

Research and distance learning essay



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Throughout this assignment I intend to demonstrate an understanding and knowledge of research methodology. I will examine how research is used to support practice and policy. I will address research terminology and the roles and responsibilities of the researcher. Our group research project will be critically analysed. Kumar (2001) implies research is more than a set of skills. Research is a way of thinking and examining the various aspects of your day-to-day professional work, understanding and formulating guiding principles that govern a particular procedure.

Research helps us to understand why things behave the way they do and why people act in a certain way. If carried out effectively, research can be imperative as it brings about change in policy and practice Burns (1972). The two predominant methods of research are Quantitative and Qualitative research (Kumar, 2001). These methods differ primarily in their analytical objective, the type of questions they pose and the different methods of data collection.

The following definition, taken from Aliaga and Gunderson (2000, pg1), describes what we mean by quantitative research methods: Quantitative research is ' Explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods in particular statistics. ' (Muijs, 2011) Quantitative research is also described as traditional or empirical research, meaning that it is based upon observation, experimentation and measurement (Lambert). Qualitative research is usually a more detailed form of research and cannot usually be expressed in terms of numbers.

It often takes in to account people's values, attitudes and opinions. The three most common qualitative research methods, are participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. Each method is particularly suited for obtaining a specific type of data. Lambert (2010, pg 256) infers that both qualitative and quantitative approaches can be combined in a single study to improve depth and breadth. For the purpose of our small scale research project we used a research question as opposed to a hypothesis. A hypothesis is a statement of assumption which will be tested in the research (Muijs, 2011).

A research question is an initial statement to set the scene for exploratory research within an interpretivist framework. A questionnaire was used to gather data for our research project. Newby (2010) states questionnaires are amongst the most popular. The advantage of using a questionnaire in data collection is they are practical. A large amount of information can be collected from a group of people in a short period of time. The data can be expressed statistically. It is thus possible to make comparisons with other studies.

The results of a questionnaire can be easily evaluated, analysed and quantified by the researcher (Barlette & Burton, 2012). The disadvantages for this type of research is people may not be honest when filling out the questionnaire this could lead to the data provided being false and therefore invalid (ibid). The interview is the most prominent data collection tool in qualitative research(Muijs, 2011). When data has been quantified, it can be used to compare and contrast other research and may be used to measure

change. Positivists believe that quantitative data can be used to create new theories and / or test existing hypotheses (ibid).

Researchers are required to consider ethics in every aspect of their conduct. The Belmont Report states the three fundamental ethical principles for using any human subjects for research are Respect for Persons, Beneficence and Justice (U. S Department of Health & Human Services, 1979.) The first of these principles meant that the researcher should treat the participant as an independent person who should be kept fully informed at all times. The researcher should also ensure that persons with reduced independence such as a child should be protected at all times.

Beneficence is included to ensure the benefits of being included in the research should outweigh any negative impact to the participant. Justice implies that selection of the participants must be fair and those who are asked to participate should also benefit (Macfarlane & Bruce, 2009). Personal values and also professional values that researchers should use when carrying out a study, will be analysed.

A code of ethics is a framework to help and advise us but ultimately it remains the responsibility of the individual (Early Childhood Australia, 2010). Research ethics are a set of principles on how researchers should conduct themselves when dealing with research participants. Denscombe (2007) states we must respect the rights and dignity of the participants, avoid harm to research participants and carry out the research with honesty and integrity. According to Stonehouse (1991) a code of ethics is ‘ a statement about practice, or what we will strive to do. It is based on core values, or

what we believe'. There are a number of reasons it is important to conduct research in line with ethical standards; it is a sign of respect for participants, other researchers and those who will use the research.

A code of ethics is not enforced but it is something that we should adhere to.

The Impact of Distance Learning on a Student's Work and Home Life

Introduction In order to better understand what affect distance learning has on the work and home life of a student, students from the Education Department at Anglia Ruskin University in the second year of their Foundation Degree in Early Years collated data from a research module seeking to answer the following question: Does combining distance learning and working have a negative impact on a student's work and home life?

The chosen method of data collection was via a questionnaire with the answers offering an explanation and understanding as to why students look to improve their early years education skills by going back to study and what challenges they faced. Method The research was a 10 minute questionnaire, asking a mixture of both closed and open questions. A combination of closed and open questions were used so allowing students to answer in a more efficient and accurate manner. Opinions from each of the surveyed students were as important as were the answers to the multiple choice questions.

The questions asked related to a work and life balance, and sought to understand how students deal with the work and study balance. Sample The results are a snap shot outlining the sort of pressure s placed on students in terms of time, commitments and everyday lives. The results covered how many hours a week were worked, where was the work undertaken, where did

the students live and the time pressures on completing course work. It outlines the key challenges facing mature students who are looking to further their early years education and teaching careers. Ethics

To ensure that all University protocols were observed, an introduction was provided outlining the aim of the research and confirming what research the surveyed students were being asked to contribute. Confidentiality was important so was the opportunity if needed to withdraw from the research at any time. Results The results of the survey outline the time constraints and challenges faced by the students as they look to progress their education and their career Figure 1 - Gender of students. The above results showed that 100% of the surveyed students were female.

Though we are unable to draw any direct conclusions from this, perhaps females are more likely to return to early years education than their male counterparts. All were involved with early years education and so found the early years course additional help to their working lives. Figure 2 - Age of Students The above outlines the age of the students. 75% of those surveyed were in the age range of 25 - 34. Though we cannot draw any direct conclusions from this, it would suggest that the 25 - 34 age range has the propensity to undertake further education whilst working and looking after their children.

The younger age groups perhaps are more interested in their social lives where the 44+ are perhaps too well established to go back to further education. Figure 3 - Hours worked per week The above outlines the number of hours worked per week. This shows that the early years students are

having to work quite long weeks whilst undertaking and finishing course work. Figure 4 –Who do you live with? The above research shows that out of the surveyed students none currently reside at home with their parents.

As 75% of them are from the 25 to 34 age demographic, they have all moved out from the parental home and are either residing with their partner, or with friends. Figure 5 – How many children do you have? The above shows that the students have a real cross section of the number of children they currently have. The older students are more likely to have had children, so making their daily working lives even harder to undertake the required course work. Reasons for embarking on this foundation course

The students were asked why they were embarking on the foundation course, all respondents cited the need to gain further qualification in order to improve their chances of career progression. Some cited the need to complete their EYPS by 2015 allowing the student to move with an improvement in their career prospects. Those with children were looking at the opportunity of also progressing their career but at a slightly older age. Some students were encouraged by the in house management to undertake the course so improving their knowledge and skills. Figure 6 – how much research is undertaken?

The above outlines how much research was undertaken before the students undertook the course. 25% admitted they had done very little research and had relied on word of mouth from friends and past students. 25% admitted attending an open day so they were better able to understand the course and the time requirements. The remainder was either advised by their

managers to undertake the course or had done minimal research and joined the course anyway. Figure 7 - Choice of learning. The majority said they did have a choice in how to study, but elected to undertake distance study.

The remaining 25% who did not have a choice said that their working hours meant they were unable to take anytime out to attend face to face courses. If they had a choice, would they have attended face to face courses as opposed to opt for distance learning? Out of the total sample, 75% said that work commitments were an influence in making the decision to undertake distance learning with the remaining 25% stated this was the only option for undertaking and completing the course. All the students agreed that distance was more flexible and was a cheaper option.

Figure 8 - Effectiveness of distance learning The research indicates that when the students were asked to compare distance learning having previously undertaken face to face learning, they all agreed that distance learning was worse. The students found it more difficult to express opinions over distance learning and missed the one to one question opportunity. Better communication via face to face because information was taken in and understood more easily. The speed of response was thought to be quicker and better via face to face with greater accuracy and clarity in the answers. The students were asked if distance learning allowed discussions to take on a greater degree of thought and reflections, with 50% saying yes it did, and 50% saying no it did not. Figure 9 - How many hours per week do you study? The total number of hours per week given over to studying is split, with 50% of the surveyed saying 5 to 10 hours, whilst the remaining 50% saying 10 plus hours per week. The difference could be down to level of experience,

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age, ease of distance learning or just the time it takes to undertake assignments.

Each individual will have key skill bases that will allow them to complete the projects in different timelines, hence the difference in hours per week worked. Using the Likert scale (Newby, 2010) the results were conclusive that students felt 1 module per half term would improve the balance between study and home. In completing the modules, 75% either agreed or strongly agreed that completing one module per half term as opposed to two over a term certainly improved the study/home life balance, with 25% saying they did not agree nor disagree.

This comes back to being able to prioritize their workload more successfully as they have a clear goal in a defined timeline, as opposed to a longer timeline where better time management could well be needed. Figure 10 – When do you study? The survey group had different work patterns, with 50% working at weekend, 25% in the week and 25% working across both. This would probably be driven by their respective home life, their career, if they have children and where they lived. Studying time would have to fit in around many other external factors.

All the surveyed agreed that the study time affected their home or social life. The younger individuals lost out on time meeting friends and going out and all agreed that weekend life with its need to undertake family and home jobs meant that their time was really squeezed. Time management was a key to getting all of the modules finished and in on time. In terms of hobbies, all

agreed that they had and enjoyed taking part in their hobbies, whether it was in the week or at weekends.

Out of the survey, 50% stated that these were severely affected and the remaining 50% said that they were affected. Hobby time spent was certainly reduced with 50% saying that the distance learning had a significant affect on how much time they could spend pursuing their hobbies over a given week. The surveyed also found that their employers had very different reactions to their distance learning, with 75% being given no extra time off to help with their studies, and 25% being helped by their employer. The 25% who were helped were allowed on average one study day off per week.

Figure 11 – Is the study having a positive effect in your workplace?

Interestingly 50% said that the learning experience was having a positive effect on their work place, with 50% being unsure. The positive impact allowed the newly gained knowledge to be used in the work place with positive effects, helping day to day running of work, cascading more information down to other staff members, additional responsibility being enjoyed and the general acceptance that the new learning was having a positive impact of the workplace and fellow colleagues.

In terms of dealing with the pressure of distance learning, all of those surveyed said they felt that the support they received as part of the online group did not help them deal with the added pressure and workload from the extra learning. This could be down to the whole new experience of distance learning where previously they had the face to face time, where issues could be discussed and solutions found.

Now if there are any issues, then the individual must try to find a solution themselves and so are potentially feeling more isolated and pressured. 75% did feel that having a mentor aided them in their day to day studies, where 25% were unsure. Again this could be down to the new experience of undertaking distance learning with the individuals taking to time to understand how to best use the mentor. As this process develops so the mentor could well be used more in a way to help find solutions to ongoing issues and problems.

The mentor when asked had a great deal of knowledge, but the issue was still how best to use them. All of the surveyed felt that having a mentor in no way helped them in reducing the number of hours they had to work. The mentor was there to help with specific questions, not to help with larger problem solving hence reducing the number of hours that had to be worked. All of the surveyed felt with the advent of modern technology development, distance learning will play an important part for our future generations.

It was felt that individuals could go back and study without having to give up their jobs, the studying would be more convenient for them and their families, older students would not have to sit in a classroom with younger students so having perhaps a confidence issue and generally the feeling was being able to study at a time and in an environment that was more suited to the individual. Reflection The undertaken research and related results were indeed a very worthwhile process that yielded some frank and interesting points of view.

With any form of research, hindsight plays an important part when reviewing the questions, the questionnaire, the sample size and the overall results. The information allowed the survey to demonstrate a view that distance learning on the home/work life balance is truly a challenge particularly when looking at the relative age and social position of the surveyed. The questionnaire included a number of dichotomous questions giving clear unequivocal responses (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Open questions gave participants an opportunity to write down their opinions generating qualitative data (Kumar, 2001).

Research ethics as described by Blaxter et al. cited in Bell (2005) is about being clear about the nature of the agreement with the research participants. Clear instructions and the overarching ethics of the research meant there was no poor interpretation. Sample sizes are always important and so the larger the sample size the more accurate and more believable the results become. Quality of the samples then becomes of paramount importance so though the sample size is small, the results are accurate and are a true reflection on what was reported within the questionnaire.

Sarah is very interested in the topic of importance of play but asks group if the group need to ask questions which are yes and no or will we ask for opened ended questions And if the group need to think of either a research question or hypothesis to ask to get the ball rolling i. e. what do we want to investigate. As in would we want to know what areas are more important the younger and older a child gets for example the EYFS suggest the most important areas for a baby are personal social and emotional and physical and communication is this true?

She also asks would questions answered by fellow practitioners think so. and what would they be for an older child Sarah is unsure if she is on the right track and asks for groups thoughts and help 22/10/2013 13: 48 Lisa Lisa suggests basing the questionnaire on something personal to the other students e. g. distance learning - the effectiveness of online discussion, combining work with study (poss. effects on home life) or something similar Lisa thinks we need open ended questions as well as yes/no answers in order to provide as much information as we can for the write up for later on 3/10/2013 04: 16 Kat On reflection Kat feels her ideas won't work for the questionnaire and agrees with Lisa's idea for long distance learning And says after reading the module further she feels she has a bigger understanding Kat asks the group Where shall we go from here and if we all agree this would be a good topic to base our research on 23/10/2013 14: 25 Steph Steph agrees with the questionnaire being based around distance learning, the pros and con's.. As she feels it's more personal to all of us whereas the other areas we looked at are more generic and not so suited to a smaller group.

Steph also says she thinks it may be easier to come up with more specific questions too. 24/10/2013 23: 10 Kat Kat volunteers to email Julia if we all agree on subject to ask see if its suitable subject She also asks the group to think over the next few days about questions we would like to include And will begin the research dairy Would anyone else like to make the questionnaire template and also offered to do this. 27/10/2013 18: 06 Sarah Sarah agrees with the questionnaire to be about distance learning and thinks

its more personal and we can all relate to this as well as the other group.

28/10/2013 11: 12

Steph Steph offers to look at questionnaire template Steph also suggests questions for questionnaire and asks for feedback and thoughts on them. Steps questions: Why did you decide to embark on this Foundation Degree? How much, if any, research did you do before applying? If so, what research did you do? How did you find the transition to the course? How do you find corresponding with tutors/other students? Do you feel supported by the university? (May be controversial!!) Do you find distance learning more agreeable than face-to-face tuition? If you had a choice would you rather have face-to-face tuition?

How do you find the balance of home life vs. studying? 28/10/2013 12: 01

Sarah Sarah likes Steph's questions and thinks we should use them in questionnaire and also suggests questions and asks for feedback: 1, Do you find completing two modules at one time as a full working employee time consuming, resulting in one modules work been jeopardised? 2, Do you think Higher Education is reflecting in your practise? 3, Do you agree that online teaching is as effective as classroom teaching? 28/10/2013 12: 05 Sarah

Sarah also volunteers do research dairy 28/10/2013 13: 07 Sarah

Sarah asks group if for the purpose of the questionnaire does anybody have any ideas of how we are going to address the questionnaire or what title we will give the questionnaire for researching distance learning 28/10/2013 13: 20 Steph Steph asks the group also For the purpose of the questionnaire template does anyone have a good title they think would be suitable. Steph's

ideas for the open question and title is ' Is distance learning as effective as face-to-face tuition? ' or ' What, if any, constraints are there to distance learning when working and raising families? ' And asks group opinion and if other suggestions 28/10/2013 13: 35 Steph

Steph is happy with Sarah to do research diary and asks if anyone wants to tackle the introductory letter to the questionnaire for the other group or would the group like her to have a go along with the questionnaire layout 28/10/2013 13: 54 Steph Steph asks the group to look at the start of our questionnaire, is it worth getting some background info from those completing it in the other group? Steph suggests asking the age of the participant, what type of setting they work in, whether they work full time or part time, whether they have children of their own, and how many hours do they actually spend per week on their university work?

And asks for group feedback 28/10/2013 14: 44 Sarah Sarah says she will do the research diary and agrees with Steph about finding out more background info on the other group as it may help with the write up at the end. 28/10/13 14: 56 Sarah Sarah has started the research diary and has posted it on to vle and asks for group feed back 28/10/13 20: 02 Lisa Lisa likes the research diary and the questions people in the group have put up too. Asks group if the group have made a decision on the research title / question and suggests : Does combining distance learning whilst working have a negative impact on a student's home life?

Lisa suggests the following questions also: 1, How many hours per week do you spend studying? Does the majority of your study take place during the

week or at weekends? If you mainly study at weekends do you feel this has an impact on your home life? If yes, in what way? Do you have any hobbies? 2, How important is it having a mentor? Does your mentor work in your setting? If not, what is your relationship to them? Does your mentor regularly contribute to your studies? Do you meet and talk to your mentor on a regular basis? If yes, how often do you meet and for how long?

If no, do you think it would be helpful if you did? Do you believe your studies would be negatively affected if you did not have a mentor? If yes, in what way? Does your mentor have enough knowledge to be of help to you? And thinks we should also ask background questions such as: Age How many hours work a week Live on own/ with parents/ with partner Any children
28/10/13 21: 06 Sarah Sarah tells the group she will continue with the diary and updating when needed. Sarah likes Lisa's questions and asks the group how will we decide on questionnaire as group 29/10/13 03: 13 Kat

Kat thinks it all sounds great and says she has been working on some questions and will post them later Kat spoke to Julia and said she thinks our idea is good but said we need to make sure the title reflects the question.. Kat suggests the idea: The Effectiveness of Distance Learning? Kat also likes Steph's idea ' What, if any constraints are there to distance learning when working and raising families' she thinks this is probably a topic close to all our hearts And states she is happy for Steph to look at templates and likes Lisa's questions Kat also says once we finalise our title we can work out which ones are related..

And is also happy with the research diary 29/10/13 14: 01 Lisa Lisa is happy with the idea of distance learning when working etc too, She suggests we also go with that But does think there may be not enough of the other group members all raising families so suggests maybe have the question more about impact on home life or something as that will cover everyone 30/10/13 00: 21 Kat Kat suggests: The impact of combining study (Distance Learning) with work and home life 30/10/13 09: 13 Steph

Steph is happy with all suggestions and think that to cover all bases it would be good for the research question to reflect everyone's lives so agrees that Kat's suggestion is good. She also likes Lisa's suggestion of including questions about mentoring as she feels it makes it a two part questionnaire but all relevant to distance learning. 30/10/13 10: 34 Steph Steph apologises to Lisa as she just re-read her message and realised she was proposing two research question suggestions... one on work/home life balance and the other on mentoring, she interpreted it to we could combine the two, but suggests this over-complicate matters.

Steph is happy, thinks we are coming up with the right line of questions, and agrees if we go down the home/lifestyle route but will wait for Kat's suggestions. 31/10/13 10: 26 Steph Steph explains that her and Lisa met up yesterday at university and discussed our research questionnaire.... and asks the group if everyone is in agreement, that the felt that a question on the impact of distance learning on our work/home life is relevant and should yield some interesting info/thoughts from the other group.

Steph asks the group if we could come up with some questions that we think would suit the questionnaire, and if possible by the weekend, as looking at the timescale we need to submit the questionnaire to Julia for authorisation before giving it to the other group next week and then the following week we will be collating and investigating the results Steph also tells group she has already put together the first bit of the questionnaire, asking background information like age, hours you work, who you live with and if you have any children.

And explains to the group we need to come up with about 3-4 questions each. In addition, asks Kat if she would like to input any more questions to the questionnaire as Sarah Lisa and herself like her questions. 03/11/13 14:51 Steph Steph has put together the following questions from group's suggestions for the questionnaire. Steph asks the group to look at them and let her know if we think they are suitable or whether we need to amend/not include any or add others. The questions: Why did you decide to embark on this Foundation Degree?

How much research into relevant courses did you do before applying to Anglia Ruskin University? Did you have a choice between embarking on a distance-learning course or face-to face tuition? How did you find the transition on to the course? Do you find online teaching as effective as classroom tuition? How many hours per week do you spend studying? Do you find completing two modules concurrently time consuming? Does the majority of your study take place during the week or at the weekends?

If you mainly study at weekends, do you feel this has an impact on your home life? If yes, in what way? Do you have any hobbies? If yes, is your time to peruse these hobbies reduced by your studies? Does your employer allow you time for studying? Do you feel your studying is having a positive effect in your workplace? 04/11/13 03: 30 Kat Kat explains she has had no internet and explains to Steph she will send over some questions now 04/11/13 09: 29 Steph Steph explains she is still waiting for feedback of rest of group and not to worry 04/11/13 16: 01 Lisa

Lisa says all the questions you have down look great and also suggests that maybe on the hours per week one we could have multiple options as answers for them to tick which applies i. e. Less than 5 hours, Between 5 and 10 hours, More than 10 hours. And that we could also ask about whether having a mentor aids study and therefore helps reduce time spent studying 05/11/13 15: 54 Steph Steph agrees with Lisa about amending the hours worked question and incorporating the mentor questions she thinks they are very valid and apologies for missing them off.

She says she is going to put it all together and send the group a copy to have a look at and asks group to let her know what we think. 05/11/13 17: 38 Steph Steph sends a copy of the questionnaire to group. 07/11/13 12: 53 Steph Steph's asks Julia if she could look at the research questionnaire she has posted over to the group on Tuesday, 5th Nov. she explains she has been waiting for the group to shed there thoughts but has not heard back form them but asks is she does not mind looking at it and giving the group her thoughts. 7/11/13 15: 01 Julia Julia has a look at questionnaire and gives her feed back: She explains the draft questionnaire was posted in the wrong <https://assignbuster.com/research-and-distance-learning-essay/>

thread, as it was attached to the area reserved for the completed questionnaires required for Group 1 to analyse only. She explains she has read the draft, and has a couple of comments.

It might be an idea to form a question in your title e. g. Does... , that way when you analyse the findings your hypothesis will be whether it does or does not.) question 11, assumes that the participants have experienced F2F/classroom teaching, and if they have not then they would be unable to answer with any value to the question Some of the questions will give you subjective comments, and you will have to ensure that your analysis of the findings are a true picture of the findings, rather than personal feelings She asks the group to make any changes the group feel are necessary and post in the thread reserved for your questionnaire, so that Group 1 can post their completed paperwork there for you to retrieve J 8/11/13 14: 32 Lisa Lisa explains to the group she has had a little play around with questionnaire, by just reworded a bit and changed research question. And asks the group to Let her know what we think or add anything else you think it needs 09/11/13 16: 06 Sarah Sarah apologies for not having time to get online and says she has caught up with the module and read everything now.

Sarah really likes the layout Steph has done but explains its is bit up and down but is could be her laptop She also likes all the questions and agrees that she can see how some of the questions may cause a personal input but she thinks it is something we are all personally doing as a group and individually so it hard for it not to be She likes the adjustments that Lisa has done and asks when we will be sending it to Julia and other group. 10/11/13 14: 08 Steph

Steph tells Lisa she is happy with alterations and thinks it reads much better and should, hopefully, give us more definitive answers to analyse. Steph thanks Julia and comments on what we had done and where to make changes. 11/11/13 09: 56 Julia Julia gives feed back on questionnaire and explains the wording is better, but her main concern is that there is still a negative feel to the questions. she realise that as a group you find the course challenging, but there doesn't seem to be any opportunity to say what is positive about the course or being online except Q 23 and the final reflection.

Any type of Research needs to be balanced and it would appear that you want there to be a negative hypothesis to this research, rather than an overview of findings. She explains this is her viewpoint and explains she is trying to influence the finding with her opinion, so the group can see how these things can easily happen. She adds the choice of whether the group adds/deletes any questions is the group's decision, and ultimately the group will need to analyse the findings, so she is concerned as she explained before that there will be too much subjection and not enough objective data/analysis.

There is also the drawback that G1 will use the questions to just have a moan about the course, rather than providing valuable data and this is always a problem with any type of questionnaire. She also explains and feels that free speech is what we want but this is an emotive subject and one where you might get a one-sided viewpoint only 11/11/13 13: 55 Steph Steph thanks Julia for feedback regarding the questionnaire and what

amendments the group should make to ensure it is more balanced. She suggests we will look at altering it to include a more positive objective.

And explains its not going as smoothly as we'd hoped because Kat is experiencing lots of problems getting access to the vle, so hasn't been able to contribute as much as she'd hoped, and Sarah M has started a new job which has meant her input has unfortunately been limited. W and explains we will try to get the revised questionnaire over to you asap. 11/11/13 14: 44

Steph Steph suggests further positive questions: Do you find distance learning more flexible than face-to-face tuition, therefore potentially cheaper?

Do you find that, because discussions build over a period, they allow for more thought and reflection? Do you feel that, with modern technology, distance learning will play an important role for future generations? 11/11/13 16: 13 Julia Julia posts to the group she has responded to Lisa on whether you should change the focus/title, but explains she wrote to Lisa, suggesting as w have all done so much work already she says start re-writing now but to just add a question maybe on how online collaboration can/might help with the negativity e. g. hared understanding of what each of you are going through etc. She also advises the group if we are all happy with the changes, don't worry about re-sending to me, just post in the thread and give G1 a deadline for returning the questionnaires 11/11/13 17: 04 Steph Steph thanks Julia and asks her if there's a place in the questionnaire for the questions I posted earlier and explains there's no need to reply if you can't answer that one but was hoping that by incorporating them into the questionnaire might make it less biased. 11/11/13 18: 50

Lisa Lisa gives feedback from speaking with Julia. She explains she suggested we add maybe a question about whether the support received by working in an online cohort helps with the pressure with work etc. Lisa is happy with Steph's questions as it adds balance to the questionnaire so the group can analyse the findings. Lisa suggests this we will have a more balanced picture and thinks if we include Steph's questions and Does the support you receive as part of an online group help with the pressure of combining study and your work/home life?

We are a group of students from the Education Department at Anglia Ruskin University in the second year of our Foundation Degree in Early Years. We are collating data for a research module and are conducting a study into distance learning and its impact on a student's work/home life. We will be seeking to answer the question: Does combining distance learning and working have a negative impact on a student's work/home life? The questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. You will be asked to answer a range of questions on your opinion of distance learning.

In line with ethical guidelines, the study, which has been approved by Anglia Ruskin University, will be completely confidential and you will not be asked to provide any information that personally identifies you. The questionnaire is completely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time. If you have concerns please contact Stephanie. anglia.ac.uk. We would like to say thank you for your participation and assistance in this study. Kat, Lisa, Sarah and Steph

The impact of distance learning on work/home life,