# *Appendix C*

## VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
## Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Projects

**Title of Project**: **Perceptions and Challenges of Implementing an E-learning Solution: A Case Study of SkillSoft®**
**Investigator:** Warren Snyder

### I. Purpose of this Research

You are being asked to participate in a research study to better understand how the spread and acceptance of SkillSoft occurred within one military agency. A secondary goal is to understand any influences (personal, technological or organizational) on you that affected your willingness to try and use SkillSoft. You will be volunteering your time to answer questions concerning you experiences with SkillSoft for this important research study on a distance learning program. A maximum of thirty individuals will participate in this study. You involvement should not require more than 2 hours of your time.

### II. Procedures

The information for this research effort will come from you. As a participant in this study, you will either participate in a focus group consisting of eight to ten individuals or be one of eight to ten individuals to be interviewed. The focus group and interviews will take place in your office or in the building you work at. You role in this research is to describe in detail your experiences with SkillSoft over the past few months. You will not be asked to answer any questions that you are uncomfortable with. The kinds of questions you will be asked are, Tell me how you became aware and learn about SkillSoft, Tell me how you were persuaded (your peers, you supervisor, organization polices, or personal feeling) to try SkillSoft, Tell me about your reasons for using SkillSoft, Tell me about any problems you encountered in using SkillSoft or distance learning programs, Tell me about your feeling with using SkillSoft or distance learning programs, Tell me about any influences that have affected your decision to accept or reject SkillSoft as a way for you to acquire new knowledge or skills?

### III. Risks

The risks to your participation in this study are minimal. You will not be asked to comment on company policy or other employees or answer embarrassing questions. Your name will not be associated with your comments. The final report will group the comments from all participants into a general comment so as to protect your identity.

# *Appendix C continued*

**IV. Benefits from this Project**

The benefit of this research is that you are contributing to a better understanding of how a new distance learning program is spread and adopted. Your responses will help me to understand answers to the following questions: how does an individual first become aware of a new distance learning program like SkillSoft; why do individuals try new distance learning programs; how different influences may have affected an individual's willingness to adopt or reject SkillSoft or distance learning programs; how individuals feel about obtaining their learning using distance learning programs like SkillSoft; and how an individual feels about not having an instructor to assist them in their learning process? The value of this research project to the US Army and other researchers is that they can learn more about issues related to encouraging people like you to use distance learning programs. This study may also assist other researchers in better understanding how to implement new distance learning programs.

**V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality**

Any stories or feedback that are related to the researcher will be described without names or other identifiable characteristics to maintain your anonymity and the confidentiality of the data. Your name will not be associated with your specific comments. The finding will not associate particular comments with names of individuals who participated in the study. The final report will group the comments from all participants into general comments so your anonymity will be protected. The researchers will request you permission to tape record the focus group and interview sessions. You have a choice to permit or deny the tape recording of sessions. If you grant permission to tape the session, the researchers will provide you an opportunity to listen to the tape and approve its content. The tapes will be secured in a locked file cabinet under the supervision of the researchers. Confidentiality of information will be retained. The only individuals who will be granted access to the tapes will be the researchers and their supervisor. At no time will the researcher release the tapes, transcriptions of the tapes or results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent. All tapes will be destroyed upon completion of this project.

**VI. Compensation**

There is will be no compensation for your time or comments. Your involvement in this research project is strictly voluntary.

**VII. Freedom to Withdraw**

Participants are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. If you choose to withdraw, there will no compensation for the portion of time you spent on this study. You are free to not answer any questions that you choose without penalty.

# *Appendix C continued*

**VII. Approval of Research**

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the Department of Adult Learning and Human Resource Development and the Land Information Warfare Activity.

**IX. Subject's Responsibilities**

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I will participate as a member of a Focus Group or agree to be interviewed as part of this study.

**X. Subject's Permission**

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and the conditions of the project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project.

If I participate, I may withdraw at any time without penalty. I agree to abide by the rules of this project.

_____

Signature Date

**XI. Subject's Consent to Tape Recording of Session**

I voluntarily consent to permit tape recording of session(s) (interview or Focus Group) under the conditions specified in this project. I understand the researcher will not release the tapes, or transcriptions of the tapes and that all tapes will be destroyed upon completion of project. _____

Signature Date

**XII. Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact: Original Signed**

Warren Snyder at 703-706-1305
Investigator

Marilyn Lichtman at 703-538-8476
Research Advisor

Marcie Boucouvalas at 703-538-8469
Faculty Advisor

M.G. Cline at 703-538-8492
IRB Reviewer

# *Appendix D*

## Interviewing

Procedure: Establish an environment that is free flowing and relatively unstructured, but have preplanned questions. Guide interview without inhibiting the flow of discussion or biasing their opinions. Attempt to get individuals to explain how and why things occurred. Follow up on key points to better understand process and meanings associated with words or terms.

Select of Participants: Purposeful

Approach Will be used to ask individuals to

Tell me how you become aware and learned about SkillSoft?

Tell me how you were persuaded to try SkillSoft?

Describe any influences that affected you willingness to try this product.

Tell me about any influences (your peers, organizational policies, or personal feeling) that have affected your decision to accept SkillSoft as a way for you to learn.

Tell me about your reasons for your continuing to use SkillSoft?
Tell me about your likes and dislikes with SkillSoft.
Tell me about the influences that will affect your continued use of SkillSoft.

Interviews: Transcribe data. Write up notes from interviews. Define terms. Read & reread interview transcriptions

Analysis: Code and enter data into NVIVO. Analyze, interpret, look for trends

# *Appendix E*

## Final Interview Questions

### Topic: Description of the Organization

Describe the environment and organizational structure?

Explain the rank/grade structure of the organization?

Describe how decisions are made in this military organization?

Describe the communication channels within the organizations?

Describe the culture and environment of the military agency?

Describe the type of skills required by personnel in this organization?

What is the age range of people in the agency?

What is the composition of the organization?

What are the educational levels of the personnel?

### Topic: Selection of SkillSoft®

Tell me the story of how SkillSoft® was selected.

Who made the decision to select SkillSoft®? Why?

### Topic: SkillSoft® Implementation Objectives

Explain the objectives for implementing SkillSoft®.

Explain your perception of what was to be accomplished with introduction of SkillSoft®?

### Topic: Audience for SkillSoft®

Tell me who your perception of who was the audience for SkillSoft®?

Who was to use SkillSoft®*?*

# *Appendix E*

## Final Interview Questions (continued)

### Topic: Creating Awareness of SkillSoft®

How did you become aware of SkillSoft®?

Describe the plan to create awareness of SkillSoft®.

What communication means were used to make you aware of SkillSoft®?

What information was provided to you about SkillSoft®?

Were personnel aware of SkillSoft®?

### Topic: Encouraging Interest in SkillSoft®

What persuaded you to try SkillSoft®?

Discuss the influence(s)?

What influence did your supervisor or superiors play in your trying or using SkillSoft®?

What influence did your friends or coworkers play in trying or using SkillSoft®*? Explain*

### Topic: Trial - First Log on Experience

Describe your first log on experience?

Describe the problems you had logging on?

Describe any problems you had?

### Topic: Evaluation - Likes and Dislikes of SkillSoft®

Describe what you liked about SkillSoft®?

Describe what you disliked with SkillSoft®?

# Final Interview Questions (continued)

## Topic: Influences on the diffusion and adoption of SkillSoft

Describe the influences that affected your trial and use of SkillSoft®?

Explain how that influence(s) affected your decision to try SkillSoft®?

Explain how that influence(s) affected your use of the SkillSoft®?

Describe what you thought was the one major influence on use of SkillSoft® in the military agency?

Explain your opinion on the mandated policy to use SkillSoft®?

Did this policy influence your use of SkillSoft®? Explain?

Explain your opinion about using SkillSoft® to complete a course?

## Topic: SkillSoft® vs. Classroom Instruction

Compare and contrast SkillSoft® to classroom instruction?

# *Appendix F*

**Warren's Data Collection Tool**

**Administrative Data**

**Division**: □ OPS □ P&T □ VAD □ ACERT □ Director □ FSD □ Automation

**Category of Employee**: □ Civilian □ Officer □ Enlisted

**Level of Education**: □ High School □ College □ Graduate School □ other _____

Age: ____ Gender: Male □ Female □

**Survey Questions**

1. **Are you aware of SkillSoft?** □ Yes □ No

2. **How did you become aware of SkillSoft?** Check all that apply

□ Email □ Deputy's Policy memorandum □ Commander's Meeting □ NCO Meeting
□ Flyer □ Training Branch personnel □ Supervisor □ Don't remember
Other ways (list) _____

3. **Have you attempted/completed any SkillSoft courses?** □ Yes □ No

a. If yes, **what were reasons for using SkillSoft?** Check all that apply

□ My Boss □ My Friends □ Saves training dollars □ Mandated Policy memorandum
□ Access through Internet/Intranet/CBT □ Ease of use □ Course Offerings
□ Good way to obtain required training □ Have not tried SkillSoft □ Other _____

b. If no, **what were your reasons for not using SkillSoft?** Check all that apply

□ Lack of time □ Course offerings not job related □ System not user friendly
□ Too much work due to mission support □ Lack of Access thru Internet/Intranet
□ Not Aware of SkillSoft □ Do not like to train using Distance Learning programs
□ Technical Problems □ Other reasons (list) _____

6. **List any other comments about your experience with SkillSoft**.

_____

7. **My Notes about Interview:**

_____

# *Appendix G*

## Calendar of Events

Year 2002

January 10 - February 15 2002 - Obtained list of employees with SkillSoft user ID and Passwords.

- Attempted to locate employees interviewees.

- Developed potential list of interviewees.

January 28 - February 1 2002 - Conducted pilot interview, and revise interview questions.

February 5 2002 - Notified that my first focus Group scheduled for February 15th was cancelled due to OPTEMPO

February 12th - May 5 2002 Began conducting interviews. Simultaneously transcribing interviews, journaling pre and post interviews and analyzing and interpretation data

February 26 2002 - Attended Senior NCO and where discussion was on SkillSoft and use of distance Learning in training the soldiers.

June 30 2002 - Finished transcribing interviews and began writing.

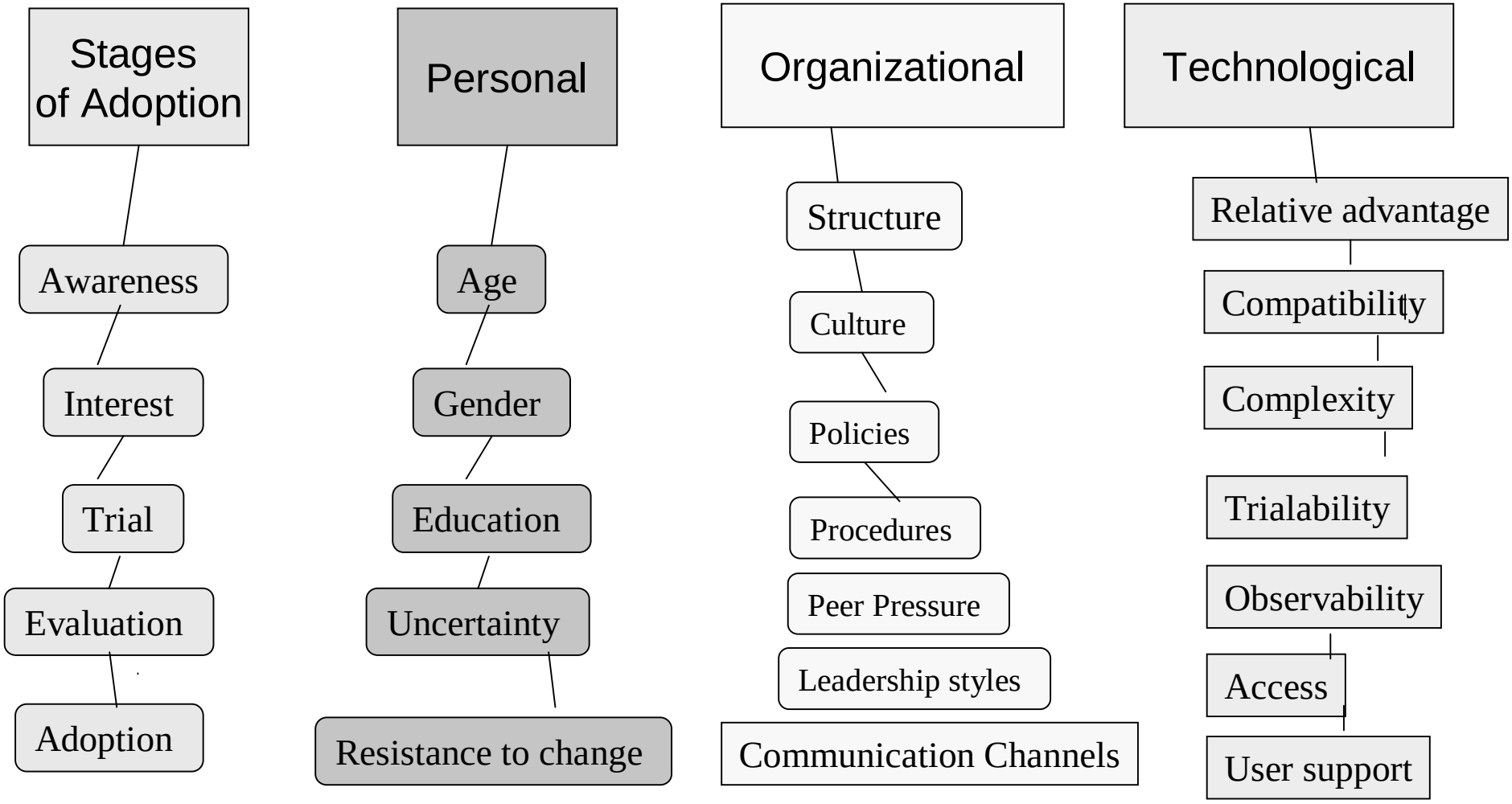
July 28th - August 5th 2002 - Conducted follow up interviews and continued to revise rough draft of paper.

August 30th – Finished first draft of dissertation.

# *Appendix H*

## Analysis & Interpretation

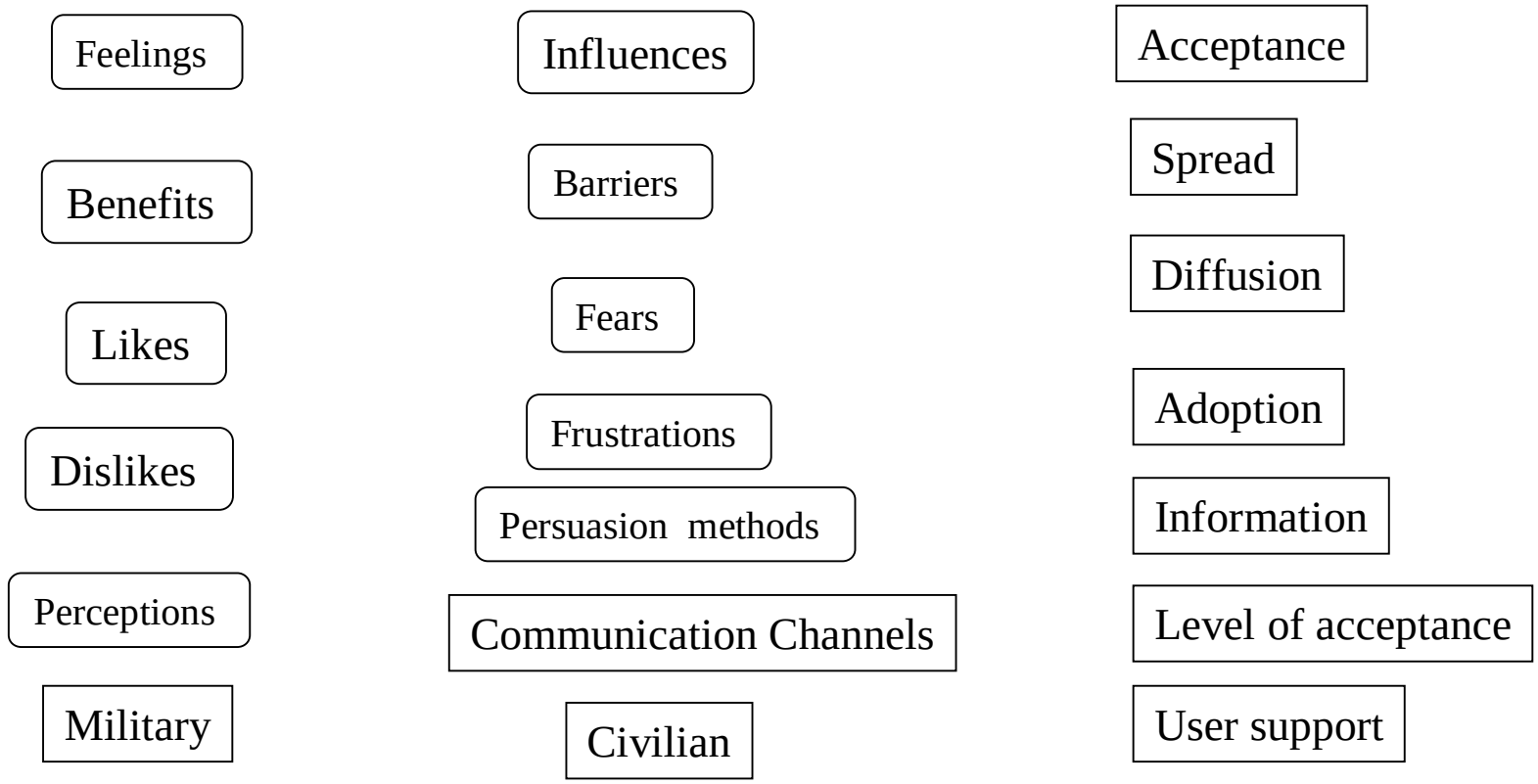
### Structured Coding & Analysis (Grouped Example)



# *Appendix I*

## Warren's Analysis & Interpretation

## Unstructured Coding & Analysis (Ungrouped Example)



# *Appendix J*

**NVIVO**

**Data Queries and Sorts of Data for Analysis**

| **Topic of Query** | **Type of Node** | **Data Analyzed** |
|---|---|---|
| Culture | Tree | All Files |
| Culture: Compare DL in Agency with Outside Agencies | Tree | All Files |
| Culture: Describe | Tree | All Files |
| Culture: Optempo | Tree | All Files |
| Culture: Perception of | Tree | All Files |
| Culture: Skills of Personnel | Tree | All Files |
| Culture: Skills of Personnel | Tree | Military |
| Culture: Skills of Personnel | Tree | Civilians |
| Methods of Awareness: All | Tree | All Files |
| Methods of Awareness: Management | Tree | All Files |
| Methods of Awareness: Demonstrations | Tree | All Files |
| Methods of Awareness: Flyers | Tree | All Files |
| Methods of Awareness: Written | Tree | All Files |
| Methods of Awareness: NCO | Tree | All Files |
| Methods of Awareness: Peers | Tree | All Files |
| Methods of Awareness: Staff Meetings | Tree | All Files |
| Methods of Awareness: Training Branch | Tree | All Files |
| Methods of Awareness: Steps in Process | Tree | All Files |
| Methods of Awareness: To Military | Tree | Military |
| Methods of Awareness: To Government Civilians | Tree | Civilians |
| How was Skillsoft spread? | Tree | All |
| How was Skillsoft spread? | Tree | Military |
| How was Skillsoft spread? | Tree | Civilians |
| Describe the Skillsoft Story | Tree | Management |
| Describe the Skillsoft Story | Tree | Military |
| Describe the Skillsoft Story | Tree | Civilians |

# *Appendix J* *continued*

**NVIVO**

**Data Queries and Sorts of Data for Analysis**

| Topic of Query | Type of Node | Data Analyzed |
|---|---|---|
| SkillSoft Project: All | Tree | All |
| SkillSoft Project: Goals | Tree | All |
| SkillSoft Project: Objectives | Tree | All |
| SkillSoft Project: Implementation | Tree | All |
| SkillSoft Project: Selection | Tree | All |
| SkillSoft Project: Opinions | Tree | All |
| SkillSoft Project: Courses Listings | Tree | Military |
| SkillSoft Project: Courses Listings | Tree | Civilians |
| SkillSoft Project: Courses Listings | Tree | All |
| SkillSoft Project: Audience | Tree | All |
| SkillSoft Project: Audience | Tree | Military |
| SkillSoft Project: Audience | Tree | Civilian |
| SkillSoft Project: Fit with Organization | Tree | All |
| SkillSoft Project: Fit with Organization | Tree | Military |
| SkillSoft Project: Fit with Organization | Tree | Civilians |
| SkillSoft Project: Measures of Success | Tree | All |
| First Log on Experience | Tree | All |
| First Log on Experience | Tree | Military |
| First Log on Experience | Tree | Civilians |
| Benefits of Skillsoft | Tree | All |
| Benefits of Skillsoft | Tree | Military |
| Benefits of Skillsoft | Tree | Civilians |
| Mandatory Policy | Tree | All |
| Mandatory Policy | Tree | Management |
| Mandatory Policy | Tree | Military |
| Mandatory Policy | Tree | Civilians |
| Change | Tree | All |
| Change | Tree | Management |
| Change | Tree | Military |
| Change | Tree | Civilians |
| Affects of Change on Project | Tree | All |

# *Appendix J*

**NVIVO**

**Data Queries and Sorts of Data for Analysis**

| Topic of Query | Type of Node | Data Analyzed |
|---|---|---|
| Personal Influences | Tree | All |
| Personal Influences | Tree | Military |
| Personal Influences | Tree | Civilians |
| Organizational Influences | Tree | Management |
| Organizational Influences | Tree | Military |
| Organizational Influences | Tree | Civilians |
| Technological Influences | Tree | Management |
| Technological Influences | Tree | Military |
| Technological Influences | Tree | Civilians |
| Learning Styles | Free | All |
| Compare Skillsoft with Traditional Classroom Instruction | Free | All |
| Compare Skillsoft with other distance learning products | Free | All |
| Frustrations | Free | All |
| Concerns | Free | All |
| Management support | Free | All |
| Fears | Free | All |
| Course selection | Free | All |