, the spectre of loans has affected the higher education sector (Quinn 2004) and students who previously would have pursued university courses are now challenged by the prospect of finishing with a degree and a substantial debt to be repaid.

Historically in the 1980s unemployment brought about changes as a new group of students entered FE colleges. The provision of Youth Training Scheme (YTS) prompted training programmes in FE and a major pilot study in 1986, The Further Education Unit Experimental College Project (FEU 1986), advocated careers guidance, information and the provision of counselling under the umbrella term of ‘guidance and support’ for this new cohort of students. More than twenty years later, with similar economic conditions prevailing, a similar group of students are entering FE. The expansion and provision of programmes resulted in the inter-agency work with Connexions, with initiatives such as Aimhigher providing provision for marginalized students in the education system. However the Aimhigher programme, which aimed to ‘encompasses a wide range of activities to engage and motivate learners who have the potential to enter higher education, but may be under-achieving, undecided or lacking in confidence’ (HEFCE 2010), ended in July 2011 following the withdrawal of government funding. In addition the fees for university courses increased with David Willetts, the universities and science minister stating that:

In the future, universities wanting to charge [tuition fees of] more than £6,000 will be required to participate in the National Scholarship Programme and will be monitored to ensure they enrol an increasing number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

(Times Higher Education 2010, p.4)

Such changes reflect a shifting political agenda whereby funding mechanisms may deter marginalised young people from acquiring or aspiring to a university education.

Research findings from Quinn, Lawy and Diment (2008) and Rogers (2009) suggest the importance of nuanced support for young people who are marginalized within communities. The research from Quinn et al (2008) notes that ‘undertaking this research has not only challenged the Connexions PA’s, but it also has alerted us to the very real difficulties they face within their roles’ (p.192). Rogers (2009), researching support and guidance for students participating in the Aimhigher initiative, noted similar difficulties for students as they engaged with the provision of support in FE. Whilst tutorial support is part of standard provision within colleges, the quality and access to such provision is variable, partly due to the differing models of support developed within institutions.

2.2.3. Financial support for FE students: The Educational Maintenance Allowance

For FE students the changes to the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) has impacted upon both students and personal tutors. For example, the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) provided a pathway for those students to come into education who otherwise would have left school at sixteen. One of the unforeseen consequences of this policy was as Wigley (2009, p.185) states ‘an unintended effect of the payment of EMA’s may be to encourage some students to drift into FE sixth-form education, whereas previously they may have preferred to secure a full-time job’, and although this may be their preferred option for some the challenge of meeting the requirement - ‘if they want to receive the maximum benefit, must attend 100% of the time,’ - is the challenge of attendance.

However changes have occurred to the EMA scheme and in March 2011, the Chancellor, George Osborne, announced the EMA scheme would be replaced with a fund for low-income learners, especially those ‘in care’ leaving care or on income support, who would receive ‘an annual £1,200 bursary if they stay in Education’ (Education 427, 2011, p.4). However, the bulk of the budget of £180 million would be given to individual colleges ‘learner support fund’. These funds when allocated will maintain the mandatory element of attendance for those in receipt of the bursary (Directgov 2011)

This has implications for practice since the phrase retention is more often coupled with the term achievement. Most notably, government initiatives emerged in the DfES (2003, 2005, 2006, and 2007) policy documents to improve skills, raise achievement and

‘improve life chances’. All these policies have arisen in the decade when social mobility in the UK has stagnated.

in documents relating to FE published in the past decade there has been an escalation in the extent to which economic drivers dominate post-compulsory education. FE has come to be modelled on a ‘supply and demand’ system which suggests that market forces be used to regulate education and training.

(James and Wahlberg 2007, p.63)

This impacts upon the personal tutoring role because tutors are now confronted by the language and practice constructed by market forces. In addition new phrases arise and embodied in policies is the focus on ‘health’ and ‘well-being’. In the next section I consider how the ‘healthy college’ remit promotes notions of well-being and emotional resilience and reinforces policy initiatives which contribute to practice reflecting the emotional learning agenda in FE.

2.2.4. The Healthy College initiative and retention of students

In the FE sector the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families initiated the Healthy Further Education programme (2008), with the inauguration of a new ‘Healthy FE’ Unit. Its remit is to support the health needs of all who work and study in the FE sector.

The aim of the programme is to encourage FE providers to forge links with partners to create positive well-being for all, thus producing ‘learners who are confident, healthy, safe, emotionally resilient and personally fulfilled’ (Healthy FE Steering Group, December 2008). Critically, ‘health and well-being should become an integral part of the annual internal assessment and planning process, linking to Ofsted framework and ECM report back and contribute to the FE improvement agenda’ (web access 2009). Thus the measured target and outcomes for ‘well-being’ now extend beyond the traditional profile of the student to include the staff.

Outcomes for the Healthy FE programme for the organisation will include a range of measures including the ‘demonstrable improvements in recruitment, retention and attendance rates’ (web access. 2009). The Healthy FE programme initiatives echoes several of the aims of other government departments, including Ofsted, and strengthens an argument which I focus upon as an alternative explanation for the interventions and rise in therapeutic education. Thus ‘demonstrable recruitment, retention and attendance

rates' become an indicator of a 'healthy college' and also reinforce the link of policy to the development of practices focused on 'retention'.

2.2.5. The national inspectorate context: Ofsted

Ofsted inspects the provision of education in FE in the 14 -19 sector and of vulnerable adults in education. It is important to understand this national context because Pendene College's major focus of education and training is the 14 – 19 sector and covers a range of delivery of vocational and academic courses which will be scrutinised by Ofsted inspectors. The new focus embedded in the aims of the Ofsted Consultation Report of 2008 - *A focus on improvement: proposals for further education and skills system inspections from September 2009* specified the changes and focus on:

- grades for equality and diversity, safeguarding and value for money that will contribute to the judgement on leadership and management,
 - more emphasis on the Every Child Matters outcomes where appropriate
- (Ofsted Consultation Report 2008, p.7).

Inspections take place every four years but failing colleges can be re-inspected annually. Ofsted judgements are made using the Inspection criteria (previously discussed in chapter two). The inspection relies upon the data from college self assessments and includes data on learner achievement and support. Directives on learner achievement require:

.....getting staff to take ownership of data and be accountable for them is critical. All teachers and curriculum managers have to understand the data, why they are needed and how to use them'....analyzing and interpreting data becomes an essential tool, enabling staff to be self-critical and accurate in their self-assessment and in measuring progress and improvement

(Ofsted 2008, p.3).

To avoid annual scrutiny from the inspectorate, Ofsted provide a raft of support for colleges to help them comply with the inspection process and prepare for inspection. Several examples from FE Colleges of its approach to 'Better Practice' appear on their web pages and Shipley College is presented here as an example of such a college implementing Ofsted directives. It also demonstrates how the level of monitoring students has developed and the dubious quality of data generated as a result which is intended to help personal tutors support their students. The example of Shipley College is relevant because it has a number of systems characterised by audit mechanisms which

track student attendance, achievement and support to improve retention on courses. For example, Shipley College uses a bar chart, representing every six weeks, the ‘social effectiveness’ of the student. It measures this using information provided from the personal tutor based upon contact with the student in tutorial. The notion of social effectiveness reproduces a discourse of therapeutic intervention and as Furedi suggests, ‘teaches people to know their place’, (Furedi 2004, p.204).

The practice outlined above suggests a technical rationalist approach to the structuring of quality mechanisms within FE and learner achievement. It is one college’s response to meeting the criteria of inspection and providing the necessary data as evidence of learner achievement and support processes and is presented as a template of how to do it right. The questions is – does Ofsted policy similarly shape the training of personal tutors at an institutional level within Pendene College; how is formal training taking place and what are the responses from personal tutors regarding the production of data and monitoring of students?

Ofsted inspectors complete observations of personal tutorial, especially noting the work with students on ‘SMART’ target setting. The acronym represents the following; specific - measurable – achievable - realistic - time bound and clearly indicates the role of the senior tutor in monitoring this process and charting the trajectory of students completing courses.

All these points in the report emphasise monitoring with importance attached to identifying quickly those at risk of not completing their course and the importance of retaining students on the course. This cycle of monitoring is driven by what Ball (2008) refers to as the ‘digitalisation’ of education (Ball 2008, p.24), which he notes is ‘the use of ICT as a medium for learning’ (p.204). At Pendene College an electronic report system links individual learning to management:

linking the management information system to individual learning plans, so that data are available at a corporate level to enable managers to monitor performance through courses and sites down to individual students’.

(Ofsted 2008, p.3)

Such practice and its current development in FE is cause for concern. Coffield and Edward (2009), writing about the rhetoric of policy making, are concerned about the ‘centralised policy making’ and the focus on ‘good or best practice’ (Coffield and

Edward 2009, p.372), 'which has recently been intensified into a concentration on excellence' (p.372). The tutors at Pendene College are recipients of this 'policy making' – they are tasked to demonstrate and conform to 'best practice' in the classroom and in tutorials. Regular observations take place in subject curriculum areas throughout the year and those tutors who receive a satisfactory grade (Ofsted grading) or below, will be the recipients of 'action plans' to improve practice, with further observations taking place to check progress. Only those tutors who achieve the Ofsted standard of grade two or grade one will not be re-observed. In the pursuit of 'best practice' (p.371) the contested and paradoxical practice arrangements for personal tutoring, surface in the data as tutors experience 'emotional dissonance - or the frequency of having to display emotions that oppose true feelings' (Bierema 2008, p.57). This dimension of practice is discussed in the following section.

This suggestion of the tutor as performer has ramifications for the institution and whilst cynicism may be directed at the prospect of the development of a stage routine and performance for the classroom, there is also the consideration of the application of performance which presents a counter-cultural quality tool in some FE colleges. This is demonstrated by the inclusion within the observation framework of the avoidance of planned and timed observations for staff. Instead the internal observers working within the Ofsted framework for observations will appear unannounced. This 'spot' observation, quality assessors maintain, will ensure that the planned performance and all its trappings are not the practice within the college and the natural setting of teaching practice will be observed. Without the window dressing of polished lesson plans and schemes of work these laser observations will take place and minus the additional time to prepare the necessary window dressing, the member of staff will be teaching without a safety net.

The observation will therefore have validity it is argued, since this will be a more accurate reflection of practice at any point in time. This approach has resonance in the control of employees in Disney World (Bryman 2004, p.136) as employees 'are encouraged to appreciate the company's unique culture and to become committed to its distinctive ways of doing things'.

The following section will elaborate upon the dimensions of the tutor as performer and the links to the role of the personal tutor role. In identifying aspects of this analysis,

Bryman's (2004), 'Disneyization' theory has currency and is included at this point to denote the juncture of practice and policy and its links to 'performing'.

2.2.6. Policy and practice informing the tutor as performer

Bryman's theory of commodification is a compelling one that is applicable to education and educational practice. Its relationship to the educational establishment, institutions, and the work of tutors can be a valuable theoretical stance to adopt, when analyzing the role of the tutor. The definition of Disneyization is the:

Process by which the principles of the Disney theme parks are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world.

(Bryman 2004, p.1)

This is not to suggest that our educational establishments are taking on the theme parks illusions, but 'the specific theme park principles that I see seeping through our society' (Bryman 2004) may be aligned to the notions of performance already discussed in previous sections. The tutor as performer becomes the pivotal and critical personality trait with the acquisition of acting skills to be acquired and developed both within the classroom and the wider community.

In this second section of the chapter I shall discuss how ideas about emotions, care and student neediness have helped shape practices in the FE sector. In the following section I consider how the positioning of emotions in the global market place represents additional policy levers for those who work in the FE sector.

2.3. Globalisation and the commodification of emotions

The integration of competing financial markets across the world has led to an increased awareness of the global picture of trading countries and their interdependency. The Leitch report in 2006 focused on the challenges of improving skills Leitch (2006) and noted that the 'UK's challenge is to drive greater increases in prosperity as the global economy changes fundamentally' (p.7).

In the new global economy, people's economic security can no longer come from trying to protect particular jobs, holding back the tide of change. Instead, it comes from helping people adapt to change, finding new work and opportunities. Skills are increasingly central to world class employment and building the flexibility that delivers economic security. (Leitch 2006. p.117)

In addition the Leitch report heralded change in education with a warning that, ‘Unless the UK can build on reforms to schools, colleges and universities and make its skills base one of its strengths, UK businesses will find it increasingly difficult to compete’ (p.3). With its many proposals, for example raising the school leaving age to 18 for education and training, and the ‘economically valuable skills’ is our mantra’ (p.3) the instrumentalist approach dominated curriculum developments in the development of a platform for skills in education. Beyond the rhetoric of the necessary ‘flexibility’ and the cursory nod to ‘social justice (p.5) the new flexible worker will be shaped within educational institutions. This is an important link to this study since I explore the link to labour processes and the necessary development of emotional skills, aligned to productive working in Pendene College which promotes success for student learning, achievement and retention.

The need for an emotionally skilled workforce, one which is resilient and flexible, are virtues promoted in policies related to the growth of programmes to promote emotional intelligence (Goleman 2004). Individuals become subjected to a distinctive set of practices related to the ‘ethos of therapeutic education’ (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009b, p.379); according to Usher and Edwards, (2000) ‘self reflective and self-regulating workers as well as citizens, have become an increasing goal of pedagogic interventions as flexibility becomes a requirement of the workforce in uncertain conditions of reflexive modernisation, itself an aspect of globalising processes’ (p.105). But for many ‘citizens’ it is the Web which heralds the greatest changes. Barber (2001) states that in ‘High expectations and standards for all’, notes that ‘the death of distance, best characterised by e-business, will not leave education untouched. We will see the globalisation of the large elements of the curriculum’ (Barber 2001, p.38).

By identifying emotions as a commodity, each individual within a nation state is subjected to the rationalisation of globalising processes, and space and time contract to provide the connection across nations. For Burman (2008) writing about the politics of emotions identifies the market position of emotions; ‘Not only are our emotions now a new form of political capital to be administered but they thereby become a vital commodity within that market’ (p.143) and within this market place is the spectre of ‘guidance’ which Usher and Edwards (2003) note; ‘In recent years in the UK, for instance, greater emphasis has been given to the contribution guidance can make to the competitive labour market, with the provision of guidance itself governed by quasi-

market mechanisms. Public service discourses have been challenged and dislocated by those of the consumer' (Usher and Edwards 2003, p.150).

The political positioning of emotions and the development of guidance and counselling are located for Usher and Edwards in the goals to be achieved by governments and they add that 'guidance and counselling can be formulated as institutional local and national and even international level' and therefore, 'can be located as part of social policy, economic policy and public policy' (p.150). For them it is 'guidance which has a higher public policy profile than counselling, and guidance itself tends to be located within the achievement of wider economic and educational goals' (p.150).

This commentary resonates in the work of Ball and Youdell (2009), who are concerned with the incursion into public education of government and note the globalising trend to introduce forms of privatisation into different sections of the education system. They view privatisation as a 'policy tool, not just a giving up by the state of the capacity to manage social problems and respond to social needs, but part of an ensemble for innovations, organisational changes, new relationships and social partnerships, all of which play their part in the re-working of the state itself through devolution, contracting-out and the increasing use of policy networks and philanthropy' (p.76). They note that 'privatisations lend legitimacy to the concept of education as an object of profit, provided in a form which is contractible and saleable' (p.76).

2.3.1. The development of the national emotional learning agenda

Concerns about the 'rise of the therapeutic' (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009) arose in response to the development of the emotional learning agenda and the development of Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning in schools (SEAL 2003). 'SEAL' is both a collective theory and a 'product' in that the acronym represents a theoretical model of a collective of mainly psychological concepts with the application of Goleman's (1998) theory of 'emotional intelligence' pivotal to its development within education. SEAL as a product is a training programme used in schools in Great Britain to develop a range of social and emotional skills which will aid learning and achievement in pupils (Weare 2007).

Several of the psychological concepts aligned to, SEAL notably personal and emotional growth, self-esteem (Rogers 1981), and 'emotional literacy' (Goleman, 2004, Mayer

and Salovey 1997, Ciarrochi and Mayer, 2007) have currency in contemporary educational practice across the sectors and have increasingly gained importance in the structuring and contextualisation of the delivery of learning and support for the learner, especially in the structuring of the pastoral system in the post-compulsory sector (Matthews, 2006, Hyland 2006, Lees et al 2007, Mayer, Salovey and Caruso 2004, Ecclestone 2004, Stott 2007).

The development of psychology and humanistic perspective in education is now an established aspect of the post graduate teacher training course (Snowman and Bielbert 2003). Pivotal to the development of student-centred education practice, is the work of Rogers (1983) and Maslow (1987). The Rogerian humanistic approach underpins pedagogic practice within FE. One prominent reoccurring phrase is the Rogerian concept of ‘self esteem’ (Rogers 1980). Low self-esteem as a concept has entered the public domain. A recent search on the web produced 3,842,681 references (online February 2010).

Students joining educational programmes in FE bring with them a raft of language which is socially and culturally transmitted through the media. New generations of children experiencing the SEAL Programme at primary school (Weare 2007) will already be inculcated into a culture of psychological experience. Those students currently progressing from comprehensive schools will also have experience – this comes in the shape of the Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) programme which is embedded in the curriculum.

Thus in order to understand the personal tutor’s role the normalisation of the student-centred approach within FE and the hegemonic nature of concepts such as ‘low self esteem’ need to be recognised. It can be argued that therapeutic approaches are embedded within FE culture. However, as I shall reveal, they may not be the real drivers of personal tutor practice.

2.3.2. National policies contextualising student needs

In identifying the complex social and emotional needs of students I consider the ways the commodification of education impacts upon practice. For tutors in FE, the most prominent is the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda (DfES 2003) which originated from an Inquiry by Laming (2003) of the Victoria Climbié abuse case. This defines

policy for all schools and colleges and for those working especially with children, teenagers and vulnerable young adults. All tutors in FE complete the statutory requirement of safeguarding training. In addition various FE policy documents from Ofsted promote the concepts of ‘entitlements’ or ‘needs’. The commodification of education, as an article or object to be acquired through the processes of ‘entitlements’, ‘needs’ is also consistently promoted in the Inspectorate processes. It occupies prominence in the working lives of every teacher in the compulsory sector and tutors in the FE sector and is encapsulated in the Further Education Act (2007). Tutors are tasked to ‘care’ for their students and the new Ofsted logo (2008) demonstrates this with a new tag line –

Table 2. The ethic of care in education – a new logo for Ofsted



Tag line – better education and care

This ‘care ethic’ is demonstrated in current policies such as the ECM policy, in notifying and working with other agencies on social welfare issues and further extends the notion of in ‘loco parentis’ for teachers in the compulsory sector. This impacts upon the ‘duty of care’ evidenced in the professional ethic for those working in the post compulsory sector.

It is evident that against the background of the marketized context, centralized education targets, and measures to enhance social inclusion, schools within socially disadvantaged areas have sought to emphasize the caring aspects of their culture to try to retain pupils in the school system and develop an open image to the wider community.

Jenkins and Conley (2007, p.991)

Critical to this element of care is the emphasis of skills and personal development reflected in Ofsted’s direction to inspectors when making judgements about ‘learners’ achievements’ to make evaluative judgements against -

the acquisition of workplace skills (4, 5)
the development of skills which contribute to the social and economic well-being of the learner (2, 4, 5)
the emotional development of learners (1)
the behaviour of learners (1, 2)

(Ofsted Common Inspection framework 2005, p.3)

One of the major ideologies and conceptual underpinnings of contemporary teaching delivery is the ubiquitous concept of ‘education is fun’ and ‘fun’, according to Fromm (1965, p.72) –

lies in the satisfaction of consuming and taking in, commodities, sights, food, drinks, cigarettes, people, lectures, books, movies – all are consumed, swallowed.....our character is geared to exchange and to receive, to barter and to consume; everything, spiritual as well as material objects, becomes an object of exchange and of consumption

Many educationalists are concerned that there is no longer a serious and arduous route to enlightenment, nor the studious route to qualification, after all, as Claxton (2007, p.116) notes ‘where is the compelling story about the real world value of education that can get young people to turn up and put in the graft...and as they watch television shows like the Apprentice, in which the two confident successful women finalists can barely muster five mediocre GCSE’s between them, young people are not inspired to go back to their maths revision’. The accusation of dullness in Ofsted reports stalks the teaching profession and the mantra that education has to be ‘fun’, could appear a maxim for the Ofsted inspectorate-

In the less effective lessons, teachers fail to cater for all levels of ability and deliver dull teaching that fails to stimulate the more able students. The quality of teaching is particularly variable in subjects such as psychology, law and general studies.

(Curriculum area report Humanities 2005, p.4)

Making education fun therefore becomes the prime responsibility of the tutor and is written into countless schemes of work framing the curriculum. Regulation and measurement become integral to performance and, for the tutor, performance becomes their individual responsibility. Just as the tutor must learn to perform so the students needs can be identified by ‘entitlement’ in policy statements and gives rise to the labeling of students as ‘needy’ and is a key discourse in FE.

I next consider the question of neediness since the attribution of the label becomes a significant social construction. The label is situated in the external social world and the internal social world of FE with its policy mandates and curricula demands (Edward et al 2007, Hodkinson et al 2007, Broad 2010, Atkinson and Duffy 2010, Lumby and Foskett 2005, Bathmaker and Avis 2005). This context becomes more complex as the shifting paradigms of education within the compulsory sector, and the ‘challenges to our

country brought about by global social, economic and environmental change are only likely to increase', (*Raising Expectations; enabling the system to deliver*, 2008) thus the personal tutor role becomes the conduit for policy and practice requirements.

2.3.3. Neediness as a key discourse in FE

Neediness as a noun is derived from the verb 'need', and throughout education this term is used constantly in quality documents, policies and Ofsted publications to centralise the student at the core of the education system. Their 'needs' are paramount and in privileging the 'needs of the student' the socio-economic agenda is also served as the 'needs' of a skilled workforce and the need for good citizens' are met as identified in the Green Paper '*Raising Expectations: enabling the system to deliver*' (2008):

Our goal is a skills and FE system which targets support for individuals and employers where it is needed most, and allows colleges and providers to deliver the excellent service we must have as we move towards a sustainable vision of a high-skills, high employment, and high productivity nation.

HM Government Green Paper (2008, p.1)

Throughout the policy paper, FE as a sector of education provision, is referred to as 'the system' and noticeably the word 'education', usually the adjunct to 'Further' is now supplanted with the word 'systems' as the rhetoric of the globalisation of skills and the changing needs of the new order are paramount. The origins of the introduction of the phraseology of 'systems' originate in the Foster Report on FE in 2005:

We think the distinction between a system and a sector is an important one. The current emphasis on institutional groupings of providers into 'sectors' should be switched to an emphasis on learner achievement and community impact. Instead we need to see FE colleges as a vital part of a coherent system that responds to learner, societal and economic needs.

(Foster 2005, p.2)

This 'participation in education and training' (with emphasis on employer engagement and skills) has become the political 'urgent necessity' and a major thrust of government policy, which permeates the work within FE colleges. Against the backdrop of the economic recession and the new coalition government of 2010, budgets and cuts are tangible in FE as efficiencies are demanded across the sector. Developing 'world class skills', (Leitch 2006, p.25) coupled with the emphasis on engagement with success (Macleod 2009) and building skills (HMSO 2009), are policy drivers for those in the post compulsory sector.

Institutions change and are prone to the flux of political and social policies. Within the FE sector in the UK this has impacted upon pedagogic relations and the shaping of a professional identity within the teaching profession and conceptualises the professional identity of lecturers in the post-compulsory sector. Sachs (2001) for example, has identified a typology for tutors in FE noting that their identity can be shaped by their engagement with managerial practices; one such type she labels as the ‘designer’ who engages with the rhetoric of the managers paying little attention to the directives and surviving by retaining their emotional distance. Ball (p.220) is concerned with the ‘terrors of performativity’ and identifies how structural practice is embodied in the performativity culture noting that ‘it is the data base, the appraisal meeting, the annual review, report writing, the regular publication of results and promotion applications, inspections and peer reviews that are the mechanics of performativity’. Thus, according to Ball (p.220) there is a sense of

being constantly judged in different ways, by different means, according to different criteria, through different agents and agencies. There is a flow of changing demands, expectations and indicators that makes one continually accountable and constantly recorded.

For Colley (2007, p.175), professional identity is viewed as ‘dynamic’. Based on research from the Transforming Learning Cultures project (TLC), Colley notes the ‘dynamics of professional participation’ are rooted in ‘conditions of professional participation’ (p.186) and suggests that the following will reverse the decline in the professionalisation of those who work in the FE sector

- Reinstating the professional autonomy of teachers
- Creating time and space for them to reflect individually and collectively on their work and develop professionally
- Rewarding expert judgement–making and the positive management of learning cultures
- And valuing diverse forms of professional practice arising from differences in tutor disposition and working contexts.

(Colley 2003, p.186)

Historically, the struggle for professional recognition was partly rooted in discourses about the fragmentation, even within a single institution, of the practice, qualifications and functions of a diverse group of tutors, lecturers, trainee teachers, vocational specialists and a plethora of ad hoc services and personnel aligned to the FE College. Additionally a college, also in serving a community, became partner to universities and developed a ‘dual-sector’ approach to learning with the provision of higher education

courses in a traditional FE setting (Bathmaker et al 2008). The local FE College continues to change and adapt against the prevailing economic conditions. It has become a complex learning site with seamless provision, and an education service provider for localised educational activity. In addition, with the continued growth of HE in FE, additional tensions and challenges occur. Turner et al (2009, p.356) note that, ‘through the expansions in HE provision, college lecturers gained new avenues in which to explore their professional identity’, and this in turn impacts upon those who work within FE.

2.4. Local policy and practice.

In this third section of the chapter I shall explore local policies and practices as enacted in Pendene College.

Within Pendene College, tutors are subjected to a raft of performance measures linked to policies at national level. In the following Table 3; I present a lengthening set of measured outcomes for the individual performing their roles within the institution. Some reflect internal audit quality mechanisms i.e. observations, appraisal, students surveys and others reflect external quality mechanisms of performance including – Ofsted, Retention and Achievement data (set against national benchmarks). The latest and significant addition to this list of measures of performativity is the new and burgeoning bureaucracy of the IfL (Institute for Learning).

Table 3. Measures of performativity of a personal tutor /tutor at Pendene College

Category of performance Measurement Positive

1. Ofsted grade criteria 1 -3 [grade 4 – fail]
 2. Internal observation 1 -3 [grade 4 – fail]
 3. Peer observation not graded
 4. IQER inspection graded
 5. Appraisal outstanding – good – satisfactory – unsatisfactory
 6. Target setting achieved within deadlines
 7. Course files audit FE pass
 8. Electronic Module Boxes HE pass
 9. Retention data 100%
 10. Achievement data !00%
 11. Student surveys positive/negative
 12. CPD 30 hours
 13. HR issues including Complaints - Health/sickness –absenteeism
 14. IfL Professional body regulator /Professional recognition QTLS
-

Many of the listed measures of quality mechanisms (observations, achievement and retention data, student surveys) prove a gargantuan responsibility for the tutor and are to be achieved through a set of matched processes (internal and external) which will be measured and commented upon by Ofsted in the Common Inspection Framework and detailed by the awarding of a grade –

A common grading scale will be used in making judgements for institutional inspection and for judgements relating to the five outcomes assessed for Joint Area Reviews.

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Inadequate

(Ofsted 2008)

The judgment will be based upon a set of criteria for each grade of Pendene guidance criteria. Part of the matched processes for internal observations will be judgements made by internal observers which will include lesson planning and delivery incorporating adherence to Pendene's Mission and Values, –

To provide...a high quality student experience, celebrated through academic achievement, personal development and employability.

Value one: Putting the student first

Value two: Value and respect for others

Value three: Responsiveness to others

Value four: High quality in all we do

Value five: Responsibility – individual and team

Value six: Pride in what we do

and all of this will be evidenced on the internal documentation for observations as directed by the Quality Department of the College. The observation becomes pivotal practice in the professional lives of tutors and one which is compulsory in Pendene College; inevitably this panoptic approach to observations may increase the workload of staff as the threat of surveillance encourages staff to self regulate their performance.

At Pendene College the observation is booked within a time scale of two weeks when staff can expect to be 'observed'. The grade is recorded within the annual appraisal process, when staff must produce the observation feedback (containing the grade) for the appraiser. This is then recorded on their appraisal form.

At local level, Pendene College in response to the various dictates as diverse as Safeguarding directives, to the Healthy Further Education Programme (2008), monitor

through audit trails the implementation of policies and the tutors are prescribed to work to the Quality demands of ensuring that students are supported in their learning and achieve success (Ofsted 2008). As recipients of national policy mediated at local level personal tutors shape their practice accordingly and within the remit of personal tutorials conflicts arise.

Within the college, continuous professional development (CPD) training sessions reflect the development of policy and initiatives within the sector and fulfil the legal requirements as stated in the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) 'Rethinking continuing professional development in further education' (2009); 'the government has set the requirement for full-time teachers in the sector to engage in 30 hours of CPD annually' (Villeneuve-Smith, West and Bhinder 2009, p.3). The CPD delivery at Pendene College includes sessions, for example, devoted to Every Child Matters (ECM), Ofsted preparation (lesson plans and schemes of work), Equality and Diversity training and the perennial Behaviour Management courses all of which must be recorded electronically.

The Ofsted report (2008) states that tutorials were achieving 'reasonable progress' (p.2) with key aspects of the Quality of Provision, identified in the Monitoring Report (Ofsted 2008). The Ofsted reports are important to the institution since not only do they provide a commentary about the standards and quality of education at Pendene College which is publicly transmitted but it means that Pendene College can be a member of the 157 Group. This group is a political pressure group, formed in 2006 and representing 27 colleges 'providing a national voice on strategy and policy for large, mostly urban colleges in England' and its aim 'is to promote change for the benefit of our members and the sector as a whole' (accessed June 2010). Membership is only available to those colleges gaining a grade 2 or above in Ofsted inspections so it is vital for Pendene College to perform well and retain its membership. The Ofsted report for Pendene College states that:

Since the last annual assessment visit, there has been further training for staff on target setting. Detailed guidance to help tutors set specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely targets is now in use throughout the college.
(Ofsted Monitoring Report 2008, p.2)

It also comments that ‘Senior tutors check compliance with this guidance as well as the quality of reviews’, (p.2). Thus senior tutors manage the pastoral teams and act as auditors within Pendene College. The Report also adds that:

The system tracks both individual learner progress and course performance. Students at risk of not completing their programmes, and underperforming courses, are identified through a traffic light system and appropriate action is taken.

(Ofsted Monitoring Report 2008, p.2)

Helping their students to be successful has always been the core work of tutors in FE but integral to the learning outcome of achieving success, is the continued demand of retaining students on courses. Each tutor in Pendene College will be mindful of this demand and will need to fill in data about their course. Measurements are continuous across the academic year with course snapshots issued each term. These snapshots capture data about the number of students on the course and their achievement in terms of modules passed and each term are required to be completed by course tutors. These data collection points then provide a profile to inform the quality data information on students and their status on courses which reflects the success of individual courses and departments. The goal for course tutors within departments is to achieve a 100% pass rate and 100% retention. For the tutor retention and achievement data has become the iron cage and the tutor is held accountable at departmental meetings for the retention data for their course. The agenda for departmental meetings is structured and formatted by the college and the item ‘retention’ is printed first on the agenda.

2.4.1. Monitoring EMA

In this section I identify practice at local level of the three specific policies discussed earlier in the chapter in the national context. ie. EMA, the ECM directives and the Healthy College initiative. All I contextualise at local level and illuminate how such policies shape practice in Pendene College. I begin with EMA .Before the demise of EMA in 2011, the tutors at Pendene College would be directly involved in this process as partial administrators of the EMA scheme; recording attendance, noting academic progress and checking that students are fulfilling the course requirements for completion of work and meeting deadlines. With large groups in FE, this could be time consuming as tutors sifted through the data for each groups attendance, progress and achievement records. One of the tasks for personal tutors is providing attendance reports to the EMA officer who has responsibility for ensuring all students claiming EMA are attending. As part of the regulations for EMA, as discussed in section 2.2.3., students

must also be up to date with their work and be making good progress in order to receive the statutory EMA payment each week.

2.4.2. Implementing ECM directives

The process of institutionalisation at local level of the ECM policy has an added impetus since the provision is now monitored and recorded within the Ofsted inspection (2004). In Pendene College, this has spawned a new layer of bureaucracy for the tutor, as they are required to provide documentation of the tutorial process and monitor each individual. The recording of student information mainly takes place within the tutorial and at present, at Pendene college, is carried out by the personal tutor. The senior tutors will regularly inspect tutorial records and provide feedback to personal tutors, on the quality of their records.

As part of the ECM agenda, a Safeguarding Officer (SO) is responsible for the overall welfare of all students and fulfils an advisory role within Pendene College for all teaching staff. Some personal tutors with students who are experiencing social and emotional problems may have protracted contact with the senior tutor over the duration of the student's time in Pendene College and inevitably such problems often consumes additional time across the day and this in turn may affect teaching commitments.

The ECM directives also shape the scheme of work for group tutorial sessions and personal tutors are expected to participate in actively promoting the five principles embodied in the ECM policy. This is reflected in group sessions, for example sexual health and careers as topics for such sessions.

Importantly this initiative reinforces both the aims of the ECM policy and Ofsted directives with its focus on measured outcomes of 'recruitment retention and attendance' as discussed earlier. This highlights and reinforces concerted policies focused on student's performance which personal tutors must monitor at local level. In addition, the initiative requires institutions to promote 'health and well being' and at Pendene College tutors are periodically involved in different initiatives. For example, activities linked to an awareness raising week in March each year. Tutor groups are invited to develop and participate in a diverse range of activities reflecting an emphasis on equality and diversity. For the personal tutor this is an evolving aspect of their tutorial work and subsequently expands their workload.

2.4.3. Conflicting identity- being a personal tutor

The personal tutor at Pendene College must perform their role against the backdrop of work practices and policies, which encourage the student to have access to their tutors at all times (this includes e-mail contact). For the tutor with only the remission of one hour on a timetable per week to service the needs of the whole tutor group the tensions between practice and reality become burdensome (Hodkinson et al 2007). The expansion of inclusion policies has created further domains of pressure especially since FE is now central to 'the economic mission' (HMSO 2006) and –

That means defining its central purpose as being to equip young people and adults with the skills, competences and qualifications that employers want, and which will prepare them for productive, rewarding, high-value employment in a modern economy. This includes developing the skills and attributes for enterprise and self-employment.

(Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances 2006, p,1)

Further more, inclusion will also expand the student cohort and increase need, as exemplified for those students suffering mental health difficulties according to Warwick et al (2008), since tutors are

...committed to building an inclusive environment to promote the well-being, achievement and attainment of all their students. Furthermore, they had invested in specific programmes and activities that provided focused mental health support to students and helped raise awareness among staff of the ways in which they could promote students' learning and improve their emotional well-being.

(Warwick et al 2008, p,11)

If the concept of emotional labour is evidenced in the role of the personal tutor and the application of performativity included then the complexities of the role, both psychological and social may create resistance, alienation and dissonance.

The emphasis on performance measures share little resemblance to the lived realities of teachers' work and identify the tensions between what teachers believe is important and what they have to be seen to do.

(Jenkins and Conley 2007, p.984)

Coping with such a diverse role with so many facets may provide the necessary psychological altruistic rewards (Erikson 1980) of making the difference in a student's life and providing pastoral support, but at what cost to the individual?

From personal, and by extension, social perspectives, the total suppression of one's emotions is neither a desirable nor a productive strategy. For instance, nobody would like to be devoid of feelings of sadness at the loss of a dear friend or family member, guilt for wrongdoing or shame for inappropriate behaviour.

However, what is appropriate or inappropriate in the moral values and social experiences that govern one's emotions remains a contentious issue.

(Syed 2008, p.189)

Or is there the proposition of personal agency and the construction of a lived reality (Denzin 2007) related to 'self efficacy' paramount in the role of the personal tutor with the manifestation of behaviours of resilience, adaption and survival? In contrast to the suggestion that emotional labour is the 'suppression of ones feelings' the reverse could be considered as tutors are encouraged to explore with students in the tutorial setting their 'needs'. If these needs are not manifest as materialist, in that they need a new text book or a library card replacing, much of the tutorial will be focused on target setting and inherent in this process will be explanations of the workload the mode of study and the impact of life generally, with all its traumas on the life of the student and their inability to complete their work (O'Donnell and Tobbell 2007). Concepts related to student needs and how these are socially constructed, were explored in the opening sections of this chapter. The support provided in the tutorial (Hawkins and Shohet 2006) may expose the tutor to emotional stress as they become the recipient of the maxim - a problem shared is a problem halved, and rather than suppress emotions the professional image may be at stake as demonstrated by the staff in the study by Jenkins and Conley (2007, p.994):

brought issues of emotional management into sharp relief as teachers struggled to balance their genuine concern with professional detachment.

However there are contradictions. The introduction of 'personalised learning' as a concept for inclusive practice (Campbell et al 2007, DfES 2004) may alter the relationship of student and tutor as 'personalised pedagogy in practice' (Campbell et al 2007, p.150) emerges:

....it is some times implied that a particular charismatic persona is needed to achieve good pace and challenge in classroom interaction. This was true in one case, where teacher charisma drove the classroom learning with liveliness and witty exchanges but not in the other [*observed session*] where a quiet, authoritative and respected but unshowy teacher personality was outstandingly effective in creating and driving the learning. Power to teach (Robinson 2004) does not always or necessarily, require a drama queen in the classroom.

The distinct transformation of the identity of the work of the tutor, is taking place. Their workplace is being transformed not only as a place where the regulation of the emotional intelligence of students is monitored but also a domain and arena for the tutor. Educational establishments are now places where 'exchange and circulation of

emotional resources take place within particular affective economies; the possibilities of change, in other words, are limitless' (Zembylas, 2007, p.454).

The provision of practice within FE with current policy developments, including the establishing of the IfL (2011) regulatory body for the sector, has added another layer to the continuing formation of the professional identity of the FE tutor (Villeneuve-Smith, West and Bhinder, 2009). Burdened with policy initiatives from the inspectorate the personal tutor must prepare to be observed teaching in the classroom and also carrying out their duties as a personal tutor. Observations require a level of performance and within this chapter, policy and its implementation at local level has been mapped and evidenced the requirement for the personal tutor to 'perform' and provide 'best practice' (Coffield and Edward 2009). It is the nature of this performance when working with students which is now measured and quantified and importantly contributes to the Ofsted grade for the institution (Ofsted 2008).

2.5. Conclusion

Within this chapter I have revealed the broad spectrum of the basis of policy and initiatives which inform tutorial practice and the overt demands on the personal tutors in managing their relationships with students when supporting their academic and social needs (Hodkinson et al 2007). I have identified the context of personal tutoring at local and national level and illuminated the positioning of the personal tutor within the institution. By doing this the needs of students have been discussed and the corresponding affects on practice for the tutor.

At times, regulation and control has surfaced in policies as the affect of the changing policies within the sector and the shifting political and social agendas have culminated in expanded workloads and conflict of practice in Pendene College for personal tutors. Within one hour assigned to tutorials each week they are tasked to implement policy, provide guidance and support for their students and conform to regulatory practice from governing bodies, the Inspectorate, Quality mechanisms and a raft of 'values' instilled in policy at national and local level.

In the next chapter I consider empirical research which underpins the interrelational social construction of the personal tutor role and the differing agendas shaping its growth in the post compulsory education system. I review the expansion of therapeutic

culture and the 'therapeutic turn' and its affect on practice in the FE sector and focus on the research which informs and shapes the practice of the personal tutor.

Chapter 3

Literature review

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter I focus on the literature relating to the emotional learning agenda. The chapter is broadly developed in two parts. In the early part of the chapter I address the politics of emotion and questions related to the therapeutic turn. I consider the seminal work of Hochschild and the way in which emotions and surveillance has been used as a mechanism for control. In the second part of the section I consider practice based issues focusing mainly on research in the FE related to professional identity and client relationships. Finally I consider the important issues of retention and its implications for tutor practice. By doing this I identify how my study can contribute and extend our understanding of the role of the personal tutor within the current culture of FE, thus filling the gap in knowledge and understanding which my research seeks to address. I begin with a brief summary of FE research trends.

3.1.1. A review of trends in researching FE

Empirical research in FE continues to identify both practitioners and students, both as recipients of different pedagogical practices and policy changes and subjects of research. For example, aspects of transitions from school to FE with research focusing on educational access (Colley 2003, Marr and Ainsley-Smith 2006, Lawy 2002, 2003, Reay 2003, Reay et al 2009, Quinn 2004, 2009) emerge in research with specific groups the focus of detailed studies, for example young people in jobs without training (JWT) or who are currently not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) (Quinn, Lawy and Diment 2008, Rogers 2009). Research has also concentrated on the broader field in the post-compulsory sector where research identifies different cultures (Hodkinson et al 2007) and distinctive practices of those who work in FE (Colley 2007, Lawy and Tedder 2009, Wigley 2009). In addition the Widening Participation agenda (Archer 2007) has brought new challenges as tutors in the post-compulsory sector cope with diverse groups of students. In particular, FE with its ‘fragmented and diverse interests’, (Fisher and Simmons 2010, p.9) has developed provision of HE (Turner et al 2010). The provision of university courses at a more local and accessible level within FE colleges has in turn added to the complexities of the role of FE tutors with empirical research

illuminating the structural and agentic dimensions of complex relationships within the sector (Bathmaker 2006, Bathmaker and Thomas 2009, Winter and Dismore 2010).

In addition, as a result of the policy changes following the Dearing report (1996) and the Tomlinson report (2004) the 14-19 cohorts emerging within FE has also impacted upon practice (Attwood 2004, Atkinson and Duffy 2010, Lumby and Foskett 2005, Ogunleye 2007, Baumeister et al 2005). Moreover this has raised issues about the role of tutors in FE and increasingly highlighted the functions of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991, Avis et al 2002, Bathmaker et al 2005) as significant in the construction of learning cultures in FE (Hodkinson et al 2007, Tedder and Biesta 2008).

As the roles of tutors within the sector have expanded in response to changes in policy and practice, empirical research has provided insights into contested notions of professionalism (Colley et al 2007, Edward et al 2007, Gleeson et al 2005) and the FE tutor identity (Coffield and Gregson 2007: Steer, Spours Hodgson, Finlay, Coffield Edward and Gregson 2007; Gleeson and James 2007; Orr 2009). However, recent research has detailed the growth and regulation of teacher education and Fulford et al (2010, p.19) acknowledge that ‘for many years it was not uncommon for FE teachers to remain untrained’, now the sector is burdened with a qualification framework and a set of standards with ‘150 statements describing the values, knowledge and practical abilities expected of those in a full teaching role’ (p.21). Avis and Bathmaker (2004a, 2004b, 2006,) have contributed a significant body of knowledge to the findings on FE teacher trainees. In detailing the ‘capital’ and ‘dispositions’ (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) of trainees and FE tutors, they contextualise discourses of performativity, professionalism, managerialism and the critical pedagogy of hope adding that ‘In addition, the emerging new professionalism also offers possibilities for the development of critical pedagogic practices’, (Avis and Bathmaker 2004b, p.310).

Whilst teacher education is changing (Lawy and Tedder 2009, Lucas and Unwin 2009), the findings from empirical research also reveals a much more nuanced role for tutors in FE concerned with information, advice and guidance (IAG), and support for learners prompted by Ofsted policy (Ofsted 2005, 2008a, 2008b) and a shifting political agenda. What the body of research reveals in the findings is the growing emergence of a more expansive role of the institution in the individual lives of learners as curriculum delivery moves to outcomes based measurements using achievement and retention data, (Roberts

2011, Schofield and Dismore 2010, Wigley 2009). Within this body of research are growing concerns about discourses of the 'emotional' (Furedi 2003, Hayes and Ecclestone 2009).

Although little empirical research on emotions exists within either FE or the compulsory sector, research findings from Hallam (2009), Miller and Parker (2006), and Weare (2007) produce contradictory findings to the efficacy of the emotions within the curriculum. However, within the Counselling services sector, emotional support in the form of counselling for clients, is well documented (Barrow 2007, McLaughlin 2008, Jenkins 2010, Qualter 2007). The migration of such services and associated practices into the FE sector has not been fully documented, although research findings from Mintz (2009) and Wootton (2006) suggest further research required to understand the complex labour processes involved.

3.1.2. The Therapeutic turn

Ecclestone and Hayes in *The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education* (2009) challenge traditional orthodoxies on guidance and support, noting that 'our critique is controversial' (p.145). Drawing upon the work of Furedi (2003), and his concept of the 'diminished self' (p.106), they have argued that students are subjected to the advances of therapy culture in education. They note 'its purposes and activities increasingly focus on pessimistic images of risk and vulnerability and the need to elicit and manage people's personal and psychological capital in the name of the enhancing their 'personal resources' (p.84). Although they lack empirical support for their claims of the expansion of therapy culture in English education and especially its growth in the FE sector, they provide a plethora of anecdotal examples rooted in the development of therapy culture across the sectors, describing the 'therapeutic primary school' (p.26), the 'therapeutic secondary school' (p.46) the 'therapeutic college' (p.65) and the 'therapeutic university' (p.86).

Their focus is on the political and relational within pastoral guidance and support, which mask regulatory power and control. They warn against interventions to support students' emotions, although concede that, 'we are not anti-therapy per se' (p.157) but do respond to the criticisms of the lack of evidence. They respond by using 'examples of a strong culture of change in society towards belief in the diminished self' (p.146). These examples are 'drawn from popular culture, politics and practices in different

educational contexts' (p.146) and for many of their critics, including Hyland (2006), Craig (2007) and McGivney (2005) they ignore the life-changing values possible for individuals engaging in therapy. They also ignore the context of research in FE emanating from the Transforming Learning Cultures project (TLC) (Colley et al 2003) and Hodkinson et al note that 'the next commonly significant element in the FE learning culture was the universal significance of the tutor' (Hodkinson et al 2007, p.42).

Ecclestone and Hayes' argument is controversial, but they are rightly concerned with evidence within current education practice, which privileges the emotions and is subject to regulation and control. Furedi (2003) also suggests that 'one of the most disturbing manifestations of therapeutic culture is the conviction that an individual's emotional state is not simply a personal matter but a legitimate subject for public concern' (Furedi 2003, p.198).

3.1.3. Well-being

Whilst there are concerns about the therapeutic turn in education, in the public domain, the context of emotions has become a noticeable political concern, as the 'well being' of individuals becomes a focus for government.

Well-being has emerged as a national characteristic to be measured. It is also an emerging growth industry with 'well-being', spawning organisations such as the New Economics Foundation (NEF 2011): 'nef, the new economics foundation is an independent think-and-do tank that inspires and demonstrates real economic well-being' (ibid). By doing this Seaford (2011), a member of NEF, suggests that by measuring 'what impact these forms of activity have on the environment, we can start to manage the trade-off between well-being now and well-being in the future (delivering well-being in a way that is sustainable)' (p.2). This however will mean changes to the present economic policy and Seaford adds:

The existing set does not discriminate adequately between varieties of growth, the kind we have had in the past, and the more effective kind we want to see in the future. It was this that led President Sarkozy to form the *Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress* (the 'Stiglitz Commission'), to several initiatives in the EU, the OECD and the UN, and to numerous national, regional and local initiatives to improve the measurement of progress.

(Seaford 2011, p.2)

Notions of well-being in the UK are now measured by the Office for National Statistics as part of the remit to collect data as part of the Integral Household Survey (HIS) and the Opinions Survey (OPN) data on well-being. The four questions used are:

Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?

Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile? Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?

Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

Respondents are asked to provide an answer from 0 ('not at all') to 10 ('completely').

In the OPN from April to August 2011, a further set of questions asked 4, 200 adults (ONS 2011) about their levels of satisfaction covering a variety of situations including work and where they live. The results so far, has accrued a mass of data on subjective well-being and indicate that 'In April to August 2011 in Great Britain, 76 per cent of adults (16 and over) had levels of 'life satisfaction' of 7 or more out of 10 and 24 per cent below 7 out of 10. There was a sizeable minority of the population who were estimated to have ratings lower than 5 out of 10 (8 per cent)' (ONS Dec 2011). As a litmus test of how happy individuals were in the UK in the summer months in 2011, this may have currency but the underlying ideology which lies at the heart of politicising 'happiness' and well-being is now promoted within government and:

The UK is not alone in planning to use these types of information to make an assessment of well-being. The Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Eurostat (the statistical office of the European Union), as well as national statistics offices around the world, are increasingly recognising the importance of subjective well-being data (OECD 2011; Kroll 2011 & Eurostat 2010).

(Seaford 2011, p.2).

The politics of well-being underpin the policy initiative of the ECM agenda and the SEAL initiatives discussed in this section. This work is also reinforced by statistics from the UNICEF Innocenti Report (2007) on Child Poverty; the subjective well-being of British children was measured as 20th out of 21 countries. With its focus on five themes, ECM encourages 'being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving and making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being' (p.3). These parallel the UNICEF measures of safety, education, and peer/family relationships, which also include measures of poverty. Although these statistics relate to schools and young children they still inform the ECM initiative which is an integral part of lesson planning demanded by Ofsted in Pendene College.

In addition, policies have emerged which incorporate government targets with concepts of well-being and staying healthy the focus of measured outcomes, for example the Healthy Schools programme. The SEAL programme is probably the most universal example of the emotional learning agenda in schools but produced some unforeseen circumstances as suggested by Hallam (2009) in her evaluation of the SEAL programme, 'as some children had developed or strengthened anti-social identities in response to the programme' (p.319). Whilst Hallam notes 'that a weakness of the programme was that it tended to consolidate the negative identity of a minority of disaffected pupils', she adds that 'positive outcomes of the implementation of the programme included the introduction of the language of emotion into schools' (p.329).

Although the SEAL programme is not a feature of the FE curriculum, the underpinning emphasis on emotional intelligence and its links to the ECM agenda are part of the FE learning culture, and the ECM directive of 'staying healthy' is now enshrined in a new emerging policy directive discussed in the section on the 'Healthy College'.

3.1.4. The politics of emotion

The emotional learning agenda embodies a diverse range of concepts and practices. These are related to social and emotional aspects of learning, with its own sphere of terminology, which encompasses such terms as emotional intelligence, emotional literacy, self-esteem and well-being. McLaughlin (2008) notes that 'the terms used often reflect the tradition of the author or the field within which they are working' (p.354) and adds that 'emotional literacy' is used often by educationalists and 'positive mental health' by psychologists or psychotherapists' (p.354). The pressure group Antidote, (formed in 1997 by a group of diverse professionals interested in emotional literacy), views emotional literacy 'as an opportunity to connect with wider society and to understand other people' (Antidote 2001). McLaughlin states that there is a 'bewildering array' (p.353) of terminology which reflects the discourses of emotional learning and also represents the diversity of the emotional learning agenda with roots in the social, economic and political.

For Hyland (2006), discourse of emotions, 'emphasizing self-esteem and affective objectives is far less dangerous than suggesting that all matters in education and training is the achievement of narrow, mechanistic performance outcomes' (p.299) and in critiquing Ecclestone's concept of therapeutic education, adds that 'this picture of a

post-school sector dominated by objectives linked to emotional intelligence and self-esteem is not one which is easily recognizable' (p.330). Hyland is critical of the analysis of the 'therapeutic turn' (p.301) advocated by Ecclestone and Hayes and is also sceptical of the impact of Rogers on contemporary educational practice, adding that:

it seems to me that—apart from a highly theoretical, inspirational impact akin to that of Freire on adult literacy tutors—Rogers has never had any *practical* influence on the English PCET sector. I would argue that the alleged pessimistic perspectives have a similar status.
(p.302)

In a scathing dismissal of the concept of the dominance of the therapeutic turn, Hyland notes that: 'The so-called therapeutic turn pales into insignificance alongside the damage wreaked by CBET and the behaviourist outcomes movement, bringing with it the radical deskilling of countless occupations, the downgrading of vocational studies, and the rise to prominence of a perversely utilitarian and unduly economistic conception of the educational enterprise in general' (p.302). Concerned that vocational education and training students would benefit from more of the affective domain, he adds that the therapeutic turn 'may be exactly what is required' (p.303). Whilst these comments present the other side of the argument they also reflect Ecclestone's claims of the sometimes challenging critiques of her work.

Central to emotional literacy is the increasing expansion across all education sectors of the use and application of Daniel Goleman's (1998) 'emotional intelligence' concept. Goleman's work draws upon the established work on intelligence of cognitive psychologists Caruso, Mayer and Salovey (2004). Their work, on aspects of working memory, suggests not a separation of intelligence, as defined by Goleman, but a combination of skill, ability and incorporates Seligman's personality traits of 'virtue' (Seligman 2002). These virtues are referred to as signature strengths and are traits which can raise our levels of happiness. Gardner's (1993) concept of multi-intelligence incorporates these differing abilities to provide a spectrum of intelligences including the inter-personal and intra-personal.

Goleman uses the research on IQ to develop his concept of emotional intelligence. Convinced that 'IQ offers little to explain different destinies of people with roughly equal promises, schooling and opportunity', (p.35) and in exploring the accumulated data on IQ, Goleman states that his work is concerned with a key set of abilities such as

‘being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulses and delayed gratification; to regulate one's moods and distress from swamping the ability to think; to emphasise and to hope’ and concedes that ‘unlike IQ with its nearly 100 year history of research with hundreds of thousands of people, emotional intelligence is a new concept’.

As a new concept it is heavily critiqued by the cognitive psychologists such as Mayer, Salovey and Gardner who are concerned about the lack of empirical data to support the concept. But Goleman (2004) is convinced that emotional intelligence can be ‘more powerful than IQ’ (p.34). He dismisses the work of the cognitive scientists and adds, ‘that rationality is guided by, and can be swamped by, feeling’ (p.41). It is this concept of ‘feeling’ which is at the heart of Goleman's concept. Importantly Goleman's research work is rooted in the world of business and he notes that ‘in a time with no guarantees of job security, when the very concept of the job is rapidly being replaced by portable skills, these are prime qualities that make and keep us employable’ and adds that ‘talked about loosely for decades under a variety of names, from ‘character and personality’ to ‘soft skills’ and ‘competence’, there is at last a more precise understanding of these human talents and a new name for them - emotional intelligence’ (p.5). Boyatzis and Ratti (2009) make a similar claim for the importance of emotional intelligence in management and, in their research on emotional, social and cognitive intelligences of Italian managers in private companies, reported that emotional, social and cognitive intelligences predict performance.

Goleman adds that ‘more and more companies are seeing that encouraging emotional intelligence skills is a vital component of any organisation's management philosophy’ (p.6) stating that ‘the globalisation of the workforce puts a particular premium on emotional intelligence in wealthier countries’ and adds that ‘as businesses change so do the traits needed to excel’ (Goleman 2004, p.9).

However it is Goleman’s contribution to education and the acceleration of emotional intelligence strategies within British education which has come to dominate the last decade. This is evidenced in the development of the SEAL programme and its origins in the Primary Behaviour and Attendance Pilot (Weare 2003). Goleman warns of ‘toxicity seeping in, poisoning the very experience of childhood, signifying sweeping deficits in emotional competencies’ (p.233) and emphasises the ‘plight of today's children’

(p.232). Moral panics abound as he cites ‘the highest juvenile arrest rate for violent crimes; teen arrests for forcible rape have doubled; teen murder rate has quadrupled, mostly due to an increase in shootings. During those same two decades the suicide rate of teenagers tripled as did the number of children under 14 who are murder victims’ (p.232). He added that ‘no children, rich or poor are exempt from risk; these problems are universal occurring in all ethnic and racial and income groups’ (p.233).

Craig (2007), a prominent critic of Goleman’s work, voices concerns about the wholesale adoption of emotional intelligence within the schools and its prominence in the SEAL strategy (SEAL; DfES, 2005, 2007) embedded in the primary school curriculum. Craig adds that ‘the danger of taking the broad approach that Goleman and followers do, is that it just morphs into anything they want it to be and cannot adequately be described or measured’ (Craig 2007, p.8). Although it lacks scientific validation, the concept of emotional intelligence has gained public popularity within educational circles, especially as a tool for emotional regulation in a schools system searching for a panacea for disruptive and disengaged pupils. But the most contentious aspect of Goleman's work is its divisive and elitist structure as children are labelled as ‘emotionally intelligent’.

Thus a critical question is - is this ‘new concept’ relevant to education practice and what conditions have allowed this concept to penetrate so much of British educational practice? What are the social and political conditions which have allowed it to thrive?

3.2. Emotional labour

In defining emotional labour, Hochschild (2003) states that:

...this labour requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others - in this case, the sense of being cared for in a convivial and safe place. This kind of labour calls for a coordination of mind and feeling and it sometimes draws on a source of self of that we honour as deep and integral to our individuality.

(Hochschild 2003, p. 7)

In sustaining the ‘outward countenance’, Hochschild details in her study of the airline industry and especially the flight attendants she interviewed, ‘the possible cost of doing the work’ (Hochschild 2003, p.7) that ‘the worker can become estranged or alienated

from an aspect of self - either the body or the margins of the soul- that is used to do the work' (p.7). In collecting information she adds that:

I gathered information at Delta in various ways. First I watched. The head of the Delta Training Centre in Atlanta, a gentle woman in her fifties allowed me to attend classes there.... To supplement the Delta study I observed the recruiting of flight attendants by Pan American Airways at its San Francisco base. I observed both group and individual interviews with job applicants and I sat in as recruiters discussed candidates.

(Hochschild 2003, p.14)

From the collated data of '30 flight attendants who work for various airlines the average age was 35, 25 were women and five were men' and the extensive additional interviews of 'managers in personnel recruitment, training, sales, and billing' (p.14), Hochschild constructs a theoretical procedural process of social interaction which she labels 'transmutation' which she describes as – 'When I speak of the transmutation of an emotional system I mean to point out a link between a private act such as attempting to enjoy a party and a public act such as summoning up good feeling for a customer (p.19). Adding that – 'I mean to expose the relation between the private act of trying to dampen liking for a person which overcommitted lovers sometimes attempt -and the public act of the bill collector who suppresses empathy for a debtor' and in doing this 'I mean it to convey what is it is that we do privately, often unconsciously, to feelings that nowadays often fall under the sway of large organizations, social engineering, and the profit motive, (p.19).

3.2.1. The management of emotions in the workplace

I adopt the definition of emotional labour which is described as 'the labour involved in dealing with other people's feelings, a core component of which is the regulation of emotions', reflected in James's research (1989, p.15). This term signifies a more inclusive understanding of how emotions are used in work, integrating the ways in which organizational leaders attempt to manage employees' emotions but also drawing attention to the complexity of emotional self-management, which includes how professionals suppress emotions when dealing with the emotionally charged contexts. I also draw upon the work of Bolton (2005) to shape my thinking, and enhance the development of the analysis in chapter four and five in relation to the contested notions of performativity and emotional labour. This I discuss in the following section to contextualise how practice is problematized within competing cultures and how

emotions are managed in the workplace. The centrality of discourses of emotional labour is important to this study because they provide additional explanations for the complexity of the personal tutor role and address the broader aims of this research.

When applying emotional labour in education, the inferences could be that the professional role of tutors within the post-compulsory sector now has an added dimension which currently is seeping into the culture and creation of performativity. This is also significant of a cultural shift which James and Wahlberg (2007) note - 'this shift is characterized as one from traditional client-centred, public service values-based on the needs of clients as interpreted and formulated by professionals, to one benchmarked against best business principles' (p.273).

Warwick et al (2008) and Williams (2008) are concerned about the normalization of these problematic displays of emotions for the individual. This is problematized because of the individual's inability to reconcile their emotions with the challenges of teaching in the different sectors where the interface is with students suffering the consequences of social and economic deprivation.

Hochschild's (2003) conceptual development of emotional labour fixed in the terminology 'managed heart', presents a pessimistic view of those who work in the service culture and emotional labour is not viewed as an asset: it does not form a productive aspect of the human endeavour within the capitalist labour process. It becomes the tool of defence and within this defensive position, for the worker; there are costs to the emotional capital individuals invest in the workplace. This presents a somewhat pessimistic view of the labour process with its vacuous, empty smiles and subordinate positioning within service organisations. However, a much more optimistic and active approach is the reworking of Hochschild's sentiments to embody a more positive approach to the labour process of working in organisations. And it is in the world of work, and theories residing in human resources and managing the workforce that I turn to next in considering my own interpretivist approach to agency and labour processes, within this study.

Bolton (2005), in critiquing Hochschild's theoretical approach, has highlighted in her book, *Emotion management in the workplace: management work and organisations*, a typology of emotional labour which opposes the negative aspects of Hochschild's

theoretical development of emotional labour. In critiquing Hochschild's theory she adds that 'There is an underlying implication of normative control, that is it is assumed that organisational actors' emotions are being captured and irretrievably damaged in the velvet cage of corporate culturalism' (p. 2). These sentiments resonate with those who work in education since we are all bound by the inescapable notion of vocation with all its incumbent nuances. As such, although the workplace for individuals within education can feel a soulless place at times, it is also imbued and shaped by the characters that inhabit the staffroom and the camaraderie which prevails at key points in the academic year when the various roles we perform collide and wreak damage. It is at such times, that 'The fragile accomplishment of social interaction is continually maintained, through not only formal exchanges, but also through episodes of compassion and shared laughter' (p.5). Laughter, Bolton (2005) explains, can be ironic humour which has natural protective qualities and importantly it can bind groups together. She also adds that:

the ability to escape into these spaces allows organisational actors to protect their sense of self from the invasive demands of organisationally prescribed feeling rules (p.149).

Within the realms of such practice she explains how the workplace can generate different types of emotions which have to be managed, noting that 'even those who profess to enjoy their work, feel some loyalty to the organisation they work for and generally are seen as good employees, find many ways in which they reassert and continually reaffirm their sense of self' (p.150). By acknowledging the employees as active, Bolton has developed an 'emotion management' (p.5) typology which is categorised by aspects of the workplace and work situations which both enhance our lives and corrode them. She refers to four types of emotional management; Pecuniary (emotion management according to commercial values); Prescriptive (emotion management according to organisational codes of conduct /rules); and Presentational and Philanthropic emotion management, according to 'social feeling rules' (p.150).

The one of most interest and pertinence to this study, is that of philanthropic emotion management of which Bolton states; 'Philanthropic management is presented as a special case in that it represents a gift of an extra effort in emotion management' (p. 135). It is this aspect of emotional labour as a 'gift' which is important to this study and further expands upon and adds to previous discussions about emotional labour. This also adds a further dimension to this study as I consider how the 'gift' is played out in

the research setting of Pendene College by the personal tutors. But the ‘gift’ is also nuanced by other aspects of dispositions and Bolton, in later research work, considers how the shared workplace can also become an active place for individuals where notions of agency are shaped. Here she is concerned about the negative view of the workplace, adding:

Unfortunately, despite claims of more liberated and liberating forms of work, we continue to be presented with accounts of demeaning, demanding, demoralizing, destructive jobs that are, quite simply, bad for the body and soul.
(Bolton, 2010, p.157)

Bolton does infer an active workplace in her work where individual fulfilment can be one outcome. In developing this idea she explores and considers the concept of ‘spirituality’ in the workplace noting that:

Although sections of the workplace spirituality literature have something of an “ethereal” quality, focusing on personal fulfilment, much of it is also firmly linked with performativity, centering on the role of spirituality as an organizational strategy to create the conditions for cooperation, citizenship behaviors and efficacy
(Bolton 2010, p.154)

Within this framework Bolton describes how spirituality also links to dignity at work and considers how the framework operates, ‘The basic premise of such a strategy being that fostering workplace spirituality not only deals with individual crises, but creates a culture for the generation of positive emotion and acts as an impetus for action’ (p.158) and it is this sense of positive emotions shaped by the link to spirituality which emerges as a possible model for workplace practice. Inevitably questions arise and Bolton suggests that:

If we are to explore the spirit–work connection then we need a little more emphasis on the actual work – what is it that people do, how do they do it, how do they feel about it, how are they rewarded, is the work dirty, dangerous, devalued?
(Bolton 2010, p.160)

Whilst this aspect of emotional labour has yet to be fully documented, the link to this thesis is important since it begins to suggest a raft of considerations which extends the original terminology used by Hochschild when describing emotional labour. Within Pendene College, personal tutors will be engaging in various degrees of emotional labour but the nature of the labour now has an additional dimension.

Whilst the link has yet to be fully researched, being an actor and performing the roles as suggested by Goffman (1969), means that the workplace and job we do provides the necessary status for our identity, shapes our lives and, as we meditate those transitions

in our lives which are shared in the workplace and marked by birthdays, weddings, illness, bereavement, so the shared humanity of our lives is played out on a stage and our performance observed by others.

3.3 Issues of Practice.

I next turn to the second part of this chapter and the issues of practice in shaping the role of the personal tutor.

3.3.1. Professional identity

The professionalisation of the FE workforce has clearly been a key debate in FE. Since the FE workforce is so diverse the shaping of a cohesive professional identity is pivotal to a wider professional recognition of the role of FE tutors in teaching and supporting and guiding their students. The professionalisation of the workforce provides challenges for personal tutors as they seek an identity rooted in practice; this practice for some tutors may have distinct overtones of the therapeutic as suggested by Ecclestone and Hayes (2009).

A key aspect of the research in the post compulsory sector is the characterization of the individual lecturers who work in the sector as ‘professionals’. Personal tutors face this challenge and discourses on professionalism identify the tensions between structure and agency and the highly contested formation of ‘identity’ of the FE ‘professional’. This is important in this study since Pendene College provides university courses as partner to a local university in the South West of England. Empirical research provides a broad view, referring to the policy levers which shape and define the ‘professionalism’ of the sector (Spours, Coffield and Gregson 2007; Steer, Spours Hodgson, Finlay, Coffield Edward and Gregson 2007; Gleeson and James 2007; Orr 2009). Findings from research oriented to the structural, suggest a workforce and professional identity often in a state of flux coping with and responding to the challenges of managerialist directives and performance measures (Ball 2003, 2008; Coffield and Edward 2009; Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler 2005; Sachs 2001). Colley et al (2007) and Gleeson and James (2007) consider the dynamics of professionalism in their research as part of the TLC project. Gleeson and James note that ‘professionalism in FE remains an elusive and paradoxical concept’ (p.451) and ‘that there exists little official data or research evidence of who its practitioners are, their dispositions or how they define professionalism in the contested contexts of their work’ (p.451). Colley et al recount that from the ‘24 tutors who

participated in the project, only about a third remain committed to teaching in the sector' (p.174).

Added to this is the construction of practice defined within the FE sector which has 'duality' (Bathmaker and Avis 2005; Bathmaker, Brooks, Parry and Smith 2008; Bathmaker and Thomas 2009) in that tutors, although contracted to teach in FE, also have responsibility for HE courses delivered within FE colleges and 'These institutions offer both further and higher education, including a range of higher education qualifications, in particular two year vocational degrees, known as foundation degrees' (Bathmaker and Thomas 2009, p.121). The provision of HE within the FE College is now shaping access to higher education degree courses at a local level and as a result students are able to access HE, often at a lower cost, within the locality. Pendene College is representative of this provision.

For the tutors, the positioning of their labour within the dual sector presents additional complexity to the formation of professional identity; tensions arise and resonate in their engagement with dual sector learners. Winter and Dismore (2010, p.225) in researching the experience of foundation degree students' progression pathways noted, 'that learning is bound up in pathways to HE, which for HE in FE students incorporates both FE and HE learning identities'. Moreover students' perceptions of tutors and curriculum delivery reflect upon and shape the professional identity of those tutors delivering HE, Winter and Dismore noted that, 'the FEIs (*further education institutions*) were often described as 'comfortable', with attainable academic expectations, small teaching groups and limited expectations on students to learn autonomously (p.259) adding that 'Seventy seven per cent of questionnaire respondents reported that they 'mostly' or 'totally' agreed that there was a difference between their workloads at the FEIs and at the HEI, with most focus group participants indicating that the HEI workload was heavier' (p.259). Such differences also arose in the research of Bathmaker and Thomas (2009, p.225) who noted that 'this implies that where incongruence between the FE in HE and HE models exist, students progressing to university may struggle to recognise and respond to cues on learning and require additional support'.

In addition, managing the public perception of the institution is critical for positive local recruitment. In the research conducted by Bathmaker and Thomas (2009) on East Heath College, 'currently one of the largest mixed-economy colleges in the country (p.123),

they detail how the college separates provision since success 'is dependent on it being able to show local people that it is an institution operating on a par with other universities and that it has moved away from the current perception of 'the Civic College' (p.125). They add that the 'strategic repositioning of HE delivery in an institution aligned with (although not part of) the HE sector concerns the 'common-sense' public perception of quality: that mixed-economy institutions provide lower quality HE than institutions which focus solely on HE delivery' (p.125).

Whilst discourses of professionalism centre on agency, Child (2009) introduces an additional consideration of professionalism within the post-compulsory sector when she considers, 'how different discourses of research are used to either assess or demarcate professionalism within UK post-compulsory education, depending in which sector practice is based' (p.333). Drawing upon her experiences of teaching within FE and then moving to HE she reflects upon how the tool of research shapes professional identity. Within FE she notes that, 'I have deliberately chosen to use the words 'lecturer' when referring to a practitioner in further education and 'academic' for a practitioner in higher education, as such titles would appear to reflect how professionals within each different post-compulsory setting are differentially labelled' (p.335). Such titles attributed to each sectors' 'professionals' reinforce hierarchy and status and identify research as the prerogative of HE. As academia is often driven by agendas such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF), 'academics' as researchers endure additional pressures which Child tends to ignore as she focuses on her FE Ofsted teaching grade in her 'reflective' account of her brief experience as 'an A-Level lecturer in the social sciences in a large further education college' (p.334). Moreover Child identifies that, 'In FE, I often felt I was an agent of research (in being the subject of Ofsted inspections)', (p.338) adding that, 'Professionalism in higher education appears to be judged in terms of the amount and quality of scholarly activity in which an academic engages' (p.339). Aware of the pressures within HE and FE Child poses the question of 'professional' status conferred by actively engaging in research and considers the value of 'teaching' in HE. She adds that:

On the one hand, the RAE clearly prioritises research at the expense of teaching, yet there are growing demands from students for a better teaching/learning experience, especially as they are now paying for their university education (p.340).

Similarly, in recognizing the pressures associated with the REF and the structure and funding of research within HE, Lawy and Armstrong (2009, p.4) discussing the 'discourse of need' note:

the economics of research have become more significant and outcome-driven within a culture of accountability, educational researchers have been forced to account for both the use of time and money, where the first is a cost and the second an indicator of value.

Feather (2010) also considers professional identity shaped by the duality within the sector. In researching tutors in FE delivering HE programmes, he asks, 'what is meant by the term 'academic identity', especially as this term is now whispered and laid claim to by some lecturers delivering Higher Education Business Programmes' (p.189) in an FE college. Participants in his study were 'lecturerscomprised of 26 (14 females and 12 males) individual interviews and one focus group, consisting of four (two females and two males)' and, 'the interviews and focus group were conducted from 2006 to 2007', (p.194). Feather's research highlights the workloads carried by tutors in FE:

...(despite having contractual hours to teach 23 hours per week), have enormous workloads, and are teaching in excess of 25 hours on average per week (some in excess of 30 hours), when compared to their colleagues in HE, who may be teaching on average 18 hours (maybe much less in elite universities) a week', (p.199).

His findings suggest that lecturers 'saw themselves more as practitioners or interpreters of knowledge rather than as academics' (p.199).

This was also significant in the responses from twelve FE college lecturers interviewed by Turner et al (2009). Conducting research into perceptions of HE tutors who work in FE, they add that, 'Of the 12 lecturers interviewed nine were teaching HE and FE', (p.362) and the participants 'primarily viewed the role of a university lecturer as lecturing to large cohorts of students', (p.360) whilst they viewed their own role as 'holistic' and 'not only did they deliver the subject matter relevant to the course, but also had to consider the specific learning needs of their students' (p.360). The prospect of completing research and developing their knowledge was viewed positively, especially 'to undertake scholarly activities such as conference attendance, professional updating and to be widely read' (p.362). However, there were drawbacks and 'The lecturers felt there was an apparent reliance on the part of college management for an individual to meet the demands of a course or maintain current subject knowledge in their own time' (p.363).

This provides additional tensions in practice and Feather adds that ‘Some lecturers (those who participated in this study) have indicated that they would like to develop their knowledge, and become published in their own field of study or discipline’ (p.200). Thus whilst Child perceives a dichotomy within the sector of the assertion of academic identity, the participants in Turner et al and Feather’s study would welcome opportunities to develop their ‘academic’ credentials.

Both studies further highlight the construction of conflicting identities and roles within the sector. However the commitment to the students in Feather’s study surfaced and he adds ‘what was evident from the study, was that all the lecturers (without exception) who took part in the study took their responsibilities towards their students very seriously’, adding that ‘In addition they exhibited a high degree of loyalty towards these students and their learning’ (Feather 2010, p.200). But there were costs to individual staff and Feather concludes that ‘The amount of administrative work has been shown to have a major impact on the motivation of lecturers’ and, coupled with increased teaching workloads, notes that the combination is ‘a major cause of stress’ (p.200).

A particular emphasis on professionalism emerges in the TLC project. Using data from the project, Colley et al (2007, p.174) in search of the ‘professional identity and ‘the dynamics of professional participation’, (p.174) note that researchers often ‘construct professionalism as a purely static category’. The research also identifies that:

many of the TLC participants and their colleagues described themselves as ‘accidental tutors’, still associating their identities most closely with their former industrial or public service occupations’ (p.174).

Whilst the TLC illuminates professional identity, the conflict which arises from different pedagogic practice arising within one institution confirms the multiple cultures across different ‘communities of practice’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991) further reinforcing the complexity of the FE tutor role.

In considering the ‘formation of professional identity’ Bathmaker and Avis (2005) researching ‘a group of trainee lecturers completing a one year full-time course’ (p.47) considers how trainees entering the profession ‘learn what it means to be a lecturer in further education’ (p.50). Drawing upon Lave and Wenger’s (1991) community of practice concept and the notion of legitimate peripheral participation, from the 43 participants in the study, they collected data from questionnaires and focus groups and

by using diary sheets collected a ‘snapshot of what a day on placement involved for these trainees’ (p.53). They also drew upon the ‘talk that occurred outside the placement colleges in the context of university-based part of their training’ (p.50). In their research they detail responses from trainees which often exemplify their alienation from the community of practice they encountered from lack of ‘desk space’ (p.55) to funding resources – as trainees, ‘had to fund the cost of any photocopying materials’ (p.55).

Whilst the trainees shared similar ideals to those who worked in the sector in terms of ‘widening participation and raising achievement’ (p.56), in practice this translated to a variety of practices including recruiting students to courses ‘for which they are not suited’ (p.56) and significantly ‘that completion of course outcomes by any means was more important than fair assessment’ (p.56). Aware of the educational realities in FE, the trainees ‘distanced themselves from existing teaching practices and presented themselves as different’ (p.57). The cognitive dissonance suffered by the trainees was tangible as Bathmaker and Avis report that the trainee’s engagement within the community of practice led to marginalization. Bathmaker and Avis suggest that this was partly due to the prevailing conditions in FE which ‘lead to communities being characterised as having low morale, being burnt out and having lost their commitment to students’ (p.61).

In addition, as part of their work ‘exploring the labour process and experiences of trainee FE lecturers’, Avis and Bathmaker (2004, p.6) use ‘trainee accounts....to reflect on the politics of care and the contradictions arising between an orientation towards care, towards particular learners as well as the material conditions within which trainees labour’. The trainees in their study noted the different qualities of different tutors and their attitudes to ‘caring’. Significantly, for the trainees, ‘caring appeared to be pivotal to their construction of a preferred identity as a lecturer’ (p.9). The trainees also provided ‘a stringent critique of practice of many lecturers’ (p.9). However this was often contradictory when confronted with the reality of working with groups of students. One particular trainee ‘found the learners to be ‘vile’, to hold attitudes and respond to tutors in ways he considered to be totally unacceptable’ (p.10). In this way many of the trainee accounts depicted the FE workplace as one of challenge and compromise. Many of the learners they encountered lacked the enthusiasm for learning and trainees ‘found themselves involved with students who were very different from what they imagined’ (p.12). As a consequence, Avis and Bathmaker note that the

trainees ‘sought an empathetic engagement with students and valued relations based upon care and respect’, but, ‘their aspirations were often thwarted’. From their findings, Avis and Bathmaker consider how the pedagogic relations are shaped and note that, ‘trainees need to move beyond the individualization of pedagogic relations’ (p.15).

They add that:

Whilst valuing the learning they need to be able to locate both themselves and the learner in the wider structural context. By recognizing such a context they will be able to ameliorate some of the costs of emotional labour in which they are involved. They will be able to ward off some of the threats to their identity that derive from learner resistance and will similarly be able to avoid pathologising or entering into the negativity of therapeutic relationships with resistant learners. Through recognition of the structural they will be able to sustain a politics of care that seeks to value and empathise with their students, one that avoids the twin dangers of pathology and therapy.

3.3.2. Surveillance for judgment

This observation of work practice, Hebson et al (2007) suggests is also an instrument not just of surveillance but the means whereby judgements can be made about an individual’s performance. Hebson et al, are especially interested in how the ‘gift’ embodied in Bolton’s notion of philanthropic emotions which present the additional gift of extra time and effort to the organisation, is shaping capability procedures. Hebson et al, adds:

The development of the concept allows us to move beyond recognising a marginalization of the caring and emotional aspects of teaching to explore how these aspects of teaching are being reconstituted in ways that redefine what constitutes capable teaching. (p.676)

In their study they found that from the twenty six tutors who responded to their advert insert in a regional newspaper, over half of the sample were ‘overwhelmingly made up of female teachers working in the primary sector and over half were in the final phase of their career’ (p.684). In addition, ‘The centrality of emotion work in definitions of good teaching was a theme expressed by all of the teachers we interviewed’ (p.685) and within this study, although Hebson et al collected data only from the teachers and not their managers, the confirmation from the interviews was that, ‘Whilst none of the teachers interviewed believed they were ‘perfect teachers’, they refused to equate imperfection with incapability because they were confident that the emotion work they carried out in the classroom was effective’ (p.685). They add that, ‘When looking at the issues that led to the questioning of these teachers’ capability, all were concentrated around the more ‘technical’ aspects of teaching, related to areas that were central to the

standards agenda and could be measured by target-setting'(p.686). Critically within their study, 'Thirteen out of 26 teachers we interviewed had their capability questioned during monitoring processes related to Ofsted, either because of intensive monitoring implemented by the head before Ofsted inspectors arrived or an unsatisfactory grading by an Ofsted inspector.' (p.686). Arising from this research is the contested notion of what good teaching is and how emotions are used in the labour process to make judgments about performance. Overwhelmingly the teachers in Hebson et al's study were being judged against the target-based provision in educational practice. As a result they were changing their practice:

The majority of teachers, then, simply taught in the ways they believed would be acceptable to pass an observation and no longer felt confident enough to use their 'instinct' in dealing with problems that arose in the class with pupils. The spontaneity pivotal to philanthropic emotion management had given way to a pecuniary form of emotion management. (p.689)

This movement from the preferred philanthropic role by the teachers to the pecuniary one establishes the context of practice shaped by emotional performance to fit the rules. As a consequence, 'When being observed by head teachers and inspectors, teachers were simply surface acting, complying with the display rules rather than using their own judgment to manage classroom situations' (p.690). By privileging the pecuniary form of emotion management, the teachers in the study were active, they played the game and, in so doing, the surface acting enhanced their performance. Whilst this study raises serious issues about the context of Ofsted Inspections and performance culture it also illuminates how tutors cope with the structural demands of the performance culture. The management of the emotions to ensure the 'gift' may paradoxically be the desired target for many organizations, yet the labour involved in support and guidance may present tutors with further conflict and tension as they balance the 'gift' against the Ofsted grade. It would appear from Hebson et al's (2007) study that the compromise is to adapt practice. This has implications for this research study since personal tutors at Pendene College are required to perform for Ofsted and provide the required amount of emotional support for their students within the remit of the personal tutor role. How they manage this role is considered in the next section as I focus on the literature informing pedagogic practice of guidance and support.

3.3.3. Client centred issues

The rhetoric of the humanistic approach is persuasive and it is difficult to argue against an approach which proffers the development of the human spirit with a positive view of

the human condition. In FE with its underlying ethos of the second chance, Rogerian concepts embodied in humanism found its ideal location and Hayes (2003) adds that ‘the appearance of Carl Rogers’ work on the reading lists for the PGCE/Cert Ed in PCE – evidenced by course handbooks – is not just an indication of his influence on teacher educators but also an expression of an explicitly therapeutic turn’ (p.35).

This ‘therapeutic turn’ Hayes suggests, ‘is given more emphasis and support by radical writers on education who influence teacher educators or who are teacher educators themselves’ (p.35). But if we accept this view Mintz (2009) suggests and ‘join Ecclestone and Hayes in their scepticism about many therapeutic educational practices, must one go so far as to reject the idea of educating the emotions?’ and adds that, ‘is the education of emotions not part and parcel of the education of humans?’ (Mintz 2009, p.638). This is a difficult aspect of the purpose of education to challenge. It becomes pertinent to the construction of my research and its direction because in recognising the politicisation of emotions inherent in the work of Hayes and Ecclestone, as explanation of the growth of the therapeutic in the FE sector; I seek to challenge and elaborate upon their explanation.

However, if we accept that they are right, that there is a ‘therapeutic turn’ in education, we must also acknowledge that the terminology changes when viewed with another set of lenses. For example Usher and Edwards (1994), in developing their account of the paradoxical nature of competence-based education and training in teacher education, commented upon the fact that competence-based education and training (with its behaviourist roots) is usually conveyed using the humanistic approach, and Hayes firmly states that ‘what Usher and Edwards see as humanistic, I would call therapeutic’ (p.35). This interplay of words and their subjective meaning surface throughout the literature as different academics take issue with differing terminology: the development of emotional literacy and emotional intelligence is a prime example of this and research related to the concepts is explored in later sections of this chapter.

In the compulsory sector, research findings from Hallam (2009), Miller and Parker (2006), and Weare (2007) produce contradictory findings to the efficacy of the emotions within the curriculum. For example, not all pupils benefited from an engagement with the SEAL programme and some teaching staff misjudged the emotional behaviours of pupils. However, within the Counselling services sector, emotional support in the form

of counselling for clients, is well documented (Barrow 2007, McLaughlin 2008, Jenkins 2010, Qualter 2007) but the migration of such services and associated practices into the FE sector has not been fully documented, although research findings from Mintz (2009) and Wootton (2006) suggest further research required to understand the complex labour processes involved.

However therapeutic discourses which problematized support for students also provided a pessimistic picture of individuals with an inability to cope. Within the counselling and guidance sector academics noted and responded to the concerns. Thomas (2006, p.24) adds that 'many counsellors and psychotherapists are deeply involved in debating the personal politics of our profession' adding the question - 'how should counsellors respond to those who claim that 'therapy' is doing more harm than good and undermining, rather than enabling, those who seek their help?'. With the growing 'psychologisation of society', Godo and Devos (2011, p.3), add that:

....the scrutiny of psychological culture, defined here as the way psychology has moved beyond the boundaries of academia and professional practice

Measures of self-worth are demonstrated in our perception of our self-esteem. Discourses about high or low self-esteem are currently problematized in the debates about 'therapy culture' by Furedi (2003), Ecclestone (2004, 2009) and Hayes (2004, 2009). It is Knapp (2007) in his book *Therapeutic Communication*, who identifies this distinctive language and provides a very detailed account of how the ability to communicate using the 'language of therapy' (p.9) is vital to the successful outcomes pursued in counselling.

This reinforces the Rogerian approach and exemplifies the client-centred relationship with its 'confessional' overtones. The client-centred relationship 'is an intensely personal and subjective relationship with the client - relating not as a scientist to an object of study, not as a physician expecting to diagnose and cure, but as a person to person' (p.184). Underpinning this therapeutic relationship, is 'the therapist feels this client to be a person of unconditional self-worth; of value no matter what his condition, his behaviour or his feelings', and adds that, 'it would mean that the therapist is genuine, hiding behind no defensive façade, but meeting the client with the feelings which organically he is experiencing' (p.184). It is this relationship which shapes the dynamic of the personal tutorial.

3.4. Retention

Retention has become a key measure in the regulation of FE and as part of policy directives (Ofsted 2008) outlined in chapter 2, retention becomes a significant measure of the value and efficiency of teaching and teaching delivery. Poor retention equates to reduced funding for a college and this has become a contentious issue for tutors faced with a variable which is often beyond their control and yet one they are professionally measured against. The empirical research in the following sections highlights the challenges faced by tutors in retaining their students.

More than a decade ago in America, Tinto (2000, p1) noted that:

Many colleges speak of the importance of increasing student retention. Indeed, quite a few invest substantial resources in programs designed to achieve that end. Some institutions even hire consultants who promise a proven formula for successful retention. But for all that effort, most institutions do not take student retention seriously.

In contrast to Tinto's statement, in the UK, retention has moved up the agenda for educationalists. As we move into the second decade of the twenty first century, against a shifting and fragile political climate, nation states within the European Union are challenged by the downturn in the global economy. With a recession impacting upon the jobs market, more students are coming in to the post-compulsory sector. This has also been heavily influenced by the Widening Participation agenda and this expansion has highlighted the need to retain students on courses to maintain financial stability within institutions.

The provision of EMA discussed in the previous chapter provided the necessary funding to encourage students to continue their studies but the stipulations of compulsory attendance and the necessary achievement levels proved challenging for many students. By establishing the link to achievement, the challenges to policies derived to improve retention cannot be so robustly challenged since few would challenge the notion of their students being successful. Bullock and Fertig (2003, p.330) comment that, 'as issues of achievement and retention become ever more pressing, college lecturers and managers have been drawn towards an individualised approach to student support and learning'. In their small scale research study of an FE / HE college outside of London, with provision for twenty thousand students, they interviewed students, tutors and managers to establish outcomes, 'to inform decision making and the setting of priorities in the

area of tutorial provision within the college' (p.332). Their work builds upon a body of research work from Martinez (2001) which I turn to now to contextualise the background to issues related to tutorial practice which are linked to this study.

In the introduction to the Learning Skills and Development Agency (LSDA) report, 'Improving Student Retention and Achievement' (Martinez, 2001), Martinez states that 'this is a good time to take stock of the state of our knowledge of retention and achievement issues in the learning and skills sector' adding prophetically:

Improving student retention and achievement has, first, a particularly high priority for the college, and, indeed, the new learning and skills sector. The success of the sector may well be measured against improvements in these performance measures.

(Martinez 2001, p.1)

The report is based upon 'comparison with schools and colleges' (p.1) and confirms the variation in practice across the sector. The report specifies the different approaches to researching retention and presents two distinct categories prevalent in research on retention – that of drop out and failure to achieve and conversely, 'possible solutions: how providers can improve or raise retention and achievement rates' (p.1). A decade later this focus has been prioritised in colleges and in Pendene College, achievement and retention rates are monitored and also included in appraisal. This is relevant to this study, researching personal tutoring, because it provides the major context for national and local initiatives and whilst Martinez adds that 'There is quite a large body of research which offers advice on improving retention and achievement', he is also conscious that 'some of this literature either has no empirical base or does not make explicit the empirical base which it may have' (p.6). As the findings reveal and are discussed in chapter five and six, this study contributes to an understanding of how tutorial processes underpin and support practice which I contend ultimately serves the function of retaining students on courses and provides an alternative explanation for the therapeutic turn in education.

Central to issues concerning retention and achievement is the attendance of students and their support and guidance. These I discuss in the next section. I begin with Wigley's (2009) research on EMA and attendance since the findings highlight the relationship of attendance and achievement. The study focused on the recording of attendance and final A/S level results of a cohort of 179 students studying A Levels. The findings reveal,

using statistical analysis, a strong relationship between attendance and achievement. Wigley comments that, 'this is not perhaps a surprising result' (p.187) and for many tutors this would be verified by their own experience in practice. What is of interest is the question posed, 'For educators, this raises the perennial question of what more teachers can do to encourage students to regularly attend and complete their course and therefore maximise their potential examination performance' (p.187). By asking what more can we do, the issue of retention is problematised for tutors and solutions required.

Further research addresses the problem and seeks solutions. For example, Woolhouse and Blair (2003) focus on learning styles in their research to improve retention. In this research 126 A Level students completed the Honey and Mumford (1986) questionnaire and this was also completed by 95% of their tutors. Their findings revealed that many of the students and their tutors were 'reflectors':

Reflectors are careful, thorough, thoughtful and methodical individuals. They are good listeners and rarely jump to conclusions. However, they are not natural 'participators' and can be slow to make decisions. They tend to be cautious and non-assertive. They are not good at 'small talk'.

(Woolhouse and Blair, 2003, p.259)

In the summary of their findings they state that, 'There appears to be a relationship between theorists and academic success:

Theorists are logical, rational and objective people. They are good at asking probing questions and are disciplined in their approach. However, they have low tolerance for uncertainty, disorder and ambiguity and are not good at lateral thinking. They do not like anything subjective or intuitive (p.259).

In discussing their findings Woolhouse and Blair assert that 'knowledge of preferences could help colleges target extra assistance to 'at risk' students to prevent early withdrawal or advise on choice of courses/subjects' (p.268). In practice this has been replicated across the sector with their comment that 'These findings could help target study skills support which could, in turn, improve achievement in academic study' (p.268) and this is evidenced in many colleges as current practice.

For other groups in the FE sector the issues related to predictors of retention have been researched. For example Schofield and Dismore (2010) completed a documentary analysis of UCAS data and reveal that 'Overall, the findings show that the incoming entry level plays a major role in the ultimate achievement in the first year of an HE course delivered in an FE institution.,' and add that, 'In other words, the higher the

entry level, the better the retention and achievement' (p.219). In suggesting possible implications for practice they add that, 'This research can help to inform programme managers looking to identify students who may need early intervention' (p.219), but their research shares commonality with Woolhouse and Blair's earlier research in that, 'Tailoring study skills to meet the profiles of learners rather than offering a generic or inflexible package may make a considerable difference to levels of retention,' (p.219) and this is evidenced in many colleges as current practice.

An alternative view is suggested by McQueen, (2009). By focusing on the theorisation of drop-out rates from first year degree students, she develops a working model based on research from Tinto (2000) on the integration of students in institutions. This model is based upon Durkheim's theory of suicide and social alienation. In a reasoned debate about the merits of suicidal acts linked to dropout rates, McQueen finally concurs that, 'Durkheim's model of suicide has been suggested as largely inappropriate in the context of education although usefully highlighting the importance of social structure on individual actions' (p.83). In conclusion to her theoretical critique, she adds that 'The inclusion of emotion has been suggested as important in understanding transitional experiences, and the possibility of change that does not preclude strong links with a previous social world', (p.83). This suggests, as does evidence from other studies on students who drop out, that emotions are integral to learning and contribute to successful retention on courses. In situating students as individuals in the different educational worlds we inhabit, the strangeness which arises from transitions from school to FE and then HE can be mediated by the support, guidance and pastoral care provided by individual personal tutors. This orientation and positioning of the personal tutor denotes an emerging prominence in the role of the personal tutors in the lives of learners and learner achievement.

Martinez noted a decade ago the importance of personal tutoring as a strategy for overall college improvement. Martinez suggests the provision of continual support for students will enhance their learning. Thus personal tutoring can both be a strategy for college improvement and also to improve achievement and retention. However Hodkinson and Bloomer (2001) note that 'retention and qualification achievement are inaccurate measures of the quality of college provision, because too many factors that contribute to eventual decisions to drop out lie beyond college knowledge control or even influence' (p.137). But personal tutoring, with its emphasis on 'personal reflection

and self assessment' discussed in this section, is linked to discourses which challenge the premise of guidance and support within the FE sector.

3.4.1. Retention embedded in tutorial provision strategies

In considering tutorial provision with FE, different strategies emerge within research linked to retention, which illuminate tutorial practice within the sector. For example, Bullock and Fertig (2003) researched the role of the personal tutor in providing support and guidance. Their study was 'designed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the tutorial provision and to illuminate the perceived impact of the different aspects of the tutorial programme on student well-being, achievement and retention' (Bullock and Fertig 2003, p.331). They collected data from semi-structured interviews with both students and tutor and from a questionnaire distributed to the full-time lecturing staff.

This study is very pertinent to my research because it identifies and establishes a research concern with guidance and support and retention. From their findings they note that 'there was agreement that retention should always be in the best interests of the students and to a lesser extent the class and college' (p.337). What is significant in this statement is that the best interests of the students are placed in a hierarchy of interests which include the class and interests of the college. Although Bullock and Fertig do not make explicit reference to the economics of retention this area, I contend, is significant when researching guidance and support and I establish this link in my research data from the interviews with personal tutors at Pendene College.

From their research findings they discover that 'tutors were concerned with a clear shared understanding of the respective responsibilities especially relevant in areas such as the monitoring of attendance' (p.341). They also reported that 'some tutors believe that strategies for improving retention and enhancing achievements were essentially the same and were driven by the one-to-one discussion' (p.338). However, they did not produce data to inform statements from interviews that retention improved as a result of interventions, but they did add that 'both aspects of the tutorial programme complement each other and are essential for optimum retention and attainment' (p.338). Importantly, Bullock and Fertig state that 'for personal tutoring to have a real impact on learning and retention, it is necessary firstly for both students and tutors to recognise the value of planning and understanding the processes of learning and, secondly, for the tutors to be the fulcrum of each student's individual strategies for learning' (p.342).

They add that ‘the role of the personal tutor in helping students develop skills of personal reflection and self-assessment cannot be understated’ (p.342) and this is reflected in the research from Martinez (2001b).

3. 5. Methodological implications of researching personal tutoring

The literature discussed in the previous sections of this chapter highlight different approaches to empirical research yet share many similarities. Research tends to reflect the interpretivist approach with several studies using similar qualitative data collection methods of interviews and focus groups. Few studies reflect the application of longitudinal studies although the work of Reay et al (2009), Quinn et al (2008) and the TLC project engage with participants over an extended time period with follow up interviews at a later stage. Several research studies adopt innovative approaches; for example, in the work of Bathmaker and Avis (2005a, 2005b) in research on FE trainee teachers, data collection included the use of logs and diary sheets.

However, within the empirical research reviewed, it is not necessarily the methods of collection of data employed but the analysis of the data which alerts the reader to differing interpretations of the findings and subsequent conclusions. For example, in researching retention Blair and Woolhouse (2003) focus on ‘learning styles’ in searching for explanations to improve retention. Notwithstanding the contested notion of ‘learning styles’ (Coffield 2005), the findings suggest that if FE recruited purely those students who were ‘reflectors’ (using the Honey and Mumford 1992 scale), then retention in colleges would improve. Whilst these findings suggest a very selective recruitment process and one at odds with the current FE practice of an ‘open door’ policy, there is a suggestion within the research that the targeting of skills support would benefit students. However for many FE tutors, the continuous skills support is integral to the delivery of the curriculum. Hence the dubious quality of such research findings is questionable.

The substantive findings from the literature has also demonstrated how research design in educational practice and engagement with those who work in the sector, illuminates the complicated social processes which mask power relations and shape labour processes. This is evidenced in the work from Colley et al (2007) Hodkinson et al (2007), James and Wahlberg (2007) and Jenkins and Conley (2007). Furthermore the

research from Bathmaker and Avis (2005a, 2005b) provide an additional view of teacher trainees coping and negotiating their presence within communities of practice, more often experiencing alienation from tutors and challenges from resistant learners. In addition the research suggests an FE sector coping with the changes resulting from the widening participation agenda and the expansion of HE in FE. Although this has brought major changes to the development of working practices in FE as outlined by Bathmaker and Thomas (2009), significantly many FE tutors who face the duality of the sector continue to provide support and guidance for their students and engage in emotional labour processes as a result.

These distinctive practices evidenced in the research and recounted by participants illuminates the hidden labour processes involved in providing guidance and support. .Hochschild's (2003) and Bolton's (2005) work raises important questions about the structuring of labour processes within the post compulsory sector. Tutorial practice for most tutors highlights their involvement with their students as decreed by managerialist objectives. Their continued adherence to support and guidance and the different aspects to supporting their students is monitored and regulated with Ofsted playing a major role in shaping practice.

One key aspect arising from the literature is the contribution it makes to discourses of professionalism and the construction of identity. Emerging from the literature are distinctive views of practice and how professionalism is constructed with FE. Such insights add to the complexity of the construction of FE tutor identity.

However the previous discussion also highlights the domains within FE research which both interest specific researchers and fulfill criteria for researching specific groups within the remit of funding allocations. Large scale projects are evidenced in the literature and although substantive findings emerge which inform current practice within the post compulsory sector the detail of small scale studies could capture additional detail arising from a focus on the social relational narratives of participants. Apart from Child's (2009) consideration of her role in the dual sector, researchers within the sector are external to the institutions and participants they engage with and although this is viewed as conventional practice, ethnographic insights from insiders can also illuminate practice. My research study therefore aims to address such issues by

adding to existing knowledge about the complexities of the roles of those who work in the sector.

The empirical research reviewed in this chapter suggests a distinctive yet complex identity attributed to the FE tutor. It also suggests a conceptualisation of the tutor identity and this provides a platform for further research into the perceptions of tutors. Whilst research on the personal tutor in FE is scarce, the research literature does refer to the FE tutor role and how tutors perform within distinctive FE cultures (Hodkinson et al, 2007). For many FE tutors, the role is shaped by the expansion of the widening participation agenda (Archer 2007). This has brought new responsibilities for curriculum delivery within the dual sector (Bathmaker 2006; Bathmaker et al 2008; Bathmaker and Thomas 2009) as tutors cope with the demands of teaching both FE and HE curriculums (Winter and Dismore 2011; Turner, McKenzie, Dermot and Stone 2009). Whilst economic changes and policy levers continue to shape the sector (Spours et al 2007; Steer et al 2007), increasingly, Ball's (2003) concerns about the 'terrors of performativity' surface throughout the literature and inform structure and agency. The adverse affects of managerialism and audit cultures are also illuminating notions of professionalism.

The impact of change within the sector is characterized by research suggesting the positioning of the FE tutor within an audit culture dominated by managerialist directives and subjected to internal and external regulatory control with Ofsted shaping practice. Ofsted inspections now focus on achievement and retention data and the provision of support and guidance becomes pivotal to the data collection. Such data is intrinsic to the grade awarded to a college.

On the one hand they require the ability to perform within the dual sector (Bathmaker and Thomas, 2009) and sustain equivalent curriculum delivery to the regional HEI whilst also sustaining the identity of the 'academic' as suggested by Child (2009). Their contribution to the local HEI may be minor but as the HE academic, 'There is no doubt that academic staff within higher education institutions (HEIs) in the UK are being judged against their ability to generate research income', (Lawy and Armstrong 2009, p.10).

More than a decade ago, Sachs (2001, p.184) suggested that, 'The mandatory application of teacher professional standards on top of teachers' already heavy workload will make the task of teaching even more demanding' and the empirical research reflects this sentiment as tutors in FE cope with the demands of IfL (Villeneuve-Smith 2009) and regulatory controls identified in the new inspection framework (Ofsted 2008, 2010).

Such issues discussed in this section add to the nature of the problems facing those who research FE since the scope of the research could be very broad based and expansive given the different fields of research. In identifying this problem I retain a focus on the local and develop a small scale study in one institution.

I have discussed the work of Hochschild (2003) in shaping my thinking on emotional labour and within the research literature there is a growing recognition of the complexities of researching emotional labour within education. The work of Bolton (2010) illuminates and extends our understanding of how emotions are integral to the FE workforce and the conceptualising of this aspect of the work of the personal tutor presents opportunities to engage with ideas related to emotional labour.

Finally the research literature has provided a set of theoretical ideas and approaches to researching aspects of the post compulsory sector. However what is lacking is research into the post compulsory sector to illuminate an understanding of what it means in practice, to be an FE tutor. The literature has also raised important questions about the structural effects of educational access and the importance of the tutor in the learning journey of students. In engaging with ideas evidenced in the discussions in this chapter I make the connections to my study in contextualizing the perceptions of the FE tutor, and research both the structural and agentic dimensions of practice which underpin the relationship tutors develop with their learners.

In the next chapter I discuss how substantive findings and insights emerging from the literature research considered in this chapter, inform the approach, methods and research questions in the design of this research study.

Chapter 4

Methodology and Methods

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter I examine the methodology that I used in the research. Pivotal to this research is the social construction of the personal tutor as performer and I draw upon the work of Goffman (1990) in illuminating the performative role in shaping the practice of personal tutors and show how I was able to adapt that for my purposes. In the second part of the chapter I look at the methods that I used and some of the issues that arose out of that related to the sample and the research process and other issues including ethical issues.

4.2. Epistemological approach

Shaping this research, are several influences which reflect my roots in the social sciences and an epistemological approach to ‘what it means to know, what is knowable and the methods of knowing’ (Hartas 2010, p.16). It was also important for me, to reflect Atkinson and Hammersley’s commentary on the value of research ‘the only value which is intrinsic to the value of research is truth: the aim should be to produce true accounts of social phenomena’, (Atkinson and Hammersley 2007, p.209). Therefore I was keen to present an accurate account in reporting the views of my colleagues. The proposition of ‘truth’ within empirical research is a critical paradigm in that ‘truth’ is a reflection of the knowledge one holds and a ‘criteria for what counts as knowledge (rather than mere belief) normally include reference to truth and to the justification for it’ (Jupp 2006, p.92). Therefore the construction of ‘truth’ within this study will be reflective of the knowledge evidenced in practice. This will also reflect my idiographic approach because I am concerned to ‘focus on specific elements, individuals and events’ (Jupp 2006, p.142).

This is also reflected in a fundamental positioning and privileging of agency. By agency, I mean that individuals are not passive actors but interact with others exercising ‘influence over what they do’ (Bandura 1977, p.3). In doing this they are ‘contributors to, rather than the sole determiners of, what happens to them’ (ibid). This is an important aspect of this study and highlights a focus on personal efficacy rooted in social cognitive theory.

Human adaption and change are rooted in social systems. Therefore personal agency operates within a broad network of sociocultural influences. In agentic transactions, people are both producers and products of social systems.
(Bandura 1977 p.6)

I discuss in the following section how the development and meaning of agency is applied to this research framework and use Goffman's (1990) work to outline and detail how performance and being an actor can be usefully applied to the role of the tutor.

4.2.1. The metaphor of performance

Goffman (1990) identifies performance as a measured outcome of behaviours within a social setting; he refers to this as the dramaturgical model and constructs a theory of human social interaction premised on the performance of individuals as if they were actors on a stage.

Ordinary social intercourse is itself put together, as a scene is put together, by the exchange of dramatically inflated actions counteractions and terminating replies. Scripts even in the hands of unpractised players can come to life because life itself is a dramatically enacted thing. All the world is not, of course, a stage, but the crucial ways in which it isn't are not easy to specify.
(Goffman 1990, p.78)

Critical to this theatre metaphor is the provision of an 'audience' (p.28)

When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be. In line with this, there is the popular view that the individual offers his performance and puts on the show 'for the benefit of other people'.
(Goffman 1990, p.28)

The 'other people' become the audience and in affecting this arrangement for observer to observe a performance the role of audience could be assigned to students in the theatrical setting of an educational establishment.

Continuing the metaphor of the theatre Goffman identifies the performance of social interactions, performed on the front stage, with the 'back stage' or 'back region' (p.114) having equal importance for the individual in engaging with others 'where the suppressed facts make an appearance' (p.114).

A back region or backstage may be defined as a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course. There are of course many characteristic functions of such places. It is here that the capacity of the performance to express something beyond itself maybe painstakingly fabricated; it is here that illusions and impressions are openly constructed.

(Goffman 1990, p.114)

Thus the ‘backstage’ becomes an arena for ‘contradiction’, where ‘the capacity of the performance’ is altered substantially and in doing this the individuals ‘painstakingly’ produce ‘illusions and impressions’. Such a place, the backstage, now becomes the social and functional space for the role of actor, which the tutor becomes, and in establishing and applying this dramaturgical theoretical framework, I suggest that the back stage for those in education, in Pendene College, becomes the staffroom, but this shared space with all its appearances of the back region is not without its difficulties for the tutor ‘actor’.

4.2.2. The green room; the staffroom

It is this backstage region which Goffman supposed that the suppression of some social activities would take place but in examining this in relation to education and education establishments – the staffroom as previously indicated, becomes an extension for the stage – I now label this the green room, a room off the stage where some deconstructing of the performance occurs. I extend the theatre metaphor in the next section and discuss how I have adapted and elaborated upon Goffman’s theory to propose a working model for educational practice. This is tentatively offered as a consideration for unravelling the complexities of the construction of social roles attributed to the personal tutor in the Further Education sector. It also has applications for the development of the interjection of the spaces between, the activities and events individuals, as social actors, perform.

In adopting the imagery of the green room, problems arise. Whilst the green room may not be viewed a safe place for displays of emotions, within the confines of the staffroom as suggested in the previous section, social interaction transforms the performance and produces a further definition to the performance but this time it is a performance only in view of other colleagues. This is a critical consideration in theorising social roles because colleagues are now substituted for the students - this subtle transformation of colleague as ‘audience’ and its implication for practice, is discussed in the following section.

In Goffman's *Presentation of Self* discussed in the previous section, the dramaturgical model emphasises performativity in terms of regulation and measurement, and the personal performance for tutors, which Goffman refers to as - the front stage. This is the public aspect of their performance where duties are enacted and work with students is 'performed' (Goffman, 1971, Ball 2003, Bryman 2004) and measured (Ofsted 2005, 2008, James and Wahlberg 2007). But this stage now has another scene unfolding which plays out the role of the tutor in supporting students to ensure they remain on the course and thus accrue the 'economic' advantage for the institution.

On the front stage evidenced are measurements of the tutors performance and judgements calculated by others i.e. Ofsted inspectors, managers, students. Backstage are the 'defences' resulting from the front stage performance; but the green room provides sanctuary. This is demonstrated in the construction below of Table 4 where I present the performance role of tutors in FE.

Table 4. Performativity and the social constructions of teaching

The Stage	
Front stage	Generativity vs. stagnation
The performance measured by:-	
Ofsted	
Quality	
Internal observers	
Peer review	
Appraisals	
Student reviews	
Backstage	Symptomatic schizophrenia
Defences demonstrated by:	
Alienation	
Deceitfulness	
Symptomatic Schizophrenia	
Ventriloquism	
Green room	Self Actualisation
Habitus	
Knowledge	
Autonomy	
Mediation	
Resistance	
Reality	

My adaption of the dramaturgical model (Goffman) and the Life Stages theory (Erikson 1981) to represent the performance role of the tutor in the post compulsory sector

The dramaturgical model originally defined individuals as actors with roles to perform. In doing this they use props which help them perform their roles. In adapting this theory I have extended and applied the model to an educational setting and by using Erikson's theory and merging the two, I have presented a representation of practice within the sector. I discuss this application of the fused models in the next section.

The construction of the role of the personal tutor mirrors all the functional roles of those exhibited in Table 2 and includes the 'cultivation of good character' (Carr 2007). Three areas of performance are proposed in my adaption of Goffman's model and added as previously discussed, is the green room. The front stage and backstage provide the habitus for practice but the green room provides a refuge.

Within the green room resistance and defence mechanisms can be deployed. The green room is closed to many but inclusion will be about shared values; membership is denied to those deemed 'ventriloquists' (Morley 2003) and the mediation of policies both internal and external will be discussed and implemented. Social interaction may be forged through shared experience, as identified in the concept of 'team-mates' (Goffman 1990) and a community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991) may withstand the falsification of the practice determined by institutional policies, this could lead to greater resolve. Goffman uses the term team-mates to 'refer to any set of individuals who cooperate in staging a single routine', (p.85) and notes that:

Each team-mate is forced to rely on the good conduct and behaviour of his fellows, and they in turn, are forced to rely on him. There is then, perforce, a bond of reciprocal dependence linking team-mate to one another.

(Goffman 1990, p.88)

This 'reciprocal dependence' shapes the practice of tutors and this dependency also forges relationship which affects practice. This aspect of 'team-mates' and dependency is illuminated and developed in this chapter when the concept of 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991), is explored as a result of defining the social relational dynamics of the personal tutor and student. Thus the green room may exist in institutions as shared space in a staffroom. In some institutions the green room may be the physical location of the staffroom. It could also be the area where informal discussion takes place – the refectory and corridors.

The personal tutor takes to the 'stage' and actors begin the play each working day, but now with the added dimension of the 'holiday rep' (Constanti and Gibbs 2005), against the backdrop of, and within the disneyesque performance arena (Bryman 2007). However this performance Goffman notes 'must not be subject to ups and downs' (p.63) and –

The expressive coherence that is required in performances points out a crucial discrepancy between our all-too-human selves and our socialized selves. As human beings we are presumably creatures of variable impulse with moods and energies that change from one moment to the next. As characters put on for audience however we must not be subject to ups and downs..... A certain bureaucratization of the spirit is expected so that we can be relied upon to give a perfectly homogenous performance at every appointed time.

(Goffman 1990, p.63)

The 'bureaucratization of the spirit' resonates with the work of Morley and the affects of the endemic audit culture on the work of those in education. The 'perfectly homogenous performance' is enshrined in the preparatory work of all those who await the Ofsted Inspector.

Added to this I consider the broad discipline of 'education' which consistently borrows theories from other academies to explain 'human behaviour' and which provide distinctive views of human behaviour within a social world. I adopt Thomas's four broad uses of 'theory' in education, notably, 'theory as the observation of practice, theory as generalising/explanatory model, and theory as developing bodies of explanations and scientific theory' (Thomas 2007, p.27) and agree that in proffering these explanations, 'theory becomes a 'sieve, manufactured from intelligently reflected-on experience filtering information to allow through only that which has passed muster according to the filtration proffered by the theory' (p.26). This 'filtration' process is both the challenge and the engagement in the enterprise of research.

In pursuing research in my own institution I faced a major dilemma, since I planned to conduct research in what Malone refers to as 'my backyard' (Malone 2003). This is pursued later in this chapter since researching my institution posed ethical questions related to 'informed consent'. By unravelling the explanations of what is shaping the role of the personal tutor, I also recognized my own positioning within the research processes and agree with Latour (2005) that, 'whatever a scholar does when she writes an account, she is already part of this activity' (Latour 2005, p.258).

4.3. My adaptation: the research approach

I considered the ontological questions of the research processes, recognizing what Strauss and Corbin (1998) say, namely ‘a researcher ultimately has to work with those modes he or she most feels most comfortable’ (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p.33). In determining those ‘modes’, I pondered on my own ‘preference, familiarity and ease with a research mode’ (p.33) and then decided upon what Thomas (2009) refers to as ‘the humility of interpretive research’ noting that ‘it makes no grand claims about generalisability or causation’ (Thomas 2009, p.77) but importantly for me as the researcher, ‘ what it does instead is to take from the local experience and illuminate and influence the local experience’ (Thomas 2009, p.77).

In adopting the interpretivist stance I recognized that, ‘the type of data we finish up with should be determined primarily by what we are trying to find out considered against the background of the context, circumstances and practical aspects of the particular research project’ (Punch 2009, p 89). I further developed the interpretivist approach by examining and considering the role of symbolic interactionism as a foundation for a research framework for this study so that ‘as a finished product, a piece of empirical research in education needs to demonstrate both conceptual clarity and a good fit between its different component parts, especially between its questions and its methods’ (Punch 2009, p.57). By adopting the symbolic interactionist approach I could explore the social construction of reality and meanings attached to interactions and illuminate the work of the personal tutor in the context of the social and relational. I could also identify aspects of what Becker (1963) refers to as stereotyping and labelling, associated with the personal tutor’s perceptions of their role in the pastoral system in providing support for their students.

In relying upon the symbolic interactionist approach I was privileging social action and in identifying Goffman’s dramaturgical metaphor, I could examine the construction of ‘self’ and ‘identity’. Thus within the parameters of this research study I focused on the capacity of the personal tutors to integrate notions of ‘self’ and their conscious, knowing actions with that of the demands of the institution. This would provide the necessary ‘good fit’ since I was concerned to identify key aspects of the local social relations context of the role of the personal tutors and their ability to present themselves in relation to others and within the institution

In pursuing the 'good fit' I was 'concentrating on a basic social process' described by Charmaz (2006, p.23) which reflected grounded theory and grounded theory methods. Strauss and Corbin (1998) refer to 'grounded theory' as 'theory derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process' (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p.12). I was open to consideration of theorizing the role of the personal tutor which could be developed from the accumulated data. What I needed was the certainty of combined methods which would afford me the greatest scope for developing this research study and theorizing to support explanations for the current role of personal tutors within Further Education. Grounded theory provided this opportunity.

In adopting this approach I was also relying upon what Strauss and Corbin refer to as an 'essential ingredient' (p.12) of grounded theory – 'creativity of researchers' (p.12). They state that 'creativity manifest itself in the ability of researchers to aptly name categories, ask stimulating questions, make comparisons and extract an innovative, integrated, realistic scheme from masses of unorganized raw data' (p.13). By being 'creative' I could pursue a set of methods for building theory. This would allow 'exciting new horizons' to be included in the data collection (Charmaz 2006, p.22) and invariably lead to 'points of departure for developing rather than limiting our ideas' (Charmaz 2006, p.17). I would be researching my colleagues and therefore would need research methods which would be transparent in terms of public display and although, 'within the same piece of research, the degree of openness may vary considerably across the different people in the field' (Atkinson & Hammersley 2007 p.211), it was crucial to the integrity of the research and my own professional integrity to pursue methods which retained a social profile within the institution and remained visible at all times.

An alternative therefore was to adopt grounded theory and 'adopt and adapt them to conduct diverse studies' (Charmaz 2006, p.3). In situating the role of the personal tutor within the social setting I would use the 'lens' of the symbolic interactionist to observe what Goffman refers to as 'the components of behaviour that plays a role in the physical traffic among people' (Goffman 1963, p.9) since these social games illuminate characteristics of 'performance'. 'Interactionists focus on the world of subjective meanings and the symbols by which they are produced and represented', (Cohen and Mannion 2000, p.25) by adopting an interactionist line of inquiry, I was able to pursue several methods in the research design to illuminate the personal tutor role.

One of the emerging aims of this research was the discovery of data referring to retention and achievement and similar to Bonvin et al’s research pursuits in examining explanations for, ‘the effects of retention to its social and emotional consequences’ (Bonvin et al 2008, p.2), I further contemplated evidence for the shifting paradigm of guidance and support within FE. Although initially this was not the sole focus of this research, it became apparent, as I merged the qualitative methods with the grounded theory approach (Charmaz 2006) that policy related to retention and achievement, was identified and its subsequent impact on the tutorial system within Pendene College, recorded.

Capturing this aspect of the data led me to use documentary analysis as I examined Ofsted reports and interpretations of the role of the personal tutor in guidance and support in pursuit of retention and achievement goals both within the institutions and specified by Ofsted documentation. This proved a lengthy and time consuming process but allowed the process of triangulation to take place within the data collection.

4.3.1. Sample

The participants in this research study are drawn from three distinct groups – those who have managerial responsibility for personal tutoring in Pendene College; those who are personal tutors and those who are new entrants to the profession.

The participants in this study are highlighted in the following table:

Table 1 Study participants

Participants	No
Staff	
Senior tutors	9
Personal tutors	20
Trainee teachers	
PGCE – fulltime	10
PGCE – p/time	10
Total	49

4.3.2. Sampling

The strategy for identifying the most appropriate sample was to adopt purposive sampling. This proved a useful tool since I was concerned with the characteristics of a particular group within the educational establishment (Cohen et al 2000). I was also conscious that education research at local level can offer other compensations to the research critics when the sample group is selected for its 'fit for purpose'. In addition I could select using gender and therefore maintain a gender balance in the research. Purposive sampling, allowed the latitude needed in this research study to select from a particular group of possible participants and the criteria applied to this sample procedure is described in Table 2. It was important for the purposes of this study to identify groups of staff who fulfilled the criteria.

Table 5: Criteria for selection of participants using purposive sampling

Criteria	Position and Status	N
a) Responsibility for pastoral policy and team management within departments	Senior Tutors	9
b) staff who are personal tutors	Personal Tutors	20
c) staff who attend the PGCE course part-time	Employed Staff	10
d) staff who are new entrants to the profession and attend the fulltime PGCE course *	PGCE trainee's	10
Total		49

**PGCE fulltime students will be on placement throughout the college departments*

4.3.3. Descriptions of sample participants

The Senior Tutor team was responsible for leading the personal tutor teams in the various centres across the College. The personal tutors had direct contact with the students. Trainee teachers were not tasked in their placements to be involved in the personal tutor process but the part time (in-service) teachers could also be personal tutors. I therefore decided to only interview those colleagues who were employed full-time in Pendene College and the tutors who were part time, to invite them to join a focus group. By researching all the groups, a stratified view of the institution at management level and front line, is presented in the study.

The 20 personal tutors were randomly selected from across the departments in Pendene College. They represent the following vocational and academic subjects and are briefly described in table 6. They are given pseudonyms.

Table 6. Personal tutors' subject and department

<i>Name</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Department</i>
Andy*	Marine Science	H.E - Marine Studies
James	History & Politics	Health & Social care
Sandy	Sociology & Psychology	6th Form
Trudy*	English	6 th Form
Mel	Bakery Studies	Hospitality & Catering
Celia*	Computer studies	Business Studies
Maggie	Equine studies	Community Studies
Julie	Early years	Health & Social care
Dave*	Mechanic	Automotive
Roger	Cabinet maker	Design Studies
Fran	Finance	Business studies
Geoff	Mechanic	Automotive
Suzie	Hairdresser	Hair and Beauty
Ali	Football coach	Sports
Julia	Psychology	Health & Social care
Sally	Performing Arts	Arts & Media
Tim	Painter and decorator	Trowel trades
David*	Boat builder	Engineering
Cathy*	Teaching assistants	Education
Alan	Plasterer	Trowel trades

**tutoring experience less than five years.*

I contacted the participants to be interviewed, by e-mail to arrange an initial meeting to discuss my research and to discover if they would be interested in taking part. This initial contact allowed those who did not wish to participate in the research to respond electronically and avoid any possible embarrassing negative responses. By following the email with a personal contact I then was able to book a suitable convenient time for the interview and provide information about the research including the 'research leaflet' (appendix 1) which is discussed in a later section.

4.3.4 Trainee teachers as participants

The college recruits and trains on its PGCE course substantial numbers of in-service and pre-service trainee teachers. This groups of trainees formed the basis of the focus groups (Cohen, Mannion & Morrison, 2001) because, like the trainee's in Avis and

Bathmaker's research (2006), I was interested in , 'respondents' transitions to working within FE', (Avis and Bathmaker 2006, p.172) and 'the process of adaption that takes place during teaching placement in FE colleges, as trainee lecturers negotiate between their own anticipated professional identity and the identities they begin to assume as they engage in their work with such students' (Bathmaker and Avis 2007, p.511). The idea was to represent the future orientation of the profession and show how different constructions of self identity and practice were emerging. Although interviews were conducted with them and they were included in the focus groups none of the data were used in the thesis. This was partly because of the request from one group to withdraw their data and as a result I decided to use the data to sensitize me to the issues that were important in the data. The use of the trainees would have added an extra and unnecessary level of complexity that was not needed. The trainees observed diverse practice cross the different departments and made judgements about what they judged as good practice. This provided a useful platform in pursuing the interviews and in the data collected from the personal tutors and the senior manages.

4.3.5. A focus on the tutors

Working in an FE College is diverse and determined by set practices and FE culture resonates with the focus on the learner and learning, as evidenced, for example, in the Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education project (TLC), (Hodkinson et al 2007). Although Hodkinson et al noted that they were 'surprised by just how different the learning cultures across our sites were' (Hodkinson et al 2007, p.400), inevitably the focus on the learner obscured at times the tutor role, although the TLC did incorporate research findings on 'the significance of the tutor in influencing site learning cultures' (Hodkinson et al 2007, p. 399).

Learners' perceptions of personal tutors are well documented and are reflected by Dawn et al (2008), 'as a result of the taken for granted assumptions of personal tutoring there is a dearth of research on students expectations of personal tutoring' (Dawn et al 2008, p. 449). EMA also had an effect according to Wigley who notes, 'an unintended effect of the payment of EMA's may be to encourage some students to drift into FE sixth-form education, whereas previously they may have preferred to secure a full-time job' (Wigley 2009 p.185) and these students Wigley noted have been extensively researched.

Therefore, contrary to current research practice in researching the voice of the learner, I intentionally marginalized the ‘learner’ by concentrating the research on individual tutors. I wanted to capture the personal constructs of practice within Pendene College and the structures and institutional processes evidenced in the work of the personal tutors. This focus, solely on the personal tutors, would also add to the small body of research knowledge on personal tutoring I identified in the literature review. From the conception of this research my objective was to explore the role of the personal tutor. How did personal tutors present themselves on the public stage within Pendene College and perform their roles as personal tutors?

In researching this role I was concerned with the ‘presentation of self’ embodied in the identity of the personal tutor role and the ‘myriad of ways in which individuals are constituted as identities or subjects who interact in a socially structured world of people, relationships and institutions’, (Elliott 2001, p.8). Goffman’s ‘model of social order’ (Goffman 1963, p.8) which explored ‘the behaviour of an individual while in a situation’ and was ‘guided by social values or norms concerning involvement’ (Goffman 1963, p.193) was appropriate and a good fit for the proposed study. Thus through lenses of symbolic interactionism, I developed and adapted Goffman’s dramaturgical model of agency to discover their ‘possible motive for conforming’ (Goffman 1963, p.12). This reflected the adoption of grounded theory and methods to discover, ‘what our research participants take for granted or do not state as well as what they say and do’ (Charmaz 2006, p.19).

4.3.6. Telling the research story

Telling the story of the research is a challenge. I agree with Dallos and Vetere (2009) that, ‘narratives are not a passive recording of the past but constitute an active process of continual construction, reconstruction and review’ and therefore I was vigilant about the process of narration. As part of this process, I took care with the social interactions which underpin research processes and to represent the participants experience in this research, because although ‘I remain in the background as an interpreter of scenes and situations’ (Charmaz 2006, p.174) the authorship of this research is evidenced in the ‘word choice, tone and rhythm’ (Charmaz 2006, p.175) of my authorship.

In defining this process I have chosen qualitative methods ‘to look at something holistically and comprehensively, to study it in its complexity and to understand it in its

context' (Punch 2009, p.161). By pursuing this course of action I could construct the necessary thick description, 'understanding a piece of behaviour – a nod, a word, a pause, etc – in context and using one's 'human knowing' to interpret it when one describes it' (Thomas 2009, p.76). In this way I could explore the analysis of the data and importantly recognise my 'positionality' (p.111) as discussed in chapter one in the interpretation of the data collected from the interviews.

4.3.7. Research questions

My research questions reflected Strauss and Corbin's classification – of 'sensitizing, theoretical, practical and structural, and guiding questions' (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p.77). This provided the scope to develop questions across a range of criteria and avoid questions which according to Strauss and Corbin, 'can lead the researcher astray' (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p.77). I am interested in the mediation of layers of practice and policy, which are shaping the role of the personal tutor but Edward and Coffield (2007) note that the 'multilayered' complexity can be contradictory. 'Charting the impact of government policy on practice in any sector is therefore not a simple matter of recording linear, evolutionary, coherent or cumulative progress' and 'The processes of translating national policy into local practice appear complex, multilayered, uneven, dynamic, ambiguous, conflictual and often contradictory' (Edward and Coffield, 2007, p 63). To demonstrate how personal tutors were coping with all of these issues I considered at least three major research questions which would identify the relational and social constructs of the personal tutor role. Each one would identify aspects of practice at national and local level in the provision of guidance and support for students. The three key research questions examined were:

1. What is the role of the personal tutor in FE?
2. What are the major influences, internally and externally, shaping this role?
3. What are the personal tutors' perceptions of the role of the personal tutor and the perceived needs of their students?

The research questions also reflected my interest in the emergence of the emotional learning agenda reflected in Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) work and their primary concerns with the emotional subtext of educational practice and the politicisation of the emotional learning agenda across all sectors. Thus the three questions provided opportunities to explore the personal tutor's perceptions and illuminate explanations of agency and examine discourses on therapeutic education.

4.4. Methods

The study consisted of semi structured interviews with the Senior Tutor team and twenty personal tutors conducted over a period from 2005 -2006. I conducted documentary analysis using Ofsted reports in 2006 -2007. As part of the research process I adopted a reflective approach to ongoing research field work and kept a research diary.

The interviews were conducted at the beginning of the academic course starting in September. The interviews were open ended and usually lasted an hour. The tapes were stored for the duration of the study and coded appropriately to avoid any breach of confidentiality.

However I was mindful of the disadvantage of the use of interviews described by Charmaz: 'During interviews, professionals may recite public relations rhetoric rather than reveal personal views, much less a full account of their own experiences' (Charmaz 2006, p.27) and thus by including less structure in the interviews I hoped to avoid this problem. But a significant problem with interviewing colleagues was sharing our practice in a non hierarchical setting which would encourage the interviewee to talk openly and frankly without making judgements about me as the 'researcher'. Charmaz states interviewees 'may raise silent or overt questions about whether the interviewer represents officials or advocates and test his or her loyalties' Charmaz 2006, p.27).

4.4.1. Recording the interviews

I considered how to record the interviews using the new technologies which would also transcribe voice to text. According to Rapley (2001), Park et al (2005) and Roulston (2006), recording the process of conducting interviews is a major problem. I have used 'Voice recognition software' (VRS) and knew it could be used for recording and then immediate transcription. I felt this would considerably shorten the research process of data collection. This initially seemed worthwhile pursuing but I dismissed this approach in light of piloting one interview using VRS (with a colleague not involved in the sample) and the experience of Park et al (2005), who employed this method in their research on graduate researcher trainers and discovered the participants needed to be trained to use the VRS system which they found time consuming and not so effective.

I therefore used tape recorders throughout the interview stages and used multiple recorders for the focus groups. These were then transcribed by an external copy typist. To ensure anonymity names were ascribed at the point of interview and I kept a record of allocated names and the original participant. This aided the tracking of the transcriptions as they were completed and the storage of the data collected.

In order to ensure reliability of the data and the subsequent accurate transcription (Nichol and Watson, 2000) two tape recorders were used in the interview sessions with participants and then following transcription, checks made on the text for errors. I then used NVivo software to analyse data and develop themes emerging in the research from the NVivo analysis described by Bazeley as ‘the analytic journey’ (Bazeley 2007, p.178). I had used Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) in previous research so using NVivo appealed to my keenness to use technology in the research process and enabled me to develop ‘clusters’ (p.191). By doing this I could also improve validity and reliability in developing thematic analysis. The clusters provided signposts within the data of emerging language and recurrences of themes. It also provided me with the ability to map and record connections in the data, electronically. This produced ‘narrative structures’ (p.194) related to support and guidance and highlighted the recurrence of language linked to retention and achievement and therapeutic words and phrases.

4.4.2. Research diary and notes

Throughout the duration of the study I maintained a research diary. This became an invaluable aide memoir as I conducted the research interviews and recorded my thoughts about aspects of the research process. I did this by using a laptop and ‘Dragon’ voice operated software. This allowed me the luxury of recording my thinking with ease and produce voice-to-text transcripts.

Following each interview I developed a commentary which became both a reflective diary entry and also provided opportunities to keep a reflective log of the interviews and record reflections on the content and discussion which occurred in each interview.

By recording my reflections I became aware of the issues colleagues were concerned with in their everyday practice. As the interviews progressed I became sensitised to the roles they were performing and their concerns with the challenges of different student

groups. This proved a great advantage in providing insights into the data and later developing themes. However the disadvantage was that I became conscious of the immense pressure some colleagues were under and the levels of stress emanating from their role and work with students. Their ability to articulate this became increasingly apparent as the interviews developed and I had to be mindful of my own emotional responses throughout the duration of the interview.

I created field notes as part of the research process ensuring the immediacy of the moment in brief annotated notes on the interview schedules. These were also recorded on the laptop using Dragon software. I took care to use the notes as part of the research process during the semi structured interviews. Time lapses occur as part of the research process and by keeping both a reflective diary and field notes I was able to further inform my thinking as the themes emerged from the different interviews. Extracts from the research diary and field notes are included in the data analysis presented in chapters five and six.

4.4.3. The interview schedule

The questions from the interview schedule reflected theoretical constructs explored in this study.

Table 7: Interview Schedule list of question for the senior tutors

1. Who decides the content and the delivery of the personal tutor training course?
2. What training do personal tutors receive?
3. Who delivers the training?
4. How will personal tutors be assessed?
5. What is your perception of the demands of the external agencies and how are these demands incorporated into the training?
6. What constitutes a ‘good personal tutor?’
7. Who will make these judgments of what constitutes a good personal tutor?
8. Do you think it important for the personal tutor to also be the subject specialist for the student?
9. Has the college to your knowledge ever considered employing lecturers solely as personal tutors?

Each question underpinned a central focus for the research in that it reflects a link to policy or training and the directional aspect of each question also established perceptions of the role of the tutor in the college. Q6 for example would reveal the extent that the role of tutor combined with the role of mentor/counsellor. Since the interviews would be semi-structured this would allow for further prompts and

elaboration to occur. According to the students in Bullock and Fertig's study (2003, p.336) a 'good tutor' characteristically had – 'empathy with the students and understanding of their needs and circumstances' and importantly 'there was evidence of sound target setting by personal tutors that was closely related to course requirements and specific learning objectives'. The interview schedule questions for the personal tutors followed a similar format and use some of the questions from the interview schedule (Table 3. Q1. Q2. Q4. Q5. Q6. Q7).

I constructed a typology for the questions which used three headings as categories; practice, skills, policy (appendix 2). In establishing these three categories the links to policy and practice and their interpretation by those who both train and deliver and those who are the recipients of the policy and training, could be mapped. This would further structure the relational dynamic of the personal tutor role and identify aspect of practice shaping that role.

4.4.4 Including a quality question and dimension to the interviews

From my experience as a personal tutor I had been observed conducting a tutorial. During the timescale of this study, Ofsted inspections included the observation of personal tutorials. The internal Quality Assurance Unit within Pendene College replicated this procedure by conducting inspections of personal tutorials. The usual practice was for the internal inspectors that are observing tutorials, to withdraw from the tutorials if the personal tutor requested they leave. Usually this occurred when students wished to discuss personal matters without observers present. This may appear contradictory in that the personal tutor session could be viewed as personal to the student but latterly this process had become the focus of scrutiny since the effective use of guidance and support was now linked to the retention and achievement of students. The questions therefore would need to reflect this and refer to the personal tutor's perception of the validity of the observation and judgments that are made and the criteria used.

Although this research study is not focusing on 'quality' as a determinant of the working practices for lecturers the current audit culture (Tummons 2007, Morley 2003) would be addressed, since for new trainee teachers, Avis & Bathmaker (2006) had noted their preoccupations with adopting the right teacher identity, which became paramount in their practice.

4.4.5. Interviewing skills

Developing the skills necessary for conducting interviews and becoming a skilled interviewer according to Gillham (2005, p. 30) is about 'developing one's own potentialities and style'. The choice of semi-structured interviews allows the collection of data which although knowingly subjective, allows for the analysis of layers of meaning. Uncovering the layers of meaning will be dependent upon the skills I have developed through my professional career as teacher/educator and my role within the wider community. This has also been informed by practice as a researcher, researching a religious community.

The most important skill for interviewing would be that of active listening. By incorporating this skill into the research methods in the interviews (Gillham 2005), I was careful to ensure that the interview was relaxed and informal thus maximising the opportunities for the individual to talk openly and discuss the aspects of the role of personal tutoring which has meaning for them in their practice.

I planned the prompts in the interview schedule to avoid any regrets after finishing the interviews that I had not probed sufficiently. In this sense I am using 'probes' which Thomas (2009, p.164) suggests 'are encouragements to interviewees to proceed with aspects of their answers; these may be verbal- for example 'go on-or non-verbal, in a tilt of the head or a nod or a raising of the eyebrows', to encourage my interviewees to relax. The prompts also helped define the structure of the interview and encouraged the participants to respond openly and helped me, the interviewer, interpret and judge the non-verbal communications (Hall, 1989).

4.4.6. Group Interviews (Focus)

Focus interviews were incorporated into the methodology of this research study to counter balance the problems associated with interviews and provide what Krzyzanowski (2008) states, 'that within focus groups, participants are expected to interact with one another....and thus to discuss the issues or topics that arise or are presented by the moderator' (Krzyzanowski 2008, p.162) . By establishing semi-structured interviews as one of the methods in this study I thought there could be some participants who would be responding to me as the interviewer and therefore could be concerned with maintaining a professional distance. I was also mindful of both social and professional identities and how concepts of performativity outlined by Ball (2003)

as, 'the performances (of individuals subjects or organisations) serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of quality or moments of promotion or inspection' (Ball 2003, p.216) could emerge within the focus groups.

I also needed to be sensitive to aspects of performance related to grading, since many of the tutors would have been observed and graded using the Ofsted criteria. In illuminating this aspect of their practice, critiques by Coffield and Edward (2009) of the models of performance and best practice with, 'significant shifts in the rhetoric of policy, finds them wanting and suggests that we need to face up to the complexities involved in deciding what is 'good practice' and how it can be transmitted' (Coffield and Edward, 2009, p.372) directed my thinking. The complexities of grading could mean that some information related to the research study, related to performativity and concepts of performance linked to grading, may prove too sensitive for the participants and remain concealed. But the focus group with the core element 'the communicative dynamic' (Krzyzanowski 2008) could promote the necessary 'far reaching and diversification of views and opinions' (Krzyzanowski 2008, p.165).

By developing focus groups I became the moderator (Krzyzanowski 2008, p.164) and 'metaphorically', remained 'hidden behind the topics which are supposed to frame the debate and which shall above all, be debated by the participants'. I suspected that performance and grading could possibly emerge in the debates within the focus groups since these concepts and practice are contested in Pendene College and in the wider FE community (Ball 2003, Spours et al 2007, Bathmaker 2007, Nasta 2007, Coffield and Edward 2009)

The organisation of the focus groups were systematically developed and planned to take place at the beginning of the academic year. The two distinctive groups (part time and full-time trainees) were timetabled across the week during the day and in the evening. In order to conduct the focus groups I had to schedule the times to suit the participants and this meant that the full-time group focus groups were conducted in time allocated for tutorials on alternate weeks. I arranged the evening focus group for a 4.30 start; this would allow participants to arrive before their scheduled session at six o'clock and provide sufficient time for the focus group discussion to take place. I drew up a planning schedule for the focus group and a 'real time' schedule for the session. This helped with the planning and helped me to focus on the process (Appendix 3).

The management of the group and the dynamics of the group proved a challenge but with preparation and planning I hoped foreseeable problems could be avoided (Appendix 4). The group skills and management of groups are part of my professional work in teacher training and delivering training sessions and I planned to employ them in a relaxed atmosphere in the focus groups (Appendix 5).

I applied the same ethical considerations for the semi-structured interviews to the focus groups. The ability to withdraw both in person and to have their data withdrawn would be repeated at the end of the focus interviews. Information regarding the follow up to the fieldwork and the availability of the final study would be provided through contact by e-mail. At all times throughout the study the taped interviews would be stored securely and the information would conform to the Data Protection Act. As part of the funding associated with this study, is the expectation from the institution that the research will be disseminated throughout the institution and also presented at the annual research conference.

In exploring in the previous sections of this chapter, the methods and issues which arose related to the choice of methods and the collection of qualitative data - I could not have foreseen or planned for the circumstances which occurred as the fieldwork progressed. In detailing the research process I am also now conscious of aspects of the research which impacted and shaped my thinking at a subconscious level and this is included in the following sections.

4.4.7. Telling the research stories and confronting the problems of legitimation, authorship and ‘truthfulness’

Telling the story of the research is complex, since qualitative research enquiry does not have one voice unlike the methods of the positivist, scientific approach and this proved problematic as I considered the ‘voice’ of those I was researching. Quinn’s commentary on the narrative (Quinn 2009) had already alerted me to problematising ‘voice’ and several researchers including Tedder and Biesta (2008) and Malone (2003) had also confronted the problem of how voices can be given equity in the research narratives as researchers provide transcripts of interviews to participants who may edit, or respond adversely to the research evidence of the transcribed interviewed. I was also confronted by the dynamics of the research relationship and reflected that ‘research can, therefore,

be explored for the mobilisations of certain concepts/ subjects/ disciplines to represent and order what is occurring', (Edwards and Fowler 2007, p.267). It is in the 'ordering' that the problems arose.

To add clarity and to implement my ethical commitment to the research process, I was keen to establish within the context of the research fieldwork the concept of 'authorship'. But there were disadvantages. The concept of authorship is a dominant principle to establish since it will determine other practices especially that of co-construction and collaboration. This is contentious for some researchers since they prefer a collaborative approach whereby the collected information from interviews and observations is shared with participants. Goldstein (2000) outlined the problems she encountered in her collaborative observations of teacher classroom practice with Martha, the participant in the study. 'I also attempted to design methods of gathering written data that would be equitable and mutual', (Goldstein, 2000, p.520) yet unwittingly, great offence was caused as she explored with 'Martha' her dialogue journal which she describes as 'a gut level and immediate response to particular experience, situation or prompt'. This proved detrimental as the shared information upset Martha and eroded their researcher-observer relationship.

For some researchers this collaborative process is positive for the participants. Avis and Bathmaker (2005) reported in their research on the development of the FE trainee lecturers, positive outcomes when they showed the trainees the transcripts of interviews. Similarly, Tedder in the Transforming Learning Cultures project, writes about the life history approach and positive outcomes of sharing transcripts with students.

I had considered the co-construction of the data and sharing with my interviewees the typed transcript but then was worried that the prospect of seeing their words in print would trigger a withdrawal response. I was also concerned of the immediacy effects of seeing their words in print and participants wishing to sanitise them in order to remove, especially, the emotional responses. I wanted to avoid the dilution of the data. I was also conscious of how this problem had been approached by other researchers who had experienced negative responses. For example the co-construction of data and authorship proved problematic for Vincent and Warren (2001). When they presented their draft paper of their research to the tutor of the group they had been observing 'she read our account as sweeping and insensitive, the theorising as alienating and abstract', (Vincent

and Warren 2001, p.231). They were genuinely surprised at ‘her anger and feelings of betrayal’. Thus although the intention of collaboration is present I am accountable for the research as process and as product and therefore the voice, the authorship, of the research thesis must rest with me the researcher and the individual pursuing the qualification (Sparkes, 1996).

4.4.8. Ethical issues: the application of consent

I was concerned with how the concept of informed consent and the application of ethical codes of practice could be translated into practice. I decided upon a participants leaflet (see appendix 1); this will relate to current ethical practice and embody guiding principles and alleviate the issues surrounding the concept of informed consent. It included the necessary information for those interviewed and contained the following information -

- The research aim
- An outline of the research questions
- Guidance on informed consent using the BERA definition and guidelines
- The provision of feedback on the fieldwork if requested
- Withdrawal and the deletion of collected information
- Contact name, e-mail address and telephone number for follow up queries if required

A separate consent form was also provided at the interview stage for participants to sign. I decided to adopt this format as a means of communicating information to participants in the study, in a much more accessible form. The leaflet provides several items of information, from the aims of the research, methods to be used and the BERA revised guidelines (2004). To provide some element of the ethos and ‘ethics of care’ I included quotes from the work of Denzin (2003) which reinforces the collaborative and accountability of the researcher. From Clough (2004) I chose a quote which is holistic in terms of representing the researcher within the social setting and which stresses that ‘we do not come innocent to a task’.

Extract from participants leaflet information -

The moral enquirer - whether a politician or social scientist - builds a collaborative, reciprocal trusting, mutually accountable relationship with those studied (Denzin, 2003)

And as researchers of educational practice, we ourselves give shape, weight and identity to these meanings: we do not come innocent to a task or situation of events: rather we willfully situate those events not merely in the institutional meanings which our professions provides but also we constitute them as expressions of ourselves (Clough, 2004)

The language and tone of the leaflet was purposefully conversational. This provided an intimacy for the reader/participant who is inclusive and does not separate or segregate the participant from researcher. I wanted to avoid the ‘otherness’ Schostak refers to, of qualitative research, which can blur the reality of the shared experience and ‘to be open to otherness, means to be open to the challenge of otherness, the alternative ways of envisaging futures through which to make sense of the past and a present’, (Schostak 2006, p.139). In making sense of the ‘past and the present’ I considered how to convey and promote the collaborative, participatory nature of the research process and such statements by Denzin and Clough, reflect this. Jargon is avoided and I sought to provide the ‘honesty and integrity’ of language espoused by Clough (2004) in an endeavour to convey my position and the care ethic extended to all participants who participated in the research study.

The leaflet also provided information about the scope of the research and the means of contact either throughout the duration of the study or following the interviews. The results and their availability were also included and the time scale informed the participants of the time lapse between the interview phase and the final completion of the study.

My aim in providing the participants leaflet was that it should act as a conduit and conversational opening for dialogue with the participants about the research, the methods, and the process of the interview and importantly addresses some of the issues concerning informed consent. It could be a prompt sheet for the participants; a means by which they could be active, ask questions and formulate their decisions about the truthfulness of the research process. My intention was that the fieldwork could then progress in closer partnership with participants entering a dialogue, sustain the researcher/relationship and be devoid of the positivist hierarchical power and reductionism approach of viewing the participant as an ‘object’ to be studied.

4.4.9. Focus group challenges:

The focus group sessions were planned and structured and I thought I had covered all possible sensitivities but within the first focus session with the full-time trainee teachers a sensitive topic occurred. The students were concerned about the sexual connotation of their role as a personal tutor and the dynamic of a sexual relationship which could develop with students close to their own age.

Val but then do you think if they (personal tutors) were aged a bit younger they would have connections with you anyway -

Lucy yeah but they're closer to you in that sense and start to make one you knowthat sexual connection. .

The students were concerned with the level of intimacy which could develop within the tutoring relationship and also articulated concerns about their individual abilities to cope with the emotional relationships which they perceived as part of the tutorial relationship. All of the students in this group discussed the role of the personal tutor and their experiences of personal tutoring. However the group returned to what continued to be a pressing set of ideas. The dialogue reflected their preoccupation with their image and the presentation of self. I had recorded in my notes that the two males in the group had nodded and agreed with points but had not directed the conversation. At this point I considered whether I should intervene and re-establish the focus on the topic but in allowing the group to debate, I had retained my 'moderator' role identified by Krzyzanowski (2008).

Following this focus group session I reflected upon whether I should have interrupted and directed the group. When I examined and considered what had occurred in the focus groups social construction of the personal tutor role, aspects of what emerged in discussions, reflected views and concerns with gendered notions of the personal tutor role. I felt that interrupting their conversations to redirect would have missed the opportunities to hear the trainees' articulate aspects of the personal tutor role I had not initially considered.

The second focus group session proved the reverse of the first group's discussions; the group articulated several aspects of the personal tutor role they had observed in their placement and I was encouraged by their discussions and opinions.

Towards the end of the academic year, two of the focus group came to see me to ask for their contribution in the discussion to be withdrawn. I had not contemplated individuals

withdrawing from the focus group even though I had planned and taken each of the groups through the consent process. Confronted with this withdrawal and because of the mesh of conversations recorded in the focus group I felt compelled to withdraw the complete record of the second focus group. It was close to the end of the academic year and to set up another focus group would have compromised the original stages in the research and skewed the data in that any groups interviewed at the end of the year would already have shaped their thinking by their experience within the institution.

In doing this the currency of the data collated from the focus groups was compromised and without a second group to draw upon, the usefulness of the data was negligible. As a result I withdrew the focus group data from the study and focused on the data collated from the semi-structured interviews of the senior tutors and the personal tutors. This would provide sufficient data on the manager's perception and social construction of personal tutoring. Plus the data from the personal tutors would illuminate their engagement in practice.

4.5. My role as an insider researcher

In researching my own institution and institutional practice I have considered and discussed previously, concerns about issues of informed consent, I return to it here to finally reflect upon the overall process and structure of this research study. This thesis has set out to explore the social relational and by adopting the methods described I have taken care to establish parameters of good practice to avoid issues arising within the research process. In the development of the fieldwork I came up against these issues first hand and shared many of the misgivings encountered by Malone (2003), Goldstein (2000), Clough, (2004), notably that:

All qualitative researchers inevitably experience errors and confusion in their research. Many decisions must be made, some of which – in retrospect – are regrettable. This is true in all research, but in qualitative methods the mistakes are usually carried out and observed by the researcher first hand.

(Goldstein 2000, p.526)

There is also the issue of responsibility. Some researchers including Heath, Crow and Wiles (2007), feel that professional guidelines have hidden the responsibilities we all should face and that for some they are useful devices to conceal their research practice. For others it is a contention that informed consent is an ethical vacuum which researchers in the social sciences have corrupted purely to avoid litigation. The

consequence of this is that researchers may now operate informed consent as a protection policy for themselves and thus avoid possible legal action from respondents in their research.

I was also wary of intruding upon the personal. Clough (2004) reminds us of the dangers and the intrusions on the lives of others as we ‘steal in the name of research’ – the conscious theft of glimpses of peoples lives in the interests of research’ and he notes ‘and because we suitably disguise and anonymize, we justify our theft’ (Clough 2004, p.376). Informed consent predetermines for the researcher a gateway into the world of the participants or subject to be researched (Ryan and Hood 2004) and this made me overtly conscious of my role as the researcher and also the colleague. There was also the issue of power and this is discussed in the next section.

4.5.1. Coping with the power relationships for the interviewer and the interviewee

I am in a privileged position within the institution as a manager who works with other managers within the college as part of my different teaching and support roles. However such positioning within the institution for me is tempered by my role as lecturer. In my role as teacher educator and lecturer I take care to demonstrate the necessary interpersonal skills to be open and accessible.

On the PGCE programme, many of the new entrants to the profession, are in their late twenties and as new entrants, need to feel confident that their tutor will be open, supportive and professional in their conduct towards helping them develop their teaching practice and forge their professional identity (Fish and Cole 2004). I am consciously vigilant of the hierarchical role which would prove detrimental to the growth of these students on the course. In demonstrating openness I try and exhibit those aspects of personality which are non authoritarian; challenging but not demanding; caring but not stifling. Taking on the role of researcher would add another dimension to this role so I was consciously aware of not impeding my teaching role with that of researcher by being vigilant about my communications with students. As a researcher I strive to build, ‘a collaborative, reciprocal, trusting, mutually accountable relationship with those studied’, (Denzin, Lincoln and Giardina, 2006, p.776). Also to embrace the ‘feminist, ethical framework’ espoused by Denzin et al (2006) which ‘seeks to contextualize shared values and norms’ and in so doing ‘privileges the

sacredness of life, human dignity, non-violence, care, solidarity, love, community, empowerment, civic transformation'(p.776).

As I reflected on my role within the institution and the skills I had employed in my teaching role I felt reasonably confident that I would put my participants at ease and engage with them in a non-hierarchical way. This relaxed egalitarian approach proved sufficiently successful to provide quite unexpected responses in some colleagues who similarly adopted a relaxed approach and began exploring their own engagement with emotional issues when the interviews had been completed. This was partially triggered by ongoing restructuring in Pendene College and two tutors especially were very anxious about being made redundant. As part of the research process I had inadvertently provided 'the listening ear' and was conscious of straying into the 'therapeutic' emotional arena which Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) have denounced.

I noted and reflected upon Radnor's statement concerning 'the researcher's orientation' which she states, 'is an outcome of what interests and motivates and it provides the impetus for the style and thrust for the investigation'(Radnor 2001, p.23) and I became concerned about how I would conduct my research without compromising or exposing colleagues to any adverse affects. I felt confident that the research process did not trespass into sensitive areas of research.

Vincent and Warren, (2001, p.42) note from their research on women as students in education, that, 'being asked about one's own views and opinions, having a sympathetic listener as one recounts part of one's life story, is often quite seductive, and we think for most of the women the experience was an enjoyable one'. The 'seductiveness' of the research approach using interviews also surfaced in the work of Tedder and Biesta's research using data from the 'learning lives project' of mature FE students who 'were invited to comment on the experience of being asked every few months to give an account of their recent experiences and thoughts and to comment on what the transcripts of the previous interview meant to them' (Tedder and Biesta 2008, p.9).

Tedder and Biesta's research revealed complex aspects of agency in the rationale for students pursuing educational courses but coincidentally reinforced the aspect of the 'therapeutic' in FE critiqued by Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) as they offered their

participants opportunities to describe their life experiences. The narrative therapy however transient was present and conscious of this research I sought to develop a relationship with my participants that did not promote notions of the ‘therapeutic’ espoused by Ecclestone and Hayes (2009), which I was researching.

I reflected upon the research process and similar to Hunt (2001) ‘added a vital third strand of personal reflection on the actual processes of my research and writing’ (Hunt 2001.p.354) as the thesis was constructed. The reflections of my own participation in the research process - as an individual asking for consent from my colleagues, I was faced with two major conundrums. The first was the problem of unpredictability. I could not know how the research would be received within the institution but I could take steps within the planning of the fieldwork to ensure that the fieldwork would be accepted as ethical. But how could I make the research one hundred percent ethical since by the very nature of asking questions I would sow seeds in the minds of participants which could indirectly affect their practice and make them question what they did. But would this necessarily pose a problem for them? The second conundrum was one of certainty – how could I be certain that the research process would not affect others adversely?

This raised the question of my own ethical stance and the validity/truthfulness of the research process I was undertaking. I was mindful of Schostak’s comment that ‘a narrative kills’ (Schostak 2006, p.141) thus as the researcher I should put in safeguards. The safeguards were part of the reflective nature of the teacher’s professional identity (IfL 2009) and the participants leaflet underpinned my research practice and outlined my intentions to respect others, their opinions and importantly their right to withdraw from the interview or at some later date to withdraw and have deleted the transcripts of the interviews. The ethic of care (Collins and Duguid 1989) can be major constituent of the research process and it was the essential guide for all the research I completed. But could I do more to provide informed consent?

4.5.2. Protection for the researcher

In consideration of posing this question I found myself considering the participants and also considering - how do I protect myself? (Heath et al 2007). What if the participant at risk is not just the sample individuals but also me? How could I know how the research would affect me and what safeguards could I put in place to mitigate this position?

Within the institution I had access to different college groups across all of the sites within the college. Many of them already knew the purpose of my research because of several ‘research in progress’ updates I had presented. Therefore visibility was essential and then ‘time’ also became an issue as outlined by Clegg (2001) who noted that:

The importance of time in these relationships cannot be underestimated and will, I hope, be taken up by other researchers. Looking closely at experiences of time gives a different angle from which to think about managerialism. In particular, it focuses attention on the ‘proper’ time of individuals and the different time of institutions’

(Clegg, 2001, p.816)

Clegg’s work ‘as an insider, with a particular commitment to undertaking critical analyses of everyday practices’ resonated with my own practice position within the organization. I would be researching my colleagues and many of them held senior positions within the institution. Like Clegg, the issues were similar, ‘There were, therefore, two closely related issues in conducting the research; my own place and visibility in the institution, and my own values’ (2001, p.808). In reflecting upon those values and the issue of visibility I would come to a greater understanding of how to approach the issues of ethical practice, most notably informed consent. Visibility as an issue is also an advantage. Colleagues know me and have viewed me in various roles within the college; PGCE lecturer, advisory teacher and support worker. I have worked across centres and accessed the wider community of staff within the college in my role of developing and delivering CPD training. In discussing practice issues on a local level in staffrooms and participating in Lave and Wenger’s, ‘communities of practice’ (Lave and Wenger, 2002), contentious issues related to belonging to the ‘community of practice’ are articulated but not necessarily resolved.

4.5.3. The development of themes in the data analysis

Within the framework of this research I used the data analysis to help me pursue particular themes which were emerging in the data. These included themes from the data related to aspects of guidance and support, including, the personal tutor role, needy students, retention and therapeutic language related to tutorial practice. Within the context of this research is also my view of human interaction and notions of social agency which arise from this perspective. I view this interaction as positive and meaningful and in adopting and applying the work of Goffman, I begin to formulate notions of agency and apply to the social and structural complexity of the mediation of policy outlined and discussed in chapter two and evidenced in Pendene College which

affect and shape the role of the personal tutor. In doing this I establish the following sections on data analysis and then develop the section on interpretation to elaborate upon the themes and their development and application within this research thesis. These are fully discussed in the following sections.

4.6. Data analysis

Following Gillham's advice for 'the basic rules of transcription' (Gillham 2005, p.123) I followed a pattern of interviewing and then delivering the tapes to the audio typist each day. In this way I could keep up to date with the transcriptions and any nuances within the interview which I had recorded could be added before memory loss occurred. To avoid any confusion within the tapes, I asked each participant to identify themselves at the opening of the recording with their first name. I then labelled each tape with the name and date. I began the first stage of interviews with the senior tutors.

In reviewing the transcripts I read each one and replayed the tape to check accuracy. I annotated the scripts using my interview notes adding further information where there were pauses in the interview. Using the work of Paul ten Have (2007, p.215) I followed transcript conventions to code each interview and this enhanced the validity and reliability of the systematic analysis of the interview data. The interview and focus group transcripts used the same codes to ensure the consistency across the data, With the focus groups I also adopted, 'the Jefferson system', which 'is a vertical one in that the utterances by different speakers are printed one below the other in the order in which they are spoken' (p.106). This included a detailed coding of pauses and 'some vocal sounds that are not easily transcribable because they are not comprehensible to the transcriptionist' (p.100). For example I recorded on my interview notes that several of the interviewees paused and gave 'knowing nods' when answering some questions, or when disclosures occurred within the interview; these were coded and added as KN (knowing nods).

All of these non verbal responses I added before developing preliminary focused coding. Although this process may appear tedious it provided the opportunity to engage with the interview data and explore those insights which can leap out of the page at the first encounter. This familiarity with the data enhanced my analysis as the research progressed.

I then completed focused coding by reading individual transcripts and coded each one according to their perceptions. For example one interviewees codes included 'students as needy who demanded too much of their time', 'students who are not coping'; 'students who need lots of support'. As the coding progressed I grouped these into the tentative category of 'needy students'. Once all of the transcripts had been individually coded I then identified the connections across the individual participants and used Charmaz's method of memo writing noting that, 'you stop and analyse your ideas about the codes in any and - every way - that occurs to you during the moment', (Charmaz 2006, p.72). By doing this I was then able to use the memo process to 'provide a space to become actively engaged in your materials, to develop your ideas and fine-tune your subsequent data gathering', (p.72). I continued to develop the process as part of the constant comparative method and then moved into the next stage of the analysis using NVivo.

Following the practical guidelines for setting up NVivo (see Bazeley 2007, p.13 -15) I navigated the programme using the 'Researchers Project' (p.14). This is the familiarity 'project' which helps you set up your data in the programme. Following this immersion in the software programme I imported the Word documents transcripts into the Nvivo 'workspace' set up the tentative categories which I devised as a result of the initial reading of transcripts – these included, needy students; retention; bureaucracy; managerialism; professional identity, tutorial content; Ofsted; workload; emotions and stress. Using the tools of the programme I was then able to build the data analysis. This mirrors the long-hand coding favoured by other researchers and is equally as long to complete. However the advantage of working with documents electronically does ease the process of finding the sheet of paper you have misplaced.

As the research progressed, I continued the memo mapping and emerging from this iterative process was the 'in vivo codes' which Charmaz (2006, p. 55) says, 'serve as symbolic markers of participant's speech and meanings' adding that you should 'pay attention to language while you are coding'. Within the three categories of in vivo codes the data revealed that participants in my study were using 'insider shorthand terms specific to a particular group that reflects their perspective', and 'general terms everyone 'knows' that flag condensed but significant meanings', (p.55). By focusing on these codes I explored the leads to develop a deeper understanding of the perceptions and practice of the interviewees and more crucially was able to 'grasp what is

significant' and pursued the 'telling terms' (p.57). For example when referring to 'practice' the first interviewee consistently referred to Ofsted and I became interested in the recurrence of the term in the data. Similarly therapeutic terms surfaced in the data and in continuing to synthesise the analysis I continued the data collection with documentary analysis (of Ofsted reports) and text analysis of interviewees use of therapeutic language- for both I used content analysis.

By doing this I developed 'theoretical sampling' whereby I gathered 'more data that focus on the categories and its properties' (Charmaz 2006, p.96). By conducting theoretical sampling 'until no new properties emerge' (p.96) the data became saturated and I was able to 'illuminate the categories' (p.103). I drew upon the work of Robson (1993) in developing the content analysis and set up a content analysis frame using the categories from the interview data. By using content analysis, I enhanced reliability and validity. I followed the same process for the therapeutic language but used the work of Knapp (2007, p.40) in compiling the categories derived from the format of 'counselling'.

In the next section I discuss the interpretation of the analysis outlined in the previous section.

4.6.1. Interpretation

I referred to the theoretical framework constructed from the analysed data to interpret the perceptions of the interviewees regarding the role of personal tutors. The analysed categories revealed evidence of personal tutor's use of therapeutic language and their engagement with the emotional and the structural tutorial process. The data revealed examples of how interviewees perceived their role as personal tutors and how they engaged with their students in tutorials especially highlighting their efforts to retain students on courses. Consequently the analysis of the data provided evidence to suggest distinctive practice shaping tutorials in Pendene College.

The findings indicated in the analysis were then considered in the light of the concepts discussed in chapter two and used to explore the meanings interviewees attached to 'how' they performed their role, how they interacted with each other in interpreting this role and how they responded to institutional demands. Within the context of the theoretical framework this led me to focus on the pivotal element of agency within the data. For example the interviewees' social participation within the institution

collectively shapes practice. By interpreting this social world within the institution I was able to map their use of language in relation to therapeutic discourses. In practice this required a comparison of therapeutic terms with those employed by counsellors. This further illuminated the development of tutorial practice to provide support to ensure that students remained on courses.

Importantly one key aspect of the interpretive process was to explore how interviewees managed this social process of tutorials driven by retention and their articulation of this element of their practice. For example the analysis yielded significant findings concerning the interviewees' engagement with ways of managing their workload and the time allocated to them for tutorials. Inherent in supporting students and completing tutorials were defensive actions to maintain efficiency and compliance. The interpretive analysis presented evidence of new knowledge about personal tutoring and I use the major themes arising from this analysis in the next two chapters.

4.6.2. Validity and reliability

In defining validity and reliability and its context within this research study I have adopted the research approach necessary in qualitative studies which reflects transparency in the methods used, adherence to the norms of data collection for qualitative researchers (Silverman 2008) and 'the data selected must be representative of the sample' (Cohen et al 2000,p.107). Competing definitions of validity and reliability arise from concerns about producing data which is authentic but both Hammersley (2008) and Silverman (2007) do not view the positioning of the researcher in the research setting as sufficient to validate and produce reliable data. Being personally involved in data collection makes the researcher immediately suspect and therefore the internal and external validity and its subsequent claims for reliability needs to be documented throughout each stage of the research design.

Several strategies were developed to improve validity and reliability within this research. Since the major data collection relied upon semi - structured interviews I begin with a focus on these and evidence how I established methodological rigour.

Silverman (2006, p.145) states that, 'we can treat interviews as giving us access to the repertoire of narratives that we use in producing accounts' and in doing this I was fully aware of the importance of planning and preparation of the interview stage so as to

avoid the dangers Gillham (2005, p.71) refers to as, ‘a lack of adequate preparation means going into the main phase of the research blind and blundering around with disastrous results’.

To avoid this I incorporated into the planning stage a pilot interview inviting two colleagues, who were personal tutors and ‘who would be the same kind as the research group but not the same people, briefing them to the purpose of the exercise and asking them to make any comments they see fit; and ensuring that apart from this all aspects of the interview are as they intended to be in the main study’ (p.73). By introducing this stage I could then pursue the methodological rigour of the interview as outlined by Gillham (p.76), which embodies the five stages of ‘preparation; initial contact; orientation; substantive phase; closure phase’. Whilst there are many positives to this approach I was also aware of the negatives - that this could prove ‘costly in time (interview plus transcription, plus analysis, plus writing up)’ (p.79) however I rationalised this approach since it provided the necessary validity and reliability.

I was also mindful of the problems associated with transcribing the interviews and as already discussed in this chapter adopted protocols to ensure confidentiality and protection of the stored tapes. I used an external copy typist for the transcriptions, which Gillham notes can be a drawback because of the expense incurred (p.123), but this was funded as part of my initial research programme. This then gave me the time to carefully check the audio tapes against the transcription and also add my own notes recorded during the interview as discussed in the previous section.

In reviewing the transcripts I was able to check the accuracy and ‘by reading them through one after the other’ (p.125) begin the process of developing what Gillham refers to as a ‘feel for the content’ (p.125). By using the verbatim transcripts and standardising the analysis of the content using the constant comparative method ‘to establish analytic distinctions and thus make comparisons at each level of analytic work’ (Charmaz 2005, p.54) I could then compare for example, the personal tutors perceptions of training with that of the senior tutors.

I did this first through the process of focused coding discussed in the previous section and then by using NVivo to develop the analysis from ‘nodes’(codes) and ‘tree nodes’ (Bazeley 2007, p.15) to the development of clusters as part of the process of analysis;

this also shaped the thematic analysis. Inherent in this systematic analysis is that it is 'driven by the data rather than the researcher's assumptions' (p.188) and this improves validity and reliability. However I was also cautious and avoided the seduction of the software which Thomas (2009) warns against and I kept in mind his comment about employing your 'brain' (p.207) and not being wholly reliant upon the software. I elaborate upon this further in chapter six.

4.6.3. Applying validity and reliability in this research

Reliability in qualitative research may be 'contentious' according to Cohen et al (2000, p.119) in that 'purists might argue against the legitimacy, relevance or need for this in qualitative studies'. Within the parameters outlined for this research, I developed several aspects of what Cohen et al refer to as 'the fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched' (ibid).

For example -

- The sample participants included tutors from academic and vocational backgrounds
- The senior tutors responsible for personal tutoring in Pendene College were included in the sample
- Personal tutors were also representative of teaching both FE and HE courses
- The interview questions were piloted and amended
- The analysis of the data using Nvivo in the initial stages presented data opportunities for thematic analysis
- Ethical considerations related to informed consent were fully documented in my personal narrative as the inside researcher

In doing this I have demonstrated that the validity and reliability of this research is rooted in the strategies I developed to highlight within this narrative my own research footprint. I have not obscured my impact upon the research process but intentionally highlighted the strategies I developed to ensure that researching my own institution generated reliable and valid data. For example I fully explored the ethical issues of informed consent, conscious of Malone's (2003) work within her institution and the power relationships inherent in the interviewer/interviewee relationship.

By providing an account of the interview process and the choice of questions I have also detailed the processes whereby I analysed the data and reflected the narrative of the

interviewees. By first piloting the semi-structured interviews, I sought to increase validity and reliability by using the interview schedule and maintaining the same question format for each interview. However aware that ‘interviewers and interviewees bring their own, often unconscious baggage with them into the interview situation’ (Cohen et al 2000, p.121), I have presented the data in full from participants in this study to build a coherent set of responses and avoid the piecemeal affect of less detailed responses.

Whilst as a researcher I have been concerned to triangulate the data to increase its validity I am also mindful of the necessity to present data within the paradigm of qualitative research and construct an ‘understanding’ (Maxwell 1992) of the social and cultural setting of the location of the research – Pendene College. By doing this I have provided an evaluative framework of analysis which details holistically the responses from the participants in this study.

The focus on the interviewee and their participation in this study has relied upon the shared understanding of being a practitioner in the FE sector and throughout the duration of the study the changes occurring within Pendene College were affecting all staff groups. Hence the importance attributed in this study, to the contextualization of policy and practice discussed in chapter two in shaping the role of the personal tutor. This is also reflected in the discussion in this chapter of the researcher’s orientation and my own position within this research process. Paramount is the ethical practice I have employed throughout this research which dignifies the participants, ensures confidentiality and when requested by the interviewees - the withdrawal of data.

4.7. Evaluation of research methods

In constructing the research design within the interpretivist paradigm I have been able to develop rich data within one setting of the perceptions of those who provide support and guidance for students in Pendene College. The perceptions of the interviewees, in their own words, provide a thick description of their engagement with personal tutoring. In addition, because I broadened the research sample to include managers as well as lecturers I was able to collect data which represented a kaleidoscope of viewpoints which added to the rich data source.

Consequently the data although localised to one setting is detailed and significant in that it captures and articulates the essence of institutional practice as perceived by different groups within an FE College at one point in the first decade of the twenty first century. By combining the data collection with documentary analysis I was also able to provide an additional layer to its interpretation and this has generated insights into structural practice at national and local level with the FE sector.

In adopting and adapting grounded theory I further added to the data as the research progressed, by exploring the use of therapeutic language by the interviewees. This has illuminated discourses of therapeutic education and helped to contextualise practice within the sector. Moreover by implementing the research design discussed in this section, I successfully addressed the research questions and broad aims of this study.

However there are limitations to the research design and these are inherent in my choice of qualitative data collection and my implementation. In using semi structured interviews I collected rich data but forfeited the insights gained from unstructured interviews which would allow participants to set the agenda for the interview. Gillham (2007, p.45) suggests that ‘what an unstructured interview does is give responsibility for determining the structure to the interviewee who has to lead the way and tell the story’. In this way the interviewee creates the narrative and further insights into the world of the personal tutor may have arisen. Reflecting upon this it may have been prudent to use unstructured interviews as exploratory in the preliminary stages of the data collection followed by the semi-structured interviews. But since unstructured interviews can run into ‘several hours’ (Gillham 2007, p.47) this might have deterred many of the personal tutors from participating. I was also conscious of Silverman’s point that an over reliance on interviews ‘can allow phenomena to escape’ (Silverman 2006, p.117). However I counterbalanced this threat to the validity and reliability of the data, by triangulating the data, using focus groups and as the research progressed, I used documentary analysis and text analysis to explore additional discoveries in the data.

A further limitation is the constraints within the timescale of the research. In order to capture data which is time bound I needed to implement the interviews and focus groups data collection within one academic year to contextualise the practice. All the participants were therefore present in Pendene College for the duration of the data collection and exposed to current institutional policy and practice. As a result I am

conscious of the time constraints which Silverman suggests can cause additional problems in that, 'the extended immersion in 'field' so typical of qualitative research, leads to a certain preciousness about the validity of the researcher's own interpretation of 'their' tribe or organisation' (Silverman 2006, p.47). In counterbalancing this aspect of the research I focused on the transparency of positioning myself within the research and acknowledged, as previously discussed in chapter one, my own position within the 'tribe' and 'organisation'. This consolidated my research position and with my ethnographic insights added to the truthfulness of the interviewees accounts presented in the data.

The points previously discussed in this section, with its checks and balances to provide reliable and valid data, culminated in research which generated rich data and indicates significant research findings about personal tutoring within FE. Although this is restricted to one setting and one interpretation nevertheless the research findings indicate a complex and detailed picture emerging of guidance and support in FE. This has inferences for practice both structural and relational and impacts upon those who work in the sector who guide and support students.

4.8. Conclusion

In considering the research process I have explored my preferences for an interpretivist approach and qualitative data collection and I have recognized the influences of grounded theory on my approach. I used the construct, 'like a camera with many lenses', to 'view a broad sweep of the landscape and then to 'change the lens several times to bring scenes closer and closer into view' (Charmaz 2006, p.25). I was interested in how personal tutors construct meaning attached to their role and validate this role within the parameter of institutional practice at national and local level. I was also concerned with the validity of the research process and my ability to 'discern the range of potential meanings contained within the words used by respondents and develop them more fully in terms of their properties and dimensions' (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p.109).

By focusing on the social relational aspect of the practice of personal tutors in their work with students my initial concerns were to explore, analyse and illuminate the 'voice' of personal tutors. But I was also conscious that, 'the social world is very different from the natural world and what we see is not necessarily the truth' (Basit

2010, p.16). As the research progressed, establishing the 'voice' of the participants became an increasingly important aspect of the research because through the processes of the literature review and my own engagement with the work of personal tutoring, I realised that their presence was missing in research. Why the work of personal tutors had fallen below the radar of researchers is in part a general question to be asked and considered in the final chapter of this thesis.

In adopting an interpretivist approach I 'filter' (Thomas 2007, p.27) and explore the dimensions of practice of the role of the personal tutor within the sector conscious that additional theories which emerged as the research progressed, provide additional complexity to the research theorizing. But the complexity is also the fascination and the following chapters, which chart the findings and illuminate social and psychological processes, are both revealing about human relations at the local and national level and illuminate the conflict sites and dynamics of institutional practice within the sector.

In the following two chapters I explore the data collected in this study and discuss the shifting paradigm within Further Education, of guidance and support. I use the framework outlined in this chapter to address the research questions and in developing the analysis and interpretation in the following two chapters I continue to draw upon the theorising and the emerging themes from the literature in chapter three to address the research questions and the broader aims of this study in researching personal tutoring.

Chapter 5

Personal tutors perceptions of their role.

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter I introduce the research data collated from the semi-structured interviews of the twenty personal tutors in Pendene College who participated in this study. I also present a tapestry of analysis as I consider retention and its links to guidance and support, the skills paradigm and the positioning of a skills agenda for the post compulsory sector in the first decade of the 21st century (Foster 2005, Leitch 2006, Ofsted 2008, and Hodkinson et al 2007). All provide different learning sites within Pendene College and thus impact upon pedagogies of practice and the role of the personal tutor.

In examining the data I first identify the social construction of the label ‘neediness’. I am interested in this term because within Pendene College it has often been used as shorthand for students who make demands on a tutor’s time. The personal tutor is making judgements about the personalities of their students and in doing this uses the label – ‘neediness’ to ascribe a personality trait to the individual student. Mayer’s (2007) definition of personality states that ‘personality can be defined as the global function of an individual’s major psychological subsystems; motivations and emotion, knowledge; the self, and social action’ (Mayer 2007, p.126). Various procedures exist which aim to measure personality but here I identify and explore the ‘label’ of neediness and its currency within Pendene College.

The models of personality described previously are not included in any pre-initial assessments for students joining the post-compulsory sector courses. Students joining Pendene College are normally given initial assessments usually to establish literacy, numeracy and learning styles. Measures for learning styles are the focus of the initial assessments at Pendene College and students complete an online set of questions to establish their ‘VARK’ score identifying their Visual, Auditory, Reading and Kinesthetic abilities. The VARK score is recorded in the tutorial files. Tutors are not collecting quantifiable evidence on scores of personality inventories so the judgements against personality traits, made by the personal tutors in the interviews about their

students 'neediness', simply illuminate the perceptions of the tutors which inform their practice.

In highlighting the learning sites connected to the work of the personal tutor I examine the data to establish the social construction of the 'neediness' label attributed to students by personal tutors, discussed in chapter two and consider how the 'lived reality' (Lave and Wenger 1991) of belonging to a 'community of practice' plays out on the 'front stage' of Goffman's (1969) 'dramaturgical model' Avis and Bathmaker (2004) in commenting on the 'structural' (p.309), add that, 'to sustain a politics of care' (p.309), 'we need to move beyond individualised forms of reflection to those that recognise the structural' (p.309) and I pursue this line of enquiry identifying the structural dimensions of practice, drawing upon Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' in the examination of the data in this chapter (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, Robbins 2000). I also use the framework of Foucault's 'disciplinary power', (Foucault 1977, Ball 1990, Kendall and Wickham 2003) to consider the positioning of the personal tutor's role within the culture of FE

Discourses of Rogerian humanistic theory are also central to this study, and overlay the complexity of the structural and the interplay of agency in determining the perceptions of the role of the personal tutor. This illuminates the relational and situational contexts of the work of personal tutors and I have chosen several individual tutors to consider in depth. It is these perceptions of interrelated issues which will be used to shape the analysis and discussion in this chapter.

As I shall discuss, the label 'needy' is often attributed to students by the personal tutor and it has common currency in Pendene College as a short hand descriptor for students with particular characteristics. This social construction of neediness by the personal tutor reinforces a stereotype and infers the notion of dependency, conducive to a culture of 'therapeutic intervention' described by Ecclestone and Hayes, (2009), Ecclestone (2004) and Furedi (2005). Coupled with the widespread application of Rogerian theory, in FE, the dynamics of the personal tutor relationship could be underpinned by the necessity to construct the necessary fit to the prevalent schemata of 'need' in the institution. The connotations of the 'neediness' label introduces paradoxical intentions and conflicts to the site of learning of the personal tutorial, and provide additional complexity to the personal tutorial and to the dimensions of guidance and support,

discussed in chapter 2 (Thomas and Hixenbaugh, 2006, Marr and Ainsley-Smith 2006, Thomas 2006).

But is there a tangible deception which will be revealed when the data is scrutinized with a very different lens? Could the application of Rogerian theory now be sustaining the retention of students in FE and thus serving the needs of the institution rather than the ‘personal’ needs of the students? In examining the data I seek to identify the relational practices within teams and cross sites within the institution. The rationale of personal tutors engaging with students to provide guidance and support may be suffused with meanings and practice attached to the ‘retention’ of students on courses and not wholly motivated by supporting ‘growth and human potential’ (Rogers 1980) or ‘emotional well being’ as outlined by Mc Laughlin (2008), Perry and Ball (2008) and Burman (2008).

Following this consideration, in assigning the label ‘neediness’ to students, personal tutors may be unintentionally, constructing, replicating and reproducing the ‘therapeutic’ in their practice. But not as Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) suggest to promote ‘therapeutic education’ using the tools of the counsellor, but, contrary to the perceptions of the dominance of the Rogerian humanistic student-centred theory, to underpin the practice in FE and Pendene College, of ensuring and reinforcing retention rates for the institution. The concept of neediness becomes a key discourse in shaping the analysis of the data in this chapter and having introduced this concept I will establish the currency of its value in terms of institutional practice within Pendene College.

I now turn to the data from the semi –structured interviews of the twenty personal tutors who participated in this study. Many of the participants shared similarities in their views and in providing several detailed in-depth narratives provided by the tutors, throughout the chapter, I have avoided unnecessary repetition and ensured a broad spectrum of the major views of the tutors constituted within this narrative framework of the presented data. The tutors are representative of different departments and vocational backgrounds and a range of qualifications delivered within Pendene College.

5.1.1. Providing therapeutic support in personal tutorials

Tutors readily identify ‘needy students’. Celia, teaches Information Technology, and talks about a student who has a complex relationship with processes of learning and academic study. Celia relates these problems to the emotional difficulties that the student constantly discusses with her and perceives the students’ inability to manage her domestic life, as increasingly problematic.

One of the access students that I (inaudible), she’s lovely, but she’s disabled, and she likes to talk, and even down to the fact when you’re giving her extra time, you know, my own time, to, to teach her the programming because she hasn’t grasped something or she had to miss a lesson because she had an appointment, it’s very difficult to stop her talking, because she just wants to tell you about everything at home and about her cat and about her husband. And, she’s got a court case going, and I think, I don’t want to know. (Um) so, that’s when it starts getting a little bit difficult. She’s needy, she needs to tell you it all, that’s the trouble. So that’s one of them.

Celia, personal tutor (2006)

Notions of inclusivity arise as Celia is conscious of the amount of time the students needs to manage the learning (Archer 2007, Williams 2008). The student’s interruptions to her course attendance and the amount of time lost from teaching, becomes an issue for Celia. The student becomes burdensome as the tutor desperately tries to ensure that the student has extra time to continue with their studies and not be disadvantaged. Paramount is the delivery of the course.

For the tutors this is a major problem. They consistently talked about the students in terms of the domestic arrangements impacting upon and interrupting learning. Several of the tutors identified their students’ needs as those that reflected and reinforced the domestic arrangements that were about privation and emotional challenge. Invariably they recorded their attempts to engage with conversations with the students that reflected their concerns about the impact of the social and emotional lives of the students on their learning and achievement. Some of the tutors could articulate the rationale for their actions. They were emotionally enmeshed with their students’ lives and rarely separated academic study from the ‘emotional’. However what they did recognize was the need to do this. Celia, by accommodating the student, illuminates in her practice the emotional dissonance and has to manage her own emotional response as a result.

The emotional labour involved in doing this is reinforced and replicated in several of the other narratives presented in this chapter and resonates with the work of Helen Colley and her study of nursery nurses (Colley 2003). The study explores ‘the learning experiences of a group of trainee nursery nurses – almost all of them teenage girls – during the first year of their course. The course is one of 16 learning sites in the project TLC). The dispositions of the tutors on the Nursery Nurse Course reflect a similar approach to their students as several of the female tutors at Pendene College. Colley notes that the tutors were perceived as ‘very caring’, in whom ‘students can confide’ and the ‘dynamics of professional participation’ (p.176) evidenced in Colley’s study is also replicated in the data from the personal tutors. Both Celia and Julia are tutors ‘in whom students can confide’ and the relationship of trust permeates their responses in the interviews.

Julia in her consideration of the needy students, similar to Celia, refers to domestic arrangements. She teaches Health and Social Care to sixteen year olds and this is reflected in her comments.

I think...I think.... If .yea...I’ve definitely had needy students. And I think personally, that comes down to parental involvement at home, rather than, (um) anything else. They’ve....they, ya know...we’re only hearing one side of the story, when we’re hear. (Um) ya know, that’s their prejudiced view. (laughs) There are students coming in....they’re obviously one sided, so you don’t hear....we hear...yea. So, you do get students that will say, ‘Oh me mum’s kicked me out, this has happened....this has happened.’ And you’ve got to take on board that, but also you’ve got to expect there’s probably a different side to the story, so, yea, they have been needy.

Julia, personal tutor (2006)

She is also very sympathetic to the problems teenagers face and considers the prospect of a teenager coping with education and overt social and emotional demands at a time in their lives which can be for many, a time of storm and stress (Erikson 1980, Warwick et al 2008, Quinn 2004, Zembylas 2007, Dallos and Vetere 2009, Reid 2009).

I’ve heard definite needy stories...and they’re not stories. They are fact and...and...and it is worrying. I get...I go home and worry about things, because I think, well, if that’s happening to them, and they’re still coming into college, we’re winning in a way, but, on, ya know...I almost need counselling myself sometimes, cos’ I feel that the...the.....issues that the students at 16, 17 and 18 are having, they shouldn’t be having. So, we have needy students in a variety of fields, I would say.

Julia personal tutor (2006)

Julia was one of the first tutors to comment and reflect upon her own emotional needs and recognizes the role of the tutor counsellor (Knapp 2007). This self-revelatory comment is a crucial issue in the lives of the personal tutors as they provide emotional support for their students but recognise their own needs for emotional support as well. Julia is sympathetic to the students and recognizes they are coping with the traumas of life and the adjustments students must make as they continue their education.

In referring to the stories, Julia is concerned with the 'other world', of the student, the world which exists outside of the institution walls and which immerses students in a very different tapestry of experience. Julia attempts to mediate against the social and economic deprivations which permeate these stories and positions the lives of her students in the other world, a world devoid of adult control and she is concerned to construct alternative explanations. By doing this she constructs the necessary defence for her own positioning in the work with the student. Julia's perceptions of the student world are separate and distinct from hers and are one in which conventional middle class supervision and protection for teenagers is absent. But she is very empathetic to the student and concerned about their continued education, recognising that college is the refuge and respite for the student against the emotional turbulence and socio-economic deprivations they encounter. Dispositions of class and gender emerge and this is reflected in Julia's comments.

Bourdieu's cultural analysis and his concept of 'habitus' I apply in shaping the analysis of the tutor's commentary (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). Bourdieu identifies human agency in the reproduction of cultural values and within Pendene College the fields of reproduction of social and cultural values is inherent in the structural organisation of the personal tutor system. Resonating in the tutors' comments are the notions of class and difference. This permeates the narrative and within the commentary is the recognition of distinctive dispositions which are accepted. Robbins (2000) states that Bourdieu (ibid):

Analysed the dominant culture that possesses the power to make itself legitimate...and the ways in which the lower classes are inclined to legitimate their own cultures by adopting the formalism of the dominant culture to which they aspire (p.116).

But here the subjective views of the tutor, which according to Bourdieu, shape their 'disposition' are also overlaid by both the structural impact of social agency and the regulation of the individual. This reflects external and internal behaviours forged by the structural processes. Power infuses both and Foucault's (1977) concept of self -

regulatory control informs key aspects of structural mechanisms and human agency in the 'habitus' of personal tutors. Julia's commentary is both structurally defined and rooted in the internalisation of power which constrains and reinforces the structural.

Foucault's disciplinary power which emphasises self regulation, surfaces in the commentary of both Julia and Celia and this also illuminates the narratives of the other tutors presented in this chapter. Overarching the analysis using the lens of Bourdieu and Foucault is the considerable dominance of Rogerian theory which is manifest in the narratives of Julia and Celia and the remainder of the tutors in this chapter. They all are engaging with the central concept of Rogerian theory - 'student-centred' learning, the most dominant and paradoxical practice in FE.

Whilst Julia is concerned with the students continued attendance at college and views this as a very positive and productive aspect of the students' lives, attendance at college for Celia is about the cognitive demands of intellectual achievement. Celia infers that the student is not engaging with academia and manifests her frustrations with her students lack of engagement with all things academic (O'Donnell and Tobbell 2007). Some of the tutors however emphasised that they were not solely concerned with developing academic achievement. This reinforces Colley's concerns about the 'dynamics of professional participation' (p.176) and how personal tutors mediate practice in the throes of a dominant managerialist culture focused on quality mechanisms (Morley 2003, Hodkinson and Spours 2007, Hodkinson et al 2007). For example Suzie, who teaches hairdressing manages both part-time and full-time student groups and highlights the differences in her narrative about coping with the tutorials-

They're all part-time.....olderso its easier.....they just come in and get on. It's great (laughs).....the young ones are in the fulltime group....much younger and some of them....(sighs) – not sure why they're here - nowhere else 'spose and how can I hang onto them – two have left.....well one really.....the other one is in hospital.....bit sad. I can do the tutorials but they are always late...the young ones...it's the boys (laughs) they have to see their boyfriends... I don't mind, so I just start again.....most times it's small stuff and they love the fundraising we did last term...they loved doing that. It's fun but ticking all those boxes all the time.....I try

Suzie, personal tutor (2006)

In managing diverse groups Suzie illuminates the practice of coping strategies developed within the necessary timeframe and demonstrates a response to the managerialist responses required by the dominant audit culture in Pendene College. Tutorial files are inspected as part of termly audits and the senior tutors for the different teams will encourage colleagues to keep files updated. Suzie reflects a functional approach to managing her role and adds that –

Much of it is on Moodle.....I don't always check it – but I've got the timetable fromand she's good, so I just turn up with the file. Not much to it really (laughs). I do keep that one going – you know it's checked. Anyway, my lot are out of here at 4 so they don't hang round for chats, one or two – you know the type –well they are always there - so I help when I can

Suzie, personal tutor (2006)

For other tutors a similar narrative develops as they refer to descriptions of their own needy students. How personal tutors shape their practice in response to managerialism and shape their identity is reflected in this narrative (Sachs, 2004). Celia talked about needy students who had joined an access course; Julia was concerned with young teenagers coping in difficult circumstances and Suzie is concerned with functional aspects of tutorials including conforming to practice and meeting the requirements of the termly audits. Some of the tutors associated need as the need 'to qualify'. These tutors engaged in functional aspects of the tutorial in the interviews, and outlining and addressing academic qualities and abilities, providing the support necessary to ensure that their students could complete assignments and perform the necessary tasks prescribed by the curriculum.

5.1.2. Supporting students in the dual sector

For James, working with A level students and teaching Foundation Degree students, 'needs' are articulated in response to age and qualifications pursued.

The older students can be more needy. Precisely because they are insecure about A level study; about coming back to college; about working as a student with a bunch of much younger students, because we don't teach adults (inaudible) the way we used too. So, sometimes you might have a mature person, say 45, working with a bunch of 16 year old, whatever. And that for a 40 year old or what ever, must be pretty (inaudible) and I can understand to an extent, why they might feel insecure and some what needy, in that sense. (Um) I've also worked with some of the degree students who have different needs; In particular, just recently I've just written several references for students who have just completed a degree, who obviously want to have references for future careers (inaudible).

James, personal tutor (2006)

James immediately infers and reflects upon the distinction of teaching mixed groups of adults and teenagers and highlights for many tutors in FE the compromise of andragogical and pedagogical approaches and the conflicts which arise (Knowles 1970). Such structural changes are significant in the delivery of the teaching and learning. Bathmaker highlights the structural changes and their impact upon FE lecturers 'dispositions', which 'create a differentiated and stratified system' (Bathmaker and Thomas 2009, p.119).

James is aware that in the past adult returners studying A levels would be separated from the mainstream fulltime 16-18 year olds. Programmes for separate adult groups have since collapsed as economic constraints have meant the inclusion of adults in the mainstream A level traditional teaching groups. In recognizing that the different approaches to teaching in FE has ameliorated the traditional divide between the pedagogical approach of the compulsory sector and prevalent with some 16-19 year old groups in FE and the andragogical approach identified by Knowles as distinctive characteristics of the adult learner: he is now confronted with mixed groups with adult learners and sometimes, immature teenagers. His focus in the interview is mainly with his group of Foundation Degree students.

This articulation of 'need' therefore is inferred by a perception from the tutor of an academic need for the Foundation Degree students. This reflects the model proposed by Bathmaker et al (2008) of the 'dual-sector'. 'Dual-sector establishments were seen to offer extended opportunities for access, progression and transfer, particularly for working class and non-traditional students who were the target of widening participation policies', (2008, p.127). Tutors at Pendene College must negotiate a timetable of FE and HE teaching with all its attendant conflicts and challenges as tutors endeavour to support students studying in the 'dual-sector'. With sometimes competing conflicts of time allocated for personal tutorials, tutors working in the 'dual-sector' also bridge two distinctive tutoring models, the 'pastoral model' and the 'integrated curriculum' model. These are two of the three models, the third being the 'professional' model outlined by Thomas and Hixenbaugh (2006) and discussed in chapter one. James is immersed in the pastoral model which exemplifies the traditional role of the personal tutor in FE. However the integrated curriculum module will provide tutorials within the structure of the HE modular programmes thus James is engaging in tutorial practice

within the parameters of the two models. James also exemplifies the continual conflicts and challenges for those who teach HE in FE outlined by Turner et al (2009) in their analysis of emerging HE cultures. Each of the tutors in their study were positioned in FE but stretched by the demands and institutional barriers of 'the multiple policies and agendas being imposed across the FE sector' (p.261).

James reinforces his academic role of guidance and support for the students. His response to his degree students is reflective of a tutor recognizing the changing learning environment exemplified in the research work in FE of Avis and Bathmaker, of shifting patterns of practice (Avis 2005, 2007, Avis and Bathmaker 2004, 2005, 2006). James's perception of his role and the distancing from his students is contrary to the findings from Winter and Dismore (2010). In their analysis of FE students progressing from a partner college Foundation Degree to an honours degree, they note the close relationship of staff and students in FE, where tutors were often 'described as mates' (p.262), were 'approachable', impacted upon their learning with the disadvantage that when the students progressed to the larger university campus, the subsequent 'unfamiliarity between staff and students was deemed to have had important consequences for students educational development' (p.263). However other tutors in this study closely reflect the roles and close learning relationships evidenced in the FE culture outlined by Winter and Dismore (2010).

James distinguishes the needs of younger students from those of adult returners. But his perception of these needs is measured by his schemata which represent the divisions of the academic and those who aspire to the level of degree. He recognizes that the '40 year old' will feel insecure in a group of sixteen year olds. James's reflections compartmentalize his students into those with emotional needs and those with academic needs. He positions himself with those who have academic needs avoiding interactions and reflections upon the 'needy students'.

The academic also surfaces in Celia's final reflection. When assignment deadlines draw near tutors are actively engaged in supporting the preparation of written work -

The main part of the needy aspects that I've come across is that is' all to do with the work. It's all to with the work, they're either, they're exams are coming up or their assessments, not sure exactly what they've got to do, that's their main type of needy.

Celia, personal tutor (2006)

For Celia there is the juxtaposition of working with needy students, who are both demanding of her time, increasing her workload and emotionally straining the relationship of the academic and the personal, in the role of providing support and guidance. Here in the data is the juncture with Hochschild (1983, 2003). Writing about the commercialisation of human feeling and the distinctive characteristics of emotional labour, Hochschild provides the profile of the worker and the institution, noting that ‘the institution arranges their front stage. They guide the way we see and what we are likely to feel, spontaneously’ (p.50). She adds that ‘for within institutions various elements of acting are taken away from the individual and replaced by institutional mechanisms’ (p.49). Celia is caught up in the paradoxical practice of the personal tutorial and as Hochschild states below, there are consequences -

Surface and deep acting in the commercial setting, unlike acting in a dramatic, private or therapeutic context, make one’s face and one’s feelings take on the properties of a resource. But it is not a resource to be used for the purposes of art, as in drama or for the purposes of self discovery, as in therapy, or for the pursuit of fulfilment as in everyday life. It is a resource to be used to make money.

(Hochschild 2003, p.55).

Celia has become the resource. Within this personal tutor role, questions arise for Celia about how she copes with these demands and continues to maintain the course requirements and provide the necessary support for individual students. As ‘a resource to be used to make money’, the positioning of the personal tutor and the personal tutorial occupy centre stage. Celia’s personal tutor role becomes structural.

Andy, who teaches Marine Science, has a similar approach in that he questions the division of support for the emotional and support for the academic. These are two functions he views pivotal to the role of the personal tutor. His comments are very reflective and in judging his students as ‘not needy’, he explores his ideas about the distinctive role of the personal tutor.

No I don’t think I have needy students. In fact a lot of my students are probably the opposite, they are far too relaxed particularly with some students this year who have been evidently behind in some of their subjects like mathematics and whenever you take this up and say I am really quite concerned that you haven’t handed in your portfolio work or you know your results haven’t been fantastic, you do realise what the pass mark is for this module and there is support we can give, and ‘oh yeah, yeah, I am fine and will arrange for that.

Andy, personal tutor (2006)

This distinctive lack of interest in the emotional he perceives as gender specific, adding-

May be from coming from quite a male dominated environment of engineeringand may be I am making things up at that point but I don't know but the time that students do want to kind have, have attention and all that tends to be far more social far more non course related in that they are asking questions to do with things very much encompass the subject within an area that you don't necessarily teach them a lot... sea going qualifications, which isn't part of design but is obviously linked to the sea (scene) and the questions that they have are far more orientated about having a laugh and going sailing than they are about academic issues.

Andy personal tutor (2006)

His students are happy to talk to him but also do not necessarily want to concern themselves with talking in a stylised 'emotional' manner. He notes that their conversations are more about creating the laughter and talking about 'sailing' which is the specific purpose of the course. Similarly Alan, a tutor in Trowel trades, avoids the 'touchy-feely' and shares the same approach as both Andy and James.

Are you making me laugh? (laughs) Course I do it all- tutorials – who doesn't? My lot are blokes so I don't do touchy-feely. I've got one or two who need help but we sort it in the lunch hour. Been doing this a long time so I sort it. Malcolm (the senior tutor) would lend a hand....no...they just come in and get on with it.....great group. I 'm here all the time with them so if anything comes up...cup of tea and I send them to Paula (student services) - she'll always sort them out.

Alan, personal tutor (2006)

Contrary to warnings from Ecclestone and Hayes about the 'rise of the therapeutic', both Andy and Alan are not concerned with the 'emotional learning agenda' (Goleman 2004) or 'social and emotional aspects of learning' (Hallam 2009). Andy especially establishes, in his narrative, a divide between the emotional and the academic. For Alan his personal tutor role is structural and empathetic in that he will signpost the student services available and like James is professional in his approach reflecting the professional model of tutoring outlined by Thomas and Hixenbaugh (ibid) and discussed in chapter one.

5.1.3. The personal tutors ability to detach according to gender and subject

Andy's tutorial stance is specific in that his identification of his role is academic and subject focused. In contrast, Trudy who teaches humanities is the embodiment of the concerns Jenkins and Conley (2007) have, with a tutors ability, to demonstrate

‘professional detachment’ (Jenkins and Conley 2007). Trudy teaches Humanities and A level students and identifies gender as a key aspect of her work and from her observations of a colleague, also suggests that students from different academic subject backgrounds behave differently. Trudy is the only tutor to make this distinction so forcibly. Her awareness of her inability ‘to detach’ is a recurrent theme in her responses. According to Bierema (2008), ‘emotion is at risk of becoming a commodity similar to the learning organisation model that expects access to workers thoughts, experiences and emotions’ (p.56). Trudy is sharing her emotions and feelings with colleagues within the organisation, which illuminates a state of flux in the shaping of the personal tutor professional identity and resonates in the conflicts and tensions experienced by the workers in Hochschild’s study of air cabin crew. What Hochschild discovered was that the air cabin crew developed atypical behaviours, ‘As a precaution against burnout many experienced workers develop a ‘healthy ‘estrangement, a clear separation of self from role’ (p.188), for Trudy the separation of the roles is recognised but as yet unachievable, as she discloses her concerns about her ability to ‘detach’.

5.1.4. Personal tutors perceptions of the impact of well-being on tutorial practice.

Andy and Trudy suggest that their perception of the tutorial role is gendered

What has been interesting this year is that for the first time ever Sue has had a science tutor group because there weren’t enough and we are of course used to humanities students and she says she cannot believe the difference.

Trudy, personal tutor (2006)

Her incredulity at the amount of time she has to engage with the students outside of the tutorial time is reflected in her following comments in which she compares her predicament with that of her colleague.

The science are mostly all boys, they turn up to tutorials when they are supposed to, they do everything they are supposed to do they don’t complain they don’t whinge they don’t come and ask for anything, they just do what they are meant to do and then they go away.

Trudy, personal tutor (2006)

She contrasts this to her own situation and experience as she copes with the demands and needs of students who constantly make demands on her throughout the working day.

In humanities there are just hundred of them, they are at the door the whole time, you know about their boyfriends, you know about their girlfriends, you know about their parents, you know about you know about everything they come in tears we spend time mopping up tears, solving the kind of problems that

you can never write down on a piece of paper and Sue is just absolutely beaming with her students who are so wonderful.

Trudy, personal tutor (2006)

There are also within Trudy's statements, a narrative which emphasizes the Rogerian holistic approach to a student group and also a continued commitment and awareness of a workload associated with the role of personal tutor. The competing notions of professionalism and professional identity emerge in this narrative which Ball (2003) aligns to the 'terrors of performativity' and the 'epidemic of reform ...that does not simply change what people, as educators, scholars and researchers do, it changes who they are,' (Ball 2003, p.215). Trudy also provides a rationale for the students continued presence, one she perceives as a lack of adult contact in the world outside of the college.

The humanities ones are really, I don't know why, I really don't know why but yes I have got students I have got students who wait for me in the mornings, they are just there waiting and they think of things to say because they want to be with you. I am sure everyone has got this as well – there's somebody out there now waiting for you, yes they just like being around us, they just... and I think some of these are kids who just perhaps don't have adult conversations at home and they just love to be around not just me but all the others.

Trudy, personal tutor (2006)

The responses infer a social structure of the relationship, one which is rooted in Bowlby's (1969) theory of attachment and belonging and reflect a need to attach, to be with the tutor, even when there is no definitive associated rationale other than students seek the contact with an adult. This further reinforces the social aspects of learning and Trudy is especially conscious of perceived differences in the students from the Humanities she tutors and those students from Science who her colleague Sue tutors.

5.1.5. Personal tutors concerns about supporting students with additional needs.

Some of the tutors are also concerned about the needs of the student that they do not necessarily label as emotional. Their concerns are about the needs of the student that they construe as a lack of academic skills. This for one of the tutors is first and foremost, working on assignments and providing support with class work. Dave is concerned about providing support for his students which he views as an extension of his classroom teaching on the Motor Mechanics skills.

We do have needy student, a few even in motor mechanics now find it difficult writing. When I set them examples. Obviously what I do when I set them writing examples during the course work I collect the work in, evaluate it myself and if they do need help then I identify it straight to the key skills manager who will

then put the appropriate member of staff there to assist and if need be they like to come into the classroom and assist during lessons, not just with key skills.

Dave, personal tutor (2006)

For this tutor, his role is to provide the academic support of basic skills needed for his students pass their motor vehicle course. He follows the college policy of ensuring the students are quickly referred to the key skills manager attached to each department who would arrange the necessary support. As he considered his reply he then added -

Sometimes it is financial thing as a mentioned earlier, that they might not have their bus fare to come to college and what have you. We do talk to them, I have spoke to some parents, and there are genuine cases of hardship out there.

Dave, personal tutor (2006)

Like many other tutors, he reinforced the added dimension of the relationship many of the tutors who teach the fourteen to nineteen year student maintain. This is the added dimension of the development of the tutor role with parents of the younger students and provides evidence of the ties with the wider community commonly found in schools in order to develop 'effective pastoral support ...if learners are to settle and begin to achieve' (DfES 2006, p.50). This practice of engagement with parents has commonly been associated with practice in the compulsory sector but with the advent of the 14-19 cohorts in FE more tutors are facing the prospect of involvement with parents in discussions about academic progress. This is currently an aspect of the expansion of structural practices of the personal tutor role and further identifies additional roles for the personal tutor as they focus on retaining students on courses. The economics of 'turning up' permeate the work of personal tutoring and Dave is concerned with the economic problem of 'getting to college' - for some students this becomes a major economic achievement and another aspect of the key role of personal tutors in the retention process.

Cathy who teaches the schools teaching assistants course, is a relatively new tutor and is circumspect about her role in supporting students and notes that –

Yes, if I can compare it to last year, this year that we have just completed I have found incredibly difficult and I am still not sure that the route caused that. I had quite a small group to begin with and petered down to 8 eventually, I think I started with 12 and they have gone down to 8. It was a bit of a sticky start with people coming and going and funding and all that sort of thing. I got my 8 and I just feel like it has been a real struggle this year, last year I had 20 in my group they were a great group and things were so much easier and I still struggle with

it and really reflected on it and I just I don't know quite what, but I have been assured that some groups are like some that you know that come and go but right from the start it was just very difficult.

Cathy, personal tutor (2006)

Aware of her new status as a personal tutor she is concerned about her relationship with her group and the loss of students from the group. Her concerns are highlighted by the fact that there were only 8 in the group when it started compared to the one she has this year. Underpinning her narrative is her genuine concern for establishing a rapport with her students and the need to keep them on the course. She adds that -

I am glad it worked that way because I was in my first year of teacher training and I think if this group had been my first experience I don't know if I could have had the confidence to think no this is okay I have done fine because I don't really feel that it has been a great year at all for me. I have good attendance last night for our celebration you know everyone's finished and there were 6 out of 8 that came and again yeah. And people have thanked, you know the people that have attended and come everywhere, I have had quite good attendance but it is just, I don't know, it just didn't click this year at all for me,

Cathy, personal tutor (2006)

Like Dave, Cathy is concerned about the level of support and her role in supporting the academic needs of her students. Tutorials are an opportunity to discuss additional support and with her empathetic approach evidenced in the following narrative Cathy is keen to provide all the necessary support to help her student achieve and remain on the course -

Where the tutorials I think, to me a tutorial should be about the way you are progressing with your learning, how you are going to meet the deadline, how you are going to submit on time, you know, what information you need, sometimes they come and say so there might be something in the curriculum they are not sure how to achieve the evidence and I can translate the curriculum and say look could you do that activity or maybe I could come out and see you

Her commitment in supporting her students is evidenced in her keenness to 'walk the extra mile' and in doing this she demonstrates her engagement with the emotional labour as defined by Hochschild (2003) and discussed in chapter 3. Aware of the pressures to retain students, Cathy's narrative illuminates the constant pressures experienced by personal tutors as they strive to fulfill their role as personal tutors.

In the next section I identify how tutorial practice is shaped when tutors are responsible for particular vulnerable groups of students.

5.1.6. Tutorial practice and the emotional well-being of vulnerable students

There are a substantial number of students who attend Pendene College who are completing Entry Level 1 qualifications. The Special Needs students have a specialist department in a purpose built building. Students who are excluded from school are also based in this department. Maggie teaches a group of special needs students, but quickly identifies that only one of four of her students pursuing a 'horse care' qualification could be labeled as 'needy'.

Yes some of them are, not all of them in my group, so you have got to differentiate and you have got...well.... I have got some very capable students.

Maggie, personal tutor (2006)

Many of these students have support assistants working with them and the concept of personalised learning takes place within the groups as teaching assistants work with tutors to support and guide their students. Tutors working in this department are from traditional vocational backgrounds. Many staff have specialist qualifications and the pastoral support is integral to the working day and is not separated from the timetable and designated as tutorial time. Groups are assigned to one tutor and normally would spend significant parts of the week with that tutor, thus the role of personal tutor and subject tutor is subsumed as one and evidences the blurring of the boundaries of personal tutor and subject tutor.

Maggie admits that her capable students are coping but within this statement she raises her concerns about their welfare -

oh they are okay, they are doing well, and you take it for granted that they are okay but are they okay?

Maggie, personal tutor (2006)

Maggie identifies and empathises with her students. She's aware of the dedication and commitment required when working with working with the 'needs' students. Responses are couched in such terms of empathy, sympathy, parental control and an overriding commitment to the welfare and well being of vulnerable students. Since many of the students have mental health problems, Maggie personifies the pastoral support identified by James and Wahlberg (2007) as critical to the support and inclusion of students suffering with mental health problems.

Yes they are needy students, because of their academic level is obviously is of a lot lowerA prime example yesterday twenty past four one of my students who is 17, nearly six foot and to all intents and purposes to anybody else would think, oh well a very capable girl. Well she is so childlike bless her, twenty past four when I was in the staff room working there was a knock on the door and there is one of your students is crying. So I went, you know, what's wrong. My taxi hasn't come, so I said well no it won't be its twenty past four, you are ten minutes early going home, you will have to wait for it. It's you know (sighs).

Maggie, personal tutor (2006)

These students are specifically 'special needs' and some have a complex range of needs which are met by the health and educational professional who work with them. Maggie as the course tutor and personal tutor exemplifies the 'parent role' of Berne's transactional analysis patterns of communication (Berne 1964, p.28), in providing nurturing support and protection for particular students but she is aware of a range of ability within the group and she articulates their academic prowess.

This is a distinctive juncture to the discussion of 'needy students'. Whilst some of the tutors interviewed have talked about their 'needy' students, some have identified that not all of their students are involved in the structural processes of the personal tutorial. Why is this happening and importantly are there cohorts of students who are not receiving tutoring? This is an interesting supposition in that those students who are not part of the pastoral system are continuing with their studies and this aspect of personal tutoring is discussed in the next session.

5.2. Personal tutors perceptions of students who are coping – the untutored.

The personal tutors interviewed for this research all have mentioned how they cope with students within the personal tutorial system, but what emerged as the interviews progressed, was the notion of students who did not take up tutorial time or make demands. These students, personal tutors noted, were deemed to be 'coping' since they did not present themselves in tutorials or alert their personal tutors to their needs. For some tutors this was of equal concern and this surfaced in the interviews.

Roger is an example of one such tutor who was equally concerned about those students who did not fully engage in the tutorial process. Roger, who teaches furniture making, considers the other students in his tutor group who without his help and support, managed to cope. He expresses his concerns and expresses a set of reasons for their choices in the following statements -

I don't know, some of them I don't feel sort of use the opportunity they have but maybe - not needy enough, they are quite happy to muddle along and stay quiet much of the time, than the other way round. I don't know whether that is needy in the respect that whether they want me to come forward more or it makes them quite happy to stay away in the background really. If it wasn't me who was actually approaching them they would just barely speak for the whole day. Well not all of them but certainly this year a core group of them they would stand there and just do whatever or nothing if I didn't come up and ask them.

Roger, personal tutor (2006)

Resonating in this response is the consideration of the amount of tutor time the needy students monopolize. Normally one hour per week is assigned to each group and it is a policy for Pendene College that once a term each student will be given the opportunity for a personal tutorial.

Fran, who teaches Business studies represents the challenge to this policy noting the problem of insufficient time allocated to tutorials and adds –

....it could be better you could be given more time, I don't think an hour for each of the class is enough, not with these and other students, if it was just to check progress and yes you can ... through in 10 minutes with students, there is no way that our tutorials last 20 minutes. Every single week it will go over and always at the end of the day it goes over.

Fran, personal tutor (2006)

Similarly, Mel is conscious of the time issue and the pressure of the increasing workload as the term gains momentum:

Then the workload starts to build, more things expected of you, keeping them, and additional things are expected of you that you don't really think, oh, didn't know we had to do that, and you do. And then you find that the individual tutorials are going by the wayside because you are playing catch-up and having to catch your tail to your admin and it is a vicious circle so therefore really the students missing out although you know we are really on tap as soon as you walk in that door at half past eight

Mel, personal tutor (2006)

For Ali, the Football coach, balancing time for the subject and supporting students merge, as he adds that-

Yeah (uh) no issues (uh) they just want to play football. Yeah (um) I don't know – they're ok –they will do all I ask them.... 'cos then they know we'll be out on the field...it's sport you see.. that's all they want to do – play football so I can talk to them whenever.....I keep on top of it all - it's not that bad. I've got the file sorted...Alan makes us and he'll always help...so yeah I think its all ok.

Some of them have got that ADHD thing but I just say ...come on then....lets get out – and we just head for the field... if the gym's empty we go in there.....

As a personal tutor within a vocational team Ali has the flexibility to manage the timetable and his narrative suggests flexibility in his approach to his role as personal tutor. With a focus on maintaining the tutorial file, he recognises aspects of the role which is monitored and seeks help from the senior tutor when required. He is also able to provide the reward of extra sports time on the completion of tasks.

.He is also conscious of the time constraints and the implications of retaining students adding that -

Our team is great ...so I just ask, you know if I'm stuck – you know with the applications all that uni stuff- a few want to go- well do the course here ... but yeah they're ok and they know where they can find me so tutorials – bit long at times..... but you gotta do it and I've kept them all- (cheers)

Ali, personal tutor (2006)

The time allocation has long been challenged as insufficient and tutors try and remain equitable with the allocation of their time. The tutors are aware of this problem and in talking about the 'needy students' recognize that if there's time, which is sparse, is given to one or two students, the majority of the remainder of the group will not receive a tutorial. I use the term 'untutored' to describe this position within the tutorial system.

Therein is the paradox which privileges 'needy' students over other students. With constraints on time and tutor availability, the paradox is – who can tutors 'tutor?' Personal tutors are confronted with the prospect of the allocation of time and resources and the need to be equitable in providing personal tutorials for all their students. However in identifying some students as 'needy' and meeting their demands on tutorial time and energy, the remainder of the group of students, the untutored, who appear 'quite happy to muddle along and stay quiet much of the time' (Roger, personal tutor) can appear marginalised or neglected, as the tutor valiantly copes with 'needy students' who monopolise tutorial time.

Thomas and Hixenbaugh's model of personal tutoring previously discussed in this chapter do not accommodate this 'gap' in the provision. Where do the 'untutored' fit in to a pastoral system? Their model neatly defines the provision and the status of the tutor

within each model but data arising from interview responses indicate many tutors coping with heavy workloads and ‘needy’ students who monopolise time. The ‘untutored’ therefore also have a role in the tutorial system in that their absence privileges the ‘needy’. By establishing this concept and category I add a fourth model to Thomas and Hixenbaugh’s – the ‘untutored’.

The analysis of data responses in the next section is highly significant and forms the final part of this chapter. In continuing the exploration of the social construction of neediness and searching for the meanings personal tutors attach to these labels, one specific group of students are labelled by the personal tutors as needy. This group of students are categorised by the personal tutors with a further label – that of ‘depressed’.

5.3. Personal tutors who emphasise emotional well-being in their role

In articulating the needs of the students some of the tutors were very specific about the characteristics of certain students who displayed ‘needs’. Some students were viewed as displaying symptoms of depression and therefore the tutorial role was important in supporting ‘emotional well-being’ (Goleman 1998, Warwick et al 2008, James and Wahlberg 2007). One particular tutor, Sally, felt this and experienced firsthand with her Drama students, the challenges of providing personal tutorials and support and guidance for this group of students. In the interview she referenced significant episodes throughout the academic year, of coping with students who have been medically depressed and these are discussed in the following section

Sally spoke at length about the personal tutorial role and her support for the students in the tutorial ‘suffering depression’. The magnitude of the problem for her has significantly increased she had observed, for the past few years. Sally operates an open door policy and it is in this practice that the paradoxical contested site of the personal tutorial, unravels-

it is an open door - voluntary really which all that means is that they can come in at any point, they need to learn not to do it in class time so much but really at any point they can just have a little chat. And that is normally meeting their emotional needs.

Sally, personal tutor (2006)

In structuring this open access for her students she engages in significant emotional labour and is conscious of her own predicament of both providing ‘an open door’ and balancing this support and guidance with the role of being the subject tutor.

Yes because we have been too busy, short staffed, very demanding year, we have had to be really flexible so, not difficult to carry out of the role because it has been open door but what I have found difficult is keeping it organised and structured, so they have been having masses of tutorials but I have had to be in the classroom so much that I have had sometimes to say okay lets leave this tutorial now we will pick it up tomorrow or we will do it where we go into an intensive period for 2 – 3 weeks, all other lessons are stopped.

Sally, personal tutor (2006)

The structural pressures of ‘being ‘short staffed’, curtail the tutoring activities. In recognising the continual demand from students for tutorials, there - ‘ have been masses’, Sally structures tutorials at different times throughout the year noting that she has the flexibility to do this including when ‘all other lessons are stopped’. This level of flexible interaction is significant and not necessarily reflected in the accounts of the other personal tutors and may refer more to the social construction of the subject delivery of ‘Drama’.

...which worries me sometime because the quieter ones, the less needy ones can go by the by a little bit. I mean I don’t I keep pulling them in but I would like it to be more structured throughout really. And I also think it would help the more needy ones not be quite so demanding where they don’t need to because there can be an over indulgence there.

Sally, personal tutor (2006)

Sally recognises the ‘untutored’ exist in her groups and acknowledges that ‘the less needy ones can go by the by a little bit’. With her concerns about the ‘the emotional development of her learners’ (Ofsted Common Inspection Framework 2005) she is confronted by conflicting professional identities as she ‘manages her heart’ Hochschild (2003) and as 'a person who does emotional labour for a living must face three hard questions that do not confront others, the answers to which will determine how she defines her self’ (p.333). In order to resolve this issue, ‘a worker has to develop the ability to depersonalise the situations’ (p.333). Usher and Edwards (2005) use a post-structuralist approach to ‘inform the understanding of guidance practices’ (p.397) and this illuminates the conflictual challenges of practice in guidance and support for Sally. This is pursued in the following section where I draw upon Rogerian constructs, the work of Foucault (1982) and Bolton’s (2005) emotion management typology discussed in chapter two to further illuminate the practice.

The centrality of the Rogerian humanistic theory in guidance and support in FE was discussed in chapter two and is one of the dominant discourses in this study. Usher and

Edwards referring to Rogerian theory of student centred practice, identify ‘the assumption that these practices, as well as being more efficient are also more progressive’ (p.398). They state that they provide a more ‘humane, democratic and empowering contribution to the educational experience’ (p.398) which translates in to ‘educational discourse and practices where self-development and self-realisation become framed as a central normative goal’ (p.398). Sally, immersed in such ‘practices’, embodies the quintessential characteristics of the humanistic approach to guidance and support and her approach permeates ‘the contemporary structuring of learning opportunities both within and outside the classroom’ (p.398). Inherent in such practice is the notion of ‘power’ and the contradictions of Rogerian student centred approach, to liberate human potential and empower individuals, masks the power and processes, described by Foucault as the ‘confessional’ whereby individuals self regulate and the need for external regulation and control is minimised. Aligned to the ‘confessional’ are the processes of communication and the co-existence of a relationship with another individual – someone to confess too.

With the overtones of Christian practices, the personal tutor becomes ‘the authority who requires the confession’ (Foucault 1981, p.61). Thus the personal tutorial becomes a contested site; a site of intervention. Information is collected within this social relational structural positioning of the personal tutor and recorded in the personal tutorial file (a necessary requirement in Pendene College of the internal audit mechanism). Usher and Edwards contend that ‘through certain practices and techniques people’s inner lives are brought into the domain of power’ (p.402) and thus ‘educating people to govern themselves’, (p.402) and ‘to realise oneself, to find the truth about oneself becomes both personally and economically desirable’ (p.402). Whilst I have highlighted and considered Foucault’s ‘pastoral power’, in this section, I further develop this argument in chapter five with a close analysis of the interviews of the senior managers role in the structuring of tutorial practice and the role of the personal tutor. Importantly the humanistic discourses and practices permeating the practice within the personal tutorial establish a structural and relational role. The ‘dynamic’ of the relational is considered in the following section as Sally’s in-depth narrative illuminates the individual tutors propensity to engage with emotional labour, structure practice and respond to a particular group within the pastoral system.

5.3.1. Engaging with emotional labour and coping with students demands

Aware of the ‘over indulgence’ and her own need to separate the roles and maintain separation from her students Sally talks expressively and empathetically about her support and guidance for her students, especially the ‘lads’.

We have had a couple of lads over the last few years that were so needy that they got possessive in the end so with this open door policy which they would have - he particularly was very very timid, very apologetic, charming. Thank-you, thank-you, so kind of you and within a year, just over a year, he was aggressive because I would stop the class to talk to him there and then, you know if I am running into a class at 9 o'clock, say I need to talk to you, yes, don't worry can just wait til break? Would that be okay and they transfer it all you know and get nasty when ...

Sally, personal tutor (2006)

The ‘lads’ are demanding and monopolize her time but her own personal values underpin her responses to them –

...you are trying desperately to say the right things to them but you know we are subjective.. you are limited and can respond, I have had quite a bit of dealing with depression in my family so I kind of pull on that when I can and it is not definitive is it by any means, so I try to do as much as I can...

Sally, personal tutor (2006)

The pressures of time and space for Sally, compound the problem of coping with the students. Reid referring to the ‘stress and burn out within a time pressured environment’ notes the importance for the personal career advisers in her study to find time for ‘restorative conversations’, (Reid 2007, p.75). For Sally there is little respite.

Sally provided several examples in the interviews of students she had referred to the college counsellor – noting that, ‘I assure them all of the time that they go to the college counsellors off the record - it won't go into your medical file- they are terrified they just do not want to take any risks’. This element of confidentiality is broached by Jenkins (2010) in his discussion of challenges for tutors working with adolescents and adds that there are ‘contextual factors which are closely related to confidentiality ...such as trust, potential embarrassment or anticipatory anxiety if personal material was disclosed to others without consent’ (p.267).

Sally applies Thomas and Hixenbaugh's model of pastoral support and guidance by implementing the ‘professional model’ whereby she refers students to the available professional services within the pastoral system. But, the student stigmatises meeting

the counsellor and this is viewed by them as a risky activity. The dynamic within the 'confessional' changes and as the student is passed on to professional services the power is unmasked as the student consciously fears the recording of information by someone other than the personal tutor. With other students Sally has escorted the student to the GP's surgery -

.....I try to do it with the rules properly, I took her myself and I told the college I was taking her..... went with her to the surgery.

Sally, personal tutor (2006)

and within this statement the paradoxical complexity of the personal tutor role with the representation and implementation of different practices subsumes all three modules referred to by Hixenbaugh and Thomas (2006) as discussed in chapter one.

5.3.2. The issue of retention for the personal tutor and 'keeping all sixteen on the course'.

However within the constraints of the time and the demands from the Drama students Sally is also conscious of one other demand and that is retention. Whilst other tutors comment upon the importance of retention and some demonstrate in their practice the strategies to retain their students, Sally's responses are explicit as she details in her responses how she manages the structural demands of retaining students on her Drama course.

.....I think it key to keeping them – tutorials - and for them succeeding talking about it in those terms. I mean you always get some leaving for whatever external reasons because they are mature students financially but Keep all 16 and so far they have all gone off feeling more confident and I think that is the crucial thing to developing their self esteem and seeing their confidence.

Sally, personal tutor (2006)

Sally provides testimony to the caring ethos of the humanistic student centered approach to the role of the personal tutor at Pendene College. She interweaves her personal and professional responsibility in guiding and supporting her students, and adopts a proactive parental role, when 'needs' arise and students need referral to external agencies. Her level of engagement with vocational students resonates in the research from Colley (2003, p.488) where vocational students from health care and engineering students displayed what Colley refers to as vocational habitus, 'Vocational habitus proposes that the learner aspires to a certain combination of dispositions demanded by the vocational culture'. The Performing Arts students were involved in their course and committed to the prospect of careers in the Performing Arts. For some

of Sally's students this would prove challenging and Sally's continued support was necessary to retain them on the course and maintain their focus on future prospects. For example, this was demonstrated in her direct approach to student's needs and escorting them to the doctor's surgery or referring them to the college counselor. Illuminating Sally's practice is the 'gift' of extra time and effort, she continually provides for her students. She exemplifies in her practice the 'philanthropic' emotional labour which Bolton (2005) explains as an additional aspect of practice integral to the concept of emotional labour. Being the good tutor – is embedded in practice which encapsulates emotional labour shaped by the philanthropic.

What also emerges is a complex role of personal tutor, support worker and quasi-parent. However this is underpinned with the constant knowledge of the course requirements and the conscious or unconscious efforts required for retaining students on courses reflecting Tinto's commentary on support in American Colleges, 'support is a condition that promotes retention' (Tinto 2000, p.2). Sally states this at the end of her interview with reference to her ability 'to keep all sixteen' and reinforces the interrelational aspect of the dynamics of the personal tutorial and the role of the personal tutor within the institution as a key aspect of the retention process.

However Sally's work as a personal tutor positions her within the FE sector, with responsibilities to encourage progression to HE and whilst her concerns are ultimately about retention, Murtagh (2010) notes that students enrolling on higher education courses found that students 'were insufficiently prepared for HE study and in particular for independent learning' (p.410). Personal tutors may contribute to this lack of independence and critically may foster dependence in their Rogerian approach to their students. Murtagh adds that 'many year 1 students expect to receive much more guidance and support' (p.414) and the sense of 'diminished self' which Furedi refers to could be fostered within the pastoral system in Pendene College and an unwanted legacy for lecturers in the HE sector.

5.4. Conclusion

The sites of learning in this chapter were explored using the context of the personal tutorial, the perceptions of the personal tutors and the narratives they developed in their interviews when discussing their 'needy' students. Discourses related to the centralising of the Rogerian humanistic theory (Rogers 1981), the 'therapeutic' and 'interventions'

(Ecclestone and Hayes 2009, Furedi 2003), Goffman's dramaturgical model (Goffman 1969) and how tutors engage with emotional labour and 'manage their heart' using Hochschild's (2003) framework, structured and informed the analysis. Additionally Foucault's notions of 'pastoral power' and the structuring of the 'confessional' was reflected and resonated in personal tutor's comments concerning their practice in Pendene College.

Although responses were varied and provided different functional views of the personal tutor and tutorial models of practice using the three models presented by Hixenbaugh and Thomas (2006); James and Dave were concerned with the 'academic needs' of students and along the continuum of guidance and support, Sally was at the extreme with her focus on parenting roles and the needs of depressed students; tutors referenced their guidance and support, to achievement and success for their students. This impacted upon their ability to retain their students on their courses and several of the personal tutors, notably Sally, Celia, Trudy, Dave, Cathy and James were investing time and effort in very different ways to securing retention on their course.

In contrast to the personal tutors role in Pendene college and their varying roles in guidance and support , Schofield and Dismore (2010) in their analysis of retention and achievement of students studying HE in FE note that 'there are two major predictors of retention and achievement: academic entry level and age', (p.207). Notions of pastoral support and guidance within the context of their study of students entry data from UCAS, is devoid of references to personal tutors and highlights the importance of this study in defining and examining the role of personal tutors in guidance and support and their critical role in retention of students.

The personal tutors at Pendene College engaged in contested sites of learning, similar to those outlined by Hodkinson et al (2007) in their research on 'learning cultures' within FE. In identifying the 'positions, dispositions and actions of the tutors (p.399); 'the time tutors and students spend together' (p.400) Hodkinson et al noted that 'tutors are very important in mediating learning cultures and in promoting successful learning, even the best tutors can only do so much and they need space and support in addressing the particular needs of students in the learning cultures in which they participate' (p.411). I highlight this link to the Transforming Learning Cultures project because in developing the analysis of the data and the focus on retention in this study, notions of the nature of

the 'learning culture' are now enhanced by the dynamic of retention and thus I have contributed an added dimension by identifying the privileging of retention, within the learning cultures in Pendene College.

The personal tutors in the data presented in this chapter demonstrate their commitment to a 'learning culture' in which they mediate 'needs'. I have identified within the data how different tutors have responded to the perceived needs of their students and in so doing have engaged with structural demands within the institution to fulfil targets of retention. But this is a 'learning culture;' infused with the 'therapeutic' described by Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) in which the student occupies time and the 'learning' is often secondary to the demands of the students who privilege their needs over the 'academic'. Sally's 'lads' exemplify this status whereby the tutor is enmeshed in support and guidance for the emotional needs and the students academic needs surface only in relation to retention.

Personal tutors were investing heavily in the close relationship they developed with their students and many were engaged in emotional labour which stretched their personal and physical resources to cope with 'needy' students. Celia, Cathy and Julia were pressured by the 'needs' of their students and consistently engaged in activities to retain their students on the course. Celia opted to teach in her own time; Cathy was prepared to travel to meet students outside college and Julia identified Pendene College as a refuge from the outside world, viewing attendance as preferable to the challenges the students face beyond the college walls.

This was reflected in the construction of the 'neediness' and the perceptions of the needy students. Students were constructed as existing in a world different to that of the personal tutor. This is highlighted by Bathmaker and Thomas (2009) who add that 'FE tends to attract certain sorts of students - those who have in Bourdieu's (1997) terms less of the necessary cultural, social and economic capital to consider the elite part of the higher education system' (p.122). They add that 'they are likely to have no direct family experience of HE be more debt averse, and therefore inclined to study close to home and want to stay with the familiar and to have good levels of support with their studies' (p.122). Their study 'followed 80 students moving between further and higher education' (p.119), 'tutors' were cited as important sources of information. One student 'George' cited 'getting advice from his personal tutor' (p.138). The tutors at Pendene

College reflect this capacity for support with student cohorts who view FE as their 'second chance', (Foster 2005).

Emerging from the data discussed is a hidden curriculum of emotional and personal values which are replicated across the courses taught by individual personal tutors. At times the work of the personal tutor and subject tutor were so fused that the separation of 'needs' were often dictated by the emotional. Several of the tutor's privilege emotions whilst academic needs remain unchallenged. This adds credence to Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) commentary on the positioning of emotions in the curriculum. It also resonates with the seminal work of Willis (1977) in that the teachers in his research reproduced the hidden curriculum of low achievement and pathways into poorly skilled and low paid work. The students studying childcare in Colley et al study (2007) followed a similar route as they prepared for low level work. Thus the social construction of the label 'needy' by the personal tutors reflected Bourdieu's 'habitus' and although personal tutors accommodated a range of students, demonstrating inclusive practice, many of the characteristics of a typical FE and HE student studying in FE, identified by Bathmaker (2008) and Appleby and Bathmaker (2009) are reflected in the responses from the personal tutors when identifying their students needs and the importance of retaining their students.

Class divisions separated the personal tutors from their students and some tutors articulated this difference by commenting upon the absence of parental controls; the level of socio-economic deprivation; the prevalence of 'depression' which was not supported by the family. Gender was also a consideration and cultural values were reproduced as the Marine Science students and the Science students in the Sixth form, were perceived as coping without the constant support of the personal tutor. But there were also contradictions in that the 'lads' in Drama, were distinctive in that their emotional needs were often tempered with anger and frustration if the personal tutor, Sally, was not available and this could be more reflective of particular characteristics of personality attracted to particular vocational courses (Colley 2003, Warwick et al 2008, Hyland 2006).

The personal tutors had differing concerns. Julie and Trudy were concerned with the student world devoid of adult input and involvement; Sally concerned with 'depressed students' was actively engaged in securing support for them whilst James reinforced

expert advice in guiding his students in their UCAS applications. For Ali, Suzie and Alan it was about managing diverse groups within vocational departments and responding to pressures to retain students on courses. Cathy exemplified these concerns as a new tutor anxious about students leaving her course. These tutors demonstrated the need to conform, to follow the tutorial processes and maintain their files for the termly audits. All tutors were guiding and supporting; some of the tutors were replicating and reproducing incremental measures of human capital and cultural reproduction (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). They were also demonstrating ‘dramaturgical loyalty’, (Goffman 1969, p.207) in that, ‘the team mates must act as if they have accented certain moral obligationsthey must not betray the secrets of the team when between performances’ (p.207).

Within this chapter I have introduced the concept of the ‘untutored’. Whilst student’s needs are perceived and accommodated by the personal tutors many of the students at Pendene College were not engaged in the personal tutorial system. By privileging the ‘needy’ student the personal tutors allocated their time and the structural impact of insufficient time meant many personal tutors recognised that not all students could be tutored. But because these students were viewed as ‘coping’ they were therefore perceived by the tutors as not at risk of leaving the course and therefore would be retained without the intervention of the personal tutor.

I have discussed in this chapter the impact of the structural on the work of the personal tutor and from the data, illuminated the importance of retention for the personal tutor. I have also identified strategies that personal tutors have pursued in order to retain their students and noted how some students are ‘untutored’. The social construction of the label ‘neediness’ has been considered and the relational dynamics of institutional practices highlighted. In the next chapter I consider how training and the dynamic of social processes, illuminates the practice for both managers and personal tutors as they seek to ensure retention of students at Pendene College. In considering the emotional learning agenda within FE and its application for retaining students on courses, I consider the data drawn from the responses of the senior managers, the focus groups and additional data from personal tutors.

Chapter 6

Training personal tutors in Pendene College

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter I examine the data provided by the senior tutors linked to the training of personal tutors in Pendene College. I also discuss the senior tutors' perceptions of the value of training and its role in preparing tutors for their role as personal tutors. The provision of training as a process is multilayered involving both national and institutional levels and formal and informal aspects. The chapter is structured into four sections. The first section outlines the training provision at the national level and identifies the role of Ofsted quality mechanisms in the formal processes, shaping the role of the personal tutor. I also note training processes taking place in Pendene College at the institutional level which are formal and structured. Following the examination of formal processes, I then consider informal processes taking place within the institution which shape training provision for personal tutors.

In structuring the four sections, I use the interview data from the senior tutors and additional data from the personal tutors related to training.

The participants in this study represent distinct groups within Pendene College and as discussed in chapter three, mirror the recruitment of fulltime and part-time staff within the post compulsory sector workforce. Avis and Bathmaker (2006) note the fragmentation of the FE sector and the challenges faced by staff. Such nuances resonate throughout this study and in this chapter the interview data from the different participant groups provides a kaleidoscope of views which illuminates formal and informal training processes.

6.1.1. Training the personal tutor at national and local level

To map the formal training processes taking place at the national level, I include documentary analysis of Ofsted reports from 2006 onwards that I use to support my main argument that the role of the personal tutor is primarily focused on the retention of students. The Ofsted documents include reports, case studies and policies and include the *Monitoring Report* (Ofsted 2006); *A comparison of the effectiveness of level 3 provision in 25 post 16 providers* (Ofsted 2008) and the consultation document - *A*

focus on improvement: proposals for further education and skills system inspections from September 2009 (Ofsted 2008). I also identify, as part of the formal processes, training at the institutional level in Pendene College. The College provides an internal training course for personal tutors, called the Personal Training Qualification (PTQ) and this is organised and delivered by the senior tutors.

The informal training processes surface within the data and contribute to a more complex picture of personal tutoring within the institutions. Other variables linked to CPD, are revealed and I use the evidence from the interviews to unravel a performative orientation of agency and practice shaping the role of the personal tutor within Pendene College.

In exploring the data in this study I next briefly refer to the conceptual framework and consider the pivotal Rogerian theory and its dominance in FE in promoting what Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) refer to as therapy culture.

6.1.2. Therapy culture and Rogerian principles

I now return to the consideration of the most influential theory underpinning ‘therapy culture’ and practice in FE - the Rogerian Humanistic theory, as raised in chapters one and two. Rogers states that:

It has been my experience that persons have a basically positive direction. In my deepest contact with individuals in therapy, even those whose troubles are most disturbing, whose behaviour has been most anti-social, whose feelings seem most abnormal, I find this to be true.

(Rogers 1967, p.26)

The seminal, Humanistic theory (Rogers, 1967) is the cornerstone of the teacher training courses as tutors learn about the Rogerian principles of self worth and positive regard. Inherent in the humanistic approach is the distinctive language descriptors attributed to emotions which shape behaviours; these include empathy, unconditional positive regard, and feelings of self worth rooted in positive or negative feelings. Rogers is ‘interested in learning which makes a difference’ (p.281) and adds that ‘to the extent then that educators are interested in learning which is functional which makes a difference which pervades a person and his actions then they might well look to the field of psychotherapy for leads or ideas’. It is this adaption of the psychotherapy which is constructed within the pastoral support and guidance system but with one omission

and the relevance of that omission is significant to the discourses about ‘therapy culture’, this is what Roger’s describes as the ‘teacher’s real-ness’(p.287):

It means that he feels acceptance’s towards his own real feelings. Thus he becomes a real person in the relationship with his students.
(Rogers 1967, p. 287)

This suggestion by Rogers to be yourself in the educational setting may not resonate with those in FE who are continually subject to managerialist directives and the coercive nature of policy directives at national and local level. However, it is the link between the Rogerian theory proposed here and therapeutic discourses which I further develop in the analysis and aspects of performance aligned to the work of Goffman. By ‘paradoxically, concentrating on a basic social process’ (Charmaz 2007, p.23) in this study - the perceptions of the personal tutor and student relationship, I can ‘gain a more complete picture of the whole setting’. In doing this I consider challenges to the analysis of therapeutic discourses presented by Hayes and Ecclestone (2009) and in the next section introduce the data derived from Ofsted.

6.1.3. The personality characteristics of performance detailed by Ofsted

Performance and attributes of the best performer can be deliberated upon by the individual tutor. Performance attributes are found in the Ofsted literature where comments promote a particular set of performative characteristics and in pursuing this research I highlight in Table 8, the list I constructed from a content analysis of Ofsted reports from 2006 – 2008.

Table 8 Characteristics of ‘performance’ for the tutor related to personality traits using the Grade 1 Ofsted criteria

Patient	Expert subject specialist
Reliable	Honest
Good sense of humour	Engaging
Positive	Dynamic
Challenging	Cheerful

The characteristics resemble a checklist for a personality typology with an emphasis on performance and this may be indicative of a possible preconceived ‘Ofsted teaching personality’ as perceived by the Inspectorate with the combination of characteristics best suited to providing the performance in the classroom to produce a grade 1. Thus

performance and its loaded connotations become pivotal to the measurement of teachers ability and therefore teaching ability is measured as - performance.

This shift is characterized as one from traditional client-centred, public service values based on the needs of clients as interpreted and formulated by professionals, to one benchmarked against best business principles characterized by commitment to the values and mission of the specific organization.

(James and Wahlberg 2007, p.479)

If the development of performance now is critical to the tutors identity so will be the ability to perform.

Teachers are no longer encouraged to have a rationale for practice, account of themselves in terms of a relationship to the meaningfulness of what they do, but are required to produce measurable and 'improving' outputs and performances, what is important is what works ... Beliefs are no longer important - it is output that counts.

(Ball 2003, p.222)

The ability to perform and the subsequent lack of performance within the classroom and especially at critical times during Ofsted observations may leave the tutor exposed to the machinations of the institution and the insistence of developing the characteristics of performance which in turn will lead to high grades in an Ofsted inspection (Coffield 2009). This is probably replicated across the sector in a multitude of institutions as they seek to improve their Ofsted grades for Teaching and Learning. At Pendene College this has become the focus for further CPD training. But why is there now in Education the resonance of tutors as 'performers' and what does this seemingly innocent usage of the term mask as ideology and conceptual differentiation within the workforce?

The personal tutor must perform their role against the backdrop of work practices and policies, which encourage the student to have access to their tutors at all times (this includes e-mail contact).

For the tutor with only the remission of one hour on a timetable per week to service the needs of the whole tutor group the tensions between practice and reality become burdensome (Hodkinson et al 2007). The expansion of inclusion policies has created further domains of pressure especially since FE is now central to 'the economic mission' (HMSO 2006) and –

That means defining its central purpose as being to equip young people and adults with the skills, competences and qualifications that employers want, and which will prepare them for productive, rewarding, high-value employment in a

modern economy. This includes developing the skills and attributes for enterprise and self-employment.

(Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances 2006, p,1)

Further more, inclusion will also expand the student cohort and increase need, as exemplified for those students suffering mental health difficulties according to Warwick et al (2008), since tutors are

...committed to building an inclusive environment to promote the well-being, achievement and attainment of all their students. Furthermore, they had invested in specific programmes and activities that provided focused mental health support to students and helped raise awareness among staff of the ways in which they could promote students' learning and improve their emotional well-being.

(Warwick et al 2008, p,11)

If the concept of emotional labour is evidenced in the role of the personal tutor and the application of performativity included then the complexities of the role, both psychological and social may create resistance, alienation and dissonance.

The emphasis on performance measures share little resemblance to the lived realities of teachers' work and identify the tensions between what teachers believe is important and what they have to be seen to do.

(Jenkins and Conley 2007, p.984)

Coping with such a diverse role with so many facets may provide the necessary psychological altruistic rewards (Erikson 1980) of making the difference in a student's life and providing pastoral support, but at what cost to the individual?

From personal, and by extension, social perspectives, the total suppression of one's emotions is neither a desirable nor a productive strategy. For instance, nobody would like to be devoid of feelings of sadness at the loss of a dear friend or family member, guilt for wrongdoing or shame for inappropriate behaviour. However, what is appropriate or inappropriate in the moral values and social experiences that govern one's emotions remains a contentious issue.

(Syed 2008, p.189)

Or is there the proposition of personal agency and the construction of a lived reality (Denzin 2007) related to 'self efficacy' paramount in the role of the personal tutor with the manifestation of behaviours of resilience, adaption and survival? In contrast to the suggestion that emotional labour is the 'suppression of ones feelings' the reverse could be considered as tutors are encouraged to explore with students in the tutorial setting their 'needs'. If these needs are not manifest as materialist, in that they need a new text book or a library card replacing, much of the tutorial will be focused on target setting and inherent in this process will be explanations of the workload the mode of study and

the impact of life generally, with all its traumas on the life of the student and their inability to complete their work (O'Donnell and Tobbell 2007).

The support provided in the tutorial (Hawkins and Shoet 2006) may expose the tutor to emotional stress as they become the recipient of the maxim - a problem shared is a problem halved, and rather than suppress emotions the professional image may be at stake as demonstrated by the staff in the study by Jenkins and Conley (2007, p.994):

brought issues of emotional management into sharp relief as teachers struggled to balance their genuine concern with professional detachment.

However there are contradictions. The introduction of 'personalised learning' as a concept for inclusive practice (Campbell et al 2007, DfES 2004) may alter the relationship of student and tutor as 'personalised pedagogy in practice' (Campbell et al 2007, p.150) emerges:

....it is some times implied that a particular charismatic persona is needed to achieve good pace and challenge in classroom interaction. This was true in one case, where teacher charisma drove the classroom learning with liveliness and witty exchanges but not in the other [*observed session*] where a quiet, authoritative and respected but unshowy teacher personality was outstandingly effective in creating and driving the learning. Power to teach (Robinson 2004) does not always or necessarily, require a drama queen in the classroom.

The distinct transformation of the identity of the work of the tutor, is taking place. Educational establishments are now places where 'exchange and circulation of emotional resources take place within particular affective economies; the possibilities of change, in other words, are limitless' (Zembylas, 2007, p.454).

I now turn to the formal training process at Pendene College and examine the data from the responses of senior tutors and personal tutors.

6.2. The provision of formal training at the institutional level

When asked in the interview about the formal training provision in Pendene College, senior tutor Adam replied:

Senior tutors deliver the training; we're now working on rota systems because some of us work in areas that lend themselves better to particular units. So Kelly she does the majority of it to be honest, (uh) then we'll have the careers people and (uh) Fran, who's head of student services, to do the unit on student services. I generally do the policies and procedures ones, cos' that's my kind of bag and,

so we work around that. Sam does child protection and the mental ill health and any elements like that. So we tend to lean towards certain areas of expertise. Again, if 'stars' (refers to the electronic programme) comes into it I'm now passed the doing 'stars' for people.

Adam, senior tutor (2006)

There are five training sessions leading to Pendene College's internal qualification - the Personal Tutor Qualification (PTQ) each session covering one module. All five modules are written and delivered, as indicated by Adam, by the senior tutor team.

Having outlined the training Adam then describes the links to policy which focuses on the importance of ECM:

(Um) Every child matters, you know the five or six, I'm not sure, five I think, should be written into this scheme of work, built into the tutorial practices. On all the schemes of work I've identified which button to hit, being healthy, staying safe, (uh) within a given tutorial. There's a, there's a whole resource pack, on (um) the internet under, tutorials, (um) tutorial resources, and everything in that is, is (inaudible), every child matter agenda. They're all listed under the, (um) under the particular areas. So for instance, 'being healthy, staying safe' one hour tutorial, (uh) lessons from healthy eating, looking after yourself, washing your clothes, living with mates and stuff, and all those areas, will, will.. come under that. That's a free resource on the internet for everybody, under tutorial resources if you want to go and have a look.

Adam, senior tutor (2006)

The resources Adam refers to are on the staff intranet system easily accessible for all staff. Significantly the ECM agenda surfacing in the comments is closely aligned to the Ofsted Consultation Report 2008, with the measurement of 'how effective are the guidance and support learners receive in helping them achieve?' (p.27) and 'how safe do learners feel; how well do learners take responsibility for their own health safety and well being?' (p.27) all these are monitored in inspections and thus contribute to the overall grade for Pendene College. The scheme of work developed by the senior tutors for tutorials implements Ofsted policy, and covers the 'ECM domains' (Ofsted 2008, p.17). The Ofsted report states 'we will use the term Every Citizen Matters as Every Child Matters does not apply to many adult learners' (p.17) yet the senior tutors at Pendene College, continue to use the term 'child' confounding the practice in FE where the provision is for adults not children.

The senior tutors demonstrate a collegiate approach to training and the development of tutorial practice:

The personal tutor training course is divided by the senior tutors, (um), and depending on which different unit they're going to be covering (um) and also the

availability of the senior tutors, all depends on who actually takes the training, and delivers the training, but it is discussed between the tutors, what the content of the actual training, what's going to be involved in the actual training, to make sure everything is covered for that unit,

Miranda, senior tutor (2006)

Both Adam and Miranda, as senior tutors, are clear about their role in the organisation of training and the provision of resources. From the evidence in the interviews collected from the senior tutors they acknowledge their role in formal training procedures but how important do they view the training?

The senior tutor team shared similar views about the importance of training with Adam revealing the most critical point about formal training in Pendene College:

In a nutshell they are not forced to have any training. No, not at the moment we've been asking for them to link that to their appraisal, or whatever other system they're gonna use now. (um) because as we've found out, a guy can walk off site, be very knowledgeable in the craft skills, they're not though a higher education route, they've done work based learning route generally. Like myself, I'm that and you don't understand the concept of personal tutoring. We're taken straight off the building site and we're put in front of a class.

Adam, senior tutor (2006)

Adam indicates the unpreparedness of tutors as they face the demands of being a personal tutor. He describes the normality of moving from the building site to a classroom the next day, as common place practice and highlights the preference to make training compulsory by aligning it to appraisal. Training at Pendene is incidental. It is neither a prerequisite for becoming a personal tutor nor is it a compulsory requirement. Miranda confirms this statement of non-compulsory training for personal tutors and adds –

(Um), at the moment there isn't anything compulsory, (um) if you are now, (um) taking part in your PGCE course, so to become a lecturer, then Unit 1, which is all about the personal tutors, (um) is not part of, (laughs) exactly what you've been told, (laughs) so it's now part of it and you have to do that, so it's quite nice really, so you do it if you do get to become a personal tutor then you have got the basis of what the personal tutor role involves, (um) so, that's really where it sort of stands at the moment.

Miranda, senior tutor (2006)

In referring to the teacher training course Miranda highlights the information which is limited within the current training course and recognises that it may not be wholly

applicable but adds-

and I know a couple of our PGCE students, that have sort of like, come in and they've been, obviously, in here, (um) but have done the first one, they've then actually asked me if I can give them a hand, so, they've gone onto complete other units, and even though they are not personal tutors though, there are a couple of the units they can't do unless they are actually a personal tutor, in does mean they can cover quite a few of the units as well. So it's been really good.

Miranda, senior tutor (2006)

The training for some departments and centres has further complications as outlined by Malcolm -

(Uh), this is where it's hit and miss, certainly from my point of view, because obviously as an outline centre, I, (um) my original attention was to run PTQ, Personal Tutor Qualifications on the sites, (um) but what we found was that because quite a lot of them were experienced already (uh) as tutors of the take up was very low, so we then said, it was o.k., your access as a personal tutor qualifications on other sites, and I would recommend that and encourage new personal tutors to do.

Malcolm, senior tutor (2006)

Aware of the issues inherent in the provision of training across the different college sites he adds-

But apart from that, if they don't access that then it's really down to (um) one to one sessions with me,

Malcolm, senior tutor (2006)

Malcolm also notes possible proposed changes adding that -

We're, we're actually getting potential applicants for a teaching post, to do a short presentation or a short session with a group of students, and getting their feed back. We don't currently yet do it for people who are appointed as course managers and personal tutors, and you know, perhaps it's something we need to look at doing, is saying, "Ok, well part of your role is gonna be personal tutoring therefore, what we are gonna do, is introduce you to a small group of students, and you're just gonna have a chat with them, we're just gonna get some feedback, with them, on how they felt about (uh) about you, as a, (uh) as a person, as a tutor."

This has implications for future practice and training and as Malcolm infers, will include the learner voice.

Since the training was not compulsory I needed to establish how many personal tutors' had pursued the formal training qualification and achieved the PTQ and what the personal tutors views were of the provision of 'training'.

6.2.1. The personal tutors' response to formal training

In order to establish responses to formal training I asked the personal tutors the question 'Do you have a personal tutor qualification?' These elicited a variety of responses, sometimes evasive, but often direct:

(Um) that depends what you mean by that, (um) I did a certificate, a national certificate in counselling skills and development of learning. (Um)... which was (uh-hum) a bit of a time ago now?

Probably, I did that about 15 years ago which was very good. But I don't have formal qualifications, and I've haven't attended recent counselling sessions, (um) I did attend one and I found it rather patronizing. And that's just barmy to think, well if that's the attitude. It may be because a lot of people there were inexperienced and so on, I felt a little bit out of it.

James, personal tutor (2006)

Whilst Cathy, as a new entrant to the profession, refers to her teaching training qualification reflecting the response from Miranda, the senior tutor,

My independent study module was the mentoring, tutoring and guidance in my but no other qualifications.

Cathy, personal tutor (2006)

What surfaced in the data was that only three tutors (from the sample twenty) attended the first training module of the Personal Tutor Qualification (PTQ). This tutor explained the relevance of the information she received and her memory of what had taken place:

Yes, I have. I attended one of them, I can't remember, oh last year, the year before, yes I have attended one of those but again it is slightly different because it is geared obviously to main stream students where as our students aren't in main stream and we have the added problems of having you know behavioural problems with them and pre-six teens, so sometimes its not quite relevant the training to actually the cohort students you deal with.

Maggie, personal tutor (2006)

The remainder of the sample did not have and have not taken part in any personal tutoring training qualification. This included any external qualification obtained from an external awarding body and also referred to the internal qualification provided by Pendene College. This is critical information since if personal tutors did not pursue

formal training for the role of personal tutor how did they acquire the necessary skills and understanding to perform the role?

6.2.2. Social processes shaping practice in Pendene College

Having established views about formal training and personal tutoring from the different participants within Pendene College I now focus on the informal social processes in the practice of FE tutors which inform training. I need to discover apart from the formal training taking place, what other processes are informing the tutor role practice in Pendene College, conscious that as Coffield explains:

Politicians and policy makers no longer concern themselves solely with strategic issues such as funding, targets and performance indicators, but with professional topics such as how students should learn, how tutors should teach and what methods they should use.

(Coffield, 2009, p.385)

Rawolle and Lingard (2008), refer to the:

potential, then, to talk about a policy habitus, implying the sets of dispositions that dispose agents to produce practices related to policies.

(Rawolle and Lingard, 2008, p.731).

In exploring the data I consider the link to policy as a relational concept and its importance in defining the role of the personal tutor. I consider the dispositions of the personal tutors. This is an important aspect of the discussion in this chapter since the work of both personal tutors in Pendene College and in FE is subjected to inspection. Structural and social relations within the college are shaping practice and personal tutors may consciously identify and respond to the dictats from Ofsted. Thus identifying the link to policy and agency is pivotal to understanding the complex nature of the work of the personal tutor. Compliance could be an important feature characterizing their work but are personal tutors responding to what Coffield refers to as the culture of compliance when he states: 'No mention is made of the fact that 'the culture of compliance' was and remains a rational response by providers to the plethora of policy initiatives from government' (Coffield 2009, p.380) - are personal tutors conforming to policy and the demands of Ofsted as part of social processes taking place in Pendene College?

In considering this question I develop a framework for analysis using Lave and Wenger's theory, 'legitimate peripheral participation' and the application of 'communities of practice' (Wenger 1998). Communities of practice, with its distinctive

characteristics of ‘master and apprentice’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991) provide an explanation as:

theory, in which the production, transformation and change in the identities of persons, knowledgeable skill in practice and communities of practice, are realized in the lived-in world of engagement in everyday activity
(Lave and Wenger 1991, p.47).

Avis et al (2010) notes that, ‘we absorb the way the world around us works, however messy so that incongruities become familiar and unnoticed’ (p.34) and, as I shall discuss, the ‘incongruities’ of practice emerge as senior tutors and personal tutors talk about training. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) note that -

Whether he wants to or is even aware of it, the teacher must define himself by reference to the social definition of a practice, which in its traditional form cannot forego some dramatic action.
(Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, p.124).

The role of the personal tutor and the development of their practice as personal tutors, is also reliant on other social processes; Bourdieu’s concept of habitus provides an additional framework for analysis. Rawolle and Lingard note that, ‘like practice, habitus is an open concept that, in its most general applications, indicates the socially developed capacity to act appropriately’, (Rawolle and Lingard 2008, p.731). As I shall discuss in this chapter, the role of the personal tutor differs across departments within Pendene College, replicating Bourdieu’s ‘multiplicity of social fields’. However, I will demonstrate that the focus of their practice remains the same; retaining students on courses.

In the next section of this chapter I examine the informal training processes taking place in Pendene College. I consider the theoretical explanations and detail the responses from the two major research groups. I begin with the senior tutors.

6.2.3. Senior tutors’ response to informal processes of training

Within the community of practice, Wenger (1998) suggests that learning is taking place as individuals ‘participate and observe practice’ (p.179): a process Wenger refers to as ‘alignment’; is taking place where by ‘the process of alignment bridges time and space to form broader enterprises so that participants become connected through the coordination of their energies, actions and practices’ (p.179). More importantly his definition of the alignment process also involves explanations of the ‘practice’ within

Pendene College, since Wenger notes that:

We may engage with others in the community of practice without managing or caring to align this practice with a broader enterprise, such as the demands of the institution in the context of which we live.

(Wenger 1998, p.179).

Were the personal tutors developing within a community of practice, agency and participation, which denied the demands of the institution? Some of the senior tutors may have ignored forms of resistance although they were aware of tutor responses to audit procedures. One senior tutor recognises the modelling taking place within the educational setting and adds:

they generally respond by how they were been taught (uh) I know I did, it was a long while ago. How did my tutor teach me? That's how, well that's my.. teaching student input. Cos they've had no training in most cases.

Ben, senior tutor (2006)

For Adam, as a senior tutor, he recognises there are other issues informing the shaping of practice and notes that -

There's so much to learn and these guys and girls find it difficult because they don't come from an academic background. They can cope with it if there, if it's explained to them, but having the time, not me so much, them, getting the time to sit down with them, cos' the minute they're here, they're on full time, or (inaudible) 50 hours min, if they're part time, they just, ya know, don't get any spare time. Ya know, in, teach, go home. (uh), that is gone off the beaten track...

Adam, senior tutor (2006)

In recognising the reality of the situation Miranda states that -

Training is there in the future. And they should have an induction partner. OK. (Ah) That doesn't always happen, especially when you are short of staff, this is a real world, this is not how it should happen.

Miranda, senior tutor (2007)

The predicament for the senior tutors is the contradictions in training, the demanding nature of the personal tutor role and the lack of training within their teams. The senior tutors could see a solution to this problem and reaffirmed the link to appraisal believing that a quality mechanism would prove the solution.

.....until proper training, is linked to the appraisal nothing'll get done. It won't change, and it's a time thing. It's not cos' a lot of the guys don't want to.

Adam, senior tutor (2006)

However one of the senior tutors articulates distinct advantages to a lack of training,

supporting Lave and Wenger's (1991) contribution to the development of a social learning theory, demonstrating that 'situated learning' takes place with a community of practice:

(Um) I, when I first started as a personal tutor, some 10 years ago, I had no formal training at all, as a PTQ (personal tutor qualification) or anything like that, and I actually felt it of benefit to come in without any preconceived ideas, and just be, be myself and I used all my skills as a parent, and as a, as a middle managerial supervisory manager in the forces, used all those skills to apply to the personal tutoring role and it seemed to work relatively well, quite effectively, so I think in some ways, ya know, training can be a disadvantage, because it can actually take away sort of those natural applications that might, serve better to a certain group of students.

Malcolm, senior tutor (2007)

As part of the informal training process the senior tutors also talked about their role in auditing the personal tutorial file. This takes place as part of the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) audit mechanisms. During the process of this research study, the tutorial records moved from paper based to electronic, using a software package system called 'Stars'. The implementation of the software programme has proved problematic with some staff continuing with a paper version. This is significant because it demonstrates that the personal tutors are engaging in resistance to the institutional practice at local level and are conforming to what Lave and Wenger refer to as 'alignment' in that their practice is not fully in step with the institutional directives.

Senior tutors direct the personal tutors on how to organise their files:

You can do it one of two ways, either if you are quite good with the keyboard and the student doesn't mind, my tack would be to always ask first if they mind when we are talking because they find they can authenticate it by using their own password.

Anne, senior tutor (2007)

For Miranda, the files are important and need to be inspected but she also acknowledges that for some personal tutors problems arise and states that -

if tutorial files aren't being, (um) there's not a proper, (um) the feed back isn't there when we do an audit, say for instance they're not being filled out properly, there's bits and pieces missing, not all of the students have been seen, then it would be down to me (inaudible) responsibility to, have a chat with the personal tutor, obviously, you're not (inaudible), but you're not being a personal tutor anymore. It's a case of helping them, that personal tutor to become a better personal tutor, so they can answer, sort of like they need to become really as a personal tutor.

Miranda, senior tutor (2006)

For some senior tutors the tutorial process was transparent and clearly delineated and demonstrates the evidence observed in the Ofsted Report (2008) outlined in the previous section:

You might not have covered all of the things but however you need to have done an initial action plan you. You plan what you think are important points for them against where they are with regards to their initial assessment. So if you have got your initial assessment plan then you have really have to be going through it expeditiously and get them going on where they are with regards to the initial assessment. So then you would have your tutorial with the student and you would have followed up with actions which you could print that off for them target setting, you know, they could follow those through.

Ben, senior tutor (2007)

Completing tutorial records increases the pressure of compliance on personal tutors and adds to the workload of senior tutors who monitor the work of the personal tutors.

The demands from Ofsted of recording students personal and academic development is evidenced in the work of the personal tutors at Pendene College. Wootton (2006) commenting on the changing practice in tutorial provision in the post compulsory sector, notes that ‘when Ofsted and QAA insist on quantifying the success of personal tutoring, they look at retention and achievement statistics,’ (Wootton 2006, p. 117). Ben, as a senior tutor, exemplified this practice as he focused on the systems and outcomes – the student was the object to be measured.

6.2.4. Mentoring and support for personal tutors

Additional informal processes are identified in this section, these also includes the social processes taking place and I identify how they connect to practice as I examine the work of the senior tutor. Without the structure of compulsory formal training, informal practices were surfacing and the senior tutor addressed the issue of shared practice with their personal tutor teams. This was usually individually and reflected what Cunningham (2007) refers to as a ‘mentoring role’ (p.13). Adam commented:

..... he didn't have a clue about course files, tutorials, when that came apparent, you know I sat down with him and explained the system, but he didn't know, and he wants to know because he wants to do it right. So I sat down with Jeff, and worked with him over a period of, yea, just 2 or 3 hours, yea, hour here, hour there. I got his file together and he's up and running and he's great, cos' he's keen, he knows systems, wants to do it, and his files - great.

Adam, senior tutor (2007)

Adam is impressed by tutors who can keep accurate records; files and systems are paramount with the student marginalised in the bureaucratic processes. The file referred to, is the personal tutorial file which is audited in termly departmental inspection rounds.

Very little time is spent with personal tutors and as Malcolm explains:

is that I try and (um) identify who the appointed personal tutors are gonna be for the following year, then catch them as early as possible to discuss the sort of schemes that work, and the (um) and tutoring protocol (uh) for that year,

Malcolm, senior tutor (2007)

He also notes that -

I'm looking for student feed back and how they feel about the questionnaires and I'm looking at the student review meetings and I'm listening to the students, but also I'm just getting the feel for, how well the tutors doing, as well as looking at the key performances.

Malcolm, senior tutor (2007)

This informal induction process constitutes the training and Malcolm identifies a problem with a reliance on informal processes stating:

The problem I had this year is that, is that, we've had 3 courses where personal tutors have come in half way through the year, because the original personal tutors gone on maternity leave, or, or whatever and they've come in halfway through the year, literally just dropped straight in and (um, uh), and with very little experience or, or, or understanding of what the personal tutoring role is and that's been very hit and miss, though it hasn't, it hasn't altogether failed,

Malcolm, senior tutor (2007)

The senior tutors appear to rely upon the personal tutors learning their role from other personal tutors. The workplace becomes the arena for the absorption of social learning processes and reflects Wenger's explanation of learning a role in the work environment. This draws upon Bandura's (1977) original concept of social learning which provides behaviours of imitation, role modelling and observation to be pivotal to the development of learning in a social environment. The senior tutors observe that tutors acquire the skills within the community of practice. Some of the skills they perceive are inherent in personality and leadership styles.

I mean, leadership, I think leadership is the key element so somebody who (uh), somebody who has a good leadership style and that obviously depends on the group. so I won't specify, I couldn't specify what style of leadership would be a good personal tutor, because, (um) some require, - require a more - style of leader, (uh) whereas others can be (uh) ya know, (uh) far more relaxed in their

approach, but it's finding the right style of leadership, to the group of students that your working with, (um) but at the same time being (um) (uh), be human, they need to see that not only are you leading them to where they need to go, but, but also they are approachable and, and, that they, that they're relaxed and they can be (um) be somebody that you can trust and confide in (um).

Malcolm, senior tutor (2007)

The perception of the style of leadership and the personality qualities become intertwined as Malcolm seeks to construct the perception of the 'good tutor'. In reflecting upon his team and his own role in supporting and mentoring his teams he adds -

I'm very proud of my personal tutor team. Ya know, I...I think that (um), all said, even the inconsistencies, I (um), took the job on as senior tutor, because actually from the outside I thought it was gonna be (um, uh) relatively easy in terms of the...the...the management because (um) the tutors were doing by and large what we wanted them to do, and they were all doing it in different ways and, (uh) and to greater or lesser levels, but it was happening and the students were being supported and (um) it sort of,...part of the ethos, at the...at them...(um) in a small college, like ... college is part of the ethos, you know.. That we have a support team, and that we, we engender this support culture.

So I was relatively confident, by taking the role of senior tutor, there wouldn't be too much work in that area.

Malcolm, senior tutor (2007)

In considering his teams and their characteristics Malcolm presents a distinctive portrait of the qualities of personal tutors.

For senior tutor Mary the role of supporting the personal tutors is an enjoyable one and she comments that -

I do enjoy it I really do. I think it is a constant learning process because I think you are always challenged with something new. And because everybody else is, organisations change, you have to be up to date, you have understand the systems and be up to date. Just something simple like applying to university from data to electronic you have to make sure that the tutors can do it. And you would do that definitely. Yes.

Mary, senior tutor (2007)

Some of the characteristics Malcolm mentions are also part of the therapist's repertoire of skills and are conducive to what Knapp refers to as , 'a consistent exchange of

information and feelings between you and the client' (Knapp 2007, p.113). Training is superseded by a reliance on personality characteristics of individual personal tutors with a hierarchy of preferred traits evidenced in senior tutor's comments.

6.2.5. Learning the role of being a personal tutor

Many personal tutors come to the role as indicated in the senior tutor comments, without experience of the role and learn from observing others. Lave and Wenger (2006) refined the concept of social learning and evolve a concept which describes a role for participants engaging in social interaction. They use the term '*legitimate peripheral participation*' to determine those within the community and establishment, located on the periphery as '*apprentices*'. The role of '*master and apprentice*' (Lave and Wenger 1991, p.91) are recognizable labels which can be used when discussing personal tutorial practice. But Lave and Wenger establish that though the label 'master' infers a hierarchical position, within the community of practice' (Lave and Wenger 1991 p.94.) 'to take a decentred view of master - apprentice relations leads to an understanding that mastery resides not in the master but in the organization of the community of practice of which the master is a part' (p.94).

New tutors joining a 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger p.98) become the 'newcomers' (p.57) and through their legitimate peripheral participation they become apprentice personal tutors. Situated learning takes place within the social community of the college environment and the personal tutors are both apprentice, in the context of being a personal tutor, and master when they enter a classroom as a subject specialist. Lave and Wenger refer to this as a necessary development within all communities so that practice can be learned by newcomers as they establish their professional identities. But this process is not static and Lave and Wenger note that in, 'granting legitimate participation to newcomers with their own viewpoints introduces into any community of practice all the tensions of the continuity-displacement contradiction' (p.116). Thus the personal tutors at Pendene College will also be part of the cyclical process of sustaining practice, socially reproducing the institutional practice and eventually replacing their 'masters'.

As newcomers the apprentice personal tutors at Pendene College replicated personal tutorial practice but they also had their own views and 'these may be muted, though not extinguished, by the differences of power between old-timers and newcomers' (p.116)

which surfaced in the data. The senior tutors support and are members of this community of practice but they are not necessarily the only masters present since the community at Pendene College will contain personal tutors who are ‘old timers’, (p.57). Associated with the dynamic of the social processes; inherent in the concept of legitimate peripheral participation, is the conflict and tensions which arise within the ‘community’ and this itself is worthy of further research.

In continuing to examine the responses to informal training I next consider the perceptions of the personal tutors. Informal training centres on quality mechanisms which are linked to Ofsted directives and as I shall demonstrate, the work of the personal tutor is shaped by policy demands at a local level.

6.2.6. Responding to national directives and conforming to tutorial practice

The locus of work for the personal tutor is the tutorial with their students. As previously outlined in chapter 2, the Ofsted report (2008) for Pendene College noted that target setting, using SMART targets, the tracking of students using electronic data software, and continual monitoring and collection of data of students at risk of not completing their courses, is evidenced in tutorials. However, this rigorous level of monitoring has implications for practice. Some of the personal tutors question the bureaucracy:

These bits of paper – how do they help me help the students?
Sandy, personal tutor (2007)

What a waste of time – I have to talk to the students not write about them
Ali, personal tutor (2007)

It takes hours and I just haven’t got the time what with everything else, I really do try but I’m sorry – its not me but I can’t fit it all in but the at risk stuff I do - I’m usually late with that – but its important so you have to do it.
Suzie, personal tutor (2007)

Suzie recognises the importance of the ‘safeguarding’ issues and is responsive but is feeling overwhelmed by the volume of work attached to her monitoring role, whilst Ali and Sandy are much more dismissive of the monitoring procedures. Other personal tutors recognise the monitoring process is a problem but conforms to the institutional demands:

Well we have to do it – you just get on with it
Roger, personal tutor (2007)

It’s okay – I try and Malcolm (senior tutor) always helps
Alan, personal tutor (2006)

You know, you have got to be selective about what you put into the file but for the file I make sure that all the assessments all the deadlines, all the SMART targets are being met

Sandy, personal tutor (2006)

It is a demanding role that of a tutor, you have got a lot of pressures. I think a lot of pressures are put on us that don't have to be there because someone wants to sit in an office and say that's a good idea, that might tick a few more boxes and all the rest of it, but they don't understand, they are not on the coal face, they are not working, they don't have the pressures, they are just doing a paper exercise, and that's what really irritates me.

Mel, personal tutor (2006)

Roger, Alan, Sandy and Mel, like so many other personal tutors were responding to the directives from the senior tutors and conforming to practice, but the practice was also mediated. Personal tutors were not wholly compliant as revealed in the earlier section. From the Ofsted frame work, Ofsted Reports, web pages and dictats, advice on how to improve 'retention and achievement', 'the learner experience' and improve 'support and guidance' continue to provide an increasing deluge of information to be implemented at local level. By necessity the senior tutor must inform practice within tutorials which meets the criteria of Ofsted. In Pendene College, the data examined, suggests that the informal training process is regulated by audit mechanisms and monitored by the senior tutor.

Personal tutors are responsive in varying degrees to the monitoring processes. In understanding the multi-faceted role of the personal tutor and the informal training processes which shape their practice I consider in the following section their responses and reveal how personal tutors shape a very distinctive approach to practice as they mediate policy 'individually' at local level. Their perceptions of personal tutoring and their engagement with students, is at the heart of this study and in the next section, the data from the personal tutors provides a more complex picture of agency and human interaction, and links to Bourdieu's 'multiplicity of social fields', and Rawolle and Lingard's (2008) notion of acting appropriately in response to policy; this further illuminates how the role of the personal tutor is shaped in Pendene College.

6.3. An empathetic approach shaping informal processes

In this section I focus on informal processes and illuminate how they shape the personal tutor role. I have detailed in the literature review the concept and interpretation in educational practice of ‘an ethic of care’ which is embedded in the policy of Every Child Matters initiative. This ethos of care, demonstrated as empathy, emerges in the data and is used to counter Ecclestone and Hayes’ (2009) convictions that the relational aspect of the tutorial relationship are distinctively therapeutic and damaging to the students as they ‘diminish’ the individuals capacity to cope. If an empathetic approach is promoted by the personal tutors in Pendene College is it therapeutic or is it driven by the economic demands of retention?

This is a complex question which underscores Ecclestone and Hayes concept of ‘therapeutic’ but changes the lens, which Charmaz (2006) considers is an important aspect for researchers in examining the context of the setting in order to ‘gain confidence in your perceptions of your data and in your theorising about them’, (Charmaz 2006, p.110). By examining what tutors ‘say’, I will be developing a new research pathway mindful of Pring’s (2005) comments that, ‘researchers of educational practice cannot ignore the language through which the practice is described and evaluated (Pring 2005, p.26). I examine the language personal tutors use since it could prove a key to understanding the relationship of the personal tutor role and the structural demands of the institution.

6.3.1. Therapeutic language use by personal tutors

There is a conundrum, however, in pursuing the prospect of therapeutic language and personal tutoring – would this not reinforce Ecclestone and Hayes premise that the FE College promotes the therapeutic? This promotion of the therapeutic in FE may be evidenced but their concerns are about the politicisation of the emotional agenda in education (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009, p.22) whilst this study is concerned with what is shaping the role of the personal tutor. This is an important distinction in the focus of this thesis and I therefore decided to examine the data and consider not only the context of the language personal tutors use but also search for the links to retention.

I completed a content analysis of the data and used NVivo to construct a data set (Bazeley 2007, p.84) to map the repetition of therapy terms. These are recorded in Table 9 and are based upon the work of Knapp (2007) and Mayer et al (2004) who are major

researchers in the field of emotional intelligence research and therapeutic communication.

Table 9. The number of tutors who used terms of therapy

Therapeutic term	Number of tutors
Empathy	11
Active listening	19
Sensitivity	16
Emotional support	22
Emotional intelligence	14
Counselling	27
Guilt	8
Depression	10
Self –esteem	23
Rapport	18
Reframing	6
Rephrasing	2
Vulnerability	14
Fragile	9
Transference	2
At risk	4

Interview data N - 30

The terms emotional support, self esteem and counselling are used regularly by the personal tutors and demonstrate what Tannen (2007) refers to as ‘repetition’ (Tannen 2007, p.61). Writing about conversational discourse and the ‘role of language in human relationships’, she notes that, ‘it bonds participants to the discourse and to each other, linking individual speakers in a conversation and in relationships’ (p.61). An example of this is the descriptive use of therapy terms evidenced by Julia who uses the terminology of the therapist/counsellor when talking about her work with national diploma students. She is very concerned about the emotional state of some of her students and uses the terms ‘self esteem’ and ‘vulnerable’ when referring to her practice:

They are so vulnerable, and some have such low self-esteem that I just worry about their coping strategies.

Julia, personal tutor (2006)

Whilst Julia expresses concern about the nature of, and problems with, demanding girls and teenage boys – Julie states how emotions dominate the agenda in tutorials and the difficulty she faces in steering the student from their ‘emotions’ to ‘back to the work’:

But the students often use the tutorial to fulfill their emotions, like I am not getting on with my work because and they like to go off on a tangent and I find it sometimes difficult to manage with that - to manage them taking over telling me

about their personal issues rather than me bringing it back to their work really.
Julie, personal tutor (2007)

The NVivo results indicate that the personal tutors at Pendene College use the language of therapy; this does not however infer that they were also replicating the skills in practice but it does identify the proliferation of the language of the therapist/counsellor and their use by tutors in Pendene College (Table 9). The personal tutors were using the language of therapy mainly when describing their students and reflecting ‘the function of repetition in conversation’ noted by Tannen as ‘coherence and interpersonal involvement’ (p.58). Such ‘involvement’ may partially explain how the language serves as a tool in establishing relationships and forging informal training in the practice of the personal tutors.

But are there other social constructs to consider concerning ‘practice’? Since the personal tutors had shared practice evidenced in the language they used, did this also reflect the development of a ‘community of practice’ and reinforce the importance of informal training practices embodied in Lave and Wenger’s (1991) development of situated learning? Their membership of the community suggested by Warford (2011) could just account for the support they receive and not the social construction of membership which Lave and Wenger suggests. In developing this alternative explanation for membership of a community, Warford (2011) suggests the community of practice concept and situated learning may merely account for support received. Thus support from senior tutors could be attributed to what Warford describes as the ‘zone of proximal teacher development’ (ZPTD) (Warford 2011, p.252), in that, just as scaffolding is put in place to help learners, Warford uses the Vygotskian term of scaffolding to account for support given to new teachers. Embedded in this Vygotskian approach of scaffolded support, is the possible explanation of social processes at work which shape the practice of personal tutors

Therefore belonging to a community of practice may only provide a partial explanation. The master and apprentice role described in chapter two, has relevant currency to the symbiotic relationship of personal tutor and senior tutor but a more complex picture is emerging from the data. I consider this in the next section as I examine the ‘situated learning’ that takes place at the chalk face and identify how informal processes shape the work of the personal tutors in the delivery of the pastoral curriculum of the social and emotional. This also illuminates the practice element of tutorials as perceived by the

personal tutors as they cope with the social and emotional needs of their students.

6.3.2. Addressing the social and emotional needs in tutorials

The Scheme of Work (SOW) for the tutorial sessions (academic year 2006/7) at Pendene College is heavily dominated by the PSHE agenda and includes sessions on drug education and sexual health and reflects Ball's (2008) comment that, 'our 'learning' is also expanding to include health, fitness and sexual behaviour, and citizenship and entrepreneurship' (Ball 2008, p.202). With this emphasis on the personal and social, tutors follow up these group tutorial sessions with individual tutorials as necessary. Several tutors have reservations about the scope of this work and their own ability to 'follow through', for example:

tutorials ...it's all about drugs and sex - god these kids have interesting lives...I wouldn't know where to begin but luckily - (senior tutor) looks after us.

David, personal tutor (2007)

there is a lot you need to know about Chlamydia.....

Cathy, personal tutor (2006)

Some of the tutors here are really good and know their stuff – but we don't..... (laughs).

Tim, personal tutor (2007)

what can I say to a pregnant lass.....I worry about it

Dave, personal tutor (2007)

I draw upon the work of Hart (1996) to explore these responses from the personal tutors at Pendene College. In doing this I consider how they are coping with the social and emotional in tutorials and identify similarities which provide further insights and knowledge from the findings in my research. In Hart's study on the comparison of roles of the personal tutor and counsellor, she identified several aspects of similarity in the roles of the counsellor and their practice, and the work of the personal tutor.

The counsellors in the Hart (1996, p.86) study, were well practiced in active listening, reframing and prompting and she noted that:

Tutors felt most confident in dealing with course guidance, attendance and discipline whereas counsellors did not feel at all confident about these types of problems, supporting the notion of the academic-pastoral divide.

It is James who positions himself within the academic-guidance personal tutor role, as suggested by the tutors in Hart's study and is clear about his own lack of ability to cope

with the 'emotional'. He advises students to seek 'counselling help'.

But there was evidence from the sample of tutors in the Hart study to suggest

Tutors do feel some confidence in dealing with *personal* problems such as conflicts with friends and with staff.The areas where they felt least confident were drug abuse and pregnancy.

(Hart 1996, p.87)

Over a decade later from the Hart study some of the personal tutors at Pendene College are concerned about their ability to cope with personal and social issues but some were also expressing the recognition of the level of emotional support they were now providing; Cathy felt they needed specific training:

I need to get across some information to the student as well but usually the majority of the tutorials - I inevitably get told about personal circumstances and how it affects their learning and their ability to submit work. So I feel a bit of a counsellor - that is very frequent and I feel sometimes that I should have taken a counselling examination rather than teaching training course.

Cathy, personal tutor (2007)

Other tutors although commenting on their own inadequacy to cope with their students emotional problems, reinforced some of the professional skills for a counsellor outlined by Knapp (p. 101-5) where being a '*listening ear*' is fundamental to the skill of active listening - ironically Cathy felt that this was all she could do in terms of support:

I have been told quite a lot of, and you feel you are taking all that and you haven't always got the right answers, a listening ear I think and that's all you can do

Cathy, personal tutor (2006)

Whilst Mel, found the listening a pleasurable experience it was also about maintaining the necessary boundaries:

I actually really enjoy listening to the students, but you have got to obviously you are not the social worker, there is a cut-off point, and you have to know your limitations and your boundaries and when you have got to hand that over to the professional bodies that are able to deal with them.

Mel, personal tutor (2006)

Hart's study finally concluded that, 'the differences found in this study is not large, and it is interesting how similar tutors and counsellors are in their use of skills' (p.92). From personal tutor's accounts of their role as personal tutors in Pendene College, empathy is a key characteristic of their work and becomes an important aspect of the relational. Farside (2007) notes that 'the greater people's ability to empathise, the greater their

potential to be altruistic', (p.474). Whilst altruism is often disputed as merely an action to bring selfish satisfaction, DeWall & Baumeister (2006) from their psychological experiments on social exclusion, explain that those who are not nurtured, fail to empathise and thus remain insensitive to the needs of others. In Pendene College many of the tutors are empathetic as they provide guidance and support for their students.

6.3.3. Separating the academic from the emotional needs

However not all tutors dealt with emotional support, the role of academic guidance is also a feature of the tutorial and the 'assessed needs of individual in order to tackle any underachievement' (Ofsted 2008, p.5). One other tutor Andy, who worked with Foundation Degree students, also did this and engaged in discussions about the division of the role of academic support as opposed to the pastoral support and provision for emotionally vulnerable students:

I think there is a case for investigating whether actually the tutorial process should be separated from the academic process and whilst tutors from an academic point of view ...are ideally placed to help students with the problems that they are having on the course and understanding the difficulties that individual students are having with the academic regime...

Andy, personal tutor (2006)

Andy is aware of the academic challenges facing some students. He epitomises tutors working within the 'dual sector' and his experience resonates with the work of those researching the dual sector and those researching the expansion of Foundation Degrees (Bathmaker et al 2008, Bathmaker and Thomas 2009, Winter and Dismore 2010). Noting that 'Foundation Degrees attract people from a broad range of backgrounds, particularly low participation neighbourhoods', (Winter and Dismore, p.254) Andy is coping with some students who have low social and cultural capital. In the future, such non traditional higher education students will be further attracted to HE provision in an FE setting as the economics of current government policy for funding loans impacts upon degree choices. For Andy, in coping with the non traditional students, he recognises the positive advantages of segregating the academic in tutorials from the social and emotional. By doing this he feels tutors will be able to support the student's academic work and this in turn will address underachievement.

This concept of underachievement is integral to the provision of information, advice and guidance which I highlighted in chapter two and prompts the question - what is the personal tutor's role in this? Whilst this topic of 'underachievement' is beyond the

scope of my original study, I include it here since it has inferences for practice for personal tutors in Pendene College. For example Bullock and Fertig's (2003, p.331) study which 'explored the nature and effectiveness of the tutorial experience in the eyes of both students and tutors', highlighted how personal tutors could be effective in helping support learning with some tutors in the study believing that 'strategies for improving retention and enhancing achievement were essentially the same' (p.338). The tutors interviewed in their study, stated that 'the prime purpose of the tutorial was to enrich learning' (p.338). However Bullock and Fertig noted that 'too often the feeling from student respondents was that the one-to-one tutorials were 'done' to them,' and this the students inferred was about 'the paperwork associated with the tutorial process' (p.340). The recording and monitoring of the students by the tutors in Bullock and Fertig's study reveals the difference in the student views of the purpose of tutorials and that of the tutor. Similarly tensions arising from the tutorial processes are evidenced in the findings emerging in this study as personal tutors reconcile support for learning with the completion of tutorial records which map attendance and progress, record formative and summative results and additionally record the social and emotional status of the student.

Moreover, this process of recording personal information relies upon a quality of conversation with the student enhanced by the use of therapeutic language. From the points discussed in previous sections in this chapter and with reference to Hart's study, personal tutors at Pendene College were engaging in tutorial practice which both supported learning and adopted a counselling tone. In doing this personal tutors were engaging in processes which resonate with the work of the therapist as explained by Knapp:

Therapists are obliged to maintain thorough client records-including information detailing the common sense for treatment, initial problem, diagnostic information, therapeutic goals, progress notes, and collateral information - in order to review to clinical progress and as a professional service to other providers who may be involved with or take over the care of the client.

(Knapp 2007 p.13)

The insights and knowledge emerging in the data discussed in this section relates to work practices and the social processes shaping personal tutorials. In developing their work practices the personal tutors were aligning their roles to the work of counsellors. This helped them collect the necessary data for their records, for audit purposes and for external inspections and reflects how the social relational and structural impacts upon

their practice.

6.3.4. The institutional construction of tutorial practice

For some of the senior tutors there was an organisational set of practices which developed within a framework of specialism and competencies, as reflected in the comments by the following senior tutor:

Corporate messages are sent via email electronically and we would have had training and then , very much like behaviour issues, and the one on child protection that all came centrally - we all had a chance to view it or in some cases we take it and modify it for our particular staff . So if we feel a bit more is needed - child protection is classic, we rolled it out the first time and we had Katy who is very used to delivering it - and she wanted to add things to it which added a different dimension to it and gave more information which engaged people because the family one which was so just giving information - the one I did at - it was a bit more interactive . And then it came to be very mechanical so I think sometimes the shock issue they tend to remember. And it makes them stop and pause and think about things.

Adam, senior tutor (2007)

For the other teams there were schemes of work with detailed plans for following practice:

That really comes down to the course manager and the personal tutor, (um) and that's a large part of their responsibility. (uh) but again, as a senior tutor I (um) arrange days for my teams, where we have people coming in from Brooks to do (um) talks about Social Health, (uh) we have people coming in to do drugs talks, (uh) driving, (uh) drink driving, so major sort of days, (um) is about 6 or 7 I've organized this year, which obviously comes in with every child matters as well, to make sure that those key things are picked up throughout the year for all the students, so they all have to attend those. (Um) and then the weekly (uh) sort of tutorials, is to make sure that every student has at least one, one to one tutorial a term, (um) so, to make sure they have that quality time with their personal tutor, if there are any problems, it's also down to the personal tutor to make sure that they allow time (um) if the student comes to them at any other time.... Any other point, because it can be obviously, he might not have your tutorial for 6 weeks, but you've got something really pressing, there could be something happening at home, so to make sure that you're available to your students anyway, (uh) whenever, but the definite thing is to make sure that they have one at least, a term. Sometimes it can be 2. (Coughs) excuse me.

Miranda, senior tutor (2007)

The development of practice is evidenced as the tutorial is subdivided and categorized as 'quality time'. However within this framework of institutional practice inherent in senior tutors comments were the need to support students but also to be mindful of the issue of retaining students and this is prominent in the following comments from Ben-

and they used a risk assessment process where, a student at interview, if they

ticked three or more key indicators they would be classed as an 'amber warning student', and would be closely supported and closely monitored and closely watched and...because they would be considered a student at risk from the out set.

What they found at.....College is that so much effort was put into those students, cos' they were identified very early on, and everything, all the resources were focused in onto those students, that they were actually losing the retention levels for the other students, became... became worse, because they were spending so much time on these amber warning students.

So it's trying to find the right balance. Yes, identify them early, and (um) point the resources that way, but at the same time not losing sight of the others, because it's very easy to do that sometimes.

Ben, senior tutor (2007)

This statement reflects the senior tutors concerns with addressing the needs of students and maintaining good retention rates. Therefore finding the balance within the tutorial provision presents personal tutors with additional pressures. However quality time is rationed and students are timetabled for one meeting with the personal tutor per term. Were the original concerns of Furedi and Ecclestone, that the education system is nurturing therapeutic ethos and creating emotionally fragile students, evidenced from the interviews with staff? Could dependency be nurtured in one hour a term?

A much more complex picture was emerging from the examination of tutorial practice. The data provides a different explanation and one that suggests a link between the subject tutor and their relationship with a group of students. If there is inadequate time within the tutorial system, then the subject tutor could be pivotal in developing the tutorial relationship. Being the subject tutor and personal tutor for a group of students, could provide key insights in answering the research question - what is shaping the role of the personal tutor?

6.4. The importance of retention and the subject tutors role

In this section I propose a link between the subject tutor and the tutor group. I identify that some tutors working with their personal tutor groups, found it easier to develop strong relationships, bonding with the group, when they were the personal tutors of the subject groups they taught. Constancy of contact therefore may be an important and vital constituent of the personal tutor's characteristic relationship with their students.

In outlining this relationship of bonding and belonging, the seminal work of Bowlby

(1973) illustrates the importance of attachments and the sense of belonging. His work has long been established within social work practice as the theoretical framework which underpins successful relationships from early infancy to young adulthood (chapter 3). Although critiqued by feminists, his work applied to educational practice, highlights how belonging is an important constituent of the social integration of the student. When applying this to a sense of belonging forged in the personal tutorial relationship, there would appear to be little time for this to occur. Could the lack of time and contact be a constraint to what Ecclestone (2004) refers to as the therapeutic relationship in education?

In examining the context of the importance of the subject tutor, as personal tutor, I discover whether or not the participants in this study attached importance to the role of the personal tutor being separate from subject delivery. This is important in this study because the subject tutors may have an added reason to provide additional support for their students and retain them on their course - that of retention. Being able to demonstrate their skills as professional subject tutors will be measured, in Pendene College, by pass rates on a course and also retention rates. The responses from the tutors provided a variety of opinions:

I think it's just (short pause), it's not important to have a subject person as the tutor, but in our department it really, really helps. (Um) Just because, if you don't have that person, you might see your tutor just for 45 minutes, or one hour a week. And I don't see how you're ever going to build up a close relationship, (um) so, I think it can work well for us, potentially. I guess, in vocational areas, there could be a tension and a conflict, between having your subject teacher and your tutor, as one and the same person.

Miranda, senior tutor (2007)

This senior tutor is responsible for numerous teams of tutor in one of the A level centres in Pendene college. The A level tutors would meet with their subject groups for a specified five hours of A levels subject delivery and this would be in addition to the tutorial time. Unlike their vocational colleagues they would have less time with the students and although the senior tutor says it's not a problem - contradicted statements with, 'it really, really helps.'

The practice within some departments is different to that of the A level centre tutor team in the previous example, to provide one personal tutor as subject tutor, for the group, will increase the amount of time the students spend with this subject tutor:

....I think it helps. (um) I, I mean, we do in our department, I know in different parts of the college it is different, (uh) it is quite different in here, (um) butGenerally the course manager is also the personal tutor. (Um) but it does help, because if it is problems with learning in college, they're worried about the way they are progressing, or anything like that, then the areas are very specialist within our subject (um), and it's nice because you are able to say, O.K. we can put some extra time to one side, we can help you with this. So because they have the subject knowledge to help that student as well, I think it is important.

David, vocational tutor (2007)

Many of the personal tutors agree with David, especially those tutoring vocational qualifications, stating its advantages. Senior tutor Mary echoes the advantages of being the personal tutor and the subject tutor noting they are particular to academic disciplines and departments:

*I work with dance and drama and sometimes there is slight tension, with the demands of the curriculum, and the needs of the individual student in tutorial sense and sometimes there's a slight tension there.
But in the main, I think it does work reasonably well to have an overlap, not just one role.*

Mary, senior tutor (2007)

For Anne the focus and responsibility of managing the two roles rests in the personal tutors' ability to set parameters.

Its all about the tutor how you set up your personal tutoring, how you engage with the students, how is important to set your boundaries, why you are there and what you are going to do for them and what they have to - opportunity of seeing you as and when.

Anne, Senior tutor (2007)

However working with the student group as their subject tutor and also their personal tutor may have advantages but Ben stresses the importance of the link to retention and as a senior tutor comments on one of the personal tutors in his team adding that –

..... said 20% of the students were taking up 80% of her time, that doesn't change. That will always be the case, but it's being sure that you don't lose sight of the other 80%, (um) you only need 20 % , you need to make sure they get at the very least 20%, (um, ,um) because otherwise, you end up losing them.

Ben, senior tutor (2006)

There appears agreement within the senior tutor team and the personal tutors, that the role of personal tutor should not be separated from subject delivery. This model is

reflected in the practice in many FE colleges though some colleges employ staff solely as personal tutors. Senior tutor, Anne summarises the advantages of the merged role and states that -

Generally the course manager is also the personal tutor. (Um) but it does help, because if it is problems with learning in college, they're worried about the way they are progressing, or anything like that, then the areas are very specialist within and it's nice because you are..... to be able to say, O.K. we can put some extra time to one side, we can help you with this. So because they have the subject knowledge to help that student as well, I think it is.....

Anne, Senior tutor (2007)

However the importance of the subject tutor and their links to personal tutoring and retention became apparent with a further development in the data which I explore in the next section.

6.4.1. Subject coaching and the role of the subject tutor in retention

As I have discussed and revealed in the data, training is not a prerequisite for the personal tutor role at Pendene College, however the importance of the subject tutor emerged as I continued to search for additional explanations of how informal training was occurring in practice and reinforcing links to retention. This occurred when Subject coaching was initiated in Pendene College. This new initiative emerged in 2008 and is included in this research to evidence the institutional practice at national and local level, determining the role of the personal tutor. Strauss and Corbin (1998) highlight the importance of social conditions and state:

Any explanation of a phenomenon should include the conditions under which it can be found - the broad or more macro conditions as well as the micro conditions of those having more immediate bearing on the phenomenon.

(Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.271)

This also resonates within the theoretical framework of grounded theory in continuing research and Charmaz (2006) adds that this can occur 'even in the later stages' (p.16). She also notes that 'paradoxically, concentrating on a basic social process can help you gain a more complete picture of the whole setting than the former approach common in earlier ethnographic work' (p.23). I began to explore other possibilities of informal training and links to retention in tutorial practice, ironically - this time I was directly involved in the policy initiative of developing subject coaches. This is the focus of the next section where I introduce additional data which illuminates the subject tutor's link to personal tutoring and retention.

6.4.2. The role of the subject learning coaches in Pendene College

The Teaching and Learning Programme (TLP) initiative incorporates the Subject Learning Coaches (SLCs) Programme (2007, p.1), ‘a unique approach for organizations from across the learning and skills sector to transform teaching, training and learning’. These roles within the institution have primarily promoted and supported subject specialists but now, ‘it is increasing learner motivation, improving retention, enhancing success and boosting teacher/trainer morale’. In providing this ‘unique approach’, the inference is that learners become motivated and retention is improved. Pendene College adopted this strategy and once trained as a subject coach with my fellow colleagues on the Teacher Education team, I would be able to develop coaching practice and promote Whitmore’s (2003) GROW model in our support and advisory work. As I will explain this becomes increasingly significant to the role of the personal tutor.

The GROW model represents cognitive behaviour therapy and the acronym represents G – goal; R – reality; O – options; W – will. The training took place in two stages with the first group of four colleagues completing the qualification process and undertaking a coaching role to demonstrate their practice. I was asked by a colleague if he could coach me. Recognising that this could be a research opportunity I asked permission to record the session. Following the session, I recorded my reactions in my research journal and a snapshot of responses is presented in this section.

Whitmore’s GROW model replicates the intrusion into the personal and it forms the basis of the coaching process. The narrative which follows, displays vocabulary which is sometimes hesitant and with words repeated; there are also breaks in the continual prose which are identified as --, indicating sometimes a sudden change in direction of the speaker. The session opened with a very brief ‘hello’ and then began in earnest with:

As teachers we have no problem spoon feeding our students – yet when we’re in, we are in the tutorial position when the student comes to us in a distraught position it’s our role to calm them down and sort them out with practical advice sort them out, -- it’s not where we start.

Matt, Subject Learning Coach (2008)

Here was affirmation - because this aspect of supporting the learner was directed at the subject tutor but was now firmly sited in the ‘tutorial’.

Personal Journal (2008)

The role of the subject tutor and personal tutor had merged. Although this does not necessarily deviate from standard practice it merges the role of guidance and support and subject specialist as one. As the coaching progressed, Matt added that:

we'll know what the problem is and that might require on our part and lots of intuitive understanding and empathy with the student becomes very often, what they say, is .. the problem might not actually be the problem - it may be the symptoms the results of the consequences of a problem which is behind that once the student has genuinely said all they really want to do – it hasn't been channelled by us in any way, we can ask is there anything else.

Matt, Subject Learning Coach (2008)

Thus the cycle of the GROW model, categorized as 'coaching' share similarities with a counselling session and Matt identifies that 'it helps with problems with their course and keeping them here' - ie retaining them on their course.

Matt describes how he uses it in sessions with his teacher trainee:

when I get my IT students to do it we actually - we have triads and one has the problem - one is the counsellor rather - the coach - and the third one is the observer.

Matt, Subject Learning Coach (2008)

The skills inherent in the GROW model, represents the student-centred Rogerian approach. It also illuminates and now shapes the role of subject tutor in guidance and support beyond the remit of subject delivery.

In Pendene College the GROW model is now embedded in the teacher training curriculum providing another informal training process for tutors. Included in the coaching is a set of tasks centred on Goleman's (1998) concept of emotional intelligence. What emerges from this data is the development of the emotional learning agenda previously discussed in chapter two and the shared language of the therapeutic. The data provides further evidence of institutional practice and the reinforcement of retention. Bierman (2008) sounds a warning and states that:

Emotional learning involves meddling with deeply personal, private aspects of workers' lives in an effort to influence and shape their emotions, sometimes with constructive and sometimes with destructive results. Two aspects of emotion have particular relevance in the workplace: emotional intelligence and emotional labour.

(Bierman 2008, p.342)

6.5. The therapeutic relationship and developing the skills of a therapist

In the previous sections, training and skills have been highlighted in the data and linked

to retention. Training has been established as informal and increasingly replicates role acquisition through situated learning. Communication within teams becomes significant since this shared language indicates the dispositions Bourdieu refers to and include the 'linguistic capital' (Bourdieu and Passeron 190, p.90) as indicative of agency and human interaction. The social construction of the tutorial reflects the communication of therapeutic techniques, therapeutic actions and discourses. This is now evidenced in the promotion of Whitmore's GROW model in support work for tutors and used in the DTLLS course.

According to Hayes and Ecclestone, in the FE sector, the tutorial replicates a counselling session where:

Powerful images of people at risk permeate the FE sector where students are between the security of school, higher education or work. Its purposes and activities increasingly focus on pessimistic images of risk and vulnerability and the need to elicit and manage people's personal and psychological capital in the name of enhancing their personal resources.

(Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009 p.85)

The management of the students 'psychological capital' dominates the tutorial process. The characteristics of Goleman's 'emotional intelligence' discussed in chapter two, underpins the GROW model for the 'coaching' approach advocated in subject teams. Developing a relationship where feelings can be discussed is now actively promoted and helps to keep students on courses. This subject based therapeutic relationship is underscored by the premise of working with a client/ student as a professional therapist and Knapp (2007) defines this as:

The therapeutic relationship is by no means devoid of feelings; in fact effective therapy largely depends on expressing, perceiving, and processing feelings as they pertain to the client's life circumstances. Therapy largely consists of acknowledging such feelings and sensitively working with emotionally laden issues while maintaining a professional emotional distance.

(Knapp 2007, p.9)

This form of communication entails the development of skills aligned to the work of the therapist and Knapp outlines how communication can take place within the therapeutic setting and describes how the skills of the therapist can be developed through practice. But does the practice that he details parallel the work of the personal tutor in the educational setting?

Consider the client as an expert on his or her own life and work collaboratively with the client to flesh out a facilitative course of action suitable to the unique needs and attributes of the client. This can involve prompting the client to

discuss the problematic circumstances, identified functional and dysfunctional components and select which parts of the problem that the client is motivated to resolve.

(Knapp 2007, p.7)

The GROW model data from Matt uncannily mirrors Knapp's statement. By substituting the word student for client Knapp's work on therapeutic communication could appear a suitable manual for training personal tutors and Knapp (p.12) adds:

As the therapist your role would be more in the capacity of coaching the client to do as much for him or her self as possible by collaboratively identifying meaningful goals and providing feedback and encouragement.

As previously discussed, target setting is a mandatory part of tutorials. In a therapy session targets become 'goals' and Knapp notes that:

Topics of conversation are guided in order to address those issues specifically related to the therapeutic goals' adding that, 'Unlike casual conversations, wherein the participants particularly discuss things they mutually want to discuss, therapeutic discussions may involve emotionally challenging issues that the client may be hesitant to discuss that which are essential to addressing and resolving problems at hand

(Knapp 2007, p.6).

Several of the tutors provided examples of emotionally challenging issues they have to deal with including, bullying (Roger), legal issues (Celia) conduct in the workplace (Adam) and behaviours linked to stressful situations they were facing at that point in time (Julie). Many of the tutors found the 'emotionally challenging issue' too demanding ie domestic hang ups, marital or other problems with a partner, or partners (James), and avoided where possible engaging in such conversations. For example in tutorials, James who teaches A level and Access students, would signpost support services for the student rather than develop discuss emotional issues:

..... rather than using up my time talking about this, that and the other, I'm not trying to be unsympathetic about it, but say to them, you might find it more productive to go and have counselling with a college counsellor, or who ever, rather than spending too much time with me or a personal tutor, who after all has got other students to think about, whose time is precious anyway, because of his or her teaching commitment.... (um) and (short pause), probably hasn't got the necessary skill or (short pause), empathy, to get to grips with that particular personal issue or whatever it might be.

James, personal tutor (2007)

The separation of the role of the tutor, from the work of the counsellor is for James an issue about empathy. Knapp explains that 'Empathy is used to identify and articulate your awareness of the clients feelings' (p.91) and for James this is a matter of choice

about his engagement with the student. Indirectly he makes a clear judgment about the support and guidance the student needs by signposting the services of the ‘counsellor’ thus making a professional judgment concerning the student and adopting the ‘professional model of tutoring’ (discussed in chapter two) exemplified by Thomas and Hixenbaugh (2006). His language is reflective and acknowledges the importance of empathy in the pastoral relationship thus signifying what Knapp identifies as, ‘therapeutic communication’ (p.2).

For senior tutor Mary, it is an emotional response which personal tutors engage with in their role as personal tutors; in recognising this she reflects in her comments the duality of the role of subject tutor and personal tutor and stresses the need for personal tutors to communicate their passion for the role -

I would love for there to be a steady stream of people who were personal tutors, and are signed up for that fact in an overt way and were really, really, passionate about that role, as passionate as they were about their lecturing role. Because, what I think I’ve noticed over the years is that good tutoring is directly correlated with good potential and achievement, ya know, evidence that if...say I’ve got 20 tutors, at the end of the year, you’ll find some groups, where you’ve got fantastic tutoring, you’ve got full...full...retention and great achievement. And you’ve got other tutor groups, where, I call, is weaker tutoring, you’ve got poor retention and achievement, therefore, I think it’s a fantastically important role, the personal tutor.

Mary, senior tutor (2007)

In stating the link of good tutoring to retention and achievement, Mary reinforces in her statement the ability of the tutors to engage with their role on the public stage and in so doing they must ‘perform’. The role is viewed as an emotional response and one which benefits both the student and the institution; the students achieve and retention rates are maintained. This performance has set criteria and resonates in Goffman’s (1969) dramaturgical model whereby the personal tutors stage a performance and as actors publicly communicate their emotional engagement with the role. This performance however is underpinned by the institutional demands for retention and achievement.

Personal tutors and subject tutors are increasingly immersed in practice which exemplifies the ‘emotional learning agenda’, discussed in chapter two. However, most importantly their practice is shaped by institutional demands reflecting the Ofsted criteria for guidance and support rather than a therapeutic relationship per se as reflected

by Mary's comments.

I've actually been in a meeting today, where...quality and diversity meeting where there's a tendency to push more and more and more into the tutor programme in terms of the delivery sort of thing. At the same time, time is being taken away from tutoring, but anyway, and in another meeting there's more and more of this monitoring and all that kind of tutoring, so it's (um), I think there's probably going to be some decisions made about which way they go

Mary, senior tutor (2007)

6.6. Conclusion

In this chapter I have mapped the formal and informal training provision at national and local level, which is structured by complex social processes. Training or a qualification to be a personal tutor was not a pre-requisite for the personal tutor role nor demanded by the institution. Informal training however occurred and was evidenced in the data as part of the induction and mentoring processes provided by the senior tutor team. This confirmed Bourdieu's concept of habitus and what Rawolle and Lingard (2008) refer to as a, 'bundle of relations' (Rawolle and Lingard, 2008, p. 731) which reflected agency and participation within Pendene College.

In my analysis, attributes of performance were indicated in comments from the senior tutors as positive qualities. In addition the data from Ofsted confirmed a performative orientation in the typology of a teaching personality emphasising the characteristics of performance in the classroom. This was further reflected in the data by the affect of practice on newcomers who were absorbed into the 'community'. 'Situated learning' became the norm as personal tutors developed their practice and in doing this they learned the necessary elements of performance. Coupled with the Vygotskian approach of the senior tutors in providing support for the social and emotional issues they faced, personal tutors were responding to informal training and social processes which underpinned their practice and reinforced performance.

Although some of the tutors were concerned about their ability to participate in the delivery of tutorial topics and discuss emotionally laden issues with their students there was a strong commitment to the development of the team to reinforce the pastoral system. Being a newcomer did not pose a threat to the 'community of practice' as many of the tutors engaged in 'legitimate peripheral participation' and became 'the

apprentice'. Continuous support using a Vygotskyan approach, advocated by Warford (2011) was reflected in the comments from personal tutors as they coped with the social and emotional needs of their students.

Informal training was also reflected in the social processes of therapeutic communication defined by Knapp. This surfaced in the data and provided explanations of how personal tutors are using the language of the counselor, in their roles as personal tutors (Table 9). Whilst the data from interviews suggested a reliance on the language of therapy, the demands of the 'practice' were about meeting the Ofsted criteria. The demands of the institution presented a structural positioning of the personal tutorial within quality demands of internal quality mechanisms and the external demands of documentation for Ofsted inspections. Within the parameters of the structure of the personal tutorial competing demands are made upon the personal tutors to fulfill their roles as arbiters of quality mechanisms. In fulfilling this role they enter a social relationship within the institution which is bound by the agenda of 'raising achievement' (Ofsted 2008, p.1) and monitoring the 'vulnerable' who are 'at risk' (Furedi 2003, p.131). All reinforce the importance of retention as a core activity for the personal tutor to focus on in their practice when providing support and guidance for students.

Other social processes which informally shaped the work of the personal tutor and in outlining the development of 'The Subject Learning Coach' initiative in Pendene College I explored how the role of the subject tutor also contributes to supporting students. There was evidence of Lea's 'scripted communication', (Lea, 2004, p.160) as subject tutors were engaging with the GROW process learning a script. The alignment with the role of the therapist/counsellor emerged in the examination of the communication and language used by the tutors and although seemingly adding credence to Ecclestone and Hayes critique of the 'therapeutic Further Education College', (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009, p.65) the data reinforces my contention that the therapeutic is aligned to the economics of retention.

Personal tutors demonstrated an awareness of class relations. They commented on the 'otherness' of the students existence but are committed to the 'care ethic' which often has an emancipatory element in that they want their students to progress, achieve and be successful. They are empathetic; caring for a student will raise their self esteem help

them progress on their course and thus improve retention. This also provides altruistic rewards for the individual according to Baumeister (2005). In his work on social interaction and the human need to belong, Baumeister (2005) notes that:

People are relentlessly guided by the drive to connect with others and that the majority of their thoughts, emotions, impulses and behaviours are at least indirectly rooted in that drive.

(Baumeister 2005, p.372)

In mapping the formal and informal training provision in Pendene College I have discovered a complex set of social processes which provides evidence of an economically driven agenda focused on performance and the retention of students on courses. I contend that the roots of therapy culture and 'emotional, individual and social outcomes' (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009, p. 12) inherent in therapy culture, serve the economic agenda of retention and is now prominent in Pendene College, as an integral role of the personal tutor.

In the next chapter I address these findings and discuss the new knowledge emerging from insights into the role of the personal tutor in retaining students on courses. I also consider the implications this has for pedagogic practice and how this study builds upon previous research. Finally I discuss possible future research emanating from the emerging themes and the new knowledge revealed in this thesis.

Chapter 7

Contested practices in personal tutoring

7. 1. Introduction

In this chapter I return to the research questions to establish how the data, discussed in chapters five and six illuminate our understanding of what is shaping the role of the personal tutor in Pendene College. By doing this I demonstrate that the major contribution of this thesis is that it offers an alternative explanation for the ‘therapeutic turn’ in the further education sector. Whilst discourses surrounding therapeutic education have been concerned with the politicisation of the emotions and the erosion of the individual as a coping and resilient individual (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009, Furedi 2004) this thesis offers a structural explanation for tutorial practice. As I will discuss in this chapter, emerging within this explanation is a new model of pastoral support and guidance which is structural and rooted in the economics of retention. Underpinning this thesis is a theoretical and empirical approach which further adds to an understanding of how tutorial practice is shaped at the national and local level.

My aim in this chapter is to highlight the research questions and discuss the collated data in terms of the aims of researching personal tutoring. By doing this the broader context of researching personal tutoring can be assessed.

The research questions outlined in chapter one are -

1. What is the role of the personal tutor in FE?
2. What are the major influences, internally and externally, shaping this role?
3. What are the personal tutors’ perceptions of the role of the personal tutor and the perceived needs of their students?

In discussing the research questions and establishing how the data illuminates what is shaping the role of the personal tutor in FE, I consider the contribution of this study in relation to previous research and literature and the positioning of my study within the research field. I will then consider how this research has implications for practice within FE using the key findings emerging from the data. Finally I discuss the strengths and limitations of this study and consider future research prompted by insights from this study.

7.1.1. Addressing the research questions

In this section I discuss the new knowledge and insights from the findings which further our understanding of what is shaping the role of the personal tutor. This is prompted by the themes developed through the analysis and interpretation developed in chapter five and six and which address the research questions. In these chapters I presented an analysis of three major areas that are central to the aims of this study;

- pedagogic practice
- performativity
- therapeutic discourses

I further refined these categories in relation to the three research questions and developed several categories which are;

- performativity
- emotional labour
- retention
- therapeutic practice

By developing this focus on the themes to illuminate the data, the analysis and interpretation of the data was further informed by drawing upon the theoretical framework and the literature review discussed in chapter three. I chose these areas because they provide a coherency for the data analysis outlined and discussed in the methods chapter and address the research questions posed in the opening chapter.

In chapter five I addressed the research questions using the themes discussed in the previous section and argued that the key discourse of 'neediness' is pivotal to the provision of support and guidance within Pendene College. This illuminates the research question and focus upon the 'role of the personal tutor' in supporting the emotional needs of students whilst ensuring that they retain them on courses.

Drawing upon the work of Goffman (1969), Rogers (1980, 2004), Foucault (1977) and Bourdieu (1990) I developed an analysis arguing that pastoral power, habitus and disposition inform discourses of the social, emotional and structural in tutorial practice. Additionally the use of Hochschild's (2003) research on emotional labour and Bolton's (2005) typology of emotions, added to the analysis and interpretation of the interviewees comments in establishing labour processes in their practice. In theorising personal

tutoring I also applied the theoretical tutoring models from Thomas and Hixenbaugh (2006). The findings offer significant new knowledge about tutorial practice as I revealed that privileging the 'neediness' of a minority of students marginalised others who I labelled the 'untutored'. The untutored are a significant group within the pastoral system who continue their courses, are judged to be coping and therefore do not need support. Within this chapter I also drew upon the Rogerian approach to argue that an adaption of Rogerian concepts are now sustaining tutorial practices to encourage the retention of students on courses.

In chapter six I considered 'the major influences, internally and externally, shaping this role' and demonstrated how the findings from the data provided insights into the structural and relational. In developing the analysis and interpretation using Bourdieu's original concept habitus, I drew upon the work of Rawolle and Lingard (2008) who applied the term to educational policy using the term 'policy habitus' to reveal insights into an individual's social engagement with policy. By doing this I revealed the interconnectedness of policy and practice, structure and agency.

I drew upon the work of Knapp (2007), Whitmore (2009) and Goleman (1998, 2008) to construct an analysis and interpretation of social processes which inform tutorial practice. This included insights which contribute to current therapeutic discourses and reveal new knowledge about the application and use of 'therapeutic' in guidance and support to ensure retention. The findings from the interviewees also suggest the structural construction of practice shaped by Ofsted policy and the requirement of internal quality mechanisms which all contribute to the retention of students.

The review of the chapters in the previous section contextualises the research questions and themes and the analysis and interpretation of the broad themes emerging in the findings. I now turn to those themes and insights in the findings which add new knowledge to a small but growing body of knowledge on personal tutoring and retention in FE. To do this I discuss the key themes of performativity and emotional labour to present insights into the 'lived world' of the interviewees where, in this study, the blurring of the boundaries of performance and emotional labour are inextricably entwined. I then consider the findings concerning therapeutic practice. I view the findings holistically, as I will discuss in the next section, to maintain the coherency of

the interviewees data. This new knowledge emerging from the findings reveals a complex role of pedagogic practice central to an economically driven pastoral system.

7.1.2. Empathetic personal tutoring

In considering the themes, the research findings suggest a paradigmatic shift in the structure and implementation of the field of support and guidance in FE. Structure and agency reflected in the findings in this study suggest a fluid and dynamic relationship which opens up the possibilities of a new identity for FE tutors which is complex, interrelational and structural and, as I will discuss, the role of the personal tutor is perceived as one of being empathetic and supportive. This has inferences for the labour processes as the interviewees did not use the label of professionalism when referring to their practice but maintained their identity through their perceived ability to ‘care’. This links to the emotional aspect of what is often viewed as commitment to the ‘vocational’ when pursuing the various elements of their roles within Pendene College.

The omission by the interviewees, of the ‘professional’ identity in terms of defining their practice, does not infer that they were not concerned about being professional. On the contrary, in their responses they reflect Ball’s (2003, p.216) commentary on ‘the terrors of performativity’ noting that:

The ground of such struggles is often highly personal. Expressed in the lexicons of belief and commitment, service and even love, and of mental health and emotional well-being. The struggles are often internalised and set the care of the self against duty to others.

The interviewees were mindful of their role in support and guidance and often commented upon the ‘labyrinth of performativity’ (p.220). Ball adds that:

They make management, ubiquitous, invisible, inescapable part of and embedded in everything we do. Increasingly, we choose and judge our actions and they are judged by others on the basis of their contribution to organizational performance, rendered in terms of measurable outputs. Beliefs are no longer important it is output that counts. Beliefs are part of an older, increasingly displaced discourse.

(Ball 2003 p.223)

Although in the findings there was evidence in the comments from interviewees about the performance management culture within Pendene College, contrary to Ball’s comments, practice within Pendene College was negotiated and often shaped by individual belief systems. This was primarily rooted in a belief in the transformative

nature of education and sits at the heart of philosophical discourses in education in asking the question, 'why educate?'

The findings reveal that the interviewees were earnest in their beliefs and in their responses, commented upon retaining students on courses not merely to fit the managerialist objectives but also to enhance students' lives. But this was not naively conceived. They were also conscious of their responsibilities to provide students with the necessary skills to survive in a capitalist system focused on a skills agenda of developing 'flexible workers' (Foster 2005). The interviewees were conscious of the realities of the workplace and the tensions within practice arose when, for example, time constraints curtailed their support for students.

In addition, interviewees relate their practice to personality characteristics and these dispositions are evidence in the construction of social processes discussed in the previous chapter which shape the role of the personal tutor and also shape their practice. In doing this they acknowledge a greater reliance on colleagues and build a collegiate approach. As a result there is a strong collective ethos which surfaces in the interviewees comments, which is supportive of the institutions pursuit of quality and excellence in guidance and support. This contributes to a distinctive form of community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991) evolving within Pendene College which as Avis (2010) suggests, is also shaped by the very nature of the increased size of many FE colleges.

An FE college is too large and complex to be considered a single community of practice. Rather, it consists of multiple communities arranged in a constellation, each with their own way of doing things, their own shared stories and meanings. These communities might be situated within staffrooms, workshops or classrooms. Some participants are experts and others are apprentices, while some are members of more than one community.'

(Avis 2010, p.54)

This particular characterisation of practice also presents the construction of the tutor relationship as sometimes diametrically opposed with students on one side and tutors on the other. This 'othered world' emerged within the interviewees comments about their perceptions of 'needy' students, Atkins (2008, p.6) notes, 'this is of particular concern given that such learners are significantly 'othered' by academics and society at large'.

The volume of students threatens this relationship since too many students' make the relationship untenable as personal tutors cope with a reduced number of those students

they label as 'needy'. Ironically this relationship can only be preserved if personal tutors offer support and guidance to the few. Within the remit of the widening participation agenda, contradictions arise and present further threats to this new emerging model of practice arising from the recruitment of too many students and time constraints.

Both could threaten the 'care' offered and the increase in numbers of students pursuing personal tutorial could reduce the practice to the 'tick boxes' approach that some interviewees fear will erode the very essence of the personal tutorial. The paradox can only be resolved with more time allocation to pastoral work and this requires a much more favorable political and economic climate.

Tensions arise within this practice and personal tutors responding to management directives monitor students electronically as they record each tutorial. Inevitably this also implicates the tutor in the surveillance process as their work with the students is a constant source of data collection. Thus the findings suggest a dynamic relationship which is shaped by the directives from managers and the structuring of communities of practice within Pendene College. In belonging to a community of practice Avis et al (2010, p.54) notes that:

Through participating in communities of practice, members learn how the community works and how it talks to its own members as well as to others. Members learn about the history of the community, and how it goes about doing what it does. They learn how to engage and contribute to the practices of the community, and perhaps how to change them as well.

In doing this the tutors at Pendene College forge tutorial practice which privileges the needy and it is this I turn to next to reveal the findings which suggest a distinctive form of practice within Pendene College.

7.1.3. Personal tutors perceptions of tutorial practice

Emerging early in the findings was the references to practice which suggested a particular perception of tutorial practice shaped by the 'care ethic' and integral to the identity of the personal tutor. This aspect of practice is corroborated in research from Avis and Bathmaker (2004, p8) who studied the responses of trainee teachers in FE and noted that:

Central to these trainees' understanding of lecturing was a notion of care and of empathy with students. Caring appeared to be pivotal to their construction of a preferred identity as a lecturer.

They add that the trainees were critical of those lecturers they viewed as ‘uncaring’. Such perceptions resonate with those trainees in the focus groups in this study and discussed in chapter five. This construction of an empathetic identity resonates with the findings in this research as ‘caring’ permeated the data from the interviewees comments and this intrinsic quality of practice, manifests itself in the interviewees commentary about their approach to tutorials. Many of the interviewees, referred to this in describing their practice.

The personal tutors with the senior tutor makes value judgements about the ‘care’ needed. Similar to the interviewees in Avis and Bathmaker’s study, Maggie exemplifies the ‘caring tutor’ and aligns caring with being a ‘good’ tutor. In identifying this aspect of caring, Maggie contextualises her tutorial practice emphasising the dynamic of her professional role with the engagement with an empathetic approach. This suggests the notion of ‘occupational professionalism’ which reflects the nature of teaching as a calling, a vocation. Colley et al (2007, p.175) expands upon this, noting that ‘this model (*occupational professionalism*) is focused on the identity of the practitioner herself, more emotional aspects of professionalism as a vocational calling, and particular ethical obligations attached to specific roles’.

This dynamic of professional participation resonates in the interviewees comments in this study, and their perceptions of their practice. However this can increase tensions in practice. For example, for many tutors in Pendene College, frustrations arose from the managerialist conflicts which impeded their ‘caring role’ often evidenced in the data from the A level tutors.

In addition, a further dimension to this empathetic approach, which has remained neglected in discussions about practice, is the concept of ‘kindness’ (Clegg and Rowland 2010). The majority of interviewees commented about practice in personal tutorials which demonstrated ‘kindness’. There were numerous examples emerging in the data. Sometimes it is about practicalities for example one personal tutor - Dave talking about his perceptions of student needs that he tutored in the Motor Automotive department referred to instances when he would loan students their bus fares.

Other times it is about the kindness embedded in ‘caring’. This corroborates the findings from Clegg and Rowland’s (2010) research interviewing third year social science students noting that:

Kindness’ is ‘out of place’ in talk about higher education, and higher education pedagogy. It can suggest a sentimental and unrigorous approach taking us into fields better addressed by therapy and as indicative of being focused on the relational at the expense of ideas (p.722).

Similar to the perceptions of students in other research which documented the ‘good tutors’ (Bullock and Fertig 2003, Colley et al 2007, Rogers 2009), ‘students readily see kindness as a mark of the good teacher and yet the concept of kindness is singularly silent in accounts of teaching ‘excellence’ (Clegg and Rowland, 2010 p.720). They add that, ‘the sociology of higher education has been quick to analyse the struggles of the field – audit, mass education, academic capitalism – but this has tended to bracket out normative matters such as kindness’ (p.720). Although this research focuses on HE students it still has implications for practice in FE as the interviewees in Pendene College readily engage in acts of kindness towards their students which denotes an empathetic, caring identity which illuminates tutorial practice.

Whilst an added dimension to practice can be about caring and going the extra mile it, also prompts more questions about the role of FE and the nature of emotional labour in educational practice in this sector. Atkins (2008, p.17) commenting on this aspect of ‘caring’ and nurturing recorded in data from interviews with teacher trainees and subject tutors adds that:

.....the further education system is providing a social service rather than education in any meaningful sense raising serious questions about the role of the FE teacher and what the extent of their responsibilities should be.

I turn to these questions next to discuss the emerging theme of ‘therapeutic practice’ and corroborate the findings from this study which add insights and new knowledge to discourses of therapeutic culture in FE and which also address the research questions in this study.

7.1.4. Personal tutors’ development of a counselling role

As I discussed in the opening chapter, the original prompt for this study was rooted in my interest in the emergence of the ‘therapeutic’ and personal observations of increasing pressures on personal tutors within the pastoral system in Pendene College.

Personal tutors were increasingly tasked to provide tutorial support within a pastoral curriculum of personal and social education which increased their involvement with guidance and support.

Interviewees in this study are negotiating their pedagogic practice within the boundaries of guidance and support determined by managerialist policies which are shaped by Ofsted requirements. They negotiate their practice similar to that of the counselors in Hart's (1996) study as discussed in the previous chapter. What the findings reveal which adds new knowledge to the debate on therapeutic discourses, is the extent of therapeutic language they use in tutorial practice (Knapp 2007). In chapter six the findings suggest the use of therapeutic language is promoted through formal training and social processes.

This is an important finding in this study since it provides insights into a deeper and more complex role. A role in which the use of therapeutic language suggests a new dynamic to the labour processes which is negotiated within practice and where the interviewees demonstrate behaviours associated with the 'managed heart' (Hochschild 2003) and emotional labour (Bolton 2005). This is a significant finding and presents an image of the 'good' tutor who is involved in the lives of students and deeply committed to their support and their learning often at the expense of their own well being.

Going the extra mile, for the interviewees in this study, has been normalized into everyday practice. So much so that the senior tutors and personal tutors interviewed, demonstrate anxiety at not being able to 'help' their students; provide the support, or provide the necessary time for that support (Trudy, Sally, Cathy, Celia, Dave, Andy and Alan). The consequence is that many students fall into the group I have labeled as 'untutored'. The emotional labour involved in providing the emotional support for students is therefore rationed and is supplied to those viewed as the most 'needy'. In making these judgments as I have previously discussed, the tutors ensure that the 'needy' students are managed within the time allocation of the tutorial system. The 'untutored' by necessity remain outside of the tutorial system; they are the necessary casualties whose lack of presence ensures the 'needy' students obtain the support.

The professional identity is similarly defined within Pendene College. Amsler (2010, p.51) suggests that:

...because they feel confronted with a new species of human being – a person taught more through media than by schools, not traditionally literate but proficient in multiple digital literacies, uncomfortable with deep thinking but at home in complex networks and pastiche and who regards learning almost exclusively as an instrumental means to economic and social advancement

personal tutors may not be coping with their role in support and guidance. It quickly became apparent in this study that a complex and dynamic relationship was at the heart of the tutorial process whereby tutors engaged in emotional labour.

7.2. Practice indications of retaining students

The findings from this research suggest that the personal tutors within Pendene College are engaged in pedagogical practice which is dominated by emotional labour and their concerns not only for the welfare of their students but in their ability to meet the demands of their managers in retaining their students on courses. Whilst this research is localised and small scale the interpretation of the findings presented in this chapter illuminate practice and the broader context of support and guidance within the sector. This is a relatively under researched area so this study contributes to a growing body of literature focusing on those who work in FE. In doing this the research offers several important indications about practice within FE and these are discussed in the next section.

Primarily this research suggests the importance of the role of guidance and support in FE which not only focuses on student needs but also focuses on the economics of retention. This has inferences for practice and since this role is also nuanced by the challenges of audit mechanisms in monitoring student progress and achievement, tensions arise. For example the structural processes involved in the demands of both providing support for students and tracking individuals using Ofsted guidelines means that practice is often emotionally laden and an ability to ‘perform’ adds additional tensions to work practice in the sector.

This element of performativity and the requirement to constantly record practice generates the necessary data for Ofsted inspections but also requires compliance as the personal tutors fall under the gaze of the senior tutors. Insights from this research demonstrate that the burden for staff is tangible as they comply with directives of quality mechanisms and try to balance competing workloads. For example several of the

personal tutors, including Trudy, Sally, Maggie, David, Andy and James, managed their workload through a form of non-compliance – delayed compliance. By that I mean they did not openly refuse to complete student tracking documents or complete the necessary on-line tutorial documents they merely found ways of accommodating the requests from managers and shaped their practice to fit.

This mediation of managerialist directives reflects the construction of practice which is shaped by the notions of power, compliance and resistance. This is characteristic of the hegemonic culture in FE and confirms research by Satterthwaite et al (2003) Spours et al (2007), Ball (2003, 2008) and research from Avis and Bathmaker (2004, 2006) on the nature of policy, culture and pedagogic practice in FE. Similar to the tutors in the Transforming Learning Cultures in FE (TLC) project, personal tutors at Pendene College were constantly under surveillance and their tutorial work monitored by their managers. Hodkinson et al (2007, p.410) noted that tutors in the TLC project, had a good understanding of their position in the institution and that, ‘their often partly tacit understandings of the existing learning culture’, reduced, ‘the chances of misjudged actions, which could be counter-productive’. The interviewees in Pendene College acted accordingly and the personal tutors engaged in active agency which contributed to tutorial practice, fulfilling managerialist directives which focused on retaining students on courses. In addition this aspect of agency in the research offers insights into a further related area of practice within FE and this is the tutor’s engagement with emotional labour.

Hodkinson et al (2007) in summarising the research findings of the TLC project discussed in chapter three, ‘found evidence of emotional labour, where tutors absorbed the burdens of their students (Hodkinson et al, 2007, p.402). Similarly the tutors in this study engaged in such practice by ‘going the extra mile’ (Stephen et al 2008, p. 449). For example several of the tutors not only supported the students within the college but they also took time to make contact with family members and in one case to follow up non-attendance by visiting the student’s home. The work of Hochschild’s (2003) and Bolton (2005) and research from Colley (2003) proved invaluable in shaping my thinking about issues related to emotional labour. This area of research could make a valuable contribution to the development of research into work labour processes with FE and I consider how this insight can further progress our knowledge in the section where I discuss the implications for further research.

Next within this section I identify one further insight which interests all educators and this outlines what this thesis tells us about the nature of students in FE and the judgments tutors make about them. Although this study was primarily focussed on colleagues who work in the sector, it does not imply students did not have a presence. On the contrary, like Banquo's ghost they are present in the descriptive narratives presented in the interviews. The personal tutors and senior tutors were concerned with student's progress on courses, their domestic lives, how they coped with their studies, their emotional capabilities and their future career pathways. Indirectly the tutors present a distinctive picture of the students and categorised students as those who are 'needy' and require support, and those who are viewed to be coping and do not seek tutorial support. I refer to these students as the 'untutored'.

This was a significant finding in the research and the data revealed that personal tutors made judgments about their students coping abilities. In doing this they privileged those they categorised as 'needy' over those who did not seek tutorial help. The personal tutors viewed these students as 'coping' within the system and therefore directed their energies to those they labelled as needy and this consequently meant that tutors were heavily investing in emotional labour. A good example of this is the 'lads' on the BTEC Performing Arts course described by Sally and discussed in chapter five. Their needs displaced other students. In other examples, the tutors talked about the problems of the 'dual sector' highlighted by Bathmaker and Thomas (2009) and how they coped with students studying for degrees in an FE setting. This provides insights into the widening participation agenda highlighted by Archer (2007) and its impact upon the FE sector but importantly it also offers insights into the practice and the continuing challenges of working in FE and managing a diverse group of students on a variety of courses (Reay et al 2002, Reay 2003, Bathmaker et al 2008, Reay et al 2009, Rogers 2009, Turner et al 2009).

Finally I complete this section with the insight related to therapeutic practice. My research findings suggest pedagogic practice is socially constructed with a shared language of therapy sustaining practice within Pendene College. The interviewees used the language of therapy when describing their perceptions of their tutorial role. Thus the research highlights how therapeutic language has been 'normalised' in practice by the interviewees. Personal tutors use the language of therapy in supporting their students

and as a result tensions arise in their practice as they adopt a counsellor stance in their dealings with students. In the next section I build upon these insights as I consider the contribution this study makes to the field of pastoral care in FE.

7.3. The research contribution to the field of pastoral guidance and support

This research study contributes to the field of pastoral guidance and support in three main ways which are discussed in this section; these are –

- Adds to the research on pastoral guidance and support and the ‘therapeutic turn’
- Establishes the nature of performativity shaping the role of personal tutors
- Provides a single case study of personal tutors and their perceptions

In addition the study illuminates practice in FE and identifies how national policies are mediated at the local level. In providing the insights discussed in the previous section my work builds upon work on pastoral practice in the post compulsory sector. For example this research adds to Hart’s (1996) study which showed that personal tutors in FE were using some counselling skills compared to that of counsellors. My findings confirm this but in addition expand upon this research by indicating the language of therapy used by personal tutors. Hart used questionnaires to compare the work of the counselling and that of the personal tutor and this study expands upon her research by the inclusion of interviews and documentary analysis to substantiate the development of tutorial practice within FE using the language of therapy and the skills of the counsellor. This also corroborates research from Bullock and Fertig (2003) that identified counselling skills used by tutors in supporting students.

In addition this study builds upon the research on the development of therapeutic education and corroborates research within the ‘counselling and guidance’ field from Thomas (2006), Barrow (2007), Reid (2007) Thompson et al (2007), Warwick et al (2008). These studies acknowledge the importance in practice, of the counselling relationship and benefits of therapy for the client/student. Within Pendene College groups of students were receiving beneficial support, often aligned to a counselling role, which helped them pursue their studies and cope with their social and emotional problems.

This study also adds to the debate on therapeutic discourses. It provides evidence of the ‘therapeutic turn’ in education identified by Hayes (2003) and the emotional learning agenda evidenced in research from Whitmore (2009) and Goleman (1998, 2008)

demonstrating how emotional support for students is constructed within tutorial practice. However Hyland (2006, p.302) in critiquing the therapeutic turn advanced by Furedi (2003) Ecclestone (2004) and Hayes (2003) asks does ‘the new emphases amount to anything more than giving due and proper attention to the affective domain of learning?’ This sentiment resonates in the findings from this study suggesting the importance of the affective domain. It may well be that ‘for learners, young or old, who achieved little at school and associate learning with anxiety, grief and failure, a ‘therapeutic’ concern with foundational skills, attitudes and motivations may be exactly what is required’, (Hyland 2006, p.303). The student’s receiving support within the pastoral system at Pendene College accrue all these benefits and those who are labelled as ‘needy’ effectively receive the most.

In addition, this study adds to the research on professionalism developed in the work of Ball (2003), Colley (2003), Bathmaker and Avis (2005) Colley et al (2007), Lawy and Tedder (2009) and Gleeson and James (2007). Especially, this study builds upon the notion that ‘professionalism in FE remains an elusive and paradoxical concept’ (Gleeson and James 2007, p.451) and in doing this adds to the research emanating from the TLC project. For example, Gleeson and James draw upon the research from the TLC project and add that ‘mediation is reflected in FE professional practices that might facilitate political transformations and advance forms of social as well as democratic professionalism and accountability’ (p.452). The research findings from this study corroborate these revealing interviewees in Pendene College pursuing practice which is mediated by their construction of a professional identity. Similar to the TLC respondents, ‘many tutors felt bound to an externally monitored cycle of recruitment, retention and certification linked to college funding, remuneration and quality measurement, that has changed little over time’, (p.458). It additionally adds to the TLC research as the narrative from the Pendene personal tutors and senior tutors offer an explanation of the ways practice is mediated and constructed and thus contribute to ‘ways of understanding, in a detailed sense, the nature of professional knowledge and action’ (p.456).

This adds to and enhances our understanding of what it means to work within the FE sector and further expands upon the research of the TLC project (Hodkinson et al 2007). In highlighting this research on professionalism and the shaping of the identity of the FE tutor this research illuminates pedagogic practice and adds to Gleeson and James

(2007, p.465) consideration of ‘how new models of professional practice need to operate’, where ‘some recognition of the tensions, contradictions and paradoxes that surround FE practitioners work is essential’.

It also expands upon the nature of students in FE and how the widening participation agenda (Archer 2007, Stephen et al 2008, Winter and Dismore 2010), is shaping the student body and the work of personal tutors as they offer guidance and support. This also adds to research on transitions (Lawy 2000, Reay et al 2002, Quinn 2004, Quinn et al 2008, and Quinn 2009) as the students negotiate economic, social and cultural barriers as they pursue vocational and academic qualifications. For example, it builds upon the work of Ruth Rogers (2009) who focused on the difficulties and challenges facing Aim Higher students in accessing support in FE. Her research revealed that although there was ‘extensive support’, (p.110) the ten teenagers in the study continued to seek support from their AimHigher Learning Mentor - the tutor at their previous school. Rogers identified the tutor as adopting a parental role, often bridging the gap between the cultural domains of education and home. My findings extend this research by identifying a similar role for the personal tutors at Pendene College, especially for those personal tutors responsible for cohorts of 14 -19 students taking academic or vocational qualifications.

In locating the changes to the pastoral system I built upon the theorising on personal tutoring from Thomas and Hixenbaugh (2006). I did this in two ways. Firstly I highlighted from the insights in this study, a new emerging practice model which privileges needy students. This adds to the three models of personal tutoring (pastoral, professional and curriculum led) outlined by Thomas and Hixenbaugh (Thomas and Hixenbaugh 2006, p.25). Inherent in the model I suggest, is the polarisation of student needs which privileges one group – the needy over the second group of students who remain ‘untutored’. By doing this I present a structural model of pastoral support and guidance which serves the needs of the few and excludes those students who are viewed as coping. Secondly I added to the small but growing body of knowledge on retention and its prominence in the personal tutorial system by introducing a fluid and dynamic identity for personal tutors which merges the structural and ‘agentic’ and reflects Bandura’s (2001, p.2) notion of agency:

To be an agent is to intentionally make things happen by one's actions. Agency embodies the endowments, belief systems, self-regulatory capabilities and

distributed structures and functions through which personal influence is exercised, rather than residing as a discrete entity in a particular place. The core features of agency enable people to play a part in their self-development, adaptation, and self-renewal with changing times.

The interviewees in this study mirror this active agency and ‘personal influence which is exercised’, and as a result are able ‘To make their way successfully through a complex world full of challenges and hazards, people have to make good judgments about their capabilities, anticipate the probable effects of different events and courses of action, size up socio-structural opportunities and constraints, and regulate their behaviour accordingly’, (p.3). In reflecting this dynamic the interviewees in Pendene College negotiate their practice and provide support and guidance for their students capitalising upon their own agentic qualities. As ‘human agents operate generatively and proactively, not just reactively, to shape the character of their social systems’ (p.15), so the personal tutors develop individual practice and shared practice within communities.

7.3.1. Placing this study within the broader perspective

In the previous section I have indicated how my findings are indicative of my particular theoretical approach to tutorial practice adopted in this research. My research illuminates the growing importance of the role of pastoral support in retaining students on courses. By theorising human action as active in this research, I build upon the work of the interpretivists in this field and I have added to a small growing body of knowledge which adds, ‘insight and understanding of people’s behaviour,’ (Cohen et al 2004, p.23). For example this perspective, using Goffman’s (1969) work, proved fruitful in demonstrating how personal tutors ‘perform’ their roles. It also revealed the ‘roles’ they act out as they conceal aspects of emotional engagement which is both emotionally challenging for some and for others the necessary defence against the onslaught of the burgeoning bureaucracy of the personal tutor role.

In addition, by adapting Charmaz’s approach to grounded theory I have been able to illuminate the structural in shaping the role of the personal tutor and in so doing, identify ‘many things happening in the setting’, (Charmaz 2006, p.20). In doing this I have been able to highlight the importance of Ofsted and policy directives in directing the work of the personal tutor. By expanding upon this I also have been able to show

how personal tutors use therapeutic language which at times aligns their role to that of a counsellor.

Lave and Wenger's community of practice, which emphasis the roles of master and apprentice within situated learning as a 'lived in world' (Lave and Wenger 1991, p.35) has reflected the practice of the personal tutors in Pendene College. Moreover I have built upon and expanded this to demonstrate that personal tutors were belonging to communities of practice and these were self- regulated and reflected their engagement in emotional labour and the hegemonic culture prevalent in FE.

Finally in conceptualising the interviewees within this study as active agents, I have theorised, drawing upon the work of Goffman (1969), Rogers (1980, 2004), Foucault (1977), Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), and employing Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of 'community of practice', an optimistic view of agency. One that counters the pessimism of Furedi's (2003) educational world where individuals are 'diminished' (p.106) by the support they receive. Specifically my research reveals tutors in Pendene College, engaged in empathetic support of students which illuminates a new emerging professional identity shaped by their ability and commitment to 'care'. Added to this is the empirical data which has highlighted a holistic approach and avoided the polarisation of agency and structure. This has allowed me to bring together and establish a distinctive eclectic approach in which the 'analysis provide leading off points, platforms from which to jump' (Thomas 2007, p.165).

7.4. Evaluation of research methods.

My research findings reflect and expand upon the research literature related to support and guidance discussed in chapter three and the development of personal tutoring within FE culture. Thus I have confidence in the data collection and the analysis of the perceptions of FE work practice of personal tutors in this thesis. In addition, because I conducted this research in my workplace I acknowledge and validate the interviewees' accounts and their truthfulness. However there are differences in the findings and these stem from the continuous and fluid changes taking place across the sector which affect interviewees' perceptions of the tutorial role. These I will discuss in the next section as I identify possible changes and improvements to my data collection.

My view of human interaction as active and meaningful determined the premise of this research. The development of agency in the workplace and its layered meanings provided the situational context of this research. In adopting the interpretivist approach I could produce a coherency to my research consistent with that of previous research and which mirrored the theoretical approach.

In the analysis I have avoided the piecemeal effect of fragmenting and reducing interviewee comments to 'what seems best for answering our research questions' (Thomas 2007, p.95). I have maintained the integrity of the data by establishing the context of the comments in its original linguistic form and paid attention to ensure that I did not deviate from the 'intercommunication' of interviewer and interviewee, which Wodack (2008, p.11) claims can detract from the analysis since, 'many instances of everyday conversation need a lot of background information to be understood'.

In the context of this research I have used my prior knowledge of the organisation and this allowed me to develop purposive sampling; firstly to attain a gender balance, and secondly I selected those 'to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality' (Cohen et al 2005, p.103). In doing this I concede that 'it does not represent the wider population: it is deliberately and unashamedly selective and biased' (p.104).

In recognizing this, I added the necessary balance by developing triangulation. This addressed the problem of validity and, although the findings cannot be generalised from a single case study, it does still provide evidence across the data of agency and structure. The triangulation of methods, as Wilson (2009, p.120) notes, 'has the merit of counterbalancing the threats inherent to any one method', and I combined different qualitative methods to ensure this. I chose interviews and focus groups and documentary analysis. In doing this I produced a kaleidoscope of interrelated links within the findings which illuminate sociocultural processes, the relational and the structural.

However the development of the focus groups data within this study proved problematic. Gillham (2005, p.167) notes that 'the real world is not organised for researchers: data will be incomplete, difficult to access, problematic to interpret'. Data from the focus groups was withdrawn from this study as discussed in chapter four.

'Focus groups are contrived settings bringing together a specifically chosen sector of the population to discuss a particular given theme or topic where the interaction with the group leads to data and outcomes' (Cohen and Mannion 2005, p.288), but, as my experience shows, it is impossible to control the outcomes. I was however confident about the other data tools embedded in this study and the subsequent data provided.

Gender can shape research and Cohen et al (2005, p.37) note that this can influence, 'the choice of topics and foci, the choice of data collection and the relationships between researchers and researched'. I was conscious of my positioning within the research and the nature of the relationship I developed with the tutors within Pendene College as a senior woman perceived as supportive and nurturing. However this gender distinction is also reflected in the feminisation of the sector. For example, the Further Education Workforce Data for England for 2009 - 2010, states that '63.7 per cent of staff were female and 36.3 per cent were male, and there has been little change in the gender breakdown of staff over the past five years' (LLUK 2011). Whilst I was conscious of gender influences I sought to provide a trustworthy account in which issues related to discourses on therapy culture were systematically examined. This would also add to its reliability in that I am confident that by substituting another researcher similar results would be achieved.

To do this I used semi-structured interviews with an interview schedule, outlined in chapter 4. This allowed the flexibility of dialogue and the checking of comments. Following the interviews, transcripts were not abridged but fully transcribed. I also systematically recorded and fully transcribed the focus group discussions to provide a 'more intimate understanding of the content of the talk, the flow of discussion and the group dynamics' (Wilson 2005, p. 105).

I then considered the choices to be made concerning the structure and the interpretation of the data. I had used other statistical computer software in previous research so felt comfortable using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) to help organise the data. However I was aware of Thomas' warnings that 'it leads you to the false belief that something else is going to do the hard work for you' (p.207) and although he advocates and states that 'there is no substitute for a good set of highlighters from W.H Smith, a pen and paper and a brain' (p.207) I could improve reliability and validity using NVivo in developing the data and expanding upon thematic

analysis. Noting that Thomas (2009) states ‘nothing substitutes for your intelligent reading of your data’ (p.207) I used NVivo which proved reliable in the processing of transcripts and then scrutinized the data. I did this by using the nodule trees and was able to establish themes within interviews and across the interview data (see Bazeley 2007). By doing this I was able to provide the ‘thick description’ of, ‘the close analytical account and interpretationinherent in events and social behaviours’ Wilson (2009, p.120).

I applied the same systematic approach to the structure and interpretation of the documentary analysis (Ofsted Reports) but this time used ‘a good set of highlighters’ and conducted a content analysis as outlined in chapter 3 and continued this process for the examination of personal tutor’s use of therapeutic language. In doing this I completed the triangulation of methods to increase the validity and reliability of the research findings.

From the discussion in the previous sections to generalize from the findings could be problematic since this is a single case study. This study has similarities with the research of Bullock and Fertig (2003) that completed a single college case study. In addition they used a large scale survey of staff to collect information; but unlike my research - they also included students in their data collection. I purposely chose not to include students in the research and discussed this in chapter three. Whilst other studies use a comparative approach, notably Hart (1996), Warwick et al (2008), Rogers (2009), the themes arising from my research findings are consistent with these studies. The numbers of respondents included in the study were 49 and this cohort is similar to Bullock and Fertig’s study although comparative studies in FE use larger cohorts.

7.4.1. Strengths and limitations of the research

There are many strengths arising from this research including the contribution the findings make to our understanding of the role of the personal tutor in FE and the complex and layered meanings personal tutors attach to their perception of this role. The most significant being their perception of the importance of their role in the retention of students on courses. This contribution to existing research is significant in that it illuminates the dispositions of the personal tutors and their mediation of tutorial practice at local level.

One of the strengths of this research has been the conceptualisation of the research using the ideas from discourses on therapy culture. Research in this field has previously focused on the development of pastoral systems in schools (Bullock and Fertig 2003, Bullock and Wikeley 2004), and latterly researching support and guidance in the context of higher education to address the widening participation agenda (Marr and Ainsley 2006, Archer 2007). As I have demonstrated from evidence in the previous chapters, the application of the therapeutic within personal tutorial practice is symptomatic of a more concerted structural approach to the 'retention' of students. This focus on 'retention' adds to a small but growing body of knowledge focused on strategies to improve retention within the sector in response to government policies and directives (Hixenbaugh and Thomas 2007, HEFCE 2010).

Limitations of this research stem from the perspectives I have adopted and the development of the research in terms of the setting. I discussed in chapter four the problems associated with researching 'my own backyard' (Malone 2003). Whilst this could be deemed a limitation it also proved a strength in that my foreknowledge of the institution allowed me to research and question the common place taken for granted behaviours, described by Goffman (1969) and viewed at close quarters.

However the major strength of this research lies in the constructivist interpretivist approach I adopted to research the layered meanings attached to the role of the personal tutor, associated with both structural and socio-cultural processes. For example in identifying both the structural and agentic, I was able to illuminate the mediation of practice and the nature of the support provided by the personal tutors in Pendene College. Lucas and Unwin (2009, p.425) suggest that, 'Like all workplaces FE college teachers exist within a productive system in which their activities are heavily regulated and directed by central government, '- within such a regime, practice in Pendene College was shaped by policy directives (DfES, 2006, 2007) and the 'new industrial activism' (HMSO 2009, p.23) whereby students are prepared for the new order of flexible working practice in a climate of economic decline.

The main contribution of this research is that it enriches our understanding of the work of personal tutors within further education. By interviewing personal tutors and senior tutors about their perceptions of their role in support and guidance, this research has added to our understanding of the complexity of the role of the personal tutor. By doing

this, this study has produced a rich seam of data which is a significant contribution to an under researched area within the field of FE. The data provides a view at local level of the perceptions of a group of professionals working within a sector continuing to respond to a major shift in educational policy and as Attwood et al (2004, p.107) notes, responding to ‘a range of issues faced by FE colleges in responding to the educational needs of all students, including those who present challenges to conventional educational provision’.

What is of particular importance is the contribution this research makes to debate on discourses of the ‘therapeutic within education’ (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009, p.163). In developing the interviews, it became apparent that there was evidence within the data highlighting different explanations for the ‘rise in the therapeutic’ which sat outside the domain of the therapeutic as a coercive regulatory tool which produces a ‘diminished curriculum for diminished individuals’ (ibid p.164). Tutors perceived their role as supportive and necessary to the well being and educational achievement of their students. They managed the learning and the emotional lives of their students especially providing support for the ‘needy’.

In doing this personal tutors were often constrained by institutional demands and managerialist directives. They pursued their roles in supporting students and invested in labour processes and the necessary emotional capital to retain their students on courses. The empirical data collated in this study provides evidence of the structural conditions which shaped and defined this role and especially the extent of what Rawolle and Lingard (2008, p.731) refer to as ‘policy habitus’ which reflects the necessary tutor dispositions ‘to produce practices related to policies’ to support and retain students on courses. This is a significant aspect of the data and contributes to our understanding of the development of ‘professionalism’ within F.E which is nuanced, in this study, by emotional capital which serves the economics of retention.

An additional strength lies in the application of the concept of community of practice.

According to Avis et al (2010, p.55):

Members engage in the community in a number of ways: the daily or weekly meeting of the class; the shared workload of class and assignment preparation; perhaps the use of a virtual learning environment (VLE). The efforts of the students and teachers are focused on a quite specific joint enterprise: successful

negotiation of the course or programme of study, leading to the award of a certificate or other form of credentialed achievement.

Similarly the tutors in Pendene College were engaged in this 'joint enterprise'. Belonging to this community of practice illuminated how the procedural within the community of personal tutors and at times the structural, were evidenced by responses to the bureaucracy. Further explanations were required which avoided the dichotomy of agency and structure and in adopting both approaches I was able to provide coherency to my interpretation in the analysis of the interviews. I have commented upon the responses tutors make in terms of requests from the senior tutors to provide information for audit purposes. For example these included the documents used to track student progress and recording tutorial information electronically on the Student Tracking and Recording System (STARS). Participating in the community of practice Lave and Wenger suggest is not static. This is reflected in the comments in the interviews from the personal tutors and the senior tutors, who exist in a social relationship which is nuanced with power relations, and where the 'the old and the new, the known and the unknown, the established and the hopeful, act out their differences and discover their commonalities, manifest their fear of one another and come to terms with their need for one another' (p.116).

In commenting upon the social world of the personal tutors I have stressed and reflect what Cohen et al (2004 p.7) suggests is the 'importance of the subjective experience of individuals in the creation of the social world'. How the personal tutors as individuals or in groups, interpret their world has reflected my own research bias in that I perceive structure and agency as 'people's beliefs in their capability to exercise some measure of control over their own functioning and over environmental events' (Bandura 2001, p.10).

In adopting the constructivist interpretivist approach I focused on the way 'in which persons construe their social world' (Cohen et al 2004, p.21). In doing this I have viewed the world of the personal tutors as socially constructed and multi-layered and thus avoided the reductionism of the positivist approach. The personal tutors are active beings who interpret and interact with each other. Whilst these findings refer to only one setting, I also adopted a diverse set of theories in order to understand and make sense of their interpretations. Also the methods could not be conveniently packaged but

rest in the assertion that I was pursuing the paradigm of active agency and interaction with the structural. This provides a necessary ‘thick’ description and the qualitative data collected illuminated pedagogic practice which adds to our understanding and knowledge of the role of the personal tutor in providing guidance and support for their students.

7.4.2. A personal reflection on the research journey

Completing this research journey has proved an invaluable personal and professional experience. I have always enjoyed being a personal tutor and the experience of helping and supporting students on their learning journey has been part of my professional life for many years. This role became the focus of my research and with the inevitable highs and lows throughout the duration of this study; the journey has been about developing knowledge and seeking answers.

As the insider researcher I began the journey with several concerns similar to Schwarz McCotter (2001, p.1) especially those related to the participants and how to ‘represent participants with integrity and authenticity’. I endeavoured throughout the research to maintain the ethical position which dignified the participants and developed the researcher relationship constantly self monitoring my role as the insider researcher. Since the research setting was known to me and I had shared knowledge of the personal tutor experience I did find that sometimes, ‘participants’ comments resonated with my own experience, ‘ringing true’, while others made me stop and reflect from the perspective of experiences which were very different from my own’ (McKenzie and Ling 2009, p.51). What this meant as part of the research journey was, ‘*What I knew* and *who I was* at the start of the journey was very different from *what I knew* and *who I was* at the end’ (ibid).

The personal journey has also been about other participants since this journey has not been a solo adventure. The supervisors are pivotal to the journey acting as guides and mentors and provide the welcome guidance and support to complete the journey. They are the confederates who having traveled this road, can commiserate, enlighten and encourage.

Hindsight can be precious when viewed at the end of a journey and in this instance I have reflected upon the research process, the participants, methods, the validity

concerns, representing the participants and providing an accurate record of their statements in the data in other sections of this chapter and discussed possible changes. In the next section I consider such changes and consider the implications for further research. The focus on personal tutoring with all its complexities as detailed in previous chapters has been a journey of discovery.

Finally the metaphor of the journey is applicable to my own experience since as a journey provides experiences so coming to the end of this research journey highlights the beginning of the next one. The road ahead and the ongoing journey are about disseminating the information contained in these pages and engaging with a wider audience beyond the walls of Pendene College.

7.4.3. Implications for further research

Arising from this research is the picture of FE practice captured at a local level and whilst this is a limitation of the research as previously discussed it also merits further research to develop a similar study which encompasses several FE colleges across the sector in England.

A comparative study would add to the findings from this research. Importantly this would also identify if the findings from this research are relevant and valid and the findings and implications for practice not merely located to one setting. Such a study could build upon the personal accounts of the personal tutors, within departments and disciplines, and add substantially to our understanding of the perceptions of the role of the personal tutor across the sector.

Further research could also be developed from some of the more interesting aspects of the data surfacing in the findings. For example in the interviews, personal tutors talked about other aspects of their work in FE which is defined by their engagement with emotional labour. This has gained prominence as the research progressed and in theorising using the work of Hochschild (2003) and Bolton (2005) I have been able to further our understanding of how pedagogic practice is shaped in an FE college. The participants in this study responded to structural procedures which demonstrated varying degrees of involvement with Bolton's notion of 'philanthropic' emotional labour and as such gifted extra time and effort to their students. Although this area of work was beyond the scope of my original study, it does suggest an interesting focus for

research which broadens the research. In pursuing such a study it could potentially add to research on the professional identities of those who work in the FE sector and make a valuable contribution to our understanding of those who choose to work in it.

In addition the findings suggest certain characteristics of FE students, especially those described by the personal tutors as 'needy'. In exploring this aspect of the nature of being a student in FE further research would potentially add to established research linking those socio-cultural processes inherent in the widening participation agenda which contribute to students dropping out of courses.

One of the most significant aspects of the research findings in this study is the issue of the 'economics of retention'. In highlighting this in the data I have illuminated tutorial practice which offers an alternative explanation for 'therapeutic education' in the work of Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) and provided the necessary empirical data. By doing this I have revealed the links to emotional labour and considered how the role of the personal tutor is shaped by their engagement with emotional labour processes. This in turn has revealed a rich field of future research possibilities with the nuances of the labour processes now suffused with what Bolton (2010, p.135) refers to as the 'gift'.

In addition, the economics of retention findings from this study may further be researched using the concept of well-being. Discourses of 'well-being', present additional possibilities for future research with its links to the political and socio-economic already surfacing within educational practice. Well-being as a discourse and research focus, may prove the successor to Ecclestone's and Hayes' (2009) concerns about 'therapeutic education' but within this study the empirical data provides insights into a new aspect of tutorial practice, one which is fused with the language of therapy (Knapp 2007) with guidance and support in tutorials, focused on the retention of students on courses.

The development of policies related to the notion of 'economic well-being' alerts researchers to the socio-economic capital attributed to an individual's status in society. Bolton's (2010) research work on well-being and spirituality in the workplace provides a central focus on a new emerging topic with the individual and notions of selfhood problematized as selfhood is now to be measured by 'wellbeing' indicators (ONS 2011).

This in itself could provide a rich source of data to explore and illuminate the roles of those who work in FE. Further exploration of the interrelatedness of retention and support and guidance would make a valuable contribution to what I have already revealed in this thesis.

In organising and structuring this final chapter I am also conscious of Strauss and Corbin's (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p. 243) comment regarding the researcher's imprint which is visible across the research domains and processes whereby, 'We become conscious of and gain insight and understanding from, our research and, in turn, pass this consciousness to others through presentations and by writing'. The distillation of the research with all its nuances is presented in this chapter to illuminate the practice of personal tutors in Pendene College and confirm their role in ensuring retention. This role is highly regarded by the tutors, significant in the lives of students and important to the economic existence of the institution and therefore worthy of further research.

By focusing on the work of the personal tutor in this study, I have illuminated new pedagogies of practice emerging within Pendene College which reflect alternative discourses for the expansion of therapeutic education originally suggested by Furedi (2003) and Ecclestone and Hayes (2009). The empirical data reveals a complex role for personal tutors as they focus on the retention of students within the institution. This new dimension to the role of pastoral support and guidance is significant and within Pendene College personal tutors were engaged in labour processes which heavily relied upon the 'gift' of emotional labour (Bolton 2010) to meet the demands of retention and achievement policy at national and local level. This study also highlighted the demands of 'needy' students seeking support and identified students positioned outside of the system of pastoral support whom I labelled the 'untutored'. For personal tutors their ability to perform their roles was often constrained by the hegemonic culture within Pendene College but the empirical data illuminates their commitment to pastoral support and guidance and importantly, the retention of students within the institution.

Appendix 1

Researching personal tutors

Personal tutoring is a role I have been interested in for some time. I am especially interested in 'what is shaping the role of the personal tutor?'

So as part of pursuing my PhD studies I will be conducting interviews and focus groups, with fulltime and part time tutors who work in the college and I would like to invite you to take part in the research.

The interviews and focus groups should not take up too much time, perhaps about fortyfive minutes.

I would be really grateful if you could find the time to take part.

The moral enquirer - whether a politician or social scientist - builds a collaborative, reciprocal trusting, mutually accountable relationship with those studied (Denzin, 2003)

The research will take place throughout this academic year and if you have any queries regarding information in this leaflet or about the research process – please do not hesitate in contacting me. Plus if you would like to know more about the study do let me know.

My college email address is
.....
My telephone number
.....

Guidance on informed consent: I will be using the Bera ethical guidelines (2004) which stipulate the code of conduct for research and I will take care to ensure that information you provide is confidential and anonymous.

Feed back: if you would like any feedback at any point on the research, again – give me a ring or email me.

The right to withdraw: if after you have completed the interview or taken part in the focus group and you decide you no longer wish to take part - the data from your interview or focus group will be deleted from the study.

And as researchers of educational practice, we ourselves give shape, weight and identity to these meanings: we do not come innocent to a task or situation of events: rather we willfully situate those events not merely in the institutional meanings which our professions provides but also we constitute them as expressions of ourselves (Clough, 2004)

I will be providing updates as part of the research process at the annual staff research conference so I look forward to meeting you there.

Thank you for taking the time to read this leaflet.

Appendix 2.

Table 10. Typology of questions uses the categories of practice, skills and policy

Practice	Skills	Policy
What training do personal tutors receive? [2]	Who delivers the training? [3]	Who decides the content, the delivery of the personal tutor-training course? [1]
What constitutes a 'good personal tutor?' [6]	What constitutes a 'good personal tutor?' [6]	How will the personal tutor be assessed? [4]
How will the personal tutor be assessed? [4]	How will the personal tutor be assessed? [4]	What is your perception of the demands of the external agencies and how are these demands incorporated into the training? [5]
Do you think it is important for the personal tutor to also be the subject specialist? [8]		What constitutes a 'good personal tutor?' [6]
		How will the personal tutor be assessed? [4]
		Who will make these judgements of what constitutes a good personal tutor? [7]
		Do you think it important for the personal tutor to also be the subject specialist

Appendix 3

Table 11. Interview Schedule – list of questions for the senior tutors

1. Who decides the content and the delivery of the personal tutor training course?
 2. Who delivers the training?
 3. How will personal tutors be assessed?
 4. What is your perception of the demands of the external agencies and how are these demands incorporated into the training?
 5. What constitutes a good personal tutor?
 6. Who will make these judgements of what constitutes a good personal tutor?
 7. Do you think it important for the personal tutor to also be the subject specialist for the student?
 8. Has the college, to your knowledge, ever considered employing lecturers solely as personal tutors?
-

Appendix 4

Table 12. Focus group – real time

1. An opening statement of introduction to the research study.
 2. A statement of ethical practice and informed consent sheets – to be signed.
 3. Facilitate the discussion with opening statement – ‘I’m researching personal tutoring and I’m interested in your views on personal tutoring in this college’.
 4. Alertness to the non-involvement of participants and attempt to include them with a direct statement but avoiding the steering and control of the group which could act as a disincentive to discussions.
 5. Summary of the discussion, points of agreement and disagreement- further concerns and considerations and implications for the role of personal tutor. At this point last minute disclosures might occur.
-

Appendix 5

Table 13. Focus group schedule

Focus group programme – planning - (groups of ten participants in each group)

1. Open invite to the year 1 - PGCE/Cert Ed teacher trainee's in the first month of their course (September). The first ten participants to respond to be participants.
 2. The colleagues attending the PGCE/Cert Ed will all be invited and the first ten participants to respond will be included. I will attend each group to extend the invite and answer any questions that may arise at this stage.
 3. The timing of the focus group will be in the afternoon (for the full time trainees) when normally tutorials will be taking place on alternate weeks. For the part-time group the session will be time in the 'twilight time' which is 4.30. This will ensure that all those colleagues who are teaching will be able to attend.
 4. Convenient room booked within the teacher training building and the room to be arranged with tables and chairs gathered around. The tape recorders will be placed in the middle of the table.
 5. Tea and coffee will be provided; this will ease the social setting and artificiality of the situation.
-

Appendix 6

Certificate of ethical research approval

DISSERTATION/THESIS

Your student no:

Title of your project: Retention or therapy? : The role of personal tutoring in a Further Education College.

Brief description of your research project: The research focuses on personal tutoring and pastoral support and guidance in a Further Education College. The research includes interview data from 20 personal tutors and eight senior managers and also includes data from two focus groups.

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

FE College staff - 8 senior managers; 20 personal tutors; 2 focus groups of new entrants and part-time staff.

Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:

- a) informed consent: Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents). Copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document. **a blank consent form can be downloaded from the GSE student access on-line documents: Consent form and participants leaflet attached.**
- b) anonymity and confidentiality
All interviews were recorded and pseudonyms added at the opening of the interview. Confidentiality maintained throughout the research with the secure storage of data, and anonymized interviews. Debriefing followed the BERA protocol and included the opportunity at any stage to withdraw data.

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

Data collection – semi structured interviews (audio-recorded).

Debriefing with my contact telephone number and email address included on ‘Research participants leaflet’ provided for all participants.

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

Interviews will be recorded (audio) with pseudonyms assigned for recognition. For the duration of the research, all tapes will be stored securely to comply with Data Protection.

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School’s **Research Support Office** for the Chair of the School’s Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be

added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: **until:** 2013

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature):

.....RLawy.....**date:**...20/9/2006

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.

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