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DOCTOR OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Policy and pedagogy in the further education sector

an emerging professional identity

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Policy and Pedagogy in the Further Education Sector: an emerging professional identity

Carey Normand

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Presented for the degree: Doctor of Education

Carey Normand

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Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is presented as a portfolio and represents the assemblage of artefacts produced by me for the degree: Doctor of Education. The portfolio is structured in three parts.

The three parts of this thesis can look disparate and unconnected – separated as they are by time, purpose, intention, thinking and learning – but a common thread runs through my work and is my driving intuition. Essentially, I see five strands as dominant and influential in my work and these can be encapsulated as: my philosophical position and belief in democratic education; my theoretical educational perspective as a social constructivist, stressing the social and culture dimensions of learning; my pedagogical approach as a facilitator of adult learning coupled with my constant enquiry into the nature of learning and teaching, especially within the twenty-first century; my belief in the centrality of narratives - the stories told and the ways in which they are told – and how they are understood and given meaning at a cultural level; and the dynamic relationship between policy and practice.

The work presented in this thesis builds on my earlier study and professional educational practice. I have lectured in further and higher education for over twenty years and my enquiry is generated by the immediate concerns I have within my own practice as an educator in higher education and post-16 'teacher' education, as is evident in Part One of the thesis. It is also generated by the concerns and enquiry of other educators and theorists at a local and global level. The context and dominant subject of all three parts of this thesis are lecturers who work in the Further Education college sector, in Scotland. The college sector is relatively recent in the history of Scottish education but, and perhaps because of this, is the most dynamic and reflects the essence of Scottish democratic education. Most of the research on the Further Education sector, and those lecturers working within, has been undertaken outside of Scotland and refers to a different set of conditions from the Scottish context in relation to practices and policies.

I was driven to research the history of Scottish education as I felt I needed to know 'my' history and to understand why I had particular views on education that were grounded in democratic principles. This awareness of my own, implicit, values became palpable when working with colleagues in the English further education (FE) sector and those working in English universities as teacher educators for FE. I was struck by the omnipresence of the policy context and how this negatively impacted upon them as practitioners, appearing to paralyse and dominate their thinking and practices. Their professional autonomy seemed compromised, even eradicated and they expressed strong feelings of hopelessness. I often found myself as the lone voice at the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers, Post-16 Committee advocating collective action from members to challenge the barrage of contemporary policy directives, perceived by them as detrimental to their students, the educational sector and their professional status. This seemed anathema to them yet logical to me and I r ecognised a fundamental difference between us in relation to my own feelings of agency and the belief in the individual potential to effect change and my awareness of a more subtle policy context in relation to FE in Scotland. This recognition made me aware that my cultural experiences as someone educated in Scotland and now as an educator in Scotland was critical. This led me to investigate the nature of Scottish education historically and contemporaneously, especially within the college sector. This work provides the literature review for the study and is found in Part Two of the thesis.

Following from this literature review, my research for Part Three shifts from a purely theoretical basis to an empirical investigation into the ways in which lecturers are conceptualised as professionals, within the college sector in Scotland. My intuition was that there were stark differences between: lecturer experiences and practices; of conceptualisations of lecturer professionalism; and the relationship between policy and pedagogic practice, in the Scottish and English further education sectors. This perception was well founded and the investigation in Part Three identifies and analyses how and why these findings are significant for lecturers working in Further Education colleges in Scotland and beyond.

I will now present an abstract for each of the three parts of this thesis.

Abstract: Part One, is comprised of four publications by me (and co-author(s)) accompanied by a narrative text as a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) claim. All four publications were peer reviewed prior to publishing (they are reproduced in full in the thesis following the RPL Claim). This constitutes 2/5ths (two modules) of the degree.

Two of the publications Papers (1) and (3) are on flexible programme implementation and delivery (FPD). In paper (3) my co-author and I developed a model, as an analytic tool, to analyse 19 dimensions of FPD at three structural levels: Institutional Management (IM); Operational Management (OM); and Teaching and Learning Management (TLM) within two case-study institutions. As our thinking and analysis of implementing FPD deepened we began to investigate the role of 'strategic thinking' and how and where this is located within an institution (i.e. IM, OM, TLM levels), and the structure of an institution, especially 'structural hierarchies' (i.e. top-down or bottom-up approaches and management). Critically, papers (1) and (3) in constructing the model demonstrated research, and the application of the research, that made a significant contribution to the topic. We proposed an original way of conceptualising the problem – implementing FPD – and developed a model that could usefully incorporate a multiplicity of understandings and discourses and to use these discourses within and between hierarchical layers, thus facilitating shared visioning and ensuring strategic alignment and sustainability.

The other two publications are on the efficacy of online collaboration and the use of communication tools for professional lecturers studying for their Teaching Qualification in Further Education. Journal paper (2) is a focussed investigation into one aspect of flexibility within an online professional learning programme: the use of discussion board fora. Data were obtained using, firstly, observation of usage and then through a two stage questionnaire process. This methodology generated both quantitative and qualitative data and analyses. This study was very useful for us as academics teaching on the TQ(FE) programme but the findings also transcended the specific study by identifying 'learner characteristics' as influential in participation in online fora. Journal paper (4) emanates from Journal paper (2) and investigates further non/engagement in online communication fora. This study investigates the efficacy of a new blog tool that

my co-author and I developed, in promoting learning and enabling social interaction and collaboration among participants. The findings of the survey and semi-structured interviews highlight the complexity of factors that impact on learner participation on the blog, including learner characteristics, self-belief and self and group efficacy, ICT skills, time, timeliness of posts, tutor interaction and motives. The research findings have had a significant impact upon how we design learning environments and, specifically, online communication fora.

Abstract: Part Two, is a literature review entitled, *Revisiting the Democratic Intellect: a History of Scottish Education*. This constitutes 1/5th (one module) of the degree.

The focus of this study is on the Scottish education system and investigates its unique characteristics: exploring how education – learning and teaching – is conceptualised in the various educational sectors. In the piece I hypothesise that the national sense of the Scottish education system, the common 'structure of feeling', is predicated on the principles of democratic intellectualism and the 'generalist' tradition. This central argument is explored and tested through close analysis of the Scottish education system from its early foundation to the modern period; the extent to which its characteristics are actual or mythologised is examined; and, comparisons are made between Scottish education and the English and central European systems. Following from this, and as an original contribution to the debate, I argue that in the modern period the college sector is the exemplification of the values and ethos of the democratic tradition. Moreover, that it is in the work of the further education college sector in Scotland that the sense of a 'democratic' education remains and is sustained.

Abstract: Part three, is an empirical study entitled, *(Re)Conceptualising Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status.* This constitutes 2/5ths (two modules) of the degree.

The focus of this study is to explore and analyse conceptions of Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status for lecturers who teach in the contemporary further education college sector in Scotland. This is done initially through a systematic theoretical analysis of the literature on the three constructs of 'teacher' Professionalism which is followed by an empirical study whereby I apply Critical Discourse Analysis to the Scottish Executive's 2004 Consultation exercise *On the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges* and the Scottish Executive's 2005 analysis of the Consultation in their report *A Consultation on The Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges: Analysis of Responses*. The study is driven by four research questions that ask: How Professionalism; Professional Identity; and Professional Status are conceptualised for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland; and how these conceptualisations interface with belonging to a professional body? These four questions provide the foci for the critical discourse analysis. The study has four main findings: Clear, though differentiated, conceptualisations are located within two competing discourses: Neo-liberal Managerialism and Pedagogical. Secondly, that within the two competing discourses, conceptualisations are framed by three domain lenses: Personal, Occupational and Organisational. Thirdly, that language is used constitutively, that is, it creates what it refers to, within the two competing discourses. Critical, in the conceptualisation of the three constructs, are ten categories: Qualifications; Standards; Continuing Professional Development; Accreditation; Status; Role; Coherence; Flexibility; Quality and Professionalism, all with multiple and cultural meanings. Fourthly, that the context is essential to the conceptualisation of the three constructs and I found three contextual factors to be pertinent, firstly, the three domains as lenses; secondly, the history of education within Scotland; and thirdly, the Scottish political structure and the policy context.

PART 1

Recognition of Prior Learning Claim presented as 2/5ths of the degree: Doctor of Education

Carey Normand, December, 2011

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Introduction

This submission constitutes a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Claim for 40% of the Professional Doctorate in Education (DEd). The submission will draw upon four academic publications and correspondent activity. The publications are:

(1) Normand, C. A., Littlejohn, A. and Falconer, I. (2008) A model for effective implementation of flexible programme delivery, *Innovations in Education and Teaching International,* Vol 45, no 1, pp. 25-36, London: Routledge, Taylor Francis Group
http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a789692958~db=all~jumptype=rss
Carey Normand (40%), Allison Littlejohn (40%) and Isobel Falconer (20%)
Peer refereed by two anonymous reviewers selected by the Journal editor.

Innovations in Education and Teaching International is an international, interdisciplinary, peer reviewed journal. It has an impact factor of 0.644. This research was first commissioned and funded by the Quality Assurance Agency for Scotland, in collaboration with the UHI Millennium Institute and an initial research paper was published by QAAS in 2006 (see below). This paper synthesised data collected in that study as a vehicle for the analysis of leadership and strategic management at three hierarchical levels within an academic institution.

(2) Normand, C.A. Keatch, B. (2007) New on-line teaching qualification for college lecturers: an evaluation, *Journal European Teaching Education Network (JETEN)*, Vol 3, pp. 61 -73, London: ETEN and Greenwich University Press.
Carey Normand (50%) and Brenda Keatch (50%)

Peer refereed by four international reviewers, and was selected as one of only nine papers (out of hundreds), to be in the *Journal European Teaching Education Network* (JETEN).

This research project analysed the use of discussion fora amongst professional lecturers, while undertaking their teaching qualification. The study and outcomes has

had a significant impact upon how we design learning environments and, specifically, online communication fora. Our research highlighted dissatisfaction with Discussion Board and this has led us to develop a new communication tool, a blog, which is not part of the University's Blackboard platform. The project led to further research into the relationship between 'learner characteristics' and online communication tools (see paper (4) below for this follow-on project).

(3) Normand, C.A. and Littlejohn, A. (2006) *A Model for Analysis and Implementation of Programme Delivery*, report for the Quality Assurance Agency: Enhancement Themes. Booklet published and CD Rom distributed to all universities and some colleges. Published on QAAS website:
http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/flexibleDelivery/flexible_delivery_QAA_124.pdf
Carey Normand (80%) and Allison Littlejohn (20%)

This professional publication was peer refereed by two anonymous reviewers from the University of Lancaster, selected by the QAAS.

A *model* for effective implementation of flexible programme delivery was developed by Normand and Littlejohn (2006) and Normand designed and delivered a series of National workshops to colleagues in FE and HE to disseminate findings and test the model's efficacy (see Appendix 6). The model has had an impact by underpinning research, e.g. Casey *et al* (2006) and has influenced research and practice in the FE and HE sectors – see Cornelius and Gordon (2007) and Mason and Rennie (2008).

(4) McGuigan, A. and Normand, C. (2011) Interactivity or Inactivity: A study of blogging in a professional teaching qualification programme for college lecturers. Special edition: 'e-Learning in Professional Contexts in Higher Education'. *Enhancing Learning in the Social Sciences (ELiSS).* Online at:
http://www.eliss.org.uk/CurrentIssueVol3No3/ProfessionalDevelopment/tabid/335/Default.aspx
Carey Normand (50%) and Aileen McGuigan (50%)

Peer refereed by anonymous reviewers selected by the ELiSS editorial board.

The ideas explored and outlined in this paper emanate from an earlier project Normand and Keatch, 2007 (see paper (2) above) where the researchers investigated the use of discussion fora amongst the same professional group. This study and paper has had a significant impact upon how we design learning environments and, specifically, online communication fora. Our research highlighted dissatisfaction with Discussion Board in terms of its immediacy, its aesthetic and as a learning medium for critical thinking, and this has led us to develop a new blogging tool, for online communication, which is not part of the University's Blackboard platform, though is housed there for ease of use. This research has generated the evidence to convince the University of the need to incorporate appropriate Web 2 technologies in our teaching. Furthermore, the originality of the solution generated to solve the problem – non-engagement in the online communication fora – has led to a more participative student experience and posed further research questions. For example, it identified that 'learner characteristics' was a construct worthy of further research and this has led to our next project which is a comparative study that explores learner characteristics in and between four occupational groups.

How the RPL Claim will be presented

I request that the above four papers be assessed against the learning outcomes, of the five characteristics, delineated in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) for Level 12.

The five characteristics are:
- Knowledge and Understanding **(KU)**
- Practice: Applied Knowledge AND Understanding **(P)**
- Generic Cognitive Skills **(G)**
- Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills **(C)**
- Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others **(A)**

I will present my RPL claim by demonstrating how my research and the specific publications referenced above provides evidence of my attainment of all five of the characteristic learning outcomes, at SCQF Level 12.

For fluency and ease within the text, I will use a code to discuss my publications and the Characteristics. For the publications, I have numbered them (1), (2), (3), (4) and if citing specific examples I will include the relevant page number from the original published text e.g. (1:12). For each of the characteristics I will use their abbreviated initials (emboldened), as indicated above in brackets. The four published texts are reproduced in full in the following appendices 7, 8, 9 and 10 at the end of the thesis.

Table 1. Map Grid: my competencies mapped against the five generic characteristics at SCQF Level 12

Characteristics	The following are for guidance only-it is not expected that every point will be covered	Evidence from Journal papers
Knowledge and understanding (KU)	Demonstrate and/or work with: • A critical overview of a subject/discipline, including critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts. • A critical, detailed and often leading knowledge and understanding at the forefront of one or more specialisms. • Knowledge and understanding that is generated through personal research or equivalent work that makes a significant contribution to the development of the subject/discipline.	**(1:26-27)** **(2:62-63)** **(3:5-6); (4: 6-7)** **(3:7-8)** **(3:9-12)** **(1:34-35)** **(2:61; 69)** **(3:14-21)**
Practice: applied knowledge and understanding (P)	Use a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, practices and materials associated with a subject/discipline. Use and enhance a range of complex skills, techniques, practices and materials at the forefront of one or more specialisms. Apply a range of standard and specialised research/equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry. Design and execute research, investigative or development projects to deal with new problems and issues. Demonstrate originality and creativity in the development and application of new knowledge, understanding and practices. Practise in the context of new problems and circumstances.	**(1:29-30)** **(2:64-68)** **(3:12-13)** **(3:25-26; 33)** **(4:10)** **(3:14-21)** **(2:69-70)** **(3:27-32)** **(4:18)** **(3) national workshops p.5**
Generic cognitive skills (G)	Apply a constant and integrated approach to critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas, information and issues. Identify, conceptualise and offer original and creative insights into new, complex and abstract ideas, information and issues. Develop creative and original responses to problems and issues. Deal with very complex and/or new issues and make informed judgements in the absence of complete or consistent data/information.	**(3:12)** **(3:10); (4: 17)** **(1:30)** **(2:70)** **(1:30)** **(3:22)** **(2:63-68)**
Communication, ICT and numeracy skills (C)	Use a significant range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/discipline, for example: • Communicate at an appropriate level to a range of audiences and adapt communication to the context and purpose. • Communicate at the standard of published academic work and/or critical dialogue and review with peers and experts in other specialisms. • Use a range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify software requirements to enhance work. • Critically evaluate numerical and graphical data.	**(3:12)** **(2:64)** **(3: 27-32)** **(2, 4) International conferences p.7 & 10** **All four papers peer refereed** **(3:22)** **(1:31-32)** **(2:63-68)**
Autonomy, accountability and working with others (A)	Exercise a high level of autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities. Take full responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others. Demonstrate leadership and/or originality in tackling and solving problems and issues. Work in ways which are reflective, self-critical and based on research/evidence. Deal with complex ethical and professional issues. Make informed judgements on new and emerging issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.	**My contribution – 80% for (3)** (**1:31)** **(2:62)** **(3:4)** **See Impact statements p.6** **(1:30); (4: 20)** **(2:70) & see Impact p.7** **(1:27-28)**

Source: http://www.scqf.org.uk/Resources/Publications.aspx
(NB. the table has been adapted to incorporate an evidence column)

RPL Claim

Overview

Journal papers (1) and (3) emanate from one piece of research into Flexible Programme Delivery (FPD) through the analysis of four case-studies from the University of Dundee and the UHI Millennium Institute, though both have a different focus, audience and purpose **(P; A).**

In paper (3:12) we developed a model, as an analytic tool, to analyse 19 dimensions of FPD at 3 structural levels within the case-study institutions: Institutional Management (IM); Operational Management (OM); and Teaching and Learning Management (TLM) **(G).** Our model drew on the MIT90 model, which was about 'strategy' and 'structure' (Morton, 1991, cited in Nicol *et al.,* 2004), and the model of technology as a learning workbench (Collis and Moonen, 2005), which was about 'contextual' factors, 'roles and skills' and 'management processes' (3:10; 1:30). As our thinking and analysis of implementing FPD deepened we began to investigate the role of 'strategic thinking' and how and where this is located within an institution (i.e. IM, OM, TLM levels), and the structure of an institution, especially 'structural hierarchies' (i.e. top-down or bottom-up approaches and management). Uniquely, we saw both aspects as pivotal for successful implementation of FPD and, therefore, we investigated and analysed the alignment/non-alignment between each of the three management levels within an institution **(KU; G).**

Critically, papers (1) and (3) in constructing the model demonstrated research, and the application of the research, that made a significant contribution to the topic. We proposed an original way of conceptualising the problem – implementing FPD – and developed a model that could usefully incorporate a multiplicity of understandings and discourses (only some of which were shared) and to use these discourses within and between hierarchical layers, thus facilitating shared visioning and ensuring strategic alignment and sustainability (1:30). **(KU; G; C).**

Research methodologies

A comprehensive literature review was conducted by me to provide us with a critical overview of the issues surrounding implementing FPD **(KU).** Thereafter, we designed the research into two phases: the four case-study groups – two University of Dundee and two UHI (3:14-21) – were given a Case Study Outline Pro-forma for completion at the three management levels within the institution (3:27-32). This necessitated sound project management and appropriate communication skills to elicit responses from the professionals occupying a variety of hierarchical roles. I administered the questionnaires and analysed their content. I shared my findings with my co-author. Following from this, we designed a semi-structured questionnaire to elicit respondents understanding and perceptions of enablers and barriers within and across FPD (3:33) **(KU; P; G; C; A).** Again, I administered this questionnaire and collated responses, which we analysed together. The data was qualitative and necessitated an interpretative approach to its analysis (3:22; 1:31-32) **(G; C).** Journal paper (1) synthesises the research findings and the literature and provides a cogent analysis of leadership and management within a three level framework and identifies how using this model, developed by us, institutions could improve alignment (and therefore success) when implementing FPD. Furthermore, and perhaps more significantly, the model and the round-table approach (identified as the appropriate medium) could be used in a much wider context (I demonstrated this in the national workshops I led) to institute new developments and initiatives. Additionally, it challenges the notion that strategic management is located solely at the institutional management level as we found that leadership and strategic management can happen at all levels **(KU; P; G; C; A).**

Impact

Casey, Proven and Dripps (2006) have adapted our model to explore meaning and shared understandings between the different institutional levels **(P; A)** and the work has also influenced research and practice in the FE and HE sectors – see Cornelius and Gordon (2007), Rennie (2008) and Hall and Mooney (2010), thus demonstrating the importance of our research/publications and its impact and knowledge transfer **(A).**

A recent study by Tucker and Morris (2011: 1), cited in the British Journal of Educational Technology, sought to reconcile the tensions between 'the competing demands of learner's increasing flexibility demands, teacher's attributes and pedagogical objectives and the structural limitations that militate against the delivery, resourcing and maintenance of flexibility in an Australian School of Architecture **(KU).** The authors' used our theoretical framework and Model as published in Papers (1) and (3), as the basis for there study. They said:

> The literature on flexible education falls into two broad groups—meta-analyses identifying aspects of flexibility (Casey & Wilson, 2005; Collis & Moonen, 2001; Ling *et al*, 2001; Mayes, 2006; Normand & Littlejohn, 2006), and/or individual case studies (Lindberg & Olofsson, 2006; Morrison & Pitfield, 2006; Sappey, 2005; Willems, 2005) detailing how aspects of flexibility are implemented.

Casey and Wilson (2006), as cited above[1], were our project partners from the UHI in the QAA project and the Model they were using was the one developed by Normand and Littlejohn (2006). Tucker and Morris (2011: 2) continue:

> In the UK, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Scotland recently published a model to support higher education institutions in planning for flexible programme delivery (FPD) (C. Normand *et al*, 2008). In common with our own project, the QAA considered the consequences of institutional flexible learning policy on teachers. The QAA model addressed issues in FPD at three levels within institutions: institutional management (IM), operational management (OM) and teaching-learning management (TLM). At the IM level, 'big picture' strategic objectives are defined often with little structure provided for realising these objectives. This lack of structure may be reflected by inappropriate provision of resources at the OM level leading to problems for teachers at the third level—who have to provide flexible

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[1] Tucker and Morris (2011) have cited Casey and Wilson as (2005), which is when the study was conducted but the finished publications should actually be cited as 2006.

delivery within budgetary limits often informed by the requirements of more traditional teaching. In Australia, where policy encourages flexibility in time, content, access and pedagogy as well as delivery, resourcing shortfalls at the TLM are more acutely felt.

I chose to include this lengthy quotation to show the centrality of our work in shaping the thinking of Tucker and Morris and that they have used the constructs, developed by me – IM, OM and TLM – throughout there own work. This indicates the importance of the work and its ability to impact at an international level. It also indicates that the Model developed by Normand and Littlejohn (2006) is robust and was developed with rigour **(KU; P; G C; A)**.

Rigour, originality and significance

Rigour is evident in the Model as its creation was predicated on two other robust models, namely, Collis and Moonen (2005) and the MIT90 model, by Scott Morton (1991) and adapted by David Nicol *et al.,* (2004). The lineage was coherent and robust and reflected critical thinking, creativity and rigour. Our original contribution was to synthesise aspects of the two, quite diverse, successful models and then to create another unique dimension which was that strategic thinking, located at different structural levels within an institution, was central to the successful implementation of FPD. I introduced the idea of the three levels as I had previously completed a research project on leadership as part of my Masters in education degree, and was convinced by the work of Gleeson and Shain (2003) and Hellawell and Hancock (2003) that middle managers had a mediating role between two competing discourses: managerialism and collegiality. The significance of this development is that the theoretical model can be used beyond FPD implementation and is, in fact, a strategic decision-making framework that can be effectively utilised in any context **(KU; P; G; C; A)**.

The papers also demonstrated rigour and significance in the relation to their generalisability and transferability from our specific research and publications and this is evidenced by how they have underpinned the research of others. Further, there is a clear example of transfer from the theoretical base to the practical application as

exemplified by the national workshops written and led by me (and referred to in Tucker and Morris' (2011) article) **(P; C; A)**.

Professional publication paper (3) was disseminated within every HE and some FE institutions in Scotland (disseminated by the QAA in hard-copy, CD ROM and still accessible via their website for the Enhancement Themes: Flexible Delivery) and I designed and delivered three national workshops – Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow - on behalf of QAA and the Enhancement Themes. I designed the workshops to: a) test the model as an effective tool for implementing FPD; and b) to utilise the roundtable approach as an effective medium for decision making between the three hierarchical levels previously identified. To this end, I constructed two case studies – one for a pre-1992 institution and one for a post-1992 institution – as the content and basis of the task. I then created roundtable groupings, at the three levels – IM, OM, TLM (I added Admin and ICT roles at the TLM level, as both have a particular and critical role within an organisation in the implementation of FPD, though neither were part of our original research) and gave each a role profile (see Appendix 6 for the workshop task and role profiles). The Student role was later added, for obvious reasons. This demonstrates the significance of the work and my skills in leadership of knowledge and understanding, communication and the development of creative and original responses to problems and issues **(KU; P; G; C; A).**

Journal paper (2) is also about FPD but is a focussed investigation into one aspect of flexibility within an online professional learning programme: the use of discussion board fora. Data were obtained using, firstly, observation of usage and then through a two stage questionnaire process. This methodology generated both quantitative and qualitative data and analyses (2:63-68) **(KU; P; G; C; A).** This study was very useful to us – academics and students - in the TQ(FE) programme (2:69-71) but it also transcended the specific study by identifying 'learner characteristics' (2:71) as a construct worthy of further research and this has been followed up in my recent European Conference on Educational Research conference paper: *Interactivity or inactivity: A study of blogging in a professional teaching qualification programme for college lecturers (2010).* Prinsen *et al* (2007: 1037) found that 'gender, socio-cultural background and ability' were all learner characteristics that were thought to influence participation in discussion fora; however, in my recent study I have also been exploring

whether being/not being a 'digital native' is critical and how/if this relates to age. This study will now feed into my next project which is a comparative study exploring 'learner characteristics' in and between four occupational groups. I have expanded my discussion here to illustrate how the findings outlined in paper (2) have underpinned subsequent research activity and further demonstrates that the research is current and original in its response to specific problems and issues. Furthermore, it demonstrates my leadership skills and drive to address issues and solve problems **(KU; P; G; A).**

Impact

This study and publication (2) has had a significant impact upon how we design learning environments and, specifically, online communication fora. Our research highlighted dissatisfaction with Discussion Board in terms of its immediacy – time taken to respond – and of social presence (2:70) and this has led us to develop a new communication tool, a blog, which is not part of the University's Blackboard platform. This demonstrates the far-reaching consequences of this research and the originality of the solution generated to solve the problem – non-engagement in the online communication fora **(KU; P; G; C; A).**

Journal paper (4) emanates from Journal paper (2) and investigates further non/engagement in online communication fora. This study investigates the efficacy of a new blog tool in promoting learning and enabling social interaction and collaboration among participants on an innovative online professional teaching qualification programme for college lecturers. Participants were surveyed and some were interviewed to elicit the perceived influencers on participants' blog activity and, specifically, the impact of learner characteristics and self-regulated learning skills on participation. The findings highlight the complexity of factors that impact on learner participation on the blog, including learner characteristics, self-belief and efficacy, ICT skills, time, timeliness of posts, tutor interaction and motives. The research findings have led to a redesign of the blog structures to

facilitate: ease of access, improved functionality, for example, providing a search facility, greater coherence between blogging and the learning content/experience, and greater interactivity through collective efficacy **(KU; P; G; C; A)**.

Conclusion

The four papers presented for recognition of prior learning demonstrate my competence at producing work at SCQF Level 12 and in all five of the characteristic learning outcome areas.

The creative process involved in authoring academic papers for publication in journals and professional publications necessitates academic rigour of the highest order. My engagement in this process involved identifying the area for initial enquiry and thereafter systematically critiquing, reviewing, modifying, synthesising and applying analyses of the data, in this case, the factors impacting in implementing flexible programme delivery and the facilitation of online communication and learning.

The completion of the papers within a finite time-frame, exemplifies my ability to work professionally, both autonomously and cooperatively with my co-authors and publishers. Additional to the impact of the research publications, has been the national workshops that I have designed and led. This has enabled the dissemination of the research findings to be wider audience than is often the case with academic journals (Papers (1) and (3)) and this practice has led to other FE and HE institutions utilising the Model, created by Littlejohn and Normand, and the round-table approach when implementing FPD.

Similarly with Paper (2), I was able to discuss this Scottish study with educational colleagues from around the world as I presented it at an international conference in Porto in 2007. Notable, also, is the fact that the paper was selected as one of only nine papers (out of hundreds presented at the conference and thirty-nine submitted to the Journal for that edition), in the *Journal European Teaching Education Network* (JETEN). Further, this study underpinned the more recent paper (Paper (4)) which has had a profound impact on the development for the TQ(FE) programme, in relation to the use of social media in delivering the curricula and, most recently, as an online tutoring communication system. This hugely significant development resulted in the TQ(FE) Team being awarded two prizes: the College of Arts and Social Sciences

Innovation in Teaching award 2011 and the University of Dundee's *Honorary Graduate Award for Innovation in Teaching.*

Carey Normand
December, 2011

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Postscript: RPL

In contemporary education we often talk of the 'learning journey' to symbolise the process elements of learning that is incremental and progressive; it is also transformative. My reflections on this assemblage of artefacts, that now constitutes a thesis, is that my own learning journey, my 'thinking', is laid bare; so too is my history.

It is not without irony that I note that some of the language used by me in my earlier work, that is, in the published texts that constitute the evidence for the RPL claim, is language that reflects a managerialist discourse. Examples include 'delivery' and 'flexible learning'. There is also a shift in my thinking about concepts such as 'communities of practice', which I used impressionistically in my earlier work.

In my introduction to the thesis, I said that the three parts are separated by time, purpose, intention, thinking and learning. The flexible delivery papers were, in a very real sense, driven by the funded project with that title. That said, I think that I would now approach the work differently and would critique the language terminology to show the meanings imbued within interpretations. The term 'delivery' was used as a kind of short-hand for teaching, curriculum development and design but it disengages the teacher from her action and turns a creative act into a service delivered. This, as is evident in Part Three, is detrimental to the teacher and the ways in which she is perceived as a professional.

'Flexible learning' is another term that I used freely but now I would ask for whom is it flexible and for what purpose. In the published papers it is the 'flexibility' that is really being discussed and not the 'learning'. There are really two strands to this, firstly, that developing flexible opportunities for learning can enable teachers and learners to engage in novel and more suitable experiences, that is, the learning can be enhanced; however, it can also be driven by market competition and economic factors that have nothing to do with learning. Secondly, 'flexible' is a concept that has been embraced by managerialists as a highly prized attribute for academic professionals to hold – linking it with learning is just one of many ways that it is used in the commodification of teaching.

Carey Normand, December 2012

PART 2

Revisiting the 'Democratic Intellect': a history of Scottish Education

Literature Review presented as 1/5th of the degree: Doctor of Education

Carey Normand, July 2010

Revisiting the 'Democratic Intellect': a history of Scottish Education.

In 1961 George Davie spoke of the 'democratic intellect' and argued that fundamental qualities of egalitarianism, universal accessibility and inclusiveness were the core characteristics of Scottish education. Moreover, he made the case that these were distinctive 'Scottish' characteristics in education and helped define a unique national character. The democratic component of this education was complemented by its comprehensive nature. And so the idea that Scottish education was determined by a 'generalism', a concern with the unity of diverse disciplines and the rejection of specialisms, became a feature of understanding the nature and history of Scottish education. As an element of a nationalist discourse Davie was highlighting a sense of 'difference' and this distinctiveness was grounded, it has been argued, in the three components of civic society that dominate and define Scottish life: the law, the church and the education system. Post-Union these three institutions remained uniquely Scottish, as opposed to 'British', and are said to exemplify and shape Scottish identity, culture and nationhood (McDermid, 2005). Davie's thesis has become something of a common trope in the discourse on Scottish education and for this reason it is worth revisiting and reconsidering when reflecting upon the history of education in Scotland.

This paper will focus on the Scottish education system and will investigate its unique characteristics: exploring how education – learning and teaching – is conceptualised in the various educational sectors. The author hypothesizes that the national sense of the Scottish education system, the common 'structure of feeling' (Williams, 1960: 42 and *passim*), is predicated on the principles of democratic intellectualism and the 'generalist' tradition. This central argument will be explored and scrutinised through close analysis of the Scottish education system from its early foundation to the modern period; the extent to which its characteristics are actual or mythologised will be examined; and, comparisons will be made between Scottish education and the English and central European systems. Following from this, and as an original contribution to the debate, the author argues that in the modern period the college sector is the exemplification of the values and ethos of the democratic tradition. Moreover, the author will argue that it is in the work of the college sector that the sense of a 'democratic' education remains and is sustained.

In opening out this debate this paper will present an historical investigation of teachers' role(s), the qualifications held, and the education and training given to educators. There will also be a study of professional status and professional identity and, furthermore, models for understanding teacher professionalism in the 21st century will be critiqued and analysed.

1. The Early History of Education in Scotland.

There is evidence of 'Scottish' education from as early as AD 563 when Columba first landed on Iona and founded the Celtic Church. The Celtic Church established monasteries in many areas and some of them had adjoining seminaries for the education of boys intent on the priesthood and, from the 7th century, they provided education to lay scholars (Hunter, 1972:1). Hunter has noted that from the 8th to the 11th centuries there is scant documentary evidence about education. However, from 12th century to the 15th centuries, there are reliable sources documenting the spread of schools attached to the Church or Cathedrals of the Roman Church. An Act of 1496 stated that barons and free-holders should put their eldest son to school from the age of 8 or 9 in order to learn Latin and prepare for one of the three founded Scottish universities: St Andrews (1411), Glasgow (1450), and Aberdeen (1494). This Education Act is thought to be the first Act in Europe and though it appeared to have little effect it is of interest since it 'attempted to introduce some element of compulsory education' (ibid: 2).

Post-Reformation, in the *First Book of Discipline*, 1560, John Knox outlined the vision for spiritual reform and a distinct role for education in realising this aim. He proposed a national system of education that would include a school in every one of the 900 parishes and that they would teach grammar and Latin alongside religious studies, as well as a college in every notable town that would teach the arts and logic (Northcroft, 2003; Cooke, 2006). He also detailed how universities should be regulated and the subjects that they should teach (ibid). There was a specific section in the *Book of Discipline* named 'The Necessity of Schools' where the vision was outlined:

> Seeing that God hath determined that his Church here in earth shall be
> taught not by angels but by men; and seeing that men are born ignorant

of all godliness…of necessity is it that your honours be most careful for

the virtuous education and godly upbringing of the youth of this Realm

(Dickinson, 1949 cited in Cooke, 2006: 6)

Following from this dictate reformers proposed schools at various levels – parish and burgh - and this was supported by legislation throughout the 17th century culminating in the Education Act of 1696 which remained the legal basis for parochial education until its demise in 1872 (Anderson, 1997: 4-5). Religious life was now centred in the parish and the Scottish Presbyterian Church encouraged both private individual self-discipline and public congregational discipline as an individual's conduct was understood to be seen, at all times, by an omnipresent God. There was a real demand for literacy and learning, which was seen as critical for religious and civic life (ibid). The introduction of printing presses throughout Europe, after 1440, made it possible to produce pamphlets for dissemination to the populace. Literacy was deemed necessary in order to understand God's word and this was the primary driver for the education of the masses and was also perceived as the vehicle for civilising and self-improvement. In consequence almost all parishes in lowland Scotland had a school, to provide elementary education, by the 1690s (ibid).

These parish schools were established by the Church of Scotland and local landowners and they were linked, educationally, to the universities through the study of Latin. They were also linked ideologically through the notion of the seamless transition from the school-room to the university, and this progression was considered available to all. However, universities in the 16th century were more akin to secondary schools (as we would now understand these institutions) than to higher education institutions. There was no formal entry requirement other than spoken and some written Latin. Fees were also relatively low as the Scottish custom was predicated on the idea of day students, unlike the English collegiate system in Oxford and Cambridge. Equally, there was no degree or qualification as the summation of the education process; or at least most students left without the conferment of the degree. From the 18th century there is some evidence of the clever working class boy, the 'lad o' pairts', who through his intelligence and diligence, aided by a dominie and a bursary, was able to attend university and benefit from this education. He would in turn, probably return to his community as a Presbyterian minister or schoolmaster of

the parish (ibid). This open access was a feature of the education system and was seen as being distinctly Scottish and, 'something largely unthinkable in England in the eighteenth century' (Knox, 2009). So too, was the concept of a graded system with an 'end-on' organisation and progression: elementary – higher – university (Hunter, 1972: 3). In consequence 'The parish school and the democratic, liberal university became "defining institutions" for Scottish education' (Paterson, 2003: 4), and, 'the ideology behind the system shaped Scottish thought on education' (McDermid, 2005: 28) right through to the modern period (Northcroft, 2003). As Anderson has insisted:

> For in Scotland Latin, university culture, and liberal education were not 'aristocratic', but the symbols of a national democratic tradition (1995: 283)

Although England and Scotland became united by the Act of Union in 1707, Scotland still retained its distinctive religious (Protestant/Presbyterian), legal and education systems. It is generally argued that these institutions define the cultural identity of the Scottish people (McDermid, 2005). Through the parochial schools, education and religion became co-dependent and, arguably, mutually beneficial. Education was a means of individual improvement while, simultaneously, through the common education, was a socialising system within the Scottish culture. Complementing, this Presbyterianism is viewed as a serious and cerebral faith, stripped of all artifice and idolatrism; likewise the education in the parish schools focussed on the things that needed to be known for humble living and worship. Fundamentally, it is argued that Calvinism appeals more to the head than the heart, having a strong intellectual element and what Devine (2007: 70-71) called the 'latent enlightenment' within it, linking this religion firmly within the long-established Scottish philosophical tradition.

The relationship between the church and the state, whereby the former was backed by the latter, to legislate for greater educational provision, was distinctly Scottish and had no English equivalent (Houston, 1985: 5). National education systems were to develop outside of Scotland but not until the 18th and 19th centuries, ironically the period when Scotland's education system is said to have faltered (Smout, 1986); however, Scotland's early tradition was considered to be the reason for higher literacy levels amongst the Scottish population (ibid, 3-5). Paterson (2003: 195) has argued that 'the purpose of a common provision was always to free individuals'. 'Calvinism

seems to have had a particularly strong attachment to ideas of thrift, self-denial, and 'getting on' in life or self-improvement' and, furthermore, that 'individualism was also at the heart of the Scottish faith in meritocracy'(ibid: 6). These Knoxian principles from the 16th century were still to be relevant to the educational thinking of the 19th century whereby the 'principles of scholastic achievement on the basis of merit, hard work, ambition and seriousness of purpose had powerful appeal to the middle classes in an era of competitive individualism' (Devine, 2007: 391). Church and State, then, became the co-determinants of a 'democratic' educational practice that, in turn, helps define the idea of nationhood even after Scotland was incorporated in the British Empire.

2. Complexities and Contradictions in the Modern Period.

In the late 18th century Scotland experienced rapid economic growth and a change in agricultural practices, this was accompanied by an intensive industrialisation and a growing urbanisation. Evidence of this expansion is provided by population statistics: in 1801 the Scottish population was 1.6 million but within fifty years this was to rise to 2.89 million. Moreover, one in four of the population was now living in one of the four major Scottish cities (Cooke, 2006: 35).

In parallel Scottish education, especially from the 18th century, was characterised by its belief in a broad, general, education that would be profoundly academic but underpinned by the disciplines of moral philosophy and logic. The Scottish university structure still reflects this breadth within the curriculum and is exemplified in the wide range of subjects taken in the four-year undergraduate degree - the first and second years being general, with specialisation only occurring in the third and fourth honours' year (Crawford, 1997). The 'rationale is, of course, that one area of thought or expertise benefits from illumination by another and it is therefore culturally and educationally desirable...' (Macdonald, 2009: 5). Macdonald (2009) cites Patrick Geddes, the 19th century polymath, as exemplifying the 'generalist tradition' (ibid). Geddes himself while addressing Dundee students in 1927 (his final lecture) said of generalism:

> [a] general and educational point of view must be brought to bear on

every specialism. The teacher's outlook should include all viewpoints. …
Hence we must cease to think merely in terms of separated departments
and faculties and must relate these in the living mind; in the social mind
as well – indeed, this above all (ibid: 4)

Interdisciplinarity is often hailed as new within education, however, it is clear that
creative thinkers have always eschewed the artificial barriers between disciplines and
this, it is claimed, is a defining feature of Scottish education.

The general education, or what George Davie would call the 'Scottish intellectual
tradition' was expected to have philosophical study at its core (1961). It would also
honour one discrete area of knowledge with respect to its relationship to other
disciplines and respect the means by which this informs the whole (Macdonald, 2009:
12). In addition to this emphasis on breadth and grounding in the philosophical
tradition, the 18th century Scottish universities were categorised as 'schools of
professional training', for example, medicine and law, which was contrasted to the
provision available in Oxford and Cambridge (Anderson, 1997: 16). To illustrate this
example, in the years between 1750 and 1850 the universities of Oxford and
Cambridge turned out 500 doctors compared to the 10,000 trained by the 4 Scottish
universities (Houston and Knox, 2001: xlvi). This combination of professional and
general education has most characteristics in common with other Protestant countries:
for example, Holland and northern Germany (ibid). Professional training, however,
should not be confused with vocational training for, interestingly, there was a
resistance to this within Scottish education. Vocational training was generally viewed
as inferior to 'intellectual' education. In fact:

The dominant Scottish view was that the best vocational preparation ought to
be as intellectually rigorous as any university degree (Paterson, 2003: 194)

Moore noted from school logs and inspectors' reports of the 19th century that among
the Scottish poor there was strong parental resistance to their daughters being taught
sewing and other domestic subjects as these were not considered educational. This
is consonant with the belief that intellectual discipline is the best way to develop the
intelligent, moral and civic individual (Moore, 1992, cited in McDermid: 18). Evidently,

then, education is highly prized and is seen as a form of cultural capital. Moreover, these reports show that the female gendered domestic domain was not considered to have any capital; at least in the empowered public realm. Domestic education for working class girls in the 19th century was offered at only one level, the most basic, therefore, girls could not progress, as in other subjects (Moore, cited in McDermid, 2005) and, were ultimately denied full citizenship.

Interestingly the concept of the democratic intellect dominated the literature of the 18th century and became emblematic of Scotland's superior education system, a system that was viewed as egalitarian and enlightened. This has been questioned by some historians and is often referred to as a myth (Anderson, 1997; McDermid, 2005). Mythologised, not as a blatant fabrication, but serving a 'potent and creative political role' (Anderson, 1997: 36). Hence, after the Act of Union in 1707, this myth might be understood as the Scots' desire to mobilise 'Scottishness' and national pride through the metaphor of its distinctive and acclaimed education system. This mark of national identity could be 'defended against assimilation with England' due to its 'supposed superiority' (Anderson, 1997:36; Anderson, 2000:215). Consequently 'Scottish education has been characterised by a peculiar awareness of its own history' and two notable achievements: the 'early arrival of near-universal literacy' and a 'precociously developed university system' both having engendered national pride (Anderson, 2000:215). It was from these that the so called 'democratic myth' was founded and this was exemplified in the 'lad o' pairts' who 'climbed the educational ladder' (ibid). As with other myths, there are elements of truth here alongside idealised beliefs and aspirations, and it is difficult for historians to disentangle the two. Most historians critique the 'lad o' pairts' as a construct that exemplifies an individualist form of meritocracy rather than reflecting a class-less society (Anderson, 2000). The iconography of the 'lad o' pairts' also has at its core conceptions of egalitarianism and that is 'key to explaining why educational values appear central to a sense of Scottish culture' (McCrone, 2000: 237) as well as an important form of national cohesion and confidence, particularly when challenged by English influences as in the Victorian period (McDermid: 154-155).

The parish schools were open to girls as well as boys but there is no evidence of the 'lass o' pairts' thus questioning egalitarianism in relation to gender (McDermid, 2005).

Furthermore, definitions of 'working class' have shown that the term mainly referred to children of artisans, tenant farmers and skilled workers and not the unskilled and poor. McDermid (2005: 3) argued that:

> The parish school was built around the meritocratic ideal which was male-centred, but which in practice affected a tiny minority of lower class boys.

William Barclay, 'the schoolmaster of Cadden in Lanarkshire' attributed the good teachings of the Parish schools to the 'good behaviour of the lower ranks in Scotland' compared to their English counterparts and he argued that the social, religious and political function of the schools was justification for increased salaries for schoolmasters. However, it was noted that 'some gentlemen and lords' wanted the Parish schools to be quashed as their educated servants were less 'obedient and dutiful' (Old Statistical Accounts, 1973, cited in Cooke, 2006: 38). Many commentators on education in the 18th and 19th centuries held these competing views of education as: a form of social control that corralled the masses into 'acceptable' and obedient behaviour suitable for the workplace (Houston, 1985:3); a socialisation process which moulds the (adult) character and personality (Anderson, 1995: 33; Paterson, 2005: 20); an instrument of human progress and a liberating force (ibid) whereby the individual can engage in analysis and creative thought; and as 'an antidote to the detrimental influence of economic changes' (Houston, 1985:3). In fact, in 1818, it was found that almost two thirds of all Scottish children were educated outside of public institutions i.e. parish and burgh schools, and were educated in small private schools called 'adventure schools'. The cost of such schools was borne by the parents and the church had no say in the curriculum (Smout, 1983: 213).

In 1827 there were 906 parish schools and 400 of them had masters who had a four-year university degree, and only 250 had a dominie with no college education (Scotland,1970: 191). Scotland stated that the salary of a teacher in a parish school was 'lucrative' compared to other occupations (though for all occupations there were regional variations, e.g. the Highlands were poorer than the Lowlands). The following list provides some insight into how teachers' salaries equated with other occupations:

> An agricultural labourer - £25 a year

An artisan - £35 - £45 a year

A minister - £225 a year

A parish school teacher - £71 a year

A dominie - £64 a year

A master in a side school - £35 a year

(ibid: 196)

The *Chartist Circular* in 1839 claimed that the Parish schools had 'failed to accomplish education of the people' stating that only about 14% of the Scottish population was at school; however, this has been challenged by historians and the number of Scots who could read and write in 1834 was thought to be I in 6 (Cooke, 2006:63-64). The *Circular* also called for better teacher training and for the establishment of teacher training schools.

In 1846 a pupil teacher system was introduced to provide 'cheap, adequate schoolmasters for the future' (Smout, 1986). The system lasted for sixty years and able pupils from aged thirteen were selected to undertake the five-year apprenticeship, for a small salary, and complete their training (supported by a Queen's Scholarship) at a Training College (Hunter, 1972: 15). In 1851, 35% of teachers in Scotland were women and by 1911 this figure had risen to 70% (Smout, 1986). This did not lead to equality, however, as pay differentials were pronounced in the period 1872-1900: 'the average salaries of certificated male teachers varied from £121 and £145 a year, while female teachers received between £62 and £72' (ibid: 6). Women were not prohibited from accessing the teacher training colleges but they were required to pay their own fees, unlike men who received bursaries. Moreover, the gendered curriculum for boys and girls, with girls studying fewer academic subjects, meant that girls were disadvantaged when it came to accessing higher education (ibid).

More provocatively Corr (1995: 154) has argued that 'the Scottish education tradition was highly patriarchal' and that Presbyterian clergy and the landowners were 'against the employment of women in parish schools'. Drawing on statistical evidence provided by Tropp in 1957, she highlighted gender inequalities related to pay scales between men and women in the period 1875 to 1914 with women being paid at

roughly half the rate of men. Furthermore, when the mean annual salaries of English and Scottish certified teachers were compared, Scottish male teachers were paid considerably more that their English male counterparts and Scottish female teachers were paid the least; i.e. lower than English and Scottish males and English females (Tropp, 1957 cited in Corr, 1995: 155).

In the west of Scotland from the mid-Victorian period there were several Catholic schools, teaching mainly Irish migrants who arrived following the famine in 1845. The women teachers who worked in the Catholic schools 'participated in a very different cultural tradition from the Presbyterian one' and exemplified an Irish identity (Corr, 1995: 154). Women teachers also found work in the 'female industrial schools, charity schools, Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge Schools and 'dame' schools (ibid).

In 1846 the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) was formed and Scotland was thought to be the first country in the world to have a national association for 'all' her teachers (ibid; 198). Initially female teachers were not included and had to wait until the 1870s to be admitted (Anderson, 1997: 29). In 1853 the EIS set out a programme of reform, which included 'the high standard of professional training for all entrants to the profession' (McDermid, 2005: 198). Evidently concerns about social and professional identity emerged within the teaching profession and the EIS was attempting to achieve higher professional status for male teachers. This led to debates about 'teaching' as a profession - in the same way as with medicine, law and the clerics - and prevailing views of teaching having lower status appeared to emanate from the Edinburgh middle classes (Corr, 1995: 161). In 1847, the EIS founder members identified their chief objective as:

> To improve the condition of the teacher and to enable him to take that
> place in society to which his character, attainment and professional
> status entitle and to obtain a higher social position for the teacher so
> that the scholastic profession shall have its recognised place in the
> same way as the clerical, legal and the medical professions
> (Belford, 1946 cited in Corr, 1995: 161-162)

The EIS's objective to elevate the status of the teacher and to have them recognised as professionals is justified by the knowledge that teachers, in their central role as facilitators of learning, transform individuals and society. Interestingly, Camic argued that 'the "universalism" of the Scottish Enlightenment's leading thinkers can be traced partly to their school experiences' in the burgh schools, which were similar to grammar schools (cited in Anderson, 1997: 10). The schoolmasters of the burgh schools were considered to be 'men of genuine scholarship, with higher social status and comfortable stipends; they were an 'elite which transmitted an educational heritage and also preserved much of what was best in the national culture' (Gatherer, 2000:993). And so:

> A fundamental feature of the Enlightenment was the discovery of
> knowledge which could then be used to improve the human condition
> (Devine, 2007:68)

The tenets of Calvinism and democratic intellectualism are as entwined in this period as earlier and, indeed, later. Scotland did have a higher ratio of university places per capita than other European nations and this is attributed to the seamless transition from parish and burgh schools to the universities (Devine, 2007:78). Smout (1986: 212) has said that it was the Scottish system's meritocracy rather than democracy that proved it to be the forerunner of British education in the 20th century. The Argyll Commission into Scottish Education in the 1860s found that 200 students, out of the 882 matriculated, originated from the working classes, though mainly the sons of skilled workers and not the poor. The report also identified who was attending university and found that of the students matriculated:

> 117 were sons of ministers out of an occupational group of 4,205;
> and13 were sons of miners out of an occupational group of 46,190
> (Knox, 2009: 4)

Although the percentage is small for the miner's son it does illustrate that it was possible for the working classes to progress from the parish school to university - if they were male - and so perpetuated the belief in the democratic intellect. As McCrone argued, myths 'are not amenable to proof' due to them functioning on a

'different plane from 'facts' but as a 'collection of symbolic elements' they can 'explain and validate sets of social institutions' (2000:235). He continued:

> Myths are general guides to help interpret complex social reality. They operate as reservoirs of beliefs and values which allow individuals to interpret the world and their place in it (ibid)

The sculpting of an idealised collective memory of Scottish education appears to be important for Scottish people. O'Keefe (2007:5) stated that historical memory is 'that (of) which we are reminded, as distinct from that which we remember'. She has also said that '…we have no collective capacity to share memories that are not in some way externally programmed for us' (ibid). As argued earlier, the Scots' belief in democracy and meritocracy, and an education system that is both a cause and effect of those beliefs, has led to a selective and idealised conceptualisation of the history of education.

So far the discussion has centred on the school sector and the parish schools in particular, as the investigation has focussed on the extent to which the Scottish education system was national, universal and democratic. The literature suggests that educational provision was widespread and available in most parishes; however, many families chose to send their children to other 'private' schools with no church control, perhaps questioning the centrality of the 'Presbyterian heritage' (Barr, 2006: 3). There is evidence of able boys – the 'lad o' pairts' - from poor backgrounds climbing the educational ladder, thus supporting the view that the Scottish education system is markedly democratic and egalitarian. Feminist historians have been critical of this history and challenge the contention on several fronts. Firstly, they question how a system can purport to be democratic when it denies access on the basis of gender; where is the 'lass o' pairts' the able girl and her opportunity to climb the educational ladder (McDermid: 2005)? Secondly, there is evidence of women teachers, both trained and untrained, working in a wide range of schools, educating the poorest and most vulnerable children, yet not being recognised by the patriarchal interpretation of historical events. Barr has argued 'the whole literature on the democratic intellect…is silent on women' (2006:3). Her contention is that such 'crucial blind spots' and silences frame the debate in such a way as to ignore the 'deep structures of inequality

and disadvantage' (ibid). Thirdly, that the patriarchal telling of history ignores women's history within the education system as home educators, as socialisers of children, as critical within an oral tradition and as active learners in formal and informal settings. Arguably, there is greater evidence of this latter type of learning in post-compulsory and adult education, which will be reviewed next.

3. The Progenitors of the College Sector.

Many examples of democratic inclusion are found within the post-compulsory sector and, in the 19th century, the universities in Scotland were not only populated by the very young student but had many mature students, who mainly came from the working-classes. Adult education, both formal and informal was mainly linked to the universities until the late 18th century. The universities opened their doors to men and women at the weekend and in the evenings for popular lectures, principally on the Natural Sciences. The extra-mural activities in universities can be viewed as the precursor to the Mechanics' Institutes: the first of which, in Britain, being established in Edinburgh in 1821 as the School of Arts, and was later to become Heriot Watt College (Paterson, 2003: 89). The Institutes targeted the artisan class but, in reality, the majority of students were from other lower working class occupations. By 1851 Scotland had 55 Mechanics' Institutes with 12,500 members (much lower than in England: 610 Institutes with102,000 members) (Cooke, 2006: 51). The reason for less uptake in Scotland than in England seems to be that Scots had always been able to take advantage of the many other opportunities for adult education than were available to the English (Standish, 2000:641). Indeed, by the mid 19th century there were '438 evening schools in Scotland catering for around 15,000 adult pupils' (ibid). In addition to formal courses and institutional provision, there were a number of informal educational opportunities linked to employment groups, for example, the miners and the weavers. Moreover Robert Owen's 'utopian society', New Lanark founded in the early 19th century, had a strong emphasis on education for both the children and adults of that community and this was scheduled as part of (before or after) their working day at the mill. Throughout the 19th century a multiplicity of formal and informal, child and adult educational opportunities existed; however, in 1872 the shape of elementary education was to change under the governance of one authority.

The Education (Scotland) Act of 1872 combined voluntary and statutory provision under one authority, whose remit was to oversee elementary schooling for the whole nation (Paterson, 2003). The Act made education compulsory for children aged 5 – 13 years, which amounted to 87,000 children, though a roll taken that year could only account for 53,000 children. This figure was adjusted by 10,000 to account for absentees, but still shows only a 60% attendance rate (Smout, 1986). Complex demographic factors impacted upon this figure, for example, child employment, regional and seasonal variances, gender and social class. For example, in Dundee the employment was for girls, as young as eight, to work in the predominately female Jute mills, whereas in the mining villages of Fife it was boys who left school early, often as young as six, to work down the pit. Schooling was also interrupted on a seasonal basis to suit agricultural and fishing practices. *The Christian Watt Papers* (1988) describe the balance between schooling, education and work:

> We had to work when we were 8 years old, but our schooling went
> on in the winter when fishing was slack (cited in Northcroft, 2003: 37)

The balancing of schooling with the necessity for working-class children to work and contribute to the family 'purse' was to continue well into the 20th century. The Act also led to 'higher class and endowed' schools which provided secondary education (Anderson, 1997: 35). There were two schools of thought on how secondary schools should be organised: the first view was that they should be limited in number and funded by fees from the middle classes who would be their users. It was also proposed that a scholarship route would be made available for the talented elementary school child. An alternative view was that they should be based on the Parish schools with secondary schools providing a seamless progression from elementary school and so open to all. Anderson (1997) has argued that initially secondary schools became a compromise between the two views and it was not until a direct subsidy to support secondary education was introduced in 1892 and, when most towns had their own secondary school, that they supported educational mobility. He concluded that this outcome illustrated 'how the democratic myth could have a potent and creative political role' (ibid: 36).

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Until the 1872 Education (Scotland) Act, the teaching profession was dominated by men with a degree or teaching qualification (Knox, 2009); however, women were allowed access to university in 1893 and this laid the way for a feminisation of the teaching profession and qualified female teachers (in 1851 65% of teachers were male by 1911 70% were women) (Smout, 1986: 220). Furthermore, it forged the basis of a modern education system that was governed by a publicly elected school board rather than the church (Bain, 1998).

The tradition from the Reformation had been for co-educational parish schools but this changed in the 1850s 'under the influence of the English, where there was a preference for single-sex schools and private middle class mixed sex schools (ibid). Class and gender were to influence and stratify education, especially in the Industrial schools or Ragged Schools, founded by Thomas Guthrie and designed to offer 'accommodation, welfare and education to homeless young in the city' (cited in Northcroft, 2003:72). In the schools, children would be educated for around three hours a day and employed for 'not less than six hours daily' (Ayr Industrial School, 1878 cited in McDermid: 19).

As Anderson (1985: 101) said:

> 'Traditions' are not neutral or innocent reflections of the past, but constructions which serve specific purposes. In its time, the ideal of the lad o parts gave good service to bourgeois Scotland and to wider democratic interests too.

As said earlier, there is evidence of the' lad o' pairts' and of mass education and literacy but statistical information shows that there was variance based on class, geographical and gender differences. How then does the 'myth' of a unified and superior education system still dominate the Scottish people's perceptions about it? The superiority of the Scottish system over the English, it has been argued, can be measured by illiteracy statistics. Literacy statistics were hard to get but the usual way was to assess literacy/illiteracy by examining the marriage registers and looking for signatures (Smout, 1986). In Scotland in 1871 male illiteracy was half of that of the

English and for females it was one-quarter less (Anderson, 1983: 8-9) thus supporting the view.

To return to Anderson's quote cited above: 'Traditions' are...constructions which serve specific purposes' and turning to an exploration of literature and art, especially in the 19th century, can help to illuminate how the prevalent ideology of democratic intellectualism shaped notions of cultural identity as exemplified through democratic education. This is particularly evident in the work of the Kailyard writers and the 'genre' painters of Scottish agricultural and domestic scenes whereby both arts combine to create a romantic and sentimentalised vision of Scotland and her people. Both ignored the increasingly industrialised and urban environment that people lived in and chose to portray Scottish archetypes of a bygone age – honest and moral menfolk, dutiful and/or redemptive children set in a landscape of 'the Glens', the Kirkyard and the humble, warming hearth. Women are 'bit players' in these narratives or rather they are restricted to the private, domestic, role rather than the public realm. Consequently Ian Maclaren's novels typically depict clever boys who get a first at university and go on to be university professors (Daiches, 1993: 169).

In fact, it was Maclaren who launched the term 'lad o' pairts' into the world in 1894 and presented a powerful ideological conception of Scottish identity (Anderson, 1997: 36). In his book *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush*, 1894, Maclaren, himself a minister, sketched a warm picture of the Dominie, or "Domsie" as he was affectionately called, and commented that he had an 'unerring scent for the "pairts" in his laddies' (Maclaren, 1894: 9). He revelled in the unfolding story of the humble boy who had 'something ahint that face' that suggested he was 'a likely lad' and who had gone on to academic greatness. The story continues with the arrival of a letter, with an Edinburgh postmark, which showed that:

> he was worth a' the toil and trouble. First in the Humanity and first in the
> Greek, sweepit the field, Lord preserve us. A' can hardly believe it. Eh,
> I was feared o' thae High School lads. They had terrible advantages.
> Maisters frae England, and tutors, and whatna', but Drumtochty carried
> aff the croon. It'll be fine reading in the papers – Humanity. – First Prize
> (and Medal), George Howe, Drumtochty, Perthshire. Greek. – First prize

The pride felt in George's success was not seen in personal terms but was, rather, seen as a collective (responsibility) success and, as such, was shared and celebrated by all of the villagers.

Earlier in the century, a painting by Thomas Faed, *Visit to the Village School* from 1852, portrays a school-room full of children, mainly boys, at the point of a visit by the school's patrons.

Plate1.Visit to the Village School, Thomas Faed 1852

The central scene is the Dominie presenting his most able pupils to the seated patrons, whose black servant stands in attendance behind them. Front centre is a small boy dressed in ragged clothing and bare footed, one can interpret him as the 'lad o' pairts' as he has obviously been selected to read to the patrons because of his intellectual abilities. It is interesting to see the little bare-footed girls reading their books to the patrons, with their upturned angelic faces, symbolising purity and virtue,

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which was a common theme in Victorian paintings. The wider classroom scene depicts the majority of the children displaying mischievous and disinterested behaviour, with one caricaturing the black servant's features with chalk on a board while another gestures with his fists behind his back. A boy in the corner, wearing a dunce's hat, casts a sideways glance at the central scene. The whole scene is simultaneously serious and playful, real and idealised, mockish and political.

A slightly later painting by George Paul Chalmers *The Legend,* 1864-78*,* illustrates another facet of Scottish education – the oral tradition.

Plate 2. The Legend, George Paul Chalmers, 1864-78

The painting depicts a group of eight children engrossed by the story told by the elderly woman. Morrison (2003: 166) has said that this work illustrated a Scottish interior of the period and had examples of regional furniture which added to its authenticity and gave a sense of its 'truth'. Chalmers worked on the painting, intermittently, over a fourteen year period, and referred to the subject as 'the village school'. The 'teacher' here is the old woman and the tale was most probably traditional, historical or folklore but, as Morrison says, it perpetuated an idealised view

of an explicitly Scottish rural culture. Although the oral tradition was important in Scotland, especially in the Gaelic-speaking Highlands, the painting was constructed at a period of rapid migration from the countryside to the towns and the concomitant shift from agrarian to the industrial labour. It can thus be interpreted as romanticisation of an earlier period and the capturing of the 'true' Scottish human character. It also brings to the fore the centrality of women as educators in an informal setting – the domestic domain. Such works enabled commentators to re-present the 'truths' about education, especially amongst the poor – who received it, who provided it, and how was it provided – which can give voice to a different story.

First hand accounts by school teachers are hard to come by, but A.S. Neill's *A Dominie's Log* (1915: 11-13) is a welcome exception. Neill muses on the purpose and point of education for his pupils as the boys will be 'going out to plough the fields' and the girls will be 'going to farms as servants' and wonders at the purpose of the 'Three R's', which he says 'spells futility'. The reason for his pessimism is that although we, the Scottish people, have educated in this way for generations yet we still have the same predictable condition. He says that:

> Education should aim at bringing up a new generation that will be better
> than the old (ibid: 12)

Notions of self-improvement and self-efficacy are implicit in his writings, also too, the belief in the transformative nature of education and its facilitation of social mobility. He then goes on the say that it is not what is taught, but the attitude (by this I think he means critical enquiry) the individual has towards it that is important, as this will be applicable to all situations, i.e. transferable, and will bring about change and progress. Neill went on to develop his progressive school Summerhill, a school based on child-centred and discovery learning rather than teacher-centred principles (Humes and Bryce, 2000:107).

The 1918 Education Act increased the comprehensiveness and the element of compulsion in the education system and raised the leaving age to fifteen (though this wasn't realised until 1947). It also integrated Catholic schools within the state system (Knox, 2009). By 1918 women made up 74% of the Scottish teaching profession,

which led some of the clergy to express concern over the 'loss of professional status with the feminisation of teaching' (McDermid: 16). In actuality, there was a gendered hierarchy within the profession with men and women teaching different subjects, as considered appropriate for their gender (ibid).

Much of the discussion so far has been on the principles of generalism within the Scottish education system and curriculum; however, like other European countries, Scotland was well aware of the need to have a properly educated and skilled labour force to meet with the developing world. The Technical Schools Act 1887 aligned the concepts of technical and adult education with the development of secondary education, as the latter was meant to develop the technical competence of skilled workers (Paterson, 2003). A UK commission had been set up 'in response to fears that France and Germany were becoming more successful economically because of a better system of technical education' (ibid: 89-90). Technical Education was defined by Cowper (1970) as 'instruction which aims at communicating to the pupils knowledge and facilities which have a *direct* bearing upon some special occupation, industrial or commercial (cited in Paterson, 2003: 90; emphasis in original).

Paterson (2003) stated that the real beginnings of technical education began with the 1901 Code that governed continuation classes; however, he noted that the continuation classes were never exclusively for vocational purposes and that the SED had 'interpreted them as a way of prolonging general education' (ibid: 91). The continuation classes were for pupils who had left school at fourteen and were meant to be articulated with the central institutions, which were also established by the 1901 Code (Paterson, 2003). All school boards were required to provide continuation classes by the 1908 Education (Scotland) Act. These were funded by the Scottish Education Department (SED). In 1910, in Edinburgh, it was noted that half of those aged fourteen to eighteen were in education, with one quarter in evening classes and the other quarter in schools (ibid)

The central institutions, that delivered technical education, included, Heriot Watt, the Art colleges, Scottish College of Commerce, The Scottish Academy of Music, the Agricultural colleges and the Edinburgh Cookery School and, because of their diversity, were never just concerned with delivering technical education. In 1901, 78,171 students were enrolled in mostly part-time vocational education and this rose to 144,815 in 1912 (Paterson, 2003: 12). They were expected to provide education at university level (most of them became universities later in the century) and always provided breadth in the curriculum (ibid: 92). This is exemplified by Dundee College of Technology's insistence that its 'purpose was to instil in young men "a knowledge of the principles of their trade" – that is, an intellectual understanding, not just technical dexterity' (Cowper, 1970 cited in Paterson, 2003:92). The generalist tradition continues.

This complex series of practical, political and cultural events provided the foundations for a re-orientated educational landscape: a landscape wherein the issues of democratic, open access became more fully realised. It is the contention here that this realisation was actualised in the College sector.

4. Further Education and the College Sector: Learners and Educators.

It was only after 1945 that a broader concept of Further Education (FE) developed and the establishment of a network of local 'technical' colleges were dispersed geographically (Anderson, 1997: 52). In 1952 the 7th Advisory Council reported on further education, stating that education was a continuum of stages – primary, secondary and further education. The purpose of further education was to: extend literacy to the whole population; strengthen the moral basis of society; facilitate an understanding of human culture; be recreational and support hobbies; improve job opportunities and prospects; promote citizenship; and be 'consonant with human dignity' (Paterson: 178). A laudable set of aims and ambitions, fully consistent with liberal and humanist aspirations though, in the event, only partially realised.

Central government had responsibility for the coordination of the college sector and invested £17 million by 1961, creating over 50 colleges. It is helpful to consider this figure in relation to the funding given to the Universities at the same time, which was around £1.6 million each year. In 1965 there were 10,248 full-time students enrolled in colleges (compared with 2,685 in the central institutions) and a further 299,768 enrolled on a part-time basis. Almost all were on non-advanced courses (Paterson: 178).

Paterson (2003: 179) has said that the Advisory Council had given only a few suggestions on how the curriculum should be shaped for the technical education colleges, and has noted that it was not until 1963 that the Brunton committee attempted 'to give a philosophy' to Further Education. The report stated:

> Experience has shown that it is through courses of further education that
> the young worker can deepen his knowledge, widen his vision and learn
> to do his job with greater efficiency and understanding.

This suggests that college education is focussed upon the skills and knowledge necessary to do the particular job of work; however, by contrast, the report also stated that courses should be of 'the most general nature' and facilitate core skill development, especially English and communication, which is consonant with the generalist tradition. The report, moreover, outlined how the curriculum should be delivered, stressing the importance of a student-centred approach that is sensitive to individual differences, aptitudes and temperaments (Paterson, 2003: 179). Furthermore, the report espoused democratic and egalitarian ideals and stressed that young women and men were both entitled to a 'full vocational education' and that an education provided greater opportunities for young women and, crucially, for married women when they returned to the workforce, in order that that they might have the requisite skills, knowledge and understanding for a wide variety of jobs (ibid).

The numbers attending the colleges in the 1960s were high and yet the potential number was never realised because of what Paterson calls 'the Scottish preference for seeing academic education as more respectable and as defining educational democracy as providing access to it' (2003: 178-180). The Robbins' report in 1963 found that young women and men who fell just short of the entry requirements for university (three highers and two lowers) were actually admitted to Higher institutions young men into universities and young women into teacher training colleges. Anderson (2000:223) argued that the Robbins' report 'only endorsed a trend already well underway'. New universities were opening and 'universities were created from existing advanced technical colleges and the newly renamed colleges of education for teacher education were encouraged to expand their remit and award degrees'. Bathmaker (2003:174) argued that the expansion in HE was uneven and not systematically planned; however, following the Robbins report student numbers doubled in the UK between 1963 -1970. She stated that the Robbins report reflected the ideals of social democracy in the post-war years and that this 'offered a vision of social mobility and greater social equality through wider access to educational opportunities, including HE.' This led to the creation of a 'tertiary' education sector, which was comprised of the universities and the colleges. Various Reports emanating from the Scottish Education Department (SED), spanning the years 1952 – 1963, set the course for Further Education and for a college sector.

The Further Education (FE) sector was under the control of the SED, as were the primary and secondary schools; however, the White paper 'Access and Opportunity' (1991) and the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 resulted in 43 of the now 45 FE colleges having independent status (Orkney and Shetland remain with LEAs) with the incorporated colleges assuming their responsibilities on 1st April 1993 (Paterson, 2000:17; Leech, 2000:50). The Act gave details of the powers to be granted to colleges and of the new forms of governance through newly formed boards of management, with industry represented (Leech, 2000:50). Leech summarises the policy as espoused in two documents, Mission and Vision and Quality and Efficiency (1992) as concerned with: improving FE in Scotland; improving educational attainment and developing a highly trained and qualified workforce; contributing towards the expansion in HE; enhancing quality; and improving efficiency (ibid:51). This status enabled the colleges to grow and to develop a curriculum that could meet and shape the needs of their local communities.

One distinctive feature of this learner-centredness is exemplified in the way that Scottish Higher Education (HE) differs from elsewhere in the United Kingdom as a large proportion of students undertake HE courses in the FE college. In 1995-6 over 285,000 students were registered on FE courses and a further 60,700 were following HE courses, in FE colleges. However, interestingly, the boundaries between FE and HE have blurred further as in the same year 84,000 students were following FE course in HE institutions, mainly new universities (Leech, 2000:56). The Dearing Inquiry into Higher Education (1997) 'recommended that further education colleges should continue to expand this type of activity' (ibid).

Delivering HE in FE not only benefits individuals, communities and colleges but the Government, as the recurrent costs funded by the Scottish Office in 1996 to 43 FE colleges was £233m whereas the recurrent costs in 1995 of 23 HEIs was £850m (plus £375m in private funds). This has led Paterson to conclude that the Scottish Government (established in 1999) is likely to favour FE, especially as it attracts working-class students and offers greater flexibility and part-time provision (2000: 23-25).

The FE college sector is 'the most funding-sensitive of all of the education service' (Leech, 2000:57). This, in part, is because students access FE colleges from many different routes and many have complex attendance modes – funding is straightforward for full-time study – thus creating financial and management challenges for the sector, especially as they continue to widen participation. Leech stated that the college curricula reflects societal and labour market changes, for example, there has been a dramatic rise in service and care industry courses and a reduction in manufacturing courses (ibid:58). He noted that the core-skill agenda is at the fore and is fully embedded within vocational subjects thus ensuring a flexible workforce able to transfer skills from one setting to another (ibid: 59). Paterson states that both FE and HE contribute to lifelong learning and that the lifelong learning agenda is 'seen as a way in which a new democracy could be underpinned by knowledgeable and critical citizens' (2000: 25). The distinctiveness of the FE college sector will be a challenge to sustain, especially as the FE and HE sectors come closer together and, now under a Scottish parliament, if they can continue to lead the way in widening participation then, Leech believes, they can 'achieve a level of public recognition and esteem, which will not only keep the colleges open and local, but will bring about new investment…'. He argued that some strategic planning is necessary 'if a nation of five million people is to make the best collective use of its post-compulsory education institutions, and the available staff expertise…' (2000:61).

The expertise and role of staff, notably the 'teacher', is of course critical in any educational setting. Earlier in this paper reference was made to the questionable and often contested professional status of the teacher, especially in relation to the more generally accepted professions of, for example, medicine and law.

> Disappointingly, perhaps, the application of historical perspectives confirms professionalism to be an artificial construct, with ever-changing and always-contested definitions and traits. In times of late or postmodernity, some may wish to argue that we can all – dog-walkers and landscape gardeners no less than solicitors and archbishops – be professionals if we want to be professionals and if we conduct ourselves in a manner that seems to be professional (Crook, 2008: 23).

Crook's analysis is shaped by what he calls the 'long century of the professional' from around 1870, where 'professionals' were found to be working in a wide variety of capacities, though only some of them had 'social capital' (ibid: 23-24). He argued that the democratisation of the professions has resulted in a loss of influence and 'intellectual leadership' that was once commanded by professionals (ibid: 24). Crook cites Brint's (1994) thesis about the 'modern professional', which was that conceptions of professionalism had shifted from 'social trust professionalism' to 'expert professionalism'; however, while acknowledging strengths in this thesis Crook argued that the model did not account for the tensions between the 'ideal image… - client-focused, independent, respectable, well rewarded, influential - and what is sometimes the reality – overwhelmed by paper-work, in peril of litigation, overworked and stressed' (Crook, 2008: 24).

Definitions of professionalism are plentiful, though not universally agreed or understood (ibid: 4). Goodson and Hargreaves make the distinction between *professionalisation*, which they discuss as a social and political construct that serves the interests of a particular group and *professionalism*, which categorises the quality and behaviour of those within the group. The authors also discuss two further concepts in the discourse: *deprofessionalisation*, which they refer to as aspects of the teacher's work where control and decision making is external and bureaucratic and *reprofessionalisation*, which refers to, aspects of the teacher's role that is given greater complexity, autonomy and collaborative working practices. Fundamentally, though paradoxical, both are borne out of the crisis or lack of clarity of what constitutes professional identity amongst teachers and their employers and stakeholders. Hargreaves (2006) outlines the 'four ages of teachers' professionalism':

> The pre-professional age
> The age of the autonomous professional
> The age of the collegial professional
> The post-professional or postmodern
> (cited in Cunningham, 2008: 674)

The pre-professional age refers to the period from the formalisation of the contemporary secondary schools in England in1904 until changes in the 1960s (ibid). This concurs with practices in teachers' training and work in Scotland in the same period, which was predicated on the idea that 'practice made practice' and of an apprenticeship model of learning from the experienced or 'expert' teacher; what Hoyle (1974) called 'restricted professionalism' (cited in Cunningham, 2008: 675).

Restricted professionalism can be described as quasi-professionalism in that the role is largely conceptualised as practical and does not demonstrate the higher level thinking and autonomy usually associated with professionals. Hoyle defined it as being introspective, about the here-and-now of classroom events that are perceived in isolation (Hoyle, 1974, cited in Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996: 14).

The autonomous professional, Hargreaves' (2006: 678) second age, is from the 1960s to the 1980s, when 'professional' and 'autonomy' were increasingly seen as inseparable. Bartlett and Burton (2003) called the period from 1944 to 1976 as the 'golden age of teaching' when teachers had professional autonomy and control over the curriculum and their teaching within it. Hargreaves (2006: 679) categorised it by saying that 'most teachers taught in a box' where the culture of 'individualism, isolation and privatism' was dominant. Hoyle (1980) classified this as 'extended' professionalism, which saw the teacher as engaged with theory in relationship to practice and of training and staff development as being undertaken out of school and focussing on cognitive learning rather than practical experience (ibid: 125).

From the mid 1970s there was criticism of publicly funded education and this led to it being scrutinised and, ultimately, 'greater accountability of the teaching profession (Bartlett and Burton, 2003: 2). In 1976, James Callaghan in his 'Ruskin Speech', was to instigate 'the great debate' on standards of learning and teaching in schools. There was agreement in the parliament and the conservatives joined in the debate and 'laid the blame at the teachers' door' (Hargreaves, 2006). This debate led to Hargreaves' third age – the collegial professional – which resulted in significant and rapid changes in the teacher's role, status and autonomy. Hargreaves argued that the period from

the mid to late 1980s were characterised by 'administrative mandates' on *how* teaching should be done though, he said that, this was 'imposed and overturned at an alarming rate' (ibid: 681).

Teachers were now expected to work collaboratively with other colleagues, to share experiences and to pool resources, for most this was a new experience and one for which they had not been prepared. Hargreaves (2006) cited Grimmett and Crehan's work, which said that if 'collegiality is forced or imposed' that teachers can become resentful and resistant towards it. During this period, the teachers' role was also redefined in relation to their duties as 'carer' within the teaching role – social work duties, the integration of children with special educational needs into mainstream schools and meeting the diverse needs of multicultural learners (ibid). There was also a flattening of the management structure, which necessitated devolved responsibility to classroom teachers, with no recognition of the time or training needed to do such tasks (ibid: 683).

This age was quite paradoxical in that the teacher had less autonomy over her teaching and was now bound to regulations and standards for practice, while having an extended or expanded role which carried greater and wider responsibility and accountability. Whitty (2008) argued that 'the nature of and limits to teacher autonomy' was critical to any discussion on professionalism (cited in Cunningham, 2008: 28). Hargreaves (2006: 684) called this the 'crossroads' of teacher professionalism and professional learning citing, on the one hand, the more extended role and collegial approach with the more 'exploitative and overextended' on the other.

Hargreaves' fourth age is the 'postmodern age' and he states that this period began in the 1970s and was still evident in the 2000s. He argued that this age was driven by two forces – the global economy and the (r)evolution in electronic and digital communication systems (2006: 284-285).   This was the period where 'market principles' applied and schools and teachers were in competition internally and between others in their area. Hargreaves' characterises these principles as: rationalisation, greater efficiencies, changes in the working conditions, prescribed curricula, temporary contracts and general lowering of teachers' status (ibid: 285). The National curriculum was introduced in England in 1988 and this finally removed

the control from teachers and brought about, what many see as, assessment driven teaching (Bartlett and Burton, 2003: 4). They argued further, that the 1993 Education Act 'increased external constraints on teachers and resulted in more school inspections'. They state that there was also a reemphasis in training on 'how to teach rather than the discrete study of education'. Initial Teacher Training became competence based and grounded in practice (ibid).

Hargreaves, also noted the correspondent changes to teacher's training, which was now to be 'in-house' (and not delivered by and at the universities) and a return to a 'craft or practice based' model i.e. teachers learning from each other, on the job, as was done in the 19th and early 20th century. Hargreaves argued that this led to the de-professionalisation of teachers and teaching (2006). This de-professionalisation, he argued has 'cut deep' but all is not lost as he said:

> If teachers want to become professionally stronger, they must now
> open themselves up and become more publicly vulnerable and accessible.
> That is their paradoxical challenge in the postmodern age (691)

The paradox that Hargreaves is referring to is that teachers, like other professionals, no longer have the status by 'right', position or by qualification. In the postmodern world teaching is a highly complex activity and the teaching and learning experience transcends both teacher and learner to include other stakeholders, all with their own beliefs, needs and requirements. The democratisation of professionalism has resulted in teachers feeling vulnerable but it has also opened the door for a new conceptualisation of the construct, which can now be explored.

In their discussion of the teaching profession, Goodson and Hargreaves (1996: 5), identify six different, though overlapping, models of meanings of professionalism: classical; flexible; practical; extended; complex; and postmodern professionalism. They argued that classical professionalism was exemplified by professions such as Law and Medicine, characterised by:

> … having a specialised knowledge base or shared technical culture:
> a strong service ethic with a commitment to meeting clients' needs;

and self-regulated, collegial control rather than external bureaucratic
control over recruitment and training, codes of ethics and standards
of practice (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996: 5)

When applying the tenets of classical professionalism to teachers it has been difficult for researchers to identify the specialised knowledge base of teaching or the technical language used. Jackson (1968) argued that teachers' language was not discernibly different from ordinary language, and, Lortie (1975) found little evidence of a 'shared technical culture of teaching' (cited in Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996: 5). Teaching, it is often argued is a practical activity and largely intuitive and this has proved challenging for researchers when trying to codify professional knowledge. However, as the authors stated, Shulman did this and incorporated this knowledge base into professional teaching standards in the USA (Shulman, 1987, cited in Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996: 5).

It has been argued, by Soder (1990), that teaching cannot achieve the high status professionalism of medicine as it is not based on scientific enquiry or certainty (cited in Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996:6). However, this assumes a notion of medical professionalism that is static and constant. Research, undertaken by Eitel *et al.,* (2000: 517) highlights a host of 'problems in the professionalisation of medical education [thought to] arise from: commercial spirit and economic constraints; profound changes in the healthcare system, including technical innovations; and insufficient professionalisation, for example, insufficient formal training for new duties. The factors cited by the authors are consonant with the factors shaping teacher professionalism. It appears that in the postmodern world, it is accurate to say that the 'traditional' professions, such as medicine, are under the same scrutiny and face the same moral uncertainty as the contested or quasi-professional groups. Hargreaves, drawing on the work of Stephen Ball, stated that a 'concern for client need' and 'professional judgement' was being replaced by 'commercial decision-making' and further, drawing on Hanlon (1998), that 'the meaning of professionalism' had at its centre 'the issue of 'trust': who is trusted and why is no longer a given but is 'up for grabs' (2006: 700).

Colley and James (2005) cited Goodson and Hargreaves' work which said that professionalism could be identified as having 'seven key elements: the exercise of discretionary judgement, moral engagement, collaboration, heteronymy, care, continuous learning, and managing complexity'. This notion of professionalism describes what it is to be a professional – roles, status, modes of knowledge – and is 'practice as performing a set of externally determined principles and standards' (ibid: 3). The authors call this construction of professionalism as one that appeals to 'its virtuous functions' and refer to the work of Stronach *et al.,* 2002 where these elements were described 'as 'outside-in' stories', which refer to 'what she does' (cited in Colley and James, 2005: 3). They also, by contrast, refer to an alternative set of constructs which 'are 'inside-out' stories', by which they draw focus towards the character of the professional – 'who she is' – both individually and collectively. This notion of professionalism focuses on the 'virtuous character' (ibid). Colley and James (2005) argued that within the FE college sector that the literature on professionalism identified the 'inside-out' stories as dominant. They posit an interpretation of this as emanating from the fragmentation and diversity experienced by lecturers working in the sector. Furthermore, the competing forces between pedagogical and managerial discourses has resulted in the need for lecturers to be creative in their response to a managerial culture (Hellawell and Hancock, 2003; Gleeson and Shain, 2003; Normand *et al.,* 2008).

Views of teacher professionalism in contemporary society, especially by the government and its agencies, tend to be of teachers' professional identity as exemplified by their 'rational' capacity to 'behave competently' in the name of student achievement, and social and economic change' (Dillabough, 2006: 704). This depicts the teacher in an instrumental way as someone that accords 'with objective standards of practice'. This model of teacher professionalism is often referred to as the 'Standards Teacher'; it purports to be neutral, however, Dillabough locates it within a neo-liberal discourse of 'professionalism' that 'serves to constrain educational professionals' authenticity in practice' and results in codified and regulated behaviour as a skill-set (ibid). Dillabough, drawing on Lawn and Ozga's work, states that:

> 'teacher professionalism' is used by the state as a political device which
> gives the impression of liberation (e.g. collaboration, 'empowerment'),

but simultaneously de-skills and de-professionalizes to the point of exploitation (Dillabough, 2006:704)

In their research into professional FE tutors in England, Colley and James (2005: 3), present two constructions of professionalism: the first, is concerned with the defining characteristics of what identifies, or singles out, the difference between the professions and other occupations and the second is concerned who the professional is – the 'virtuous character of the professional person'. The first construction would include the typology of the roles undertaken, the knowledge they use, the ethical codes that they subscribe to as part of their professional role, and their hierarchical status (ibid).

Colley and James (2005: 4) state that accounts that focus on the:

> identity rather than functions of professionals can best be described
> as a metaphor of 'shuttling'. These predominantly focus on the
> movement between deprofessionalisation and reprofessionalisation.

The authors argue, that for FE lecturers, this is further compounded by the 'shuttlings between vocational tutors' professional origin e.g. engineer, and her or his new professional identity as 'pedagogue' (ibid). Blake *et al* (1998:37) when discussing identity, state 'that the present involves the past and future'. Perceptions about identity, image and professionalism may not reflect a true account but will be mediated by past conceptions. However, what is done in the present will influence future perceptions. Identity and image are important concepts in this discussion as beliefs about professionalism will be contingent upon the image the college sector has in relation to the other educational sectors.

Within the FE college sector different 'professions' compete with each other, for example, the accountant with the plasterer or the hairdresser with the psychologist. The currency or social and political capital usually lies with the disciplines described as 'academic', in part because the level of academic qualification required for entry to the profession is usually higher but also because they are more likely to belong to the classical professions, which are valued and respected. Clow (2001:413) calls this 'Ex-

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officio Professionalism' as it is based on the previous role occupied by the lecturer and remains 'untouched by the professional knowledge base of learning and teaching'. The lecturers' professional identity is located within their previous occupation. Clow (2001) categorised professionalism for English college sector lecturers into six categories:

> ex-officio; vocational professional standards; segmented; holistic; professional judgement; and emancipatory.

In her study, Clow (2001: 413-415) said that lecturers had different views about themselves as professionals; for some it was 'passing on their professional standards' to their learners, while another, new lecturer, professionalism was thought to be intermittent (segments) and not evident in all aspects of her role. The Holistic category was most evident in those who were previously teachers and was manifested as a concern with the whole, especially 'pastoral care' of the learners. Colley and James (2005: 9) reiterated the Stronach *et al.,* thesis which acknowledged the multiplicity of identities and, further, stated that 'professional identities and trajectories are inseparable from personal and political identities and trajectories'.

Lecturer identity, we can see, takes the form of personal and collective, which leads us to explore further the notion of 'collectivity' within the 'teacher's' role and, specifically, to use the conceptual framework of a 'community of practice'. Lave and Wenger's (1991) thesis is that learning is situated within an authentic context and that novices learn from their more experienced, or expert, colleague(s) as they engage in tasks and develop competencies and skills. Recognition of professionalism, in this case, would be when the teacher had learned the appropriate behaviour, mastered the skills and knowledge of their professional context and moved from 'legitimate peripheral participation to full participation in a community of practice' (Colley and James, 2005: 5). This mode of learning, the cognitive-apprenticeship model, is well recognised and evidenced in the history of teacher training and education, yet the belonging to 'a community of practice' has been less well evidenced. In fact the authors cite research which studied schoolteachers in England and found little evidence of a community of practice (Colley and James, 2005).

Most of the recent research into and analysis of teacher and lecturer conceptions of professionalism have been conducted in England and, arguably, reflect a particular set of conditions pertinent to that country. Throughout this paper it has been argued that the Scottish education system is distinctive and different from the English education system, though obviously sharing some of the external imperatives. The next section will explore conceptions of professional identity, professional status and 'professionalism' for lecturers working within the Scottish college sector.

5. Professionalising the Educators.

In 2005 the Scottish Executive (SE) undertook a national consultation on *The Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges (2004).* They undertook the consultation because of a rise in discussion and papers on the need to 'professionalise the college workforce' (Strategic Advisory Group, 2004). Most notably, in 2004, a paper was produced on the professionalism of lecturing staff as it might look in 2014 (Strategic Advisory Group, 2004). It addressed questions on the status and future of lecturing as a profession and a number of issues that impacted upon the profession (ibid: 3). The paper was intended to stimulate and generate discussion from within and out with the college sector on lecturer characteristics and status contemporaneously and appropriate for the future. The paper also mooted the idea of instituting a Professional Body for college lecturers and the rationale for such was outlined.

The conclusions drawn from the consultation were that the sector was 'not ready' for a Professional Body, though this view was primarily held by employers and the trade unions. The lecturing staff voted in favour of having their own professional body. This disjuncture between the views of lecturers and managers has been documented earlier in this paper and fits within a managerialist discourse and, arguably, can be seen as the infantilisation of the academic workforce in Scotland's colleges. That said, many of the issues raised and identified during the consultation process were to be taken forward by Scottish Ministers and manifested in policy directives. Key factors emanating from the consultation and leading to policy changes were that:

qualifications held by lecturers in their subject disciplines had to be at

the highest possible level available; Teaching Qualification (FE) should

be achieved within three years of appointment for full time staff and within

five years for part time staff; continuous professional development (CPD)

should be undertaken by all college

staff; and that a Code of Practice for college lecturers may be introduced

(Scottish Government, 2009)

The drive to have all college lecturers highly qualified in their own subject discipline and as 'teachers' was viewed by many as a very positive step forward. There was much debate over the relationship between teaching knowledge and skills and subject knowledge and skills at a national level, for example, the Professional Development Forum (PDF); however, ultimately, it was decided that teaching was a separate set of skills and knowledge that sits parallel and complementary to an academic's subject discipline. Both are considered essential for the lecturing job. Furthermore, the CPD requirement is consonant with other professionals, for example, medical practitioners, and is often a condition of registration with a professional body.

A fundamental notion of professionalism is the holding of a professional qualification. Government audits conducted throughout the UK had noted that many lecturers were not qualified to an appropriate level within their subject discipline. In England the level of core skills (key skills) was also below expectations so national initiatives to up-skill and up-qualify the college workforce were launched. In Scotland, the qualification levels of lecturing staff were higher than those in England; however, the Scottish Government has now legislated that applicants to TQ(FE) have to demonstrate core-skills qualification and/or proficiency in addition to holding their subject discipline qualification at the highest level available. This requirement has two functions, which both reflect the Scottish tradition: firstly, the need for all to have 'breadth' and generality in their education; and secondly, it acknowledges that learning and knowledge transcends subject disciplines and that core/key skills are transferable to any setting and can be used for any intellectual challenge. So, in Scotland, it is less about up-qualifying the lecturing workforce, as it is in England, but more about ensuring lecturers' fitness for purpose within the generalist tradition.

One of the primary arguments in relation to the demand for a college lecturer (teaching) qualification was predicated on the notion of parity of esteem between school teachers, university lecturers and college lecturers. If one considers the lifelong learning agenda and the blurring of sectoral boundaries for students, this makes consummate sense. The blurring of boundaries between sectors means that career development and progression for academic staff can be inter-agency/sector. College lecturers have worked with the 14-16 year old pupil in the college setting and/or the school setting. As initiatives such as More Choices More Chances (MC2) (Scottish Government, 2006) and the Curriculum for Excellence (ltscotland, no date) develop more links between schools and colleges there is a drive to ensure dual qualifications, or at least parity in qualification levels. The School-College Review (Scottish Government, 2004) set out the scope of the collaborative arrangements.

One of the difficulties facing the college sector, especially when considering parity of esteem, is its image or cultural identity. It is often hailed the 'Cinderella sector', which refers to the lower funding it receives compared to other sectors; however, the metaphor also indicates its status as not quite 'belonging', perhaps due to its relatively recent history and its perceived difference or 'otherness'.

The Strategic Advisory Group (2004) considered the role of the college lecturer, as it currently is and how it might be in the future - 2014 - and situated their discussion within, what they called, four impact themes:

•   Changes in Information and Learning Technology
•   Changes in Teaching and Learning theory and practice
•   Work-Based Learning; and
•   Social, Political and Legal Trends

The authors stated that although not an academic paper, the observations and interpretations they proffered did provide some insight into the ambiguous professional status of lecturers in the college sector in relation to other educational sectors:

> So lecturing in further education, while clearly part of the education
> profession, currently survives in the outer suburbs of professional

respectability (ibid: 4)

Firstly, they argued that 'lecturer' is not the correct term for the role occupied by teaching staff in a college, finding the title 'archaic', preferring 'learning facilitator and developer of core skills' (ibid: 5). The latter reflecting both perceived changes in the learning environment in colleges, for example, technological advancement and a 'blended' approach to learning, and delivery of the 'vocational curriculum' (ibid: 6). In a strict sense, of course, the term 'lecturer' does not fully delineate academic staff's role as lecturing is rarely done in colleges; however, this observation could equally be levelled at much of modern university teaching where group-work and seminars are common modes of delivery. No, it suggests the authors' felt uncomfortable with lecturer status and the perceived power dynamic between the lecturer and the learner. Secondly, they argued that 'teaching in further education does not display many of the recognised features of a profession', though they acknowledged variance between different professions in terms of rigour, registration, licence and requirements (ibid: 4). However, this latter view represents a particular view of 'teacher' professionalism as seen through the lens of 'classical' professionalism or, indeed, 'virtuous functions' – what she does - as the elements in 'outside-in' stories. Whereas, it is 'inside-out' stories, the 'virtuous character' – who she is - that dominates the lecturer's notions of professionalism within the FE college sector (Colley and James, 2005). 'Who she is', of course, is a multiplicity of identities, mediated by past conceptions that are personal, political and cultural. The author argues that the present set of conditions, compounded by a managerialist culture, necessitates lecturers to conceive of how they might mobilise their 'collective identities' to alter how they are evaluated and gain recognition for their status as 'professionals' within a distinct group. This type of action would concur with Bernstein's (2005:48) notion of 'identity politics' that is 'the activism engaged in by status-based social movements'.

Conclusion:

This paper has focussed on the unique and defining characteristics of the Scottish education system and explored how it has been a source of national pride and an emblem of Scottish identity, especially since the Union of the Parliaments in 1707. Nairn (1981) viewed Scottish national identity as emanating from her unusual status of

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being an ancient nation that was now governed externally, from London. And hence Scotland might be conceived of as a 'stateless nation'. However, he has argued that the British state allowed Scotland a degree of national autonomy at the civic level: and so the customs, beliefs, normative values, distinct religious, legal and educational structures continued and formed a distinctive 'Scottish identity'. This fracture, according to Nairn, resulted in a 'cultural sub-nationalism' which manifested itself 'neurotically' in Scottish romanticism and a skewed anti-English sentiment (Normand, 2000: 34-35). This interpretation helps to put into context the particular set of conditions that shaped Scottish education and the Scottish people's belief in this element of civic society as different from, and superior to, England's educational culture. Indeed the contention explored throughout this paper that Scotland's educational principles are predicated on democratic openness and egalitarianism.

Patently, the 'lad o' pairts' personified the ideals of the Scottish educational culture in the 18th and especially 19th centuries; however, it is argued here that it is in the college sector that this democratic tradition is most manifest in 21st century. The college sector's educational principles of open access for all, student-centred learning and teaching, personalised guidance and support for learning, are the contemporary embodiment of egalitarianism. Their strategic objectives and policy initiatives, such as, More Choices More Chances: a strategy to reduce the proportion of young people not in education employment or training (NEET) (Scottish Government, 2006); and the Curriculum for Excellence, are examples of their support for democratic education and its vital role in individual and cultural social mobility. A recent report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2007) commended the 'breadth of vision and commitment to both high standards and social inclusiveness' of the Curriculum for Excellence programme. A major review of Scotland's education focusing on all sectors reported that 'For learners in Scotland's colleges, the overall quality of learning and teaching has remained high'. Furthermore that:

> Colleges have continued to make good progress in promoting learners'
> wider achievements as well as their vocational skills. Learners' personal
> and learning skills, core skills (including literacy and numeracy), skills for
> citizenship and employability are being developed well and increasingly
> recognised (HMIE, 2009: 60-67)

Lecturing staff within the sector realise the strategies and policies as they work tirelessly with diverse students in the facilitation of learning. As with teachers, challenges are faced within the college sector in relation to the professional status of lecturing staff. A recent report from the Scottish Funding Council (2010) provided useful statistical information on Scotland's colleges and showed that 89% of full-time teaching staff is teacher qualified or if measuring teacher-qualified or qualified the figure rises to 99.7%. The report also provides other illuminating analyses about the composition and demographic factors of lecturing staff in Scotland's colleges, for example, 58% of teaching staff FTE (Full Time Equivalents) are female, and that 41% of teaching staff are aged 50 and over, with 9% aged 60 or over.

Earlier in the paper, the author discussed the argument that the debate around 'professionalism' had resulted in teachers feeling vulnerable, but that it had also opened the door for a new conceptualisation of educational practice. With so many models of professionalism, often competing and temporally fixed, it would seem reasonable to develop a new model for understanding this construct. The groundswell in contemporary society to question the nature of professional status by non-professionals indicates that previous models and beliefs are not sustainable. Consequently, if the distinction between professional and non-professional or unprofessional is still considered useful within society, then any development of a new model should be cognisant of 'professionalism's' historical, discipline and temporal status, and be one that embraces fundamental egalitarian principles. This egalitarianism, this 'democratic intellect', is, as evidenced here, a concept with a long and distinguished history in Scottish education.

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PART 3

(Re)Conceptualising models of Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status for college lecturers in Scotland

Empirical Study presented as 2/5ths of the degree: Doctorate of Education

Carey Normand, August 2012

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Section 1: Introduction

This study builds on an earlier literature review conducted by me entitled *Revisiting the 'Democratic Intellect': a history of Scottish Education*, where I argued that the unique characteristics of the Scottish education system were predicated on the principles of democratic intellectualism and the 'generalist' tradition (Normand, 2010: unpublished).   Scotland has a long educational tradition that prides itself on egalitarian principles and the notion of democratic intellectualism, with its fundamental qualities of egalitarianism and universal access to education (Davie, 1961). This principle flourishes within a generalist tradition, where the curriculum is structured to provide diverse and complementary subject discipline choices and eschews narrow specialisms.

In the twenty-first century these principles, beliefs and values have been challenged as higher education institutions grapple with funding shortages and a highly competitive global market-place. In Scotland the generalist tradition is still evident in higher education as manifested in the four year undergraduate degree. These generalist principles are also epitomised within the further education college sector, where the curriculum encompasses subject discipline specialisms and general academic education, and embraces the egalitarian values of open access for all citizens. A host of legislative and policy directives, such as, *Life Through Learning; Learning Through Life,* the Lifelong Learning strategy (Scottish Executive, 2003); The Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005, that instituted a single funding council for further and higher education (Scottish Parliament, 2005); the implementation of *More Choices, More Chances* to address the needs of young people not in education, training or work (Scottish Government, 2006a); the policy to strengthen school and college partnerships (Scottish Executive, 2005b) and the introduction of the cross-sectoral *Curriculum for Excellence* (L&T Scotland, no date) have secured the continuance of this vision within a long and distinguished history of democratic Scottish education.

The literature review, conducted by me, on a history of Scottish education, became the basis for a study of 'teacher' professionalism, professional identity and

professional status and, of models for understanding these concepts in the twenty-first century. The study concluded that having no clear definition of teacher professional identity and so many models of professionalism, often competing and temporally fixed, was problematic and signalled the need to develop a clearer understanding of these constructs and, if appropriate, the development of a new model. The groundswell in contemporary society to question the nature of professional status by non-professionals indicates that previous models and beliefs are not sustainable. Consequently, if the distinction between professional and non-professional or professional and unprofessional is still considered useful within society, then any development of a new model or understanding should be cognisant of 'professionalism's' historical, discipline and temporal status, and be one that embraces fundamental egalitarian and democratic principles. This egalitarianism, and democratic tradition, has a long and distinguished history in Scottish education.

1.1 Context

In the contemporary period, education in the UK across all sectors faces the challenge of balancing educational philosophical positions of 'education for all' within a society where a great many citizens feel 'culturally, politically and economically dispossessed' (Apple, 2009: xv). Apple (2009: xvi) argues that in such challenging times it is imperative to draw on historical knowledge, what he calls, the 'restoration of memory' to suggest possibilities for moving forward. The task itself is not only historical but is about raising (public) awareness about the possibilities, the other 'story-telling', about all of our work as 'teachers'. The ways in which teachers are conceptualised within the twenty-first century, especially within a neo-liberal policy context, has led to a crisis in the way society views teachers in relation to their professional status and identity. Many argue that the policy context within the UK and beyond (see Erde, 2008) has deprofessionalised teachers and the teaching profession (Hargreaves, 2006). To counter this, Apple argues that we need to better understand, through analysis, the models of professionalism imposed on teachers and to suggest alternative models that have the power to 'interrupt dominant policies and narratives' (Apple, 2009: xvii).

Most of the studies on teacher and lecturer professionalism have been conducted outside of Scotland and, consequently, may only shed partial light on the Scottish

situation. Having previously argued for the unique and distinctive characteristics of the Scottish education system, it is important to test this contention against the literature. The focus of this study is to explore and analyse conceptions of professionalism, professional identity and professional status of lecturers working in the contemporary college sector in Scotland.

In 2004, a paper was produced on the professionalism of lecturing staff as it might look in 2014 (Strategic Advisory Group, 2004). It addressed questions on the status and future of lecturing as a profession and considered a number of issues that impacted upon the profession (ibid: 3). The paper was intended to stimulate discussion within and outwith the college sector and the idea of instituting a Professional Body was mooted and the rationale for this was outlined.

The authors of that paper stated that it was not an academic paper, however, the observations and interpretations they proffer do provide some insight into the ambiguous professional status of lecturers in the college sector in relation to other educational sectors:

> So **lecturing** in **further education**, while **clearly** part of the education profession, currently survives in the **outer suburbs** of **professional respectability** (ibid: 4).

In this passage the authors illustrate this ambiguity in college lecturers' professional status by initially locating them within the corpus of educational professions and especially so through the use of the word *'clearly'*; however, they then proceed to situate them on the periphery, in what they call the *'outer suburbs'* which gives them an insider-outsider status. This duality of belonging and not-belonging within the education profession is made more tenuous by their use of *'respectability'* in relation to them being an educational *'professional'*. This short sentence embodies a discourse on hierarchies of professionals – credible and respectable - based on cultural understandings of constructs of professional identity.

The authors state that *'teaching in further education does not display many of the recognised features of a profession'*, though they acknowledge variance between

different professions in terms of rigour, registration, licence and requirements (Strategic Advisory Group, 2004: 4). They also assert that *'lecturer'* is not the correct term for the role occupied by teaching staff in a college, finding the title *'archaic'*, preferring *'learning facilitator and developer of core skills'* (ibid: 5). The latter reflecting both perceived changes to the learning environment in colleges, for example, technological advancement and a *'blended'* approach to learning, and delivery of the *'vocational curriculum'* (ibid: 6). This is consonant with the studies in the English college sector, discussed later. It also taps into a discourse that denigrates professionalism as being out-dated, here they use the word *'archaic'* to describe the title lecturer and state that for modern education the appropriate title would be *'facilitator'*. Couched in the language of student-centred practice this can sound plausible, however, it makes peripheral the professional 'teaching' role, as contiguous with the learning experience, and deprofessionalises the lecturing role. James and Biesta (2007: 134) noted 'a strong affinity between a belief in managerialism and a continuing tendency to see professionalism as old-fashioned'.

This Advisory Group paper creates quite a distinctive view about lecturers working in Scotland's colleges and states that they are: firstly, on the periphery of education (teacher) professionals, which itself is a contested profession; and secondly, that this status is acceptable because 'teaching' in post 16 education is actually the *'facilitation of learning'*, that is, an enabling role, and that this is considered to be more modern and democratic. The shift in emphasis, from what the lecturer does, has and is, to the centrality of the learner and what s/he needs, has polarised the teaching and learning experience. This duality is critical to the conceptualisation of lecturers' professionalism, identity and status being espoused in this document; the effect of which is to deprofessionalise the lecturing workforce. Lecturers have always focused on their learners' needs and striven hard to meet them and, ironically, that is how they conceptualise professionalism, i.e. as being embedded within a pedagogical discourse that, for them, still has relevance and currency.

It is worth exploring further what is meant by a Pedagogical discourse as the term does not necessarily conjure up an easily understood set of concepts and meanings. Essentially, it is concerned with pedagogic practices, that is, the emphasis is on teaching and learning, the interpersonal and synergic relationships involved in both,

beliefs about the value and purpose of education – the ideological – and the educational environment and landscape within which the lecturer teaches and the student engages in learning. This encompasses the micro level of the personal and communities of practice based on collegiality, the meso level organisational and structural factors, and the macro level policy directives and global trends i.e. it is not a narrow discourse that focuses only on the minutiae of teaching. Pedagogic practices are created and reproduced within a learning culture which reflects the social practices 'constituted by the actions, dispositions and interpretations of the participants' that occur between teachers and learners (Hodkinson *et al.,* 2004). The learning culture will shape and be shaped by the participants – teachers and students – and other imperatives, for example, policy directives or management structures, which can change the culture and challenge teachers' pedagogic practices. Biesta (2009) investigated the nature of teaching and was compelled by the notion of the 'art' of teaching which was starkly contrasted to what might be called the 'science' of teaching that emphasises rules, content (often decontextualised knowledge) and the 'how' of doing the work (184). Biesta argues convincingly that teaching is about teachers being able to use their professional judgement, that is, to use the knowledge they have and to apply their judgement as to 'what is to be done' (2009: 187-188). He calls this 'educational professionality' which is about 'teachers' being able to '*see* in an educational way', which he sees as a 'practical wisdom', and something that can be learned (Biesta, 2009: 188; emphasis in original). Being able to *see* in an educational way is a 'complex disposition - a way of seeing and being –' (Biesta, 2009: 191) and this conceptualisation works well as a kind of shorthand for the pedagogic discourse, which can be contrasted starkly with that of the managerial discourse.

The Advisory Group, discussed above, seek to conceptualise the lecturer ten years on and point towards a brave new world where lecturers are 'facilitators' who enable learners to learn, through interaction with technologies. This seemingly democratic vision, which removes the authority (power) from lecturers to learners, disguises the implicit assumptions that underlie the vision. Democratic discourses are concerned with 'teachers' professional identity which are grounded in 'collaborative cultures' and communities of practice that are 'collegial, negotiated and they form and reform around specific issues' (Sachs, 2010: 159). This has similarities with Biesta's conceptualisation of professional identity, as both acknowledge the importance of

'teacher' reflexivity and of using this as a resource (Sachs, 2010:159; Biesta, 2009). The Advisory Group's vision is actually reflecting a managerialist discourse as it reduces the lecturing role to that of technician. This reflects what Williams called the 'emergent culture' and, within contemporary Scottish college management, the emergent culture is the:

> …recognition of the primary importance of learners and of the learning
> experience, requiring a new network of relationships among managers
> and other professional groups and with external stakeholders
> (Lowe and Gayle, 2010: 5).

Notably this statement does not mention the most obvious professional group, namely, the lecturers, which is surprising given that the context is about learners and learning; however, perhaps less so when this is considered in relation to, what the authors call, the sector's 'almost complete political invisibility' until the 1980s when the reforms of the Thatcher government began to stress the principles of 'economy, efficiency and Customer service', which were maintained by the Blair government (Lowe and Gayle, 2010: 1). The new 'focus on accountability and standards of governance and management' encouraged by the Blair government and the Scottish Executive, though in the interest of 'joined-up government', brought about a shift in focus towards the institution, with the 'organisation' being the primary agent in the 'delivery' of education rather than 'the local authority, government agency or individual professional' (Lowe and Gayle, 2010: 1). This shift towards the organisation is critical in the context of conceptualisations of Professionalism and it epitomises a neo-liberal managerial discourse that is about 'being' a business, individualisation, privatisation, market competition and the survival of the fittest. The perception that education, and specifically teaching, is defined as 'delivery' is also critical as it leads to another facet of the neo-liberal managerial discourse which is that teaching is a technical activity, a skill that is practical and that is performed and therefore can be measured; it also posits the notion of it being a service that is *delivered* to the consumer, in this case, the student and the wider society that 'needs' to be educated.

The neo-liberal policy context and the consequence of the reform of the colleges in Scotland was characterised by 'a punishing drive towards efficiency, through

incentivising individual institutions to compete for government funding and to secure other funds by finding new markets (Gallagher, 2003; cited in Lowe and Gayle, 2010: 2). Central funding was 'rewarded' on 'above average growth in levels of student activity', which led to aggressive competition between colleges to secure the largest funding pot. The colleges that did not grow, or rather, those who 'achieved average or below average growth', had their budgets cut and imposed 'efficiency gains' (McTavish, 2003; cited in Lowe and Gayle, 2010: 2). The consequence of this was that the sector produced 30% efficiencies within a four year period and the greatest pressure point was of 'resource management' (ibid). Like most organisations, the biggest and most economically expensive resource is the staff and, therefore, those most squeezed by these imposed 'efficiencies' were the staff that had to do more with less. Arguably, within an extremely resource tight environment, higher levels of competence are required by the staff to ensure that the tasks are effectively achieved. The tasks asked of the college sector, by the Government, were to be the key agents of delivering socio-economic prosperity for the nation through the LLL strategy (Scottish Executive, 2003) with its pledge to educate the socially excluded and non-traditional learners, as a means of fostering inclusion, active citizenship and an educated workforce. This important, democratic and ambitious aim sits counter with the reduction in central government funding from which it could be realised.

It is within this challenging context that the Scottish Executive launched their investigation into how the Scottish college sector, and other stakeholders, view professionalism; and, specifically, whether there was a perceived need for a professional body for college staff. The Scottish Executive's Consultation exercise, in 2004, will be analysed in Section two and will constitute the primary data for this empirical study.

1.2 Overview of the Study

This study analyses the constructs of professionalism, professional identity and status for lecturers through an investigation and close analysis of the literature and through the Scottish policy context and how that impacts upon lecturers working in colleges in Scotland. The specific policy context for analysis is firstly: the 2004 Consultation *On the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges* (Scottish Executive,

2004a); and secondly, the 2005 *Analysis* of the Consultations' respondents, including individual and group responses, as represented in the report document *On the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges*: *Analysis of Responses* (Scottish Executive, 2005a); thereafter, their impact on consequent policy directives emanating from the Consultation, as outcomes, will be assessed.

The study will be presented in five sections. The first section, will present an introduction and overview of the context for this study, which draws on an earlier study by me on the history of Scottish Education and democratic intellectualism. As part of that enquiry my research led me to investigate the particular identities and status of 'teachers' historically and within the contemporary period and across the range of educational sectors. That investigation concluded that having no single definition of teacher professionalism was problematic for teachers, especially for my research group: college lecturers. This finding compelled me to undertake this study and to explore conceptualisations of Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status for lecturers working in the Scottish college sector. I will do this through an empirical study whereby I apply critical discourse analysis to the two Consultation documents stated above.

To provide the theoretical basis for this study and as another form of context I will, in the second section, provide a critique of the literature on 'teacher' Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status and analyse how these *constructs* are conceptualised, in the twenty-first century. A critique of this literature identifies no single definition for the constructs but two main, and competing, discourses emerge; namely, Neo-liberal Managerialism and Pedagogical. These discourses are complex and need to be decoded to enable a cultural understanding.

Following from this, in section three, the study will shift from a theoretical and historical field to the close, critical analysis of the Scottish Executive's 2004 Consultation discussion paper *On the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges (2004a),* that constitutes the primary data source for this study before moving on to the analysis of the consultation through the document *A Consultation on The Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges: Analysis of Responses* (Scottish Executive, 2005a). The study will address the following research questions:

1. What is professionalism? How is this conceptualised for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland?
2. What is professional identity? How is this conceptualised for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland?
3. What is professional status? How is this conceptualised for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland?
4. In what way do conceptualisations of these constructs interface with belonging to a professional body?

The methodology I will use to elicit the answers to each of the research questions will be Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which will be applied to the two Consultation 'texts' cited above. This methodology will enable me to identify discourses and test the findings from the literature review against the specific context of the Consultation and the college lecturers working in Scotland. The Managerial and Pedagogical discourses have a range of meanings, therefore, as a framing device; I will situate these competing discourses within three domains – the personal, the occupational and the organisational. The three domain lenses will provide a way of understanding the meanings within a given context. This will provide the analytical framework for the study.

In section four, I will present the findings that emerge from this study and my analysis of the data. These are discussed in relation to their significance, in relation to the four research questions and the implications of these for college lecturers and the wider field previously discussed.

Finally, in section five, I will provide the conclusions to emerge from the study and proffer a vision for 'teacher' professionalism and specifically for lecturers working in Scotland's colleges.   These insights will lead to recommendations for the Scottish policy context in relation to lecturers and other teachers. I will also point towards future research.

Section 2: Theoretical Context and Literature Review on 'Teacher' Professionalism

Professionalism

In this section I will investigate the literature on 'teacher' professionalism, professional identity and professional status as the theoretical framework for this study. I will take each of the three constructs and discuss them individually in relation to what I perceive to be the relevant literature. I recognise that they are interrelated and that this could be construed as a false separation; however, based on my previous study I have understood that the constructs are used differently and interchangeably, therefore it is my intention to interrogate the construct to illuminate its essence. I will begin with what can be seen as an overarching concept that embraces identity and status, namely, *professionalism.*

2.1 Professionalism

It is widely recognised that there is no single definition of professionalism and other related notions, for example, professionality, profession, professional identity and professionalisation (Erde, 2008). Professionalism can be seen as a concept or idea that 'points in many different directions' (Gewirtz *et al.,* 2009: 3). The authors think that two directions are worth signalling: the first 'points in the direction of 'profession' as 'a category of occupational classification'; and the second points in the direction of 'professional virtues' described, by the authors as, 'categorizations of technical and ethical standards claimed on behalf of certain occupational roles' (Gewirtz *et al.,* 2009: 3). This conceptualisation is useful as it succinctly relates occupational roles with concomitant characteristic standards and codes of (ethical) behaviour. It can also be seen as problematic in that it signals 'the exclusionary nature of professions' and 'their claims to special status and influence over others' (ibid). Gewirtz *et al.,* (2009: 3) argue that to understand teacher professionalism it is critical to 'work with plural conceptions of professionalism' and to do this 'dialectically'. Consequently, it is important to identify lecturer professionalism by analysing lecturers' occupational role(s), the standards and codes of practice adhered to and of power relations legitimised by belonging to an 'exclusionary' body.

Analysing occupational roles for college lecturers is not as straightforward as it may be for other occupations given the diversity of roles and subject disciplines within FE. Clow (2001: 412-3) noted six different constructions of professionalism in Further Education lecturers working in the English college sector. One construction she referred to as 'ex-officio' professionalism and this construction resonates with the discussion above as it is predicated on the previous experiences and roles of the lecturer, for example, the lecturer previously being an accountant or carpenter, rather than their current experience/role as a lecturer or 'teacher'. Her study showed that lecturers strongly associated their professional identity with their occupational subject discipline, rather than their teaching/lecturing role. This has significant implications for college lecturers and perhaps explains why there is no coherent definition or agreed constructs of professional identity, status or professionalism for college lecturers (and the same could also be argued for university lecturers - see Homewood, 1998 cited in Clow 2001: 414). This diversity in types of professionalism may, as Clow indicates, lead to a fragmented workforce with no understanding of their individual and collective professional identities, authenticity and agency (2001: 417).

Increasingly, it is argued within the literature, that personal identity constructs and collective or organisational constructs of identities are misaligned and incongruous. Evetts (2009: 23) argued that 'we are witnessing the development of two different forms of professionalism in knowledge-based, service-sector work: organizational and occupational professionalism'. Organizational professionalism is what she calls the 'discourse of control' and is used by the employers and managers and is a form of managerialism i.e. it is based on bureaucratic and hierarchical structures, target setting, performance management, regulation and increased standardisation. Occupational professionalism is markedly different and is exemplified by 'discourse constructed within professional groups' and conforms to more classical definitions of professionalism which are about collegiality, autonomy, self-regulation, control over one's own work, discretion and professional ethics and codes of behaviour 'monitored by institutions and associations' (ibid). Essentially, Evetts' (2009) research highlights the tension between the two competing types of professionalism with their very different behavioural codes. Furthermore, the shift in power, control and agency from the individual professional, as a member of a professional occupational group, to that

which is located within a managerial group, who standardise work practices within a marketised, privatised and consumer orientated policy context.

Policy makers often refer to external forces shaping educational or wider public service reforms; however, Clarke and Newman (2009: 43) found that it was national political projects that were decisive in shaping reform and in 'translating international policy and political discourses into national settings'. This finding led the authors to suggest the need for 'trend spotting' in policy reform and to not assume that 'processes of reform sharing similar orientations produce the same outcomes in different places' (ibid). This observation may be relevant when drawing inferences from research into the English context and applying it to the analysis of the Scottish context; however, their argument that many of the issues and tensions surrounding public service professionalism can be encapsulated in the 'knowledge-power knot', appear to transcend geographical boundaries. They use the knot metaphor to show the 'tangled view of multiple threads' vis-à-vis the relationship between forms of knowledge and modes of power (Clarke and Newman, 2009: 44). Critical to their discussion is the contention that 'multiple forms of knowledge contest dominant professional institutionalizations' and, critically, that the public no longer accept that 'professionals know best'; this, as acknowledged earlier in this paper, has implications for how we conceptualise professionalism in the twenty-first century. Clarke and Newman (2009: 44) have used a diamond framing device to explore and analyse the dynamic relationship between the four axes: Governmental – Public, on the vertical axis and Occupational – Organizational, (see Evetts, 2009) on the horizontal axis. They say that public service professionalism is formed at 'the conjunction of occupational and organizational dynamics' and that managerialism attempts to 'construct a new configuration of power' along this axis (ibid: 45). For example, an organizational imperative might be to become 'a world leader in teaching excellence' and this is realised through competition with other providers, control of resources (including human) and developing (and monitoring) performance indicators to measure 'success'. An occupational imperative could also be to have teaching excellence but this would be framed differently and would almost certainly be articulated as contingent upon the effective relations teachers have with their students. Clarke and Newman (2009: 44) identified two key imperatives: 'autonomy' especially in being able to make ones own judgements and 'legitimacy' for public service

professionals. The latter refers to public perceptions about the role of professionals and the levels of trust in professionals, held by service users. Contemporary publicly exposed cases citing unprofessional conduct in a few medical practitioners, MPs and tabloid journalists have contributed to the public scepticism and contestation over the meaning of professionalism (Hargreaves, 2006). However, conceptualisation of the 'public' or public sphere as polarised from the 'professional' sphere needs to be reframed to incorporate democratic principles. Ranson (2003) said:

> Trust and achievement can only emerge in a framework of public accountability that enables different accounts of public purpose and practice to be deliberated in a democratic public sphere: constituted to include difference, enable participation, voice and dissent, through to collective judgement and decision, that is in turn accountable to the public (cited in Apple, 2009: xvi)

The current policy context in education and impacting upon 'teacher' professionalism combines 'at least three elements' – neo-liberalism which fundamentally supports 'private' over 'public'; neo-conservativism which supports the principles of 'discipline, tradition and real culture'; and a 'professional and managerial middle class' that support an 'audit culture' premised on 'efficiency, accountability, measurement and the constant production of evidence that one is acting 'appropriately'' (Apple, 2009:xiv). Critically, within New Managerialism, with its focus on accountability, professional performance is *measured* rather than judged (Briggs, 2005: 5). Briggs outlined, what she called, the 'core assumptions' of neo-liberal which can be categorised as centring on individual and market competition with self interest fostering 'free enterprise' (2005: 26). This application of 'market mechanisms' to education can be seen in the primacy given to, for example, parental choice in relation to their child's education, including what should be taught, or the fostering of diverse educational institutions that are pitted against one another for survival (ibid).

The dual processes of managerialism and commercialisation 'have threatened the dispositions of truthfulness, respect, authenticity and magnanimity' within universities and have undermined the fundamental principles and ethos of civic learning spaces (Gewirtz *et al.,* citing Nixon, 2009: 14). This 'New Right ideology' can be found across

the world, though it takes different forms in different countries, and is characterised by 'moral authoritarianism and economic libertarianism' which result in the 'survival of the fittest' (Briggs, 2005: 25) and 'the centralizing and decentralizing tendencies' in the neo-liberal policy directives and managerial forms of control (Menter, 2009: 221; Bartlett and Burton, 2003: 121). This dualism of 'control' (which manifests in many ways, including, accountability, prescribed curricula, monitoring, performativity) and 'autonomy' (which, within this paradigm, manifests as, for example, privatisation, 'free' market, devolved budgets) runs through the literature on teacher professionalism. This has also resulted in a clash between academic staff, whose focus is on 'student learning, concern for academic standards and professional autonomy' and their managers, with a managerial focus, on 'student throughput and income generation' and on institutional 'efficiencies' and 'effectiveness' (Briggs, 2005: 1). Menter (2009: 221) discusses this dualism as residing between 'performativity' on the one hand and 'enhanced professionalism' in teaching on the other. He cites the Scottish agreement *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century*, which led to a change in teachers conditions and the creation of the Chartered Teacher as an example of 'a much more 'balanced' approach than that seen in England' though, within the UK, it was Ireland that had placed a stronger emphasis on extended professionalism.[2] Biesta (2009) argued that autonomy was 'central to teaching because of the nature of teachers' professional knowledge'. His argument is that teaching is not merely a technicist activity; for example, delivering the curriculum, but one that involves utilising the intellect and one's knowledge and understanding to make the 'right' decisions and to find solutions that suit the context of each educational experience. Further, that 'time to reflect' on practice, knowledge and previous decisions and actions is critical for what he calls 'educational professionality'.

Critical, then, to this discussion on professionalism is the relationship between the individual professional 'teacher' and the organisation, the wider political, social and cultural environment and the policy context. The tension lies in the ways in which professional lecturers see themselves as individuals and as a collective and the ways

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[2] *Extended professionalism* refers to Eric Hoyle's (1980) term and is characterised by the teacher's concern with locating their practice within a wider educational context, through working with and evaluating the work of other teachers, and through the scholarship of pedagogy. This contrasts with *restricted professionalism* which he characterises as the teacher's concern for the immediate classroom, with no sense of belonging to the wider community or to scholarly or evaluative practices (cited in Broadfoot, 2008: 265).

in which their employers, society and the policy makers also see them, and allow them to be seen. The metaphor of the 'knowledge-power knot' and the tensions between autonomy and control or, put differently, between agency and structure, appear to be critical. So too is the recognition that professionalism is predicated on individual constructions and enactments that are usually constructed within the occupational group, but that these are mediated by organisational factors that could enable or block professional behaviour; the evidence is compelling that, within the new managerialist paradigm, professionalism is restricted. This results in the conceptualisation of professionalism as residing within the competing discourses of the *personal,* as situated within the *occupational* practices, and the *organisational*.

2.2 Professional Identity

In a literature review on teachers' professional identity, undertaken by Beijaard *et al* (2004: 107), the authors found that there was no clear definition of professional identity but that the research literature on teachers' professional identity could be divided into three categories, namely: (1) identity formation; (2) identification of the characteristics; and (3) teachers' representations in their stories or narrative accounts. From this review, the authors concluded that there were 'four essential features of teachers' professional identity': firstly, that it was an '*ongoing process'* that was dynamic and not 'stable or fixed'; secondly, that it constituted both the '*person and context*' and, therefore, illustrated that teachers will behave differently in different contexts based on their own value base and 'own teaching culture'; thirdly, that a 'teacher's professional identity consists of '*sub-identities*', again linked to the person, experience and to their relationships within a context; and fourthly, that teachers are active engagers in the process of 'professional identity formation' and it is not so much about what they have but about how they use this 'to make sense of themselves as teachers' i.e. have '*agency*' (Beijaard *et al.,* 2004: 122-3; emphasis in original).

These findings are interesting as they show that professional identity is not a thing, a list of characteristics or a set of behaviours and codes but, rather, it is a way of being that is contingent upon personal, social and cultural constructs. This distinction is important as it links to a particular view of identity that is developmental, socially and culturally mediated and is related to one's conception of 'self'. Professional identity

then is felt by the teacher and embedded in her or his behaviours. Consequently, equilibrium relies on the synergy or alignment between the teachers' professional identity and that of the institutional environment in which she or he works. Beijaard *et al.,* (2004) noted that the teachers' sub-identities should be harmonised as these are at the core of professional identity and if teachers' experience conflict, for example, 'educational change or change in their immediate working environment' it will be very hard for them to make the change. This is often interpreted by employers, managers and policy makers as resistance to change or stubbornness but the authors argue that 'the more central a sub-identity is, the more costly it is to change or lose that identity' (ibid 2004: 122) which, as said earlier, is a fundamental state of being.

This last point touches on a key theme which is the relationship between standardised behaviours – uniformity and conformity – and professional identity. In recent years there has been a move towards standardising behaviours and measuring these through competency audits. This conflicts with Beijaard *et al's.,* (2004: 114) findings that teachers' actively engage in a (life long) process of professional identity formation and it is through this that teachers can find their 'authentic and discursive self'. This self, drawing on Dillabough's (1999) work, 'arises out of complex and meaningful social interactions with peers and other 'professionals'' and not out of an instrumental and competency dominated teaching environment (Beijaard *et al;* 2004: 114).

The work of Dillabough (1999) on teacher identity and teacher professionalism is useful to this discussion as it questions core assumptions about these concepts and offers a critique from within a feminist epistemology. Her contention is that contemporary notions of teacher professionalism are grounded in a Western philosophical tradition that can be traced back to the Enlightenment period and which emphasises the constructs of 'rational man' and 'irrational women'. In her paper, Dillabough (1999) argues that it is critical to 'fully embrace the symbolic gender dualisms' as within this construction we can expose and critique state-centred views on the modern teacher. This, within the neo-liberal policy context, would be that teacher professionalism is about the 'Competent Teacher or the Standards Teacher' which stresses the notions of teaching being instrumental (about output), procedural, rational and objective (Dillabough, 1999: 378). An emphasis, then, is on the 'rational' and 'objective' representation of teachers' professional identity as a 'form of human

agency closely tied to masculinity' and of 'women's contradictory and devalued position in relation to the state' (ibid: 391). The 'principles of rationality which underlie state-centred views on the modern teacher', Dillabough argues, fundamentally results in teachers:

> no longer seen as political participants, and are once again removed from contesting the very meanings which are attributed to their professional identities in practice (Dillabough, 1999: 391).

This argument is powerful and illustrates how professional identity is politically constructed outside of the personal and practice domains of being a 'teacher' and taps into a dominant discourse about male rationality and female irrationality that assumes that the largely female teaching profession needs to be controlled and measured. Critical, too, is the notion that teachers are not seen as political participants and, consequently, able to contest this conceptualisation.

Many of the studies analysed in the Beijaard *et al.,* (2004: 115) literature review, referred to 'lay theories', which are personally constructed by the student teacher or teacher and are otherwise referred to as 'tacitly acquired understandings' or *personal* theories. Teachers' personal experiences, including childhood, and early teaching role models, all contribute to lay theories about teacher professional identity. In a study into trainee FE lecturers' professional identity formation, Bathmaker and Avis (2007) found that pre-conceived, or idealised notions of lecturer identity, influenced trainees expectations about 'how they should behave' but also led to tensions as they struggled with these idealised concepts and the contradictory reality they experienced in the role. The authors cited three theoretical frameworks as a possible way of understanding role identity formation in FE, they are: communities of practice; youth transitions and the new vocationalism; and 'vocational habitus' (ibid). All three frameworks could provide useful lenses to explore the concept of professional identity; however, the Bourdieusian theoretical concepts of *habitus* – the set of dispositions held by individuals and groups that are shaped by class, race and gender - and *field* – where habitus is located and value is attributed, in the form of *Capital* (Colley *et al.,* 2003), and as used by Colley and James (2005). These concepts perhaps provide the most illuminating lenses because of their potential to interpret the multiplicities of professional identity. Furthermore, they are conceptual tools that help

us to identify and understand complex relationships and structures.

A recent literature review by Trede *et al.,* (2011: 1) on the development of professional identities and the theoretical frameworks that advance the learning and teaching of professional identities, found that there was great variation in the field. This led the authors to conclude that this 'remarkably disparate range of theoretical frameworks', which spanned: developmental, activity theory, communities of practice and situated learning, personal epistemologies, reflective practice and social constructivism, indicated 'an underdeveloped field where there is little agreement amongst scholars' (ibid).

These findings are pertinent to this study as they will provide some insight and understanding of college lecturers' professional identity. What seems clear is that it is unlikely to be one identity but rather will be a multiplicity of identities that reflect the personal contexts i.e. that professional identity will be socially situated within occupational groups and understood relationally i.e. between individuals and groups and organisations.

Recent research in England has focused on the FE workforce and attempted to identify 'who' the lecturers are. These studies have shifted from the position of the earlier research on FE professionalism that situated it with practitioners' former occupational identity, to 'the emergence of a new 'learning professional' working across academic and vocational divisions, in a polycontextual environment' (Gleeson *et al.,* 2009:118). Gleeson *et al.,* (2009:118) argue that although there appears to be a paradigm shift towards this new learning professional within FE, that 'traditional' and 'new' practices coexist and have created a tension for the lecturer as she or he engages in the 'multi-skilled nature of FE practitioners' work, in an increasingly prescribed performance environment'. The authors, drawing on case study evidence, cite lecturers' entry to FE as a significant factor impacting upon lecturers', their employers' and society's view of lecturer professionalism. They cite 'Ruth', a lecturer in their study, as saying:

> Nobody leaves school saying, Oh I want to be a basic skills teacher.

It's something you come to via a variety of routes (ibid).

The authors speak of 'sliding' into FE, often through part-time and temporary contracts – the long interview - and involving a largely female workforce. This recruitment legacy, and the new national reforms on workforce 'flexibility', 'reinforce casualization in the sector' (Gleeson *et al.,* 2009:119) and poorer conditions of service with all its associated instabilities, inequalities, pay and status differentials. Professional identity and status is also challenged through lecturers' perceptions about their role as pedagogues. The widening access and social inclusion agendas of government and policy makers has changed the nature of teaching for many lecturers , especially those working in the English college sector. The Gleeson *et al.,* (2009: 123) study, illustrated lecturers' dismay at the shift from being 'accredited subject specialists with expertise as [for example] 'an Economist' and in being 'a lecturer' to the 'slow downgrading of their professional status as it changes to being 'a teacher' of lower status courses with a welfare function'. The distinction between lecturer and teacher here is significant and denotes the shift from high status, autonomous professional to one that is low status as it is defined by the people they teach - the disadvantaged and 'hard to teach' student. Furthermore, the creativity to teach what they know in an autonomous manner has been replaced by prescribed curricula and their effectiveness measured through their performance (not student learning) in the ever increasing audit and surveillance culture (ibid).

The Gleeson *et al.,* (2009) research concurs with Bathmaker and Avis' (2007: 516-7) findings which shows that the personal identities, histories and behaviours of students – their habitus - impacts upon how lecturers engage with their students. 'Habitus is located in the context of a particular field', with its own set of social relations and context, for example, training for work programmes, and it is here that different forms of capital (social, economic, cultural) can be located. In the case of lecturers 'teaching' disaffected youths, school drop-outs or those labelled 'hard to teach', as in the two examples cited above, any form of capital may be difficult to see and use. This is because of identity drift between the idealised and the real (the personal values, feelings and aspirations and the dichotomous professional reality) and of the very real tensions between professional agency and the underlying managerialist structural form within the college environment.

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Critical to any professional identity is the fundamental principle of autonomy and through this agency, that is, the lecturer's ability to make their own professional judgements and control their own behaviour and professional practices. From the literature, it is evident that for many this aspect of professional identity has been diminished or eroded and the perception is of not being 'allowed' autonomy at a structural level. This has resulted in the paradoxical position of the *managed professional* lecturer. Further, it individualises the lecturer and their practices and frames them within a narrow field which is essentially between the individual and her or his manager. This form of micro-management fails to recognise the multiplicities of professional identities and negates the collegiality and the formation of communities of practice.

2.3 Professional Status

It goes without saying that perceptions about professional identity and dominant neo-liberal conceptions of professionalism all impact upon the status of lecturers working in the college sector. We have seen from several research projects on the FE sector in England (Colley and James, 2005; Bathmaker and Avis, 2007; James and Biesta, 2007) examining lecturers' roles, identity and professionalism have found that morale is low and that lecturer status, both within and out with the institution, is seen as undermined. This is reflected in what Colley and James (2005) call an exodus of lecturers leaving the profession (college sector), with many of them choosing not to work in education. Lecturers and researchers have identified this lowering of morale as being linked to subject differentials, for example, academic and professional subjects having more value attributed to them than teaching 'welfare students' and/or non-accredited courses, which were widely viewed as having low status. Further, that the shift in priorities – less democratic and more business or market driven - and in Capital – the move to an audit culture - within colleges post-Incorporation has resulted in many lecturers feeling dislocated and marginalised (James and Biesta, 2007:118). This sits paradoxically with the beliefs and values held by most lecturers of the importance, personally and socially, of the teacher and learner relationship, democratic educational principles and the value of all education. It also indicates that 'good education', 'improvements' and 'good practice' are not universally agreed and, in fact, are usually heavily contested constructs (ibid: 115).

Professional status is an important concept in relation to understanding how lecturers see themselves in relation to the work that they do. The James and Biesta (2007:130) study found that many of the FE lecturers in their study reported feelings of disillusionment and there were many complaints around 'some of the key attributes associated with professional status – with pay, regimes of audit and inspection, perceived decline in resources, lack of recognition of expertise, reduced autonomy through performance management and so forth'. The work of Wallace and Hoyle (2005) has highlighted the negative impact of educational reforms on professional practices, though partly unintended, has resulted ironically in the 'managed professional' (James and Biesta, 2007: 133). Individual lecturers will respond differently to the dominant culture within the institution but essentially their 'responses can be categorised into compliance, non-compliance and mediation' (ibid). Compliance can be with good grace or reluctance – positive and negative – and Wallace and Hoyle argue that *mediation* is a more useful characterisation as it has greater complexity and variability, it can also incorporate irony and ambiguity (ibid: 133). The lecturers' response to the policy context is as 'mediating professionals' and their behaviour is what Wallace and Hoyle (2005) call 'principled infidelity' in that they don't follow the policy directives yet do this by adhering to their own professional values (ibid). This resonates with what Gleeson and Shain (1999) call 'strategic compliance' whereby the lecturers appear to work in line with the policies and procedures but in fact remain true to their own beliefs, values and practices. In this sense the identity drift is being controlled by the lecturer. In the studies by James and Biesta (2007), they found that many lecturers considered themselves to have little or no control due to being perceived as having low status due to having only temporary and fractional conditions of employment and/or because of their subject discipline or area of teaching.

The conceptualisations of professional status, like identity and professionalism, falls into two domains - the personal which in this instance is grounded in the occupational and the organisational. The personal and occupational are insider conceptualisations, that is, they are created and co-created by the individual lecturer in relation to her or his values, qualities, experience, subject discipline and observance, reflexivity and work with colleagues. Within the personal and occupational domains, the context is important as it impacts upon the ways in which teachers see themselves and value the

work that they do, as we have seen in the examples above in principled infidelity and strategic compliance where there is dissonance and misalignment between the values of the individual and the organisation. The organisational conceptualisation is an outsider perspective whereby status is relational to the context as defined by the institution, for example, the lecturer ability to be flexible or adapt the change. It is also depersonalised and lecturers are categorised – staff - and comodified. The organisational discourse conceptualises status through what the teacher has i.e. qualifications and what he or she does; of course, within this discourse what is done has to be standardised, routinised and controlled.

There is no disputing that a fundamental notion of professional status is the holding of a professional qualification. Government audits conducted throughout the UK had noted that many lecturers were not qualified to an appropriate level within their subject discipline. Furthermore, that in England, most lecturers did not hold a teaching qualification or have the requisite level of key skills (core skills). This led to national initiatives to improve the level of qualification, training and skill for lecturers working in the FE college sector. In Scotland, the qualification levels of lecturing staff were higher than those in England and more lecturers are teacher qualified; however, the Scottish Government has now legislated that: a) lecturers' subject discipline qualification should be of the highest available level (up to degree level); b) that lecturers must become qualified teachers – Teaching Qualification (Further Education) (TQFE) - within three years of their appointment (five years for part-time staff); and c) that applicants to the TQ(FE) must have the requisite core-skills qualification portfolio (Literacy, Numeracy, ICT). This Scottish requirement for college lecturers is consonant with Scottish educational values and tradition: firstly, it recognises the importance of academic qualification; secondly, it upholds the generalist education tradition exemplified by both 'breadth' and 'depth'; and thirdly, it conceptualises learning, and knowledge as transcending subject discipline boundaries through the transfer of skills and competencies. Therefore, the English and Scottish agenda for professionalising the college sector's workforce is different in form, based on current status and national imperatives. In Scotland, it is less about up-qualifying the lecturing workforce, as it is in England, and more about ensuring lecturers' fitness for practice within the generalist tradition.

One of the primary arguments in relation to the demand for a college lecturer (teaching) qualification was predicated on the notion of parity of esteem between school teachers and college lecturers. The lifelong learning agenda, with its fluidity and blurring of sectoral boundaries has made this more pertinent, though college lecturers have always worked with school age pupils in both the school and college setting; however, parity of esteem is difficult to achieve particularly as Colleges image or cultural identity is the 'Cinderella sector'. The School-College Review (Scottish Executive, 2004b) set out the scope of the collaborative arrangements and the introduction of a new curriculum framework in Scotland the *Curriculum for Excellence* in 2004 (LTScotland, no date) with its emphasis on learning through the lifecycle, especially in relation to the 14 – 19 year old students, has necessitated further collaboration between schools and colleges (Scottish Executive, 2004b). Recent government policy initiatives in Scotland such as More Choices More Chances (MC2), which was introduced to tackle the large number of Scottish school leavers who were not in education, training or employment (Scottish Government, 2006a). In England the figure for young people classified as 'socially excluded' is 10%; however, the 40% of young people who do not achieve five GCSEs at Grades A*-C are considered to have been unsuccessful in their school education (Bathmaker and Avis, 2007: 510). This group is, like their Scottish counterparts, the young people who are directed towards the college sector.

Another important initiative was the Executive's lifelong learning (LLL) strategy, expressed in their policy document *Life Through Learning; Learning Through Life* (Scottish Executive, 2003), which recognised the 'crucial part that college staff play in delivering high quality education and training…' (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 1). The authors of the Consultation document report that the LLL strategy includes an 'undertaking to **update**… the **range** and **level** of **competencies** provided for the *National Guidelines on Provision Leading to the Teaching Qualification (Further Education) and Related Professional Development* (ibid: 1). The driving narrative here is that learning is now seen as a continuum that spans the life-cycle and that colleges and, especially, college staff (lecturers) will play a critical role in delivering the education to an ever widening learner population and through a range of learning contexts. Within Scotland the policy context driving this consultation was small by comparison to its neighbours south of the border, in England.

In England, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) set out their intentions for reform of the English FE college sector in their document, *Success For All* (2002). In this document the authors set out their aims for the FE sector, one of which was to 'produce a fully qualified workforce by 2010' (Scottish Executive, 2005a: 7). The DfES set stringent targets for the sector and said that all new, full-time lecturers had to gain their teaching qualification within two years of appointment and that all new, part-time lecturers had to achieve this within four years of being appointed. This was the same for Wales, while Northern Ireland required new FE lecturers to be teacher qualified within three years of their appointment (ibid: 7). In Scotland there was no such legislation or requirement. This was perhaps because there was a perception that Scotland had a greater percentage of qualified lecturers, though 'no wholly accurate figures' relating to this were available for the period (2000-2002); however the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) in 2001-2002 suggested that the percentage of full-time lecturing staff with 'some form of teaching qualification may be as high as 84%' contrasted to the DfES figure for England which was 'around 60% of full-time and 43% of part-time lecturers (ibid: 7). In England the level of core skills (key skills) was also below expectations so national initiatives to up-skill and up-qualify the college workforce were launched. The reforms in the English FE sector were initiated to raise standards in relation to teaching and learning and it was thought that one of the ways to do that was by moving towards a fully qualified lecturing workforce.

One of the primary arguments in relation to the demand for a college lecturer qualification was predicated on the notion of parity of esteem between school teachers, university lecturers and college lecturers which, considering the lifelong learning agenda makes consummate sense. The blurring of boundaries between sectors means that career development and progression can be intra-agency/sector. College lecturers have always worked with the 14-16 year old pupil in the college setting and/or the school setting; and initiatives such as More Choices More Chances (MC2) (Scottish Government, 2006a) and the Curriculum for Excellence (LTScotland, no date) develop more links between schools and colleges there is a drive to ensure dual qualifications, or at least parity in qualification levels.

The drive to have all college lecturers qualified as 'teachers' was viewed by many as a very positive step forward. There was much debate over the relationship between

teaching knowledge and skills and subject discipline knowledge and skills at a national level, for example, by members of the Professional Development Forum for Scotland (PDF); however, ultimately, it was decided that teaching had a separate set of skills and knowledge that sits in parallel and complementary to a lecturer's subject discipline. For lecturers working in Scotland's colleges, it is considered necessary to hold dual qualifications (subject discipline and teaching), knowledge bases and skill-sets, though it is recognised that not all staff have this. Government audits conducted throughout the UK had noted that many lecturers were not qualified to an appropriate level within their subject discipline. In the Consultation paper, the Scottish Executive (2004a) acknowledged that recent policy and legislative changes had placed 'significant new demands on what college lecturers are expected to know and the teaching methods they employ' saying, that a 'fully qualified college lecturer is now expected to:

- have appropriate academic and vocational expertise or commercial and industrial experience;
- have a thorough knowledge of their subject and high-level skills not only in generic pedagogy, but also in their subject area;
- take steps to keep their vocational and professional skills and knowledge up-to-date;
- be able to address the needs of learners of all ages from 14 upwards;
- have the competence to support the literacy, numeracy, language and other basic skills needs of students;
- have the competence to address the needs of students with learning difficulties and disabilities and the knowledge to make appropriate use of specialist support services;
- be able to make effective use of ICT for teaching and learning purposes;
- be sensitive to a wide range of learning styles and confident in a number of different settings' (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 2).

In this statement, and set of knowledge and skills competencies, we can see that to be **fully qualified** lecturers have to have subject discipline knowledge (academic and experience), teaching knowledge, professional skills and core skills competency at a high level. In Scotland the SFEFC set a four year programme of monitoring the

'quality of provision in the sector' and the targets that they had set for institutions (over 80%), and the ring-fenced funding, for their staff to have the TQ(FE). As a strategic driver for the SFEFC, they had ring-fenced the staff development and CPD budget in an attempt to *'increase the number of lecturers who have a full TQ(FE)'* (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 3). However, from 2004/5 the SFEFC decided to change this funding model to one that is 'more holistic' in its *'view of staff development and gives colleges the flexibility to develop their own strategies and objectives'* but '**hopes**' that colleges *'will continue to give **high priority** to **teacher training** and **education** for lecturers'* (ibid: 3). As Chief Executive's of their business, college principals want to decide how to spend their budget and welcomed the 'freedom' to prioritise their own spending in relation to staff development and the teaching qualification. Most colleges continue to use the funding for TQ(FE) but some colleges, since the target setting and monitoring has stopped, have not used the money for this purpose and they have a large number of lecturers that are not teacher qualified. The SFEFC's policy change has enabled Principals to decide on the level and type of qualifications their staff will hold and also their CPD activities. This has had some significant repercussions for lecturing staff, in some colleges and as funding gets tighter and monitoring gets lighter, the picture will surely worsen.

Prior to the Consultation, a report was produced by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (HMIE), from their perspective as reviewers of the college sector in relation to the quality of the student learning experience. In that report, they stated that action was needed to ensure that 'teaching staff have their professional and industrial development needs addressed' (HMIE, 2004). This widens the discussion from one about qualified teacher status to one about dual qualifications, that is, subject discipline and teaching. The DfES (2007) recognised this and have stated that all teaching staff in colleges in England, in addition to their initial qualifications, should have 30 days CPD annually. They are required to keep a CPD portfolio which provides evidence of current industrial experience, membership of PBs, teaching and learning approaches/methods and learning from student evaluation (Scottish Government, 2007a).

A fundamental notion of professionalism, within what James and Biesta (2007) call the functionalist/consensus view, is characterised by holding professional qualifications

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and to be continuously enhancing/improving them; so too is belonging to a professional body. The DfES consultation on how to improve the English college sector in relation to lecturer qualification, especially in initial teacher education, concluded that a new professional body be instituted – the Institute for Learning (IfL) became the new PB in 2006. One reason for its establishment is to 'promote and support the professional standing of teachers and lecturers is the post-16 sector' (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 6). Belonging to the IfL is voluntary and is not automatic upon gaining a recognised teaching qualification but requires evidence of competence and status, as well as a registration fee. However, in 2007 the government made it a statutory duty for FE lecturers working in England to register with the IfL for CPD (Rammell, 2007).

The IfL cite a growth in membership and in their 2008-9 Impact Review report cite 195,000 members (IfL, 2009). They also report that they continue to present evidence (for example, government select committee) of FE lecturers' professional achievements and pursue parity of esteem with other professions and school teachers through qualified teacher status (QTS) being mutually recognised in both sectors, thus enabling staff transfer (IfL, 2009: 11). It is not without irony, then, that as I write, the IfL have been instructed by the English government that they will no longer be funded to fulfil their role as a professional body for FE lecturers working in England. This, despite, recognition by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) of the continued improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the teaching qualifications were made mandatory (BIS: 2012). Disputes between the Unions, lecturers and the IfL over fee charges had led many to question the IfL's legitimacy and this, in turn, led to the government's Review of 'Professionalism in Further Education' and the resulting recommendations from the Chair, Lord Lingfield (2012).

The Lingfield report recommends that the 2007 Regulations[3], which states that FE lecturers must be teacher qualified, be revoked and to remove registration requirements with the Institute for Learning. The proposal is to give the employers discretion as to what they deem appropriate qualifications and CPD for their staff. In

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[3] *The Further Education Teachers' Continuing Professional Development and Registration, England*, Regulations, No. 2116 and *The Further Education Teachers' Qualifications*, England, Regulations, No 2264 (Lingfield, 2012: 4).

effect the recommendations are to deregulate the FE sector in England. The consequences for the lecturers will lead to further deprofessionalisation and this can only have a detrimental effect on students. This latest action by the English Government (the Review was established by the Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning) consolidates neo-liberalist policies that value the private over the public, individualism over the collective and negates the personal and occupational perspectives and voice of the 'teacher' professional.

One of the difficulties facing the college sector, especially when considering parity of esteem, is its image or cultural identity. It is often hailed *the* 'Cinderella sector', which refers to the lower funding it receives compared to other sectors; however, the metaphor also indicates its status as not quite 'belonging', perhaps due to its relatively recent history and its perceived difference or 'otherness'. The UK government's drive to professionalise the FE college sector through raising the qualification levels of its lecturing staff and through curricular and managerial reforms has, in part been to bridge the gap between sectors and create parity of esteem. The introduction of a professional body for lecturers in England – the Institute for learning (IfL) – was another professionalisation initiative, though membership is optional. The 'classical' professions such as Medicine and Law have registration with their professional body as a requirement for practice; so too does Nursing, Social Work, Architecture and for school teachers, the General Teaching Council in Scotland, and soon to be so in Wales.

Membership with a professional body (PB) necessitates meeting the registration requirements and operating within a code of practice/ethics. It is also an outward statement about the professionals' fitness to practice and status. The diversity of the college sector in relation to the subject disciplines and qualifications held by lecturers makes it more difficult to see lecturers as a coherent professional group. Their relatively short history and perceptions of 'otherness' compound this difficulty. Clow's (2001) work is resonant here as she argues that individuation and a lack of coherence in the profession have led to a fragmented workforce. Therefore, belonging to a PB could be one of the characteristics of being a professional lecturer and as recognised by the individual professional and by the wider community. It is then surprising that in Scotland, following the Consultation on the need for a Professional Body, the Scottish

Government decided not to have one for lecturers working in the college sector. The Ministerial statement said that the college sector was 'not ready' for a professional body at this time (Scottish Government, 2007a); however this contention does not represent the views and beliefs of the largest group of stakeholders to participate in the Consultation namely, the lecturers, who overwhelmingly stated their desire to belong to a professional body.

As part of the Scottish Executive's (2004a) Consultation on the need for a professional body, views were sought from individual agents working in or with the college sector (Scottish Executive, 2004d). The Executive invited seven key stakeholders in the college sector to make an initial response to the Consultation Question, which was: *is there a Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges*? These were named the *'Stakeholder Platforms'. The seven Stakeholder Platforms identified* were: The Association of Scottish Colleges (ASC); The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS); The National Union of Students Scotland (NUSS); The Professional Development Network (PDN); The Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC); The Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU); and The Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC). Each were invited by the Scottish Executive to provide a short statement on their constituents' views on whether a professional body was needed for lecturers (and other staff) working in Scotland's colleges. These statements were then inserted throughout the Scottish Executive's Consultation document and were intended to *'stimulate debate'* amongst those being consulted (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 4).

The next section will investigate the reasons for the Scottish Executive's decision through an empirical study that will critically analyse the 2004 Consultation exercise *On the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges* (Scottish Executive, 2004a).

Section 3: The Study

This study will focus on the Consultation exercise; analysing the consultation document *On the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges* and individual and group responses to the consultation (Scottish Executive, 2004a). The analysis will centre on the narrative texts included therein from various key stakeholder groups referred to in the Consultation document as the *'Stakeholder Platforms'*.

There are seven *Stakeholder Platforms* in the consultation document. These seven *Stakeholder Platform* statements have been chosen as the primary data set because they provide first-hand accounts of the *Stakeholder Platforms'* views in relation to the Consultation question – on whether there is the need for a PB for staff working in Scotland's colleges – and on their conceptualisations of professionalism, professional identity and professional status. I have chosen this Consultation exercise and the consultation documents as they provide a unique opportunity to see, compare and critique the views of the stakeholders, as espoused in this public document. Furthermore, they have, as positional statements, the intention to espouse a particular view while simultaneously locating themselves within both a dominant Discourse, centred on conceptualisations of the lecturer, and other discourses, for example, neo-liberal policy context.

The questions that this study will ask are how these stakeholder statements illuminate conceptualisations, views, positions, ideologies and discourses – dominant and subordinate - on lecturer professionalism, identity and status; and how these interface with belonging to a professional body. The study recognises that the views expressed may/may not refer directly to conceptualisations of 'professionalism', 'professional identity' or 'professional status'; however, the nature of the Consultation question - on the need for a professional body - posed by the Scottish Executive, necessitates considering these constructs, even if different terms of reference are used. In fact, the choice of language used by the stakeholders is important to this study as it provides a cultural representation of how the lecturer is viewed and represented by the key stakeholders. It is also where attitudes and values are exposed and 'meaning' is created and contested. Consequently, the study will categorise the words/terms used

under the headings provided by the three constructs of Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status. Thereafter, the study will consider what the implications are for lecturers and the college sector.

Accordingly, the research questions are designed to interrogate these statements and identify and critique implicit and explicit conceptualisations. The research questions are:

1. What is professionalism? How is this conceptualised for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland?
2. What is professional identity? How is this conceptualised for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland?
3. What is professional status? How is this conceptualised for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland?
4. In what way do conceptualisations of these constructs interface with belonging to a professional body?

The methodology for this study will be Critical Discourse Analysis. This has been selected as the most appropriate methodology because of its focus on textual and narrative discourses, within a qualitative and interpretative research paradigm.

3.1 Methodology

The methodological and conceptual framework employed in this study is Discourse Analysis. The consultation document *On the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges* will be the study's primary text for analysis; however, it will be necessary to also analyse related documents and texts as they both feed in to and out from the consultation exercise and document. This approach has been chosen as it enables the researcher to analyse the language in texts – the 'talk' (discourse) – not merely as an objective entity, dislocated from context, but as a social practice or medium for interaction – 'action' – between people, and what they do. The discourse-analytic perspective allows researchers to analyse how language is used representationally i.e. culturally constructed. The cultural construction of lecturer within the discourse on lecturers' professionalism, professional identity and status is critical to this study and it is on these constructs that the analysis will focus. As previously discussed, the amorphous conceptualisation of the three constructs has been detrimental to lecturers, and the college sector; therefore, analysis of these constructs will move us towards a (re)conceptualisation.

Discourse analysis has many forms but is essentially a research methodological tool to analyse 'text', be that written or spoken and sometimes the non-verbal aspects of language; that is analysing what is not said but can be inferred from body language or inferred through the spaces between thought and 'text'. It is best understood as a 'field of research rather than a single practice' (Taylor, 2001: 5). That is because there is no one right way to undertake this research; although there are methodological and ethical frameworks of practice. This study will focus on written text, though cognisance of action that both preceded and resulted from the texts will undoubtedly provide a context, lens, or framing reference from which the texts will be interpreted. In Discourse Analysis (DA) the language used is the key to the analysis and understanding and some forms of DA focus on the language structures – syntax, grammar, semiotics – and interpret the 'meaning' from these linguistic structures. This study will focus on language as a constitutive medium and the 'site where meanings are created and changed' (Taylor, 2001: 6). This perspective views language not as a 'neutral information-carrying vehicle' but as 'a fluid shifting medium' in which 'meaning is created and contested' by the language users who are always situated within it and

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striving to make their own social and cultural positioning and understandings (ibid: 6, 9). This approach comes from one of the five core traditions and is called Critical Discourse Analysis (Wetherell *et al.,* 2001, ii).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is correct for this study because it is a methodological framework that stresses the interpretative nature of knowledge and the multiplicities of discourses within data, in this instance text. As it is an interpretative model, the text will be analysed to illuminate the symbolism of the language used - the discourse - and the values and attitudes that underpin it. CDA 'provides a way of moving between close analysis of texts and interactions, and social analyses of various types', what Fairclough calls showing how 'language figures in social processes' (2001: 229). Discourses 'define and establish what is 'truth' at particular moments' in time (Carrabine, 2001: 268).   They are 'historically variable ways of speaking of' and conveying 'specific messages' and 'central themes' (ibid: 274). This study will critically analyse textual artifacts within an interpretative paradigm that acknowledges the complex nature of the social world and that knowledge obtained by research is 'partial, situated and relative' (Taylor, 2001: 12). Partiality, situatedness and relativity are pertinent to the texts that constitute the data for this study; the authors who created the texts, the readers who interpreted the meanings within the texts, the actions that followed the interpretations of the texts. They are also relevant to me as the researcher and author of this paper.

I will do this by following the framework of cultural models as the tools of enquiry as outlined by Gee (1999). This framework and approach examines how language – words and phrases – is used and the types of meanings they have within a particular situation or context. This framework recognises that, beyond the situated meaning of the words-in-use, they also have more general meanings, storylines and theories that are 'shared by people belonging to specific social and cultural groups' (Gee, 1999: 81). Further, that these 'storylines' or 'theories', within cultural models, 'link to create bigger storylines' (ibid). This framework will lead me to read the texts and ask 'what I must assume' about the views, values, and beliefs of the people who wrote the text, be they conscious or not, implicit and explicit? Of these beliefs, what differences can I detect between the values and beliefs espoused and those effecting actions, practices and outcomes? As cultural models, how relevant and consistent are they and can I

detect dominant models or 'master models', for example, neo-liberal managerialism? Finally, I will question how these cultural models have arisen and what discourses they are creating, helping to reproduce or transform (Gee, 1999: 78).

It is critical to acknowledge myself as a socially, temporally, spatially and culturally situated person within this study as this will influence my analysis of the data. I worked in the college sector for twelve years as a lecturer and senior lecturer, with my final appointment in a management role as Head of Faculty. At the time of the Consultation *On the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges* I had recently taken up a permanent full-time appointment with the University of Dundee, after previously being seconded on a 0.5 FTE basis (2002-3). I was the person charged with responding to the Consultation document on behalf of the University. This gives me both 'insider' (as a lecturer with twelve years experience of working within the college sector) status and 'outsider' (as a lecturer working within the university sector) status and this, obviously, influenced my response at the time and continues to influence my interpretation. This history gave me a unique perspective on what it is to *be* a college lecturer, on the consultation document and exercise, and on the outcomes. Consequently, I declare my self as an agent within this study and point towards the particular lenses from which I view the data.

It is important to locate myself in this study as the methodological attitude to this type of inquiry can be referred to as 'grounded' and as a 'living theory' that questions 'what it is to know' (Drake and Heath, 2010: 36). The authors state that work in the public sector operates in an 'intensely political climate' where dominant ideologies may 'allow for little dissent, and create hegemonies for practice that can be analysed in terms of the distribution of power through networks and maintaining power' (Drake and Heath, 2010: 35). They argue that behaviours will be 'driven by political stratagem' so research is never 'clean', 'neutral' or 'objective' (ibid). Acknowledgement of this is important for the researcher who is an 'insider' in relation to the research and its validity; by positioning myself in the frame I am acknowledging my own stance and what that signifies. Validity in this type of qualitative research methodology can be substantiated by being 'credible' and through 'trustworthiness' (Wertz *et al.,* 2011: 399). It also signifies the authenticity of the research. Being reflexive and recognising where one is positioned vis-à-vis the 'prevailing political ideologies' is critical to this

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type of enquiry as 'living theories' can challenge institutional power bases and can therefore have consequences for the researcher (Drake and Heath, 2010: 36). This is less of an issue for me as I no longer work in the college sector, though I still work in partnership with the college sector. Critiquing narratives can lead to new and original understandings but this can have an impact on those who have written the text(s) and exposed their views. Questions about who 'owns' the narrative have been raised (Wertz *et al.,* 2011; 397) but the narratives I will be critiquing are all in the public domain; and were produced for that purpose. The study will demonstrate rigour through the explication of the principles, approach, and process of the analysis, and the richness of detail (Taylor, 2001: 321).

My approach has three rules. The first rule is to look for explicit and direct references to any of the three constructs – professionalism, professional identity, and professional status. Thereafter, my second rule is to identify any implicit or indirect references (other words, often adjectives that describe qualities, used as a substitution or used interchangeably) to the constructs, through close analysis of the language used. Thirdly, my rule is to analyse the meaning of the chosen terms of reference, both implicit and explicit, and to specify what it signified as a cultural model, that is, I will look at the words-in-use and investigate what types of meanings they convey, if there are discourses – dominant and subordinate – evident and if these are shared by social and cultural groups.

3.2 Data Sets and Collection

Part 1: The data will be presented initially through a brief introduction to the Scottish Executive's Consultation document *A Consultation on The Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges* (2004a) before focusing on an in-depth analysis of the seven *Stakeholder Platforms*, which were an integral part of the Consultation document and considered by me to be instrumental in signifying meanings, exposing narratives and displaying discourses, and in shaping the outcomes of the consultation. The seven *Stakeholder Platforms* are:

The Association of Scotland's Colleges (ASC);
The General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS);

The National Union of Students Scotland (NUSS);

The Professional Development Network (PDN);

The Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC);

The Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU);

The Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC);

These seven key stakeholder groups were asked by the Scottish Executive to create a short statement on the views held by their constituency in relation to: *A Consultation on the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges.* These statements were included in the Consultation document and are referred to as the *Stakeholder Platforms.* The aim of the *Stakeholder Platforms* was to 'stimulate debate' by including:

> …a number of platforms which set out the initial views of the main **organisational stakeholders** who have an interest in the subject. No editorial control has been exercised over the views expressed in the stakeholder platforms (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 4).

The Scottish Executive acknowledged that the stakeholder organisations (also referred to as representative bodies) would want to contribute to the Consultation exercise beyond the statements 'of their early thinking on the question of a professional body' and stated that:

> Making an early contribution to the debate does not, of course, prejudice the right of these stakeholders to submit more fully considered formal responses at a later date (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 4).

This Consultation document, *A Consultation on the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges,* including within the *Stakeholder Platforms*, will be named 'Document 1'.

Part 2: The data will centre on the Scottish Executive's published findings from the Consultation in their *A Consultation on The Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges: Analysis of Responses* (Scottish Executive, 2005a). This will be

presented as a continuum of the *Stakeholder Platforms* as this study will also analyse the responses of two of the same organisational stakeholder bodies (*Stakeholder Platforms)* – ASC and NUSS - in their formal written responses as part of the Consultation exercise and as represented in the Executive's findings and analysis (2005a). This will be named 'Document 2'.

In Document 2, the Scottish Executive was selective in the responses they wished to highlight in detail, discuss and analyse and I have had to work within their selections, that is, I have not had access to all of the participant responses to the Consultation but only those published in their *Analysis* (2005a). In their selection, only two organisational bodies correlated with the seven *Stakeholder Platforms* previously discussed (other *Stakeholder Platforms* were discussed in the *Analysis* document but not as fully as the ASC and, to a lesser extent, the NUSS). Consequently, I will focus my analysis on the detailed responses of the ASC and NUSS and these will be used in this study.

These responses are relevant to this study in three distinct ways. Firstly, they provide the authors of the *Stakeholder Platforms* with another opportunity to contribute to the dialogue on the need for a PB in a way that is not there explicitly to stimulate discussion or as a positioning device, though their position is clear, as was the intention of the *Stakeholder Platforms*; secondly, it enables a quasi-private response (i.e. not intended to stimulate debate but as a formal response to the Consultation question) and statement opportunities for the ASC and NUSS, and this can be used to test concordance with their initial *Stakeholder Platform*; and thirdly, it enables further analysis of the views, beliefs and value-base of the ASC and NUSS respondents in relation to conceptualisations of the three constructs – Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional status - and the four research questions (as previously outlined).

Additionally, other respondents, namely, Lecturers will also be part of this analysis and will give, largely for the first time, the practitioners' responses to the Consultation Questions. These responses will be drawn from the sample selected and provided by the Scottish Executive in their *Analysis* document (Scottish Executive, 2005a).

The table below summarises the two documents that will provide the data to be analysed as part of this study.

Document	Data Sources: Document Name	Author/Date
1.	*A Consultation on the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges.*	Scottish Executive (2004a)
2.	*A Consultation on The Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges: Analysis of Responses*	Scottish Executive (2005a)

Table 2: The Study's primary data source documents for analysis.

The seven *Stakeholder Platforms* will be reproduced in their entirety in text boxes replicating their original form in the Consultation document (Scottish Executive, 2004a). Thereafter, the method I will employ is to embolden the words and passages from the *Stakeholder Platform* that I consider to be critical in terms of an interpretation of meaning, signifying, discursive devices, positioning and representation in relation to the four research questions. I will be looking at the words explicitly used in the texts as a direct reference to the three constructs, for example, 'professionalism'. However, I will also be looking for other words – indirect references - that have an implicit meaning in relation to the three constructs and adjectives which describe their qualities. I will also be analysing their meanings.

The Scottish Executive's *Analysis* (Document 2) will be used selectively as already stated and critiqued in relation to the research questions, discourses and outcomes. I will employ the same methodology as for Document 1 and will embolden words and passages that are signifiers of meaning and discourses, as related to the research questions.

I will do this, as already outlined in the Methodology section, by following the framework of cultural models as the tools of enquiry as outlined by Gee (1999). This framework and approach enables me to interrogate the words and phrases being used and the types of inherent meanings they have, within the given context. The

framework will also enable the understanding of 'meaning' beyond the specific context and demonstrates how the language creates 'stories' and discourses within social and cultural groups, for example, employers, trade unions (Gee, 1999: 81). Further, that these 'storylines' or 'theories', within cultural models, 'link to create bigger storylines' thus transcending specific contexts and becoming overarching or dominant discourses (ibid).

This framework will lead me to read the texts and ask 'what I must assume' about the views, values, and beliefs of the people who wrote the text, be they conscious or not, implicit and explicit. Of these beliefs, what differences can I detect between the values and beliefs espoused and those affecting actions, practices and outcomes? As cultural models, how relevant and consistent are they and can I detect dominant models or 'master models', for example, neo-liberal managerialism? Finally, I will question how these cultural models have arisen and what discourses they are creating, helping to reproduce or transform (Gee, 1999: 78).

The Study's four research questions will impel the interrogation of the texts and analysis will be extrapolated from the close examination of how constructs of professionalism, professional identity and status are conceptualised by the key stakeholder organisational bodies related to Scotland's colleges and by the lecturers themselves as they respond to the Consultation questions. The organisational bodies are: Scottish Government, Professional Learning and Development Forum Scotland (PLDF), Scottish Funding Council, Scottish Trades Union Congress, Scotland's Colleges, General Teaching Council Scotland, National Union of Students Scotland. This will be done by Critical Discourse Analysis of the texts, as outlined previously, and through the classification of discourses for each of the three concepts: professionalism; professional Identity; and professional status and how these constructs interface with belonging to a professional body.

What will now follow is my first analysis of the documents that are used in the study, as the primary data sources, in relation to the research questions stated above.

Thereafter, the study considers the implications of these conceptualisations for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland.

3.3 Analysis of Data

This study on how the key stakeholders related to the College sector conceptualise Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status and how these constructs interface with belonging to a Professional Body will be presented in two parts.

The first part will be my analysis of the Consultation document: *A Consultation on the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges* (Scottish Executive, 2004a) – referred to as Document 1 – in relation to this study's four research questions. The substantive analysis will centre on the seven *Stakeholder Platform* statements that are interspersed throughout the Consultation document.

The second part, as a logical extension, will centre on the Scottish Executive's *Analysis* of the Consultation and their published Report on its outcome: *A Consultation On The Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges: Analysis of Responses* (Scottish Executive, 2005a) referred to as Document 2. For the substantive analysis I will centre on the responses of two key stakeholder bodies that had previously provided their views in relation to the Consultation question on the need for a Professional Body in their *Stakeholder Platforms,* and fully analysed by me in Part 1; namely, the Association of Scottish Colleges (ASC) and the National Union of Students Scotland (NUSS). The analysis in Part 2 will also, for the first time, examine the individual Lecturers' responses to the Consultation, as presented in the *Analysis* document, and critically explore their conceptualisations about Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status and the need for a PB for college staff.

3.31 Part 1: Document 1

I will begin Part 1 by introducing the Scottish Executive's Consultation document that formed the central component of the consultation process. My reason for this is to present a brief insight into the context of the Consultation and to demonstrate the views of the Executive in relation to the Consultation question on the need for a

professional body and in relation to the conceptualisations of professionalism, identity and status, as presented therein.

Scottish Executive. (2004a) *A Consultation on The Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges.* http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/lifelonglearning/npbssc-00.asp Accessed 28.04.2011

In the autumn of 2004 the Scottish Executive launched *A Consultation On the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges*: the topic is introduced by them thus:

> Scotland's **colleges** play a **key role** in the creation of an **inclusive** and **economically** vibrant **society**. The **quality** of the **education** and **training** that they provide **depends** crucially on the **skills, knowledge and understanding of lecturers** and related support staff. If **staff** in colleges are to maintain a **high level** of **performance**, they **must** continue to **develop** and **update** both their **academic** and **vocational expertise** and their **professional learning** and **teaching skills** (Scottish Executive, 2004a:1; emphasis added).

The opening three sentences of this consultation document sets out Scottish Executive's position on the wider context underpinning the consultation exercise (quoted above) Firstly, if we look at the first sentence, we can see that the Executive views colleges as having a key role in the widening participation agenda and of inclusive teaching and learning and, further, how this underpins the social fabric (being inclusive) and economic prosperity of the Scottish society (nation). In this statement colleges, as institutions or as the locus for education, are expressed as having a powerful and dynamic role within the culture. In the next sentence, the authors are quick to use *'quality'* in relation to the education and training provided by lecturers working in the colleges. They say that this *'quality'*, especially in relation to lecturer 'performance', 'depends crucially' on lecturers having the requisite 'skills, knowledge and understanding' in relation to 'academic', 'vocational', professional' and 'teaching skills' and that these need to be continuously developed and updated. This short but

dense passage illustrates the Scottish Executive's assumptions about the contiguous relationship between effective teaching and effective learning and, further, the connection between qualifications, education, training and continuous professional development (CPD) and effective teaching ('performance'). This assumption is significant and has shaped the way that the Scottish Executive constructed the Consultation document. At the end of the first paragraph, the authors say:

> This paper **seeks views** on whether there **should** be a **professional body** which could help to **support** the **career development** of college **staff** and **raise** the **standards** of **learning** and **teaching** throughout the sector (ibid; emphasis added).

The Executive's interpretation of the role of a Professional Body (PB) is, therefore, two-fold: firstly, a PB would 'support' lecturers and other staff working in the colleges and, secondly, it would be a mechanism for the raising of standards within the educational experience for college lecturers and learners. The first part is expressed very weakly by the amorphous term 'support' and doesn't state the more usual benefits of belonging to a PB, for example, 'enhanced status and coherence as a profession' (NUS Scotland's response to the consultation) or of how society 'will expect standards to be maintained, learning and teaching to be enhanced, professional responsibilities to be clear' (GTCS response to the Consultation) (cited in Scottish Executive, 2004a; 11 & 8 respectively).

Later in the Consultation document the authors state that another driver for the consultation was 'recent legislative changes and policy initiatives' (Scottish Executive, 2005a: 6). For example, the School-College partnership agreements expressed in, *A Partnership for a Better Scotland* which outlined the Executive's plans for 14-16 year olds to 'gain access to vocational education and training', which was seen as critical (Scottish Executive, 2004b). This driver is premised on the notion of a seamless transition between the school and college sector; the recognition that the school curriculum is narrower than that of colleges; and that there are different perceptions about 'teacher' status between the two sectors i.e. there is no parity of esteem. It is clear that there are several drivers for the Consultation and, certainly, the professionalisation agenda is dominant with its impetus towards a highly qualified

workforce, which would enhance teaching and learning in colleges, but also recognising the importance of teacher status if the creation of a highly flexible and mobile workforce is to be successful.

Interspersed within the Consultation document are the seven *Stakeholder Platforms* which provide the views, values and conceptualisations of the key representative bodies related to Colleges within Scotland. I will now turn my attention to these *Stakeholder Platforms* and analyse what is said within each; the symbolism of the language and the dominant and subordinate discourses that are revealed within.

3.32 Seven Stakeholder Platforms

For the first phase of this analysis, each of the seven *Stakeholder Platforms* will be presented in full and analysed, using Critical Discourse Analysis. Using this methodology, I will select key words, that is, those words or phrases that I consider to be significant in relation to conceptualisations of professionalism, professional identity and professional status and how these relate to belonging to a professional body. I will do this by emboldening the key words and by providing a full discussion following each of the *Stakeholder Platforms*. I will look for patterns in the language used and how these represent the attitudes, values, meanings and cultural understandings of the *Stakeholder Platforms.* I will examine their choice of words and phrases looking for categories and discourses related to the four research questions and the lenses from which they are viewed.

1. Stakeholder Platform: Association of Scottish Colleges (ASC) – the Principals' group

ASC welcomes the opportunity for discussion on a professional body specifically for college staff in Scotland.

Expertise and professionalism are essential to ensure that college provision is high in quality, up-to-date in content, and flexible and responsive to the needs of students and employers. Colleges have invested a great deal in new and updated qualifications. Many college staff already have accreditation with an appropriate professional or other specialised body.

ASC supports the aim of further enhancing the professionalism and accreditation of college staff. Any new "body" should be established and owned by colleges to ensure that it remains effective and fully engaged with the work and staff of colleges. The focus should be on continuing enhancement of professional skills rather than initial entry qualifications or formalities of "registered" status.

The development of occupational standards and awards needs to be broad-based and inclusive. Any new arrangements must be open to all college staff engaged or supporting teaching, and to part-time as well as full-time staff. The new body should also be committed to raising the standing of vocational education and training.

Because of the diversity of learning needs of students, and the very wide range of specialisms in colleges, there is already a wide range of qualifications and accreditation. Scotland will need to draw on the resources and expertise elsewhere in the UK and, in particular, from the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) and its expected successor the Lifelong Learning Sector Skills Council.

Continuing professional development of staff also needs to dovetail with development of curriculum and awards of the colleges. A new body will need to work closely with existing sector bodies, in particular the Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU) and the Colleges Open Learning Exchange Group (COLEG).

(Scottish Executive, 2004a: 6).

The ASC's opening line is: *'ASC welcomes the **opportunity** for **discussion** on a **professional body**…'.* The authors have signalled that they are willing to discuss the topic but not that they welcome the idea of having such a professional body. This position is further evidenced when they state that the *'ASC supports the **aim** of further enhancing the professionalism and accreditation of college staff'* but that any *'new **"body"** should be established and **owned** by colleges to ensure that it remains **effective** and fully **engaged** with the **work** and staff of colleges'.* These two sentences expose the ASC's view which is that, of course, they want staff in colleges to be well qualified and professionally minded but that this should be controlled (*'owned'*) by college senior managers. By putting body in parenthesis they are questioning the legitimacy of any agency, outside of their control and authority, having governance with 'their' staff. This is continued in the next sentence when they say the *'focus should be on continuing enhancement of professional skills rather than initial entry qualifications or formalities of "registered" status.'*

Registered status requires adherence to professional standards and ethical codes, as agreed by the professional body. This would mean that lecturers, in accordance with the PB's codes, would self regulate their professional behaviour, identity and status, thus removing the need for this between them and their employer. It is clear in the ASC's response that they put the perceived needs of the college and students, in relation to *'raising the standard of vocational education and training'* and the introduction of any new body, before the needs of the staff. This is reflected in their concluding a paragraph which states:

> Continuing professional development of staff also needs to dovetail with development of curriculum and awards of the colleges (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 6).

It is apparent that college principals, as senior managers, express an essentially managerialist view that puts the function of the institution before the individual staff that work in and shape that institution. Staff professional development, in this context, has little to do with self-improvement and much to do with business expediency. The dominant model explicated by their platform statement is that of neo-liberal managerialism with its belief in management control over all resources including staff and the conceptualisation of Professionalism as equating with professional development – CPD – which in itself supports the notion of a deficit model i.e. staff need developed.

2. Stakeholder Platform: General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)

The General Teaching Council is the professional body for teachers in Scotland. As such one of its principal aims is to maintain and enhance professional standards. It is within that context that the GTC has always argued that there should be a professional body within the Further Education sector.

The Council has responsibility for setting entry requirements, for establishing national professional standards which ensure consistency across the whole of Scotland, for accrediting CPD Programmes that can lead to additional qualifications for teachers and headteachers as well as accrediting all programmes of initial teacher education. Over the years the Council has been closely involved in the Further Education sector most notably in accrediting all TQ(FE) courses in partnership with HMIE. In other

words, it has in place all the structures which are needed by the Further Education sector if it were to establish a professional body.

The decision to incorporate the Council's Further Education Committee into the main Education Committee was an important one. It enabled discussion of Further Education issues to be central to the education agenda thus raising the profile of the sector within the Council. We also currently have four members on the Council from the Further Education sector. One of the Council's most powerful committees – the Finance and General Purposes Committee – is chaired by a Further Education Lecturer.

This relationship between the GTC and the FE sector becomes increasingly important as we move into an educational world where increasing flexibility in the 12-18 curriculum has resulted in a wide range of FE courses being offered to pupils of statutory school age, i.e. under 16. The Council accepts that flexibility in the curriculum is desirable if we are to meet the needs of all pupils. That flexibility will only be attained if there is a mutual professional trust and understanding between the Further Education and Schools sectors.

The GTC has always believed that there is a sensible and logical course to be followed if that objective is to be met. All lecturers in the FE sector should be registered with the Council. We would argue strongly that the General Teaching Council for Scotland should be the professional body for FE lecturers in Scotland.

The Council understands and accepts that a new educational world is emerging. It is a changing world. Some things, however, will not change. Society will expect standards to be maintained, learning and teaching to be enhanced, professional responsibilities to be clear. It is that world of maintaining and enhancing standards that the GTC has inhabited for the past 40 years. It has the experience, the structure and the drive to become the professional body for both teachers in schools and lecturers in Further Education. That would be a colossal step in moving Scotland towards an integrated educational environment where lifelong learning is taken seriously. We will never achieve that if we continue to compartmentalise education.

Matthew M MacIver
Chief Executive/Registrar
May 2004

(Scottish Executive, 2004a: 8-9).

The GTCS response took time to claim their legitimacy in being not only *'the professional body for teachers in Scotland'* but an organisation that had maintained and enhanced standards *'for the past **40 years'*** and, because of its **changed**

structures, could be *'the professional body for **both** teachers in **school** and lecturers in Further Education'* (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 8-9).

The GTCS may have missed an opportunity here by not engaging fully in the debate on the need for a PB for college lecturers. Their statement assumes that a PB is desirable and say that *'the GTC has **always argued** that there **should** be a **professional body** within the **further education** sector'* but they don't say why, other than the potential for creating a flexible curriculum for 12-18 year olds, which can be seen as having more to do with the school sector that they represent. Regrettably, they used their *Stakeholder Platform* to foreground themselves and to make a pitch for the role as PB for the college sector (ibid) rather than demonstrate that they did have the expertise, knowledge and indeed credibility to represent the sector. They demonstrate this tenuous link in the statements that they have *'**four members** of the Council from the Further Education sector'* and that **one** of their important committees is *'**chaired** by a Further Education lecturer'*.

Rather than strengthening their legitimacy as a credible PB for the college sector their *Stakeholder Platform* statement actually weakens it because it shows their allegiances with the school sector. Furthermore, their statement has to be interpreted in parallel with the fact that very few college lecturers register with the GTCS even though they can. This is because most lecturers can not see any benefits in registering and have no specific locus within that body. Consequently, there is a difference between the GTCS's espoused beliefs and values and those affecting practices.

3. Stakeholder Platform: National Union of Students Scotland (NUSS)

> NUS Scotland welcomes this consultation on developing a professional body for FE lecturers. Teaching, whether in schools or in the tertiary sector, is a responsible and complex vocation. It is important that those involved in teaching are confident in that role, and are competent to teach. It is also important to recognise that the skills required for the role are not limited to 'teaching' itself, but also pastoral care, equalities awareness, and numerous other responsibilities relating to students' welfare.
>
> All teaching, whether delivered in a school, college or university should reflect certain standards of delivery and competence. We do not dispute that there are many very skilled teaching staff in Scottish colleges, or that

the Teaching Qualification for Further Education (TQFE) is a robust standard. However, it is not mandatory, nor is there a time limit within which these professional skills should be learned.

NUS Scotland recognises that there are difficulties in expecting all part-time teaching staff to obtain the same level of qualification as full-time staff. Nonetheless, NUS Scotland expects all staff who train or teach students of any age to obtain certain minimum standards of competence in the processes of education.

NUS Scotland believes that membership of a professional body would give college lecturers enhanced status and coherence as a profession. It would reflect the professionalism that should be a mark of teaching in the college sector. It would also, importantly, give students and potential students a level of confidence in standards across the sector, that students can expect similar high levels of professionalism from staff in any college in Scotland.

(Scottish Executive, 2004a: 10-11).

The NUSS state that *'membership of a professional body would give college lecturers **enhanced status** and **coherence** as a **profession'*** that would *'reflect the* **professionalism** *that* **should** *be a* **mark** *of* **teaching** *in the* **college** *sector, and would give students 'a level of* **confidence** *in* **standards** *across the sector'* (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 11). The NUSS has responded in a way that highlights their primary consideration which is on the quality (*'confidence in standards'*) of the student learning experience as determined by the quality of the teaching and other **professional skills** and **qualities**, for example, *'**pastoral care'**, '**equalities** awareness'* (ibid: 11).

The NUSS response has defined professionalism for college lecturers as located within teaching but also transcending it as staff work within what they call a *'**responsible** and **complex vocation'** (*ibid: 11). They note variance across the college sector in, for example, lecturers who hold/do not hold the Teaching Qualification for Further Education due to it not being mandatory, time-framed or equitable between full-time and part-time staff.   They state their belief that membership of a PB would facilitate *'**high levels** of **professionalism** from **staff** in **any college** in Scotland'* (ibid: 11).

The dominant discourse espoused is support for the individual staff member as the key agent in the teaching and learning experience but that this consideration is afforded to all staff in a systematic, coherent and equitable way. It is implicitly attacking the piecemeal way that, for example, lecturers have access to the teaching qualification.

4. Stakeholder Platform: Professional Development Network (PDN) – staff development professionals

The Professional Development Network was formed in 2000 as a network of staff development professionals working in Further Education and as such the network concerns itself with promoting best practice in the training and development of all staff in Further Education colleges. This statement has been prepared by members of the PDN steering group and whilst trying to represent a range of views it is recognised that network members will wish to express other viewpoints as part of the consultation exercise and they are encouraged to do so.

The proposal for a professional body for the FE sector is broadly welcomed by the PDN as a means of providing a coherent framework and driver for the qualification and continuing professional development of staff. The quality and effectiveness of staff who impact on the learning process is perhaps the biggest single influence on the quality of the learner experience. A professional body would enable clear standards to be agreed and applied for the appropriate qualification and continuing professional development of staff as well as raising the professional profile of FE staff with client and other stakeholder groups.

Many issues remain to be addressed with regard to the nature and operation of a professional body. However, the need for a flexible and broad based approach that can accommodate a range of membership groups and levels would best reflect the developing needs of the sector. As it is unlikely that a sufficiently consistent impetus towards the development of a professional workforce across the whole sector could be achieved from a wholly voluntary model the need for registration and requirements for continuing membership also need to be considered. By providing support for the professional development of staff it is envisaged that a professional body would promote best practice in the interests of staff and learners alike.

(Scottish Executive, 2004a: 12-13).

The PDN says that they *'broadly'* welcome a PB for the FE sector as a *'means of providing a **coherent framework** and **driver** for the **qualification** and **continuing***

***professional development** of staff'* (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 13). Not surprisingly, their focus is on education and training, but it's interesting to note that they think that a PB would provide a *'coherent framework'*, which presumably they consider is missing.

Like the NUSS, they assume that ***'quality** and **effectiveness** of **staff'***…is *'the **biggest** single **influence** on the **quality** of the **learner experience'*** (ibid: 13). They are also agreed on the role that a PB would have in ensuring *'clear **standards'***, *'appropriate **qualification'*** and in *'**raising** the **professional profile** of FE staff'* (ibid: 13). Furthermore, they also state that such a body would need to be mandatory to develop a *'**professional workforce** across the **whole sector'***… and to be the locus for *'registration'* and *'continuing **membership'***… and to *'promote **best practice** in the interests of **staff** and **learners** alike'* (ibid: 13). This reflects a pedagogical discourse that focuses on occupational factors.

The last two stakeholder groups have viewed professionalism as defined by adherence to a coherent qualification structure that delineates competencies, skills and qualities to an appropriate and agreed standard and that this should be regulated through staffs' membership of a PB. This is about staff as a *'workforce'* not as individuals.

5. Stakeholder Platform: The Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) - now SFC

SFEFC has consistently identified staff development and professional qualifications as key drivers for its policy of promoting continuing quality improvement in the FE sector. From 2001-02 until 2003-04, SFEFC set sector-wide targets for achievement of TQFE, and allocated £2.75M p.a. to colleges to support staff development. We have supported the creation of new Professional Development Awards, and of learning support materials for existing PDAs, in order to support colleges in making greater use of these awards. Recently, we commissioned the Professional Development Network to conduct a 'gap analysis' to identify areas where there is a shortage of national staff development provision, and we are funding a project to create a CPD toolkit for colleges.

The Council no longer sets specific targets for TQFE. Instead, we look to each college to develop and implement a holistic approach to staff development which addresses the professional and vocational skills needed

by all staff, including the need for CPD for experienced teachers. This approach is encapsulated in our new Corporate Plan target which aims to ensure that "All teaching staff…are professionally competent, not only in their discipline, but also in teaching skills", and by the introduction of a revised quality framework for HMIE review which gives greater emphasis to college policies for development of all staff.

The Council welcomes the Scottish Executive's consultation on a professional body since it will enable the sector to consider how best to deal with the important issues of initial and continuing professional education for FE staff. The Council believes that colleges themselves are best placed to take decisions on staff development, and we would give significant weight to the views of college managers on these issues. We will wish to work constructively with whatever body may be created as a result of this consultation, in order to support the sector's continuing development.

(Scottish Executive, 2004a: 15).

The SFEFC state their position as an organisation that has driven policy and quality improvement in the FE sector through funding *'staff development and professional qualifications'* and by setting *'sector-wide targets for achievement of TQFE'* (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 15). Like the preceding two stakeholder groups, the SFEFC stress **professional competence** and **qualifications** as being critically important, but they also differentiate between *'teaching skills'* and competence and qualification and *'in their own discipline'* (ibid: 15).

The SFEFC, see the utility of a PB is in its ability to help the sector *'deal with the important issues of initial and continuing professional education for FE staff'* but, like the ASC, they believe that the colleges, especially their managers, *'are best placed to take decisions on staff development'* (ibid: 15). This can be viewed as acceptable because they have restricted the parameters of professionalism to staff development and qualification, that is, about skills and competences. This view fits within a managerialist model.

6. Stakeholder Platform: Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU) – now Scotland's Colleges

The Scottish Further Education Unit welcomes the opportunity for discussion on how to further enhance professionalism in Scotland's

colleges.

SFEU supports college staff at national and college level in addressing the key changes in policy, legislation, technology and pedagogy. It works in collaboration with all the major college sector stakeholders. Support takes the form of workshops, conferences, publications, research, the development of standards, the sharing of good practice and the operation of subject and functional networks. Activity is shaped by a mix of specialist contribution from SFEU staff, many of whom are from colleges, and the practitioner advisory groups which oversee specific projects.

The college sector in Scotland is small but complex and has a dynamic culture of continuing professional development. It has limited resources of time, money, and staff on which to draw. Structures already exist for the professional development of college staff who teach or support learning and they work well. It is vital to avoid inadvertently introducing new barriers to the recruitment, retention, and professional advancement of staff.

If there is to be a new professional body, it must be:

- suited to the needs of colleges in the 21st century
- open to all staff employed within colleges and
- shaped and governed by colleges themselves.

It must also create a clear, flexible framework for professional development which:

- offers a wider range of opportunities for staff
- ensures direct involvement of college practitioners
- draws on the new approaches to lifelong learning and professional development in which Scotland is already a leader and
- contributes to and benefits from new thinking and occupational standards at UK level.

SFEU is – and will remain – one of the sector's principal strategic resources for advancing and sharing new approaches and best practice in developing college staff and practices.

SFEU will play a major part in any reconfiguration of professional development in Scotland which results from this consultation and in related initiatives such as the new Lifelong Learning Sector Skills Council for the UK.

(Scottish Executive, 2004a: 16-17).

The response from SFEU is interesting in that it rarely directly addresses the primary issue of the Consultation, which is on the perceived need of a PB for the college sector. I think that this can be explained by the statement towards the end of their response which states: *'SFEU is – and will remain – one of the sector's principal strategic resources for advancing and sharing new approaches and best practice in developing college staff and practices'* (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 16). This rather long-winded sentence has several key facets. Firstly, they set out their premier position as the main agency involved in continuing professional development (CPD) for the college sector - *'is'* and *'will remain'* the *'principal'* – and in doing so they undermine the need for the introduction of another body. They say they welcome the opportunity to discuss *'how to further enhance professionalism in Scotland's colleges'* but with *'limited resources'* and the existence of *'a dynamic culture of continuing professional development'* it is *'vital to avoid inadvertently introducing new barriers to the recruitment, retention, and professional advancement of staff'* (ibid: 16). This response illustrates their view that Scotland's colleges already have the CPD they need and, cleverly, by introducing the notion of dynamism, they position themselves as being proactive, aligned and flexible in providing CPD, and that this is within the available resource. Furthermore, if this aspect of practice was regulated by a PB then there could be implications for college managers in terms of who they could/could not employ (entry qualifications and benchmarks may be set), and/or keep in employment (CPD requirements for registration would need to be met) or promote (PBs can set standards for reaching spinal points and grades, with registration perhaps being a requirement).

The SFEU, like the ASC and the SFEFC's responses to the consultation, demonstrates a concern about colleges' losing management autonomy and governance so, not surprisingly; they have adopted a managerialist stance and interpretation of the impact of introducing a PB for college staff. The SFEU hedge their bets and say that they will *'play a major part in any reconfiguration of professional development in Scotland'*, thus positioning themselves as a credible PB should the groundswell of opinion deem one is needed by/for the sector (ibid: 17).

The STUC is Scotland's Trade Union Centre, and is pleased to contribute to the debate on the need for a professional body for FE. Representing over 630,000 working people and their families, the STUC speaks for trade union members in and out of work, in the community and in the workplace. Through our affiliates in the education sector we represent thousands of workers in tertiary education including academic and support staff.

The STUC believes that all lecturing staff in further education should be teacher trained and that registration with the GTCS should be compulsory. Therefore, we do believe there is a need for a professional body for FE in Scotland.

As more and more interaction takes place between the secondary and tertiary sectors it is vitally important that confidence in the professionalism of staff is maintained and that quality of educational provision is not undermined for financial expediency. Anecdotal evidence suggests that FE employers are reluctant to release staff to undertake TQ(FE) qualifications purely on cost grounds. The STUC believes a mandatory requirement for a teaching qualification is the only means of ensuring FE lecturers gain and maintain the expertise necessary to provide a high quality educational experience to students. The STUC commends the approach taken in England whereby all lecturers must gain a recognised teaching qualification within two years of employment and within four years if employed part-time.

The STUC believes there is a need for a common framework for the recognition of the qualifications of teachers and lecturers. This should be developed by the GTCS which has expertise in both sectors having recently completed work on the suitability of qualifications of FE lecturers for use in teaching S5/S6 pupils in schools. The STUC would favour strengthening the capacity of GTCS to ensure it would function as the professional body for both school teachers and FE lecturers, over the establishment of a separate FE body which would not have the inter-sector experience of GTCS.

(Scottish Executive, 2004a: 17-18).

The STUC set the context by stating that they represent thousands of academics and support staff working in the tertiary education sector so they are pleased to contribute to the debate. In the second paragraph they state that *'STUC believes that **all lecturing** staff in further education should be **teacher trained** and that **registration** with the **GTCS should** be **compulsory**. Therefore, we **do believe** there **is a need** for a **professional body** for **FE** in **Scotland***' (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 17).

Their rationale is that sectoral boundaries are blurring and need to blur further for the benefit of the learner. This, they consider, is especially so between secondary schools and FE colleges and therefore there is a need for confidence in the professionalism of FE lecturers if they are to undertake the teaching of school pupils. Essentially, this discourse is one about parity of esteem and the STUC are arguing that compulsory teaching qualification and registration to a PB would be a way of ensuring parity and gaining confidence. They say that **professionalism** should be **maintained** and that the **quality** of educational provision should **not** be *'undermined by financial expediency'* (ibid: 18). This tension between the unions' view of lecturing staffs' right to TQ(FE) and the reluctance by some college managements to release staff and/or support them to undertake the qualification, has been widely aired. They commend the approach taken in England *'whereby **all** lecturers **must** gain a recognised **teaching qualification** within **two years** of employment and within four years if employed part-time'* (ibid: 18).

The STUC consider the GTCS, once their remit has been widened and strengthened, to be *the* appropriate agency to function as the PB *'for both school teachers and FE lecturers'*, rather than the *'establishment of a separate FE body which would not have the inter-sector experience of GTCS'* (ibid: 18). Veiled within this response is their view that the SFEU is not the right agency to become the PB for FE lecturers, evidenced in the phrase they don't have *'inter-sector experience'* (ibid: 18). The STUC position is similar to the NUSS' position and both reflect a pedagogical discourse that stresses the importance of high quality lecturing and its relationship with high quality learning.

The seven *Stakeholder Platforms* have provided useful lenses from which to examine variant and often competing views on what is to be a professional within the contemporary college sector; what professionalism means, how identity and status are constructed and how these interface with belonging to a professional body. The ways in which the language is constituted is illuminating and the analysis of each of the *Stakeholder Platforms* has shown that the language is formed into patterns and codes that imbue meaning, values and dominant and subordinate discourses. It has also shown that the language – the words-in-use can be categorised and analysed within and outwith discourses but always understood within specific contexts. I have found

the lenses of the personal, occupational and organisational contexts to be pertinent in this study.

My analysis of the *Stakeholder Platforms* in relation to the research questions of: how notions of professionalism, professional identity and professional status for college lecturers are conceptualised and how this relates to their membership of a professional body, has led me to the identification of ten categories. These ten categories exemplify the language-in-use of the *Stakeholder Platform*s, drawing on the explicit and implicit language used in relation to the three constructs of professionalism, professional identity and professional status. The ten categories I have identified are critical for an understanding of conceptualisations of the three constructs as each category is imbued with meaning(s) that is contingent upon the context, 'voice', intent and discourse. This identification and analysis has shown the falsity of perceptions about a shared language and word use and the benignity of word meaning. My analysis has shown the criticality of context in the interpretation of language and discourse. The ten categories I identified are:

1. Qualifications

2. Standards

3. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

4. Accreditation (with a Professional Body - PB)

5. Status

6. Role

7. Coherence

8. Flexibility

9. Quality/Enhancement

10. Professionalism

These are summarised in Table 3. overleaf which also shows the *Stakeholder Platforms'* use of the category. I have constructed the table thus: Column one shows

the three constructs of Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status as they map to the ten categories. Column two outlines the ten categories that emerged from the critical discourse analysis of the *Stakeholder Platforms,* as conceptualisations of the three constructs. Column three illustrates the language used by the *Stakeholder Platforms* implicitly, that is, interchangeably with or as a substitute for the category. Column four shows the *Stakeholder Platforms* use of the category, whether explicitly stated or implicitly. Column five shows the *Stakeholder Platforms* that did not use a specific category.

Table 3: Summary of the *Stakeholder Platforms'* conceptualisations of Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status

Three Constructs	Ten Categories (explicit words for 3 constructs)	Implicit words used in relation to the 10 categories	*Stakeholder Platform* – Yes to category	*S P*–No to category
Professionalism	1. Qualifications	Teacher trained; TQ(FE)	ASC, GTCS, NUSS, PDN, SFEFC, STUC	SFEU
Professionalism Professional Status	2. Standards	Governed; occupational	ASC, GTCS, NUSS, PDN, SFEFC, SFEU, STUC	
Professionalism	3. CPD	Continuing enhancement; toolkit	ASC, GTCS, PDN, SFEFC, SFEU	NUSS, STUC
Professional Status	4. Accreditation	Registered	ASC, GTCS, NUSS, PDN, STUC	SFEFC, SFEU
Professional Status Professional Identity	5. Status	Professional workforce; level of confidence; raising the profile; standing; recognition; mutual professional trust	ASC, GTCS, NUSS, PDN, STUC	SFEFC, SFEU
Professionalism Professional Identity	6. Role	Teaching; confidence; professional responsibilities; skills; professionally competent to teach; suitability; complex vocation	GTCS, NUSS, PDN, STUC	ASC, SFEFC, SFEU
Professional Status	7. Coherence	Integrated educational environment; holistic; common framework	GTCS, NUSS, PDN, SFEFC, STUC	ASC, SFEU
Professional Identity	8. Flexibility	Broad-based; inclusive; responsive; flexible framework	ASC, GTCS, PDN, SFEFC, SFEU	NUSS, STUC
Professionalism	9. Quality	Maintain expertise; level of confidence in standards; effectiveness of staff	ASC, GTCS, NUSS, PDN, SFEFC, SFEU, STUC	
Professionalism	10. Professionalism	Professional skills; responsibilities; competence	ASC, NUSS, SFEU, STUC	GTCS, PDN, SFEFC

These ten categories were elicited through my methodological approach and the application of the three rules, as discussed in the Methodology section. The first rule was to look for explicit and direct references to any of the three constructs – professionalism, professional identity, and professional status – and the table shows that only professionalism and status were directly referenced. Thereafter, my second rule was to identify any implicit or indirect references, that is, other words, often adjectives that describe qualities, used as a substitution or used interchangeably to the constructs, through close analysis of the language used. These words and concepts are shown in Table 3 for example, the ways in which CPD was used as a symbol of professionalism. Thirdly, my rule was to analyse the meaning of the chosen terms of reference, both implicit and explicit, and to specify what it signified as a cultural model. This can be seen in Table 3 where 'flexibility' is used interchangeably with Professional Identity and how this reflects neo-liberal managerialism, which will be discussed more fully in the overview of the ten categories, in the next part.

My analysis of the implicit and explicit language used resulted in the identification of ten categories. These categories are words or concepts that are used, sometimes interchangeably, by the *Stakeholder Platforms* when they are considering and responding to the Consultation question. This has led me to interpret the categories as sub-sets of the three constructs of professionalism, professional identity and professional status for lecturers working in Scotland's colleges. Consequently, I have positioned the ten categories against the most appropriate construct (*standards, status* and *role* map with two of the constructs so are expressed thus).

Professionalism – qualifications, standards, CPD, role, quality, professionalism

Professional Identity – status, role, flexibility

Professional Status – standards, accreditation, status, coherence

I will now present an analytical discussion of each of the ten categories I identified with the intention of illuminating my interpretation of the data in relation to conceptualisations of the three constructs of Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status and how these interface with belonging to a PB; and as a means of exemplifying the significance and utilisation of each of the ten categories

within a given context, as viewed through a particular lens and within a discourse. I will discuss each category in turn in relation to the four research questions before providing a conclusive summary for Part 1.

Qualifications

This category is heavily associated with a classical definition of professionalism, for example, medicine (Hargreaves, 2006). Holding the requisite qualifications to access and be accredited by a professional body is central to this category and, further, it is also one of the main ways of excluding membership to those who don't hold the required qualifications. This can be seen as elitist and exclusionary in nature and is inherent in registration with professional bodies where the entry tariff is predicated on qualifications. However, holding the appropriate qualifications to do a job is seen by most to be a requirement; for professionals the qualification bar is set high and holding them is an essential requirement for registration and practice.

In this Consultation, being suitably qualified for the lecturing post was considered critical for six out of the seven *Stakeholder Platforms* - the SFEU being the exception. This can be attributed to their role within the sector as the organisation with responsibility for professional development, rather than qualification. In their *Stakeholder Platform* they said their role was in '**advancing** and **sharing new approaches** and **best practice** in **developing** college **staff** and **practices**' (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 16). They are saying that, for them, lecturing (staff) is about what s/he does – practice – and not about what s/he has or knows. The SFEU discuss '*continuing professional development'* but not qualification and, as the agency for the delivery of professional development, that is not surprising; however, by omitting the importance of qualifications as part of their conceptualisation of Professionalism, it could indicate their antipathy with the qualifications that are currently recommended, namely, the Teaching Qualification (Further Education) (TQ(FE). This qualification can only be delivered by one of the three universities in Scotland approved, by the Scottish Government and the GTCS, to deliver the award. The content of the qualification is underpinned by the national professional standards but the universities have control over content and delivery. The SFEU *Stakeholder Platform* makes it clear that they see themselves as the main support agency for the college sector in relation to national and individual professional development and stress their legitimacy

to this role as many of their staff *'are from colleges'.* What is evident in their statement is the 'insider' 'outsider' discourse, with them positioning themselves as insiders who know what's best for the sector. They say that a new professional body should be *'shaped and governed by colleges themselves'* and that *'structures already exist for the professional development of college staff'* and that it is *'one of the sector's principal strategic recourses for advancing and sharing new approaches and best practice in developing college staff...'* (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 16). As persuasive talk goes, this is pretty compelling – they have set out their stall as *the* agency for CPD and support for colleges and one that is poised to expand its role, should the 'sector' decide.

The SFEU view sits counter to all of the other views expressed in the other *Stakeholder Platforms*, whereby lecturers having qualifications, especially in teaching, was seen as paramount. The reasons cited by the stakeholders included: giving lecturers' parity of esteem with teachers in other sectors (GTCS, STUC); demonstrating internally and externally that lecturers across all colleges are competent to teach (NUSS, STUC); recognising that teaching knowledge and skills is quite distinct from subject discipline knowledge and skills, and that lecturers should hold qualifications in both (SFEFC). The PDN stated that a *'professional body would enable clear standards to be agreed and applied for the appropriate qualification…'* to meet with registration requirements (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 13).

In the Executive's final analysis of all of the Consultation's respondents (discussed fully in Part 2) they found that 87% expressed support for all new lecturers being required to gain a teaching qualification within a set period of time (Scottish Executive, 2005a).

Standards

'Standards' has been used by respondents to the Consultation in several ways. Firstly, standards refer to the professional or occupational standards that currently underpin the teaching qualification (further education) and are benchmarks for lecturer competence (NUSS); secondly, the term is used as a quality measurement and indicator denoting a practitioner's alignment with a standard to enable their effectiveness; thirdly, it is used as a level or rank and exemplified by the statement

'raising the standing of vocational education and training' (ASC) or *'confidence in standards across the sector'* (NUSS). In this sense the term can be used to reflect the level as an objective construct but also as it is perceived i.e. vocational education and training may be ranked by some as low level; fourthly, it relates to *'clear standards'* (PDN) suggesting both the need for them/it to be understandable; fifthly towards that clarity developing into standardisation, indicated by the word *'applied'* (PDN); and finally, it is discussed as a behaviour *'maintain and enhance professional standards'* (GTCS) (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 11, 6, 11,13, 8).

Having so many meanings and interpretations of Standards is problematic as it is not possible to compare like with like; however, what is meaningful about this is that when discussing lecturers, their lecturing role and the need for a professional body for lecturers it is evident that high professional standards are considered to be a fundamental requisite.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

It was interesting to note that the two stakeholder groups that did not specifically mention CPD in their statement were the Unions. The other groups have, at least in part, some responsibility for qualification, education, training or CPD as part of their remit, so perhaps that is the explanation. However, the STUC support continuous development of their members and the NUSS in their *Stakeholder Platform* spoke at length about lecturers being highly qualified. The distinction here is between 'initial' qualifications and training and 'in-service' professional development. The Unions are trying to establish a base-line commitment from the employers about the level and type of qualifications they should be supporting, through the SFEFC's funding for staff development. CPD is often non-certificated and delivered in-house, with a particular institutional focus. One of the debates in education is about the value of non-certificated education and, increasingly, as part of the lifelong learning agenda, certificated qualifications with credits levelled and accumulated is viewed as having more social capital. The Unions have been strong supporters of education and qualifications for college lecturers being delivered by universities. Another interpretation is that there is a difference between the 'managers' groups and the others in relation to the purpose and reasons for CPD. The managers' view is often expressed from the perspective of a deficit model i.e. staff are lacking in skills or

competences, whereas the others are viewing it as an opportunity and developmental experience that is often driven personally by the individual.

Accreditation

The SFEFC and SFEU were the two groups not to discuss this construct. Accreditation has two meanings in the *Stakeholder Platform* statements. Firstly, it refers to *registration* and membership with a professional body; and secondly, to the accreditation of specific *qualifications*, for example, the GTCS's accreditation of the three TQ(FE) programmes. The ASC discussed staff being already accredited to *'an appropriate professional or other specialised body'* but in relation to one specifically for college staff they say the *'focus should be on continuing enhancement of professional skills rather than initial entry qualifications or formalities of "registered" status'* (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 6). This position juxtaposes that of the PDN who state that a professional workforce could not be achieved *'from a wholly voluntary model'* and that there is a *'need for registration and requirements for continuing membership'* (ibid: 13). Ultimately, these polarised views reflect the contestation over who should have authority and control over lecturers' professionalism: a separate body with rights to legislate on entry requirements for lecturers entering the profession and on the requirements for continued membership of the profession would remove this control from the employers. This would have implications for college employers and the college sector as in some areas of the curriculum there are not enough people qualified to the high level that would be required to fulfil this role and so those with industry experience are employed and many of them gain higher level qualifications on the job. Many of the negative perceptions about the college sector can be attributed to this factor: college lecturing is not a graduate profession, though most of them are graduates and highly qualified. The Scottish Government has been addressing this issue over a number of years and requires college management to take full responsibility for ensuring all staff have the appropriate level and type of qualification commensurate with their role. This factor is important in relation to lecturers' and colleges' status.

Status

Earlier in this paper 'status' was discussed in relation to individual lecturers and to lecturers collectively. In the *Stakeholder Platforms* 'status' is only explicitly stated by the NUSS who argue that membership of a PB would *'give college lecturers enhanced status'* (Scottish Executive, 2004: 11). However, it is implied in the statements of others, the exceptions being the SFEFC and SFEU. The PDN use *'raising the professional profile'* and the GTCS use the same phrase in relation to the sector (Scottish Executive, 2004: 13, 8). The discussions around *'parity of esteem'* for college lecturers with school teachers, is actually about *status*. The GTCS, in their *Stakeholder Platform*, discuss this as *'mutual professional trust and understanding'* between the college and school sectors (Scottish executive, 2004a: 8). College lecturers' status is generally perceived as lower than school teachers and university lecturers both of whom have a longer history and work in sectors that are more highly funded. As institutions they are also more coherent in relation to their staff's qualifications and both are graduate professions. The ASC spoke of any new body being *'committed to raising the standing of vocational education and training'* (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 6). The STUC favour the GTCS being the PB for college lecturers as a vehicle for parity between lecturers and school teachers stating it would signal *'that confidence in the professionalism of staff is maintained'* (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 18).

In the UK vocational education is not valued as highly as academic education, unlike some of our continental neighbours. This is evidenced by the change in name from Further Education Colleges (shortened to FE; the term is still used in England) to Colleges in 2009, which can be seen as an attempt by the college sector to shake off the lower status mantle but also to make explicit that around 50% of their curriculum is at the higher education level. Status is also linked to levels of autonomy which is compromised in all three sectors with the growth in managerialism and performance management.

The literature on lecturers working in the English college sector indicates that the relentless regime of audit and inspection has reduced autonomy, self-efficacy and status through managers not recognising expertise (James and Biesta, 2007). Status

is a difficult construct to discuss in an abstract sense as it is relative, and, therefore, requires contextualisation. This is where status and 'role' conflate.

Role

The NUSS were the only group to explicitly mention 'role' but others inferred it when discussing teaching, for example the *'effectiveness of staff of staff impact on the learning process'* (PDN) or *'a wide range of FE courses being offered to pupils of statutory school age'* (GTCS) or when the STUC speak of the need for *'confidence in the professionalism of staff'* (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 13, 8, 18). Overall, there appears to be a reluctance to speak of the lecturing role as an action or attribute but it is there in the dialogues as an inference, for example, speaking of the consequences of the role of teaching on the student experience or their attainment. The effective lecturer facilitates the successful student. In the PDN's statement they endorse this view and state that *'The quality and effectiveness of staff…is…the biggest single influence on the quality of the learner.'* (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 13).

There is also a tendency to lump lecturers together as an amorphous group denied of individual agency. This is exemplified in the ASC's statement that says: *'Expertise and professionalism are essential to ensure that college provision is high quality, up-to-date in content and flexible and responsive to the needs of students and employers'* (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 6). They have chosen *'college provision'* which may be suggestive of the lecturers' role – the people responsible for providing the *'high quality, up-to-date content'* - but is far from explicit and signals a worrying objectification of lecturers as an 'invisible' mass. There is no reference to how this might be done i.e. how do lecturers teach and what makes it high quality? The statement reflects a focus on outcome and not process. Increased flexibility and changes in practices and roles has brought the English college sector into crisis as lecturers leave due to perceived intolerable role dissonance and uncertainty (James and Biesta, 2007). This is also evident in the accent put on the un-characterisable, unique, variable and diverse nature of the role of the lecturers working in the college sector, with the concomitant belief by college managements in the justification to have non-uniform and flexible staff deployment.

This can, at least in part, be seen as a contributing factor to the role confusion experienced by many 'teachers' working in the contemporary education sectors. It is important to make the distinction between role-holder and role-user as there will be differences in perceptions. Clarity around role is essential for professional working and is closely linked to identity formation. A study by Briggs in 2007 which explored the professional identities of those in middle leadership posts in further education colleges found that there were three elements within professional identity: professional values, location and role (Trede *et al.,* 2011). The importance of role within professional identity cannot be overstated as it is not only about what one does (role) but about how one feels about what one is doing – one's self-image, values, satisfaction, connectedness, beliefs and agency. The work of Paterson *et al.,* 2002 defined professional identity as 'the sense of being a professional' (cited in Trede *et al.,* 2011). This is a rather impressionistic description but concurs with what I have said previously which is that it is a 'way of being' that is contingent upon personal, social and cultural constructs. Understanding and recognising this would lead to the coherence that is needed both within and between sectors.

Coherence

Many of the *Stakeholder Platforms* said that having a PB would provide the sector with the opportunity to have a coherent framework for lecturers' professional qualifications, and CPD activity (PDN, STUC). The NUSS said that *'membership of a professional body would give college lecturers enhanced status and coherence as a profession'* (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 11). Coherence is used to speak of a systematic structure that would bring order to a rather nebulous qualifications and development situation. It is also used as an alternate for holistic i.e. that issues around professionalism – qualifications, status, behaviours – should be drawn together and considered holistically rather than in a piecemeal fashion. A professional body was considered by several of the stakeholders to be a body that could bring this coherence.

Flexibility

Flexibility is an interesting construct and is used increasingly in the literature on professionalism. It is also referred to as a 'graduate skill' that enhances employment opportunities as it is highly prized by employers – the flexible professional that can transfer knowledge and skills gained in one area to another. It's clear to see the

attraction for the employer but whether it is as attractive for the employee will depend on the context and how 'flexibility' is defined and used. Flexibility between sectors, especially the schools and colleges, is seen as important as the boundaries blur between those delivering the post-sixteen (often post-fourteen) curriculum; and as a tool to enable the migration of staff to other educational sectors. The GTCS state that this can only happen if *'there is mutual professional trust and understanding'* between sectors (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 8-9). It is clear that *flexibility* is used in the *Stakeholder Platforms* of the management groups in a specific way that is embedded within a neo-liberal managerial discourse i.e. the managers right to control their staff and use them *'flexibly'* to suit their organisational needs and demands.

Quality

Quality was discussed in several ways in relation to staff having a professional body. In the first sense it was associated with the level of confidence that students, employers and the wider society could have in lecturers, if they were registered. The argument goes that PBs have stringent registration requirements for entry and ongoing membership, therefore registered lecturers would have met this standard, which would be clear for all to recognise. The STUC and NUSS both make this point and stress the importance of it being coherent and across the whole sector and not just pockets of good practice (Scottish Executive, 2004a). Secondly, quality was used as an indicator of performance and competence, which can be linked to the Standards discussion above. Thirdly, it is used by reference to enhancement. Enhancement is an interesting quality construct as it already assumes a level of competence and that further enhancement will elevate this to another level. It also moves beyond quality as an absolute term that can be benchmarked and measured against a set of criteria or indicators to one that is more about codes of behaviour within a quality culture.

Professionalism

There is no clear definition of professionalism within the *Stakeholder Platforms* but the word is specifically used by several of the groups. The SFEU state that they welcome the discussion on *'how to further enhance professionalism in Scotland's colleges'* but not what 'it' is or how it might be enhanced (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 16). The ASC discuss the *'continuing enhancement of professional skills'* rather than a full regulatory

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body for lecturers (ibid: 6). Professionalism for them is about having the requisite skills. The SFEFC also share this view and speak of staff as being *'professionally competent'*, which for them means having the dual qualifications of subject discipline and teaching (ibid: 16). While the GTCS speak of *'professional responsibilities'* and the need for clarity around these (ibid: 9). Adopting this 'definition' of professionalism illustrates the power dynamic as it negates professionalism as operating as a social practice that is nuanced, negotiated and contextual by confining it to technical skill that can be judged and measured. The NUSS use the term professionalism twice and although they don't define what it means for them they do take a more broad-based stance and align it with the lecturers' status, role confidence, a coherent framework and high teaching standards.

The PDN and the GTCS share similar views to the trade unions in that they focus on the benefits to the lecturer of having a coherent qualifications and CPD framework. They think that a PB would raise *'the profile of FE staff'* (PDN) and make the assumption, like the other groups that lecturer quality determines learner quality, so improving the former improves the latter with benefits for all. Throughout all of the responses is a strong drive for the college sector to have high quality staff to improve learner quality. Four out of the seven *Stakeholder Platforms* were overtly in favour of having a PB. The other three – ASC, SFEFC and SFEU – **welcomed the opportunity to discuss** having a PB for the **'sector'** but did not commit to having one as an abstract or concrete idea. The underpinning reasons or rationale can be scrutinised further by analysing the written feedback from the Stakeholders in their individual (organisation) responses to the Consultation. These will be explored in Part 2.

Essentially, what these *Stakeholder Platforms* reflect is the duality between personal and collective occupational identity constructs and organisational constructs. The ASC, SFEFC and the SFEU *Stakeholder Platforms* exemplify what Evetts (2009: 23) called 'organizational professionalism' which is about hierarchical structures, target setting and performance management; what she referred to as the 'discourse of control' and is a form of managerialism used by the employers and managers. The NUSS, who adopt a more broad-based definition, are more representative of 'occupational professionalism' which is exemplified by the 'discourse constructed

within professional groups' and is very much about control over one's own work, autonomy and professional codes of behaviour and practice. Analysis of the *Stakeholder Platforms* shows a duality between the personal and collective occupational identity constructs on the one hand and the organisational and managerial identity constructs on the other. The identification and analysis of the ten categories has been significant in illuminating these different conceptualisations about the three constructs and has shown how language is used constitutively within the discourses and how these reflect dominant cultural models.

Having reached this understanding in Part 1 of the data analysis it will be useful to turn to the Scottish Executive's analysis of the Consultation - Document 2 – and to examine the conceptualisations held by the ASC and the NUSS *Stakeholder Platform* groups in their individual responses to the Consultation and, significantly, the responses and views of the Lecturing community.

We will now consider the analysis of the data in the Part 2 by turning to Document 2 – The Scottish Executive's *Analysis* of responses to the Consultation exercise.

3.33 Part 2: Document 2

I will begin Part 2 by introducing the primary data source for this: the Scottish Executive's *Analysis* of the Consultation.

> Scottish Executive (2005a) *A Consultation on the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges: Analysis of Responses.* Edinburgh: Astron. (I will refer to this document in a shorthand form as the *Analysis*)

Following the Scottish Executive's Consultation exercise in 2004 *A Consultation on the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges* (Scottish Executive, 2004a), they provided their analysis of participants' responses and findings in a document that was published in June 2005 (Scottish Executive, 2005a). This document *A Consultation on the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges: Analysis of Responses* will form the basis of the discussion and analysis in this section.

The Analysis document is pertinent because: firstly, it provides me with another opportunity to analyse the narrative from the key stakeholders in the Consultation, and this will both complement and be used as an adjunct to the narratives they provided in their *Stakeholder Platforms*. Secondly, it also crucially provides a new narrative and one that is central to this Consultation, namely the lecturers' views on how they conceptualise professionalism, professional identity and professional status and whether they perceive a need for a PB. Thirdly, it provides the Executive's analysis of the Consultation process and, through their selection and interpretation of the respondents' responses, illuminates their position and views. Further, it signals the Consultation's outcomes, as a consequence of their analysis, though not as a result of their findings - a moot but highly significant factor.

The Executive's analysis of responses to the Consultation was informed by a total sample of 242 responses of which, 201 (82%) came from individuals, 21 (9%) from colleges (at this time there was around 45 colleges so this figure represents approximately half of colleges in Scotland), 17 (7%) from other stakeholders and the remaining 3 (1%) from three representative bodies: ASC, EIS and NUS Scotland (two of which – ASC and NUSS - have previously been discussed in relation to their

contributions to the Consultation in their *Stakeholder Platforms*). My analysis of Document 2 will centre on the responses given by three groups: the ASC, the NUSS as two of the *Stakeholder Platforms* already discussed and analysed in Part 1 and the Lecturers. All three were selected and analysed by the Scottish Executive and their responses have been represented both quantitatively and qualitatively in their presentation of findings.

The Consultation questionnaire (2004c) had twenty-four questions but the key questions pertinent to this investigation are:

> Question 5. Do you support the idea of a Professional Body?
> Question 6. - 6a) If yes, what are the main advantages?
>   6b) If no, why not?
> Question 11. Should 'licence to practise' be a role for Professional Body?
> Question 12. - 12a) Yes?
>   12b) No?

In *The Analysis* the Scottish Executive are selective and focus substantively on these questions. The key questions in relation to the need for a PB are Questions 5 and 6, which explicitly ask respondents if they support the idea of having a PB for college staff. Consequently, I will centre my analysis on the ASC, the NUSS and the Lecturers in relation to those questions. The license to practise question is interesting as it is usually a function of a PB and the responses illustrate tribal and competing views.

The Analysis reports that there was **wide spread support** for a professional body with 85% of respondents agreeing that the idea of a PB was *'worth exploring further'*, which was how the language was couched in the questionnaire (Scottish Executive, 2005a: 1). The **ASC** was the **only representative body** that was **opposed** to having a professional body for college staff and they gave a full expression of their views in their response to Questions 5 and 6 of the questionnaire (two out of the sixteen topic related questions (twenty-four in total) that formed the Consultation survey questionnaire), now articulated in 'Annex A' (Scottish Executive, 2005a: 43-45).

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3.34 Analysis of individual responses to Consultation questions

This part will focus on the specific responses to the Consultation questions by individuals and individual responses on behalf of representative groups, namely, the ASC, NUSS and lecturers. This is done through analysis of their responses to questions 5. and 6.

Question 5 of the Consultation asked:
 'THE SUPPORT FOR A PROFESSIONAL BODY

 5. Do you think that the idea of a professional body - however constituted - would be worth exploring as a means of maintaining and enhancing professional standards amongst staff in Scotland's colleges (and, potentially, other providers of post-compulsory education and training)? (Note: You may wish to refer to the current consultation document for ideas on the variety of forms and functions that a professional body might assume).' (Scottish Executive, 2005a: 19).

In response to this question the ASC answered *'No'*; however, they obviously thought it important to give their rationale for adopting this oppositional stance as they made sixteen different statements (5.2 – 5.17) to substantiate their response (Scottish Executive, 2005a: 43-45). Their main objections to having a PB can be categorised thus: firstly, that the sector doesn't need another body as *'there are **already many relevant** and **active** organisations **supporting** the colleges'* (ibid: 43). The supportive function from these *'relevant and active organisations'* comes in several guises, for example, the support for college staff in relation to their teaching and subject specific skills. The ASC proposes that the Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU) is *'…**the body** that colleges have **already established** with a **mission** to **raise standards** of **practise** and to **tackle challenging operational** and **developmental issues**…'* (ibid: 44).

This is an interesting sentence as it outlines the SFEU's primary role as the agency that supports staff development in relation to teaching and learning which is overt and relates to their primary function. However, they then add another role which is to *'tackle challenging operational and developmental issues'*, which is covert and,

consequently, would need to be decoded. What are the challenges and issues to which they refer? Are they related to the staff in relation to, for example, their standard of practise? Their use of language points towards some underlying *'issues'* to which the ASC and SFEU are aware but are not explicitly stated in this context. This has the effect of creating a knowledge-power differential between the employers group and the staff about whom they refer.

In addition to this role they say that, *'**Professional standards** are **currently maintained** not only by colleges but also by the **multiplicity of professional bodies** to which staff already belong…'* (ibid: 43) this point reflects an important dynamic of the college sector (discussed earlier in this paper) namely, of the dual roles occupied by lecturers as belonging to both a subject discipline profession and in being a lecturer (teacher) in that subject discipline. The ASC highlight the lecturers' professionalism as located within their subject discipline rather than within the lecturer/ teaching role, which concurs with the literature (for example Clow, 2001); however, this conceptualisation does signal a problem for lecturers. Furthermore they referred to the standards and quality assurance systems that function within colleges and said that they have *'four major inspection regimes that work to ensure and enhance quality in colleges'* for example, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (HMIE) (Scottish Executive, 2005a: 43). This concurs with the 'Standards' and 'Audit' model of professionalism, as previously discussed in the theoretical section on Professionalism.

Secondly, they are concerned about a PB *'**limiting the range of practitioners** with current industrial experience'* being allowed to work in colleges (ibid: 43). This is most probably linked to the fact that some lecturers in, for example, the trades and crafts do not have a degree or other higher level qualifications but do have subject discipline knowledge and experience (and maybe certification). In Scotland, the responsibility for having 'appropriately' (usually identified as higher than the level you teach) qualified staff lies with colleges' senior management and the government, and this is reviewed primarily through the HMIE review process, who have a role in monitoring this and ensuring that lecturing staff continue to develop their professional qualifications and skills.

Thirdly that '**ASC believes** equally **firmly** that **registration is not appropriate** for **the sector'** they state this in relation to the introduction of a new body which they see as being about '*a **new quango'*** that is **bureaucratic**. They argue that it is inappropriate for the **college sector** *'in the same way that it would not be appropriate for **university staff'*** (ibid: 43). They make an interesting distinction between college *'sector'* and university *'staff'*. 'Staff' in the college sector are not given their individual and autonomous status but are homogenised by the ASC into the amorphous **'*sector'*** and thus made invisible. This ASC's response could be construed as paternalistic as it exemplifies an inherently controlling attitude towards the staff. This is supported by their response to Question 6b which, as a follow on question, asked:

Question 6.b. If No, why not?

The ASC said that the main disadvantages of a new PB would be '***diminution** of the **responsibilities of colleges** for development of **their** staff'* and '***compartmentalising roles** and work'* when the **colleges need** them to be '***flexible, r**esponsive and based on **team** work between **academics and other staff'*** (Scottish Executive, 2005a: 45). The perceived threat of reduced control over staff extends beyond staff development considerations and goes to the heart of a managerialist discourse which is that staff are resources that should be deployed where they are 'needed' according to the manager. It has been previously discussed in this paper that *'flexibility'* is a highly sought characteristic by managerialists but that this requirement, when applied absolutely, has led to lecturers being de-motivated and to leaving the job (James and Biesta, 2007). They also cite financial reasons for not introducing another body into the current structure, expressing concerns about how it would be *'resourced if it is to be **sustainable'*** (ibid: 44). Citing sustainable resourcing is a powerful strategy as the college sector is one of the least funded within education. By mobilising this argument the ASC give credence to their position, which is to oppose the introduction of a PB for staff, because this rationale taps into the discourse on the scarcity of resources given to/held within the college sector.

The NUSS also cite financial sustainability and the need to avoid duplication of resources but suggest that:

It may be worth investigating the creation and support of colleges **staff network** where **existing professional bodies** can work to achieve the **highest quality of teaching** for Scotland's college students (Scottish Executive, 2005: 46).

This concords with their responses to the Consultation in their *Stakeholder Platform* and emanates from their view that *'enhanced status'* and *'coherence in the profession'* would *'serve to further develop the quality of learning and teaching'* (ibid). The NUSS see the solution to a professional college workforce as being about connectedness rather than membership of a professional body *per se*, i.e. the benefits of belonging to a *network* that was in place to support and provide coherence for staff would be just as effective. The NUSS, like individual lecturer respondents to the question, support coherence in qualification levels, standards of practice in teaching and an improvement in professional standing (Scottish Executive, 2005: 8). This contrasts with the ASC's responses.

The ASC's rationale was similar to the reasons given by other 'College' respondents in the Consultation (9% of total sample), namely: *'decreased flexibility and increased audit burden'* (ibid: 11). The authors of the *Analysis* document said *'there would appear to be a **divergence** between the **views of employers** in the sector and those of **their staff'**. In answer to Question 5 only 43% of College respondents answered 'yes' in support of the idea that a professional body was worth exploring (ibid: 7). In stark contrast, analysis shows that **all** categories of **individual** respondents **overwhelmingly supported** the proposition and this equated to 91% of staff who were in favour (ibid: 7).

Individual staff responses were categorised and respondents were asked to position themselves in six given groupings – see Table 4 overleaf:

Question 5. SUPPORT FOR A PROFESSIONAL BODY *(Individual Responses As %)*

	Lecturers up to 3yrs in post	Lecturers 3 to 10yrs in post	Lecturers over 10 yrs in post	Managers	Support staff	Senior Lecturers
yes	**88**	**90**	**91**	**93**	**90**	**94**
no	12	10	9	7	10	6

Table 4: College staff's individual responses to Q. 5 of the Consultation. (Source: Scottish Executive, 2005a: 7 - reproduced Chart B2)

The table captures lecturers and support staff's *'overwhelming'* support for a professional body. It is interesting to note that the greatest support, although only marginally higher, came from promoted staff and those with a long service as a lecturer. The reasons cited by individuals for support of a PB had commonality and reflected certain themes, for example, standards, status, values, behaviour, credibility. A representative sample is given below:

> To **enhance professionalism** and **professional values**. To **improve standards** in **learning** and **teaching**. To **monitor** and **safeguard standards** in entry to the **profession**. (Manager)
> (Scottish Executive, 2005a:10).

This statement illustrates the belief that professionalism is constituted through the *values* held by professionals and is expressed pedagogically i.e. to *improve standards in teaching and learning*. It also reflects the belief in the importance of professional identity and professional role and that these should to be 'safeguarded' through regulation.

> **All professional bodies** have minimum **standards for membership** in terms of **qualifications, behaviour and experience**. Being a **member** of such an organisation would indicate that these had been met. (Lecturer 3 to 10 years) (Scottish Executive, 2005a:10).

This statement reflects the view that professionalism is about having qualifications and behaving appropriately for the role i.e. meeting the professional 'standard'. It is intrinsic and about being seen as a professional by meeting the standard in relation to qualification, role identity, behaviours and status. This use of 'standard' can be contrasted to the managerialist Standards model which is extrinsic and about the external auditing of competence. For this lecturer, membership of a PB would be a way of signalling professionalism and professional status both internally and externally.

> The **level of educational, technical and professional qualifications** required of a lecturer should be more **strictly adhered to** if the **status** of a lecturer is to be **justified**. This is particularly pertinent if there is to be closer cooperation between secondary **schools** and FE. A professional body would give **quality assurance** in this respect. (Lecturer over 10 years) (Scottish Executive, 2005a:10).

This statement reflects the view that professionalism is linked to status and parity of esteem between professionals, in this instance, with school teachers. This status would be contingent upon holding the appropriate level of qualifications and in having the appropriate educational experiences. By stressing that this needs to be *'strictly adhered to'*, the lecturer is acknowledging the diversity of qualification levels and experiences in the college sector and also that the government expectation that colleges will have appropriately qualified staff is often flouted due to skills/qualification deficits in some cognate areas. This aspect has been previously discussed in relation to the ASC's view that college managers need to have *'flexibility'* in their choice and utilisation of staff; however, there is a drive from central government in Scotland to increase the level of qualification for lecturers in their subject discipline and their teaching qualification. This can be seen in the report on staffing that emanated from the Review of Scotland's Colleges following the Consultation (Scottish Government, 2007a). It also accents the notion that status is something that is perceived both internally, by the lecturer, and externally by the students, stakeholders and the wider public. Registration with a PB was seen unequivocally as the ratification of professional status.

The ten categories that emerged from my analysis of the Consultation document, especially the seven *Stakeholder Platforms*, in Part 1, remain central to my analysis of the Scottish Executive's *Analysis* document, which formed the data for Part 2. The two stakeholder groups were consonant in their individual responses with their earlier responses in their *Stakeholder Platforms.* The Lecturers also used the categories I identified in use by the *Stakeholder Platforms*, though my analysis has shown that their meanings were reflective of their context which was seen through the lens of personal and occupational domains. The discourse present in their responses was the pedagogical and for them this equated with high professional qualifications, standards and, significantly, values and behaviours.

Section 4: Findings

There are four main findings in this study which I will initially summarise before moving on to illustrate and discuss how each relates specifically to the four research questions. The study has identified that the three constructs of Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status are conceptualised thus:

1. Clear, though differentiated, conceptualisations are located within **two competing discourses:** Neo-liberal Managerialism and Pedagogical;

2. Within the two competing discourses conceptualisations are framed by **three domain lenses:** Personal, Occupational and Organisational, and that these emphasise the centrality of context in all conceptualisations;

3. Language is used constitutively, that is, it creates what it refers to, within the two competing discourses; crucially, that utilising a 'shared' language did not result in shared meanings. Critical, in the conceptualisation of the three constructs, are **ten categories**: Qualifications; Standards; Continuing Professional Development; Accreditation; Status; Role; Coherence; flexibility; Quality and Professionalism, all with multiple and cultural meanings;

4. The context is essential to the conceptualisation of the three constructs. This study has found **three contextual factors** to be pertinent, firstly, as stated above, the three domains as lenses; secondly, the history of education within Scotland; and thirdly, the Scottish political structure and the policy context.

4.1 Summary of key findings related to the research questions for Part 1.

Research Questions

1. What is professionalism? How is this conceptualised for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland?

The research evidence points to Professionalism being conceptualised relationally within two competing discourses that can be summarised as: managerial versus pedagogical. In the *Stakeholder Platforms*, previously analysed, Professionalism is conceptualised as lecturers having the requisite *'skills'* (ASC) and *'competence'* (SFEFC) and these are calculated by the effects and outcomes they would have on the learner and are restricted to those skills and competencies that can be measured and audited. This interpretation is located within a managerial discourse that stresses control and surveillance. Conversely, Professionalism is also conceptualised as related to the lecturers' role of being a professional educator and exemplified by her or his *behaviour*, *role coherence* (NUSS and PDN), holding of esteemed *qualifications* (STUC) and the *maintenance of standards* (GTCS). This interpretation is located within a pedagogical discourse, where the emphasis is on the 'teacher' and the teaching-learning nexus.

2. What is professional identity? How is this conceptualised for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland?

The evidence has shown that Professional Identity is conceptualised as having two spheres: internal and external and these can be viewed through three domain lenses – personal, occupational, and organisational. The *Stakeholder Platforms* illustrated the view that identity was closely linked with *role* – how the lecturer is perceived e.g. the *qualifications* s/he holds and how and what s/he does e.g. *works with students* (NUSS, PDN). This conceptualisation links with the internal constructions held by lecturers and is consonant with 'ways of being' – that are embodied. This represents an internal perspective and is about *being* a lecturer i.e. this conceptualisation is the interface between the personal and the occupational domains, and is firmly located within a pedagogical discourse.

Competing with the internal and pedagogical perspective, is the conceptualisation that sees Identity not as a personal construct or as grounded within occupational practices but as fluid characteristics as, for example, exemplified in the statements used in relation to the lecturer's *'flexibility'* to be used where needed as decided by the management of the organisation (ASC, SFEU and SFEFC). This conceptualisation reflects an external perspective that is *about* the lecturer. Further, this espouses a functional view that sees the lecturer as a 'resource' and a 'commodity' and reflects the lens of the 'organisation' (ASC, SFEU, SFEFC) and, therefore, is located within a managerial discourse.

It also reflects the wider societal perspectives in Scotland in relation to perceptions *about* lecturers and expectations held in relation to their role in, for example, in delivering post-16 education, lifelong learning, active citizenship, the skills agenda and widening participation through social inclusion. This socio-political perspective can, and does, reflect the discourses of both the pedagogical and the managerialist, which is both a strength and a weakness as it requires close analysis to reveal the ways in which a 'shared' language is being used differentially and as a cultural model in the interests of a particular group.

3. What is professional status? How is this conceptualised for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland?

The conceptualisation of Professional Status in the Consultation has similarities with that of Professional Identity in that it illuminates both internal and external perspectives. These can be summarised as representing insider-outsider perspectives. In the *Stakeholder Platforms,* 'status' is only explicitly stated by the NUSS who believe that lecturers' membership of a professional body would give them *'enhanced status'.* The use of the word 'enhanced', in relation to status, is pertinent as the construct is used relationally, though for the NUSS as an insider perspective, i.e. status is embodied by the lecturer through their ways of being and the *qualifications* and *skills* they have in relation to their role of *teaching*, in this sense it is grounded within a Pedagogical discourse.

Status is also used relationally through comparison with the status of others, namely, school teachers (STUC, GTCS) and university lecturers (ASC). The decision to benchmark college lecturers' status to that of school teachers or university lecturers is relevant and reflects dominant discourses. With respect to school teachers, who are all registered with the GTCS, it is within the discourse of 'parity of esteem' for lecturers and teachers. The Scottish policy directive is towards the notion of greater and more fluid transfer of staff between sectoral boundaries. By benchmarking to university lecturers, the ASC are able to show that university lecturers do not have a professional body yet have high status, therefore questioning the need for one for college staff. However, the conceptualisation of status is more than this and mobilises the discourse prevalent within a neo-liberal managerialist policy context that holds paramount organisational autonomy and the managers' right to control 'their' environment. This conceptualisation is an outsider perspective in that it sees status as about the *sector* rather than the individual lecturer. This is exemplified in the ASC's statement that any new [professional] body should be *'committed to raising the standing of vocational education and training'* (Scottish Executive, 2004a: 6).

4.2 Discussion about the ten categories as sub-sets of the three constructs

The ten dominant categories that I identified through my analysis of the *Stakeholder Platform* statements can be grouped as shown in Table 3. (p. 129) in relation to the three constructs of lecturers' Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status, and are critical to our understanding of these ill-defined concepts as they have enabled me to drill down and to expose comprehensions – implicit and explicit – and provide a language with which to interpret and understand the multiplicities of meanings both shared and contested. It also provides a lexical framework from which to discuss the constructs.

The inclusion of the *Stakeholder Platforms* in the Consultation document are critical in that they tell a story; they also shape a discourse – this one on the need for a professional body for college lecturers – while perpetuating other Discourses – one might say dominant or overarching discourses – in this instance top-down managerialism within a neo-liberal policy context from the ASC, SFEFC and SFEU and, conversely, bottom-up resistance from the two Unions reflecting a pedagogical discourse, with the GTCS and the PDN mediating between the two discourses though

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predominately pedagogical. What is missing in the Consultation document is the voice of the lecturer and her or his discourse; however, lecturers did respond to the Consultation and the study is enriched by their views. These are expressed in Part 2 when I critique the Scottish Executive's *Analysis* of the Consultation (2005a).

The seven stakeholder group responses – the *Stakeholder Platforms* - provide a narrative that is coherent as an individual utterance and as part of a much longer and deeper discourse which reflects tribal views. Three groups: ASC, SFEFC and SFEU, represent the views of colleges' senior management as shown earlier in the analysis of the their *Stakeholder Platforms* and they all say that they welcome increased lecturer professionalism as a means of improving learner achievement and satisfaction and college quality enhancement. This focus does not see professionalism as a personal aspiration or construct for a lecturer, or as a code of ethical practice that governs behaviour. Neither does it see it as part of the lecturers' identity and status with all the concomitant emotional and social connotations. Rather, it reflects a neo-liberal managerialist interpretation of professionalism which corresponds with what Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) call 'professionalisation' which is a social and political construct that serves the interest of a particular group. In this instance, the group whose interests are being served is not the lecturers but is the 'employers' group, the senior management of colleges, their supportive agencies and funders.

The way in which this group constructs notions of Professionalism is through, for example, the qualities and behaviours of a group (i.e. the lecturers), within a 'Standards' framework and an 'Audit' culture. Professionalism, then, is judged and measured by outcomes such as, student improvement, good external reviews and by surpassing targets. This view represents a quasi-professionalism or what Hoyle (1974) called 'restricted professionalism' where the focus is on narrow practical tasks that become routinised and, critically, that do not reflect higher level thinking and autonomy (cited in Cunningham, 2008: 675). This correlates with Dillabough's (2006: 704) work where she discusses this instrumental view of the teacher as the 'Standards Teacher' and how this 'serves to constrain educational professionals' authenticity in practice'. Interestingly, HMIE (2005: 18-19) noted that only a few colleges had 'systematically' made the connection between highly qualified and high performing

staff and positive student learning outcomes, which they view as being correlated (Scottish Government, 2007). Establishing causal links between high level teacher qualification, training and performance has been difficult to evidence, in fact, evidence of the linkage between 'enhanced professionalism and pupil outcome', in international studies, was found to be 'contradictory and somewhat inconclusive (Menter *et al.,* 2010). The authors of that study, however, do acknowledge that there are research gaps in the Scottish context (Menter *et al.,* 2010).

The two trade unions both welcomed the introduction of a PB and focussed on lecturers' personal and professional status and how this enhancement would impact upon them and lead to parity of esteem with other professional teachers and upon their students' learning experiences. These stakeholder groups stressed the individual and collective identities of lecturers, as professional educators rather than as resources to be deployed to achieve targets. The holding of professional qualifications, especially the TQ(FE), was seen as essential if lecturers in the college sector were to have professional status and parity with other 'teachers'.

Both Unions discussed the Scottish context in relation to the recent changes in the English FE sector of up-skilling their workforce and through the introduction of the new PB, which they perceived to be advantageous for lecturing staff. This leads us to the fourth research question which asked:

4. In what way do conceptualisations of these constructs interface with belonging to a professional body?

The perspectives expressed in the Consultation state a willingness to explore the idea of a professional body (PB) for staff (ASC, SFEU); with only some of the *Stakeholder Platforms* in favour of actually having one (PDN, GTCS, NUSS, STUC). On the one hand, the statements expressed the view that the sector already had their own bodies to support professionalism – which was conceptualised predominately as staffs' access to CPD – and that many staff within the sector already belonged to a PB related to their subject discipline. This highlights two things: firstly, that PBs are seen as pertinent bodies for membership by professional staff working in the college (ASC, STUC); and secondly, that holding a very narrow vision of what Professionalism,

Professional Identity and Professional Status is for lecturers, namely CPD, feeds the view that this aspect – 'professionalism' - is fully addressed. Further, within the three management *Stakeholder Platforms* (ASC, SFEFC, SFEU), it also demonstrates their beliefs that all aspects of college life should be governed from within. They repeatedly stress the importance of college autonomy and the right for them to make their own decisions about staffing. This autonomy does not extend beyond the management; in fact, the converse is true for the lecturers who without a PB have little autonomy and agency, which ultimately undermines their credibility.

4.3 Summary of key findings related to the research questions for Part 2.

The findings in Part 2 concord with those in Part 1, that is, the views expressed by the ASC and NUSS in their *Stakeholder Platforms* are consonant with the views they express in their formal written responses to the Consultation question, on the need for a PB for college staff. This investigation and analysis of both sets of responses demonstrates that the views of a sample of the representative groups are stable between their public *Stakeholder Platform* statements and their individual responses and that both reflect their particular and competing discourse.

In addition to the two representative groups, Part 2 of the findings also illustrates the Lecturers' conceptualisations of the constructs and how these interface with belonging to a professional body. The findings show that these are firmly grounded within a Pedagogical discourse.

Research Questions

1. What is professionalism? How is this conceptualised for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland?

This is conceptualised, by the ASC, as being evident in the diverse work that is done [by lecturers] in the 'learning and training' within colleges and how this *'enhances expertise and professionalism in almost every aspect of Scottish life…'* (Scottish Executive, 2005a: 43). This reflects a functional view that sees the output of lecturers' teaching – student success and its impact on Scottish life – as enabling professionalism. The lecturer is the 'invisible' conduit for this.

It is also conceptualised as a construct that can be *enhanced* (NUSS) or, as they say, advanced in relation to *'skills in teaching'* and CPD opportunities. This pedagogical view is concordant with the individual Lecturers' views and one lecturer respondent explicitly stated the belief that belonging to a PB would *'enhance professionalism'* and *'improve standards in learning and teaching'* (Scottish Executive, 2005a: 10).

2. What is professional identity? How is this conceptualised for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland?

This is conceptualised, by the ASC, within a *'standards'* and *'quality'* paradigm, whereby the professional standards are evidenced by some staff belonging to subject discipline professional bodies and the rigour of the current quality assurance and inspection regimes, within colleges and the sector (Scottish Executive, 2005a: 43). Essentially, this view sees the lecturer as a cog in the quality wheel.

The Lecturers themselves view their identity as embedded within their teaching role and state that belonging to a PB would *'improve'* and *'safeguard standards'* and would result in *'quality assurance'* (Scottish Executive, 2005a: 10). The ASC and the Lecturers are using the same words – *'quality'* and *'standards'* - but are conceptualising them in different ways, as discussed in Section 3, that reflect their competing discourses of Managerialism and Pedagogical, respectively.

3. What is professional status? How is this conceptualised for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland?

Status is not directly referred to by the ASC but it is implicitly implied when they talk about *'a mission to raise standards of practise'* which indicates their perception of there being a skills deficit around the lecturing role, especially as this is in the same sentence as *'to tackle challenging operational and developmental issues'* (Scottish Executive, 2005a: 44). Again, this conceptualisation operates within a 'Standards' paradigm and within a managerialist discourse.

The individual Lecturers speak of *values*, *standards* and *'level of educational, technical and professional qualifications'* as relevant to their professional status. This evokes the feelings experienced by being in the role and the values underpinning professional practice, which fits within a pedagogical discourse.

4. In what way do conceptualisations of these constructs interface with belonging to a professional body?

The ASC have conceptualised the three constructs in a particular way that negates the lecturers' agency. In their responses they rarely refer directly to lecturers as the professional educators within the organisation. Their language is generic and homogeneous and speaks of *'the sector'* or *'colleges'*, when it is actually the lecturers and their role in the teaching and learning process to which they refer.

The ASC categorically state that there is no place for a professional body for college staff and cite financial un-sustainability and action already taken by colleges in relation to CPD and *'career development'* as their justification (Scottish Executive, 2005a: 44). Further, they say that such a body would be *bureaucratic* and, in effect, a *quango* which could *'seriously impede the work of colleges'* (ibid: 43). This latter point refers to registration (accreditation) with a PB which they say *'is not appropriate for the sector'* (ibid).

The NUSS and the Lecturers state the converse, considering a PB to *'improve standards in learning and teaching'* and *'would help to improve the quality of the student experiences at Scotland's colleges'* driven by the *'enhanced status* and *coherence in the profession'* afforded by membership (Scottish Executive, 2005a: 46).

The insight garnered from analysis of the responses of individual lecturers to the Consultation supports the interpretation of there being two competing discourses, and they are manifested as: *neo-liberal managerialism* (ASC) and *pedagogical* (NUSS, Lecturers). Both of these perspectives influence the Scottish Executive's actions following the Consultation exercise; however, the minority view that the sector should not have a PB, held by the ASC, was adopted by the Scottish Executive.

This may seem surprising, and yet it is the Principals' group that have the most influential voice, as the Chief Executive Officers of their organisations. This group is seen as being responsible for realising the government's aims of doing more with less and, as we saw earlier in Lowe and Gayle's (2010) work, have exceeded government targets, while delivering on the socio-economic and political agendas of widening access, Lifelong Learning and numeracy and literacy. However, it must be said that it is actually the staff that have realised these aims and, it has been documented, that

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leadership in colleges is patchy and often missing, though management is seen as effective in the majority of colleges (Lowe and Gayle, 2010).

In summary, the findings in Part 2 of the study concord with the findings in Part 1: namely, that conceptualisations of the three constructs - professionalism, professional identity and professional status - held by the Consultation's respondents fell into two competing discourses: neo-liberal managerial or pedagogical. That within each discourse the three domain framing lenses of the personal, occupational and organisational were critical as ways of seeing and being; thus demonstrating the importance of context as a shaper of meaning and conceptualisation. The language used within both discourses, though shared, had very different meanings that required decoding. The ten categories to emerge from the analysis of the language-in-use, by the *Stakeholder Platforms* and the Consultation respondents, are significant as they show the multiplicity of meanings imbued in certain words that these are used differentially and constitutively to convey, create and recreate specific messages, central themes and discourses. The three domain framing lenses were useful tools in this task as they enabled plural interpretations of the words, beyond the general meaning of the language-in-use, to show more specific storylines and discourses as shared by cultural groups. In this instance between the management groups and those involved in teaching/lecturing or in their support. The three constructs are conceptualised differently within the two competing discourses and this is contingent on the context. I will now present the analysis of each domain within the context of the findings that this research has generated.

In my study there is strong evidence of the prominence of the Organisational domain. *Organisational* refers to 'the discourse of control' and how this is used by employers and managers to order and control the work environment through the imposition of bureaucratic structures, micro-management, regulation and auditing, target-setting and increased standardisation of practices (Evetts, 2009: 23). This discourse is created outwith or 'above' the professional (occupational) group and locates 'power' within the management group rather than the individual professional or professional group. The 'discourse' - that which is said but also that which is not said - is informed by certain rules or patterns, assumptions that reflect the knowledge shared by a social group, and is the site where meaning is constituted. In her analysis of Foucault's

work on discourse, forms of knowledge and power, Kenway states that Foucault 'uses the term 'discourse' to designate the conjunction of power and knowledge' (Kenway, 1990: 173). The proposition here is that power and knowledge are inseparable and that power is 'imbued within knowledge' and that 'forms of knowledge are permeated by power relations' (ibid). Consequently, Foucault used the term 'power-knowledge' to show this as 'two sides of a single process' with one implying the other (ibid). Knowledge, then, for Foucault, 'is not a reflection of power relations but is immanent in them' (Kenway, 1990: 174). Further:

> It is through the discourse, then, that the social production of meaning takes place and through which subjectivity is produced and power relations are maintained. (Kenway, 1990: 173)

Different discourses produce different meanings and power 'is maintained by the mobilization of meaning, that is to say, discursively' (Knight *et al.,* 1990: 136). Within the discourse, it is not only the inclusions that 'speak' to us but also the exclusions and what that might signify and mean. This reflects the nature of discourses as historically specific signifiers (Ball, 1990). This is pertinent to the findings of this study which has clearly shown the ways in which language is used within the competing discourses to speak about conceptualisations of the three constructs of professionalism but also as constitutive in the creation of specific cultural meanings.

Earlier, I discussed the 'knowledge-power knot' as used by Clarke and Newman (2009: 43-44) as a framing device to 'understand the pressures around public service professionalism' and 'professionalism's claim to distinctive forms of expertise' and how this is contested or questioned by the public. The knot metaphor is intended to show that the relationship between knowledge and power is not 'simple, stable or singular' but is more convoluted, what the authors call a 'tangled view of multiple threads' (ibid). This metaphor and, significantly my findings in this study, recognises power as having no centre but 'rather with multiple centres' and 'productive of meanings' (Miller and Rose, 2008: 9). I have argued that power is located within the pedagogical discourse even when it is seen as subordinate to the dominant managerialist neo-liberal discourse within the policy context, especially by its supporters.

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This study has elucidated the 'organisational' discourse on professionalism by illuminating the neo- liberal, managerialist discourse espoused in the *Stakeholder Platforms* of ASC, SFEU, SFEFC. The study clarified their conceptualisation of Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status through the identification of the dominant language used by them, which I then classified into ten categories, and the specific sets of meanings therein which I analysed in full in Sections 3 and 4.

The significant categories found to be dominant within the Organisational domain and used predominantly by the employers groups (ASC, SFEFC and SFEU), in specific ways, were*: standards, quality, flexibility, CPD.*

I have analysed each of these categories in detail in Section 3 and provided their sets of meanings, as used by the *Stakeholder Platforms.* The key finding I would like to restate here is that this discourse on professionalism, identity and status is one that corresponds with the notion of *professionalisation,* which is a functionalist view that sees the lecturer as a commodity to, for example, uphold *standards* that have been set by managers and have their performance measured in relation to these imposed standards; or to be *flexible* in their role and move between the subject disciplines they teach or the employment contracts they hold. It is also evident in the shifts in relationship between the lecturer and the student (significantly, in this discourse, the student is referred to as the 'learner') which likens it more to the marketplace, with the learner as the consumer of knowledge – the customer to be served. The implications of this discourse for the lecturers is that it negates their multiple forms of knowledge and practices and assumes that professionalisation can be *done* to them.

The category 'CPD' is dominant within the Organisational domain and the perception that CPD equates to professionalism is problematic not least because if CPD activities or opportunities are available then this can be seen as meeting professional needs. Further, there is another worrying facet to this emphasis on CPD that is borne out of the belief that 'staff' need to be developed (a deficit model) and this is evidenced by the way that the 'Professionalisation Agenda' has been conceptualised and used. This is particularly so in the English FE college sector and, as discussed earlier, has been to the detriment of the lecturer thus removing individual motivation, opportunities

for reflection and individual agency in their role and in the pursuit of professional learning and development. The consequence of conceptualisations perceived through the Organisational lens is that lecturers are denied agency and their behaviours are controlled through policies, practices and structures that result in the 'managed' professional, which is in itself an oxymoron, and is predicated on compliance. The study has shown that the imposition of conceptualisations generated by an organisational lens on personal and occupational practice has resulted in misalignment and dissonance for the lecturer.

The critical discourse analysis has clearly shown that sharing a language does not result in sharing meaning, understanding or experience. This has been clearly shown in this study through the two competing discourses identified and the use therein of the ten categories. The Organisational domain, as explicated within the neo-liberal managerialist discourses of college managers' agencies, stands dichotomously with another finding of the study, namely, that of the Occupational domain.

The *Occupational* domain centres on intrinsic characteristics related to how lecturers define their role, what lecturers do in their professional practices, the autonomy they have to make judgments and (ethical) decisions, and the control that they have over their role, and opportunities for self-regulation. A focus on the Occupational domain is seen as critical to lecturers' professional practice as it has a strong emphasis on *role* and *identity* constructs which, significantly, are constructed by the actors (the lecturers) on an individual basis and as part of the collective network or professional group. This study identified evidence of the Occupational domain in the *Stakeholder Platforms* of the NUSS, STUC, PDN, GTCS and notably in the individual Consultation responses made by the Lecturers. The language pertinent to this, and classified by me into categories, is: *qualifications, accreditation, status, role* and *coherence*. A full discussion of these categories and their meanings can be found in Section 3 but I would like here to expand the discussion and demonstrate their pertinence in relation to the Occupational domain.

The Occupational domain is critical for any professional group as it is the site where professional identity, practices and knowledge is created and recreated (Evetts, 2009). This, of course, moves with time and is personally, socially and culturally

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constructed by the professional within the professional work environment in response to a particular set of conditions and problems. These factors point to professionalism and identity as being fluid constructs that are contingent upon the context.

The context is critical in shaping modes of behaviour and codes for ethical practice in relation to the particular sets of circumstances. This can be explained by the example of a professional who will often break with orthodoxies in practice, the 'rules', to bring about a satisfactory outcome (Erde, 2008). This behaviour is often referred to as exercising professional judgment and this, we have seen, is fundamental to professional behaviour. The nature of professional judgments is that they are usually made in response to non routine problems and involve high level and abstract thinking that draws on a body of knowledge and experience and used differently within a personal, social and cultural context. The dissonance felt by the 'managed professionals' (James and Biesta, 2007), discussed previously, is a consequence of not having this autonomy over their work environment and role. The study has shown that there is close association between the Occupational and the Personal domains and, within a Pedagogical discourse; the personal and occupational domains are aligned.

The third domain lens identified in this study is that of the *Personal*. This domain is strongly linked to the Occupational and is centred on identity constructs about who the lecturer is and how she or he sees themselves. The relevant *Stakeholder Platforms* in relation to the Personal domain are - NUSS, PDN, STUC – and also the Lecturers. The relevant categories I identified are: r*ole, status, professionalism and qualification*. Significantly, I also found these categories in the individual lecturers' responses to the Consultation, some of which are represented in the *Analysis* (Document 2) and discussed in Section 4. The Personal domain outlined in this study is not individualistic though individual characteristics, values, experience, qualifications – 'habitus' - inevitably shape it and impact upon its relationship with the Occupational – 'field' (Grenfell and James, 1998). The Personal domain, in relation to the three constructs of professionalism, identity and status, is centred within the individual professional and their professional networks or communities of practice that are based on collegiality. It is very much linked to the knowledge the lecturer has in relation to their subject discipline and teaching practices; it is also about being able to exercise professional judgment and to work autonomously. Earlier in the study I discussed

professional behaviour as 'a way of *being*', an internal structure, that's embodied and located within the personal domain and, in this case, the pedagogical discourse.

The personal, occupational and organisational domains are critical but so too is the wider educational, historical, political, cultural and policy context of Scotland (see Part 2 of the thesis for a full discussion of the wider contexts).

Section 5: Significance and Implications of the Findings

Firstly, in this section, I will present the actions taken by the Scottish Executive post Consultation, to continue the story, before moving on to the impact of the outcomes and the current situation. Thereafter, I will draw the study to a conclusion and will proffer a (re)conceptualisation of Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status that emerged from this study before going on to discuss the implications for policy and practice. Finally, I will outline possible areas for further research.

5.1 Legislative and Policy Outcomes Emanating from the Consultation

The outcome of the Consultation was stated by Scottish Ministers who were of the opinion that *'the time was not yet right'* to establish a Professional Body. The ministers do not give their reasons for the decision or say for whom the time is not right or the ways in which the time is 'not yet right'. In my earlier discussion in the Sections 1. and 2. I outlined the challenging context for the college sector and in Sections 3 and 4 I demonstrated that the Management groups, especially the ASC, as resistant to having a professional body for college staff. The ASC were the only representative group to categorically state 'no' to having a professional body, therefore it is safe to assume that it is this group that are 'not yet ready'. As I discussed earlier, the college sector has been charged with a demanding and socio-economically valuable mission to widen participation, up-skill the workforce and foster active citizenship through their educational programmes and initiatives. It is plausible that some arrangement was made between the Scottish Executive and the ASC and this led to the abandonment of the idea to institute a professional body. Curiously, inserting 'not *yet* ready' leaves the door open for future consideration. This decision and outcome sits counter to the groundswell of opinion in the Consultation's respondents who are in favour of having a professional body and other characteristics, such as, a register for practitioners, standardised qualifications and the opportunities for formalised professional development. Consequently, Ministers *'did approve certain recommendations that flowed from the analysis of responses to that consultation'* (Scottish Government, 2007a). The recommendations relevant to this discussion are:

1. Expanded teacher training for new lecturers

2. Better CPD for college lecturers with a minimum time being required per annum

3. A generic Code of Practice for all college staff

4. Improved training and development of learning and teaching support staff

(Scottish Government, 2007a)

The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning announced in June 2005, that following the Consultation there would be a Review of Scotland's Colleges (RoSCO). The Review would look at four distinct areas, each with a designated working group:

1. The Difference Colleges Make

2. Colleges' Strategic Futures

3. Accountability and Governance

4. Staffing, Learners and Learning Environments (SLALE)

The fourth area listed above, which focuses on Staffing, Learners and Learning Environments was known as the SLALE group. This group responded specifically to the outcomes of the 2004 Consultation given the strength of support for a PB by the lecturers, and other participants (Scottish Government, 2007a). The SLALE group's recommendations are produced in the report *The Review of Scotland's Colleges: Inspiring Achievement: The report of the Staffing, Learners and Learning Environments Group* (Scottish Government, 2007a).

The SLALE Report reflects the aspirations of a significant number of participants in the Consultation and beyond who express a desire for the establishment of a body representing the professional aspirations of staff in the FE sector and the role envisaged for such a body. The key recommendations are: administering a professional *'license to practice'*; establishing *qualification* routes; and setting lecturers' requirements for *CPD*[4]. It is difficult to assess the impact of the Scottish Executive's decision not to have a professional body for college lecturers. The studies in England have shown that there is a tenuous relationship between lecturers belonging to a Professional Body and being recognised as professionals. As we have seen throughout this study there is no simple causal relationship but a multiplicity of factors.

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[4] The qualifications route and CPD requirements have been established and implemented but there has been no move towards a license to practise. The ASC said *'No'* in response to this question, stating, *'ASC would emphatically not support a mandatory licence to practise for staff in colleges'* (Scottish Executive, 2005: 47).

5.2 Conclusion

This study emanated from an earlier one by me on the history of Scottish education where I argued that the unique characteristics of the Scottish education system were predicated on the principles of democratic intellectualism imbued in meritocratic egalitarianism and the 'generalist' tradition of breadth and depth within the curriculum (Normand, 2010 unpublished). These principles, which became fully developed in the eighteenth century and exemplify Enlightenment ideals, can still be found in contemporary Scottish university and college education, though both sectors are being challenged by twenty-first century imperatives of education within a highly competitive and marketised global economy. As part of this earlier research study I investigated the roles and status of teachers and lecturers and found that there is no clear definition of teacher professional identity and that status has fluctuated throughout history and is contingent upon the context; further, that many models of professionalism existed, often competing and temporally fixed, which I considered to be a problem for the 'teacher' on several levels – personally and collectively - and signalled the need to develop a clearer understanding of these constructs, especially within a dynamic and turbulent twenty-first century educational landscape.

Consequently, the focus of this study is to explore and analyse conceptions of Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status for lecturers who teach in the contemporary college sector in Scotland. This is done through a systematic investigation of the literature on the three constructs of 'teacher' Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status and analysis of how these constructs are conceptualised. Following from this theoretical analysis, the study shifts to an empirical base whereby I apply critical discourse analysis to the Scottish Executive's 2004 Consultation exercise *On the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges* (Document 1) (Scottish Executive, 2004a) and the Scottish Executive's 2005 analysis of the Consultation in their Report *A Consultation on The Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges: Analysis of Responses* (Document 2) (Scottish Executive, 2005a). The study is driven by four research questions and these provide the foci for the critical discourse analysis. To recap, they are:

1. What is professionalism? How is this conceptualised for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland?
2. What is professional identity? How is this conceptualised for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland?
3. What is professional status? How is this conceptualised for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland?
4. In what way do conceptualisations of these constructs interface with belonging to a professional body?

The literature on teacher professionalism, discussed fully in Section 2, is diverse and shows a shift in focus over the past thirty years. It is recognised that teaching and what constitutes teacher professionalism has had, and continues to have, a volatile status and conceptualisations are amorphous. From this multitude of instable conceptions I have distilled what I consider to be the salient theories in the literature on professionalism and have used this theoretical underpinning to inform my own empirical work. I have found a useful framing device to be the three domains of the: *personal; occupational;* and *organisational* and have used these as lenses and to synthesise the theoretical and the empirical. The domains are in no way intended to limit the complexity found in the literature and in my findings, but rather they provide a structural model for understanding the constructs of professionalism, professional identity and professional status. They enable a cultural and multidimensional understanding of conceptualisations of Professionalism, Professional Identity and Professional Status as articulated in the discourses and ideologies.

The domains are situated within the two competing discourses of managerial and pedagogical and the language constituted in each creates different meanings that not only affect beliefs and values but crucially action. This was exemplified through the ten categories I identified in the study as critical and my analysis of how they were used by different actors to understand, shape, frame and define the three constructs; and, significantly the differential meanings located within them – what Knight *et al.,* (1990: 136) referred to as 'discursive assumptions'. The ten categories as implicit and explicit conceptualisations of the constructs were not neutral but based on sets of assumptions and ideational. This study has shown that it is critical to recognise and understand plural conceptualisations of the constructs. It has also shown that lecturer identity,

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status and professionalism is socially and culturally constructed through the discourses and some are dominant while others are subordinate. Recognising this has led to a re(conceptualisation) of the constructs that is culturally and politically contingent within a given context.

Currently, as is evident in the theoretical section and the empirical study, it is the Organisational and neo-liberal managerial discourse that makes the headlines and is the dominant discourse in shaping policy and practice. Looking through the lens of the Organisational domain, professionalism, professional identity and status are diminished and survive only as shadowy constructs often, as we have seen, as deviant behaviours by 'mediating professionals'. The implications of this conceptualisation for lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland are that they are working in a sector where the core assumptions and organisational structures militate against their personal and collective professional identities, status and practices. The dominant discourse of managerialism supported by a neo-liberal politically driven policy context, throughout the UK and beyond, creates little space for lecturers to reflect upon their situation, find their authentic voice and consider acting differently but it is this that they must do.

In a paper exploring the 'significance of power/knowledge in educational theory' Wang argued against the tendency to confine rather than 'make manifest the dynamic nature of power and knowledge' in Foucault's work (2011: 141, 147) and in educational theory. Wang argues against a current trend in educational policy which emphasises the notion of dominant and subordinate, or repressed, forms of power, stating:

> Discourse is the site of transformation and mutation, where this transformation can be both imposed upon and originated by subjects themselves (Wang, (2011: 149).

I think that this is pertinent to the ways in which lecturers see themselves and how they are seen by others and also to the pedagogical discourse. Managerialism may be the dominant discourse in the policy context at this moment in time but it does not have intrinsic power or 'truth' over the pedagogical discourse. Educational theory,

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practice and policy can be:

> '… a search for discontinuity in history through power/knowledge in such an educative way as to interrogate present being and to open towards becoming, towards our selves' becoming otherwise in the future.' (Wang, 2011: 154)

In my introduction I said that this study developed from an earlier one by me that identified most of the literature on Professionalism referred to the English sector and policy context. I stated an intention to test the distinctiveness that I have previously argued for in the Scottish education policy context and the impact of this on lecturers working within the Scottish college sector. Scottish colleges have responded to the neo-liberal policy directives in a different way from the English college sector and there is less homogenisation, for example, there is no national curriculum in Scotland, and staff are generally less negatively affected by managerialism and an excessive auditing culture as found in England. Scotland has also maintained a more stable and continuous educational policy culture that is less affected by the vagaries of politicians, which has resulted in near constant reforms in the education system in England.

My original contribution to the discourse on professionalism, professional identity and professional status is to apply a historical and cultural lens to elucidate current thinking and discourses in relation to conceptualisations of the constructs. This theoretical approach enables me to see very different 'stories', narratives and discourses, and to proffer solutions that are extremely positive for 'teachers', which sits counter to most of the current analysis which is negative, bleak even, and has struggled to find solutions to break with the current trends. My cultural solution is especially pertinent for my research group of lecturers working in the college sector in Scotland, where it is critically important for them to restore historical memory, and the pedagogical discourse, to interrupt the dominant neo-liberal policy context affecting their authentic practices.

I cited the work of Michael Apple who stressed the importance of knowing our history, not as a way of harking back to past times, but as a way of understanding our present conditions (2009). I consider this to be vitally important for lecturers, especially within

the current climate with the dominant discourse of neo-liberal policies and managerialism where there is a need to reclaim the power to 'interrupt dominant policies and narratives' – the time for the plural voice of lecturers is needed. Their pedagogical discourse is one that emphasises the Personal and the Occupational, which is related to their role as teachers and is about pedagogy and ways of seeing and being. The lecturers 'story-telling' is about what the teacher *is* and *does* and this study has shown that there is a need to be clear about what that is; consequently, it is critical to claim, live, share and tell the pedagogical discourse.

Further, for lecturers in Scotland, I think that it is important for them to situate themselves within the history of Scottish education and mobilise cultural ideology that sees education as a defining characteristic of Scottish identity and its centrality within a civic and democratic society.

This study is significant in that it has shown the importance of reclaiming the pedagogical discourse when (re)conceptualising professionalism, professional identity and professional status. This is not to say that the pedagogical discourse is a static one as it should be recognised that this is dynamic, with a multiplicity of perspectives that shift over time, while maintaining its central tenets. This discourse is cognisant of 'professionalism's' historical, cultural, discipline and temporal status and does not attempt to be elitist but rather embraces fundamental egalitarian and democratic principles. As we have seen, a belief in these principles sit at the core of Scottish education, the 'teachers' and the FE college sector.

The Scottish Government is currently forming its policy in relation to Post-16 Education. In their recent document they have proffered the idea of 'Regionalisation', which would encourage (force) the various sectors to work together and share the delivery of education between them, that is, schools, colleges and universities would no longer compete and/or replicate provision for students working at the SCQF Level 7, but would now work collaboratively to ensure the students' needs were met, within a sustainable educational environment (2011). Arguably, there has never been a more important time for college lecturers to recognise their professionalism and their key place within the education system. This will need to be done in an atmosphere of uncertainty and change as the Government's proposals will result in colleges

shrinking from forty-one to between eleven and seventeen (as I write this is still fluid) which will dramatically change the college landscape in Scotland. One consequence of this will be to 'rationalise' staffing but another will be to dramatically reduce the number of College Principals, which will undoubtedly impact upon that group's power to influence policy. It will also reverse the dominant trend of fierce competition between colleges and sectors which will strengthen collegiality; well at least in principle.

For scholars of the history of Scottish Education this 'solution' sits comfortably within an historical story of 'education for all' and the seamless transition from school to further and higher education. Although contested by many as a mythological ideal (see Barr, 2006), mobilisation of this cultural ideology could be the saving grace of the college sector and specifically for the lecturers working therein and protect them from the extreme forms of neo-conservatism and managerialism. The belief in the pedagogical discourse, democratic intellectualism and the generalist tradition I suggest is what the Scottish nation will draw on to interrupt the dominant neo-liberal policies and managerialist discourses and narratives.

5.3 Future Research

This study has shown the importance of stories, narratives and discourses in shaping ideologies and policy and practice. Two strands emerge from this: the first relates to narratives and the different stories to be told by actors. In this study the narratives of lecturers have been minimal, due to the data sources, yet significant. The Scottish Executive's analysis would have been richer, and so to would this study, had they included more examples of lecturers' responses to the Consultation; similarly, if they had had a 'voice' in the Consultation document as the key stakeholder group. A fruitful area for further investigation would be a follow-up study that explores fully lecturers' conceptualisations of being a professional in the contemporary college sector.

An area of interest for me, and one that I was only able to touch on in this study, is the role that gender plays in conceptualisations of professionalism within teaching, especially the use of the 'rational' (man) and 'irrational' (woman) and how these correspond to the public and domestic domains, within a western philosophical

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tradition. In a highly feminised profession such as teaching it would be good to explore this further.

It may also be constructive to widen this further and to explore the impact of culture on conceptualisations through a comparative and international study, working with partners. In a related vein, an inter-sectoral study that explores conceptualisations and practices between college, university and school 'teachers' would be meaningful especially as we move into regional educational groups in Scotland. The Scottish Government's driving policy narrative for this reform is widening access and the seamless transition between sectors. Consequently, SFC funding will be directed towards such initiatives and it will be essential to have such decisions substantiated by research.

The second strand relates to the policy-practice nexus, especially within Scotland. Recent research has pointed towards the co-construction of a 'shared national policy narrative' between educational researchers and the policy makers and Government, in Scotland (Grek, 2011: 239). In part this is seen as a result of scale i.e. the small nation enabling closer proximity to policy makers (James, 2011). It is perhaps also a consequence of having a government that is sharply aware of its history and has a strong sense of national identity. Many of the educational policy directives in England seem dislocated from the educational professionals and the people for which they are intended.

If the perception about the closeness of educational researchers to the Scottish Government is correct then it is my hope that the significant findings of this study, and the implications I have outlined, will have an influence on their thinking and policy directives in relation to lecturers working in the college sector and to other lecturers/teachers working in Scotland. I think that the time is right for the Scottish Government to take cognisance of this study's findings, to recognise the two competing discourses in contemporary education and to develop policies in support of a pedagogical discourse. This would be a powerful signifier of a Scotland that knows her past and can see her future as a democratic and equitable nation with people that have a voice and power.

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Appendix 1. Confirmation of authorship papers (1) & (3): Allison Littlejohn and emails from Taylor Francis editors – illustrating that I was lead author

Dear Carey

Goof to hear from you.

We discussed this and thought that if we view authorship as conceptualisation plus writing then a reasonable split would be Carey 40%, Allison 40%, Isobel 20%.

Very best wishes

Allison

From: Carey Normand [C.A.Normand@dundee.ac.uk]
Sent: 28 November 2011 14:40
To: Littlejohn, Allison; Falconer, Isobel
Subject: Letter of confirmation re. percentage of authorship for Innovations Journal article

Dear Allison and Isobel

I hope that this finds you both well. It's been a while since we last met!

I write again to request a letter or email confirmation of the percentage of authorship that can be attributed to the article:

Normand, C., Littlejohn, A. and Falconer, I. (2008) A model for effective implementation of flexible programme delivery, Innovations in Education and Teaching International, Vol 45, no 1, pp. 25-36, London: Routledge, Taylor Francis Group
http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a789692958~db=all~jumptype=rss

You replied to me a few months ago saying that you were not happy with my original suggestion, which was based on what we had agreed for the QAA article i.e. 80% for me and 20% for Allison (could you also confirm this, Allison?). I asked what you suggested as representative and fair, but I didn't hear back from you.

For the Innovations in Education article, would you be agreeable with: Carey Normand (50%), Allison Littlejohn (30%) and Isobel Falconer (20%)? If not, what would you suggest?

I would be grateful if you could get back to me as soon as possible, so that I can submit my RPL claim towards my Professional Doctorate, which I'm in the final stages of writing up.

Thanks, Carey

From: "Littlejohn, Allison" <Allison.Littlejohn@gcu.ac.uk>   04/12/2011 16:01:29
To: Carey Normand; Isobel Falconer
Subject: RE: Letter of confirmation re. percentage of authorship for Innovations Journal article

Dear Carey

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Thanks, Carey

Carey Normand
Senior Lecturer in Education
Head of Learning and Teaching, College of Arts and Social Sciences
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Scotland
UK
email: c.a.normand@dundee.ac.uk
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Winner: Times Higher Education's Widening Participation Initiative of the Year 2009 and Herald Society's Education Initiative of the Year 2009.
http://www.gcu.ac.uk/newsevents/news/bycategory/theuniversity/1/name,6219,en.html

Winner: Times Higher Education's Outstanding Support for Early Career Researchers of the Year 2010, GCU as a lead with Universities Scotland partners.
http://www.gcu.ac.uk/newsevents/news/bycategory/theuniversity/1/name,15691,en.html

Emails: October 2007, from the Assistant Editor and Production Editor to me as lead author

Dear Carey, as promised your paper is now going through the layout stage to go to the publishers for inclusion within the first edition of 2008. I have provisionally laid out your paper (I'm off on holiday tonight so wouldn't need answers until next Monday), and have some questions. I have attached the paper (excl. figures) can you see what you can do.

Very best wishes

Liz Rose
Assistant Editor
IETI
(Innovations in Education & Teaching International)
Tel: 01223 872119
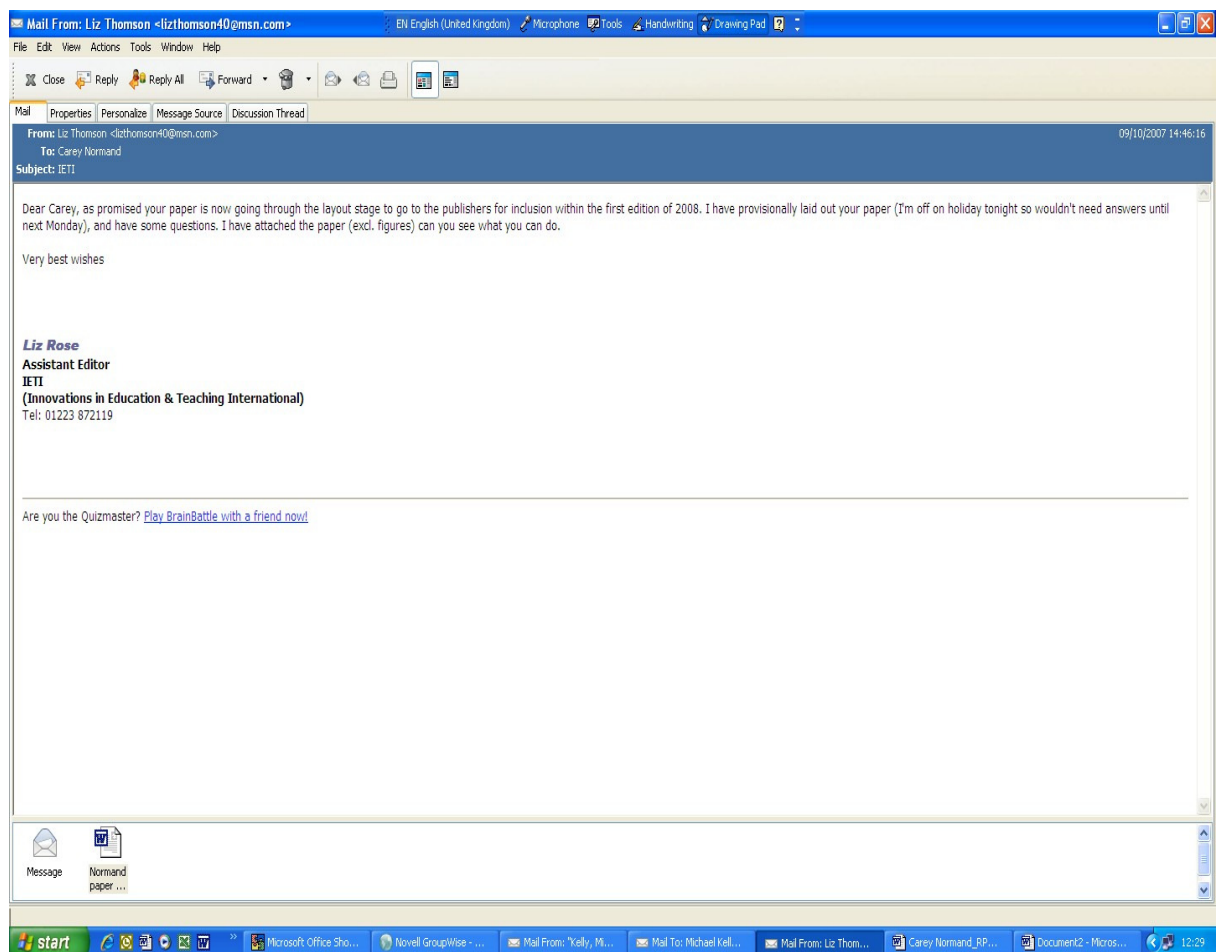
Dear Carey,

Thanks you for correcting the title - I will update our record immediately. Please find my contact details below.

Best regards,
Mike

Michael Kelly
Taylor & Francis Group
2-4 Park Square | Milton Park | Abingdon | OX14 4RN | UK
Tel: +00 44 (0)20 7017 7412
Fax: +00 44 (0)20 7017 6713
-----Original Message-----
From: Carey Normand [mailto:C.A.Normand@dundee.ac.uk]
Sent: 22 October 2007 10:38
To: Kelly, Michael
Subject: Re: Manuscript Acceptance Memo

Dear Mike

Thank you for this. I will fax the signed, copyright document to you tomorrow.

I notice in your email (and on the CATS site) and error in the article title. It should be: A Model for Effective Implementation of Flexible Programme Delivery (you have A Model 'of' Effective Implementation of Flexible Programme Delivery).

You also say to send the fax/mail to the Taylor and Francis address at the bottom of your email; however, there is no address given. Could you please email me the address?

Best wishes
Carey
>>> <michael.kelly@tandf.co.uk> 19/10/2007 10:49 >>>
Carey Normand
c.a.normand@dundee.ac.uk
19 Oct 2007

Dear Carey Normand

Re: A Model of Effective Implementation of Flexible Programme Delivery

Production tracking number: RIIE 275704

Your paper for Innovations in Education and Teaching International has been received by the Taylor & Francis production department. Contact details for the assigned production editor are listed below.

A user account has been created for you for our online CATS system. http://cats.tfinforma.com/PTS/in?

Log in with the following details:
User Name: NORMANC2
The password is the same as your User Name.

If available, a projected date of proof distribution is provided on the author page. You will receive another e-mail when your proof is ready for correction.
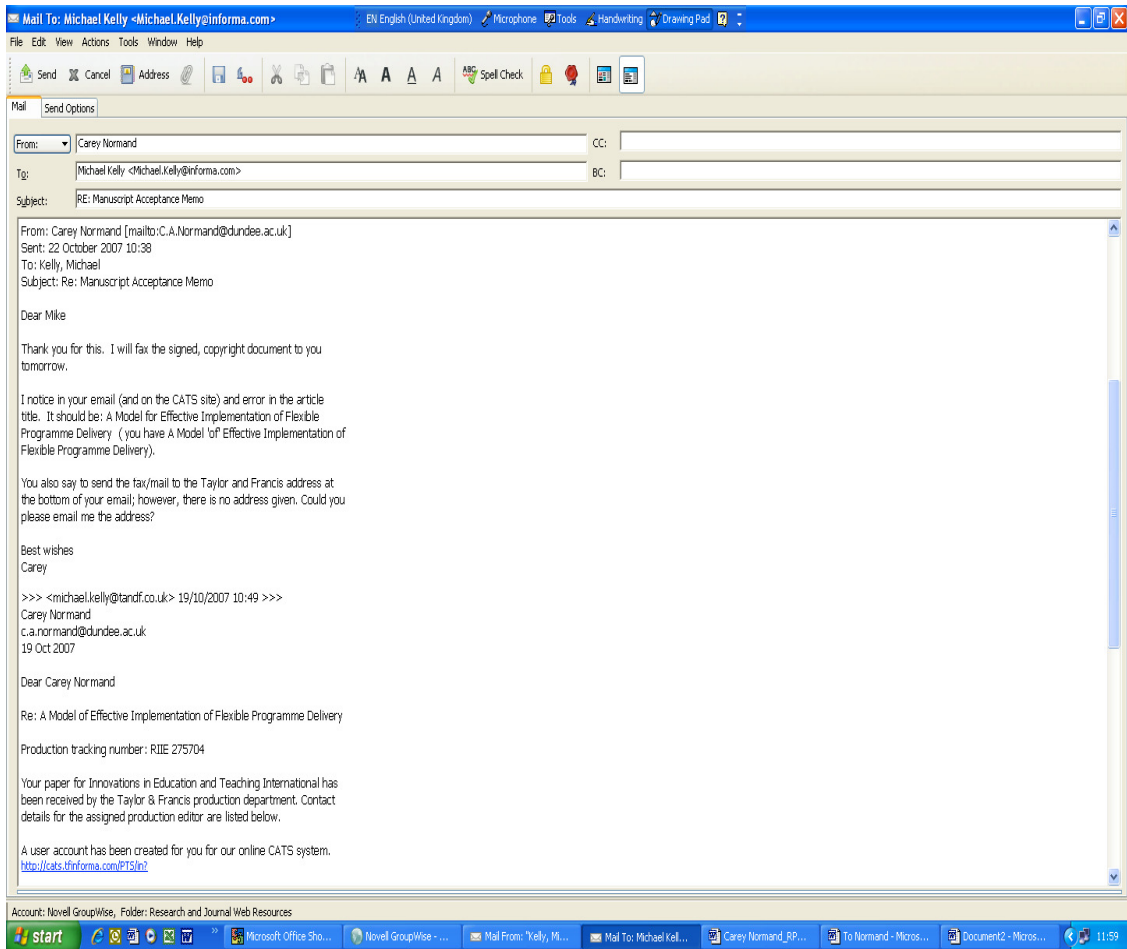
Please print and sign the attached copyright form and send or fax it back to the Taylor and Francis address given at the end of this email (unfortunately a scanned version of the copyright form is not acceptable, due to legal reasons).

Yours sincerely,
Mike Kelly
Production Editor
Email: michael.kelly@tandf.co.uk

From: Carey Normand   CC:

To: Michael Kelly <Michael.Kelly@informa.com>   BC:

Subject: RE: Manuscript Acceptance Memo

From: Carey Normand [mailto:C.A.Normand@dundee.ac.uk]
Sent: 22 October 2007 10:38
To: Kelly, Michael
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the bottom of your email; however, there is no address given. Could you
please email me the address?

Best wishes
Carey

>>> <michael.kelly@tandf.co.uk> 19/10/2007 10:49 >>>
Carey Normand
c.a.normand@dundee.ac.uk
19 Oct 2007

Dear Carey Normand

Re: A Model of Effective Implementation of Flexible Programme Delivery

Production tracking number: RIIE 275704

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been received by the Taylor & Francis production department. Contact
details for the assigned production editor are listed below.

A user account has been created for you for our online CATS system.
http://cats.tfinforma.com/PTS/in?

Appendix 2. Editor's Queries on Paper (3) and my Reponses (in blue) – illustrative of my substantive role as lead author in this publication

Editor queries 13 July 2006 - *A model for analysis and implementation of flexible programme delivery*

Page 2
Editor's comment: I have moved the acknowledgements to here, as being the more usual location – they were right at the end of the text after the Summary.
Fine.

Page 6
'The model, together with the associated *Practical guide to providing flexible learning in further and higher education* (Casey and Wilson, 2006), should allow programme teams'

Editor's comment: have made this a proper ref citation and added it to the list of refs at the end.
Fine.

Page 16
'Interestingly, e-technology was also cited as a **barrier** by both IM and OM because of issues relating to access to adequate equipment and networking. This is a pertinent point within this case study, as 'adequate equipment' was given to all students in the first year of the programme, but a strategic decision was made to remove this funding. So students **in the second year** had to buy their own computers, with varying specifications as a result'.
No, the programme is a one year programme. What I meant was 'subsequent students had to buy their own computers' (the programme was in its second year of existence) i.e. now all students on this programme have to provide their own computer.

Editor's comment: have added this, as it's the implication from the previous sentence.

Page 18
'In this case study, OM responses reflect an affinity with the pedagogically driven discourse. **The OM, as programme originator**, displayed a strong adherence to the current programme design, which does not include use of a VLE. This is consistent with Nicol et al (2004), who state that in older, collegiate HEIs bottom-up initiatives are most likely to drive innovation, and that these initiatives may reflect the interests of individuals rather than focusing on strategic objectives'.

Editor's comment: Page: 183
some implicit criticism of an individual in this paragraph I think, as this programme was originated by one person. Have neutralised it generally as OM, but no getting round 'The OM as programme originator' here.
I agree with your reading but think that it should stay in as it is critical in understanding the results – this was the only case study where there was greater concordance between the IM and TLM. The main factor being their agreement on the use of technology.

Page 18

'IM stated that an **enabler** (in relation to process) is the 'excellent delivery team who communicate regularly with each other,' whereas TLM stated that a **barrier** to flexible learning (in relation to context) is that 'with a geographically dispersed team, negotiation of solutions to complex issues agreed by consensus takes longer'. This appears to **signal** the 'ideal' from the reality'.

Editor's comment: don't think 'signal' is the right word here. Separate?

Page 20

'**Main flexible features:** exit points (certificate, diploma, masters), time, content, **place**, pedagogy'.

Change 'place' to 'pace' and also insert 'location, on-line,' after it.

Editor's comment: should this be 'pace'?

Page 21
'We see the round-table approach as most appropriate, as we wish to move away from a view of strategic management as being located at the institutional level or layer. Casey et al (2006) are trialling this approach in their work on the TrustDR project. However, further study is required to ascertain whether or not alignment actually leads to improved implementation and student learning. The authors acknowledge that this may not be the case. The '**implementation guide**' from this project provides guidelines as to how the model and approach might be used by institutions as a framework for planning their flexible programmes'.

Editor's comment: Page: 184
what is this referring to – would it by chance be the accompanying *Practical guide to providing flexible learning in further and higher education* (Casey and Wilson), the previous document I edited?
Yes, this is the guide that I was referring to. Please change.

Page 22
'Casey J and Wilson P (2006) *Practical guide to providing flexible learning in further and higher education,* Gloucester, QAA '

Editor's comment: Page: 184
have added the companion practical guide to the refs (it's referred to in the text) – I presume it's going to be a QAA publication like the others in this theme?
Fine.

Page 23
'Twigg C (2002) *Improving Quality and Reducing Costs*, The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education
This is wrong ref. It should be:
http://www.obhe.ac.uk/products/reports/pdf/September2002.pdf

(**http://www.predict.strath.ac.uk/projects/risk/documents/briefing_paper.pdf**   (accessed 12 September 2005)'.

Editor's comment: Page: 184
this leads you to Strathclyde Univ's Predict project publications. Can't find any mention of the Twigg ref though. The Nicol et al ref goes to the same site, but then you can find the project (title in ref) under 'Risk'. Not so with Twigg though

Hopefully I have answered all of your queries satisfactorily but if you require more information please let me know.

Regards
Carey Normand
20/7/06

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Appendix 3. Confirmation of authorship paper (2): Brenda Keatch

Hello Carey.

Just to confirm 50% authorship for Carey Normand and 50% authorship for Brenda Keatch for the following peer reviewed paper.

Normand, C.A. and Keatch, B. (2007) New on-line teaching qualification for college lecturers: an evaluation, *Journal European Teaching Education Network (JETEN)*, Vol 3, pp. 72 -78, London: Greenwich University Press.
http://www.etenonline.org/img/publications/ETEN%2017%20proceedings.pdf
Carey Normand (50%) and Brenda Keatch (50%)

Regards,
Brenda
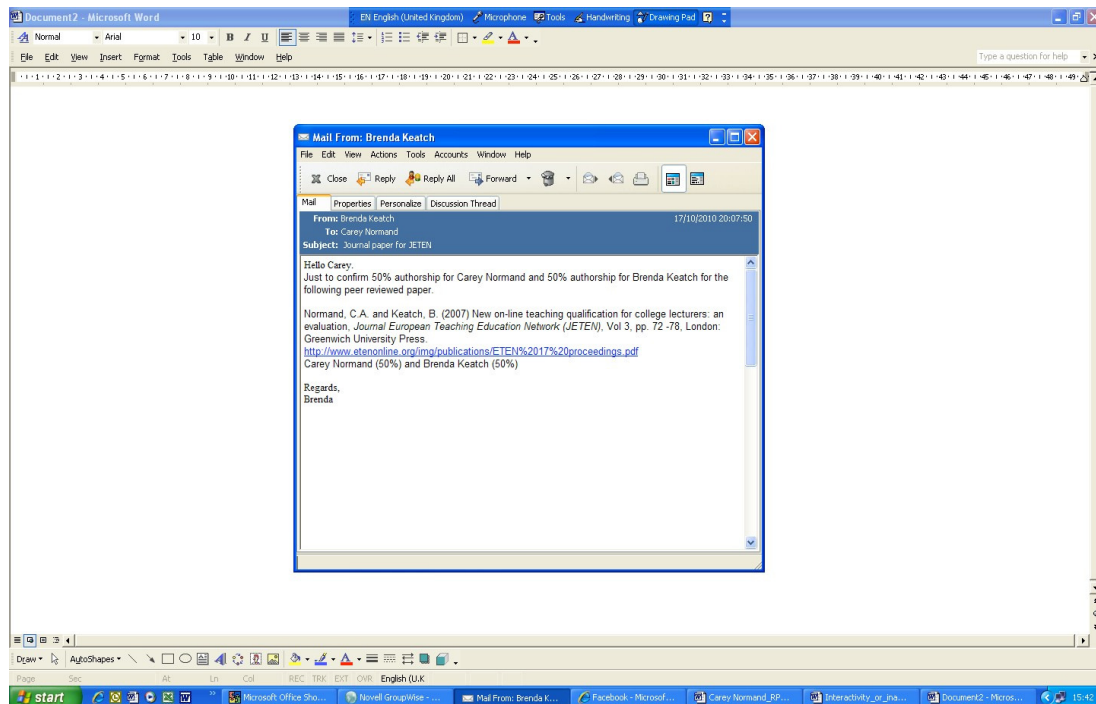
Appendix 4. Letter to the editor of JETEN Neil Hall - illustrating our responses to the four international peer referees' critiques

6.12.2007

Dear Neil

We would like to thank you for the editorial suggestions made for the paper entitled 'New on-line teaching qualification for college lecturers: An evaluation of the use of Discussion Board fora' which was presented at the ETEN conference in Porto earlier this year.

We can confirm that this paper has not been published and has not been presented for publication elsewhere other than as an earlier version in the ETEN Proceedings of 2007.

We feel the referees' comments were very constructive and we have addressed their suggestions in the revised paper.

Changes have been made to the title and we have attended to the minor revisions in accordance with the referees' comments. This has increased the word count but is still within the recommended length (4534 including graphs but not reference pages). We have developed the theoretical underpinning and increased the current academic references in line with the general comments made. The layout of the paper has been simplified by the removal of some of the less pertinent graphs and this data has been replaced where necessary with a narrative discussion as suggested. We do, however feel that the graph depicting confidence levels in ICT does adequately show the spread in the participants' ability as would be expected in a group of learners who are clearly aware of the links between teaching and learning.

As discussed in our paper this was a preliminary study of our participants' use of discussion boards and our next research area will narrow our focus and critically explore this in more detail as exemplified in the discussion and conclusion section.

Thank you for the opportunity to make the changes, we hope that the paper now satisfies the editorial team and that it will be selected for publication in JETEN.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course.
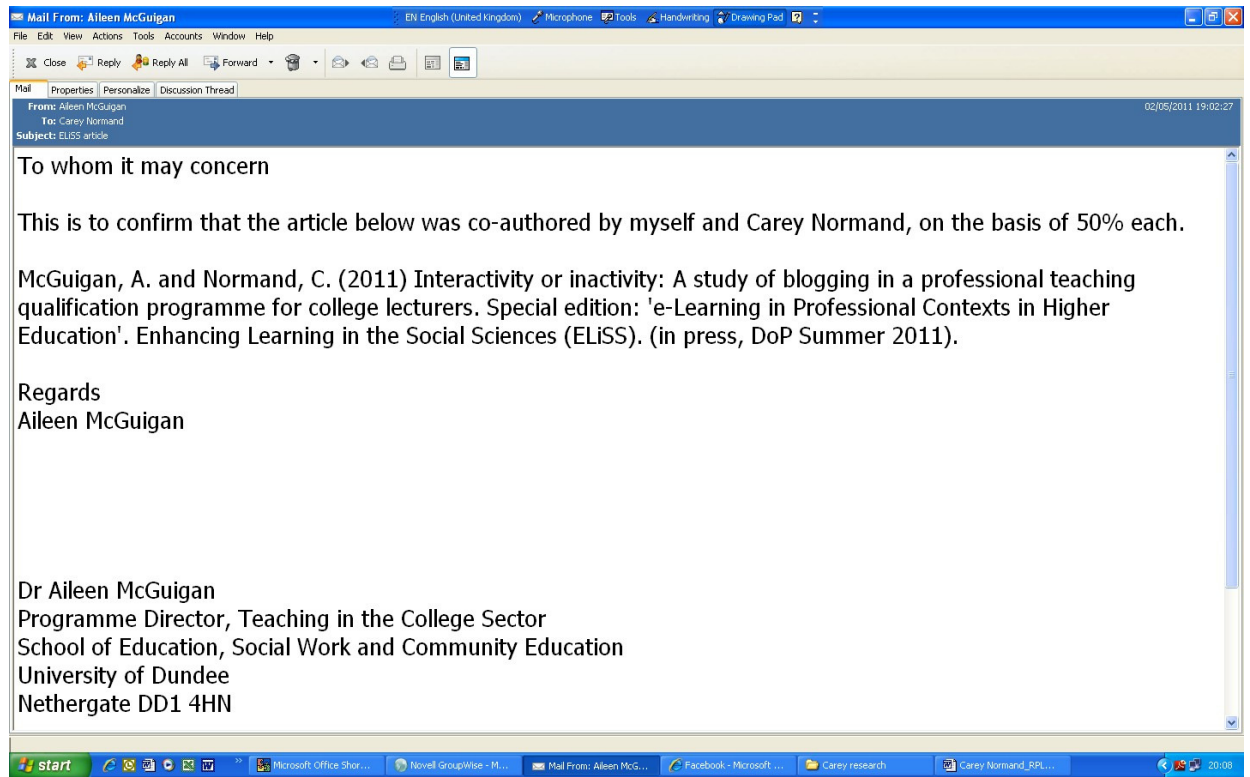
Kindest Regards

Carey and Brenda

Carey Normand and Brenda Keatch

University of Dundee

Scotland

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Appendix 5. Confirmation of authorship paper (4): Aileen McGuigan

To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that the article below was co-authored by myself and Carey Normand, on the basis of 50% each.

McGuigan, A. and Normand, C. (2011) Interactivity or inactivity: A study of blogging in a professional teaching qualification programme for college lecturers. Special edition: 'e-Learning in Professional Contexts in Higher Education'. Enhancing Learning in the Social Sciences (ELiSS). (in press, DoP Summer 2011).

Regards
Aileen McGuigan

Dr Aileen McGuigan
Programme Director, Teaching in the College Sector
School of Education, Social Work and Community Education
University of Dundee
Nethergate DD1 4HN

Appendix 6. QAA Enhancement Themes Workshop Series

The following six pages outline the Workshops that I delivered on behalf of the QAA. I created the materials and shared them with my project colleagues: Allison Littlejohn (UoD), Paddy Maher (UHI), John Casey (UHI) and Pam Wilson (UHI). Paddy Maher contributed and provided me with feedback on the Case studies created (see pages 19 and 20 for examples; I illustrate two CS here though I originally created four case studies). Everyone was happy with the design and content and we agreed that I would lead the workshops with support as required from others, in reality it was only me who delivered these workshops; as their originator and author.

Carey Normand

QAA Flexible Delivery Conference: Workshop Plan

Introduce the Task (5mins)

Divide into 4 groups (if numbers high)

Ask each group member to adopt one of 5 roles. Read role profile (5mins)

Give University profile; Programme profile (read 5mins)

Ask each person, in role, to write down what the issues are for them in relation to process (10mins)

Facilitator to ask each to share their perspective with the group and to debate the issues (15mins)

Each facilitator to report back to the whole audience their findings/issues (3mins each= 15mins)

We pull the ideas together and explore the efficacy of the model (20mins)

Flexible Delivery Workshop: Case Study 1

University of Central Beltshire

About us:
The University of Central Beltshire is a pre-1992 Scottish University. Most of its programmes are delivered face-to-face on campus. Some staff members in the Department of Health Studies are concerned about recruitment and access issues. A senior lecturer has identified an urgent need across the UK and further afield for a postgraduate course in 'the strategic management of institutional catering' to enhance professional practice and competence and meet the entry requirements of a recently established Institute of Healthy Eating. Their target audience is professionals in work, so they plan to develop a part-time MSc which will be primarily delivered online through one of the VLEs currently in use within the University. In the production of online materials, the limited subject-specific expertise currently available within the department will be supplemented by externals with appropriate professional knowledge and expertise who will also act as expert tutors. There will be 120 points of taught modules with fixed assessment points and a 60-point dissertation. Students are expected whenever possible to attend an initial induction weekend but otherwise they will communicate with their tutor and each other via the VLE or phone.

Group work

In your designated role within your group please discuss the following issues:

1. How flexible is this proposed programme? Please use the 'Dimensions of Flexibility' handout to give you a basis for discussion.

2. What would you see as the major factors that are likely to either enable or inhibit flexibility in this proposed programme. If possible, please group them into
   - **Context** (e.g., the learning environment, the level of study, the subject discipline, the organisation of the programme and any other issues related to context).
   - **Process** (e.g., the learning processes, social interactions, course design processes and/or administrative processes).
   - **Technology** (its use in learning or administrative processes as well as social communications).

About us:
We have a student population which has grown to over 12,000 in recent years since becoming a university in 1992. We have over 80 undergraduate, 40 postgraduate programmes and a large number of students engaged in research for PhDs in topics that put them at the forefront of their disciplines and on the international stage. Our students come from approximately 60 countries throughout the world, enriching life on campus and making us a truly global environment in which to study. We aim to increase our international student numbers by 10% in the next academic year.

Our approach is entrepreneurial. We actively explore new markets and create opportunities to become Scotland's most dynamic, innovative and responsive university. We believe that this can be achieved by working in partnership with all our stakeholders and in responding to perceived needs for our learning, research and consultancy services.

All of our programmes are offered in a variety of modes such as evening, day-release or distance learning, ensuring that we have something that fits your life-style and requirements. We are developing the latest online technology throughout many of our programmes, which means that you can study whether you're on-campus, at home or in the workplace.

The Strategic Plan for the University sets out five key values that guide our planning and investment:

- **High quality**: we shall work at the cutting edge of our disciplines
- **Student focus:** we shall adopt a student centred approach
- **Relevant to stakeholders:** we shall serve the wider community and work in partnership
- **Widening participation:** we will actively promote opportunity for all those with the ability to benefit from university education
- **Entrepreneurial:** we shall create new markets and respond to market needs.

Group work:

Case-study
The School of International Relations has had many requests from international students wishing to study the Masters programme, on a distance learning basis. The Vice Principal has indicated to the Head of School that she wants this new, and potentially large, market. A roundtable meeting is arranged to explore the perceptions of staff at various levels and with varying roles…

Task
Refer to the Role Profile sheet and select a role. **In your designated role** within your group please discuss the following issues:

1. What dimensions of flexibility would you propose for this programme? You may wish to use the 'Dimensions of Flexibility' handout as an aid.

2. What would you see as the major factors that are likely to either **enable** or **inhibit** flexibility in this proposed programme. If possible, please group them into
- **Context** (e.g., the learning environment, the level of study, the subject discipline, the organisation of the programme and any other issues related to context).
- **Process** (e.g., the learning processes, social interactions, course design processes and/or administrative processes).
- **Technology** (its use in learning or administrative processes as well as social communications).

Flexible Delivery Workshop

Role Profiles

1) Institutional Management (IM)
At the IM level decisions are made with strategic objectives in mind. It is often 'big picture' thinking with little structure provided as to how the strategic objectives might be realised. The drivers that affect IM would include, widening participation, equality legislation, employer demands and lifelong learning. Personnel involved at this level will be principals, deputy/assistant principals or deans.

2) Operational Management (OM)
At the OM level, the operational managers are staff working at the middle level who have responsibility for implementing strategic objectives coming from the top in a way that is consonant with their operational objectives. Personnel at this level are heads of faculty/school and programme directors/leaders. A key feature of this level is that this is where budgetary control is usually located and this is significant in curriculum delivery – flexible or not – and resource management.

3) Teaching and Learning Management (TLM)

Academic:
At the TLM level, lecturers carry-out the strategic and operational objectives with explicit and implicit awareness. This level is primarily made up of lecturers who engage directly with the learners focusing on flexible learning and teaching driven by pedagogical considerations.

Administrative:
At the TLM level, administrative personnel will administer the programme(s) liaising with academic staff and other administrative staff within their institution e.g. registry, as well as students and other stakeholders e.g. employers, funders, professional bodies.
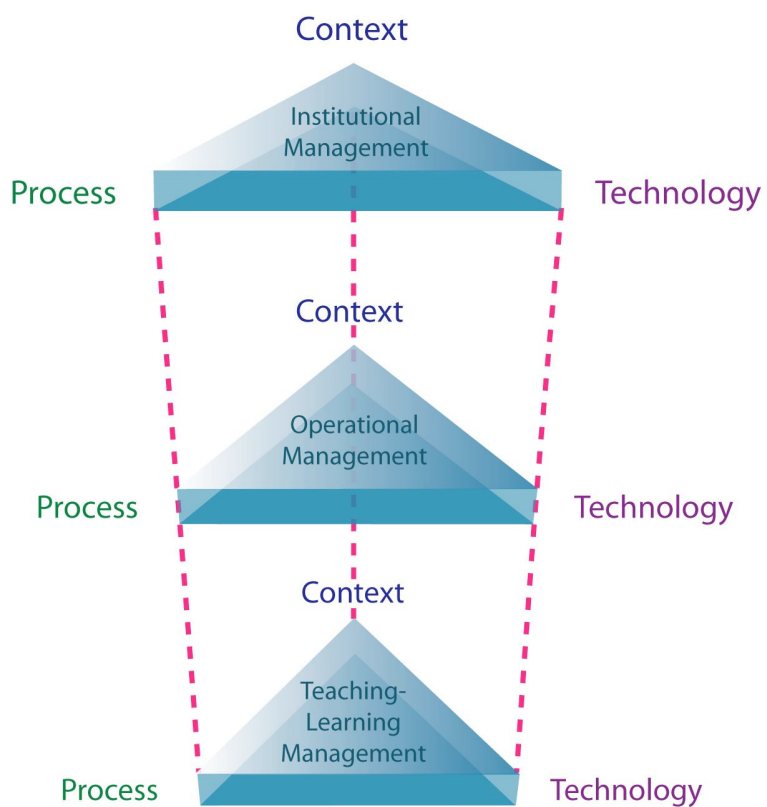
ICT:
At the TLM level, ICT personnel will work as learning technologists and technological support staff working with the programme team. They may support the development of ICT in teaching and learning, have a training and developing role in the use of technology and offer a technical support service.

NB. Select the role that you are most familiar with at the TLM level

4) Roundtable Facilitator
The facilitator will introduce the task to the roundtable participants. S/he will administer the plan for the group activity, following the schedule and timings provided. The facilitator's role is to convene their roundtable discussion enabling individual and group discussions. S/he will ensure that all members are clear about the task and their role. S/he will also report the findings/issues of the roundtable group to all workshop participants, at the plenary.

A Model for Analysis and Implementation of Flexible Programme Delivery (FPD)

Context

Institutional Management

Process

Technology

Context

Operational Management

Process

Technology

Context

Teaching-Learning Management

Process

Technology

Normand and Littlejohn, 2006

Flexible Delivery Workshop: Handout on Dimensions of Flexibility

The Dimensions of Flexibility		
More Fixed <<--->> **More Flexible**		
Time	**Fixed**	**Flexible**
Fixed time	<<--->>	
1 Starting and finishing a course		
2 Submitting assignments and interacting within the course		
3 Tempo/pace of studying		
4 Moments of assessment		
Content	**Fixed**	**Flexible**
Fixed content	<<--->>	
5 Topics of the course		
6 Sequence of different parts of the course		
7 Orientation of the course (theoretical, Practical)		
8 Key learning materials of the course		
9 Assessment standards and completion requirements		
Entry Requirements	**Fixed**	**Flexible**
Fixed requirements	<<--->>	
10 Conditions for participation		
Instructional Approach and Resources	**Fixed**	**Flexible**
Fixed pedagogy and resources	<<--->>	
11 Social organisation of learning (face-to-face; group; individual)		
12 Language to be used during the course		
13 Learning resources: modality, origin (instructor, learners, library, WWW)		
14 Instructional organisation of learning (assignments, monitoring)		
Delivery and Logistics	**Fixed**	**Flexible**
Fixed place and procedures	<<--->>	
15 Time and place where contact with instructor and other students occur		
16 Methods, technology for obtaining support and making contact		
17 Types of help, communication available, technology required		
18 Location, technology for participating in various aspects of the course		
19 delivery channels for course information, content, communication		

Table: Dimensions of Flexibility (from Collis and Moonen, 2004)

In John Casey and Pam Wilson (2006) '*A Practical Guide to Providing Flexible Learning in Further and Higher Education*'

Appendix 7

A model for effective implementation of flexible programme delivery

Carey Normand[a]*, Allison Littlejohn[b] and Isobel Falconer[b]

[a]*School of Education, University of Dundee, Dundee, UK;* [b]*Learning Technology Department, Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, UK*

The model developed here is the outcome of a project funded by the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland to support implementation of flexible programme delivery (FPD) in post-compulsory education. We highlight key features of FPD, including explicit and implicit assumptions about why flexibility is needed and the perceived barriers and solutions to implementing it. Our model addresses issues in implementing FPD at three levels within institutions: institutional, operational, and teaching and learning management, supporting strategic alignment at all three levels. It has been used to analyse four case studies at the University of Dundee and the UHI Millennium Institute.

Keywords: flexible programmes; flexible delivery; distance learning; blended learning; educational management; institutional management; higher education; further education

Introduction

As the drive to widen participation in further education (FE) and higher education (HE) takes effect, and numbers approach the UK Government's target of involving 50% of the 18–30 age range in HE by the year 2010, institutions face two challenges that prompt a move to increasingly flexible delivery: the size and diversity of the student body; and the fast pace of change in the external environment.

To help meet these challenges, the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAA Scotland) identified flexible delivery as one of its 'Enhancement Themes', for Scottish HE. QAA Scotland's vision reflected a learner-centred model of pedagogy and learner support, appropriate to the needs of the individual learner, within a high quality learning environment, supported by efficient and effective business and administrative processes' (Quality Assurance Agency 2004). In line with this vision, the view of flexible delivery was a broad one, encompassing both underpinning infrastructure and methods of delivery, as well as modes of study.

The model presented in this paper is the outcome of a project funded under the enhancement theme to support institutions in planning implementation of flexible programme delivery (FPD). Our model follows the broad view of flexible delivery by addressing issues in FPD at three levels within institutions: institutional management (IM), operational management (OM) and teaching and learning management (TLM) levels. The model may be used by institutions as an auditing and implementation tool, supporting the introduction of flexible delivery by identifying issues in strategic alignment at all three levels. It has been used to analyse four case studies of flexible programmes at the collaborating institutions, the University of Dundee and the UHI Millennium Institute (Normand and Littlejohn 2006).

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Before describing the model, we explore the conceptual background to FPD within FE and HE, and the perceived barriers and solutions to implementing it.

Key features of flexible programme delivery

There is no single definition for flexible programme delivery within the literature (Nunan 1996). The term FPD is used mainly in FE where it may refer to flexible learning, flexible teaching and flexible modes of delivery, i.e. distance learning and also blended learning. It is often used synonymously with other approaches including 'open learning', 'distance learning' and 'e-learning'. This is not surprising as any flexible programme may contain elements of any or all of these. However, Collis and Moonen (2004, 8) argue that this conceptual conflation of 'flexible learning' with the mode and location of delivery may be counter-productive as it deflects attention from the many other dimensions of flexible learning.

One reason for the vagueness of definition may be that 'flexible delivery' means different things to different people. In particular, the perspective, aims and objectives of different levels of management may be distinctively different, influencing the decisions made and the nature of the concept(s). We distinguish between institutional, operational, and teaching and learning management, which may have very different views of what flexibility entails.

At the institutional management (IM) level decisions are made by principals, deputy/assistant principals or deans. They reflect the strategic objectives of the institution and are usually driven by government policy initiatives. They exemplify 'big picture' thinking, providing little detail of how the strategic objectives might be realised. For this level reasons to introduce flexibility may include improving the quality of the teaching and learning experience and process (Yetton 1997); the shift from short-term, subject-focused learning to 'lifelong' learning (Bates 2005; Rigmore and Luke 1995); the need to tap into a global market (Nicol et al. 2004); widening access and embracing diversity (Yetton 1997); social inclusion and employability agendas (Rigmore and Luke 1995); the 'new' knowledge society (Collis and Moonen 2005; Laurillard 2002); competition from other universities (Yetton 1997); and the private sector (Nunan 1996; Twigg 2002). These drivers are complex and may not be clearly perceived by other groups who, nevertheless, feel their impact: lower management, the academic practitioner, the learner or the community.

At the operational management (OM) level, faculty/school and programme directors/leaders have responsibility for implementing strategic objectives coming from the top in a way that is consonant with their operational objectives. A key feature is that budgetary control usually resides at this level, and this is significant in curriculum delivery – flexible or not – and resource management. Gleeson and Shain (2003) report that the competing values of institutional management and teaching and learning management may be mediated at this operational management level. Successful integration may require 'strategic compliance', in which an operational manager is able to engage in dialogue meaningful to staff at the other levels (2003, 240). He or she should be able to articulate institutional management vision and values, while, at the same time, understanding the views of lecturers.

At the teaching and learning management (TLM) level, staff put FPD into practice without necessarily having any awareness of strategic and operational objectives. This level is primarily comprised of lecturers who engage directly with learners, focusing on flexible learning and teaching driven by pedagogic considerations. The literature on flexible delivery concentrates on this level, centring largely on control of learning being moved from the teacher or institution to the learner (Collis and Moonen 2004, 10; Nunan 1996; Talbot 2003; Twigg 2002). These authors regard learner choice as an essential component of flexible learning, a philosophy subscribed to by many practitioners at the TLM level. Collis and Moonen (2004) focus on 19 key 'dimensions' of flexible learning that shift the emphasis from teacher-led to learner-led processes (we draw on

these dimensions in the pro forma reproduced in Appendix 1). For them an important question is, *for whom is this learning flexible*?

While much of the literature considers the *learner* focus of FPD, some also points to dimensions of flexibility that arise from individual, innovative *teachers* (Bates 2005; Collis and Moonen 2004; Littlejohn and Peacock 2003). This represents a 'bottom-up' implementation of FPD whereby individual initiatives promote structural change at the micro level. The most innovative examples of flexible teaching derive from the work of individual lecturers. The drivers that affect IM, widening participation, equality legislation, employer demands and lifelong learning, have all impacted upon lecturers, and have stimulated new and often ground-breaking methodologies (McNaught 2002) and a range of developments in programme design, delivery, assessment and use of new technology (Nicol et al. 2004). As teaching has largely been subsumed within the discourse on learning, this teacher contribution to structural change has often been overlooked. The danger of perceiving teaching as 'invisible' is that it has not been assessed and evaluated in the same way as flexible learning and, to a lesser extent, FPD. One reason for this could be cultural, particularly within HE institutions where the lecturer is usually seen as having autonomy over her own teaching (Nicol and Coen 2003). Another danger is that this micro level can be overlooked by strategic and operational managers. However, there has been a recent re-emphasis on the centrality of teaching within learning (Ramsden 2005), further promoted by the current prominence of 'professionalism' within HE and FE (Furlong 2000).

Several studies highlight the tension between the competing views of TLM and IM. According to Nicol et al. (2004) e-learning, a frequent synonym for, or component of, FPD, is often implemented through a 'top-down and bottom-up' approach, which they refer to as 'two trajectories'. Although many institutions focus on one of these (i.e. either top-down or bottom-up) they also incorporate some aspects of the other. The top-down approach is most commonly implemented in institutions that have a 'managerial' culture (i.e. FE and smaller HE institutions). The bottom-up approach is frequently implemented in institutions with a 'collegiate' culture, usually older HE institutions (Nicol et al. 2004, 6). According to Gleeson and Shain, 'polarised identities of institutional management and lecturers' have led to 'a crisis of professional identity' among FE lecturers (2003, 233). In other words, there is a perception of disparity between the cultures of 'Managerialism' and 'Pedagogy' within institutions (Hellawell and Hancock 2003). Lecturing staff may not be in accord with what they view as 'management values', focusing around finance and marketplace factors, rather than pedagogical considerations. Consequently, institutional, and teaching and learning managers may not share a common vision (Hellawell and Hancock 2003; Normand 2004), a misalignment which is sometimes overcome by the mediation of operational managers.

Barriers and solutions in implementing flexible programme delivery

The means by which flexible programmes are delivered is regarded as critical by lecturer, learner, manager and institution. Although the strategic focus will be different for each management level, the strategies need to be well aligned into a coherent whole for effective implementation. Many of the barriers to implementation of FPD arise from misalignments due either to ignorance or to perceived incompatibility. For example, when considering FPD the lecturer may ask questions such as, 'what will be the balance between facilitation and instruction?'; 'will the materials be paper-based or electronic'; and 'what aspect of the programme will be flexible and what part static'? However, these considerations may not be known to the wider institution. At the operational-management level FPD will be concerned with questions such as the mechanism of delivery as an 'output' or product, cost, programme fit and course models. Both perspectives are vital to successful implementation, teaching and learning. At the institutional management level the needs

of the institution as a whole are the driving force. As institutions compete for students the impetus to find flexible solutions has increased (Nicol et al. 2004). Flexible delivery mechanisms have been viewed, implicitly, as a way of reducing costs and improving efficiency (Nunan 1996; Yetton 1997) and improving learning outcomes (Twigg 2002). Yet surprisingly few studies report cost reduction as an explicit reason for introducing flexibility. This highlights a tension between explicit and implicit reasons for FPD.

Perhaps because these institutional management objectives are frequently implicit, they have been less studied than TLM issues. The situation is further confused by the relatively recent shift from 'flexible', meaning variations on face-to-face learning and delivery, to 'flexible' meaning electronically mediated learning and delivery (Nunan 1996), with consequent changes in what might be evaluated and the criteria for evaluation.

The development of e-learning and the virtual campus have resulted in significant costs for institutions, yet rarely is 'return on investment' considered (Collis and Moonen 2004, III). This may, at least partly, be due to the difficulty in measuring the complex and diverse information sources. Most costing systems focus on a single aspect, for example, network costs or staffing costs. Moonen (1997) argues that the difficulties in costing arise from there being no consensus on inclusive frameworks. Bates (2005) states that institutions need to develop a cost structure that recognises the local context and cultural conditions as these will influence outcomes and analysis. Current workload models often do not take into account full staff costs, omitting time required for online learning and teaching (Bates 2005), and exemplifying a lack of infrastructure to support the use of new technologies in learning. Perhaps even more importantly these workload models do not take staff development costs into consideration, particularly the extra time required for staff to learn how to teach in new ways (Bates 2005). Nor do they have clear, measurable evaluation processes to assess real cost–benefits (Bates 2005; Nicol and Coen 2003). As a result, teaching staff are often working under extreme pressure, compromising both the quality and long-term viability of FPD and leading to resistance to new working practices. Such resistance has been identified by Nicol et al. (2004, 8) as a major risk facing institutions and undermining operational readiness for the transformational change necessary for successful implementation of FPD.

In an attempt to overcome these problems and develop an appropriate costing framework, Nicol and Coen identified three distinct types of costs: infrastructure, i.e. the total cost of 'ICT assets'; value-added, i.e. activities related to teaching and learning; and support, including ICT, administrative and academic support (2003, 48–49). Their INSIGHT model evaluates costs and benefits through the appraisal of 'competing options', for example, 'staff satisfaction' with 'student satisfaction'. The advantage of this model is that it takes a whole institutional perspective, evaluates the tangible with the less tangible, and can be used as a decision-making tool in implementing FPD.

There is little hard evidence of programmes that have introduced flexible learning that both increases learner choice *and* improves learning (Nicol et al. 2004). However, a notable exception is the 'Pew Learning and Technology Program' (Twigg 2002), which demonstrated that course (re)design and the incorporation of ICT within programmes could provide learners, academics and institutions with an improved experience. One strategy was to individualise the programme starting with an audit of learner knowledge and an assessment of need, from which an individual learning plan was created (Twigg 2002, 17). The Pew Program was a large-scale project in which 30 American institutions participated, in three 'Rounds': five of the 10 projects in Round I reported 'improved learning', while preliminary findings from Round II suggest that six of the 10 projects show 'improved learning outcomes'. More significantly, Round III projects, though still in the pilot stage, have reported 'increased learning by students' in eight of the 10 projects (Twigg 2002, 20).

A model for analysing and implementing flexible programme delivery

This section outlines the development of a model for analysing and implementing FPD. This model can be viewed as a 'planning tool' or 'framework' that supports exploration of explicit and implicit issues in introducing FPD.

Implementation of FPD requires institutions to identify the key elements of flexibility that they aim to put into operation. Collis, Vingerhoets, and Moonen (1997; Collis and Moonen 2004) identify 19 dimensions of flexibility, which cut across all levels of management. These include flexibility related to time (time for starting and finishing a course, assessment, and pace of study); content (topics, choices related to sequence and learning resources); entry requirements (recognition of prior knowledge, experience and qualification); pedagogy (pedagogical approach, social interaction, language and resource generation); and delivery logistics (time and place for interactions, technology supporting collaboration, learner support mechanism and communication channels). Research at the Open University of the Netherlands is exploring a further dimension: the flexibility to study different parts of a course across a variety of institutions (Koper 2005).

Institutions also require a strategy for putting the agreed elements of flexibility into operation, and supporting them. Our model has been derived by combining the MIT90 framework (Scott Morton 1991), with the Collis and Moonen (2005) model of technology as a learning workbench.

The MIT90 framework was originally developed to analyse the effects of information technology on business processes (Figure 1). More recently it has been used to examine technology implementation in HE (Yetton 1997). The framework focuses on the interactions between five components: strategy; structure; roles and skills; management process; and technology: and is predicated on the idea that strategic success depends on maintaining alignment between the components. When one component, such as technology, alters, it is the task of successful management to bring the other components into alignment with it.

Drawing on the five MIT90 components we introduced the notion of institutional structures and strategy to Collis and Moonen's view of technology as a set of tailorable tools to manage learning (2005, 6) within a systemic context and set of processes (Figure 2). The interlinking of context, process and technology underpins Collis and Moonen's learner-centred concept of FPD; it puts the learner in control with technological tools that support learning processes within particular contexts.
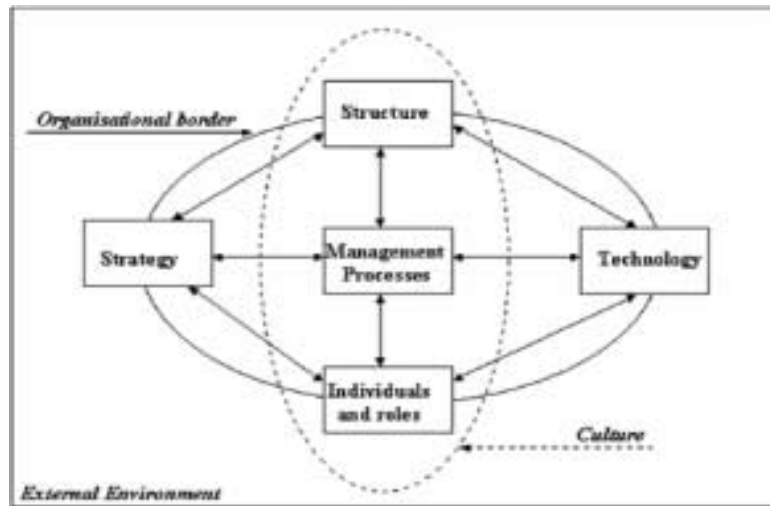

Figure 1.   The MIT90 model (Scott Morton 1991), taken from Nicol et al. (2004).

Figure 2.   Collis and Moonen model (2005).

In developing our model, we initially aligned the MIT90 'strategy' and 'structure' components with Collis and Moonen's 'contextual' factors, and 'roles and skills' and 'management process' with 'processes'. Subsequently, we explored the idea that strategy, or strategic thinking, is central to successful FPD, and the consequent implications of structural levels (IM, OM and TLM) within an institution. The significance of each of the components (context, processes and technology) seems likely to vary between different levels, but all need to be brought into alignment for successful implementation of FPD. Therefore we propose analysing the three components of FPD at each of the institutional levels using a three-dimensional model which enables multiple discourses within and between plane hierarchical layers, as shown in Figure 3.

This model provides a lens that enables stakeholders at each level to analyse key issues in FPD and work towards a 'best fit' in process, context and technology that aligns strategies not only within, but between levels.
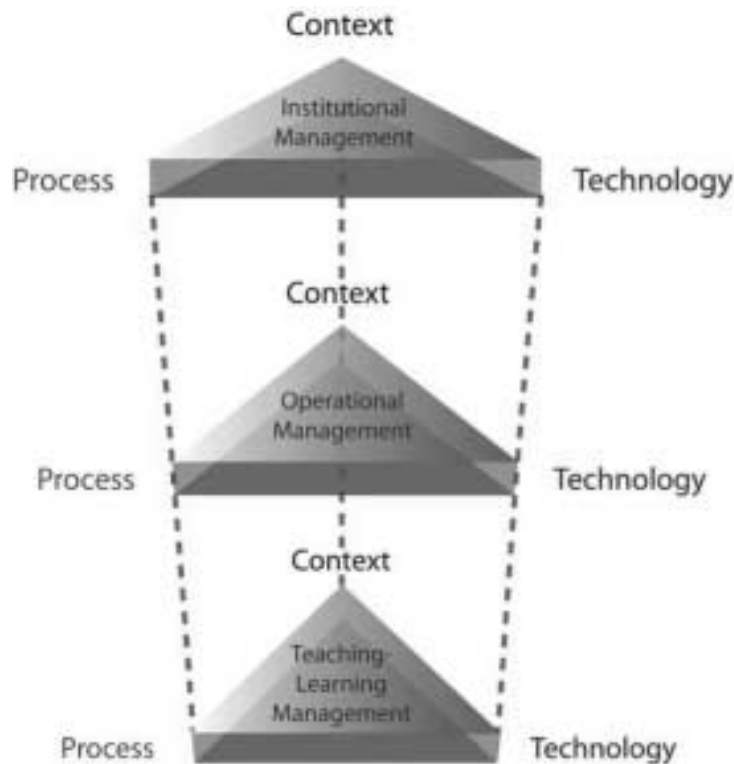

Figure 3.   Model for flexible programme delivery (Normand and Littlejohn 2006).

Using the model

Normand and Littlejohn (2006) have tested this model as an analytic tool through case studies of four programmes that include elements of flexible delivery from the UHI Millennium Institution (UHI) and the University of Dundee (UoD). The case studies reveal areas of flexibility and perceptions about flexibility within each of the programmes and at each level. The nature of the flexibility delivered was assessed using a pro forma based on Collis and Moonen's (2004) 19 dimensions of flexible delivery (Appendix 1), while management attitudes to the components were investigated using structured questionnaires which revealed perceptions of enabling and inhibiting factors across flexible learning programmes (Appendix 2). Each case study included responses from IM, OM and TLM levels, which reveal areas of shared understanding about flexibility and illustrate alignment/non-alignment between each management level.

Within this study we were not able to test the model as a tool for implementing FPD because we were working with established programmes. However, we envisage it being used effectively in planning for FPD in new programmes, by using the model, pro forma and questionnaire as the basis for 'round-table discussions' with IM, OM and TLM, which will reveal misalignments of context, process and technology, and highlight issues that need to be tackled to bring these components into alignment. This concurs with the view discussed by Shattock (2003) and emphasised by Nicol et al. (2004) that effective strategic management should be spread through the entire organisation and not be the sole prerogative of senior managers, and that change needs to be supported at many different levels simultaneously.

In another context, Casey, Proven, and Dripps. (2006) have adapted our model and developed a grid matrix to explore meaning and shared understandings between the different institutional levels during planning for implementing digital rights management systems. They have used these discussions to audit the competencies of actors, set targets and derive requirements for all levels of management.

Discussion

Each of the case studies reveals distinct viewpoints at each level. The IM responses all evidence a 'broad brush' standpoint, while the TML perspectives focus on specific issues surrounding pedagogy, support and integration of e-learning with face-to-face communication. The OM level of three of the four case studies reflects aspects of both 'top-down' or 'managerialist', and 'bottom-up', perspectives, concurring with the findings of Nicol et al. (2004).

All the case studies are examples of 'bottom-up' initiatives, having been instigated at TLM level by teaching practitioners, or at OM level with a learning and teaching concern, and it is hardly surprising to find the OM adopting a discourse that emphasises pedagogy, more frequently than a 'managerialist' discourse. However, three of the four studies reveal a good fit between adjoining levels (i.e. IM and OM; OM and TLM). This is concordant with Gleeson and Shain's (2003) view that the operational manager has a bridging role, drawing together bottom-up imperatives and top-down strategic objectives.

The mismatch of views that is evident between the IM and TLM may also illustrate discord between two types of flexibility: 'institutionalised' and 'instructor-offered' flexibility (de Boer 2004). Institutional flexibility focuses on cross-programme implementation and includes issues of entry requirements, access codes, number of intakes, and assessments. This type of flexibility is usually recognised at all three management levels. 'Instructor-offered flexibility' is more personalised and individualised, and includes flexibility between group members on assessment submission dates or attendance at face-to-face sessions. This type of flexibility is not usually recognised at the IM level, being viewed as an operational issue specific to the programme. de

Boer argues that, as universities adopt a more diverse student population, there will be a greater need for both types of flexibility (2004, 60).

All the case studies in our project are examples of 'bottom-up' programmes and reflect 'instructor-offered flexibility' with some aspects of 'institutionalised flexibility' evident. Further investigation is required into 'top-down' initiatives and the effects of 'institutionalised flexibility' (e.g. compulsory use of virtual learning environments; 24/7 campus).

The case studies illustrate ways in which the three-level framework can be used as a basis for discussion of alignment issues in established programmes. The case study questionnaires helped identify specific areas of match or mismatch across each of the levels. We intend to use this approach as a basis for round-table discussions involving IM, OM and TLM personnel to improve alignment where necessary and to develop implementation strategies that reflect perspectives from all three levels. The round-table approach is seen by us as most appropriate in moving away from viewing strategic management as located solely at the institutional level. Casey et al. (2006) are trialling this approach in their work on the TrustDR project. However, further study is required to ascertain whether or not alignment actually leads to improved implementation and student learning.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1. QAA flexible delivery case study outline pro forma

Programme Name	
SCQF Exit Level/Scotcat points	
Faculty	
Institution	
Programme Originator/Developer	
Contact Name	
Contact email	
Programme Overview	Programme outcomes, market, previous delivery methods, average cohort size, staff: student ratio, duration of programme, funding stream
Delivery Mechanism	Campus based, distance paper based, web based, student support arrangements
Main Flexible Features and Rationale	Flexible in terms of time, pace, structure, location, entry, exit, course content? Rationale for developing the Programme?
Learning and Teaching Approaches	How are learning and teaching strategies structured? Who supports the students? Are core materials provided centrally, shared, or individually developed? Who supports you and the Programme team?
Assessment Strategies and Arrangements	Are assessment strategies considered in terms of meeting flexible demands?
Evaluation to date and main changes	How long has the programme run in its present format? How is it evaluated? Are criteria different for flexible delivery? What have been the main changes and why?
The Areas of Flexibility Implemented in the Case Study	Do you think that your Programme offered flexibility to students in terms of one or more of the factors listed below? Place an 'x' at any of the relevant choices.

Flexibility related to time:

Fixed time ⟵----------------⟶ Flexible

1. Times (for starting and finishing course)
2. Times (for submitting assignments and interacting within the course)
3. Tempo/pace of studying
4. Moments of assessment

Flexibility related to content:

Fixed content ⟵-------------⟶ Flexible

5. Topics of the course
6. Sequence of different parts of the course

Appendix 1. *(Continued)*

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7. Orientation of the course (theoretical, practical)

8. Key learning materials of the course

9. Assessment standards and completion requirements

Flexibility related to entry requirements:

Fixed requirements ⟵------⟶ Flexible

10. Conditions for participation

Flexibility related to instructional approach and resources:

Fixed pedagogy and resources ⟵---⟶ Flexible

11. Social organisation of learning (face-to-face; group; individual)

12. Language to be used during the course

13. Learning resources: modality, origin (instructor, learners, library, WWW)

14. Instructional organisation of learning (assignments, monitoring)

Flexibility related to delivery and logistics:

Fixed place and procedures ⟵---------⟶ Flexible

15. Time and place where contact with instructor and other students occur

16. Methods, technology for obtaining support and making contact

17. Types of help, communication available, technology required

18. Location, technology for participating in various aspects of the course

19. Delivery channels for course information, content, communication

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Based on Collis and Moonen (2004, 10).

Appendix 2. QAA flexible delivery

1a. What do *you* think are the three main enabling factors within your flexible learning programme in terms of context? (By *context* we mean the learning environment, the level of study, the subject discipline, the organisation of the programme and any other issues related to context).

1b. Please list the three main inhibiting factors within your flexible learning programme in terms of context.

2a. What do *you* think are the three main enabling factors within your flexible learning programme in terms of process? (By *process* we mean the learning processes, social interactions, course design processes and/or administrative processes).

2b. Please list the three main inhibiting factors within your flexible learning programme in terms of process.

3a. Outline any of the ways that technology has contributed to the success of your programme. (By this we mean ways in which *technology* supported learning or administrative processes as well as social communications).

3b. Please list any inhibiting factors associated with the use of technology. We are particularly interested in situations where technology was not useful in supporting learning, administration or social activities.

Please answer each question as fully as possible. All responses will be anonymised and treated in confidence, though responses will be integrated within a final report.

Appendix 8

6.   New on-line teaching qualification for college lecturers: An evaluation of the use of Discussion Board fora

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Abstract

The paper focuses on a newly developed, highly innovative online, distance learning qualification for College Lecturers, delivered by the University of Dundee. The learning is facilitated through an interactive Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and uses a Constructivist learning and teaching approach. Initially, the rationale and design of the VLE will be discussed and this will lead into our research project which explores the efficacy of the Discussion Fora for participants on the programme. Our hypothesis was that the Discussion Fora would be central to the efficacy of the learning and teaching processes and activity. However, this was not substantiated as the level of engagement in discussion fora has been surprisingly, and disappointingly, low. This motivated our research into the underlying relationship between the user and the VLE interface, focussing on participants' identification of key factors influencing use or non-use of the discussion tool and perceived barriers and enablers. The data were obtained using observation of usage, and a questionnaire survey administered in two phases. The results demonstrated a range of factors impacting negatively upon usage, including, fear and uncertainty; perceived skill deficit; and dislocation from co- communicators. The paper outlines strategies developed to ameliorate perceived barriers and capitalise on perceived enablers.

Introduction

The paper focuses on a newly developed, highly innovative online, distance learning qualification for College Lecturers, delivered by the University of Dundee. The learning is facilitated through an interactive Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and uses a Constructivist learning and teaching approach. Initially, the rationale and design of the VLE will be discussed and this will lead into our research project which explores the efficacy of the Discussion Fora for participants on the programme.

The TQ(FE) programme aims to provide a comprehensive teaching qualification for experienced lecturers working predominately in the College Sector. Traditionally, this is delivered on a face-to-face basis; however, here at the University of Dundee we have developed a state-of-the-art, distance on-line learning programme supported by the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Britain and Liber (1999:10) state that the VLE used in an educational context '…is inherently more pro-active from the

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student's perspective…'. This correlated with our view, but was not evidenced by our participants' behaviour which was reticent in this environment and was tutor driven.

Distance learning can take many forms and is usually sought in situations where face-to-face contact is not possible, or at least for the most part. Increasingly, educationalists have been exploring more flexible delivery mechanisms and curricula for which the drivers are multifarious and complex, including: improving the quality of the teaching and learning experience and process (Yetton, 1997); the shift from short term, subject focussed learning to 'lifelong' learning (Bates, 2005, Lueddeke, 1999, Rigmore & Luke, 1995); the need to tap into a global market (Nicol et al, 2004); widening access, and embracing diversity (Yetton, 1997); social inclusion and employability agendas (Sangra, 2002, Rigmore & Luke, 1995); the 'new' knowledge society (Collis & Moonen, 2005, Laurillard, 2002); competition from other universities (McCausland et al, 2002, Yetton, 1997); and the private sector (Nunan, 1996, Twigg, 2002).

Our drivers were various and included most of the above, we were particularly drawn towards a mode of learning that promoted and supported the development of autonomous learning and facilitated participants' control of their own learning and decision-making processes. There is little hard evidence of programmes that have introduced flexible learning that both increases learner choice and improves learning (Nicol et al, 2004). However, a notable exception is the 'Pew Learning and Technology Program' (Twigg, 2002), which demonstrated that course (re)design and the incorporation of ICT within programmes, could provide learners, academics and institutions with an improved learning experience.

University tutors and College mentors encourage participants to become independent learners aware of their own learning styles, meta-cognitive processes and development needs. Through the interactive VLE participants are also encouraged to move towards collaboration with peers to foster a community of practice for greater efficacy. A Constructivist theoretical approach is adopted in the design of the VLE for this programme drawing from the work of Vygotsky (1978). The conceptual framework is premised on the notion that all knowledge is constructed within a social and cultural context. Vygotsky was actually interested in what the child (learner) could do with assistance rather than what they could do alone. His thesis was that the learner could transcend their developmental level when their learning was scaffolded by a teacher or more able peer and she or he was guided through the 'zone of proximal development' (Faulkner and Woodhead, 1999). In the Vygotskian model the role of the teacher or more able peer is critical, as is their use of teaching tools such as instruction, modelling, scaffolding and demonstration in guiding the learning process. Azmitia (1998) in her work with adolescents found that thinking could be changed and developed through peer collaboration resulting in a mutually shared, co-constructed view (Faulkner et al, 1998).

The VLE is constructed thematically rather than in a linear form, which enables autonomy in leaner choice, process and product. The learning units, which constitute the bulk of the programme content, operate independently and co-dependently with the discussion fora. Participants are invited to share their theoretical knowledge, extrapolated from the learning units, with peers on the discussion fora through

discursive exchanges about how the theory relates to their practice mediated by critical reflection. It has been argued that electronic communication tools may produce a different sort of reflection and analysis from face-to-face interactions but that guidance is needed for the learner in relation to using the tools (Putnam & Borko, 2000:11). Our belief is that this medium actually can enhance reflection and analysis because of its asynchronous nature which leaves space and time that may not be there with face-to-face interactions. Through stressing the dynamic interplay between theory-practice-critical reflection we attempt to firmly situate the learning. Situative theorists view cognition as something that is more than the individual's thinking, they state that it is situated within the social context, through interactive processes and that the context of learning shapes what is known and how it is known (ibid: 4).

Construction and co-construction of knowledge is fostered by the VLE design which is non-linear, interactive, and reflexive. Britain and Liber (1999:12) state that the VLE's 'most interesting role is as a medium for supporting constructivist and conversational approaches to learning. The authors' reference Laurillard's (1993) conversational model and develop it in relation to following "key characteristics': discursive; adaptive; interactive; reflective'.

Throughout the programme, participants engage in dialogue and reflection about their teaching, their learning and their learners' learning. To facilitate this process, participants are put into managed virtual discussion groups of around 15 people. Here they can access discussion fora fostering ongoing debate, discourse and engagement in peer and tutor support and critique.

With a distance learning programme such as this, we firmly believed that the participants would require additional support other than just the programme team and we were conscious of a need to nurture and develop peer supported collaborative learning. It was initially believed that the discussion board would go some way to develop these learning relationships and establish effective communication between our participants. Our views, on the collective need of our participants to have programme team and peer input, was substantiated by Holmes and Gardner (2006:106) who stated that: 'The more support a learner feels they have, whether through access to several tutors, external experts or peer colleagues on the same course, the more likely they will be well disposed to the course and will succeed'. This belief led us to undertake this research project and explore why the discussion board fora was not utilised as much as we had initially expected.

Method

Our research project began with detailed observation of the discussion fora usage. This was done through careful analysis of the data available through Blackboard and analysis of the Course Statistics. There were clearly limitations to this as we were able to analyse our participants' access to the discussion fora but not whether they engaged with the environment. As stated in Blackboard Library (2004):

> when viewing reports that include hit or access statistics, a hit is tracked
> every time a request is sent to the Blackboard Learning System. For

example, when tracking use of the Communication Area: a Student accesses the Communication area (1 hit), clicks Discussion Boards (2 hits), clicks a forum (3 hits), and clicks a message to read (4 hits).

With the course statistics we were able to identify that our participants were engaging fully with the VLE but not visiting the discussion board as regularly as we had expected and through checks made on the board itself we were able to see they were not posting threads. It was necessary to focus in on the particular aspects of our participant group's usage and ascertain whether they were in fact able and willing to use this communication tool effectively.

The questionnaire was chosen as the preferred method, as it enabled us to gather specific and accurate information. 'This is a complex process which involves presenting questions in a clear and unambiguous way so that the respondent may interpret them, articulate his or her response and transmit it effectively to the researcher' (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003: 8-10). As there were two specific areas that could potentially affect our participants' usage of the discussion group, we created two phases of questionnaire. The Questionnaire Phase 1 - was sent out to all our participants and investigated ICT familiarity/usage and ICT skills and efficacy with both users and non-users of the discussion fora. The results of this allowed us to identify participants who had varying levels of confidence in ICT, thus moving into the next phase of research which was to look more specifically at the discussion fora. Questionnaire Phase 2 – explored participants who actively used the VLE but did not engage in the discussion fora and sought to identify the perceived enablers and barriers to using the discussion fora. We selected a specific number of participants who engaged with the VLE and had been identified as having displayed high levels of confidence in their ICT skills and efficacy. We further categorised these participants in relation to their usage of the discussion board; with frequent, seldom and non - frequent users being identified categories. We selected 5 participants from each of the categories in order to give a balanced view of the discussion board from all perspectives.

Results and data analysis

Phase 1

Our sample for Phase 1 of the study, was sent a questionnaire electronically, by email, to 160 participants on the current 2006/07 programme (shown in appendix A in word format). This was an online questionnaire. Of the 99 participants who opened the questionnaire, 73 responded by filling in the online form within the two-week timeframe, which was 74%; however, the response rate for the total sample equated to around 46%.

We observed that the age range of the respondents was .predominantly in the over 35 category with only 28% of respondents under 35. This led us to explore the confidence of our participants in ICT in general, since ICT skills tended to be learned after leaving school with the over 35 age group.

We explored the participants' general confidence and use of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) in their own teaching a learning environment.

This enabled us to identify the role of ICT as an enhancement of the learning and teaching processes.

Figure 1.shows that the majority of respondents had a medium to high level of confidence in their use of ICT for both teaching and learning and it was from these data that Phase 2 participants were selected.
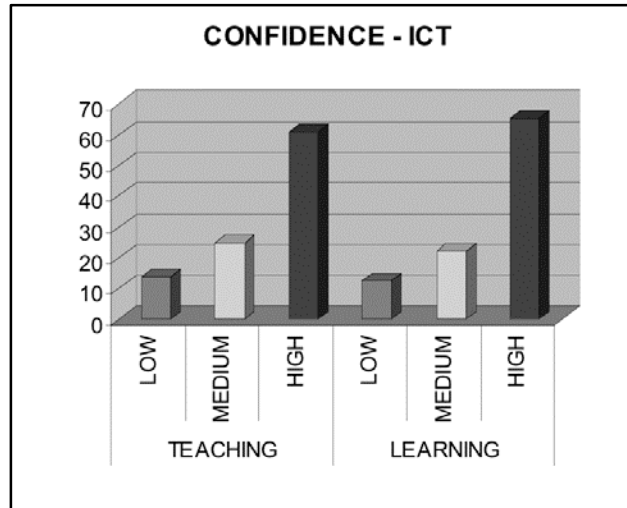

Figure 1 Participants' confidence in using ICT

Respondents were also asked to rate their perceptions of their ICT skills in a number of areas. Most of these areas related to their own teaching but some of the questions related to them as learners on the TQ(FE) programme. Most were confident and regular users of ICT and were able to perform basic tasks such as adding attachments to emails; downloading files from the web; and creating PowerPoint presentations. Most of the participants felt that ICT had enhanced their role as a lecturer and had enabled them to produce and engage with materials of a high standard.

As learners on the TQ(FE) programme the respondents felt a high degree of satisfaction with the online element of the programme. Figure 2. illustrates that there was concordance between respondents that using ICT was enjoyable and led to an overall sense of satisfaction with ICT and the VLE as a medium for learning.
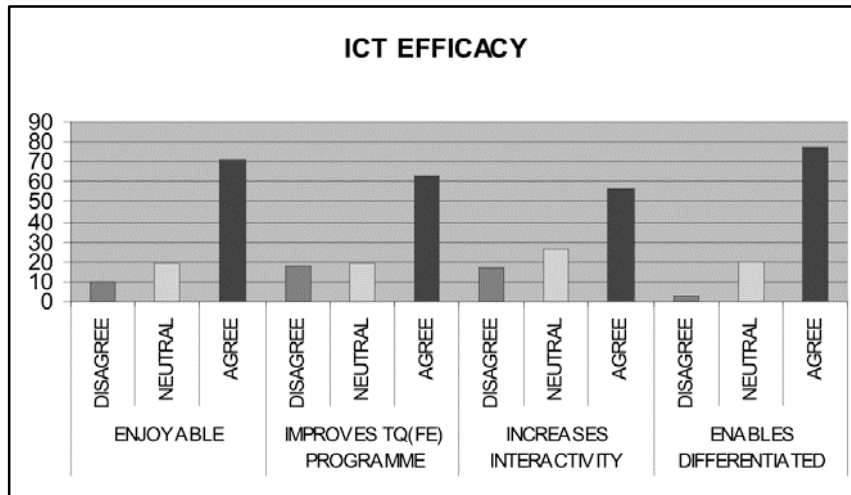
Figure 2. Self-perceptions of ICT skills and efficacy

Phase 2

Of the 73 respondents who took part in Phase 1, 15 were selected to take part in Phase 2 of the research. This involved sending out a more specific questionnaire (see appendix B), which related to the discussion board element of the VLE. Of the 15 selected, 11 responded within the 1 week time-frame, equating to a 73% return ratio.
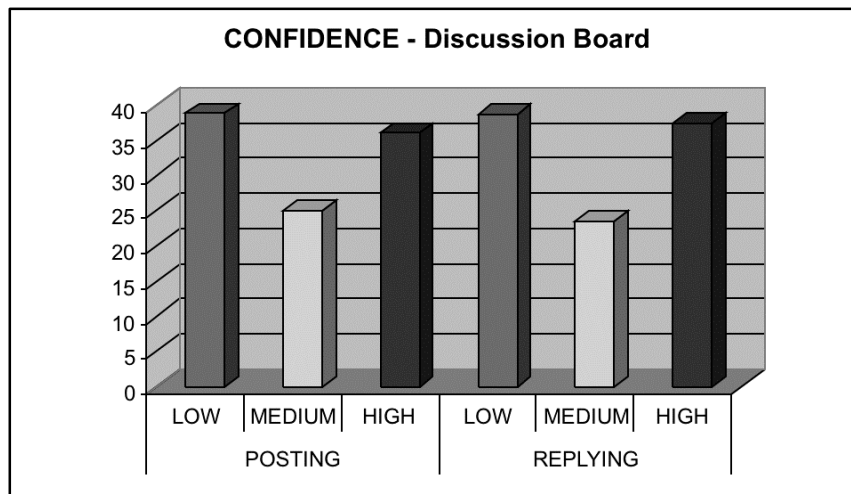

Figure 3. Participants' confidence when using the discussion forum

There was an immediate disparity between the previous questionnaires' findings, which suggested that our participants had a high level of confidence in their ICT skills and efficacy. We can see in Figure 3. that in the discussion board element of the VLE our participants did not mirror this confidence in the basic skills of online chatting, posting and replying.

Results: Phase 2

Despite having extensive experience in using ICT in both their teaching and learning environments our research highlighted the fact that 64% of the returns in Phase 2 had no previous experience of discussion boards or chat rooms. Much of the experience that participants had engaged with had been on a very basic level, with only three of the respondents having had widespread experience of the discussion board in their own teaching experience. Some general avoidance of discussion boards was evident with comments such as 'no interest or time for chat rooms' was recurrent.

64% found the discussion board easy to navigate around; however, some comments were made that they had difficulty getting in to the discussion board to begin with. One respondent stated that the 'discussion board' title was not used but once found in 'My Groups' it was easy to use'. Once they had connected to the discussion board the majority felt they were able to use the facility. More than half of our respondents did not engage with the discussion board with 55% stating they were not comfortable using the discussion board element. When this was interrogated, participant apprehension appeared to be due to lack of training in the mechanics of the fora and of a perceived dislike of the medium.

Communities of practice had been established to provide the students with small groups of online 'friends' to chat to in the discussion groups. These were called after famous Scottish birds and became known as the bird groups. 55% did not feel the groups had an effect on their usage of the discussion board. Only 18% of the respondents found these communities (bird groups) beneficial to their use of the discussion board with comments such as 'small groups can be effective but you still need contributors'. Contrasted to, 27% who found the groups to have no benefit to their engagement and, in fact, led to the following comments 'It has isolated me from all the others, because none of the other students in my bird group are contributing, anyone geographically near to me is in another bird group – I have no access to them for discussions' and 'I do not know who is in the group and I would prefer to know who I am conversing with'. Simpson (2003) discussed the anxiety experienced by discussion group participants at the presence of 'lurkers' because of the 'unequal distribution of speech' or 'class participation', which for him was graded, which may have increased the anxiety they felt.

Comments were also raised about students' preferences in who they wished to communicate with in the discussion board. 73% felt that they wished to engage with both their peers and the staff/tutors in the discussion board. 'It is true that a more frank and interesting point of view may come from a peer, where a tutor would be more constricted by the 'party line'. However, I don't have a preference and would value any discussion'. 9% would rather engage with their tutor/staff exclusively, adopting a pragmatic stance, for example, 'Most of my problems are course specific so I am more likely to contact my tutor'. This left 18% of the respondents who wished to engage in discussion purely with their peers.

Participants were asked to comment on how the discussion board had enabled them during their TQFE programme. These comments proved to be a mix of positive and negative experiences. Some of the respondents felt the discussion board enabled them to 'gain insight from other students' and helped them to share in information that

they might not have known. A recurring comment was that other users' ideas provided them with reassurance that they were 'on the right track'.

Our research enabled us to establish a pattern of similar responses and we grouped these as perceived enablers and barriers. It was evident through our respondents' comments that even those who had not engaged fully with the discussion board could identify situations that would benefit them in the use of the discussion board. We explored the positive comments that came from the questionnaire in Phase 2. The perceived enablers had the potential to provide the participants with a medium for both challenging and directing their learning. The opportunity was there to follow and join in with discussions as they progress.

A particular strength was seen to be the fact that points could be raised without these being challenged before they had been fully explained, as can often happen in face-to-face dialogue.

The perceived enablers were: -

- An ability to follow (history) and review a discussion

- An ability to communicate with distant others

- An ability to express own viewpoint without interruption

- An ability to read postings with different and unexpected points of view (challenging own ideas)

- An ability to reassure that the participants' ideas are 'on the right track'.

Equally important were the perceived barriers that our respondents felt impeded their engagement with the discussion board. We determined these in order to provide solutions, which would allow us to develop a better framework for the discussion board that would encourage use.

The perceived barriers were: -

- Too long a gap between replies to make it valid

- Inability to know who is reading the posts

- Only valuable if contributions are meaningful

- Uncomfortable with the idea of online 'chatting' with people

- Unsure of how to use the facility

- Fear!

Discussion and conclusion

In a recent study of undergraduate students by Caruso and Kvavik (2006) they found that 51% perceive that the most valuable reason for using technology in courses is for the convenience it affords with only 11% scoring communication with peers and

teachers highly. It was important for us to establish whether this trend continued with our distance learning participants. Our results show that the vast majority of our participants sampled felt that the discussion board element of the VLE was a valuable resource and would aid their learning. However, in its current format it was not meeting its full potential.

Response to research findings suggested that improvements were required to the discussion fora in order to foster meaningful interactions. Garrison and Anderson (2003:23) investigated what practices needed to be established to achieve a successful community of practice within the VLE and concluded that 'teachers and students transacting with the specific purpose of facilitating, constructing and validating understanding, and of developing capabilities that will lead to further learning'. They identify three key elements which are: cognitive presence; social presence; and teacher presence, and state that it is the balance of these presences that is important in the construction of communities of practice. It was clear from our participants that the aspect of social presence was an area that they were having most difficulty engaging with. Social presence is defined by Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2003:94) as 'the ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project themselves socially and emotionally, as 'real' people (i.e. their full personality), through the medium of communication being used'. Land (2004: 6) discusses the risks for learners associated with posting responses to a discussion group, especially as the may be 'tentative' and done in the knowledge that their 'contribution is likely to remain there, with all its feared inadequacies, for a considerable period...' He contrasts this with the 'ephemeral and evanescent' nature of the spoken remark during a face-to-face tutorial. MacDonald (2006: 153) also reported that many learners perceive the 'permanent record of the messages' they post as 'daunting'.

Kotrlik and Redman (2005:205) referenced the work of King (2003) who had cited four stages in the use of technology in learning, namely:

> ...fear and uncertainty; testing and exploring; affirming and connecting current knowledge; and a new perspective of using technology in educative processes.

This resonates with our study as usage was compromised by uncertainty and fear about the medium. As a result of our research a number of changes have been made to the structure of the discussion board fora.

Changes made: fostering a community of practice

- Participants now share personal email addresses to encourage communications at many levels
- Discussion Groups are arranged by level of study i.e. Postgraduate or Undergraduate
- Participants are taught by the same tutor
- At face-to-face workshops, participants are grouped together – peers and tutor.

These changes were identified as being in line with our respondents' need for a connection with the other participants and sought to encourage a social presence.

Our research had also highlighted dissatisfaction in the time taken to respond to their postings. This had been an area that the programme team had found concerning. How could we nurture discussion without being the dominant voices in the discussion board? Mazzolini, Maddison (2003) highlighted this issue and suggested that one should make one's presence known in the discussion boards, but not to dominate or overwhelm by too frequent posting. Posting too frequently leads to short discussions and fewer student postings; posting too infrequently leads students to believe the instructor is disinterested or absent. The role of the programme tutor is further explored by Salmon (2006:31) where she argues that 'The value of an online discussion can be very high so long as the interest and focus last. But there is no need artificially to extend discussions and plenaries'. We had to adopt a role as tutors that nurtured and encouraged discussions but only where they were relevant to the students' learning experiences.

Changes made: e-moderation increased

- Discussion Board has been renamed 'Your Discussion Groups'

- Nominated Programme tutors to check 'postings' regularly and encourage use

- Discussion threads are accessed directly from the Module materials, thus strengthening the link between 'talk' and learning.

In our research there was much comment made about a need for training in order to enable the participants to make full use of the discussion board facility. This has been addressed by providing our participants with 'hands on training' at our mandatory Induction workshop at the beginning of the programme. Participants are given the opportunity to post and reply to threads that are both social (perceived non-threatening) and TQ(FE) (subject specific) related. University staff are on hand in the small group sessions to provide assistance as and when required.

It was also established that although participants could benefit a great deal from this hands on experience, much of what was shown to them during induction was not retained. This led us to explore the use of Camtasia software, which provides a video with screen capture that leads the participants through the protocol required to find the discussion board, navigate around and post and reply. This feature was placed in the resources section of the VLE for participants to access as required.

The issue of students remembering and reacting to technical issues related to the VLE led us to develop a problem page facility within our VLE. The first phase of our research had clearly established that our participants had high levels of confidence in their ability to email, so we felt this was a comfortable environment for our participants to explore further issues. We positioned the link to the problem page (Auntie Effee) in a prominent position on the Programme Home Page and monitored the emails regularly. Participants can ask specific, technical or learning questions with relative anonymity as pseudonyms are used in the replies.

Changes made: training needs analysis

- Participants are inducted to the VLE and given specific, and grounded training

- Additional online support is available from University's support staff

- 'Camtasia' software is used to demonstrate how to use VLE discussion facility

- Programme specific advice is now available via a 'Problem Page' – Auntie Effee (this will generate a repository of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Quality online collaboration as part of the learning process takes an investment of time to develop and grow (Curtis and Lawson, 2001) and this is the process we now find ourselves engaged in. We have enabled these changes throughout our programme and will monitor carefully the results with the subsequent cohorts adapting and analysing as we go.

Now that we have established the practical facilitation of online 'talking', our next research project will explore an investigation of the quality of the 'talk'. This will allow us to explore the structures and interventions that may facilitate meaningful communication and encourage deep and creative learning. This will focus our research on a group of our learners who have engaged in the VLE discussions giving us a method for interpreting and reflecting on the impact peer discussions have on their learning.

Furthermore, we will explore participant characteristics as an indicator of the variables impacting upon online discussion. One line of enquiry will be the relationship between Learning Style and posting. Salmon (2004: 110) discusses this activity as a 'reading and writing medium'. We know from other aspects of the programme that some of our learners find this medium difficult and find expression through performance or demonstration to be their preferred mode. Salmon (2004: 111) argued that 'Reflectors' as defined by Honey and Mumford (1986) probably benefited the most from online, asynchronous discussions because of the increased time available for thinking before responding.

Prinsen et al (2007: 1037) reported that 'learner characteristics' such as, 'gender, socio-cultural background and ability' influenced participation in discussion fora. Wang & Lin (2007: 600) argued that self-efficacy and 'self regulated learning skills' influenced learners' performance on web based learning. That is, the learner's belief in her or his ability to succeed in completing the task, or what Pintrich and Schunk (2002) called 'the expectancy component' (Wang & Lang, 2007: 601). We intend to focus our future investigations on these areas.

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Enhancing practice

Flexible Delivery

A model for analysis and implementation
of flexible programme delivery

Carey Normand and Allison Littlejohn

Preface

The approach to quality and standards in Scotland is enhancement-led and learner-centred. It was developed through a partnership of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), Universities Scotland, the National Union of Students in Scotland (NUS Scotland) and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Scotland. The Higher Education Academy has also joined that partnership. The Enhancement Themes are a key element of a five-part framework which has been designed to provide an integrated approach to quality assurance and enhancement, supporting learners and staff at all levels in enhancing higher education in Scotland drawing on developing, innovative practice within the UK and internationally.

The five elements of the framework are:

- a comprehensive programme of subject-level reviews undertaken by the higher education institutions themselves; guidance on internal reviews is published by SFC (www.sfc.ac.uk)

- enhancement-led institutional review (ELIR) run by QAA Scotland (www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/ELIR)

- improved forms of public information about quality; guidance on the information to be published by higher education institutions is provided by SFC (www.sfc.ac.uk)

- a greater voice for students in institutional quality systems, supported by a national development service - student participation in quality scotland (sparqs) (www.sparqs.org.uk)

- a national programme of Enhancement Themes aimed at developing and sharing good practice to enhance the student learning experience, which are facilitated by QAA Scotland (www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk).

The topics for the Themes are identified through consultation with the sector and implemented by steering committees whose members are drawn from the sector and the student body. The steering committees have the task of developing a programme of development activities, which draw upon national and international good practice. Publications emerging from each Theme are intended to provide important reference points for higher education institutions in the ongoing strategic enhancement of their teaching and learning provision. Full details of each Theme, its steering committee, the range of research and development activities, and the outcomes are published on the Enhancement Themes website (www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk).

To further support the implementation and embedding of a quality enhancement culture within the sector, including taking forward the outcomes of the various Enhancement Themes, a new overarching committee has been established, chaired by Professor Kenneth Miller (Vice-Principal, University of Strathclyde). It has the important dual role of supporting the overall approach of the enhancement themes, including the five-year rolling plan, and of supporting institutional enhancement strategies and management of quality. We very much hope that the new committee, working with the individual topic-based Themes' steering committees, will provide a powerful vehicle for the progression of the enhancement-led approach to quality and standards in Scottish higher education.

Norman Sharp, Director, QAA Scotland

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

The Flexible Delivery Enhancement Theme

The Enhancement Theme Steering Committee for Flexible Delivery (established in January 2004) has implemented a programme of work to address the growing challenge faced by higher education (HE) institutions to develop and adapt their provision to allow greater flexibility for today's large and diverse student body, as part of the wider implementation of a learner-centred approach.

To this end, the Steering Committee adopted the broadest possible interpretation of flexible delivery, to encompass not only modes of study but also methods of delivery, together with underpinning support and infrastructure. Accordingly, its programme of work has sought to encapsulate a vision of a learner-centred model of pedagogy and learner support, appropriate to the needs of the individual learner, within a high-quality learning environment and supported by efficient, effective business and administrative processes. This work has been informed by exemplars of good practice from HE institutions worldwide, reflecting changing practice in learning and teaching to promote flexibility. It has also been informed by the outcomes from a series of workshops involving a number of international experts, together with UK and Scottish practitioners.

As a practical means of ensuring that the breadth of the Enhancement Theme was reflected in the scope of its development projects, the Steering Committee formulated a typology of flexible delivery, comprising the following key operational areas:

- flexible admissions
- credit, recognition of prior learning (RPL) and accreditation of prior experiential learning
- flexible programmes
- student support, advice and guidance
- continuing professional development
- collaborative partnerships.

This typology provided a framework to support the planning and implementation of a number of projects addressing different practical applications of flexible delivery; the outputs from these projects would provide a suite of tools to inform and support institutions, practitioners and learners in terms of both strategic issues and practical implementation.

A model for analysis and implementation of flexible programme delivery

This is one of a series of publications from the Flexible Delivery Enhancement Theme. It represents the outcomes from one of six development projects supported by the Steering Committee.

This publication provides a reference model for use by teams designing new or revised programmes across the Scottish HE sector. The model addresses the effective implementation of technology-supported blended learning and, in particular, the integration of technical services with pedagogical

and administrative processes. It aims to transform the way in which HE institutions consider flexible delivery and to provide a practical tool that will help them to achieve change. The reference model for technology-supported blended learning described in this publication has practical applicability across the sector.

The model, together with the associated *A practical guide to providing flexible learning in further and higher education* (Casey and Wilson, 2006), should allow programme teams to audit existing provision. It will also guide them in choosing the appropriate approaches and tools to best meet the needs of their particular groups of students.

Other publications from this Enhancement Theme

Other publications from this Enhancement Theme will address different dimensions of flexible delivery. This includes flexible entry and flexible programmes, with a focus on RPL and credit transfer in the context of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and curriculum design for achieving learning outcomes by a variety of routes and modes of assessment. In addition, there will be a survey of virtual learning environment (VLE) usage in the Scottish HE sector. The compilation of an on-line resource to facilitate access to information, tools and materials from JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) development programmes and the work of the Higher Education Academy will further assist institutions in enhancing flexible delivery within the context of their individual missions.

Project team

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A model for analysis and implementation of flexible programme delivery

Introduction

This study has been funded by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Scotland to develop a model to support further education (FE) and HE institutions in planning the implementation of flexible programme delivery (FPD). Included in this resulting publication is a literature review which explores the concept of FPD within FE and HE institutions. The aim is to highlight the key features of FPD, including explicit and implicit assumptions about why flexibility is needed and the perceived barriers and solutions to implementing it.

The model developed is for use by institutions as an auditing and analytical implementation tool for developing flexibility within teaching and learning. This model can be viewed as a 'planning tool' or 'framework' that supports exploration of explicit and implicit rationales for introducing FPD.

The model was developed through a review of the literature alongside an examination of programme team case studies exploring areas of flexibility. The rationale, impetus and drivers behind the introduction of flexibility were identified. From this, a model was developed to enable effective implementation of flexible delivery within a Scottish FE and HE context. A unique aspect of this study is that it has addressed issues in flexible programme delivery at three levels within institutions:

- institutional management (IM)
- operational management (OM)
- teaching-learning management (TLM).

Flexible programme delivery at three levels

At the IM level, decisions are made with strategic objectives in mind. It is often 'big picture' thinking, with little structure provided as to how the strategic objectives might be realised. The personnel involved at this level are principals, deputy/assistant principals or deans.

At the OM level, the operational managers are staff working at the middle level. They have responsibility for implementing strategic objectives coming from the top in a way that is consonant with their operational objectives. Personnel at this level are heads of faculty/school and programme directors/leaders. A key feature of this level is that is where budgetary control is usually located; this is significant in curriculum delivery - flexible or not - and resource management.

At the TLM level, lecturers carry out the strategic and operational objectives with explicit and implicit awareness. This level is primarily made up of lecturers who engage directly with learners.

The effect of having these three management levels - and the issues for them of flexible delivery - becomes apparent in the following three sections, which look at how flexible delivery is defined and conceptualised.

Defining flexible programme delivery

There is no single definition for FPD within the literature (Nunan, 1996). In fact, the term is used broadly to incorporate flexible learning and flexible teaching, and is used synonymously with other approaches, including 'open learning', 'distance learning' and 'e-learning'. This is not surprising, as within any flexible programme of study there may be elements of all these pedagogical approaches and modes of delivery. Perhaps the reason why there is no single definition of flexible delivery is that it has different meanings for different people.

In responding to this problem, an exploration of the context underpinning flexibility may reveal a particular perspective, which may in turn influence the decisions made and characterise the shape and nature of the concept(s). The purpose or function of flexibility within programmes is determined by many factors, both explicit and implicit, and these serve to shape its form. Collis and Moonen (2004) caution that vagueness about definition and usage of terminology may be 'counter-productive' to the aim of flexible learning because it may foster a narrow view and not reflect the possibilities and dimensions of flexibility (p8). The following section explores the meaning and usage of the terms 'flexible learning' and 'flexible teaching' within the literature.

Flexible programme delivery with a focus on learning and teaching

Institutions may have many reasons for choosing to introduce flexibility within their curricula. These include:

- improving the quality of the teaching and learning experience and process (Yetton, 1997)
- the shift from short-term, subject-focused learning to 'lifelong' learning (Rigmore and Luke, 1995; Bates, 2005)
- the need to tap into a global market (Nicol et al, 2004)
- widening access and embracing diversity (Yetton, 1997)
- the social inclusion and employability agendas (Rigmore and Luke, 1995)
- the 'new' knowledge society (Laurillard, 2002; Collis and Moonen, 2005)
- competition from other universities (Yetton, 1997) and the private sector (Nunan, 1996; Twigg, 2002).

These drivers are complex and may not be readily known to the academic practitioner, the learner and the wider social community, who may perceive flexibility within the curriculum as related to their individual needs and desires. However, they reflect the strategic objectives of the institution and are usually driven by government policy initiatives.

This strategic focus of flexible learning is often implicit and consequently is not reflected in the literature, which focuses more on moving the control of learning from the teacher or institution to the learner (Nunan, 1996; Twigg, 2002; Talbot, 2003; Collis and Moonen, 2004, p10). Therefore,

and according to this model, learner choice must be regarded as a central component of flexible learning. Collis and Moonen (2004) focus on key 'dimensions' of flexible learning that shift the emphasis from teacher-led to learner-led educational processes and choices (Appendix 1). For them, an important question is 'for whom is this learning flexible?'. From their perspective, learners should have control over their own learning. Many lecturers in FE and HE - ie at the TLM level - subscribe to this philosophy. At this level within institutions, flexible teaching and learning is driven by pedagogical considerations. Less clear, though, is how such flexible teaching and learning fits within an OM or IM concept of FPD.

Much of the literature considers FPD that focuses on **learning** and **learners**. However, the literature also points to dimensions of flexibility that concentrate on **teaching**, arising from individual innovative teachers (Littlejohn and Peacock, 2003; Collis and Moonen, 2004; Bates, 2005). This represents a 'bottom-up' approach wherein individual initiatives promote structural change at the micro level.

The most innovative examples of flexible teaching derive from the work of individual lecturers as they strive to find solutions to perennial and new problems. Widening participation, equality legislation, employers' demands and lifelong learning have all impacted on lecturers and necessitated new, often groundbreaking methodologies (McNaught, 2002). Lecturers' searches to identify ways of teaching in a flexible manner have led to a range of developments in programme design, delivery, assessment and use of new technology (Nicol et al, 2004). Surprisingly, this aspect of changing practice is not widely discussed in the literature, because teaching has largely been subsumed within the discourse on learning. There has, however, been a recent re-emphasis on the centrality of teaching within learning (Ramsden, 2005). The current prominence of 'professionalism' within HE and FE teaching adds weight to this argument (Furlong, 2000).

The danger of perceiving teaching as 'invisible' is that it is not assessed and evaluated in the same way as flexible learning and, to a lesser extent, FPD. One reason for this could be cultural, particularly within HE institutions, where lecturers are usually seen as having autonomy over their own teaching (Nicol and Coen, 2003). Another danger is that this micro level can be ignored by strategic and operational managers - not necessarily intentionally, but often through its 'invisibility'. If practitioners can find solutions at a local level, then they can continue to work innovatively and flexibly, discretely.

Several studies highlight this tension between the competing views of lecturers and senior management in relation to FPD, including e-learning. According to Nicol et al (2004), e-learning is frequently implemented through a 'top-down and bottom-up' model, which they refer to as 'two trajectories'. Although many institutions focus on one of these trajectories (ie either top-down or bottom-up), they also incorporate some aspects of the other. The 'top-down' approach is most commonly implemented in institutions with a 'managerial' culture - ie FE colleges and smaller HE institutions. The bottom-up approach is frequently implemented in institutions with a 'collegiate' culture, usually older HEIs (Nicol et al, 2004, p6).

The 'top-down, bottom-up' approach can lead to tensions in implementing e-learning. According to Gleeson and Shain (2003, p233), perceived 'polarised identities of senior management and lecturers' have led to 'a crisis of professional identity' within FE lecturers. In other words, there is a perception of disparity between the competing cultures of 'managerialism' and 'pedagogy' within institutions (Gleeson and Shain, 2003; Hellawell and Hancock, 2003). Lecturers may perceive a discord with what they view as 'management values', and may interpret these values as having a primary focus around financial and marketplace drivers rather than pedagogical considerations. Consequently, they may not share a common vision and may have a focus on different factors (Gleeson and Shain, 2003; Hellawell and Hancock, 2003; Normand, 2004, unpublished).

Gleeson and Shain (2003) report that these competing values (ie at the TLM and IM levels) may be mediated at the middle (OM) level. Successful integration may require 'strategic compliance', in which an 'operational manager' is able to engage in dialogue meaningful to staff at the other levels (Gleeson and Shain, 2003, p240). The operational manager should be able to articulate IM vision and values, while at the same time understanding the views of lecturers. To do this requires consideration of teaching and learning issues, while balancing these factors against cost. This is a major challenge for middle managers within FE and HE, and may compete with their personal values. Such conflict is experienced most acutely at the OM level because it is located between the two competing value systems at the TLM and IM levels.

Flexible programme delivery

The concept of FPD is used mainly in FE and refers to flexible learning, flexible teaching and flexible modes of delivery (ie distance learning and also blended learning). The means by which the teaching is delivered is regarded as critical by lecturer, learner, employer and institution, but they have different specific concerns.

When considering FPD, the lecturer asks questions such as: 'What will be the balance between facilitation and instruction?'; 'Will the materials be paper-based or electronic?'; 'What aspect of the programme will be flexible and what part static?' However, such reflection may not be known to the wider institution: it remains located at the TLM, operational level.

At the OM level, FPD is concerned with issues such as the mechanism of delivery as an 'output' or product. This perspective reflects an operational concern, but also has the potential to meet strategic objectives. Both TLM and OM perspectives are vital to successful implementation, and are inextricably bound up with successful teaching and learning.

Returning to the Collis and Moonen (2004) question, 'flexible for whom?', it can be seen that, in this model, the needs of the institution are the driving force. As institutions compete for students in a global marketplace, the impetus to find flexible solutions has increased (Nicol et al, 2004). FPD, therefore, could be seen as reflecting a managerialist perspective. Flexible delivery mechanisms have been viewed, implicitly, as a way of reducing costs and improving efficiency (Nunan, 1996;

Yetton, 1997). The contrary position to this - pedagogical needs and desires - may be considered invisible within this perspective, though Twigg (2002) refers to the use of e-technology as way of increasing quality in pedagogy.

Perhaps it is because so many of the concerns at all levels of management remain either implicit or invisible that there is little literature in this area. It may also reflect the more recent shift from 'flexible', meaning variations on face-to-face learning and delivery, to e-technology, ie electronically mediated learning and delivery (Nunan, 1996).

The development of e-learning and the virtual campus has resulted in significant costs for institutions, yet rarely is 'return on investment' considered (Collis and Moonen, 2004, p111). This is thought, at least in part, to be because of the difficulty in measuring the complex and diverse information sources. Most costing systems focus on a single aspect, for example, network costs or staffing costs. Moonen (1997) argues that the difficulties in costing arise from there being no consensus on inclusive frameworks. Bates (2005) states that institutions need to develop a cost structure that recognises the local context and cultural conditions, as these influence outcomes and analysis. Current workload models often do not take into account full staff costs, since they do not take into consideration the time required for on-line learning and teaching (Bates, 2005). This is attributed to institutions rarely creating the infrastructure to support the use of new technologies in learning. According to Bates (2005), technology tends to be an add-on to traditional classroom or paper-based distance-learning models rather than a planned, strategic choice (Nicol et al, 2004). Perhaps even more importantly, these workload models do not take staff development costs into consideration, particularly the extra time required for staff to learn how to teach in a new way (Bates, 2005). Nor do they have clear, measurable evaluation processes to assess real cost benefits (Nicol and Coen, 2003; Bates, 2005). As a result, teaching staff are often working under extreme pressure, compromising both the quality and long-term viability of flexible learning. Resistance to 'new working practices' has been identified as a major risk facing all institutions. In consequence, operational readiness for transformational change is deemed to be necessary at every level (Nicol et al, 2004, p8). The development of costing models which take a holistic view would appear to be essential for successful FPD.

Nicol and Coen (2003, p48) identify three distinct types of costs: infrastructure, value added and support. Infrastructure refers to the total cost of 'information and communications technology (ICT) assets'; value added refers to activities relating to teaching and learning ('the institution's primary objective'); and support refers to the administrative and academic support, including ICT (Nicol and Coen, 2003, pp48-9). From this position the authors have developed the INSIGHT model, which identifies costs and benefits through the appraisal of 'competing options', for example 'staff satisfaction' with 'student satisfaction'. The benefits of this model are that it takes in a whole institutional perspective, evaluates the tangible with the less tangible, and can be used as a decision-making tool for implementing FPD.

Implementation of flexible programme delivery

The implementation of FPD requires institutions to identify and focus on key elements of flexibility that they aim to put into operation. Collis et al (1997) identify 19 dimensions of flexibility that cut across the levels of management. These include flexibility related to:

- **time** - time for starting and finishing a course, assessment and pace of study
- **content** - topics, choices related to sequence, and learning resources
- **entry requirements** - recognition of prior knowledge, experience and qualifications
- **pedagogy** - pedagogical approach, social interaction, language and resource generation
- **delivery logistics** - time and place for interactions, technology supporting collaboration, learner support mechanisms and communication channels.

Research at the Open University of the Netherlands is exploring a further dimension: the flexibility to study different parts of a course across a variety of institutions (Koper, 2005).

The literature contains little hard, empirical evidence concerning programmes that increase learners' choice and improve learning through the introduction of flexible learning (Nicol et al, 2004). However, a notable exception is the 'Pew Learning and Technology Program' (Twigg, 2002), which demonstrated that through course (re)design and the incorporation of information technology (IT) within programmes, learners, academics and institutions could benefit from an improved learning experience. One strategy employed in the Pew Program was to individualise the learning programme, starting with an audit of the learner's knowledge and an assessment of needs; thereafter a specific learning plan was created to facilitate the individual's identified learning needs and requirements (Twigg, 2002, p17). The Pew Program was a large-scale project in which 30 American institutions participated, in three Rounds. The results of Round I stated that five of the 10 projects reported 'improved learning'. The Round II projects stated preliminary findings, which reported six of the 10 projects to have 'improved learning outcomes'. More significantly, Round III projects, though still in the pilot stage, reported 'increased learning by students' in eight of the 10 projects (Twigg, 2002, p20). As previously noted, surprisingly few studies report cost reduction as an explicit reason for introducing flexibility. This highlights a tension between explicit and implicit reasons for FPD.

A model for flexible programme delivery

This section outlines the development of a model for FPD. The model can be viewed as a 'planning tool' or 'framework' that supports the exploration of explicit and implicit rationales for introducing FPD.

Our model has been derived by combining the MIT90 framework developed by Scott Morton (1991) with the Collis and Moonen (2005) model for technology as a learning workbench.

The MIT90 framework, shown in Figure 1, was originally developed to analyse the effects of IT on business processes. More recently it has been used to examine technology implementation in HE (Yetton, 1997). The MIT90 framework focuses on five components: strategy, structure, roles and skills, management processes, and technology, which forms a central component.

We considered these components to be pertinent as they aligned with those of Collis and Moonen, yet introduced the notion of institutional structures and strategy. In our model we initially grouped 'strategy' and 'structure' as 'contextual' factors, and 'roles and skills' and 'management processes' as 'process'. Later, we began to explore the centrality of strategy (or strategic thinking) and structure (or structural layers within an institution) as being pivotal to successful FPD. These components sit alongside 'technology'. The result is a model with three main components: context, process and technology, as outlined by Collis and Moonen and illustrated in Figure 2. Our model builds on the Collis and Moonen model of technology (2005, p6) as a learning workbench, or set of tailorable tools to manage learning. It incorporates these components into a three-dimensional plane, which enables multiple discourses within and between hierarchical layers.

Figure 1: MIT90, Scott Morton (1991), taken from Nicol et al (2004)
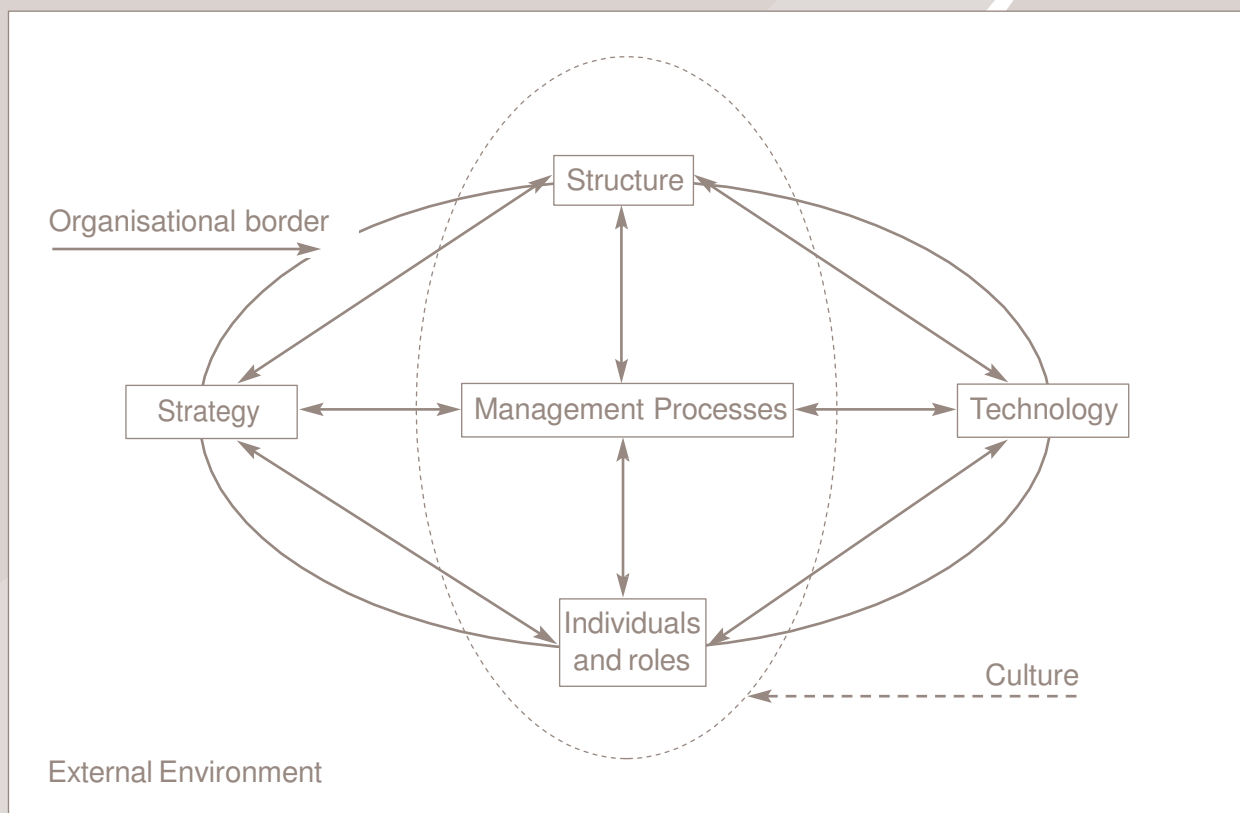
Figure 2: Collis and Moonen model (2005)

The interlinking of these three perspectives (context, process and technology) is important to flexible learning and delivery in that it can be used to put the learner in control through the use of technology tools that can support learning processes within particular contexts (Figure 2).

The significance of each of these perspectives - context, process and technology - is likely to vary across the different levels of any institution (ie IM, OM or TLM). Therefore we propose a model that analyses the three perspectives of FPD at each of these three institutional levels (Figure 3). This model provides a lens that enables stakeholders at each of these levels to identify key issues in flexible learning and delivery across each of the three perspectives. It can be used to identify a 'best fit' in process, context and technology across each of the levels.

Figure 3: Model for analysis and implementation of FPD
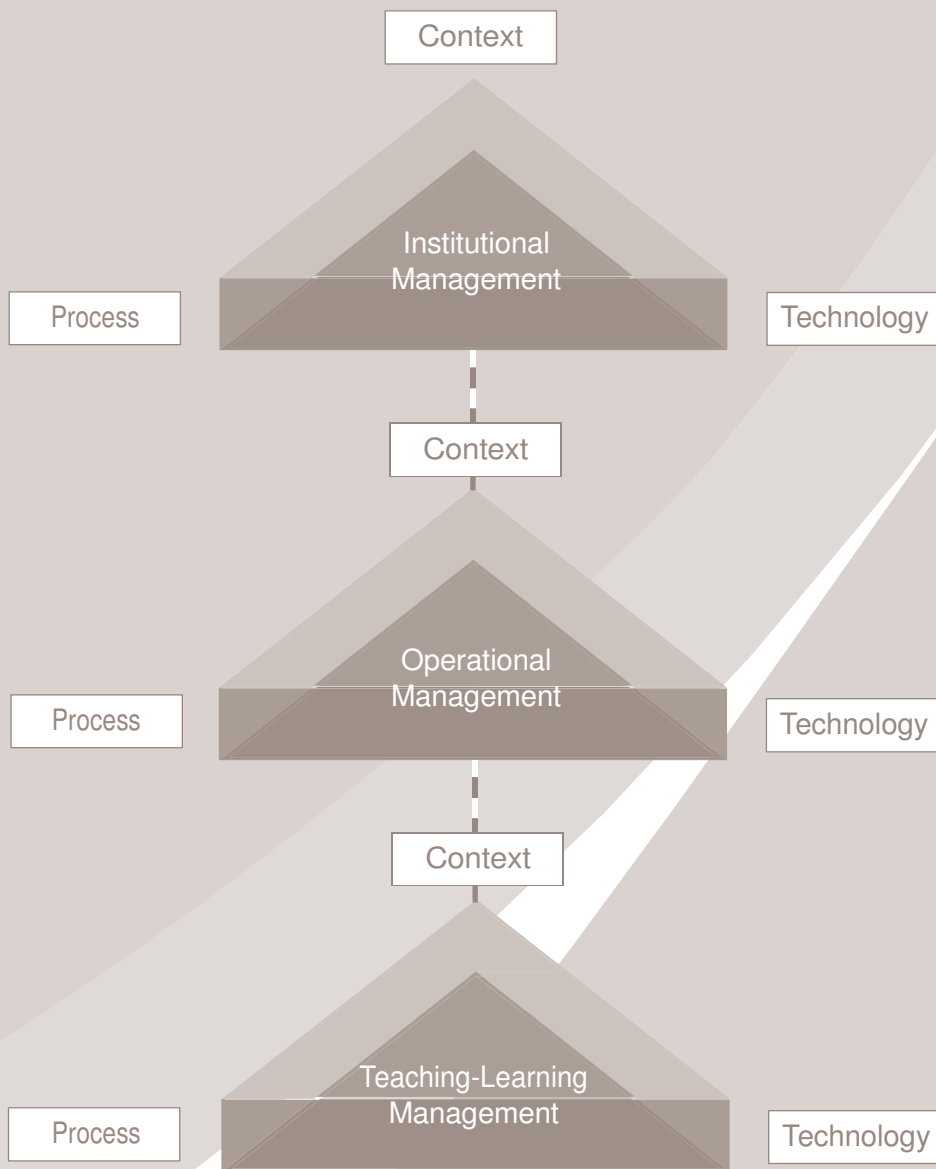
The model as an analytical and implementation tool

Within this study we were not able to fully test the model as an analytical tool for implementing FPD because we were working with programmes that were already established. However, we believe that it would be effective in the planning and analysis leading to the implementation of FPD in new programmes. Casey et al (2006) have adapted our model and developed a grid matrix that can be used in conjunction with it to explore meaning and shared understandings between the different institutional levels during the planning for implementation stage. Their work on the TrustDR project can be accessed through the website:
http://www.uhi.ac.uk/lis/projects/trustdr/work_in_progress.html

In our study, the model was tested as an analytical tool through the examination of programme team case studies from UHI and the University of Dundee. Completed questionnaires were received for all three levels for four case studies (see below). These case studies revealed areas of flexibility and perceptions about flexibility within each of the programmes and at each level.

Four case studies of flexible delivery programmes

For each of the case studies, responses were requested from individuals at each of the three levels: IM, OM and TLM (Appendix 2). Perspectives were investigated through the use of structured questionnaires that revealed understanding and perceptions of enabling and inhibiting factors across flexible learning programmes (Appendix 3). These questionnaires revealed areas of shared understanding about flexibility, and illustrated alignment/non-alignment between each management level. Case-study and questionnaire raw data can be accessed via the QAA Enhancement Themes website (http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/).

UHI and the University of Dundee have structural and hierarchical differences. Project participants representing IM at UHI were all assistant principals, whereas at the University of Dundee they were at deputy principal or dean level. Similarly, titles were different at the OM and TLM levels. However, the functional roles at each of the three levels remained similar between the two institutions.

Case study A

SCQF level 10

University of Dundee

Originated by a small team at OM and TLM levels.

The programme is in its second year of operation.

Programme overview: The programme aims to provide initial teacher education at secondary school level. It focuses on subject areas that are in short supply: English, mathematics, physics, chemistry and modern languages. The aim of the programme is to give students the opportunity to study to become secondary school teachers. This is the second year of the programme; year one had 27 students, year two has 63.

Delivery mechanism: The programme is predominantly a distance-learning one, supported by block face-to-face weeks, a VLE, email, telephone and work placements in local schools. This model of delivery has attracted students from the length and breadth of Scotland, as it meets the needs of participants living remotely to study flexibly in a way that reduces or removes the barriers of time and distance.

Main flexible features: location, content, time, pace. A blended learning model is used, with 11 weeks of on-line study, seven weeks of face-to-face study on campus, and 18 weeks in work placement (secondary school). The VLE can be used flexibly as a repository, a discussion forum, for peer and tutor support, for administrative support, for social interaction and for formative and summative assessment.

Case-study analysis: This case study illustrates a good fit between personnel at adjacent management levels, that is, between the IM and OM levels and between the OM and TLM levels, but not between IM and TLM. This is consonant with the literature on the competing values and considerations of the IM and TLM levels and the mediating function of the OM level.

Context: In response to questions about the **enablers** to flexible learning within the case study in terms of context, IM and OM agreed on improved access for students as a result of the 'any time, any place' dimension of flexibility. They also agreed on the linking of face to face contact with virtual 'contact' as another enabler. Both agreed that e-technology is a context enabler, as study can be done in the workplace or at home.

Interestingly, e-technology was also cited as a **barrier** by both IM and OM because of issues relating to access to adequate equipment and networking. This is a pertinent point within this case study, as 'adequate equipment' was given to all students in the first year of the programme's operation, but a strategic decision was made to remove this funding. So, subsequent students have had to buy their own computers, with varying specifications as a result.

OM and TLM agreed that isolation is a **barrier** for students after the initial two-week block face to face period.

Process: There was less fit between IM and OM in relation to process. However, there were more similarities when focusing on themes. Both agreed that staff are **enablers** when implementing flexible learning, but that this factor can also be a barrier.

OM cited staff time, which cannot be easily monitored, as a **barrier**. As student numbers increase (the numbers have more than doubled in the second year), the workload for staff increases. Yet this aspect is hard to quantify and, therefore, resource. This was echoed by TLM, who reported that as student numbers rise so does the difficulty in maintaining relationships with the students. This is consistent with Bates (2005), as discussed earlier. For IM, the concerns regarding staff were that they may not be suitably skilled and would require development/training to enable greater flexibility. IM posed the question of incentive and said that there were too few incentives for staff to prioritise flexible learning innovation, but praised the 'ingenuity and sheer hard work of staff' in delivering a quality learning environment.

Technology: There was good agreement in relation to the benefits of technology. All three levels identified the communicative aspects of technology and its ability to connect distance learners as an **enabler**.

It was agreed that **barriers** focused around the poor linking of university support services, such as the registry and VLE maintenance, as a major problem.

Discussion: This case study illustrates a difference in emphasis across each of the three levels.

The IM perspective is clearly 'broad brush' - eg 'resources and funding are (predictably) the main inhibiting factor'. Even with issues related to the case study, these transcend the particular to encompass the general (eg 'Degree provision without the learning technology to deliver it flexibly…is now unthinkable').

TLM focuses strongly on detail and practice rather than on broad objectives and strategy. The focus is on concerns around pedagogical issues at the micro teaching level. These include problems surrounding 'repetition of topics during the course' and 'navigating Blackboard'.

Although OM concerns are divided between the micro and the macro levels, the primary concern for OM remains at the micro level, for example: 'on site accommodation not suitable for the increased student numbers,' and 'small staff resource for teaching, with staff time not fully factored in'. This demonstrates in-depth knowledge and strong identification with the programme's pedagogical issues.

Case study B

SCQF level 9

University of Dundee

Originated by one person at OM level.

The programme has been running for several years and was revalidated in 2002.

Programme overview: The programme is designed as distance learning to enable a wide range of early childhood professionals to continue working while studying for a higher qualification. The students are professionals working in a range of early years settings, including playgroups, nurseries, child and family centres, international schools, and as development officers. The focus of the course is the exploration of key issues pertinent to the early years' sector.

Delivery mechanism: paper-based distance learning with face-to-face delivery if the numbers and geographical proximity allow. Tutor support is offered predominantly by email and telephone.

Main flexible features: time, content, pace, location. Students can choose from a range of modules, based on their interests and needs. Extended time for completion can be negotiated. Module materials are represented in a booklet that can be used flexibly. The programme is on a roll-on roll-off basis. Students can study in the workplace or at home, and can generate their own pace.

Case-study analysis: This case study reflects poor alignment between the three management levels. Interestingly, there was greater concordance between IM and TLM, challenging the thesis that adjacent levels would be more concordant.

Context: This concordance could be attributed to several of the responses being 'broad brush'. For example, with reference to context, IM and TLM agreed that students being able to study in their 'own time' is an **enabler**, which is a feature of this programme and any other distance-learning programme. IM and TLM also agreed that isolation is a **barrier** in relation to context. This is another specific-generic factor, ie specific to this programme, but also a feature of many distance-learning programmes.

There was some agreement between OM and TLM in relation to context, as both said that the 'level of student/study' is a **barrier**.

Process: There was no concordance in relation to processes for either **enablers** or **barriers**.

Technology: OM and TLM agreed on an **enabling** factor in relation to technology, citing administrative support as critical.

IM and TLM agreed that access to technology is a **barrier**.

Discussion: This case study highlights disagreements about the effectiveness of technology. OM views included: 'We have used technology, but this did not work for us,' and 'we are…still exploring whether and how to use more technology'. This contrasts with IM views on 'very limited' use of technology in the current programme, with some 'limited use of email' as an **enabler**. IM also cited 'no VLE' as a **barrier**. This concurs with TLM, who stated that 'communication is quicker via email, and tutor feedback can be more effective'.

In this case study, OM responses reflect an affinity with the pedagogically driven discourse. The OM, as programme originator, displayed a strong adherence to the current programme design, which does not include use of a VLE. This is consistent with Nicol et al (2004), who state that in older, collegiate HE institutions bottom-up initiatives are most likely to drive innovation, and that these initiatives may reflect the interests of individuals rather than focusing on strategic objectives.

Case study C

SCQF level 10

UHI

Originated by a small team at OM and TLM levels.

The programme is in its fourth year of operation.

Programme overview: The degree celebrates the diverse childhood experiences of those in the Highlands and Islands. It prepares students for a career in child and youth work and develops the skills needed to take further professional qualifications. It enables access by use of technology to fully support the learning experience, which appeals to those living remotely. The primary market is women who are home-based and/or working full or part-time.

Delivery mechanism: The programme is delivered on-line through learning materials and support on the VLE. Each student is assigned a local student adviser who provides ongoing pastoral and academic support for the duration of the programme. Tutor, peer and monitoring processes are structured for the on-line environment.

Main flexible features: on-line delivery, pace of study, time for study, digitised texts for reading programme material, place of study, on-line assessment, cyber café for social 'chat'.

Case-study analysis: Overall, there is greater concordance between adjacent levels, with some examples of agreement between IM and TLM. All levels are very focused on the specifics of the programme rather than general objectives - strategic or not.

Context: OM and TLM agreed that a major **enabler** related to context is that students living in geographically remote areas can access the programme. OM and IM considered the student adviser support to be an **enabler**.

There was no concordance with reference to the **barriers**.

Process: OM and IM cited 'teamwork of staff' and 'support' as **enabling** factors related to process. This time, IM and TLM agreed that the student advisers are **enablers**.

IM stated that an enabler (in relation to process) is the 'excellent delivery team who communicate regularly with each other,' whereas TLM stated that a barrier to flexible learning (in relation to context) is that 'with a geographically dispersed team, negotiation of solutions to complex issues agreed by consensus takes longer'. This appears to signal the difference between the 'ideal' and the reality.

All three levels agreed that organisational, business and administrative processes are a **barrier**. Problems with recording and tracking students were reported. OM reported that 'we need better links between academic staff and student registry systems at all delivery sites'. IM stated organisational problems 'associated with logging students onto modules from many sites'. This problem would have significant consequences for the institution, so it is not surprising to find IM highlighting it. Funding is related to student activity once a student is registered. The advisers, who are seen as an enabling factor within the programme, are only allocated to registered students. The control and coordination of several sites is an IM and OM responsibility, but the focus is strategic rather than operational.

Technology: TLM and OM agreed that the programme could not run without technology; this is the mode of delivery, which both saw as an **enabler**. TLM and IM agreed that the VLE (WebCT) is user-friendly. Of course, this is agreement about a generic factor rather than a programme-specific one.

There was no concordance as to the **barriers** related to technology.

Discussion: This programme has been running for four years, is fairly well established and is due for review. Personnel at all three levels have a clear view of strengths and weaknesses within the programme, but the issues and perspectives emphasised depend on the level. For example, IM cited student advisers as an **enabling** factor, yet recognised that this resource is very costly to the institution. This is traded with the realisation that the student adviser service enables students to 'keep on track'. It is not clear from the case study what, if any, return on investment is known. But the belief is there.

There is an overwhelming sense of making the programme work, which appears to come from strategic objectives within UHI to deliver 'highly relevant and up-to-date programme[s] that are available to all learners within UHI - no barriers to access' (IM). These objectives, though certainly subscribed to, are not paramount at the TLM level. Here, there is an acknowledgment that for staff there is 'poor supporting infrastructure for on-line delivery' (which is also consistent with the findings of Bates, 2005), and that 'under-funding and under-resourcing' exists for both students and staff.

In this case study, OM takes a mediating role and demonstrates an understanding of the other two perspectives and competing agendas.

Case study D

SCQF level 11

UHI

Originated by one individual at TLM level.

The programme is in its fifth year of delivery. It was revalidated in 2004 with minor changes to the assessments.

Programme overview: This on-line programme is directed at those whose employment may be wholly or partially dependent on specialist infection-control knowledge, and who require a holistic, scientifically based knowledge of all aspects of the discipline. It aims to enhance the professional practice and competence of practitioners and contribute to the development of professions in the area of infection control both within and outside the Highlands and Islands.

Delivery mechanisms: The programme is part-time with an emphasis on on-line distance learning. The only face-to-face meeting is at an annual induction weekend, though attendance is optional. Self-directed learning is encouraged and facilitated through the VLE. At registration, students are assigned a student adviser who mentors them and provides support for learning. Communication is student-tutor, student-student and within a tutor group of students. Group discussions are usually asynchronous.

Main flexible features: exit points (certificate, diploma, master's), time, content, pace, location, on-line, pedagogy.

Case-study analysis: This case study is consonant with the discourse that adjacent levels will be more concordant. The OM and TLM levels focus more on the programme specifics than IM, who discusses both micro and macro levels. There is a strong sense permeating the responses that this is a very good, perhaps even model programme.

Context: TLM and OM agreed that employing 'expert tutors' from the professional field is an **enabling** factor. The expert tutors are located throughout the country and are selected on their professional knowledge and expertise in this field. The distance model is an ideal vehicle for using remote staff. OM and IM agreed that the programme is in a 'highly topical subject'. All three levels agreed that the flexibility for students to study at their own time is an **enabling** factor.

TLM and OM agreed that 'lack of study time from employers' is a major **barrier** for programme participants in relation to context. They were also critical of the nature of computer access. All three levels stated that the reliance on expert tutors can be a **barrier**, as they have little control over them. They reported that this can create difficulties, as the expert tutors may have 'different priorities'. Interestingly, TLM and OM saw expert tutors as both a barrier and an enabler within the programme, for the reasons outlined above and below.

Process: OM and TLM cited the **enabling** aspect of 'administrative support' to the programme.

OM and TLM cited lack of face-to-face contact as a **barrier**. They also stated that there is a 'lack of human resources to meet OUVS [Open University Validation Services] requirements'.

Technology: OM and TLM stated that an **enabler** is that the course is available throughout the UK. This aspect was referred to again, when citing another enabling factor: that of the expert tutors being located throughout the UK.

IM and OM agreed that the 'downtime of computers' is a **barrier** for this programme. OM and TLM said that 'students not engaging in discussion' (because of the medium) is a **barrier**, as is 'access problems for students'.

Discussion: This case study demonstrates good alignment between OM and TLM, but poorer alignment with IM. It is an example of bottom-up led FPD, and illustrates the central role of OM. In this case, OM and TLM appear to share a similar vision for the programme. IM reflects strategic objectives, stating that 'the institution is not currently geared up to cater for overseas students'. IM also highlights the 'hidden cost' of administrative support in an on-line environment, and the lack of sector-wide 'benchmarks, against which we can measure ourselves, for the level of admin required'. This concurs with Moonen (1997).

Summary

Our three-level model for FPD can be used to capture a range of different perspectives across each of the levels. This is substantiated in the previous section, where each of the case studies reveals distinct viewpoints at each level. The IM responses all reveal a 'broad brush' standpoint, while the TLM perspectives focus on specific issues arising, for example, relating to pedagogy, support and the integration of e-learning with face-to-face communication. The OM level in three of the four case studies reflects aspects of both top-down and bottom-up perspectives. This is clearly illustrated in case study A.

All of these case studies illustrate bottom-up initiatives, with the OM adopting a 'teaching-learning' discourse rather than a 'managerialist' discourse. Three of the four case studies reveal a good fit between adjacent levels (ie IM and OM; OM and TLM). This is concordant with the view that the operational manager acts as a mediator, drawing together bottom-up imperatives and top-down strategic objectives. In part this is because OM personnel need to form an appreciation of strategic issues. At the same time, OM personnel have usually worked at the teaching-learning level and may have a strong identification with the 'pedagogical' perspective. The OM role can be seen to purposefully bridge the gaps between the two competing discourses.

This mismatch of views of the IM and TLM levels may also illustrate discord across two types of flexibility: 'institutionalised' and 'instructor-offered' flexibility (de Boer, 2004). Institutional flexibility focuses on cross-programme implementation and includes issues of entry requirements, access codes, number of intakes and assessments. This type of flexibility is usually recognised at all three levels. Instructor-offered flexibility is more personalised and individualised, and includes flexibility among group members on assessment submission dates or attendance at face-to-face sessions. This type of flexibility is not usually recognised at the IM level, as it is viewed as an operational issue specific to the programme. De Boer (2004, p60) argues that as universities adopt a more diverse student population, there will be a greater need for both types of flexibility.

The authors would like to note that since all the completed case studies are examples of bottom-up programmes, they tend to reflect instructor-offered flexibility, with some aspects of institutionalised flexibility evident. Further investigation is required into top-down led initiatives and the effects of institutionalised flexibility (eg compulsory use of VLEs, the 24/7 campus).

The case studies illustrate ways in which the three-level framework can be used as a basis for discussion on alignment issues in established programmes. The case-study questionnaires helped to identify specific areas of match or mismatch across each of the levels. The authors intend to use this approach as a basis for round-table discussions involving IM, OM and TLM personnel to improve alignment where necessary, and to develop implementation strategies that reflect perspectives from all three levels.

We see the round-table approach as most appropriate, as we wish to move away from a view of strategic management as being located at the institutional level or layer. Casey et al (2006) are trialling this approach in their work on the TrustDR project. However, further study is required to ascertain whether or not alignment actually leads to improved implementation and student learning. The authors acknowledge that this may not be the case. *A practical guide to providing flexible learning in further and higher education* (Casey and Wilson, 2006), also from this project, provides guidelines as to how the model and approach might be used by institutions as a framework for planning their flexible programmes.

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Appendix 1: 19 dimensions of flexibility (adapted from Collis and Moonen, 2004)

Areas of flexibility implemented in the case study	Do you think your programme offers flexibility to students in terms of one or more of the factors listed below? **Place an 'x' at any of the relevant choices.**
Flexibility related to time: Fixed time ← - - - - - - - → Flexible	
1 Times (for starting and finishing course)	
2 Times (for submitting assignments and interacting within the course)	
3 Tempo/pace of studying	
4 Moments of assessment	
Flexibility related to content: Fixed content ← - - - - - - → Flexible	
5 Topics of the course	
6 Sequence of different parts of the course	
7 Orientation of the course (theoretical, practical)	
8 Key learning materials of the course	
9 Assessment standards and completion requirements	
Flexibility related to entry requirements: Fixed requirements ← - - - - → Flexible	
10 Conditions for participation	
Flexibility related to instructional approach and resources:	
Fixed pedagogy and resources ← - - - - - - - → Flexible	

11 Social organisation of learning (face to face, group, individual)	
12 Language to be used during the course	
13 Learning resources: modality, origin (instructor, learners, library, WWW)	
14 Instructional organisation of learning (assignments, monitoring)	
Flexibility related to delivery and logistics: Fixed place and procedures ◄ - - - - - ► Flexible	
15 Time and place where contact with instructor and other students occur	
16 Methods, technology for obtaining support and making contact	
17 Types of help, communication available, technology required	
18 Location, technology for participating in various aspects of the course	
19 Delivery channels for course information, content, communication	

Appendix 2: Case study outline pro forma

Programme name	
SCQF exit level/SCOTCAT points (Scottish Credit and Accumulation Transfer Scheme)	
Faculty	
Institution	
Programme originator/developer	
Contact name	
Contact email	
Programme overview	*Programme outcomes, market, previous delivery methods, average cohort size, staff-student ratio, duration of programme, funding stream*

Delivery mechanism	*Campus based, distance paper based, web based, student support arrangements*
Main flexible features and rationale	*Flexible in terms of time, pace, structure, location, entry, exit, course content? Rationale for developing the programme?*

Learning and teaching approaches	*How are learning and teaching strategies structured? Who supports the students? Are core materials provided centrally, shared or individually developed? Who supports you and the programme team?*
Assessment strategies and arrangements	Are assessment strategies considered in terms of meeting flexible demands?

Evaluation to date and main changes	*How long has the programme run in its present format? How is it evaluated? Are criteria different for flexible delivery? What have been the main changes and why?*
Areas of flexibility implemented in the case study	*Do you think your programme offers flexibility to students in terms of one or more of the factors listed below?* ***Place an 'x' at any of the relevant choices.***
Flexibility related to time: Fixed time Flexible	
1 Times (for starting and finishing course)	
2 Times (for submitting assignments and interacting within the course)	
3 Tempo/pace of studying	
4 Moments of assessment	
Flexibility related to content: Fixed content Flexible	

5 Topics of the course	
6 Sequence of different parts of the course	
7 Orientation of the course (theoretical, practical)	
8 Key learning materials of the course	
9 Assessment standards and completion requirements	
Flexibility related to entry requirements: Fixed requirements ← - - - - - - → Flexible	
10 Conditions for participation	
Flexibility related to instructional approach and resources: Fixed pedagogy and resources ← - - - - - - - - → Flexible	
11 Social organisation of learning (face to face, group, individual)	
12 Language to be used during the course	
13 Learning resources: modality, origin (instructor, learners, library, WWW)	
14 Instructional organisation of learning (assignments, monitoring)	
Flexibility related to delivery and logistics: Fixed place and procedures ← - → Flexible	
15 Time and place where contact with instructor and other students occur	
16 Methods, technology for obtaining support and making contact	

17 Types of help, communication available, technology required	
18 Location, technology for participating in various aspects of the course	
19 Delivery channels for course information, content, communication	
Adapted from Collis and Moonen (2004), p10	

Appendix 3: Questionnaire

1a What do *you* think are the three main enabling factors within your flexible learning programme in terms of **context**? (By *context* we mean the learning environment, the level of study, the subject discipline, the organisation of the programme and any other issues related to context).

1b Please list the three main inhibiting factors within your flexible learning programme in terms of context.

2a What do you think are the three main enabling factors within your flexible learning programme in terms of **process**? (By *process* we mean the learning processes, social interactions, course design processes and/or administrative processes).

2b Please list the three main inhibiting factors within your flexible learning programme in terms of process.

3a Outline any of the ways in which **technology** has contributed to the success of your programme. (By this we mean ways in which technology has supported learning or administrative processes as well as social communications).

3b Please list any inhibiting factors associated with the use of technology. We are particularly interested in situations where technology was not useful in supporting learning, administration or social activities.

Please answer each question as fully as possible. All responses will be anonymised and treated in confidence, although responses will be integrated within a final report.

Interactivity or inactivity: a study of blogging in a professional teaching qualification programme for college lecturers

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Interactivity or inactivity: a study of blogging in a professional teaching qualification programme for college lecturers

Abstract

This study investigates the efficacy of a new blog tool in promoting learning and enabling social interaction and collaboration among participants on an innovative online professional teaching qualification programme for college lecturers. Participants were surveyed and some were interviewed to elicit the perceived influencers on participants' blog activity and, specifically, the impact of learner characteristics and self-regulated learning skills on participation. The findings highlight the complexity of factors that impact on learner participation on the blog, including learner characteristics, self-efficacy, ICT skills and motives. This has led to a redesign of blog structures to facilitate greater interactivity through collective efficacy.

Key words: online distance learning, professional learning, teacher education, blogging, social media, learner characteristics

Introduction and context

The Teaching Qualification (Further Education) (TQ(FE)), on which both authors teach, is a distance learning professional teaching qualification for college lecturers. The programme is accredited by the Scottish government and the General Teaching Council for Scotland. Embedded within the programme are the Scottish government's *Professional standards for lecturers in Scotland's colleges*, and it is the government's expectation that all new full-time lecturers should be working towards TQ(FE) if they do not already hold an equivalent qualification. At Dundee, the programme is delivered at a distance to practising lecturers already employed in the college sector.

The tenets of social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) are fundamental to the design of the TQ(FE) programme's virtual learning environment (VLE), which is provided via the Blackboard platform. The social constructivist theory of learning implies that knowledge and learning are constructed on an individual and collective basis. The approach stresses the social and cultural dimensions of learning and the notion that learning can be accelerated and enhanced through the facilitation of a more able 'teacher' (often a peer). In our VLE, learners are encouraged to engage with non-linear learning materials and in peer discussion in an online community of learning via a blog, which until 2009 took the form of the Blackboard plug-in blog tool (learning objects.com).

The following quotation from JISC's (2009) publication, *Higher education in a web 2.0 world*, perhaps oversimplifies, but captures the essence of what we have been trying to achieve on the TQ(FE) programme:

> Web 2.0 technologies fit perfectly with a particular pedagogic approach –
> the constructivist approach – which holds that learning is most effective
> when [...] undertaken in a community; and focused on the learner's
> interests.

Since the inception of our online version of the TQ(FE) programme in 2006, concerted efforts have been made to encourage learners to participate socially in the learning environment, in keeping with the European Communities' (2007) *Key competences for lifelong learning*, specifically competence 7 (digital competence). Part of the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence is 'an understanding of the opportunities and potential risks of the internet and communication via electronic media (email, network tools) for work, leisure, information sharing and collaborative networking, learning and research'. The final report of the large-scale (32 countries) European study into vocational teachers and trainers concluded that there was a need to develop 'social networks for the training and professional development of Vocational Education and Training teachers (VET)' through 'Technology Enhanced Learning', as this promotes 'the exchange of good practice and improve[s] the quality of VET' (Kirpal et al, 2009).

Aims and rationale of the study

For our study we were interested in the concept of 'learner characteristics', drawing on the Prinsen et al (2007: 1,037) study, which found that 'gender, socio-cultural background and ability' were all learner characteristics thought to influence participation in discussion forums. Other learner characteristics apply to this study, for example being/not being a 'digital native' and age.

Our interest in learner characteristics is borne out of our interests in factors that enable or impede learner participation on the blog, especially as participation has been argued to be an intrinsic part of learning (Wenger, 1998). Hrastinski (2008) identified six levels of conceptions of online learner participation ranging from 'accessing e-learning environments' to 'joining in dialogue'. The 'many-to-many' of computer mediated communication, rather than the one-to-one form of tutor to student or student to student, assumes that 'learners might benefit from reading or listening to their peers'. However, many studies focus on the level of participation as consonant with the level of writing posts (Hrastinski, 2008). In

our study, there is strong evidence of learner participation taking a 'passive' or non-written form but from participants' reports learning was effected by read only participation. Of course, offline we would consider reading to be active rather than passive. Hrastinski's definition of participation is useful as it sees learner participation as a 'process' which is 'complex' and 'comprising doing, communicating, feeling and belonging', thus moving away from a simplistic measurement of posting activity (Hrastinski, 2008).

Background literature

The term 'self-regulated learning' was a model developed by Zimmerman (2005; cited in Littlejohn et al, 2009) and can be defined as 'self-regulated thoughts, feelings and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals'. Self-regulation reflects an individual's disposition to direct their own learning towards stated goals and, in Zimmerman's (2005) model, has three stages: forethought, performance and self-reflection. The learner has goals that they want to achieve and strategies for how to achieve them. They also have notions about self-efficacy which affect their belief about being able to achieve their goals. Learner dispositions are located in perceptions about the self in relation to the affective, behavioural and cognitive domains and these will impact on perceptions about goal attainment. In addition, learning goals are not only individual but can be collective as in the case of group work or workplace goals, thus reframing goals from individual and fixed to collective and relational.

Wang and Lin (2007: 600) draw on social cognitive theory to frame and analyse the relationship between three key influences – 'personal, behavioural and environmental' – and 'to move towards the goal of helping students achieve high levels of self-regulated learning'. Personal influences include 'three motivational components': an 'expectancy component', which is essentially about a person's belief in their ability to do a task, for example self-efficacy; a 'value component', which links to the task and the person's questioning of *why*

they are doing it and how they value it; and an 'affective component', which is about how the person feels about the task, for example confident or anxious (p 601). We have found this theory to be useful in analysing our data: implicitly, in relation to why some participants chose to post on the blog and others did not, even within our experimental group; and explicitly, when we analysed the depth of the discussion on certain postings. The interview process enabled us to probe deeper and uncover the influencers for our participants' engagement and also to explore the relationship between these three influences.

Our programme design also draws on Laurillard's (1993; 1999) conversational model. Laurillard argues that academic learning depends on the acquisition of complex ideas and distinctions between ideas. In line with social constructivism, in the conversational model, acquisition of complex ideas cannot be brought about by the one-way transmission of information from teacher to student but needs to be negotiated through 'conversation' – with the teacher.

Laurillard stipulates that certain kinds of activities have to be incorporated into the VLE in order for academic learning to occur, not least the provision of appropriate forums for these 'conversations' to take place. Above all, the VLE needs to promote the active participation of learners.

In many academic disciplines – for example in medicine and life sciences – there is a core of non-negotiable facts which learners have to acquire. Many of these can also be acquired in social conditions – enabling learning to take place on a personal cognitive basis tempered by social negotiations (Wenger, 1999; Paschler and Daly, 2009).

Pedagogical innovation

Encouraged by our reading regarding the potential co-learning benefits to be gained from online communities of learning, we initially set up discussion groups and provided forums linked to our TQ(FE) learning materials and looked

forward to some lively discussion developing. Our idea was that, prompted by a suggestion in the materials at a pertinent point, participants would click on the discussion forum and participate in useful debate with peers and tutors. This, we hoped, would lead to some authentic social constructivist learning. However, this hardly materialised at all and for the most part our discussion forums remained very quiet indeed.

Curious as to why the discussion forums had not taken off in the way we intended, Normand set about some research with a former colleague. Among the conclusions of that research was dissatisfaction felt by participants about the amount of time taken for their postings to receive a response (Normand and Keatch, 2007).

Previous research, for example by Mazzolini and Madison (2003), has suggested that tutors can easily put off participants by dominating forums through frequent posting. The crux of the problem, though, is how to enable helpful discourse, thereby allowing participants to benefit from the advantages of social learning. It has proved a very difficult balancing act to pull off: to be simultaneously present, encouraging discussion, yet as unobtrusive as possible so as not to dominate or dampen dialogue.

Much of the literature on group work suggests that small groups are more productive in a face-to-face environment. See, for example, Brookfield and Preskill, 1999; Susan Wheelan (2009) cites a range of studies in various contexts all of which reach this conclusion; Michaelson et al's (2002) concept of team-based learning stipulates five to seven as the optimum number for small group activity in the classroom.

We started our attempts at encouraging interactivity on the TQ(FE) VLE with various small groups within each of our cohorts of students. However, after an initial flurry of activity at our face-to-face induction workshops, very little happened on our small group discussion boards. There were also practical difficulties in managing many small groups. With so many different discussion

forums, it became difficult for teaching staff to monitor activity effectively. This problem was compounded by there being no alert system in place so that both teaching staff and learners had to keep returning to a discussion area to see if there had been developments – often there had been no fresh postings.

Contrary to much of the literature, our own experience was that small online groupings were not productive. Students were not having those learning conversations. Feedback from our participants confirmed that they did not find the discussion groups helpful. Our Blackboard statistics suggested that after a few visits during the first weeks of the programme the vast majority of our participants did not return to the discussion boards. Occasionally a single participant would post something but often the discussion boards remained completely inactive. At this point we decided to abandon the small group idea and instead give those participants who did want to make use of the programme's interactivity a greater opportunity of meeting others on the VLE by granting everyone access to a new blog facility available via a learningobjects.com plug-in on Blackboard.

Here, with a population of some 200 potential participants on the blog, some peer-to-peer dialogue did materialise, but again, as had been our experience with the discussion boards, after a flurry of activity on the blog at around the time of the induction workshop, postings fell off sharply. This is where our current project comes into the picture.

Research design

Our research questions arose directly from our practice:

1. Why do so many participants not take advantage of the opportunity offered via the blog(s) to engage in programme/practice-related discourse with their peers?

2. How does this relate to learner characteristics and self-regulated learning skills?

3. Given the well-documented learning advantages of social interaction, how can educators best encourage learners (in our context, adult professional educators) to make best use of this opportunity?

4. Would a blog external to the Blackboard environment attract more interest and productive participation?

Method and sample

We now needed participants to trial the blog, so at a face-to-face workshop we invited attendees to participate in our study. Sixteen TQ(FE) people volunteered to take part and we attended to the consent forms immediately. We then arranged for all of them to have access to the site for the duration of the second of the two modules they studied to fully achieve the TQ(FE).

We made postings on the two different blogs and monitored activity, making comparisons between what happened on the Blackboard blog (to which the full cohort of 200 participants had access) and what happened on the WordPress blog (to which just 16 participants had access).

To elicit respondents' views on the WordPress blog we decided to take a three-pronged approach. First, we administered the first of two surveys via a short, purposely designed online questionnaire, which was sited via a link on the WordPress blog (see appendix 1). The questionnaire was constructed to find out about our respondents' experiences of blogging in an educational context, which helped us identify 'digital natives' amongst the group. Second, we added an identifier question to the online survey that all programme participants are invited to complete at the end of their studies so that we could compare our volunteers' answers with those of the full cohort. Nine of our volunteers took part in this survey. Finally, at the end of the research period, we invited the research group to participate in semi-structured telephone interviews; four participants agreed to this and provided us with some rich data.

Seventy per cent of our sample were women, which is interesting as the gender balance is 50/50 in the whole cohort, raising the possibility that women learners may be more predisposed to participate in blogs in the learning environment than men. However, evidence of participation on the blog did not substantiate this idea. Another explanation is that women participants wanted (felt more obliged) to assist us with our research, which led them to participate in the study. Of the four who agreed to the follow-up telephone interview, three were women.

All participants in the study were postgraduates, although in the full cohort of the TQ(FE) programme the ratio of postgraduates to undergraduates was 10:8 so we could have expected a more even distribution from the two routes. Interestingly, we found that postgraduates were also much more likely to participate on the Blackboard blog than undergraduates, suggesting that postgraduates are more confident about expressing/exposing their views in the VLE.

Age is another learner characteristic that could have an impact on participation in the online blog. Our research group would certainly not be defined as 'digital natives' as all participants were over 41 years of age. We have found (like Robinson, 2010) that the relationship between participation and enjoyment, or interaction and technical competence, cannot be assumed. In this study we had digital natives participating and positively appraising the medium and at least one highly technically competent person, a digital native by practice (working in the area of web design), who did not participate.

The relationship between subject discipline and participation is another interesting area of enquiry. In our research group, we had lecturers with a wide spread of subject disciplines, spanning hairdressing, accounting, maths, animation and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). However, interestingly, we had a disproportionate number of design lecturers (25 per cent), and this learner characteristic could be significant in relation to the visual and aesthetic component of this type of communicative media.

Our research group was representative of the whole cohort in relation to geographical spread, with representation from across Scotland and from both large- and small-scale colleges.

Our research is *theory-oriented* – we wanted to test theories about the learner and to develop theory in our specific context of the professional lecturer as learner (drawing on social constructivism and conversational theories). Primarily, however, the research is *practice-oriented*, in that we set out to solve a problem by direct intervention.

We started with the problem: there was a distinct lack of activity on the programme blog. We 'diagnosed' this based on our reading around online learning environments and feedback from our participants gathered through the quality assurance cycle. The TQ(FE) programme is evaluated annually by participants completing a questionnaire at the end of the session in which they are explicitly asked for their views on the interactive elements of the programme. More than 60 per cent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement 'I have found the blog a useful way of taking part in an online community'. We concluded that one possible explanation for the inactivity we had observed was the blogging tool available in the Blackboard environment. This lacks much of the functionality of other social media tools now available with which today's 'digital natives' are very familiar – some of whom include our learners, and of course their learners.

The next stage in the process was our design of a possible solution. This took the form of the WordPress tqfe2010 blog (tqfe2010@wordpress.com), which straightforwardly offered solutions to many of the blogging problems in Blackboard. Blog entries could be 'tagged', so the resource was searchable; a 'sticky posting' function allowed us to keep particular postings at the top of the blog (for instance, when we first gave participants access to the blog, we kept the 'welcome' message at the top of the screen to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to read that before its demotion). It was easy to use, both to set up

and for learner participation, and it was good to look at, particularly compared to its Blackboard alternative. Even just using the free online version of the blog, a host of themes was available, allowing us to create an environment that was easy to navigate and inviting to participants.

There were further advantages. We could include tabs with 'permanent' information (such as one we added with background information on the research for participants). Compared to the Blackboard alternative, it was extremely user-friendly for the educator. The 'blog roll' utility allowed us to include lots of useful links for our participants. But perhaps the greatest advantage was the facility the WordPress blog offered in the instant notification of postings/comments via email. This allows tutors to keep up to date with developments on the blog without actually having to visit it. Furthermore, we are able to reply to blog postings/comments by replying to the email notification – another terrific timesaver.

Results and discussion

The first statistic of interest to us is the number of hits on the two sites. During the period 19 February 2010 (the date on which our volunteers were given access to the new blog) to 30 April 2010 (when their coursework was complete), there were 485 hits on that site, compared with 434 on the Blackboard blog over the same period of time. Volunteers for our WordPress site were thus far more active than those on Blackboard.

In terms of user participation, while on Blackboard five tutor postings resulted in seven comments, on the WordPress blog the same five tutor postings resulted in 28 comments.

These are useful statistical data for our research question on whether a blog external to Blackboard would attract more interest. The answer is a definite yes.

But was the participation more 'productive' (ie pedagogically useful), as we had anticipated?

Comparing the texts of participant comments in the two blogs, there were noticeable differences between postings. In both blogs, there were examples of straightforward questions from participants to which their peers and tutors responded. The WordPress blog generated a much higher frequency of postings, demonstrating critical reflection on theory and practice. Our observations of this were substantiated by respondents' comments in the interview phase of the study.

One of our research group participated in both blogs during the research period, which points towards there being an explanation at least partly tied to our second research question about the influence of learner characteristics and self-regulated learning skills. We explored this further with our volunteers through surveys and at the end through semi-structured interviews by telephone.

The participants who took part in the WordPress blog were self-nominated. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that there was significant activity on that blog, since the very act of volunteering points towards users being predisposed towards this form of participation. This is borne out in data we collected from the surveys and interviews.

From the identifier question source, we learned that 100 per cent of our research group respondents agreed with the statement 'I found the VLE easy to use', in contrast to 70 per cent of the full cohort (of which 34 individuals responded on the survey; 17 per cent of the total) agreeing with these statements. This suggests that our group of participants was more comfortable in the online learning environment.

Some 40 per cent of our research group agreed that the 'blog [was] a useful way of taking part in an online community', compared with just 20 per cent of

the full cohort. In our study, there is some evidence of collective and relational goal-setting as part of an 'environmental' domain where the learner has to respond to situational demands. When commenting on the benefits of using the blog one volunteer said:

> [It] is a useful thing […] and will gradually get more use. The millennial students will be using it more to find other students and [this will] help them understand. Read someone's mind [through their postings] and here's another aspect of how to do this.
> (volunteer 3)

Asked in the semi-structured interviews 'What did you expect to get from using the blog? Did you get it? If so, how and if not, why?', our respondents' answers included:

> I thought it might be useful, for example, if I was struggling to see what problems others were having. Some of the problems discussed on WordPress I had too and that was helpful.
> (volunteer 1)

> It was useful to read others' postings and the tutor responses. For instance, I cut and pasted advice about a formative into my own writing and kept referring to it, whenever I was worried about whether I'd answered correctly or not.
> (volunteer 2)

> I didn't want to disturb my tutor with anything too trivial, so it was good to be able to get advice this way.
> (volunteer 2)

> It's interesting but I'm reticent of being part of this kind of community. Feeling that professionally I should be part. Don't want to be left behind.
> (volunteer 3)

> I know it's immature, but I felt too self-conscious to put anything up on
> the blog.
> (volunteer 4)

Our volunteers reported reading the posts of others regularly and only posting when they felt it would add something but 'not for the sake of posting it' (volunteer 4), which indicates learner awareness of learning strategies.

Several of our volunteers said they were motivated by the desire to familiarise themselves with technological developments in order to keep pace with their increasingly ICT-literate students.

Our research has provided us with lots of data, which we are using in our programme development for the next academic session. Turning back to our research questions:

1. Why do so many participants not take advantage of the opportunity offered via the blog(s) to engage in programme/practice-related discourse with their peers?

We have uncovered various reasons for this, the most frequently stated being the lack of time available to professional learners, who are balancing the demands of a full-time teaching post with those required by the TQ(FE) professional development programme.

Other factors that have been raised by our learners include:

• Satisfactory face-to-face support for learning in the place of employment when a) there are several learners in the same institution and b) mentors are actively involved in their learning
• As there is no direct assessment of the blog, it has a low priority for these very busy learners

• Had the WordPress blog been available from the outset of the programme (rather than half way through), this would have made a big difference.

2. How does this relate to learner characteristics and self-regulated learning skills?

We found that learner characteristics and self-regulated learning skills are important factors when it comes to participation in a blog. The blog environment particularly appeals to learners who are computer literate, intellectually curious and motivated by professionalism (keeping abreast of changes). Learners use the blog strategically. For example, one volunteer had belief in the value of the task but had questions about her ability to do the task. She also said that she had adopted a pragmatic stance and only contributed to a limited choice of activities:

> I don't think that my [postings] were incredibly useful – think I was one of
> the most unhelpful people on. Didn't give useful links. I looked at a few of
> the links given – think I was more selfish taking what I needed.
> (volunteer 3)

This concurs with Wang and Lin, who state that 'task value plays an important role in academic learning' (2007: 602). Furthermore, Gerber et al (2005: 37) found 'a significant relationship between the stance the instructor takes and … reasoning in student posts'. This was borne out by feedback from our research group, which suggested that our learners value tutor posts highly and that they are thought to guide the discussion:

> There was a discussion […] one on supporting learners and how much
> should be given. Carey, you posted something on that … and I think that
> the tutor input is significant and kept everyone focused.
> (volunteer 3)

3. Given the well-documented learning advantages of social interaction, how can educators best encourage learners (in our context, adult professional educators) to make best use of this opportunity?

Several of our group indicated that both accessibility (ease of use) and aesthetic qualities (they preferred the appearance of the WordPress site) were important. The timing of postings was likewise considered vital – most helpfully this would tie in with the participants' progress through the module materials and activities. This contrasted with a long-held assumption that participants would prefer to interact with the materials in an order of their own design (the VLE is highly flexible in this way). The study highlighted participants' desire to have greater temporal alignment between learning materials, collaborative blog discussions or activities, and formative/summative assessment.

Participants were reassured by reading others' questions as well as the ensuing response and/or discussion. This sometimes helped straightforwardly with understanding but it also offered different perspectives from their own, potentially leading to rich reflexivity in relation to their personal and professional experiences and how these impact on their professional activity in the classroom – exactly the kind of critical thinking that we wish to promote among our learners.

4. Would a blog external to the Blackboard environment attract more interest and productive participation?

Since our respondents were volunteers, we cannot definitively answer this question. However, the greater usability of the WordPress blog certainly points towards this. There was a good deal of feedback about the amount of 'clickery' required in order to participate on the blog – whether Blackboard or WordPress – and this is something we are still grappling with. On the whole, responses to our new blog were positive and encouraging, and we are currently devising a refined blog informed by our research.

Drawing on Bandura's theory of 'collective efficacy', the concern with 'the group's performance capability as a whole', Wang and Lin (2007: 603) have found that 'students with higher collective efficacy use more high-level cognitive skills during their group discussions'. This has encouraged us to explore the design to incorporate more opportunities for collective activity. An example is the introduction of peer critique, feedback and assessment. This is also pertinent because research has found that there is a relationship between high-quality feedback and higher-level critical thinking (Wang and Wu, 2002; cited in Wang and Lin, 2007: 604).

Early in this paper we outlined the various ways that we have organised and managed the large cohort (200) in discussion forums based on optimum group size and considerations about mixed levels (PG and UG), geographical location and subject discipline. We are heartened by Wang and Lin's findings, which show that groups are more (self) efficacious if the membership comprises a mix of 'high, middle and low self-efficacy members', as their interactions will be 'more meaningful' than those between members at the same level (2007: 606). This highlights for us the deep learning that can take place in heterogeneous environments.

Next steps

Since September 2010, our new WordPress blog has incorporated:

- TQ(FE) programme announcements: a series of postings timed to complement participant activity at different stages of the programme
- Our TQ(FE) tutor twitter feed (ideal for short news/reminders)
- A new series of FAQs, enabling a very helpful one-to-many approach.

All our participants will potentially benefit from this knowledge database, which is being constructed incrementally through the academic session, with

participant questions posted along with the relevant response and available to all via the blog's powerful search facility.

The new blog allows us to monitor participant activity closely and thereby enables a swifter turnaround for tutors responding to learners' enquiries and queries. The changes we have incorporated as a result of our research have noticeably increased participant activity on the blog site and at the end of the year we will be able to discover whether this has resulted in greater success or in a higher rate of completion of the programme.

Conclusion

Our findings highlight the complexity of factors that impact on learner participation in the blog and the difficulties in attributing the significant determinants impacting on participation. We are convinced by the importance of learner characteristics in relation to blogging behaviours, but need to drill down on this theme to tease out the learner characteristics with salience. We intend to do this through a comparative study of this group of professionals with other professionals (social work, early years practitioners, nursing/medics) also studying at a distance. We hope that by having a larger and comparative group to study we will be able to interrogate this aspect in greater detail.

There was considerable evidence that self-regulated thoughts, feelings, beliefs and actions (learner dispositions) impacted on goal-oriented behaviours. Interview data supported the three motivational components – expectancy, value, and affective – as powerful influencers on participation in the blog. Notably, beliefs about self-efficacy, the value attributed to the task, and personal feelings about one's ability and worth to do the task were all behavioural motives for our participants. This finding has led us to look at redesigning the blog structures to facilitate greater interactivity through discourse, collaboration with peers and critical thinking, through activities that will foster collective efficacy.

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Appendix 1: Online questionnaire

Q.1 Please indicate your gender *

- ⦿ Female
- ⦿ Male

Q.2 Please indicate your age range *

- ⦿ less than 20
- ⦿ 20-30
- ⦿ 31-40
- ⦿ 41-50
- ⦿ 51 and over

Q.3 Please indicate your length of teaching service *

- ⦿ less than five years
- ⦿ five to ten years
- ⦿ eleven to twenty years
- ⦿ more than 20 years

Q.4 Please give your main teaching subject(s) here *

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[                                                      ]
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Q.5 How often have you participated in an online programme as a learner? *

- ⦿ TQ(FE) is my first experience as an online learner
- ⦿ I have previously participated in online programmes as a learner
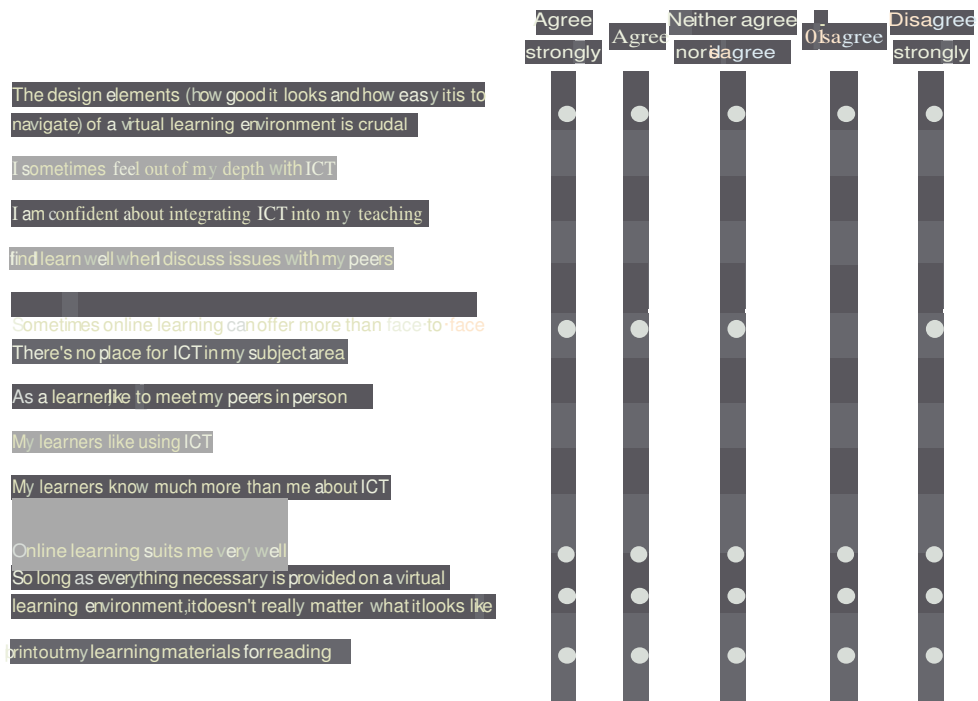
Q.6 Are you a blogosphere regular? *

- ☐ Yes, I frequently visit blogs
- ☐ No, I've hardly ever looked at blogs before
- ☐ I've set up a blog before for my learners
- ☐ I've taken part in a blog as a learner

Q.17 Please indicate your response to the following statements •

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
The design elements (how good it looks and how easy it is to navigate) of a virtual learning environment is crucial	●	●	●	●	●
I sometimes feel out of my depth with ICT					
I am confident about integrating ICT into my teaching					
I find I learn well when I discuss issues with my peers					
Sometimes online learning can offer more than face-to-face	●	●	●		●
There's no place for ICT in my subject area					
As a learner I like to meet my peers in person					
My learners like using ICT					
My learners know much more than me about ICT					
Online learning suits me very well	●	●	●	●	●
So long as everything necessary is provided on a virtual learning environment, it doesn't really matter what it looks like	●	●	●	●	●
I print out my learning materials for reading	●	●	●	●	●

Q.18 What kinds of uses might blogs best be put to in an education al context? •

If you already use a blog in an educational context, please also describe this here.

Appendix 2: Semi-structured interview questions

Participant name:

General

1 Did you use the WordPress blog? How? How often?

Did you use the Blackboard blog? How? How often?

If both, what differences did you find?

Learner characteristics

2a) Gender

What age band do you fall into?

What is the subject discipline you lecture in?

2b) What did you expect to get from using the blog? Did you get it *(Interviewer's note: this links to self belief/efficacy)?* If so, how and if not, why?

Self-regulation

3a) Can you comment on the postings made?

3b) Were you motivated to participate? What kind of participation *(Interviewer's note: e.g. written, read only, dialogic, social - was it through posting and, if so, what kind of messages e.g. ideas, resources*)?

3c) What did you get from it (this links to goals and feelings about participation/engagement)?
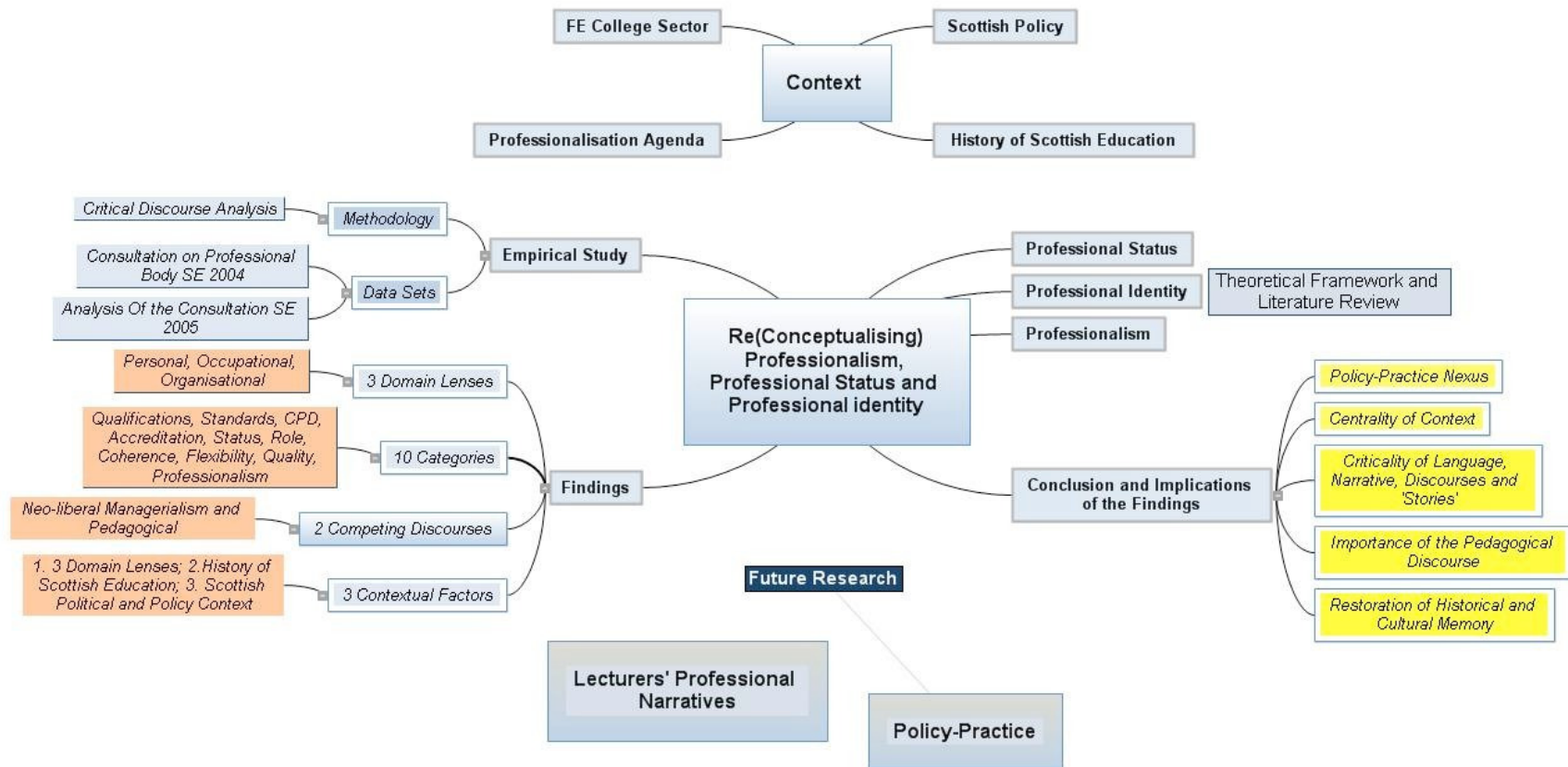
Usage and benefits

4. Were there benefits from using the blog (e.g. social, educational, other = temporal, spatial, technological) and, if so, how?

Any other points you would like to make?

Appendix 11

Concept Map

Appendix 12

Notes on Terminology and Titles

The College sector is a dynamic environment and over the past few years has changed the names of its key stakeholder organisations. There has also been name changes in the ruling Government in Scotland. In this study I have used the terminology that was used at the time of the publications. I will now do a mapping exercise to illustrate this and to avoid confusion.

Previous Name	Current Name
Scottish Executive	Scottish Government (2007)
Scottish Further Education Funding Council	Scottish Funding Council (2005)
Association of Scotland's Colleges	Scotland's Colleges: Principals' Convention (2009)
Scottish Further Education Unit	Scotland's Colleges: Next Practice (2009)
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education	Education Scotland (2011)