UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Graduate School

A Study Into Perceptions of Professionalism for Lecturers in One Further Education College in the South West.

Total Number of Volumes: 01

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Abstract

This research considers professionalism amongst lecturers in one Further Education (FE) college in the South West. Arguing that FE is quantifiably different from other settings, eight participants took part in semi-structured interviews. As a sector, FE is constantly undergoing changes (LLUK, 2010; TDA, 2012; Lingfield, 2012). Consideration of what professionalism means in FE is a growing, but still sparsely researched subject (Jephcote, Salisbury & Rees, 2008; Stoten, 2013), further confused by the broad nature of FE itself (Coffield, Edward, Finlay, Hodges, Spours and Steer, 2008).

Goodson & Hargreaves' (1996) taxonomy of post-modern professionalism was a framework to the consideration of professionalism and closest to my own ontology and epistemology at the outset. Participants were selected who shared the three 'lenses' of time, place and language with me (Cohen, Kahn & Steeves, 2000a), attempting to achieve deep, qualitative data (Kvale, 2007, Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). After each interview was transcribed, it was returned to the participant. A follow-up interview was then held where they changed the transcript to ensure more accurate meaning. This aimed to achieve the shared negotiated meaning sought in hermeneutics, but within the confines of this research (Young & Collin 1988; Collin & Young, 1988; Cohen et al 2000a; Flick, 2007b).

Six categories emerged with two prominent themes; gender and liquid supercomplexity. Initial analysis suggested that the male and female participants thought and behaved differently; the follow-up interviews indicated they often used different words for similar meanings. Although the complex nature of gender was highlighted throughout and as an issue for all participants, the extent and reality of it differed for each (Murray, 2006; Noel, 2006; Gunter, 2000) and it was overshadowed by the findings on supercomplexity.

Barnett (2000a) suggests the university is a supercomplexity, something so complex that it can not be solved; researching it adds to the problem. Participants expressed this dynamic of FE and, although they did not use the

term, there was enormous links with supercomplexity (Barnett, 2000a; Barnett, 2011). HE in FE lecturers explained that they were having to deal with not only the supercomplexity of FE but also that of HE. This I term ‘liquid supercomplexity’, adding in the notion of liquid modernity suggested by Bauman (2000) and I conclude it is the reality for my HE in FE participants. Barnett (2011: 109) suggests one future for the university is becoming a ‘liquid university’. I conclude that this role has already been taken; HE in FE professionals are stuck between the supercomplex university ‘rock’ struggling with change and the supercomplex FE college ‘hard place’ where change and flux is situation normal and professionalism must adapt.

Acknowledgements

There are a myriad of people without whom this piece of research would never have taken place. To those who I leave out I can only apologise and assure it is my lack of thought, not their lack of action.

Foremost thanks must go to my husband, Kevin and my sons, Alexander John and Thomas Richard. My children are the reason for everything I do and I am more proud of them than I can describe. Furthermore, I am fortunate enough to be married to a man who loves me unconditionally, supports me completely and who has never once doubted that I can do this.

My brother, Dr Tony Waters, has been an unfailing source of support for me since I was born. To have someone in my life who has given me so much without ever asking for anything back is to be truly blessed. He has been the translator of my life and I do not have the words to thank him.

To my tutors and supervisors, Cheryl Hunt, Christine Bennetts, Rob Lawy and Wendy Robinson, I must say an enormous thank you. Their support and encouragement have been unwavering and I could not possibly have come this far without them. Although her support has been unequivocal and completely above and beyond in terms of this thesis, I must extend my gratitude to Wendy on a personal note for sharing a story with me at a difficult time. In doing so, she gave me hope and that was what I needed more than anything in that moment.

And finally, of course, I have to thank my wicked stepmother, Mrs June Waters, who has taught me the joy of being, quite simply, a “common old housewife.” Her wisdom is as endless as her love, her encouragement and support limitless and I am truly blessed to be her daughter.

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Chapter 1. Context

Chapter Outline:

There is disparity between professionalism as defined and categorised by LLUK and the reality 'at the chalkface'. This research considers what professionalism means to lecturers in one particular college in the South West. In this chapter I contextualise the researcher, topic, participants and institution then outline the remaining chapters.

1.01 Preface:

This research fits broadly within the interpretivist framework; eight participants took part in semi-structured interviews discussing professionalism. It was influenced by a partially hermeneutic framework; transcripts were returned to the participants and amended for meaning and the participants were all individuals who shared the lenses of time, place and language with me. This chapter provides a context for the research giving a general context before moving on to look at the notion of professionalism in Further Education. The impact of policy, both in a historical and current context is considered, then my initial framework in relation to professionalism. Finally a brief context of the College and the participants is given before the following chapters are summarised.

1.02 Context

A series of events led me to realise that I define professionalism differently to Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) the body which identified professional standards for FE at the time of carrying out this research (2009 – 2010). In light of this I carried out a piece of qualitative research whereby I conducted semi-structured interviews with eight participants where we discussed professionalism. This followed reflection where I attempted to identify what professionalism means to me. My sense of self had undergone a number of changes in the years before I started the EdD, causing me to reflect on my values and beliefs and to consider my priorities, leading to a more solid notion of what I understand by 'professionalism'. Thus, I began to question whether others experienced the disparity I feel between my sense of professionalism and that espoused by wider sector governance.

The moment where this research started was where I used an analogy from *Winnie the Pooh*. As Christopher Robin pulls Edward Bear, down the stairs by his leg, Edward considers that he does not enjoy the bump-bump-bump of being dragged, but the bumping does not stop long enough to work out a better way (Milne, 1926, 2001). This analogy resonated with my own sense of place in my professional life and epitomised 'reflecting in action' as suggested by Schon (1984) in his seminal work on reflection. I began to make the distinction between what I could reflect upon with reference only to *Theoria* and what allowed me to make changes in *Praxis*.

In considering the focus for my research I realised I am both drawn to undertaking research as a tool to inform and improve practice (Avis, 2006) while maintaining a focus on professionalism from different theoretical angles. In light of this, it is pertinent to define *Praxis* and *Theoria*. Praxis goes beyond action based on reflection; Smith (2000) suggests that in praxis, action is based in

freedom, made by people who are independent and autonomous and is invariably risky. I feel strongly that this must be tempered with, and informed by, *theoria* considered here to be contemplation and consideration. Fundamentally, theoria seems to be akin to being a spectator, and a lot of the research done "on" FE by people who do not work there is very much in this category. Praxis, to me, is acting to change that which I see, that which I experience and know, with morality. The two must be utilised together for me, best summed up by Marx

> *The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.*
>
> (Marx 1845 *Theses on Feuerbach*: cited in Smith & Cuckson, 2002)

My notions of professionalism changed as I explored them and the next logical step was to try and come to an equally deep understanding of others' experience of the term.

Hermeneutic phenomenological research seemed to be the reasonable methodological choice in the first instance, which changed as the research took shape (Chapter 3). I initially decided that my desire to consider theoria and praxis would be best served by looking at individuals who were enmeshed in Praxis (lecturers) and those embedded in Theoria (fellow EdD students). This was a dichotomy I created out of a continuum and I returned to the first point of the research with a deeper understanding of what I was asking and why. This thesis was originally hermeneutic in nature, but word count and workload made this impossible, both of which were vital considerations (Montague & High, 2006). I focus on aspects of hermeneutics which most appeal to me – the notion of three shared lenses which all participants needed to be known to me through; time, place and language. Sharing these lenses with regard to our professional lives allows us to come a step closer to reaching a shared, negotiated meaning (Steeves, 2000a). It is through these hermeneutic lenses that beliefs, values and commitments of individuals can be studied and deep, shared understanding can be reached.

This research seeks to discover the meaning of the word professionalism for eight people who work in one specific FE college. It accepts there can be no single definition, but seeks to understand the term as it applies to, and is experienced by them. In order to provide a framework for this, I utilised the taxonomy of professionalism forwarded by Goodson and Hargreaves (1996). The reasons for choosing this were twofold:

a) It is closest to my own ontology and epistemology.

b) Originally forwarded as a theory of professionalism in post-modern society it is not sector specific. This fits with my own perception of a "lack of fit" for the FE sector in current literature.

1.03 Professionalism in Further Education

I believe that professionalism in FE is different to that in the school and the HE sectors. This research considers professionalism and professionality in a college which is very firmly part of the FE sector. This section will focus on my choice to look specifically at FE and to consider certain literature whilst choosing to largely ignore some key literature on professionalism in schools and HE.

There has been considerable research on professionalism in the field of education since the 1950s; whilst there is a plethora on the schools sector, there is a paucity on FE (Robson and Bailey, 2009). I want to consider the reality of professionalism in FE, the sector in which I have been employed for the last 20 years.

1.03(a) Professional Standards

FE has a different Sector Skills Council to schools and a different set of professional standards to both schools and HE. At the time of carrying out this research, the professional standards for teachers were laid out by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), although at the time of submission that has changed. The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) existed from 2011; in April 2013 it became the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) (HM Government, 2015). This research was carried out when the TDA standards were in place and thus will consider these. The TDA standards are hierarchical, linked to specific roles and assume a common point of entry and progression through teaching. Standards for HE professionals, the Higher Education Academy (HEA) professional standards framework lists the key characteristics of four broad categories of role in Higher Education and links them to the Dimensions of Practice which are likely to be relevant to that role (HEA, 2011). The LLUK for FE standards are non-hierarchical, overarching regarding job roles and make no assumptions regarding experience and qualifications. Research carried out by LLUK suggests that comparing the LLUK and the TDA standards correct at the time of this data collection highlights a more fundamental difference;

> [...] suggesting a different ethos and pedagogy underpinning each sector rather than significant differences in terms of the demands for professional rigour. These differences in emphasis are woven throughout the standards rather than emerging through direct comparison
>
> (LLUK, 2010: 5)

This research suggests that the differences are most apparent in four main areas of the LLUK standards:

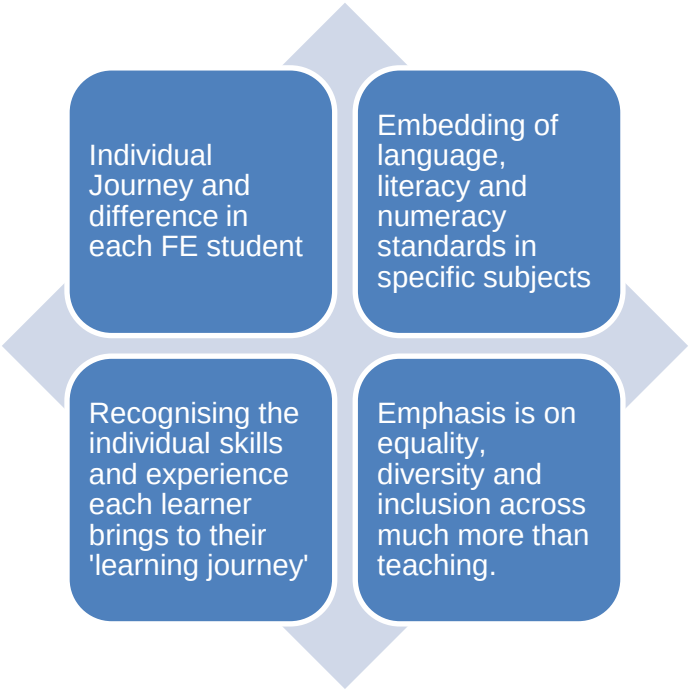


Figure 1: Areas of Difference in LLUK Standards

Since this research, the requirements for Professional Formation have been lessened and the TDA standards have been changed, as the TDA has disappeared. However, the differences were found throughout the LLUK (2010) research, which looked specifically at qualified teachers moving to FE and aimed to provide evidence-based findings which support induction for professionals moving from school to the FE sector. The requirement for 'Professional Formation' is highlighted throughout as it was then a requirement of entering FE to secure this within the first year of practicing as a FE lecturer. The findings suggest the overwhelming reason why people move is because of a perceived different 'ethos' in FE, one of social justice and diversity. It is worth noting that the lure is unlikely to be the lower pay and worse conditions of service.

The TDA standards of 2008 preamble discussed the rationale behind the standards (TDA, 2008) and gave concrete examples of each stage a teacher might progress through. This is very different to the LLUK standards and their predecessors, the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) standards for the Further Education Development Agency (FEDA). The development of FENTO in 1999 was a response to the concerns of the FE sector regarding lack of awareness of the sector in policy and practice. Prior to this, there was no requirement for a lecturer in FE to be qualified in their subject or indeed to hold any qualifications in teaching (Gillard, 2011). FENTO clearly put forward the ethos of FE in the first training standards for FE lecturers:

> Teaching in FE involves working with a wide range of learners, using diverse methods of teaching and learning [...] Change is endemic to the sector. Any standards, therefore, should seek to promote flexibility and adaptability. **The role of the FE teacher is extremely diverse and may change over time**, reflecting both the **developing interests of the teacher and the changing nature of the learner**.
>
> (FENTO, 1999: 6 my emphasis)

The TDA painted a noticeably different story with its own preamble.

> The standards describe how teachers should **discharge their professional responsibilities**, as contained in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document. They provide the **framework for a teacher's career** and clarify what progression looks like. The standards, and accompanying guidance, will support teachers to identify ways of broadening and deepening their expertise within their current career stages, or as they plan to move towards the next career stage.
>
> (TDA, 2008:3 my emphasis)

The new 2012 standards for the teaching profession has a brief and very concise preamble, namely

> Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.

(TDA, 2012: 7)

There is no mention here of the changing face of education, simply a reminder of the manner in which teachers must behave, of their individual values and subject knowledge. Certainly, the TDA standards which were in place when this research took place and those which followed it were concise in comparison to the LLUK standards of the time. The 2012 teachers' standards occupied an eleven page document, the HEA standards a mere 8 pages, whereas their LLUK counterparts were 20 pages with a 58 page annexe explaining the standards in more detail.

With such obvious differences in standards, it makes sense to look at professionalism as different. Professional standards are the foundation for professional practice; furthermore, the ethos behind the standards is noticeably different. I will now go on to consider how policy has affected FE to make it different from schools.

1.04 Historical Context

In April 1993 Colleges across the UK underwent arguably the greatest change any education sector has experienced in living memory. Colleges were no longer under the control of Local Education Authories (LEAs) and became independent corporations (Whitehead, 1998). Goodson (2006) states that policy has enormous impact on the professional identity of FE lecturers and their sense of professionalism, sense of self and even whether people wish to continue in the job. Due to the range of policy changes which have impacted on the FE sector, I focus on the time from 1993 and the incorporation of Colleges. I will briefly discuss the time before incorporation, but the main focus will be from 1993 onwards. This is for two reasons.

1. I was employed as an FE lecturer in 1995 and so that time is the structure of my own preunderstanding.
2. None of my participants worked in FE pre-incorporation, and so it seems both appropriate and relevant to focus on this time.

1.04(a) A brief history of policy affecting FE pre-1993

Hyland and Merrill (2003) suggest FE as a concept and sector entered the academic lexicon in 1944 with the Education Act. Green & Lucas (1999) outline five periods of history where FE has developed, noting the changes in social and political drives to policy.

The Elementary Education Act 1870 initiated compulsory state provision. Creating a compulsory education sector inevitably created a sector which was other to this. From around 1890, following the 1870 Act and a whole slew of government involvement, education transformed. Hyland and Merrill (2003) identify both advantages and disadvantages to this transformation (Figure 3).

The 1902 Education Act gave county boroughs responsibility for organising technical education. Hyland and Merrill (2003) note a doubling of student numbers in technical education between 1902 and the 1944 Education Act,

caused by development of public qualifications such as the National Certificate. By the end of World War 2, LEAs maintained more than 700 technical Colleges, despite the desperate economic situation of the war and post-war years (Panchamia, 2012). In response to the Percy Report of 1945, identifying low numbers of civil, electrical and mechanical engineers, a few technical Colleges were selected to develop new degree-level technology courses. These "Colleges of Advanced Technology", established in 1956, marked the onset of advanced further education which eventually led to the establishment of polytechnics in the 1960s (Hyland and Merrill, 2003). Following the Percy Report, the White Paper on Technical Education of 1956 recommended a new Diploma in Technology aiming to bridge the gap between education and work (Howard, 2009). These circumstances brought about increases in student numbers and firmly placed the focus of FE on feeding in to economic growth; a theme which endures in policy today. However, the courses that were on offer were limited in scope, gender imbalanced and often seen as a means of obtaining cheap labour in a time of economic crisis (Hyland and Merrill, 2003).

The 1970s saw a sector which had the same strength as weakness: diversity. Provision was uneven, verging on a postcode lottery in terms of availability and standard. As the 1970s and 1980s progressed, the shape of FECs changed into more or less what we see today, broad-based providers of education and training (Hyland and Merrill, 2003)

1.04(b) The last twenty years in policy

Hillier and Jameson (2003:16) note it has been "raining policy" on the FE sector for many years. The Further and Higher Education Act (1992) removed Colleges from LEA control. This, according to Hannagan, Lawton and Mallory (2007) turned FECs into businesses, changing them permanently. The Act aimed for a better deal for students, giving Colleges much greater freedom. Considering the effects of the Further and Higher Education Act (1992),

McTavish (2003) points out Colleges identified competition as being a major result of this change, alongside significant changes in numbers of senior managers and management structures. The importance of FECs being more economically aware had been recognised previously, for example, the Further Education Act (1985) granted LEAs abilities to set up companies and engage in commercial activities; taken as an opportunity by a number of FECs (Hannagan et al, 2007). McTavish (2003) illustrates the major change that the 1992 Act brought; the change in management style and structure. Management of specific curriculum areas became usual, often by middle managers rather than senior management. With this middle management role came increased responsibility for administrative and economic aspects of the business of education.

Hannagan et al (2007) identify a shift from the previous eras of public administration to New Public Management (NPM) with focus on hands-on management, explicit performance standards, emphasis on competition and greater discipline in resource use. The impact of this shift to NPM highlighted a major concern from the 1992 Act. As much as FECs were now corporations in their own right, there remained significant government directive and drive, in the form of ring-fenced funding and national standards (McTavish, 2003). Inevitably, the sector fell foul to over management at College level and corresponding lack of management at the overall system level (Hannagan et al, 2007). It is apparent that incorporation changed the expectations on lecturers; evidence suggests the main shift was from providing an educational service to meeting financial targets. Lecturers reported the changes in FECs post-1992 challenged beliefs and assumptions previously held for a long time (UCU, 2010). The push for success and achievement was juxtaposed against the drive to teach more hours to larger classes with individual classes being allocated fewer hours per week (Hannagan et al, 2007).

Post-incorporation, in 1998 the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) was created, quickly releasing the National Training Standards which became compulsory from 2001. All new entrants to FE teaching had to be trained and that training had to be endorsed by FENTO. These FENTO standards (Table 2) set out areas of improvement for teaching and supporting learning which were to be improved by initial training (Harkin, 2005). These standards reflected FE's change of status to policy makers. By 1993 FE was perceived as economically important, a vehicle for social inclusion and a means of providing education, ostensibly in that order (Lucas, 2004b).

Domain	Area of Improvement
A	Assessing learners' needs
B	Planning and preparing teaching and learning programmes for groups and individuals
C	Developing and using a range of teaching and learning techniques
D	Managing the learning process
E	Providing learners with support
F	Assessing the outcome of learning and learners' achievements
G	Reflecting on and evaluating one's own performance and planning for future practice
H	Meeting professional requirements

Table 1: Domains of FENTO standards

(FENTO, 1999)

The sheer amount of change experienced by the sector in the last twenty years is enormous; research has focused on policy and its impact on professionalism and professional identity. However, it is important to recognise that policy is not alone in creating change. Alongside policy changes, for example, the development of ICT brings a new dimension to education and professionalism. As ICT grows, types and functions of knowledge follow; eventually, teacher and

educator professionalism will need to shift to support new ways of learning (van Weert, 2006). In terms of policy, Ball (2008) suggests three main aspects of education policy which have impacted over the past few years;

- performativity policy
- privatisation policy
- changes in the modalities of the state.

These combine to profoundly change the nature of teaching and teacher professionalism (Ball, 2008). Barnett (2000) suggests performativity may be useful to measure issues of significance whilst acting to 'trap the unwary'. He points out that defining performance is discipline-specific, with limitless potential for difference. Furthermore, performativity requires focus on both discipline and applications of that discipline, rather than on one to the exclusion or detriment of the other. He postulates two performativity theses – one which focuses on the measurable outputs; economic gain, knowledge increase etc. This is part of the tradition of the university, continuing its processes and traditions. The second performativity seeks the same things, but sees them as ends in their own right, rather than the outcome of a university education. This leads to a reshaping of the university – the death of the traditional institution and the growth of more outcomes-focused activities. These two types of performativity are practical and epistemological, respectively (Barnett, 2000). This links with Barnett's notion of supercomplexity and the death of the university which I address in later chapters.

Performativity reflects changes in College cultures, with a shift towards working in ways similar to business models (Robson, 2006). The policy push towards performativity leads to both the individual and institution being visible and becoming subjects which can be measured through audits, appraisals, quality assurance and reviews, to name but a few (Ball, 2008).

1.05 Current Policy in FE

That FE exists in a state of policy flux is not in doubt. In this section, I will situate the reader in the 'now' and place FE in the context of time. It must be noted that I focus on situating the 'now' when the data was actually collected and so more recent changes are not considered.

1.05(a) Current policy and recent changes

Smith (2007) notes that New Labour's election in 1997 marked a fundamental shift in the ethos driving education; the Government sought to refine and develop the policies of their Conservative predecessors, not adopt a new strategy. This, Steer, Spours, Hodgson, Finlay, Coffield, Edward, and Gregson (2007) argue, fed the realisation that the state could not solve complex social problems with the 'band-aid' of simple policy. In 2001 compulsory teaching qualifications were introduced. Lucas (2004b) noted implementation of the FENTO standards was difficult, specifically with regard to their generality which led to difficulty in mapping the standards against pre existing courses. In 1998, the DfEE identified their requirements for the "new professionalism" of teachers (DfEE, 1998). Furlong (2005) suggests this showed the modern educator as someone working within strict and clear guidelines, abandoning autonomy over the content of their teaching. Jaquette (2009) notes that these guidelines were running concurrently to per-student funding introduced following incorporation, putting pressure for financial success on students' retention and achievement. This move, Watson and Crossley (2001) note, coincided with the move towards the 'Strategic Management Process' (SMP) in FE, previously the purview of the private business sector, focusing on decision making informed by priorities of institutional and economic survival. This process of management is inexorably tied up in issues of power and control, thereby making it a valuable and

worthwhile tool when implementing the massive change that incorporation offered.

One of the major recent policy shifts was the move towards compulsory CPD for all FE lecturers. This was overseen and administered by the Institute for Learning (IfL), a body formed in 2002, originally by members. The IfL became a professional organisation with compulsory membership overseeing the CPD requirements for FE in 2007 (IfL, 2013). This was suggested by Orr (2008) as a movement by the Government to “invent” professionalism for FE lecturers. Gleeson et al (2005) note that the mandatory CPD requirements led to an increase in tension regarding defining professionalism in FE, an increasingly politicised phrase. In 2009 the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) published “Skills for Growth”, the national strategy for economic growth which made clear that the IfL must be self-funding by 2014 (BIS, 2009). In response to this, IfL increased membership fees significantly. This was met with a boycotting of membership by the FE trade unions from March 2011 (UCU, 2014). Following negotiations, the IfL produced a number of concessions, including agreement to review the purpose and function of the IfL, however when balloted, union members rejected the concessions and undertook a boycott of fee payment. In September 2011, the government announced an independent review of professional development of college lecturers, including the role and effectiveness of the IfL. This Lingfield review recommended that IfL membership should be made voluntary, that compulsory CPD will no longer be required. The IfL announced, following the interim report of the Lingfield review in March 2012, that it would be returning to it’s previous role as a voluntary professional membership organisation. (IfL, 2013; Lingfield, 2012a). In both the interim and final report, Lord Lingfield emphasised the diverse nature of FE and how this presents challenges to the professional identity of FE lecturers (Lingfield, 2012a; Lingfield, 2012b).

Although the IfL was the focus for this policy shift, Orr (2008) notes, it too faced the 'dual identity' of many FE lecturers, it was a voluntary member-led organisation acting as a compulsory standard-providing overseer. The political pressure on the FE sector pushed very strongly for a specific professionalism which moved with the drive of the day.

> "We will only achieve this if our FE system is fit for purpose in meeting the two strategic challenges of transforming 14-19 education and up-skilling the adult workforce. This will mean major reform for Colleges and training providers, so that FE gains the esteem it deserves as the engine room of a successful economy, with the power to transform lives."
>
> (DFES, 2006, p. 10)

Orr (2008) notes the focus on FE as providing political change has been solidified in the development of the LLUK standards. Although a significant reduction from the FENTO standards they superseded, they are still 14 pages long, whereas the equivalent standards for Higher Education fit neatly on to one page. Newman and Jahdi (2009) argue FE is a sector held on a very tight leash, certainly much tighter than the equivalence in other sectors. The Lingfield report had wider implications than the reshaping of the IfL, all but one of the 2007 FE Workforce Regulations were revoked. In August 2013, the Education and Training Foundation was launched, the Guild suggested in the Lingfield review. Five months later, in January 2014, they began the process of reviewing the professional standards originally forwarded by LLUK in 2007 (Education & Training Foundation, 2014a). The outcome of this review is not clear, but it is fair to say that policy will continue to exert its influence and continue to create change in the 'Cinderella sector' (Simmons, 2008).

1.05(b) Differences in Policy:

Schools and colleges are different places putting different demands on their staff. Policy has driven them further apart in some ways, standardised them in others. However, any suggestion that the two professions are the same must be quashed by the fact that state school teachers were required by law to hold a teaching qualification in 1970; FE lecturers in 2001 (Bailey and Robson, 2002). In more recent changes, the introduction of free schools and academies and the Lingfield Review have brought about changes to these requirements which allow some types of schools and individual colleges to make more decisions in terms of their recruitment (HM Government, 2015; Education & Training Foundation, 2014a)

On 1st April 1993, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) removed colleges from Local Authority control (DfEE 1992a). This brings about an obvious difference in the conditions experienced between those working in the two sectors. FE has no national agreement on pay scale, hours of work, conditions or terms of service; these issues are dealt with responding to local demands and realities (Robson, 2006). The result has been an increase in number of teaching hours a week over more weeks each academic year since 1992 alongside increasing class sizes and less annual leave (Jephcote et al, 2008). Schools were also undergoing changes in this time with the Education (Schools) Act 1992 setting out a new OfSTED framework and the 1992 White Paper 'Choice and Diversity: A New Framework for Schools', the precursor to the 1993 Education Act (DfEE 1992b; DfEE 1992c). The two sectors were further apart than ever, government increased LEA control over schools parallel to removal of it from FE. The consequences of incorporation were enormous; FE was considered a sector in crisis (Robson, 1998). The transformation from collegiality to competitive market was not an easy one and FE professionals are required to work as both pastoral tutors, lecturers and members of a private business (Watson and Crossley, 2001). Alongside this, during the 1990s, FE had undergone incorporation but many of those working within the sector had,

on the advice of their union, refused to sign the new terms and conditions of their contracts, the sector therefore had people on ‘new’ contracts and those termed ‘Silver Book’ contracts with much preferable terms and conditions more akin to those of teachers, but with pay frozen (UCU, 2010)

There has been change brought about by policy which has affected professionals in schools, colleges and universities (Bailey and Robson, 2002). There is no doubting that schools and colleges share some aspects of their job; we are all in the business of education. However, the 2008 policy introducing 14 – 19 diplomas caused a realisation that Initial Teacher Training (ITT) in FE needed to change to meet the new challenges of school aged students in an FE college (Orr, 2010). Research by the NFER suggested that newly qualified FE lecturers should not be asked to teach 14 – 16 year olds in their first year, it was not something ITT in FE prepared them for. There is a difference in ethos between the two sectors and the bleeding in of schools into FE brings with it unique challenges which serve to highlight these differences (McCrone, Wade and Golden, 2007).

A fundamental difference is that the schools sector works with one defined group, whereas policy drivers have pushed FE to compete and diversify further than ever before. This was evident to me when I left a class of 14 year-old students and moved immediately to second year undergraduates. This situation would simply not occur in the schools sector; the flexibility of FE is such that this is one example of a very common phenomenon (Bailey and Robson, 2002). The definition of professionalism in FE is one which is questioned by the main union for FE, whose 2013 conference stated the need for a separate and unique understanding of professionalism in FE, not a restatement of the standards identified by either the schools or HE sector (UCU, 2013). It is this standpoint which I adopt throughout.

1.05(c) Differences in Professionalism:

Estelle Morris (2001), then Secretary of State for Education and Skills suggested that professionalism in schools has six main aspects:

Figure 2: Professionalism in Schools

This viewpoint fits the discourse promoting managerialist professionalism (Kennedy 2007). In the last decade there has been a growing, seemingly relentless, focus on professionalism in schools, dubbed 'New Professionalism' (Storey, 2009). This grew from the push for reform which has been consistent from government (DfEE, 1999; DfES, 2004; OfSTED, 2006). The changing face of school professionalism, a situation still very much happening, is another reason why I am focusing on FE specifically. Implementing the 'New

Professionalism' in schools has been, at best, problematic (Storey, 2009). Criticisms abound; it is contrary in its demands (Beck, 2008), it de-professionalises teachers (Mahony and Hextall, 2001), it leads to farcical notions of professionalism whilst breeding an ethos of mistrust (Stronach, Corbin, McNamara, Stark and Warne, 2002). These have led to calls for a rethink on emphasis in school professionalism, and a wider notion of the role of the teacher. Rather than embracing 'New Professionalism' literature suggests more attention should be paid to the values transmitted in teaching, seeking a less limited assessment of teachers' work and a re-professionalisation which combats years of de-professionalisation (James, 2000; Ball, 2003; Gleeson and Husbands, 2003; Avis, 2005; Beck, 2009).

There is evidence the gaps are closing; the 2010 White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching' suggests that schools should increase the flexibility of the National Curriculum, giving more autonomy and allowing focus specifically on inequalities across the schools sector, taking a broader approach than merely focusing on teaching (DfE, 2010). This was the most recent policy when the data was collected in this research. Since this, the coalition government has undertaken a number of changes, arguably fragmenting education further in order to meet local need and to devolve power (Lupton, Unwin & Thomson, 2015; DfE, 2013) However, no matter the change in the school sector, the fundamental difference between schools and FE is the learners. FE is part of the post-compulsory sector, offering education across the lifespan. Some idea of the diversity of students can be seen from the LSC stating three quarters of the just over 5 million learners in FE in 2006/2007 were over 19 years old (LSC 2007). FE can not be seen as the 16 – 19 'gap' between school and university.

1.05(d) Section Overview

Professionalism is individualistic and multi-faceted; I want to see what professionalism means to my colleagues. There are overlaps between schools and colleges but I feel the differences are too strong to focus on schools and apply it to FE. Professionalism is currently a focus for policy makers in FE. The introduction of the IfL and QTLS were the first stage in "Professional Formation" (IfL, 2009). This idea of having a goal which must be reached by the completion of the first year of service was reminiscent of schools NQT status and seemed to bring the two sectors marginally closer together. However, this was quickly discarded as impossible in FE and is now a voluntary undertaking where relevant and appropriate. I utilise writing on schools professionalism only where I see it as relevant to my own concept of professionalism and it fits with my initial framework.

It is worth noting here; this research has been influenced by hermeneutics, as it takes the most in-depth approach to reaching a shared, negotiated meaning (Cohen, 2000). Although it is not hermeneutic research, it does have hermeneutic influences, one of which was the construction of my initial framework, the first stage of hermeneutics (Young & Colin, 1988)

1.06 Initial Framework

I came to this research with a very clear initial framework for the meaning of the term "professionalism" which has three distinct aspects. I will now consider these in more detail

1.06(a) Professionalism as Praxis

I believe there are ways to behave and not to behave in relation to students, colleagues, managers and when representing my workplace. This includes starting and finishing class on time, marking promptly and following my internal codes of conduct with regards to dress and language, for example. This aspect of professionalism could be broken down in to my personal “checklist for professional behaviour” which links with the code of conduct policy document for the College and also with the LLUK standards (The College, 2009; LLUK, 2010).

This checklist would not be exhaustive as there is a need to maintain flexibility within the classroom context. Indeed, after twenty years as lecturer I am still regularly faced with new and surprising situations. Even in such situations, I could usually identify what was professional and what was not. I understood that there were grey areas where someone may be unclear how to behave, but I secretly believed that even those had a professional solution.

As far as professionalism as praxis is concerned, my initial framework falls very much into the notion that professionalism can be codified, rules can be created and certain behaviours are, or not, appropriate.

1.06(b) Professionalism as Theory

I experience the theory of professionalism as quite distinct from its praxis. I feel the theory of professionalism was analogous to looking at a brochure, an idyllic representation of a quite different reality. Further, I was quite sure that the brochure was written by someone who had not visited the location. Research on professionalism was done ‘to’ FE professionals and education professionals

generally, rather than 'by' them, unlike research in HE (Child, 2009). The ideas put forward in both current and less contemporary research were representations but, since I was working in the reality on a day to day basis, I was the one that had the real insider knowledge. Theories of professionalism were seeking to explain the complexity of FE, a sector unlike any other (Orr, 2009). I was dubious as to the relevance to my day to day practice, written about my job, but certainly not something that told me anything that I did not already know.

1.06(c) Professionalism as Morality

The final aspect of my initial framework is an assumption that professionalism has a moral aspect and is a moral imperative. This brings consideration of the distinction between professionalism and professionality. If professionalism comprises the skills, knowledge and procedures that teachers' use in their day to day jobs, *professionality* is the individual aspect ~ embedded in individual epistemology and ontology, enmeshed in moral codes and founded in individuals' understanding of what their profession demands (Evans, 2008).

I have a moral obligation to my students, to provide them with the knowledge they need to pass the course, but also with the support and encouragement they need and desire to believe in themselves. It is important to note that whilst this is obviously a personal value, I use the term morality knowingly. I believe it is a moral imperative and part of the big picture rather than my individual value, to behave in a manner which is appropriate. Indeed, sometimes the morality of 'the job' is in conflict with my personal values; when that happens the moral imperative takes precedence.

I very firmly believe that, in order to behave professionally, I have a duty to behave with my students' well being in mind. This may well involve looking after

myself, not taking on more than I can and so on, but it must be centred on the students. This focus on morality is mirrored in current theoretical standpoints (Figure 3)

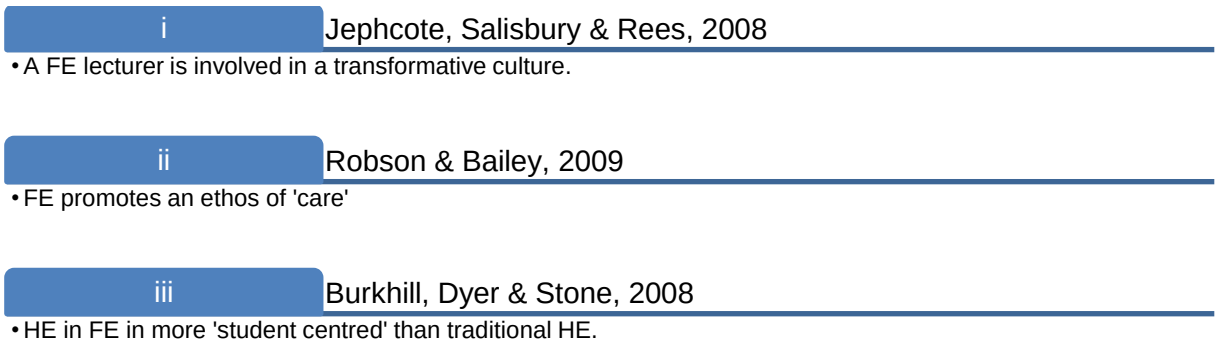


Figure 3: Theoretical Focus on Morality

I have a strong belief that lecturing is a fundamentally honest occupation. I have a moral duty to do the greatest good for my students, with my students and in the name of my students, but that must be within a framework of honesty and mutual respect. By maintaining integrity, I provide my students with what is, to me, the most important aspect of my job ~ a strong example. It is not my aim to tell my students what they must think unquestioningly, but rather to teach them to think, and question, for themselves.

1.07 The College

This research took place in a FE College in the South West of the UK. The College itself is a moderately large, successful one which has high numbers of FE and HE courses. It is in a rural area and caters for a variety of students, ranging from those undertaking Masters and Bachelors degree level study to the large numbers of SEN/ SEND students. Essentially, it is a rather 'middle class' institution in a successful and relatively affluent area. It is in a financially

stable position, far more so than many in the current economic climate with a reputation for excellence which is reflected in both the OfSTED and ALI reports.

1.08 The Participants

The participants in this study are all, with the exception of the pilot participant, employees of the same College. Some are full time, some part time and some on fractional contracts. There are 5 males including the pilot participant and 4 females in the study, and the age ranges from 20 to 60. In order to maintain confidentiality, all names have been changed and no specific ages have been given. The department where the individual participant works has not been identified. For more detail on the individual participants, see Appendix A where each participant is described in a vignette.

1.09 Professional Position

My professional position in the College has changed during the course of this research. I have worked at the College where the research took place since 1995; I was still in the middle of my PGCE at the time and it was my first job. Originally employed as a Health & Social Care lecturer, I made the move into Higher Education three years before the research began. At the time of the interviews, I was employed as a full time lecturer, teaching solely Higher Education and I interviewed only those who were, at the time, employed in the same role as me (lecturer), although the number of hours contracted varied. I have struggled, always, with my professional identity in work; I find it very hard to sell what I would not buy and I have a strong moral code in terms of what I think professionalism is. Boundaries are important to me, I am not there to be the students' friend; although I very much hope they like me, I can not let that be my driving motivation. I disapprove wholeheartedly, and somewhat judgementally, of those who seek to be friends with the students. I believe that they are doing the students a disservice. Conversely, those who do not care for the students welfare, do not like and respect them as individuals are equally unprofessional to me.

Which has led me to query what I understand professional to be. At the outset of this research, I considered it to be most close to being a long term foster parent. With an adopted child, I understand the realities for foster carers; it is a job to them and that must maintain. They can not grow too attached to a child they are caring for, that child will leave and another will take its place. Thus, I can not be a friend to my students. To me, friendship is a long term commitment which I simply can not give them – and it requires a level of unconditional regard which I can not give. As the individual who hands them back work which is graded, what I give them very much has conditions on it. For my own part, like a foster carer, it is my job to walk with them a while, help them to see that they don't need me and then bid them farewell as they take the next step of their journey. With all the tools, hopefully, they need in order to be free-thinking individuals who do not simply accept what is told to them but rather analyse, critique and do their best to ensure that they have well informed and considered opinions.

As a lecturer, I am always aware that my position is one of power with my students. As a member of staff, things are less clear. I am a long serving team member with a flawless history of excellence; I raise that not as self-praise, nor a testament to my Type A personality flaws. In a staffroom with a round table, if I am honest, I sit at the head. If there is extra to be done, management will ask me to do it, if there are questions or queries to be answered, I will be asked. In a flat structure, there is a hierarchy and the roles we have in the staff room are clear and known to all.

The power dynamic with the students is relatively clear – at least, I felt so in comparison to the staff room. At the beginning of any module I teach, I start by telling them what the module will cover and then, why and how I am qualified to teach it. Depending on how well the students know me, I will also make clear my expectations of them – and what they can expect of me. Inevitably, my expectation of them is that they turn up, ready and prepared to learn and the first expectation they can have of me is that I do the same – ready and prepared

to teach. Having been a lecturer in that institution since 1995, the dynamic of being in the classroom feels more known to me. My focus is on the students and using the knowledge, experience and skills I have to ensure that they get the best from me.

With my colleagues, however, was where I felt – and feel – the disconnect. I am unaware of the moment when I stopped being 'new' and started being 'old', but it happened. There are others in the staff room who have been in the sector as long or longer than I, yet they also tend to defer to me; I am seen as an 'expert' at what I do. My appraisal has highlighted, over the years, that I am able to teach to the level of the student, and I wondered if it was that. There are colleagues more qualified than I am – but student feedback is not good in terms of them being able to make information accessible. Others are as organised and efficient – but do not have good relationships with peers or students. Over the years I have been "parachuted in" to put things right for courses which have been failing or experiencing issues. Perhaps it is simply that reputation as a flexible problem solver. While that unofficial hierarchy remained evident to me, it was not the fact of it which intrigued me; rather it was how I could see the job so very differently than everyone else.

With my notion of professionalism feeling very different to most others, and a feeling of disconnect from my colleagues who seem to look to me for answers where I feel rather confused, I began to question what differences there actually are – and thus, this research began.

1.10 Research Questions

This research seeks to address the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of professionalism for lecturers in one Further Education college in the South West?
2. Are there differences in the way that professionalism is identified between identified sub-groups? Namely:
    a. Gender
    b. FE / HE in FE
    c. Age / length of service

Chapter Summary:

This chapter places the research in context and justifies the choice to focus on professionalism in FE. The researcher, college and participants are introduced before mapping out the content of the remaining chapters.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Chapter Aims:

This chapter considers the existing body of knowledge in relation to professionalism in an FE college. It considers the taxonomy of professionalism used and embeds it in an FE context, then looks at

2.01 Chapter Introduction & Summary

This chapter considers the existing body of knowledge, placing the research in academic context. In order to provide a clear direction for the research and to contextualise the study, the literature review is in three sections. I began this research considering the 'whole picture' and then focused on FE, the policies which make FE so very different to schools and universities and finally HE in FE, where I currently teach. This chapter utilises the following sections:

Section	
2.01	Chapter Introduction & Summary: *Introduces the function of the literature review and clarifies the sections.*
2.02	The Broad Context *A sociological and cultural consideration of the notion of professionalism.*
2.03	Defining Professionalism in FE *Considers the work on defining professionalism, and contextualises it using Goodson & Hargreaves' Taxonomy as a framework.*
2.04	Influences on Professionalism in FE *Considers the specific issues of gender and vocationalism.*
2.05	Higher Education in Further Education *Considers notions of supercomplexity and intellectual love, previously applied to HE in the university and considers their relevance to FE.*
2.06	Professionalism in Context *Considering the socially constructed nature of professionalism*
2.07	Personal Context *Embedding my own context in the literature.*
2.08	Summary

Table 2: Overview of Chapter 2

2.02 The Broad Context of Professionalism

This section considers the notion of professionalism and, by definition, professions. I utilise largely sociological considerations of the terms and attempt to fit them into my own ontological and epistemological stance. Before focusing on the context of FE or even education, this section unpicks notions of professionalism and profession in society. Largely, it considers the work of Sciulli (2005a; 2005b) and Evans (2003a; 2003b). Sciulli (2005a) approaches

the study of professionalism by stating that it needs to be reconsidered in terms of functionalist sociological theory, identifying the underlying role of professions in social control and shaping of society. According to Sciulli, the study of professionalism has functioned as maintaining the status quo almost by stealth; continuing the focus of study on economics rather than truly seeking to unpick the power and class issues. This resonates with my own notions of professionalism and the feeling of being forced into a position of choosing to 'sell what I would not buy' or, my preferred option of 'subversion from the chalkface.' Many times, in my professional career, I have been faced with curricula, assessment methods, rules or regulations which I find fundamentally detrimental to the student. Overcoming these in a manner which allows me to maintain my sense of professional self and also to work within the remit of my role has been a constant juggling act.

While Evetts (2003b) purports that defining profession is not fruitful, that the focus should be on the appeal of profession and professionalism as a concept, Malatesta (2005) suggests a simultaneous consideration of the origins, the historiography and the sociology of professions is required while Sciulli (2005a) uses the analogy of the study of professions being as important as the study of the family, if one is to understand its impact on society.

Evetts (2003b) and Sciulli (2005a; 2005b) agree that the original 'yardstick' for professions, historically and culturally, were medicine and law and they shaped notions and understanding of professions and professionals. Sciulli (2005a) queries the notion of a profession, suggesting that it must be revisited and explored; he considers it a concept inevitably tainted by the time period in which it exists and defined in the terms of that time period. To ignore this is to deny the reality of professionals, linking here with the three hermeneutic lenses suggested by (Ref from main doc); shared, negotiated meaning is achieved only when one shares time, space and traditions of language with the other individual. Holding on to historic notions of professions gives them gravitas, but separates them from contemporary society and, arguably, the professionals

within them. Malatesta (2005) notes that, in accepting this, there is very little if any difference between a professional and an expert. Evetts (2003b) suggests that knowledge-based professions, especially in the service sector are growing both in developed and developing countries. As they add to the list of jobs deemed to be professions, she maintains that there continues to be a focus on medicine and law. Sciulli (2005b) is clear; he believes that the study of professionals and professionalism very much fell into the trap, during the 1970s, of focusing on the economics of professions, rather than the broader picture. To focus purely on the economic aspect denies the issues of power, prestige and agency which Sciulli (2005a) argues are fundamental to a genuine analysis. If whether or not a job is a profession is purely an economic question, there is no doubt for me that education is not simply economic in nature, certainly not "at the chalkface", where notions of professionality abound (Evans, 2008).

In adopting a revised functionalist approach, Sciulli (2005a) suggests that professions must be analysed in consideration of two points:

a) Professions are different from other middle-class occupations. This difference is both empirical and analytical and so the two differ in both theory and practice.
b) Both in a historical and current sense, professions promote social order and drive the direction of social change.

These two points are interesting in light of this research. If professions are different from other middle class occupations, education has consistently been dubbed, at most, quasi-professional (Etzioni, 1969). If Sciulli's point is taken to what seems to be a logical conclusion, then education might well be considered simply a "middle class occupation". However, it is the second statement which resonates most strongly with me. Education has always been, for me, a medium of change. It is a transformative experience allowing social mobility and, in the FE sector specifically, it is about non-traditional learners. Many of the learners I

teach go on to work in the knowledge based professions Evetts (2003b) identifies.

Historically, functionalist sociologists suggested the same analysis should take place, focusing on the same two points above (Parsons, 1939; Parsons and Platt, 1973), but did not undertake a detailed analysis of the relationships and interconnectivity between professions and social order (Sciulli, 2005a). As consideration of professionalism moved on to what Sciulli (2005a) terms a 'revisionist' approach, analysis of these relationships remained lacking. For example, Evetts (2003a) argues it seems of lessened importance to understand the difference between professions and expert occupations, suggesting that it is a study of occupations which are mainly service sector and knowledge based, usually a level of knowledge gained from Higher Education, a viewpoint shared by Evetts (2003b). Sciulli (2005b) insists that professions are embedded in maintaining social order and control, with the structure of professions being both empirically and analytically different from occupations; professions shape society and occupations are jobs which are part of it. Evetts (2003a) focuses on professionalism as a means of controlling work and the economy whereas Sciulli (2005b) purports that it is fundamental to the foundations of society and its maintenance; the consideration of a profession as restricted to occupational order and stratification places responsibility for social order and social integration on to the state and other social movements. If a profession is an agent of social order and, thus, social control then the presence, and absence, of professional status has an impact on the direction of societal change and professionals are agents of this change, either knowingly or not. According to Sciulli, a professional has a means of maintaining, or changing, society which is simply not open to an expert or other occupation. This dichotomy is evident throughout this research; by being a lecturer, I maintain a role of power and control and continue the undeniable and well documented role as 'gatekeeper for the worthy' in terms of accessibility of knowledge and qualifications. If the students follow the rules, submit the coursework and meet the deadlines, then they are 'worthy' of achieving the course. Yet, what I do allows people who would not usually be able to, to break out of cycles of poverty. It at once

maintains the cycle and yet allows exit for some and that is a constant moral issue at the root of this research.

These different viewpoints have impacted the study of professions, having enormous impact on the sociology of professions and professionalism. With as many hours in a day spent at work as at home, often many more, if the impact of professionalism is akin to the family on society, arguably, so too is it on the individual members. Evetts (2003a) considers the reassessment of professionalism to have led to a more balanced consideration of it, no longer necessarily placing public interest and professional self-interest at opposite ends of the spectrum, but consensus on what it means seems far away. I find myself aligned with Sciulli here, seeking to unpick what the word 'professionalism' means and seeing it as something much more than an economic consideration. Certainly, if economics was the only consideration, Hodkinson et al's (2007) report on the massive amount of unpaid work undertaken by educationalists would tell a different story. This suggests that, in education at least, profession is closer to the importance of family and it is not 'just a job'.

Evetts (2003a) considers the appeal of professionalism in Anglo-American society, identifying it as a tool more suited to consideration than the search for defining "profession". Sciulli (2005a) suggests that before this occurs, the question of how specific job roles became putatively illustrative of profession is important. The definition of profession matters, he says, because it identifies what is important institutionally; he does not suggest that matters of economics are unimportant, but rather that the study of professions and professionals has been bound up in it for too long. However, Evetts (2003a) argument is that a study of professionalism must question, first, why the state creates, permits and encourages professions. She argues this is a political move, concerned with power and prestige and questions why the focus has remained on defining a

profession when the question should be why being perceived as professional is given such gravitas and kudos. The class and power issue resonates strongly for me; I see education as a means of emancipation and so a specific type of inquiry (Habermas, 1971). Evetts (2003a) questions where, and why, the elitist notion of professionalism fits in society, who it serves and what it perpetuates.

Identifying the dominance of medicine and law in the study of professionals, moving to include other professions including teaching, Evetts (2003a) is clear – different questions need to be asked, first among them why professionality is so sought after. The legitimisation of knowledge and ownership of expertise are certainly important. With the growth of knowledge-based industry and professions, professionalism became more prominent (Evetts, 2003a). Stronach, Corbin, McNama, Stark and Warne (2002) argue that professional is a term of control in and of itself; forcing the members of a profession to over-invest in an occupation in increasing amounts. The result, they argue is that the professional becomes forced to adhere to norms pushing them into a situation where they must be both more and less than they are – a notion resonant with my own thoughts.

Page (2010) reminds us of the Foucaltian notion that power does not exist in a vacuum but where it exists, so too does resistance. Evetts (2003b) points to consideration of professionalism as an occupational control and change, functioning as this at both a macro, occupational level and with the individual at a micro level. Consideration of Sciulli (2005a)'s argument suggests that control happens and is happening beyond the occupational level and that professionalism and professionals are a means of maintaining social order. If the discourse of professionals and professionalism concerns how institutions and individuals accept and expect professionals and professions to function, as Evetts (2003a) suggests, the scope suggested by Sciulli (2005b) would include individuals, organisations, occupations and societies. At that point, Sciulli's suggestion of the importance of professionals seems to be almost an under-exaggeration, not the excess suggested by Malatesta (2005).

Sciulli (2005a)'s assertion of the import of professions as means of social control resonates with education. His argument that the current means of analysing and theorising professions actively excludes looking at the social consequences professions introduce into civil society is doubly important; in education professionals provide the means of gaining access to a profession and so are both perpetuating the social control Sciulli (2005a) asserts and facilitating its continuation in the next generation of professionals. All, according to Stronach et al (2002), beneath the underlying narrative of emancipation and professional redemption. In fact, they suggest that in education specifically there emerges the equivalent of the anthropological notion of the Collective Individual, serving to obscure the underlying power discourses which educators might feel, but not be able to vocalise for fear of not meeting their own professional standards. Caught between their own inside-out and outside-in notions of professionalism (Dawson, 1994; Stronach et al, 2002) educators are forced to perpetuate the very structures and discourses they seek to address. Unless a consideration of the real importance, relevance and scope of professional influence is undertaken, Sciulli (2005b) argues this will not change.

Having considered the broader context of professionals, professions and professionality, I now move on to look at the Further Education context, where this research takes place.

2.03 Defining Professionalism in FE

This section considers the literature surrounding professionalism in FE. Although a growing subject it is still scarce in comparison to a consideration of professionalism in schools (Jephcote et al, 2008; Stoten, 2013). This is complicated by two issues;

i) FE spans the school and the university sector as well as its own specific area (Lucas, 2004a)

ii) FE is very different from both the schools and university sector with unique challenges and massive variety of learners and courses (Coffield et al, 2008)

In this section, I focus on the taxonomy of professionalism by Goodson & Hargreaves (1996), which was originally concerning professionalism in post-modern society not specific to any profession. I believe that this taxonomy fits FE which is a highly complex sector; when Coffield et al (2008) created a diagram illustrating the FE sector, they describe the result eloquently:

> '...[the diagram] looks more like the chart of the internal wiring of an advanced computer than the outline of a 'streamlined', coherent sector; it is also the outcome of years of constant interference and tinkering by successive ministers and civil servants, which has resulted in too many intermediate organisations.'

(Coffield et al, 2008: 15)

This complexity fits with the generalised theory of professionalism forwarded by Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) which I used as a starting point for my analysis as it exemplified my issues with professionalism in FE.

This section discusses the term professionalism and theories of what it may be. I believe professionalism is a discourse: a concept commonly held or widely discussed which may have little or no basis in reality (Robson, 2006). A discourse offers terms, categories and practices which can relate to our experiences and/or others, allowing us to speak the 'truth' and represent knowledge we identify as 'valid' (Whitty, 2008). I adopt Masschelein's (2001) suggestion; discourse contains internalised mentalities and attitudes. As a discourse, 'profession' does not describe particular occupations, it represents a

means of thinking about occupations (Crook, 2008). Definitions of professionalism have included:

i) The fulfilling of a role which meets complex demands of society (Hilton and Slotnick, 2005)
ii) The combining of specialist knowledge, autonomy and provision of a service (Arthur, 2009)
iii) The behaviour of people within occupational clusters, when they are behaving in a manner appropriate to their occupations (Robson, Bailey and Larkin, 2004).

2.03(a) Defining Professionalism

During the 1950s and 1960s sociologists sought to codify professions, creating lists of characteristics, including items ranging from skills to codes of conduct (Crook, 2008). Etzioni (1969) notes any occupation not fitting these criteria was dubbed 'quasi' or 'semi' professional; education being firmly quasi-professional. Attempting to gain professionalism was *professionalization* – a specific occupational strategy to achieve the outcome of being considered a professional (Friedson, 1983).

Studies of professionalism in education originally focused on the schools system, although many historical studies are now as relevant to FE as to schools; contemporary schools bear little resemblance to their predecessors. These studies led to the realisation that professionalism is, at least, a dual reality (Robson, 2006). If professionalism comprises the skills, knowledge and procedures that teachers' use in their day to day jobs, *professionality* is the individual aspect ~ embedded in individual epistemology and ontology, enmeshed in moral codes and founded in individuals' understanding of what their profession demands (Evans, 2008). This may be a false distinction; any behaviour can be undertaken and understood at a 'surface' or 'deep' level.

Robson (2006) suggests the focus on individual differences can be to the detriment of a consideration of context. When I use the term professionalism, I assume it includes professionality, which I refer to specifically as needed.

Sachs (2001) suggests *democratic professionalism* as professionalism, not under state control, seeking to demystify professional life by building alliances between teachers and those who are interested and involved. This might be at an individual, group or institutional level, seen in one FEC in the Midlands who sought collaboration by asking nearly 100 local schools to join in a federation to preserve its role in the tertiary sector (Lee, 2011a). The core of democratic professionalism is its emphasis on collaborative, cooperative action between teachers and other stakeholders (Sachs, 2001). However, the reality has been argued as unachievable; serving to create difference and shift focus to overcoming competition not excellence (Lee, 2011b). Juxtaposed to these ideas, Stronach, Corbin, McNamara, Stark and Warne (2002) caution that definitions of professionalism serve as emblematic representations which both reduce and inflate the professional within that definition, steering away from reality and creating unhelpful stereotypes, akin to the Collective Individual of anthropology, a static being who is not reflective of the disregarded movement which Stronach et al (2002) consider is vital to the professional as a moving, fluid being.

Furlong, Barton, Miles & Whitty (2000) suggest that knowledge, autonomy and responsibility are seen as key to notions of professionalism, echoed by Robson et al (2004) who identify the underpinning aspect of professionalism as individual autonomy; identified as important in various definitions and theories of professionalism. Perkin (2002) suggests discourses around professionalism embed it in the social class structure, becoming a distinct class. Gale, Turner and McKenzie (2011) identify lack of power and autonomy, noting that HE in FE professionals, particularly, are expected to perform to standards within an environment not traditionally suited to such, not conducive to an easy working life for those involved. Robson et al (2004) agree, pointing out that autonomy is always a negotiated reality and therefore, a restricted one. Evans (2008)

identifies professionalism as a service level agreement imposed from above, but she asserts it is only this when it is both accepted and adopted by the professionals it is directed to. Whitty (2008) points to the ever-increasing number of external stakeholders in education, a situation which Ball (2008) identifies as part of the complex power-dynamic faced daily by education professionals. Robson et al (2004) see this as part of the discourse of professionalism, positioning individuals and offering specific identities, all of which are interconnected to where the individual places themselves in relation to power. Clow (2001) suggests that professionalism in FE is something lecturers are unlikely to reach understanding of without external support. Over twenty years ago, Fox (1992) suggested that, whilst 'professional' is almost exclusively a positive word, it is problematic in two ways; first it is tinged with emotional input about concepts of right and wrong and second, therefore, it means different things to different people, thus losing translation between the speaker and listener. Fox (1992) suggested that, without a *language police*, overseeing the use of the word and ensuring that interlocutors in any interaction, verbal or written, are sharing meaning of the term it was unlikely that professionalism would ever be used in a single, concrete manner, an idea which resonates still (Friedson, 1994; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Gleeson, Davies and Wheeler, 2005; Feather, 2014). Fundamentally, Fox (1992) suggests that professionalism is impossible to define since it means something different to each person; it is used as a positive in daily discourse but, when seeking to unpick the term it becomes obvious that there is no shared agreement on what it means. Clow (2001) is clear that there remains a lack of understanding nearly twenty years later.

Despite this, many definitions of professionalism have shared aspects, including reflection. Robson (2006) identifies reflection in a number of forms as a largely meaningless aspect of the wider discourses of professionalism, which go beyond academic notions. She suggests that notions of reflection, including the 'reflective practitioner' (Schon, 1984), the 'reflective professional' (Light and

Cox, 2001) and even the 'learning professional' (Lucas, 2000) have little currency in seeking to understand professionalism which can not be understood by individual reflection but must be considered through different, wider lenses (see also Hilton and Slotnick, 2005). Power (2008: 156) suggests 'public-sector professional' is an oxymoron; only with development of the "professional imagination" can professionalism sit comfortably within public-sector working. Akin to the *sociological imagination,* she suggests this imagination allows understanding of the personal / professional distinction alongside a sophisticated ability to respond creatively to professional pressures (Wright-Mills, 1970; Power, 2008). Cunningham (2008) considers that critical incidents, when reflected on effectively and clearly, are able to accelerate understanding of professionalism, echoing Robson (2006). But it does not have to be a critical incident which provokes such deep reflection, Doecke (2004) utilises a self-reflexive approach to explore his development as a professional. Undoubtedly, as this brief introduction has shown, there are many different viewpoints on professionalism. I move now to consider the key studies which have shaped this thesis.

2.03(b) Adapting Goodson & Hargreaves

Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) suggest seven principles for post-modern professionalism. Hall and Schulz (2003) use these as a framework for discussing teacher professionalism. I outline these below, each codified into a specific word / phrase (Table 3).

Adapted Term	Goodson & Hargreaves Seven Aspects of Professionalism
Judgement	*The opportunity and responsibility to exercise discretionary judgement.*
Morality	*Opportunities and expectations to engage with the moral and social purposes and value of what is taught*
Collaboration	*Commitment to working in collaborative cultures with colleagues*
Heteronomy	*Occupational heteronomy*
Care	*A commitment to care and not just neutral / bland service for students*
Self-directed search for learning	*A self directed search for continuous learning relating to one's own expertise and standards of practice, rather than compliance with the enervating obligations of endless change demanded by others*
Complexity	*The creation and recognition of high task complexity*

Table 3: Goodson & Hargreaves Seven Aspects of Professionalism

I identify below the levels of priority each of the aspects had in my own framework at the outset of this research (Figure 4).

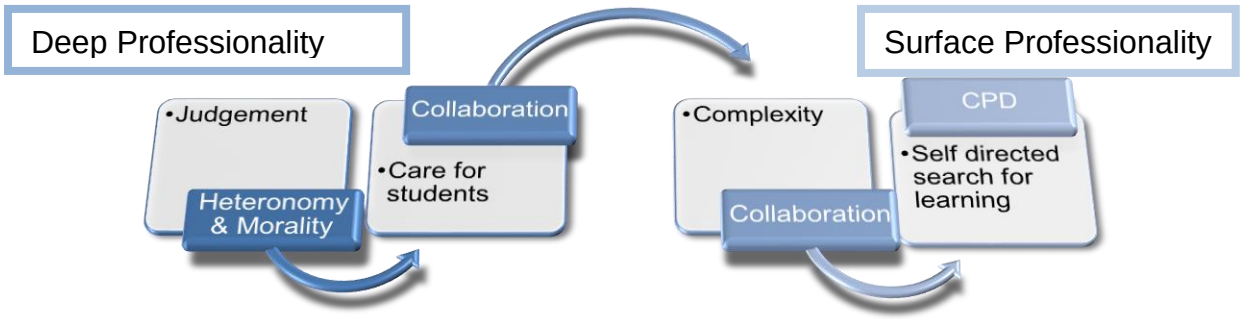


Figure 4: Adaptation of Goodson & Hargreaves

Starting at the far left is my highest priority. The diagram is split into two halves; the left is “deep” and the right “surface”. Deep professionality is, in my framework, far more individually important and much more fundamental. In my own codification of this, deep professionality is necessary for professionalism to exist, it consists of the non-negotiables. Surface professionality is those aspects which are useful and good, but which add to professionalism, rather than being vital to it. It is worth noting that collaboration appears in both; I believe the collaboration on the left side is deeper and more meaningful, linking with democratic professionalism (Sachs, 2001). Undoubtedly there are levels with all aspects, the diagram simply fits into my representation of the world. As Bateson (2004) suggests, this is probably more of a cycle, with meaningful CPD actually leading to a deeper ability to exercise discretionary judgement and so on.

I will now apply the seven principles of Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) to FE. These were chosen as they fit with my own ontology, epistemology and initial framework of professionalism and are used to analyse my interview data in Chapter 5.

1. *The opportunity and responsibility to exercise discretionary judgement.*

Arguably, this is practically non-existent in FE; decisions about curriculum content have been reduced until the curricula within an FEC is out of the hands of the lecturers (Hall and Schulz, 2003). Maringe (2012) considers the perception of staff in five UK FE colleges in terms of their involvement in decision making as part of the Integrating Diversity in Leadership Project. Whilst Maringe (2012) utilises qualitative data from a large-scale study, Bathmaker and Avis (2005a) note any attempt to analyse FE necessitates generalisations ignoring marginal areas. Thus, some areas have historically had opportunities for the exercise of discretionary judgement whilst others never have. In twenty

years FE has changed from arguably the least regulated and structured educational sector to being very highly regulated with numerous pressures.

These pressures Hyland and Merrill (2003) identify from a summary of the *English Study*, funded by FEDA, then the LSDA which aimed to look at FE colleges and their communities and the *Scottish Study* which focused on the (non) participation of marginal groups in FE and was funded by the Scottish Office. These tandem studies are summarised by Hyland and Merrill (2003) in terms of students, staff, members of the public and policy. They discuss how fragmentation in terms of college communities has led to lecturers feeling isolation, working in silos of practice and not experiencing participation in the whole college community, a term which Hyland and Merrill (2003) recognise the difficulty in using. They suggest that communities exist in a specific space, between the micro and macro level which Wright Mills (1970 cited in Hyland and Merrill, 2003) dubbed the *personal troubles* and *public issues.* For Hyland and Merrills' participants, the micro-community in a macro-culture led to a lack of discretionary judgement as directives from those above often did not fit with the specific ethos of the department, but had to be implemented nonetheless. It is worth noting, however, that Bauman (2001) likens community to an unavailable paradise, very much sought after by all who understand what it is but not necessarily even a reality. Maringe (2012) seems to echo this in his study; considering those who made the decisions he concludes that decisions amongst management in FE rarely emerged from a consensus of group opinion, but are more likely to be the result of a discussion between two individuals, one member of SMT and a middle manager which is then disseminated to others.

On a more individual level, Nixon, Marks, Rowland and Walker (2001) explain how experienced academics report a lack of autonomy and level of insecurity which means that even when theoretically able to exercise discretionary judgement, they feel in such precarious professional positions they will not act for fear of reprisal, disciplinary proceedings or termination of employment. Hoyle (2001) considers that the reticence of politicians to acknowledge educators as professionals comes from two distinct sources of "unease"; namely the false understanding of education as experienced through memories of one's own schooling and concern over teaching methods. For these two reasons, autonomy is never fully seen in education as true autonomy for educators would simply be too dangerous for learners. Nixon et al (2001) suggest that "old" definitions of autonomy are unhelpful in terms of the shifting face of education; they point out the massive changes which have taken place in terms of students, structure, form and function of HE, suggesting that the new landscape requires new definitions of professionalism and autonomy.

2. *Opportunities and expectations to engage with the moral and social purposes and value of what is taught*

In order for teaching to become open and moral practice, Malm (2008) suggests the key is to develop emotional understanding in all interactions and to maintain authenticity. Emotions are at the heart of teaching, epitomising the dynamic nature of teaching as much as anything else can (Hurst and Reding, 2009). Essential components of maintaining teachers' sense of value and worth are the rewards which develop a sense of 'self' (Malm, 2008). Davidson (2004) identifies difficulty with developing a self-identity appropriate for the lecturer whilst remaining cognisant and critical of the demands of sustaining the unique cultures of each discipline, returning to Malm's (2008) idea of the need for authenticity in order to develop identity. This difficulty brings a lack of coherence in the internal dialogue between the individual's identified discipline and their academic sense of self. Hyland and Merrill (2003) note this lack of coherence on a larger scale, identifying that FE as a sector is hard to define at a national

level and that, therefore, each FEC will be different, promoting and even encouraging a lack of coherence. In the classroom, Malm (2008) notes that the teacher needs to be able to acknowledge the uniqueness and potentiality of each individual student, a dynamic responsibility only achievable if the teacher themselves has a congruent and authentic professional identity. Hyland and Merrill (2003) identify a lack of congruence often felt by the student, also, as their *English Study* identified many misconceptions about what FE was amongst students, with many of them feeling that they were attending a college because there was nowhere else for them to go.

Kolsaker (2008) suggests professional identity is linked inexorably with power issues and complexities of self-concept in a HE context. Orr (2013: 385) identifies how both trainee and experienced FE lecturers identify their role as *benevolent and worthy*, engaging with the importance of 'the job' as more important than the money or kudos. Utilising data gathered between 2005 and 2008 from both trainee and experienced teachers in one college in the Midlands, he argues that the impact of micro-culture is less than perhaps might be considered on the identity of FE lecturers and that, in fact, it is the broader social concepts which have the most impact. Kolsaker (2008) echoes this, considering how changes in university governance have led to the adoption of managerialist ideology, bringing discourses and structures previously unknown in academia. Furthermore, Orr (2013) found that, with both experienced and trainee lecturers, ethical considerations of the value of what they were teaching was important, as was coping with workload and dealing with disaffected students. Trainees in this study identify teaching as a morally-laden vocation and experienced lecturers cited the importance of teaching according to society's views. This echoes Malm (2008 381) who suggests that authentic interactions within education are beneficial to all concerned and allow teachers to be *true to oneself* engaging with the moral and social purpose of their job, vitally, as they perceived it to be. Kolsaker (2008) suggests that the professionals in her study experienced minimal dissonance between 'new' and

‘old’ notions, accepting the managerialist discourses not as means of control but as a means of making sense of their job and allowing them to focus on what is important.

3. *Commitment to working in collaborative cultures with colleagues*

Collaboration is identified by Avis (2002) as important, from the positive outcome of working together to create resources to collaboration enhancing teamwork and alleviating job stresses. Collaboration is identified as key by Yandall and Turvey (2007) to the successful completion of ITT, rated by their case study of two teachers in the first year of their profession. Whilst learning collaboration had three main benefits:

i) allowing for a sense of self,
ii) an increased sense of identity as an educator and a
iii) feeling of belonging to a team.

Certainly, collaboration is rated as much more important than the drive to meet competencies by those who have just finished their ITT (Yandall and Turvey, 2007). Hyland and Merrill (2003) identify, in the *English Study* that lecturers across the FE sector felt marginalised and that the mechanisms and policy in fact actively discouraged collaboration on any meaningful level.

In an in-depth study into the TLC project, four main aspects were discovered which would improve the learning experience in FE. One was the collaboration between tutors and lecturers within the institution. This is easily stated and rather simplistic: what was actually found was that there was a wealth of tutor experience and skills and not enough time or other resources given over to facilitating the collaboration which is necessary in order to improve learner’s experiences (Biesta, James, Hodkinson, Gleeson, and Postlethwaite 2007). Juxtaposed to this Orr (2013) suggests that research which concentrates on the ‘local’ such as the TLC project understates wider cultural influences and dominant societal discourses on learning. These, he suggests, are more

powerful influences on teaching in FE. This is not suggesting that collaboration is not important to Orr (ibid), but he puts different parameters around it.

Bathmaker and Avis (2005a), examined cultures of learning and cultures of teaching in colleges looking at what impacted these cultures and how, in turn, professional identity has altered. Their participants, a group of trainee lecturers undertaking a one-year full time training course, identified themselves as marginalised and alienated. Considering of how professional identity forms in these trainee lecturers, Bathmaker and Avis (2005a) use Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of *communities of practice* in terms of FE professional identity, suggesting that the trainee FE lecturer fits into the notion of apprenticeship which Lave and Wenger (1991) utilised, specifically in the FEC where they undertake placement. This idea of apprenticeship is such that, rather than engage in formal 'learning' the apprentice learns through improvised practice, leading to an eventual full participation in the socio-cultural reality which is a community, existing in a state of 'legitimate peripheral participation'. Bathmaker and Avis (2005a) identify that until such time as the trainee can claim full membership, they are in this state of legitimate peripheral participation. Orr (2013) suggests that this does not work in cultures where conflict, not participation, are characteristic; cultures such as FE, Indeed, Bathmaker and Avis (2005a) report that their participants found it difficult to identify themselves as a legitimate participant, with the vast majority of them describing themselves as 'outsiders'. Evidence of collaboration was limited in Bathmaker and Avis' (2005a) trainee teachers and Orr (2013) reports a similar lack in the trainee teachers in his study. However, he also interviewed experienced lecturers and found that they had 'pockets' of mini-collaboration, within one staff room or where the geography of the FEC would allow (Orr, 2013).

4. *Occupational heteronomy*

Heteronomy is the state of working for a greater good, a common goal greater than the individual. In an FE environment, this might mean that professionalism is about community, working together for the good of the students. Bathmaker and Avis (2005a) identify that the interventions of policy-makers have attempted to redefine the identity of the FE lecturer in all aspects. They argue that policy attempts to drive staff into a managerial and performative mode, thus it could be suggested that the heteronomy of contemporary FE is working towards the common goal of 'quality'. Hyland and Merrill (2003) posit that policy has ensured that such a focus on learning (which is used as a measurement of quality) that even teaching and the curriculum have lost importance. They argue that whilst this could be seen at a surface level and indicative of the constant bombardment of change endemic to education, so too it could be indicative of a fundamental change in discourse, namely the 'greater good' which FE is working towards may well have experienced a change in recent years. However, Bathmaker and Avis (2007) report trainee FE teachers feel the need to adopt a 'school teacher' approach, rather than negotiated 'adult' identity. Adopting this approach means the trainee teacher is accepted in the community, but they wish this acceptance to meet the greater good for the students ~ therefore, achieving heteronomy. If they existed autonomously and engaged in the sort of relationship with their students that they had envisioned this would be seen as acting unprofessionally, as they would be self serving rather than serving the greater needs of the students (Bathmaker and Avis, 2007). Lucas (2013) suggests this might be due to the dual demands of being both a trainee and a teacher, a situation which is specific to FE, as people are brought in due to expertise and given the opportunity to undertake teaching qualifications whilst contracted as teachers. Orr (2012) identifies that 90% of those entering the FE sector are initially employed without teaching qualifications, citing figures from UCET (2009 cited in Orr, 2012). There have been a number of government and policy changes in relation to this, currently the Lingfield Review (2014) suggests that the teaching qualification which FE colleges require for their staff should be a matter for the individual college.

In a consideration of the professionalism of teacher-educators in post-compulsory education, Crawley (2013) points to a group who could, arguably, see and experience the most heteronomy. The study he undertook included the largest online survey of post-compulsory teacher educators at the time and questioned what participants felt were the essential characteristics of a teacher educator in post-compulsory education and how they viewed themselves as a group in relation to those characteristics. His findings show that the majority of the teacher-educators he studied felt a strong sense of heteronomy, within post-compulsory teacher-educators and towards trainee teachers. Whilst teacher educators are not the focus of this study, it is worthy of note that there are subcultures within FE which seem to experience heteronomy at differing levels.

5. *A commitment to care and not just anodyne service for students*

FECs are identified as institutions where students who have not succeeded in traditional education can flourish; the ethos of FE over the last 30 years has been to provide a transformative experience for all (Hyland and Merrill, 2003) If the ethos of the sector is to facilitate transformation, anodyne service to students would seem to be unlikely in a sector where the ‘bottom line’ is widening participation and promoting change (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005a). Malm (2008) suggests the relationship between educator and student is pivotal to quality student experience; the goal of education can therefore never be limited to mere acquisition of knowledge. Hyldgaard (2006) contends that any goal setting must be based on ideologies of what is right for students and what aspects of curriculum should be assigned equal, or superior status to others. However, Bathmaker and Avis (2005a) point to the ever-growing audit culture, where efficiency has become paramount. They point out that, of necessity, this means that the work of those ‘delivering’ Further Education, the lecturers themselves, has changed. Edgington (2013) is clear that teaching and learning

are defined by relationships and, further, that these are situated in the emotional rollercoaster of complexity. Bathmaker and Avis (2005a) point, however, to the growth of central control in FE which has impacted on individual professional identity and, inevitably, work culture.

In this context, there is the risk that the drive for the teacher to be delivering more than anodyne service leads to unreasonable demands on the teacher, forcing professionals to either leave the profession or engage in what Shain and Gleeson (1999: 447) dub ‘strategic compliance’. Hyldgaard (2006) posits the question: if enthusiasm is a prerequisite for being a professional, then how is it defined and what is the minimal acceptable level of enthusiasm in any given lesson? Certainly OfSTED guidance does not address these questions in their inspection guidance (OfSTED, 2015). Hyldgaard (2006) is clear that these questions must be answered before the linked ideas of enthusiasm in delivery and care for the student are laid bare to the audit trail. Bathmaker and Avis (2005a) point to the trainee teachers in their study, who identify a very different relationship with their students than the relationships they see between existing staff and students. When care goes too far the relationship between lecturer and student ceases to be educational and begins to become therapeutic. Ecclestone (2004a) warns against the demoralisation of education in the push for increasingly ‘therapeutic’ relationships which are encouraged; Mintz (2009) explains this in terms of rising feelings of dependency on the part of the students being facilitated by the overly therapeutic expectations placed on the teacher. An example of where this boundary blurs is described by Avis, Wright, Fisher, Swindell and Locke (2011) who cite the trainee FE teacher who brings bread, butter and jam to her tutor group, thereby ensuring that they all have breakfast. Whether this is creating dependency, meeting need or both is an ongoing debate. That the trainee teacher was female taps into gender issues regarding this aspect, which will be dealt with later in this chapter. Bathmaker and Avis (2005a) also identify that trainee teachers in an FE college recognise a need to ‘care’ for their students, however this is juxtaposed for the participants in their study who suggest that in terms of academic success, FE students are

often awarded a pass for work which is below standard in order to ensure achievement and success data is high. This is seen as a lack of care by existing staff, specifically as it sets students up with unreasonable expectations and, therefore, gives them a high likelihood of failure when they progress.

6. *A self-directed search for continuous learning relating to one's own expertise and standards of practice.*

Between 2007 and 2014, FE lecturers were required to complete 30 hours per year of CPD if full time, pro rata for part time and sessional staff. It was during this regime that I interviewed the participants of this study. This particular aspect of professionalism is a contradiction; compulsory CPD, which the experience the participants were having when the data was collected, is not a self-directed search ~ it is externally directed, pushed from the government in an attempt to regulate a sector which has been notoriously under regulated in the past (Stoten, 2013). However, the fact that the 30 hours were sanctioned as being chosen by the lecturer themselves allows for more hope that FE might be able to meet this standard (Orr, 2008). This lends itself to the idea that the individual is experiencing autonomy and democratic professionalism, thereby meeting this aspect of professionalism. One year later, Orr (2009) suggested that in fact the CPD initiative had little, if any, actual impact on practices, other than to meet quantifiable targets. A difficulty with generalising about FE is identified by Gleeson et al (2005), namely that it has been described as being unified by its difference, therefore any generalisation is contrary to our usual ways of thinking about FE. In July 2014, the IfL announced its closure and that it would be transferring its legacy and assets to the ETF. In the announcement regarding this, the ETF stated:

"Teachers and trainers should be encouraged to exercise professional autonomy and take ownership of their own CPD, in the interests of improved teaching and learning and for the benefit of learners."

Education & Training Foundation (2014c)

The new professional standards which followed (Education & Training Foundation, 2014d) identified 'professional knowledge and understanding' as one of three equally important areas which underpin professionalism in FE. There is not a clear identification of specific amounts of CPD required for the FE professional in this document, rather it places the responsibility and expectation on the professional ~ perhaps this is an expectation to engage in the self directed search.

Perhaps in the final reckoning, CPD throughout FE which has historically been as flexible and different as the sector itself (Orr, 2008) is what meets this aspect of Goodson & Hargreaves' taxonomy. The compulsory CPD created mechanisms of illusionary compliance with the ever-changing demands (Orr, 2009). Perhaps the return to a more self-directed search will create the excellence which the "Government Strategy to Support Workforce Excellence in Further Education" places at the centre of its vision (DfBIS, 2014)

7. *The creation and recognition of high task complexity*

The specific and highly flexible nature of FE has led to further marginalisation within the sector. Colley et al (2007) suggest that the contemporary FE lecturer must strive for professionalism which responds to a number of factors which they have no control over.

Orr (2013: 382) notes that the participants in his study have certain base similarities and what he terms a 'pattern of shared basic assumptions'. However, this is very much about basic assumptions and he identifies similarities as both minimal and somewhat superficial, whereas in fact

distinctive cultures existed between staff rooms and departments within his sample. The complexity of FE is often noted in the research literature, but alongside an underlying lack of recognition, perhaps lack of understanding, of the realities of this (Colley et al, 2007). The professionalism which contemporary FE lecturers strive for is one which responds to those threats in a flexible and highly creative manner, as each one will manifest differently in different departments, different institutions and different geographical and socio-economic areas (Ingleby, 2014). Orr (2013) echoes this, commenting on small staff room cultures which he identified as cultures in their own right, with their own sets of unwritten rules, codes of conduct and expectations. It is apparent that, in fact, the complexity of the sector, students, lecturing staff, curricula, funding and so on means that FE is arguably the most complex sector of education (Hyland and Merrill, 2003). The trainee teacher participants in Orr's (2013) study identified one of the reasons that they joined the profession as a notion of what FE was, which was based on general and broad definitions, the reality of which was not evident in their individual institution, or the distinct micro-cultures of individual staff rooms and staff teams. This is a highly complex situation for a new or trainee teacher to navigate, with the highly individualised nature of the staff room, the students, the college and the curriculum each adding an additional layer to that complexity.

Added to these issues, and furthering the complexity of the situation, is the fact that FE has the highest number of part time staff proportional to the entire workforce, with approximately 85,000 part time staff in the sector. It is widely documented that women make up far more of the part time workforce than men, highlighting another aspect of work in FE; namely, the gender divide (Jameson and Hillier, 2008).

2.04 Influences on Professionalism in FE

This section considers two distinct influences on professionalism in Further Education, namely gender and vocationalism / dual identity. There are, no doubt, a number of other issues which impact on professionalism, but these are focused on as they are the ones most relevant to this study. They are identified in this section as they are relevant to all FE lecturers, whether they are FE or HE.

2.04(a) Gender issues in professionalism

In this section I consider specific gender issues in FE professionalism. This is focused within the context of this study; however it is appropriate to note that this research exists within a much broader context and a great body of work on the gendered nature of teaching and education. Students in FE have already experienced a gendered education. Although this literature review does not consider this in detail, a range of authors have studied this and must be noted. Skelton (2010) challenges the notion that girls are the 'success story' of restructured education, suggesting that girls' performance in the classroom have not changed, but have been translated differently, without ever dealing with underlying gender issues. Raftery, Harford, Valiulis and Redmond (2007) consider a major research project which examined gender perspectives in the delivery and assessment of history, reporting a strong under-representation of women in the historical narrative and in the examinations. Furthermore, this skewing of gender inclusion in narratives of topic and assessment was a source of frustration for a significant number of teachers, heightened by the gender imbalance in teaching materials.

Skelton and Francis (2012) consider how gender influences opportunities available to high-achieving pupils and conclude that, 'Renaissance Masculinty' is a reality in schools, whereas constructions of femininity block the existence of it's counterpart. An enormous body of literature exists which could be entirely the remit of a literature review, not analysed here but within which this literature, and this research, is embedded (Skelton, 2007; Francis and Skelton, 2008; Delamont, 2001; Skelton, Francis and Read, 2010).

Within FE there are deeper layers of social reality unfolding. Lucas (2013) looks at two research projects in an attempt to evaluate the reforms experienced by FE lecturers in the last decade. He suggests that these reforms have led, in fact, to a fragmented system and a lack of focus on the most important aspects of FE. He argues that the then threatened (now implemented) revoking of the 2007 regulations would have enormous implications for FE ITT. Although Lucas does not deal with gender, Murray (2006), identifies gendered division of labour within the culture of the teacher trainer, which she identifies as largely paternalistic. This links with Noel (2006) who points out that the teacher educator workforce is far less diverse than the Learning and Skills workforce as a whole, which is in itself skewed to be female, white and aging. Teacher educators, as a demographic, are a more concentrated example of this lack of diversity. ITT produces a concept of caring professionalism, a gender specific term adding to the pressures of the individual and de-professionalising women in ITT, FE and HE (Murray, 2006). Noel (2006) undertook research which considered with a consortium network of more than 30 ITT providers, then the largest consortium of its type. She was commissioned by the Consortium Steering Committee and the DfES Standards Unit to analyse the demographic and characteristics of the teacher educators and to identify strategies to enhance equality and diversity.

The concept of the woman as caring professional is significant; identification of the female staff member as a maternal figure, promoting caring and taking on a mother role is both insidious and ignored (Maguire and Weiner, 1994, cited in Murray, 2006). This leads to a different approach to teaching a *learner-centred habitus*, which includes accepting personal responsibility for the nurturing and development of student teachers (Murray, 2006:340). Noel (2006) argues that issues such as this are too often considered in isolation, without consideration of the complex inter-relationships between gender and many other issues. However, Murray identifies the tendency of female staff to over work when faced with institutional changes which would lessen student support. Hodkinson et al (2007) suggest FE staff tend towards working beyond their contracted hours, suggesting a double disadvantage for female FE lecturers. Considering Murray (2006) and Hodkinson et al (2007) in parallel, a picture begins to emerge mirroring the ideas forwarded by Gunter (2000); gender is a complex discourse which can not easily be 'solved'.

In a group with such a limited demographic, Noel (2006) points out that the OfSTED expectations of what constitutes professional knowledge are not explicitly stated, leading to inevitable confusion in terms of professional role and identity. Issues such as the glass ceiling are symptomatic of the power structures which lie at the bedrock of inequality. This can lead to the inclusion of women as a response to inequality providing a group whose voice is unheard but who have been given lip service in the form of a job, without any actual power to alter the fundamental inequalities they are faced with on a daily basis (Gunter, 2000). Conversely, having a voice is not always an appropriate response to issues of workload. Timperly & Robinson (2000) point to the inclusion of teachers and educators in reform as self-defeating and causing a lack of cohesion in policy. Murray (2006) certainly believes that engaging in the 'system' is engaging within the gendered discourses of professional practice.

In FE, males make up the majority of full time lecturing staff, females holding the majority of part time lecturing numbers. Women report almost twice as many hours per week working outside of teaching hours as men, although overall weekly estimated teaching hours were fairly consistent (Avis and Bathmaker, 2001). Trainee FE lecturers report high degrees of realism regarding the onerous workload, entering the profession with a clear understanding of the highly demanding nature of the job (Avis, Bathmaker and Parsons, 2002). Interestingly, even in a study where estimated working hours per week came out with a similar mean and range for male and female staff, Avis and Bathmaker (2001) found that when four 'cameos' were undertaken, the three women reported proportionally very high amounts of time working at home each week; the one male cameo had a very low estimated amount of time spent working at home. The male cameo was a part time member of staff working through an agency; although the other, female, part time member of staff reported significant working at home. This reflects a general increase in work stress, endemic throughout the UK, although education seems to have fared worse in achieving a work life balance that is healthy and appropriate (Guest, 2002).

The gender issue is not simplistic and it is vital not to simply focus on the issues regarding women as FE lecturers. It is important to remember that men experience, for example, the double burden of work and life, simply with different stresses. This, Beaujot and Anderson (2004) argue, has not been documented with the same rigour as the double burden of women. Also, much of the research surrounding gender issues in post-compulsory education have been carried out in specific HE institutions. Quinn (2003), for example considers qualitative research with female HE students and considers how they view the university, looking at the imagined space and how they construct their own belonging within that space. Elliot (2013) points out that the environment of the FE professional is unlike any other; challenging, complex and with a massively diverse group of learners. Lucas (2013) is clear on this, also; professionalism

and it's regulation in schools, colleges and HE are three distinct and different things. Therefore, consideration of gender in HE or school would be of limited use. However, Lahelma (2014) argues that gender must be considered in the wider context, intermeshed with other aspects of difference and not separated out into 'a' problem but rather part of 'the' problem. Quinn (2009: 337) identified that exclusion from university for women constituted an 'existential crisis'. The rise of HE in FE has created a new space where women might be afforded opportunities to gain valid knowledge and thus, become legitimate knowers, perhaps especially significant in light of Simmons and Thompson (2007) identification of the feminising which has occurred specifically in further and higher education partnerships. However, HE in FE is a complex issue dealt with later in this chapter (2.05).

It is also worth noting that the gender issue for staff in FE colleges is reflected in the student experience. May, Bidgood & Saebi (2006) looked at both students and staff from an FE college in south London, gaining data on the experiences and perceptions on the disparity in completion and achievement rates of students in relation to gender and ethnicity. Staff and students in this study generally agreed on issues such as teaching and learning, the difficulty of ESOL and other issues around the classroom environment. However, the two group differed in their explanation for the lowered success and retention rates in some fundamental ways; students identified that the high turnover of staff and that support was dependent on asking for it; something which boys were highlighted as less likely to do than girls.

Simmons and Thompson (2007) also look at teacher educators, although their sample is specific to post-compulsory education and explores the gender balance of the workforce. Building on Noel (2006), they focus on the factors influencing the gender distribution of teacher educators. Simmons and Thompson (2007) point out that Noel (2006) seems to present a clear gender imbalance, echoed by Murray (2006). Simmons and Thompson do not disagree with these standpoints, but instead they explore the factors which underpin this

gender imbalance in FE teaching specifically. Most significantly, they identify the largely feminine workforce as being a direct result of the hugely significant changes experienced by FE and very different from the workforce identified by others (Ainley and Bailey, 1997 cited in Simmons and Thompson, 2007). They also point to the fact that the feminisation of teaching, especially in FE, has coincided with deterioration of pay and conditions, coinciding with increased hours of work, reductions in job security and increased use of part time and / or 'sessional' staff. Avis (2003) echoes this, identifying an overall decline in terms and conditions for those working in FE with a parallel intensification in the workload. Simmons and Thompson (2007) query whether, therefore, the increase in female workers in FE is due to the job itself being fundamentally less attractive to men. However, they argue that, whilst this might be in part true, there are more complex culture shifts at play, including the construction of identity for those working in FE. Murray (2006) identifies women working in FE as 'the caring professional', bringing traditionally perceived feminine discourses to a previously male environment. This echoes Delamont (2001) who suggests that women have changed as workers, whereas men have tended to remain the same in terms of identity. She points out, however, that the tone of public opinion has shifted and alongside the changing role of women in regard to work there has grown an expectation that they will work whilst accepting:

'a labour market predicated on male values and work patterns, and where prejudice, glass ceilings and old boy networks still abound' (Delamont, 2001:93)

In a consideration of the development of teacher education policy, Furlong (2005) suggests that the role of teacher education has changed completely, and is no longer a place for forming or re-forming professionalism thus it begins to lack political significance. He suggests that this marked the end of an era for teacher education. This links with Lucas (2013) suggests that the paradigm of the past keeps FE teachers separate from the professional framework of HE

and schools, but in a sector so diverse that it is fragmented and impoverished. Jephcote and Salisbury (2009) describe findings from a study of FE teachers conducted over a two year period, focusing on three female participants from the set of 27; these women exemplified the notion that it was their job to care for their students, committing to compensate for the shortcomings they had experienced in their previous education. Jephcote and Salisbury (2009) identify the uniquely 'Welshness' of this study, mirrored by Ducklin and Ozga (2007) who argue for a similar study on gender and management in FE in Scotland. They report on a pilot study of women in a senior management position in FE in Scotland and draw two conclusions; first that research on the gendered nature of FE is worthy of deeper research, specifically with regards to the inter relationship of masculinities and managerialism. Second, they suggest research on gender is particularly relevant to Scotland because of specifics of the local culture, including assumptions and practice which work to inhibit the recognition of women in management. It is important, they stress, for gender to be places centre stage in the study of FE be that in Scotland or the wider UK. Briggs (2005) agrees, suggesting that education promotes gendered ideology and knowledge; in a complex inter-relationship between individual identity and organisational ethos, gender politics are created and maintained.

Gender is one of the influences on professionalism identified in this study, I will now go on to discuss the role of the vocational FE lecturer, a further complexity in contextualising professionalism.

2.04(b) The vocational FE lecturer

The vocational lecturer in an FE College; a unique creature in a specific and misunderstood subgroup (Brookfield, 1995). The vocational lecturer is in their own group inside FE; a flexible sub-section of the profession likely to experience a unique professional reality. Policy assumes that vocational knowledge suffices; pedagogical knowledge is secondary (Harkin, 2005). There have been significant changes in the last 20 years, but within that time there has been no requirement for an FE lecturer to have a teaching qualification when they begin their lecturing career. Indeed, the Lingfield review and the new Education & Training Foundation have reverted to there being no national requirement for a lecturer in FE to have a teaching qualification at all (Lingfield, 2012b; Education & Training Foundation, 2014c).

In terms of vocational education, notions of teaching tends to suffer here, seen as being largely common sense or humanistic in nature. Stevenson (2001) identifies the tacit knowledge vocational teachers and educators are seen as possessing largely defies codification and is unlikely to be expressed overtly or clearly in ITT. Robson et al (2004) suggest this is further complicated in FE, one immediate and enduring difference between schools and FE is that the FE vocational lecturer is likely to have been a professional in some other capacity before they entered the sector.

Studying the role of vocational FE lecturers, Robson et al (2004) consider professionalism includes aspects such as expert knowledge. They interviewed 22 vocational lecturers from a range of five colleges. They identified four recurring narratives from their respondents, regarding adding value, protecting standards, sharing expertise and knowing why decisions were made.

Vocational lecturers describe stepping beyond the curriculum and expanding on the content and the support they gave their students (Robson et al, 2004). This presents a triangle of overwork; vocational lectures, female lecturers and FE lecturers all stepping beyond their role and going above and beyond. There are many people who fit in to all three of these groups; raising questions whether FE promotes overwork at all levels by the very flexibility which makes it unique. Edgington (2013) identifies FE lecturers as responding emotionally to teaching observations as, often, they are perceived as rejecting emotional genuineness and passion for the vocational subject. The tendency to "add value" to the qualification also gives a sense of adding value to the vocational lecturer, however Bathmaker (2005) stresses that this tendency is present only where the relationship with the students causes the lecturer to consider the extra effort worth it. Those studied by Robson et al (ibid) suggested their vocational knowledge allowed a portrayal as, and self-image of holding a greater level of professionalism than their purely academic counterparts. Their individual narratives identified much wider discourses on the nature of professionalism, concerned with expertise, commitment and care for others (Robson et al, 2004). This is echoed by Bathmaker (2005) who, in a study of 12 vocational FE lecturers identified the shift from vocational qualifications leading into employment, but rather preparing for higher education before employment; vocational qualifications were a 'second chance' for students and the role of the vocational lecturer was to cultivate a commitment to studying which had been erased by previous educational experiences. Ecclestone (2004b) cautions, however, that whilst vocational education can provide cultural and social capital for it's learners, it can be as constraining as it can be empowering; creating and giving credence to inequalities and a two-tier system of 'academic' being superior to 'vocational' students and staff.

Another aspect where concepts of professionalism seem to differ between vocational and academic lecturing staff in the FE environment is the idea of "knowing why". In the Robson et al study, the vocational lecturers adopted a narrative of understanding and applying theory to practice. It was not enough,

they asserted, for their students to gain knowledge, the students must be able to apply that knowledge to a work-based setting and therefore must truly understand it (Robson et al, 2004). This specific study is of interest to me as a vocational lecturer in an FE College, of course, but for wider reasons also. Within the larger group of FE lecturers, the concept of professionalism seems to be something that is very different amongst vocational lecturers. The fact that these lecturers feel that they can, for example, go beyond the syllabus and work for the betterment of their students as budding professionals means that they have a stronger claim to Goodson and Hargreaves' first principle of professionalism, namely *the opportunity and responsibility to exercise discretionary judgement.* This is held up as something that is done against the wishes of the exam board, larger governmental structures and institutional ethos (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996). Therefore it seems that those lecturers who possess a stronger sense of professionalism are those who feel they are acting outside of the restraints put on them by the external forces who shape the curriculum they are forced to deliver. Bathmaker (2005) identifies that those vocational lecturers in her sample who were most 'at peace' with their professional identities were those who were exerting agency of their own into creating and maintaining a culture which allowed students to shape their future. This has been a theme throughout this literature review ~ FE is different from other types of education, vocational lecturers are different from purely academic lecturers, males from females. Each stage of the literature review has sought out the specific nature of professionalism in FE, justifying the focus of this research.

It is arguable, from the studies cited, that the de-professionalisation of the FE lecturer is inherent in policy and government agenda and its implication for practice is a demand for professionalism from the lecturers themselves. This is a battle being fought in the trenches of individual classrooms using tactics which can best be described as "subversion from the chalk-face". It is to this pressure of policy on professionalism that I turn my attention next.

2.05 Higher Education in Further Education

During the 1980's Trow produced a series of essays highlighting issues facing HE in the UK. The fundamental point was that HE was failing because a lack of understanding of diversity was hindering expansion. HE in the 21st Century is different, but the stratification of HE Trow suggested echoes the reality of FE. The diversity Trow discussed was of missions, costs and standards expressed both within and between institutions (Trow, 1987; 1989). It was the Dearing Report which suggested that the traditionally separated post compulsory education sectors of HE and FE should merge academic and vocational education in a working partnership (Dearing, 1997) leading to the introduction of the foundation degree, a qualification which was designed to provide academic rigour and vocational relevance (HEFCE, 2000). Young (2002) suggests those teaching across FE and HE in FE report a lack of understanding at management and operational level. Reporting on a small scale research project which interviewed lecturers who taught on a non-vocational HE programme in a predominantly HE environment, Young (2002) suggests key differences between the HE in FE lecturer and counterparts in HEI, specifically in terms of professional identity. Feather (2014: 113) explores this 'Janus Identity' suggesting the HE in FE lecturer wears two professional faces, one following the rules of management and managerialism and another holding true to their moral code. This resonates with Hoyle's (1975 cited in Evans, 2008) identification of restricted and extended model of professionality, which Evans (2008) utilises to situate professionality orientation. Gale, Turner and McKenzie (2011) sampled HE lecturers in college in south west England to examine their practice style and how they engage with scholarship, suggesting that there was emerging a community of praxis of HE in FE.

HE in FE gives a new dimension to notions of professionalism. From a purely financial view, it increases cost efficiency of Colleges, which was one of the aims of the move (Lenton, 2008). Indeed, one of the main tenets espoused by New Labour was that social justice is inexorably linked with economic efficiency. Hoelscher, Hayward, Ertle & Dunbar-Goddet (2008) note an assumed link in policy discourse between growth in vocational education in FECs and a corresponding increase in take up of HE, specifically vocational HE courses which is not borne out in research findings. Barnett (2000) identified the contemporary university as an institution born in the traditions of being clear about boundaries and now existing in a place where the distinction between the university and the wider world are increasingly blurred. HE in FE was introduced en masse via franchising from HEIs, attempting to catch overspill of their oversubscribed courses. At the very peak of growth, individual HEIs were franchising to as many as twenty different FECs (Parry, 2003). Barnett (2000) states old notions of university are outdated; the university as it previously existed is extinct, a new university rising from these ashes almost phoenix-like. First year undergraduates clearly identify factors most important in informing their choice of institution (Hoelscher et al, 2008,). Those undertaking HE in a FEC rated location as highly important, much more than those who were undertaking HE in either a pre- or post-1992 University. Students undertaking HE in an FEC rated quality of the institution as far less important in decision making than their counterparts.

FECs providing HE exist in the LSS, sitting with sixth forms and other providers of adult continuing education, whereas Universities providing FE sit in HE . Institutions crossing sector boundaries are dual sector; dual sector FECs are common occurrences but dual sector HEIs are a very small minority (Bathmaker, Brooks, Parry & Smith, 2008). Evidence suggests collaboration between FE and HE is beneficial to staff and students, yet fraught with ‘pitfalls’ (Connolly, Jones and Jones, 2007).

2.05(a) Higher Education & Supercomplexity

Those who lecture HE in FECs and those working in HEIs exist in different places (Young, 2002). One way HE in FE delivery impacted on Young's participants was to challenge their professional identities, which they saw as teachers, not academics; the participants expressed mistrust of 'academics', identifying themselves as teachers of adults, of non-traditional students linking to the more 'traditional' FE lecturer identity. Leahy (2012) also identifies HE in FE staff as adopting an FE identity whilst not entirely fitting into that role. Utilising a case study college, she identifies the complexity of understanding HE in FE, utilising Bordieu's notion of field to illustrate this complexity. Young (2002) notes that teaching HE in FE has a positive impact on the staff who do so; staff felt challenged and positive about their teaching, freed from the restrains of the curriculum in traditional FE teaching. Conversely, isolation was a major experience of the participants in Young's (2002) study, from their peers in FE and from those working in HEIs; not fitting in to either environment led to isolation internally and externally. This is mirrored by Leahy (2012) however, she takes this further and considers that in the case of HE in FE, a new 'field' has been formed, challenging the doxa of HE in FE not being 'real' HE or somehow lacking authenticity. But as the field changes, so too does the doxa, causing a constantly changing landscape (Leahy, 2012).

Bauman (2000) suggests that we live in a liquid age, a transitional state dubbed liquid modernity, the state before true postmodernity can exist. One example of this is the changing face of HE, leading Barnett (2000a) to the consideration of supercomplexity; the state where one's own world-notion adds to hyper-complexity; a daily reality for those living in a postmodern western culture (Barnett, 2000a). Barnett (ibid) suggests supercomplex realities as the remit of the university, exacerbated and simultaneously studied by HE. This combines with the suggestion that power relationships are constant, unable to be diluted

into being about one individual or dominant group, existing in a pervasive and discursive reality (Mann, 2008). Barnett writes extensively on supercomplexity and the university (Barnett, 1998; 2000a; 2000b; 2000c; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2007; 2008; 2011), but HE staff in an FE College are engaged in something beyond this. They experience supercomplexities and power issues of a range of roles, as part of the culture of the FEC (should such exist), their own department and in their relationships with the University which accredits their HE courses. This is almost certain to have an impact on the professional identity of the lecturers themselves, impacting on the reality they experience every day, on the stories they have to tell (Dyer and Keller-Cohen, 2000). However, Williams (2008) suggests that the underlying assumption that a HE lecturer is professional is something which must be challenged, suggesting that the meshing of academia with the notion of being a profession is detrimental, creating an illusion of something which can be codified or structured in a specific way, when in fact it can not. This links with Barnett's (2011) consideration of 'being a university', utilising the Heideggarian notion of 'being' (Heidegger, 1962) and the many types of university which have existed historically, what the future of the university might be and what it means to 'be' a university in an ever changing and complex social and sociological dynamic. With professionals facing the difficult, or even impossible task of maintaining their 'epistemological authority' (Barnett, 2008: 192) the shape of the university is, at best, nebulous (Barnett, 2011). Supercomplexity might be best overcome by the development of a professional imagination, akin to the sociological imagination previously identified (Power, 2008). It is important to note that this supercomplexity is equally experienced by the HE student (Barnett, 2007) as by the university and the individuals within it (Barnett, 2008). Further, Barnett (2000a) is clear; supercomplexity is not postmodernity, nor vice versa and the two concepts are fundamentally very different. However, Block (2014) identifies supercomplexity as rising out of a postmodern era, something which Barnett (2000a: 73) is clearly not enamoured with, in his words 'the postmodernsts over-play their hand'.

Barnett (2004) identifies seven aspects of supercomplexity in higher education:

- Globalisation
- Digital Technology
- Equal Access
- Interpenetration of HE and society
- Marketisation
- Competition
- Nation / State- Sponsored Quality Evaluation.

Block (2014) is clear, it can not simply be the academics who understand these seven aspects of supercomplexity, it must be the department leaders and those who lead and manage change to know such. But it is a fragile thing to lead change, an echo of Barnett (2000a) who suggests that there are four concepts which are fundamental to understanding the university as it exists and how it is a supercomplex reality. Uncertainty, unpredictability, challengeability, and contestability make up the four main aspects of what he terms the 'constellation of fragility', the aspects of reality with regard to Higher Education which means that the university exists in a state of fragility, unsure of it's worth in the future.

This fragility leads to what Barnett (2000a: 69) terms the 'uncertainty principle'. Universities exist in a state of continuous uncertainty, meaning that they contribute three things to the general uncertainty principle and, by that contribution, maintain uncertainty. These three contributions are in a continuous cycle whereby the university:

- Identifies, thus adds to the uncertainty of existence
- Evaluates the uncertainty it identifies
- Helps us to live with the uncertainty

One way in which this uncertainty is exacerbated is by the changes to the 'knowledge function of the university (Barnett, 2000b). Block (2014) explores the idea that boundaries between inside and outside the university are blurring;

Barnett (2000c) argues that supercomplexity happens when the frameworks by which we define existence or aspects of existence are contested. So, when considering that the university is existing in supercomplex fragile undertainty, Barnett (2000b) suggests that the 'end of knowledge' in HE is being seen as happening in three ways. Higher Education knowledge is increasingly perceived as lacking status – partly due to the proliferation of knowledge in society. Coupled with this, university knowledge is entrenched in academic capitalism and 'bogged down' in procedure. Both of these are underpinned by the ideology of knowledge itself and questions about the legitimacy of a university degree in modern society.

However, Barnett (2000b) is very clear that, whilst the end of knowledge might well be upon us in one way, he does not accept the 'end of the university' thesis. In an echoing of Leahy (2012) he suggests that there is an inevitable change coming, that the face of the university will be completely different in the future. Barnett (2005) identifies the university as a shifting and dynamic space, becoming more enmeshed in society and it's structures and losing the boundaries which once stood as edifices of order. Joosten (2013) agrees and suggests a Nietzcshean analysis is relevant to education, specifically his considerations of order and chaos. She suggests that professionals should embrace the Dionysian force identified by Nietzsche; the force of chaos, emotion and instinct and apply it to their approach to learning and teaching. The reason for this is simple, she argues; the Apollinian force, identified by Nietzsche as the pursuit of order, is the more traditional force embraced in the university, but in the age of supercomplexity which universities find themselves, the Dionysian force towards nullifying and disregarding systematisation and idealisation is more useful. This further illustrates the point raised by Leahy (2012) that, in the future of education, "being" a university will involve a different kind of being. Barnett (2005) accepts this as an entrenched uncertainty endemic to the changing shape of the academic world.

Uncertainty, Joosten (2013) argues, is part of the world and those who embrace the Dionysian force alongside the Apollinian, namely those who accept both chaos and order, will be better prepared for the supercomplexities in which the university exists. Barnett (2000c) purports that each aspect of the university, from the micro-context of the individual, be it lecturer or student, the curricula and the macro-context are all existing in supercomplexity; by definition we are experiencing the constellation of fragility in every aspect of our lives. Walker (2001b) is clear; in an age of supercomplexity research, even in to what we think we know, is fragile and uncertain because everything is change. Barnett (2008: 197) agrees, suggesting that the professional is 'caught amid tensions and fluidity'

Barnett (2000a) is clear, the end of knowledge is not what it seems; it is the end of the university defining what does, and does not, constitute valid knowledge. Whilst the university exists within the constellation of fragility, existing in a fragile state Barnett (2000a) argues that this is not a value-laden observation, it is a description. Furthermore, it describes not just the university but the society and structures that the university exists within and alongside; knowing that we do not know is a strength and acceptance of fragility is acceptance of reality. Lea and Callaghan (2008) report that university lecturers identify this fragility and supercomplexity in their own teaching and that this context impacts upon them. They identify that, although the micro-context of the classroom is well researched and considered, the supercomplexity arises in the macro-context and this is not well considered but is reported as a very significant influence on the daily practice of the professionals they studied.

2.05(b) HE in FE and the impact of Intellectual Love

"Pedagogically, perhaps the most important task of the teacher is to develop, among students, an atmosphere or an attitude in which they seek"

Rowland (2005 p. 96)

Intellectual love; the love of a subject specialism and all its aspects will, according to Rowland (2005) tend to shape enquiry, which he suggests happens in three forms (Table 4). He suggests that the term itself is one which provokes conflicted ideas and which may be nothing more than an ideal rather than reality.

Type of Enquiry	Explanation
Research	An enquiry which seeks to discover new knowledge
Scholarship	Enquiry with the purpose of being more familiar with what is already known
Teaching	Enquiry with the aim of imparting existing knowledge to others.

Table 4: Three types of enquiry

Rowland (2005) discussed the work of Spinoza (1632 – 1677) who considered intellectual love. Spinoza suggests that intellectual love is a combination of both intellect and emotion, thereby being the pinnacle of human happiness. Intellectual love is active love, a moving towards rather than a passive and / or destructive force. For Spinoza, intellectual love is akin to the 'peak experiences' identified by Maslow (1908 – 1970) as the remit of those who reach the pinnacle of his hierarchy of human needs (Gross, 2010).

It should be noted here that the three types of enquiry link with Barnett's (2000) notion of the uncertainty principle. In order to clarify this for my own understanding, I have represented this in tabular format.

Type of Enquiry (Intellectual Love)		Principle of Uncertainty (Supercomplexity)
Research	An enquiry which seeks to discover new knowledge	**Contributes to new uncertainty**
Scholarship	Enquiry with the purpose of being more familiar with what is already known	**Monitors existing uncertainty**
Teaching	Enquiry with the aim of imparting existing knowledge to others.	**Encompasses skills for living with uncertainty**

Table 5: Types of Enquiry & Principles of Uncertainty

Intellectual love is a permanent driving force, as Rowland (2005) points out – a discipline can never be known completely. There is always more to learn, always a deeper understanding to achieve. Therefore, to experience intellectual love is to firstly (and most importantly) to recognise one's own ignorance. This recognition of ignorance allows an understanding that there is a space where more knowledge can 'fit', and so opens up the possibility of new knowledge. We can not learn if we do not know what we do not know. Morley (2008) suggests, however, that learning and teaching, in fact every aspect of professional life is as influenced by the micropolitical landscape as by intellectual pursuits. Rowland (2005) points out that in the case of intellectual love the old adage about familiarity breeding contempt is not true ~ indeed it is far removed from reality. If intellectual love is present, then familiarity breeds curiosity and enquiry. There is an argument that it also breeds collaboration, as intellectual love by its nature lends itself to sharing of new knowledge gained, both as additions to the discipline which is so loved and in the hope that the sharing will bring about new vistas of enquiry. When linking to the work of Barnett (2000) it could be argued that familiarity in fact leads to, or is brought about by,

supercomplexity. Burke (2008) points to the widening participation agenda as adding a further complicating factor to the delivery of higher education, causing shifts and changes in professional identities but allowing for greater access to the love of the discipline. Rowland (2002) also discusses shifts in higher education, which he identifies as five fractures, fundamentally, including the fragmented nature of knowledge and uncertainty about the purpose of higher education. He argues that, in a culture of having to identify aims and objectives of teaching, the wider purposes behind higher education are left unexamined. Rowland (2002) goes on to argue that intellectual love and the fostering of the same in students is not part of the push for higher education to be seen as part of the global economy, but it is as important for the future. Certainly Rowland (2008) argues that intellectual love is a vital aspect of the relationships between colleagues and he argues that the existence of intellectual love is what maintains collegiality and stops it from becoming corporate identity. Barnett (2007) most certainly considers the importance of emotions and emotional attachment, but he focuses more on relationships between individuals, Rowland (2008) speaks of intellectual love as being the relationship between the knower and the known.

One vitally important point raised by Rowland (2005) is that intellectual love needs freedom and space. It is vulnerable to the ‘audit culture’ which demands results and places in league tables – it seeks freedom to enquire which requires space to make mistakes and to meander down the wrong avenue of enquiry. In a slightly later work, he goes on to point out that it is not until there is a shift in the zeitgeist to realise that education is not merely about the living that a student will make following their qualification / experience, but should be about the life that they will lead that there will be any hope of intellectual love entering into the ‘arena’ of education (Rowland, 2006). This links with the notion of the ‘activist professional’ who has developed, through mutual trust, a cooperative and collaborative relationship whereby enquiry is expected on both the part of the lecturer and their management (Sachs, 2000). This is taken into the remit of

Higher Education, where Walker (2001a) discusses the need for action in not simply research, but in all aspects of professional life. Intellectual love is, according to Rowland (2005) the bridge between teaching and research, but the focus on results and outcomes stifles this, thereby eroding the bridge and forcing apart two aspects of enquiry. An institution which encouraged intellectual love might arguably end up with more than action research, but action teaching and scholarship also. This is reminiscent of Nixon (2001) who suggested that 'new' professionalism must encompass care and morality alongside a perspective in which the professional exists in and considers the wider arena in which they work, rather than the narrow view of the lone individual.

Gornall and Salisbury (2012) report on the "Working Lives Research Group" where they drew on data over a three year period with twenty four academics. They identify a very clear tendency of their participants to work many hours over their working week, but they identify that their participants create internal pressure on themselves from motivation to know more; there is very much a feeling of intellectual love, although the term used is unseen pleasure. Rowland (2008) concurs, it is the intellectual love which drives the higher education professional and student. Certainly, he argues, it makes the student more employable and allows them to be better equipped to deal with the increasing complexity of society.

Rowland (2005) suggests that the final outcome of what he terms the 'perversion' of intellectual love (p. 101) is the movement towards intellectual prostitution. But here he is talking about HE, not FE, and there is a definite culture shift to be considered. The league tables for HE are regarding research and research outputs. For FE they are solely based on student results. Therefore, there is an argument to be made here that the intellectual prostitution seen by Rowland has forced FE into a place where research and scholarship are viewed as secondary pursuits, with teaching being the only valid enquiry allowed. Nolan (2005) also suggests that in the current climate, there is a

pressure to publish in HE, rather than to cherish one's publication. She sees this as the 'publish or cherish' decision, rather than the 'publish or perish' concern (Nolan, 2005 p. 134). In a consideration of scholarship in FE, Gale, Turner and McKenzie (2011) spoke to a sample of HE lecturers in colleges and they found that the lecturers reported very limited recognition for, or emphasis on, scholarly activity. Gale et al (2011) then go on to explain what HE in FE lecturers 'should' do; namely to move away from traditional notions of scholarly activity. They suggest that a new sort of scholarship, the scholarship of teaching, might emerge, perhaps because the participants for Gale et al (2011) seemed to express not intellectual love, but the love of teaching; very much the focus for FE.

2.06 Professionalism in Context

You don't specifically use the term 'socially constructed' which the examiners used – you've done this by lending your Marxist approach/critique – but wonder whether you should use the examiners language up front?

Any analysis of professionalism – in either a broad or much narrower context – leads to uncovering a debate which has considered the nature of professionalism spanning time, disciplines, and professions. From Etzioni's (1969) dubbing of education as semi- or quasi-professional to the current literature, there is little agreement on what the word means even while we attempt to apply it to contexts which are inherently complex. Thus, a consideration of professionalism is an analysis of a socially constructed discourse applied to a range of complex settings.

Sciulli (2005a) suggests that the term 'professionalism' is a restrictive one, a subtle means to arrogate behaviour and maintain the status quo. Goodson and Hargreaves' (1996) framework of professionalism is aimed at all professions, although it has been embraced most by education; this suggests that professionalism itself is a fungible commodity, easily picked up in education and

utilised in medicine, for example. Since it is undefined (and arguably undefinable) it is constructed by the society seeking to craft that definition. The suggestion that professionalism as a term is counter to the whole notion it purports to represent is reminiscent of Deleuze and Guattari (1983), who suggest that the psychodynamic theory of Sigmund Freud creates a nostrum for academics to believe in; it 'Oedipalizes' academics and society – by giving a framework which is false and unhelpful but which masquerades as analysis. That framework obscures reality and provides comforting definitions which society can accept. Sciulli (2005b) seems to be suggesting the same of the study of professionalism, which never truly scratches the surface because it accepts the fundamentally flawed starting point, thus never looking at the deeper truths. Bair (2014) concurs, the lack of understanding of what professionalism is remains a major issue in education. She points to the other semi-professions, a tactic used by many researchers (Grossman, Hammerness, and McDonald, 2009; Swann, McIntyre, Pell, Hargreaves, & Cunningham, 2010; Tichenor & Tichenor, 2005), but one which fails to address the basic question of what professionalism is, or if it exists at all.

Logically, then, the very concept of professionalism – like many other discourses or theories – is a means of maintaining inequality and elitism, a social construct which perpetuates social norms. Those who know and understand, the intellectual bourgeoisie to put it in Marxist terms, have access to allow, or bar, others from this world. The 'desiring revolution' which Deleuze and Guattari (1961) suggest must happen for there to be true equality of access to knowledge, goods, and services is dependent on the use of individual's energies being put to a pursuit of truth, not theory. Since grand theory and academia serve only to disempower those denied access, they clearly state that to understand society, the revolution must be collective and can not be run by politicians or professionals. Sciulli (2005a; 2005b) suggests that professionalism must be reconsidered from a functionalist viewpoint; as a means of maintaining social norms, constructed and endorsed as a gateway, functioning to perpetuate inequality and obscure access.

Deleuze and Guattari (1961) suggest that academics hide away knowledge and withhold access to it, thus making it more desirable – they then equate this to Marxist notions of capital; academic theory is given cultural and knowledge capital by virtue of being academic theory. This cycle keeps the academics focusing on theory, while everyone else leaves a consideration of such to the 'experts'. This mirrors the Marxist theory of the relations of production; it creates two distinct groups – owners of the means of production and those who desire what is produced – and pits them against each other. The function of professionalism, in this analysis, is to restrict access to professions, to ensure that elitism is maintained and that there are restraints on entry. In a further mirroring of Marxist theory, the cycle is self-perpetuating; we expect and demand educated and professional teachers, lawyers, and doctors – there is a market value to a commodity which we can not define and an expectation to 'own' that commodity which has been shaped by the study of it by a group in whose interest it is to maintain it.

2.07 Personal Context

I believe that professionalism 'exists' in some form, yet I do not know entirely what it is. For me, education is emancipatory, and I struggle with the elitist nature of it. I believe that education at all levels should be free and funded to all, regardless of economic circumstance. Juxtaposed to this is the belief that there are some job roles which should require specific levels of specialised education; and the understanding that professionalism is wrapped up in cultural norms and ideas of class and privilege and yet it is something which should be expected of all employees, no matter what the role, to the extent that is appropriate.

Approaching this research, I was clear. I can not deny that I am part of the system. Furthermore, I believe "the system" needs to exist. Being a teacher – or lawyer, or brain surgeon – requires its own set of skills. Being employed to do something means that there are standards of behaviour which an employer can, and should, reasonably expect. That, for me, is irrefutable. Yet, I am disturbed

at the system which excludes people from studying and accessing education because they can not afford it.

Thus, I subscribe to the philosophy, as stated in Section 2.02 of 'subversion from the chalk face.' I can only make change from within, and so I adhere to my own position on professionalism. That is covered in depth in Section 1.06, but in terms of the broader issues of equality, social justice, and the function of professionalism, I look at these very carefully and consider my stance daily.

Education is a tool for social justice and equality, and it is one which is currently not available to many people. Therefore, I work at a FEC and would not consider moving to a university, as so many of my students have expressed that they would never have considered a degree course at university, but were prepared to take the risk. Also, because my focus in an FEC is teaching, not research. When I told my line manager that I was planning to undertake doctoral studies, her response was "Why?" The ethos is entirely different, although, I understand that the university ethos is changing, my stance remains.

In light of that, I believed that 'professionalism' means something different in a College than a University. However, with changes in university provision and the rise in teaching-focussed universities, the lines between the two blur even further. Yet, at it's core, for me, professionalism is about doing the job the very best you can – and whilst the outcome may be the same, the journey for each student is unique. Therefore, I believe that it is my responsibility, morally, to understand why I have those ideals, where my beliefs come from; which should have been what I answered my line manager when she asked me why I was doing it.

2.08 Summary

The research literature provides extensive evidence of the complexity of the FE sector (Jephcote et al, 2008; Stoten, 2013; Lucas, 2004a; Coffield et al, 2008). There is a lack of coherence both in policy and in defining professionalism. I accept professionalism as a discourse representing, at least a dual reality (Robson, 2006); professionalism as the skills, knowledge and procedures used, underpinned by professionality; individual epistemology, ontology, morality and understanding of professionalism (Evans, 2008). I utilise the taxonomy for post-modern professionalism identified by Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) as a framework as it is closest to my own notions of professionalism and professionality at the outset of the research.

This complexity is compounded by influences on professionalism as broad as the sector. Gender issues arguably add to individual pressure and de-professionalising of women in ITT, FE and HE (Murray, 2006). Noel (2006) argues against such simplistic considerations identifying the complex inter-relationships between gender and many other issues. Gunter (2000) agrees; issues of gender discourse can not be 'solved', adding to the existing complexities of FE. Alongside this, vocational lecturers in FE describe expanding on the support given to students (Robson et al, 2004) and report emotional responses to teaching observations which reject passion for vocational subjects (Edgington, 2013).

Within any FE college there are likely to be students who are studying at pre-entry level up to level 3 (DfE, 2014). Many FE colleges, including the one where this research took place, also offer Higher Education courses, expanding that provision to include level 4 through to level 7, traditionally the remit of the university. I utilise the notion of 'supercomplexity' identified by Barnett (2000a) who argues that universities exist in a state of continuous uncertainty, which they maintain. This leads to the university (and the society and structures that it exists within and alongside) no longer defining valid knowledge.

Lea and Callaghan (2008) identify that, although the micro-context of the classroom is well researched and considered, supercomplexity arises in the macro-context, which is under-researched. This links with the notion of intellectual love, which Rowland (2005) suggests tends to shape enquiry. If supercomplexity exists in 'traditional' HE and research has been driven by intellectual love, what parallels, if any, are there in FE? This has not been considered and this research seeks to explore the meaning of professionalism for those enmeshed in the micro- and macro-context of Further Education.

Chapter Summary:

This chapter has considered the existing body of knowledge in relation to professionalism in an FE college. First consideration was given to the taxonomy of professionalism used, embedding it in an FE context. Second two influences on professionalism in FE were explored before consideration was given to the HE in FE professional.

Chapter 3. Methodology

Chapter Aims:

This chapter will chart the methodological journey, identifying the influences on this research in terms of theory before moving on to justification and analysis of the methods actually used. This is followed by the procedure, a consideration of the ethical issues identified and the techniques used in the analysis.

3.01 Chapter Introduction & Summary

This chapter attempts to summarise the methodological journey of this research. I am seeking to explore what lecturers in an FE college understand by the term 'professionalism' and how they make sense of it within their own frameworks. Thus, for me, this research was about finding meaning and sharing it via indepth semi-structured interviews.

The choice of methodology and methodological framework was one which was vital to me and fundamental to this research. Having come from a very positivist background, I was determined to get the methodology 'right', thereby presenting myself with the first hurdle. This chapter charts the journey of the methodological decision-making process and the product of these deliberations (Table 6). In section 3.02, I identify my theoretical approach to research. I then move on to discuss the process of methodological decision making (3.03), the procedure used (3.04) and the ethical considerations undertaken (3.05) before finally considering how the interviews were analysed (3.06).

Section	
3.01	Chapter Introduction & Summary: *Introduces the methodology used and gives an 'overview' of the data collection methods used. Identifies the seven-stage procedure utilised.*
3.02	Thematising the Inquiry: *Discusses the theoretical underpinning of the research decisions taken. Considers the types of knowledge which I sought, how the topic influenced the methodology and the paradigms this research is conducted in. Finally, the hermeneutic influence on the research is discussed, alongside other influences which were considered but not used*
3.03	Designing the Inquiry: *The theory and practicality of the interview technique are discussed before moving on to the analysis framework utilised.*
3.04	Procedure: Interviewing & Transcribing *The procedure utilised is described, highlighting the participants, sampling and parameters*
3.05	Ethical Considerations: *The ethical considerations are discussed and decisions regarding ethical behaviour are justified.*
3.06	Analysing & Verifying the Inquiry *Tools used to analyse the interviews are discussed, explored and justified.*

Table 6: Overview of Chapter 3

This research is conducted via a series of semi-structured interviews undertaken with a group of eight participants, plus one pilot participant (Table 7) who all work in an FE college, identifying their notions of professionalism and professionality. These participants were chosen as they a) shared the three hermeneutic lenses with me, b) represented an equal gender split and c) were a variety of both FE and HE lecturers. Thus, sampling was setting up a group of very deliberately selected individuals in order to study professionalism (Flick, 2007a)

*Name**	*Gender*	*HE or FE***	*Notes*
Mark	M	HE	Pilot participant.
Alice	F	HE	
Edward	M	HE	
Julie	F	HE	
Norman	M	FE	
Charlie	F	FE	Youngest participant in the study.
Colin	M	Both	
Jan	F	Both	
Victor	M	FE	Newly trained lecturer.

Table 7: Overview of Participants

My own individual epistemology and ontology were such that I initially aimed to carry out entirely hermeneutic research; this quickly became obviously unachievable in terms of word count and time frames and so this work was influenced by hermeneutics, specifically Ricoeur (1988), as I shared time, place and language tradition with the participants. Although there are undoubtedly issues within this in terms of sharing *preunderstandings*; ideas and concepts

which our three shared lenses meant that we had a commonality of understanding over, I felt that these were outweighed by our ability to reach a shared, negotiated meaning which is the aim of any hermeneutic research (Young & Collin, 1988). Furthermore, in an attempt to achieve the *distanciation* from the text which Ricoeur (1988) suggests is imperative, all interviews were fully transcribed and then returned to the participants, in order for them to change what was said to what was meant, a fundamental issue in terms of the hermeneutic influence (Cohen, 2000a). Thus, I was able to distanciate myself from the clumsy medium of the spoken word and focus instead on the meaning of those words as ascribed by my participants. This allowed, furthermore, for my participants to achieve some level of *appropriation* as identified by phenomenological hermeneutics, to initially understand and attempt to explain a phenomena but then to consider it at a deeper level and to appropriate or gain a better and more meaningful understanding of it via a consideration of the words they had spoken.

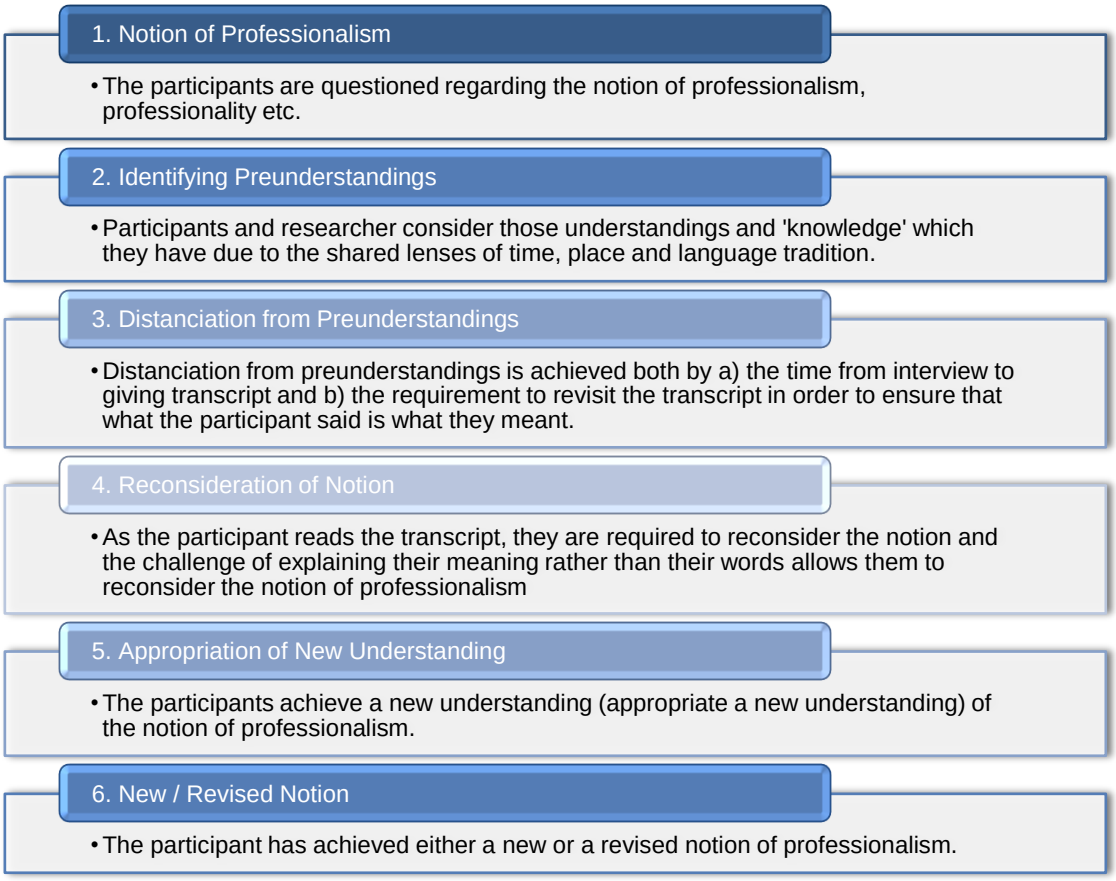


Figure 5: Process of Appropriation for Participants in this Study

In terms of paradigm, this research is influenced by the work of Lund (2005) who suggests that a movement between interpretive and critical paradigms is both acceptable and achievable. In many ways, in light of my own aims, epistemology and ontology, I believe it is inevitable. Therefore, the research begins in an interpretive framework, where I identify and interpret realities, but in a truly pluralistic manner the search for praxis may be triggered in light of this interpretation, thus it moves towards the critical (Kvale, 1983). In creating this inquiry, I followed the seven-stage structure suggested by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) for conducting interviews and so follow this format throughout this chapter.

3.02 Thematising the Inquiry: Methodological Theory

I will begin at the end ~ this research is conducted in a manner which aligns, in places, with a partially hermeneutic framework, although I have fitted it into my own ontology and epistemology, choosing to utilise some aspects and not others. This methodological influence on the research could, at first glance, seem to be contrary, but fits into my own understanding. It must be clearly stated, however, that this is not hermeneutic research but instead has taken account of some aspects of the hermeneutic.

3.02(a) Thematising the Inquiry: Types of Knowledge

The first stage of this research for me was the realisation that I was seeking knowledge which is *verstehen*,[1] best found in the sharing of common meaning

[1] Knowledge that is understanding, not easily gathered by the more analytical science

and lending itself to phenomenological hermeneutics. Stainton-Rogers (2006) identifies *explicatory* research; that which seeks to unwrap and explore the highly complex nature of reality, rather than to explain it. Shared, negotiated meaning rather than explanation was what I sought, and all the reading that I did suggested that hermeneutics was the way forward (Van der Zalm and Bergum, 2000). I commenced this thesis believing that it would be wholly hermeneutic in nature, but this soon became obviously unwieldy in terms of the word count and workload, both of which were vital considerations (Montague & High, 2006). I decided to focus on aspects of hermeneutics which had most appealed to me – the notion of three shared lenses which all participants needed to be known to me through; time, place and language. Sharing these lenses with regard to our professional lives allows us to come a step closer to reaching a shared, negotiated meaning (Steeves, 2000a). It is through these hermeneutic lenses that beliefs, values and commitments of individuals can be studied and deep, shared understanding can be reached.

This shared understanding is dependent on the past experiences possibly considered biases by other methodologies but necessary *preunderstandings* for hermeneutics (Charalambos Papadopoulos and Beadsmoore, 2008). Gadamer (1976) suggests that each individual has *appropriated* these lenses to the point they are not consciously aware of them thus they form our preunderstandings; in this case, of the workplace and, more broadly, the profession. Each shared lens allows the starting point of the interview to be enmeshed in deeper meaning than would occur otherwise (Steeves, 2000b). Starting from this point allows the researcher to both inhabit and develop an understanding of the *mode of being* of their participant, a concrete reality to the participant but never more than a proposed reality to the researcher. The point of hermeneutics is to bring together, as closely as possible, two worlds; the proposed world of researcher and the concrete experience of participant which inevitably exists in a dyad

where two people seek to understand the same word or experience through their individual preunderstandings (Clark, 2005).

In order to ensure that a shared, negotiated meaning is reached, it is important to undergo a process of *distanciation*, leading to perceiving new meanings from what is said and read (this being the process of *appropriation*) (Charalambous et al, 2008). Achieving distanciation begins with an acceptance that a text never has a single meaning, thus there are a range of interpretations, each valid and credible (Ricoeur, 1988). To achieve distanciation is to attempt to objectify the text, releasing it from the participant's original words, seeking its original meaning (Dryer & Pedersen, 2009). Each interview, when conducted in a manner which embraces hermeneutic epistemology, needs to ensure there has been a dialect on both sides which has worked through this process, swinging back and forth between distanciation and appropriation.

Therefore, following the interview a full transcription (Appendix F for exemplar) was created and then given to the participants, so that they could make any changes they wished. It was important to deal with meaning, not the clumsy medium of the spoken word, allowing the hermeneutic circle of interpretation to move forward and backward. This permits the actual phenomena to start to be uncovered and examined (Charalambous et al, 2008), thus beginning to explicate the complex notion of professionalism (Stainton-Rogers, 2006). This appropriation is gained through distanciation, but it is important to recognise that distanciation is not the end goal, rather a means to dealing with preunderstandings, specifically those which we did not share via our mutual lenses (Wiklund, Lindholm and Lindstom, 2002).

Kvale (2009) suggests twelve features to interview knowledge, characteristic not simply of the knowledge gained in an interview, but also of the objects of the interviews themselves; true of the lived experiences as much as the data collection technique. To clarify what I sought from the interviews, I analysed these twelve characteristics of knowledge and applied this to the information I was seeking to gain (Appendix B). I realised that I was interested in my research producing knowledge in practice rather than knowledge for practice and facilitating change in all those involved (Hadfield, 2005). This could, of course, have led to a situation of focusing on the "single case" due to both internal and external restraints (Traianou, 2007), but I felt that this was a risk worth taking.

3.02(b) Thematising the Inquiry: Preunderstandings

Although I started this research clear that I wanted to consider professionalism, the aspects of professionalism that I looked at depended very much on the methodology and vice versa. The goal-orientated person that I am is drawn to Action Research in the hope that I can use it to identify a problem and then hopefully find a solution to that. This links with the work of Morrison (2002) who suggested that research in education is concerned both with an attitude towards specific phenomena and a research activity. This leads to the question of what purpose this research ***serves*** both for myself and for my practice, as well as what purpose it serves for the participants. Whilst I acknowledge the usefulness of action research, professionalism is not something which can be 'solved' per se. I began this seeking something deeper than a solution, I sought understanding and accepted that this must come first (Moustakas, 1994). Acknowledging my own perspective and accepting that I bring my 'self' to this work, I do not attempt to 'bracket' out my own perspectives, but rather I choose a theoretical viewpoint which accepts that my perspective is embedded throughout the research and that this, in fact, is perfectly acceptable (Laverty, 2003).

Having reflected on this, I concluded that I aim to understand professionalism and what it means to FE professionals. Thus, the research aimed to identify a source of my own frustration and clarify the shared and specific frustrations that participants experience, if they did. Since I was accepting my own preunderstandings, it was important that I acknowledged them (Ricoeur, 1973). Therefore, I identified my own initial framework and notions of what professionalism means to me first, which fitted into the work of Goodson and Hargreaves (1996). This was important in terms of recognising my own preunderstandings and so, in order to ascertain whether the participants and I did truly share the lenses which I assumed we did, I decided to use the seven-point Goodson & Hargreaves (1996) taxonomy following the interviews. Before that, however, I amended the taxonomy so that it fitted more clearly into my preunderstandings (Figure. 4).

This research is regarding the practice of teaching; this caused me to consider carefully the relationship between practice and research. I had always considered research would have an impact on my teaching practice, but was faced with my practice impacting on my research (Hughes, 2005). This merging of practice and research is documented throughout the HE sector and juxtaposed by policy and political trend towards a further separating of teaching and research at both an individual career and a funding level (Scott, 2005). I sought to create coherence between my own theory and practice, fixing the 'fault lines' identified by Rowland (2002) in both my own reality and those of my participants.

Finally, I considered the preunderstandings I hold of the words I am using. Hermeneutics is very focused on the meaning of words and, if I am to reach any shared understanding, I must consider my own as deeply as possible (Moustakas, 1994). I understand, at an ontological and epistemological level, that education is power – in this, I come from a fundamentally Marxist standpoint. Access to education is historically a class issue, bound in socio-economic status and class identity (Radford, 2012; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Evetts, 2003). Daily, I face the paradox identified by Brousseau (1997) on an

epistemological and ontological level. For Brousseau, this was about classroom practice and knowledge; for me it is about emancipation. Giving students the tools to break free of their current situations – a goal many of them espouse at the outset of their course – and to enter into a world they have never believed they are able – or allowed – to enter empowers them. The majority of the students I teach are 'non-traditional' learners in HE. They are usually mature students and many come with few or no formal qualifications. During the two or three years they are with us, we will inevitably see a high proportion of them get divorced or leave their 'old life' behind in some way. The journey for many of them is not moving "towards" an end goal of a qualification – it is about escaping their current situation first, realising that they can be a "success." In Marxist terms, they are seeking to escape their social class; perhaps only to enter the petite-bourgeoisie, but it is social mobility which they could not attain otherwise.

Which poses an issue for me; namely that I have my own story as a learner, and I have been on the receiving end of education as emancipation. I absolutely subscribe to the idea that it is my job to provide every opportunity to my students; but I can not put my definition of emancipation on them. Emancipation 'my way' is nothing more than a new power dynamic – I become the very thing I am trying to assist them to break free of; if their education is their capital, I can not enforce my means of production on them. Which means that, for me, professionalism includes ensuring that I am facilitating them in their goals, not enforcing mine on them. Brousseau (1997) suggests that the way to solve the paradox in the classroom is for the teacher to adopt a policy of non-interference as the student works. Radford (2012) however, proposes a more socio-cultural approach, and this is what I attempt to adopt. I do not stand back and simply wait for my students to work out what 'emancipation' means for them, rather I do what I explain to them as 'walking alongside, for a while.'.

Yet, still, I am in a position of power. I can not separate myself from that – nor do I think I should. Instead, I seek to perform the alchemy Popkewitz (2004) suggests – taking their 'unthought', to use Foucalt's (1994) term, and assist them to examine it. Only when they are able to do that, do they not need my

help any more, they have developed their own cultural capital and are proletariat no longer. My standpoint on what professionalism looks like is underpinned by this; many of my students arrive knowing that they want to change, but not understanding more than that. Before they can clearly see where they wish to go – what emancipation means to them – they have to grapple with this 'unthought', identified by Foucalt (1994) as

> How can man think what he does not think . . . How can he be the subject of a language that for thousands of years has been formed without him, a language whose organization escapes him . . . and within which he is obliged, from the very outset, to lodge his speech and thought? (1994, p. 322)

One of the aspects of professionalism identified by Goodson and Hargreaves is the provision of meaningful, not simply anodyne service. When I am sitting in an interview or a tutorial with a woman in her forties who has raised five children, two with profound disabilities, as a single mother and she tells me that she has worked her entire life but she wants to be a better role model for her children in terms of education, it would not be anodyne to enforce my idea of emancipation on her; it would be reprehensible. Marxist philosophy identifies her as at a 'double disadvantage' in terms of gender, but her cultural capital is zero as far as education is concerned and she has been enculturated to believe that she will probably fail. After all, people 'like her' do not succeed. So, for a while, I will walk with her as a lecturer – in a position of power and not challenging that. True emancipation comes when she defines her own end goal. Anecdotally, the student I described did just that, not entering the field of education and becoming a lecturer on adult courses as I would have placed her. Instead, she chose to become a Social Worker. She is now, like many others, at the 'front line' of her practice and she, in her turn, is changing lives for good, ill or anything in between. Fundamentally, if I follow my own code of professionalism, then my students will change the practice of all the professions they go in to. They enter the 'system', but they do so having taken a journey of self-

emancipation – one I have walked a while with them. This cascades to their practice and so I can believe that ‘subversion from the chalk face’ makes a real difference.

In the College where I work, also, I am situated in my role. I have been employed there since 1995, it is my first job. During that time, I gained experience of teaching from Level 1 to Level 7, and have been in self-funded education for almost all of it. When I moved to Higher Education, my line manager was clear – I was going there to ‘inject excellence’ into the new provision. I have written three of the degree programmes there, including my departments first full BSc programme, which I run very successfully. I am perceived by staff and students as a ‘senior’ member of staff – and since a large proportion of our staff undertake their PGCE / Cert Ed in house, I have taught many of them – using the same notions of emancipation, and with the same Marxist philosophy. Undoubtedly, this power dynamic is worth noting. However, here the hermeneutic aspect of this research comes into play. Kvale (1983) suggests that the goal of objectivity is impossible – even were it desirable – and so in choosing participants I ensured that the first interview, and the pre-interview stage, was clear about the shared lenses required and specifically asked about being able to engage in this sort of discussion, both with me specifically and, in general as they are employed by the College. As is seen in the results, one participant withdrew due to feeling that they did not want to delve further into this aspect of their professional life. As the participants come from a diverse range of experience, time served, etc, my role with each of them was – and is – very different.

3.02(c) Thematising the Inquiry: Paradigms

Reflecting on the idea of paradigms inevitably leaves me with a sense of frustration as I struggle to come to terms with which paradigm suits my philosophy best. When reading the work of Lund (2005) I felt I had come to grips with the stance that I wished to take. My leaning is towards working within the critical paradigm as my aim is to achieve some personal praxis. This contrasts with the interpretive nature of hermeneutics however I realised I could maintain my vision whilst moving between the two paradigms. The research begins in an interpretive framework, identifying and interpreting the social realities of both myself and the participants and concludes in a critical paradigm as the search for praxis may be triggered by the interpretation offered (Kvale, 1983). Hermeneutics falls solely into the interpretive paradigm, concerned with understanding and not creating laws or rules, arguably the ultimate goal of the interpretivist researcher (Usher and Bryant, 1989). Before beginning the research I identified my initial framework; understandings, meanings and prejudices regarding professionalism at both a micro and macro level. This I identified in some detail, recognising that the rules I work with are that professionalism is a triple-aspected concept, encompassing practice, theory and morality.

There are no differences in the actual methods used within the interpretive and critical paradigms, rather their differences fall into the remit of intent and theoretical assumptions (McCormack and Titchen, 2006). When I considered what paradigm I wish to work under here, the only conclusion is both interpretive and critical paradigms, although the focus is likely to be a journey from one to the other (Lund, 2005). This fits with Ricoeur, whose hermeneutic approach is the influence for this piece (Ricoeur, 1991; Piercey, 2004). Phenomenological research contributes to many aspects of knowledge development and the revelation of human experience (Moustakas, 1994). I was

drawn to a methodology which would not prescribe action but which caused, or at the very least influenced, practice by revealing the meanings behind such human experience (Van de Zalm and Bergum, 2000). This was juxtaposed for me with my search for praxis, and is the reason for the dual-paradigm nature of this piece.

With such complexities of paradigm, it is unsurprising that the theoretical framework this research falls into is fluid. To conceptualise what I am researching is not completely straightforward. It is concerning the self-identity and self-concept of professionals in a specific educational setting and falls into a very Marxist concept of disadvantage and control. My own political agenda is fundamentally Marxist and I see this research as embedded in this broad conceptualisation of the world. Elhammoumi (2002) suggests that the work of Marx and Vygotsky brings together what he sees as the current divide in psychological research, which appeals to me as a 'lapsed positivist'. Many well-respected researchers have suggested that a Vygotskian approach is not one that is embedded in Marxism (Moscovici, 1998) but I find myself working within the framework outlined by Elhammoumi 2002). I consider FE lecturers (working at FE or HE level) to be suffering disadvantage by being in the “Cinderella Sector” and consider how they *“create their own capital”* with regards to professionalism (Vygostky, 1978, p. 9). Therefore, the theoretical framework I wish to work under is an analysis of the experiences of lecturers and a consideration of how this “deprofessionalisation” that I perceive as happening has affected them and their ability to construct their own capital within their job.

3.02(d) Thematising the Inquiry: Developing Methodology

Ensuring that I could situate my method in existing paradigms and theories allowed me to identify my own positionality (Sturman and Taggart, 2007). I initially considered professionalism in an historical framework; I felt it important to acknowledge that history shapes the present in a myriad of fashions, bringing about socially and politically important consequences (Novoa and Yariv-Mashal, 2003). This was where I began the literature review, grounding the research in a context and situating my own epistemology and ontology in the theory. Originally, I considered that I would hang the interview data on historical 'pegs' ~ pivotal moments relayed in personal histories shaping the participants notions of professionalism. Foucault (1972) argued for a move away from *grand narratives* and focus on a *genealogical approach* which recognises the importance of the smaller narratives as being the more real ones. (Foucault, ibid: 24) If I adopted this approach, I would work from pegs they identify as important to their perceptions of professionalism, not imposing my own subjective viewpoint on the participants (Armstrong, 2007). I decided against this as the construction of 'pegs' would detract from the meanings which I sought and would weaken the shared lens of time, thereby creating disparity between shared preunderstandings, which went against the idea of what I was aiming to achieve (Kahn, 2000). I wished to enter the area where we shared preunderstandings to the point of achieving meaning and so to step away from one lens which we shared seemed nonsensical (Cohen, 2000a).

Identifying this research as having even an influence of hermeneutic is to tap in to a much broader framework. Whilst it is fair to speak of 'hermeneutic research' there are types of hermeneutics. The work of Heidegger (1962; 1974) and Gadamer (1976; 1992), for example, provide polar standpoints. Heidegger suggests that the aim of hermeneutics is to inhabit the world of the text, to understand it's mode of being whilst Gadamer sought to provide a theory which

would aid human understanding (Charalambous et al, 2008). Whilst neither of these extremes fitted my own epistemology and ontology, Paul Ricoeur provided the middle ground between them, specifically identifying appropriation as part of the process of interpretation (Ricoeur, 1988). He suggests that the aim of hermeneutics is the interpretation of a text which brings about new understandings ~ when the interpretations become appropriated and form new pre-understandings (Charalambous et al, 2008). I felt that appropriation was to a small extent achievable within the single interview I carried out with each participant.

Gadamer purports that objectivity is an impossibility. The notion of *Vorutrilen*[2] is an impossible dream (Gadamer, 1992). Furthermore it is an unwanted dream, as the biases which we carry with us are not negative, but necessary – without preconceptions and biases, we would have no understanding. I purposely considered my own preconceptions at the beginning of this research and reflect on how they have changed at the end. Gadamerian hermeneutics considers that all understandings begin with preconceptions to be modified (Piercey, 2004). From this it is a logical standpoint that preunderstandings or *fore-meanings* in the language of both Gadamer and Heidegger indicate that an individual is embedded in a tradition ~ and this is necessary condition of inquiry, rather than a disadvantage to it (Gadamer, 1992). It was this philosophical standpoint which I took throughout this research. However, Gadamerian hermeneutics sees distanciation as an '*ontological fall from grace*' (Ricoeur, 1991, p.294). Ricoeur suggests a level of distanciation is not an obstacle rather sometimes a requirement. In this research I embraced the process of distanciation, as the movement from the spoken word to the written as a first step. However, the giving of the transcript to the participants meant that I was further distanced from the text, a first step towards socio-cultural autonomy as a text distanced from the intentions and meanings behind the original words (Gonzalez, 2006). Perhaps the most important point which Ricoeur makes

[2] Freedom from all prejudices, as experienced by an individual.

regarding the necessity of distanciation for understanding is the importance of the reader (or researcher), whose self-awareness is fundamental to the understanding of the text. Ricoeur argues that reading well requires readers to compensate for their own tendencies towards distortion – and so to distance themselves (Piercey, 2004). This was something which was fundamental to this research, as it meant that I approached the reading of the interview transcripts with as objective a viewpoint as possible. I had developed preunderstandings throughout the interviews, but giving the participants the ability to change the text depending on their meaning was one step towards this distanciation. The procedure that I followed also allowed me to dissect the words and phrases used by the participants against the work of Goodson & Hargreaves (1996), aiming for a level of distanciation.

Habermas fundamentally disagrees with Gadamer, suggesting his theory is philosophically flawed and ethically retrograde. Instead, Habermas suggests the focus of hermeneutic theory should be on 'theory of interests' (Habermas, 1971 p. 176). Indeed, Habermas describes three basic interests which govern spheres of inquiry (Habermas, 1971).

Interest	Explanation
Technical	Governs the 'technical' disciplines / sciences. This is the desire to enslave the natural order to human ends.
Practical	Governs the humanities. This is the desire to understand; specifically the meaning of symbols and structures in the cultural reality. This is linked very closely with tradition.
Emancipatory	Governs the social sciences. This is the desire to unwrap the motives and the 'distorted communication' of the other inquiries.

Table 8: Habermas' Three Types of Interest

Emancipatory inquiry is the remit of hermeneutics, and this is incompatible with the Gadamerian notion of the universality of hermeneutics (Habermas, 1996). This research does not seek to unwrap the distorted communication of either technical or practical interests, but seeks to find out if a truth for me is a shared experience for colleagues (Malin, 2003). Thus, although the work is influenced by hermeneutic writers, Habermas is not one of them.

This leads to recognising that I was not observing from without, but participating in the discussion and consideration of professional identity, an activity usually reserved for ethnographic research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). However, this research is not participant observation, which ethnographic research is inexorably linked with (Angrosino, 2007). I was interpreting the interviews, but also 'filling in' my understanding of the social and political arena for each participant (Taylor, 2002) a necessary and inevitable activity in order to maintain the shared hermeneutic lenses. Whilst there is no clear agreement on what ethnography actually is, it has been identified as a dialogue between research practices and the labelling of such (Larson, 2006). If that is the case this research does not fit into the typography of what ethnographers 'do' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

The question of whether one can appropriately carry out research in one's own place of work must be considered. It is analysed here in terms of appropriateness to this research, but will also be considered in section 3.05 where I discuss the ethics of insider research. Larson, for example, assumes throughout her consideration of ethnographic research, that the researcher will be *joining* the culture that they are observing (Larson, 2006). This was obviously not the case for me, adding weight to the fact that this is not ethnographic in nature and linking Ricoeur (1991) who argues that, in order to adopt a critical stance, there must an amount of what he terms 'reference'. To understand a text is to critically analyse how it refers to things beyond the text ~ the world outside the text which it speaks of. I wanted to achieve this, I sought a distanciation of the real, the mundane, from itself thus allowing me to explore

that which I felt I knew (Piercey, 2004). This was fundamental to the research as it required both myself and my participants to consider new possibilities for being in the world in order to gain understanding of our current realities. This could not have happened if we had not shared the three hermeneutic lenses (Figure 18) which meant that we had to work in the same institution. I accept this as a possible flaw, however, literature revealed numerous studies where research was carried out in the researchers own institution (Kugelmass, 2001; Haleman, 2004). Certainly, in order to share place and time with the participants, since I was researching an aspect of my work it must, inevitably, be carried out in my place of work. The ethnographic researcher acts as a voice for the participants, creating a need to revisit and reconsider from differing angles. This contrasts with the hermeneutic approach which influenced this work, whilst ethnography aims for depth and scope, attempting to examine the minutiae within a broad socio-cultural context (Jeffrey and Troman, 2004) the hermeneutic notions of Ricoeur, suggests that any interpretation is a development not only of self-awareness, but also of the contexts in which others live (Ricoeur, 1974).

Data collection utilising this method poses some issues that are probably unique to hermeneutics. I have not followed the linear “interview – research” seen in most frameworks, I sent the transcripts back to the participant to ensure that what I have written is what they meant. However, this is heavily diluted in terms of the hermeneutic framework as it would be much more usual for a number of interviews to be carried out, until such time as shared, negotiated meaning is reached (Cohen, Kahn and Steeves, 2000a). Furthermore, the semi-structured nature of the interviews which I carried out is distinctly un-hermeneutic, giving me structure (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) and allowing me to analyse the responses in relation to Goodson & Hargreaves’ taxonomy.

Accepting that what I bring to the interviews will shape the research itself I approach the research in a spirit of reciprocal discovery and reflection. Debesay, Nåden and Slettebø (2008) suggest that our own prejudices and preunderstandings are necessary for understanding the present, which mirrors my own philosophy. Debesay et al (2008) consider the hermeneutic circle as one where there is no stasis, but in fact one is constantly acquiring new knowledge, new understanding and, indeed, new prejudices and preunderstandings. The very definition of hermeneutics put forward by Debesay et al suggests that its role is to “render clear something that appears unclear” (Debesay et al, 2008 p.58).

Fundamentally, I knew that I am seeking answers, but to questions regarding *theoria* or *praxis*? Hammersley (2004) very clearly identifies the distinction and how these two aspects of knowledge are the basis for a contradiction in what action research is, and what function it performs. Initially action research was tempting to me as it offers both reflection and action, allowing me to ‘solve’ my understanding of professionalism, or at least take a step closer towards that solution. In my mind the term action research is not an oxymoron, the two aspects are intertwined rather than contradictory. Hammersley (2004) purports that in reality action research oscillates its focus between the two component terms, rather than having one being the driving force with the other being a subset.

I have always seen action research as a framework on which specific methodologies hang. It can be carried out in a number of different ways and is flexible in its approach (Sheridan-Thomas, 2006). In her work, Sheridan-Thomas considers whether this flexibility is a strength or weakness when applied to a group of teachers who have a mandate to carry out action research in their school. The pluralistic nature of action research led me to consider what it was that I wished to achieve, and although I saw the end goal as the opportunity to reflect on and change practice, that was not the aim of the study

itself. This is first and foremost a study which fluctuates between the interpretive and critical paradigm.

Due to the nature of sharing hermeneutic lenses with my participants, we are all employed in the same institution. Therefore, this research has elements of a case study. Bassey (1999) suggests that, although there are three distinct types of case study research (theory-seeking, picture-drawing, and evaluative) these are all appropriate to the building of the body of knowledge in education. Of the three, this research most closely fits the theory-seeking case study which leads to fuzzy propositions. Yet, I would argue that this is not a case study of an institution, nor is it that institution the focus. This is research about individuals and their identity as professionals. Some were new to the profession, others had worked in a number of institutions; what I sought to understand was their notion of what 'professionalism' meant to them. Edward speaks of his time in banking as part of this - as far removed from the institution as is Alice's analogy of the bus driver (see Results for more detail).The choice to work with individuals who were all in the same institution *in that moment* was to allow a sharing of time, space and language tradition. Yet, the rich history of each participant was a vital part of the research – and I was no more interested in their time in this institution than in any one before. Thus, it was not the institution as a whole which I was interested in; which would be the 'thing' or 'whole' of interest in case study research (Thomas, 2011). Taylor and Thomas-Gregory (2015) describe case study research as bound in place by time and language. This is true of my participants, but the requirement was that they shared time, place and language with me; and this is not a case study of me.

The small number of participants, geographical restriction and single institution nature of this research mean that it appears specific. Yet, perceived through another lens, this is a snapshot in time of a very diverse group of people, a relatively large number for such an in-depth qualitative study, who bring a varied experience to the results; results which resonate with shared experiences and common themes. I would argue that it is applicable to the broader FE

community – if such exists. Given the disparate and chaotic nature of FE, this group of individuals is as representative of the 'Cinderella sector' as any other.

So, in summary, this research begins in an interpretive framework, using the seven principles outlined by Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) as a focus for interpreting and identifying the levels of professionalism felt by a group of lecturers. As that initial interpretation develops it moves to a more critical paradigm where I consider how the lecturers in question manage to construct their own social capital when faced with issues that they have identified. It is important to note, however, that I did not use the seven principles in the actual interviews, but as a tool of analysis. I purposely did not mention the seven principles as they would run the risk of colouring the participants' viewpoints.

3.03 Designing the Inquiry: Methodological Decision Making

Following Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) seven steps in conducting interviews, I next needed to focus on the *how* of what I was planning. This involved considering the procedures I would use, the set-up of the interview spaces and how I would conduct myself as the researcher. The first thing that I considered was the structure of the whole experience for the participants. I decided to adopt a pre- and post- interview meeting, to ensure that the hermeneutic circle was as closed as it could be within the confines I had.

At this stage, I had to be clear that this research was *not* hermeneutic, but instead utilises what aspects of hermeneutic research I felt was plausible within the constraints I had. Van der Zalm and Bergum (2000) give examples of research which has utilised aspects of hermeneutics, in order to allow a more qualitative analysis, and that was my aim. I am drawn to the depth of understanding and richness of data hermeneutics provides, but I had to balance that with the practicalities of my situation, and the balance of keeping the research as generalisable as possible, within the confines of qualitative study (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). In essence, I wanted to ensure that the research

was as true a representation of a shared, negotiated meaning as I could get with a group of participants of this size.

3.03(a) Designing the Inquiry: Placing Boundaries

One of the main reasons for initially choosing a hermeneutic framework was its admittance of individual consciousness as a proper and appropriate subject of study (Young & Collin, 1988). I wanted to give voice to the human experience of professionalism, gaining and providing an understanding of the essence of individual's notions of professionalism, which I saw (and still see) as a semi-concrete term. It could be argued that the interview procedure boarders on the '*critical incident interview*' often appropriate for the hermeneutic researcher (Collin & Young, 1988: 195). I sought description of the multiple realities experienced by each person, focusing on the reality of professionalism for each of the participants. Studying specific aspects of professionalism as the critical incident meant that I could try and gain validation of my own understanding by mutual recognition. In short, I was seeking the *phenomenological nod* which meant that my participant was discussing something which I could truly feel I understood, an experience I could have (Van der Zalm and Bergum, 2000, p. 212). This meant that it was important for me to verify that I did, in fact, share the lenses with my participants which I felt I did. Indeed, the sampling method used (see section 3.4.2) hinged on the fact that I felt we shared these lenses and so the initial pre-meeting allowed for any participant to withdraw both for ethical reasons (see section 3.5) but also if they felt that these lenses were not, in fact, shared.

Therefore, I met with each participant before the interviews in order to fully explain what the research was about and to answer any questions. This allowed me to talk through the consent form (Appendix C) and to explain the reasons why they had been chosen as participants, namely the sharing of the three

hermeneutic lenses. This decision was taken in light of Rubin and Rubin (2005) who suggest that interview design should be more iterative than the rigid seven-step structure which I followed. However, as a novice researcher in terms of qualitative interviews, the seven stages gave me structure and clarity (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). These pre-meetings also allowed my participants to consider what they understood the term professionalism to mean in the intervening period between pre-meeting and interview. This afforded the participants the chance to consider and begin to *make sense* of previous experiences in terms of professionalism, exploring their pre-existing narratives (Kahn, 2000).

The moral aspect of professionalism which I identified in my own initial framework (Section 1.06) links strongly here, certainly with the hermeneutic aspect of this research. Gadamer (1992) clearly argues against the possibility of any rules existing in absolute, introducing the notions of *techne* (a craft or skill which can be learnt) and *praxis* (knowledge about humanity, tinged with one's own humanity). In traditionally Gadamerian philosophy, any human science is the remit of knowledge informed by *praxis* and embedded in human responsibility for truth, peace and freedom. Therefore, for me, there was very much an element of Gadamerian *praxis* in the search for action. This philosophy has been linked to the search for freedom, freedom of the individual, whereby positivist research is seen as dehumanising (Roy and Starosta, 2001). These pre-meetings set clear boundaries and allowed me to discuss with the participants what was going to be happening, thus allowing me to gauge whether we both felt that we shared the lenses which I felt we did, thereby beginning the process.

3.03(b) Designing the Inquiry: Interviews

There were a variety of methods which were available to me and a consideration of which ones were most appropriate led to the conclusion that I would utilise semi-structured interviews. Interviews were vital in order to allow a shared negotiated meaning to be reached via the hermeneutic approach (Cohen, 2000b). Kvale (2007, p 11) points out that the interview is one of the most powerful means of capturing experience, the purpose of which is to attempt to step in to the participants' *life world*. It was with the notion of stepping into, or being allowed to see the life world and meanings of the individuals that I set up the interviews.

Kvale (2007) suggests that there are twelve aspects to the qualitative research interview. It was important to me that I was clear which forms of understanding I was seeking, and which ones were less important to me. I analysed each of these aspects, considering their relevance to my own research (Appendix B) in order to ensure that I was constructing an appropriate interview schedule. It could be argued that, whilst my interviews are unlikely to produce scientific facts, they will certainly produce the truth ~ for if it is the truth as the participant sees it, then it is the truth to them (Le Voi, 2006). Although this would not be falling under the remit of a hermeneutic approach, the truth of what the person is saying at interview will allow for some movement towards the constructed interpretation which is the aim of a hermeneutical circle (Bennetts, 2004). Namely I have to be clear with myself that the truth as perceived by the person I am interviewing is more important to me than the facts themselves, historical or otherwise.

The unstructured interview produces a conversation which links closely to hermeneutic notions of language, identified as the cornerstone of the human condition, fundamental to all understanding of the world (Roy and Starosta, 2001). These interviews were semi-structured, but that structure was so loose that it was, basically, a consideration of a number of key questions. Within this framework it is important that my own narrative is seen and heard as part of the whole story, creating an iterative discussion (Malone, 1999). These key questions arose from the pilot interview which I carried out. This was unstructured and allowed me to identify the four main areas which the questions below consider. I have not utilised the pilot participant in the results or discussion as, due to time constraints, he was not available to receive his transcript back and so could not look at it in terms of meaning. Thus, this practice allowed me to hone my interviewing skills and to formalise the schedule for the interviews which followed (Kahn, 2000). It also meant that I could use his transcript as an exemplar in the Appendices for this thesis without clouding perception by having to put both an original and amended in for one of the eight participants.

Questions 1 - 3. Defining Professionalism

- Can you give me a definition of what professionalism means to you?
- What events in your life have shaped your ideas of professionalism?
- Can you tell me what professionalism is not?

Questions 4 - 6 Influences on Professionalism

- Who is the most professional person you have ever met?
- What about the most unprofessional?

Question 7 Professional Values

- What would you say are your most important professional values?
- How would you describe your own notion of professional identity?

Questions 8 & 9 Tensions in Professionalism

- How well does your idea of professionalism fit with the actuality of your role?
- What impacts most on whether these two fit?

Figure 6: Basic Interview Schedule

Alongside a clear idea of what questions I was going to ask, I needed to give thought to my own way of being throughout these interviews. I was conscious of Flick (2007b), suggesting that the role of the interviewer is to be aware of and minimise the extent to which the participant feels that they must 'perform' and thus not give an accurate representation. To validate the interview situation, I held the pre-meeting at the place of work, but I carried out the actual interviews themselves at a mutually agreed location, off the premises of the institution. I felt that carrying out the interviews in the workplace would have created a barrier to the honesty I was asking the participants to give (Flick, 2007b). Certainly, this resonated in terms of the power asymmetry which I had to also consider. Kvale (2007) posits that this asymmetry exists no matter my own wishes as researcher and to ignore it is to give it more power. The fact that the participants chose the location of the interviews offered them some element of

control of the process and also allowed for a place for them to feel comfortable (Smith et al, 2009).

Advice for first time or novice researchers suggests that it is vital to establish a rapport with the participant at the very early stages of the interview, especially if there is a hope of achieving deep qualitative data (Kvale, 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Cohen, Kahn & Steeves, 2000a). As I already shared the three hermeneutic lenses with the participants and we were known to each other, this was somewhat lessened, although the possibility for familiarity was ever-present. Further, I was aware of the need to maintain the balance between having an interview schedule and not being held hostage by it (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

3.04 Procedure: Interviewing & Transcribing

The initial proposal (Appendix D) was submitted with an ethical approval form to ensure that ethical procedures were adhered to. Once I had gained consent from each individual (Appendix C), the process of interviewing could begin.

Before I began any interviewing, I had to consider my own initial framework carefully. This led to the creation of the adapted Goodson & Hargreaves diagram (Figure 8), fitting it in to my own preunderstandings. I worked hard to ensure that I achieved distanciation from my own ideas, looking at Goodson & Hargreaves with the aim of achieving a new appropriation and understanding. Whilst this is my theoretical framework, it was important to also consider my standpoint in terms of a research paradigm, which is charted in Section 3.03.

3.04(a) Procedure: Pilot Participant

The pilot participant was chosen specifically by me because I wanted to ensure that I carried out a pilot interview with someone who was as close to my participants as possible, and who could also provide methodological commentary. Therefore I purposively identified a member of my EdD group, specifically someone who worked in an FE College and who taught HE in FE. This allowed us to hold a pilot interview and then a discussion regarding the methodological decisions I had made. I interviewed the pilot participant in a completely non-structured manner. This allowed me to discuss professionalism with him in a very 'free flow' manner without being distracted by the interview schedule. Before the pilot interview, Mark & I sat and discussed the nature of the research and I explained to him that his was a pilot interview. He explained that he would not be able to commit the time needed to revisit the transcript. I assured him that this was fine and explained that I would use his answers to formalise my own understanding and ideas in terms of undertaking semi-structured interviews with the other participants. I then transcribed Mark's interview and amended my questions, to give more structure whilst hopefully not sacrificing the depth of experience. It is important to note that Mark does not work in the same institution as myself but was a fellow student. I felt that this would allow a sharing of the three lenses to some extent.

3.04(b) Procedure: Participants, Sampling & Parameters.

I chose the participants as those who I share time, place and language tradition with within my workplace. That meant that I had to consider how to obtain a sufficiently large sample to ensure reliability and generalisability, whilst maintaining a manageable workload (Kvale, 2007). The initial plan I had was to conduct a series of interviews with each participant, until we agreed that shared negotiated meaning had been reached. This was clearly unmanageable and so

I had to rethink the nature of this research and the scope which I was able to achieve.

The participants themselves were all known to me and, with the exception of the pilot participant, working in the same institution. Maxwell (2005) queries whether ‘sampling’ is the correct word in terms of qualitative research; certainly this draws from such a limited population that the term sample seems to have less meaning. I had to know, or believe, that I shared the three hermeneutic lenses with the participants alongside which I wanted an equal gender split, a number of people who worked in HE and in FE, a range of length of service and a number of different types of contractual employment status, thus placing parameters on the sample of the population in order to attempt to secure a robust collection of data (Silverman, 2005). These decisions were made in consideration of Rubin and Rubin (1995), who suggest that rigorous, highly structured samples are not appropriate to the qualitative interview, suggesting that sampling be considered in terms of two key notions: completeness and saturation. Since this is likely to be a unique and individual reality, in a real sense this sample will never be complete. Juxtaposed to this is the notion of saturation where adding in new participants will not add anything new to the research itself. Alongside the belief that these eight participants would allow me to gain as much sense of completeness as possible, I felt that it was as close to saturation as I could achieve. Originally, I had asked a ninth participant to take part, but she refused at the pre-interview stage, stating that she did not wish to consider her ideas of professionalism as it would raise too many issues for her. Upon consideration I did not replace her as I felt that I had reached saturation in terms of the number of people who I shared the three hermeneutic lenses with to such a deep level.

Flick (2007a) suggests that a range of demographic features are useful in terms accessing the variety of what the qualitative researcher studies and I identified gender, length of service and sector in which the individual teaches as the most important demographics. I felt it important to capture the variety in notions of

professionalism and thus saw the sampling as a means of managing diversity and keeping it manageable within the confines I had (Flick, 2007b). In summary, I aimed to make the sample sufficiently robust, varied and similar in order to ensure that the information gained could be considered to be valid.

The interviews took place in a mutually agreed location and were recorded on a dictaphone. They were semi-structured in nature, following a very broad series of topics for discussion (Figure 6). Once each interview was completed I transcribed them verbatim and then passed the transcript to the participant. I then held a follow up meeting with each participant, at approximately a two-week interval from the initial interview, where we went through the transcript, discussed any areas where the participant felt that what they said did not represent what they meant and where I sought clarification of key terms and notions which I felt I had not reached a clear understanding of. The procedure detailed above was carried out with the eight participants, although I interviewed a ninth, the pilot participant. I have not included his information in the discussion and results chapters as I did not have a second meeting with him due to his own time constraints.

I found myself acutely aware of the lack of ‘rules’ for interviewing that Kvale first identified in the early 80s and then went on to discuss in later work (Kvale, 1983; Kvale & Brinkmann 2007). I developed my skills as I went along and certainly saw the process as a craft, and one which I developed only to a limited degree. At the beginning of each interview, and during the pre-meeting, I made it clear that I was aiming to find out about the participant, about themselves and to try and reach a shared, negotiated meaning with them. This was done in order to ensure that they were clear about not only what we were going to talk about but why we were going to talk about it also (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

3.04(c) Procedure: Post-Interview Meetings.

With the pre-interview meeting setting the scene, the post-interview meeting closed those aspects of the hermeneutic circle which I could attain. Within a week of the interview, I gave the participant the transcript. At this time, we arranged a date for the post-interview meeting. The purpose of the post-interview meeting was to give the participant the time to change or edit anything written. The remit given to them was to remind them of what was discussed in the pre-interview meeting and the need for us to attempt to achieve a shared, negotiated meaning. Therefore, it was imperative that what was written represented what they meant; I emphasised here, accuracy of what was said is not the key – accuracy of what they meant was (Young & Colin, 1988).

So, the post-interview meeting was myself and the participant working through their amended transcript. For many of the participants, this was the first time I had seen the amendment, which was an error on my part. Collin, however, sent me the amended transcript before our post interview meeting. He had changed a number of the words and phrases – fundamentally keeping the sentence, but altering the word. In the post-interview meeting, I followed the same format with all participants. First, I asked them to talk me through what they had changed, and why. Collin had changed words such as “tutorial” to “chat” or “meeting” to “sit-down” – he expressed that, upon re-reading it simply sounded far more formal than he meant. I considered carefully before beginning this how it would be best recorded. Since I am seeking that phenomenological nod (Van der Zalm and Bergum, 2000) I accepted all amendments made by the participants and disregarded the original, believing that this was the morally correct thing to do, and that this research is focused on meaning. I maintain that this is the case, but some of the amendments were very interesting and, in hindsight, this was an error. However, since the participants were told this would happen, it could not be fixed. The lack of recording of the post interview meetings compounded this. Where this led to further questions, especially, I had to amend the transcript with as close as possible, immediately afterward.

These post-interview meetings, however, allowed the participants to amend their words and that was vital for the aspect of hermeneutics which I was aiming

to achieve. It allowed them to express a deeper meaning and gave me the chance to talk that through with them. This gave the added depth of meaning to the process which allowed more accurate preunderstandings (Charalambos Papadopoulos and Beadsmoore, 2008). It gave a further means by which participants could attempt to better clarify the meaning of their words (Steeves, 2000b). When Collin spoke of what he meant, for example, rather than what he said, it allowed me to enhance my understanding of his *mode of being,* thus bringing together our shared understanding of professionalism (Clark, 2005). If given the opportunity to repeat these post-interview meetings, I would certainly have made a number of changes. First, I would have included more clear guidance on what might be used / not used from the edits in my brief to the participants. As I had not, I chose to err on the side of caution, but some edits – and the explanation for them – would have added to the picture for at least two of the participants. Further, I would have recorded them and included them in the consent for use. It might have been beneficial to ask the participants to use a 'key' for amendments – identifying what was where they mis-spoke / I misheard, and what was not representative of what they meant.

3.05 Ethical Considerations.

The ethical considerations for this research were, and continue to be, of paramount importance. Since the participants are known to me, personally and professionally, it became even more vital that I should adhere strictly to ethical guidelines and protocols. Informed consent was gained before the interviews took place, after each interview and at the commencement of each following interview. Names have been changed and the ages identified have been put into age categories rather than specifics in order to ensure confidentiality.

3.05(a) Ethical Consideration: Insider Researcher

Insider research is that which is conducted by people who are members of the organisation they are seeking to investigate (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). There are differing views regarding the insider researcher, with polarised opinions on the value of this methodological standpoint (Humphrey, 2013). I began this research clear I would be carrying out insider research and rather oblivious to the Pandora's Box this represented. However, it very quickly became apparent that I needed to consider this carefully as this research requires the sharing of three hermeneutic lenses; this necessitates not only that I work in the same institution as my participants but the more deeply I shared these lenses with my participants, the more preunderstandings we would share and thus the deeper we could manage the process of appropriation (Ricoeur, 1991). Taylor (2011 p 4) discusses the need to depart from *alterity* or the usual dichotomy of researcher / researched and to embrace what she terms the *landscape of the postmodern.* However, Taylor (2011) is reviewing friendship and insider research; I was very careful not to interview anyone who I had a friendship relationship with outside of work but rather those who I identified as sharing the three hermeneutic lenses with whilst maintaining an entirely professional relationship. Whilst this might be perceived as a step back to my previously positivist nature and an unwillingness to take that final step, in fact it is simply that I selfishly did not wish the research to reshape my friendships which all my reading suggested it would do if I utilised my friends as participants (Taylor, 2011). Brannick and Coghlan (2007) point out that the insider academic research has received very little consideration and, when consideration has been given, it is usual to argue against native insider research. They, however, adopt a very positive stance to insider research, suggesting that the insider researcher

> *..know the everyday jargon. They know the legitimate and taboo phenomena of what can be talked about and what cannot […]. When they are inquiring, they can use the internal jargon,*

> *draw on their own experience in asking questions and interviewing, be able to follow up on replies and so obtain richer data*
>
> (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007 p69)

Of course, the opposite side of this coin is that the preunderstandings which are shared between researcher and participant in this circumstance could lead to the researcher assuming too much; however the nature of this research is such that I am seeking individual meaning with each participant which mitigates somewhat against the potential for being closed-minded to reframing.

The impact of this insider status on myself as researcher was not something which I considered when planning the research. Darra (2008 p 253) points out that the first-time insider researcher must be prepared for both the positive and negative aspects of it, emphasising the emotional stress which can be associated with researching inside one's own institution and trying to achieve the 'marginal positioning' between being a practitioner and a researcher. Darra (2008) concludes that this marginal positioning is not, in fact, possible; possibly because of the nature of Darra's work in midwifery this poses an issue which appears less relevant to me. I was very clear about when we were carrying out interviews and when we were not; perhaps this would have been more difficult to manage if a fully hermeneutic study had been carried out, but the single semi-structured interview did not seem to present this issue.

3.05(b) Ethical Consideration: Frameworks

The design of the research had to be such that it caused no harm but the topic itself was such that the participants discussed their feelings and experiences of their work, their department and the ethos of the college itself alongside broader issues of government and politics. It was vital that all participants' rights to

confidentiality were respected. Therefore, all interviewees were subjected to rigorous ethical procedures, including a pre-interview meeting where full 'voluntary informed consent' was sought (BERA, 2011).

Participants were clearly given the right to withdraw from the research at any point until submission and were provided with the means of doing so. In the pre-meeting, the following ethical safeguarding measures were put into place:

- The right to withdraw, alongside the means of doing so, were discussed.
- The pre-meeting was not recorded and during it the nature of the recording of the interview was clearly explained.
- Each participant chose their own pseudonym by which they would be known.
- The use of the transcript was explained and the participants were made fully aware that the original transcript would not be used, only the amended one.
- It was explained to the participants that the extracts selected for inclusion in the final document will seek, as much as is possible, to protect the identity of the individuals, their departments and their managers.
- Participants were reassured that the name and location of the College will not be used.
- The fact that the Principal of the college gave permission for this research to be carried out is made explicit.

At the beginning and end of each interview, the participant was asked if they were still happy to have their information included. Other than the participant who withdrew during the pre-meeting, no other participant has withdrawn.

The framework above was vital as the questions and the line of enquiry was deeply personal. As a colleague, on the same level of employment as them, the topic brought about questions regarding shared issues between me and my participants. However, I was aware of the ethical problems which could arise

due to the very personal nature of the topic; these were questions about identity and were entrenched in notions of power. Less than a year after collecting this data, I was promoted to management in the institution and I was very aware that, had I been in that role during data collection, I could not have carried out this research.

This does beg the question of the power dynamic from the unseen hierarchy. I have identified myself as someone seen as a senior staff member. It is possible that participants such as Victor (the newly qualified lecturer) felt an element of coercion, or even challenge. At the time of data collection, I was running a BSc programme, very successfully. There could have been underlying power issues in play. However, the nature of the research meant that the participants and I engaged in deep, and deeply reflective, communication. They had every opportunity to withdraw and so, I believe, this was not an issue. Certainly, it was potentially one and, had I been a more experienced researcher, I would have mitigated against it more. The participant who chose to withdraw, for example, may have felt judged by me. I certainly can not tell what the participants were thinking and, if they held back because of this power issue, they would not tell me. I got no sense of this, yet as a novice researcher in this framework, I may well have been too inexperienced to notice. Although it allowed – and encouraged – significant depth of data and shared meaning, I have to accept that it was a lot to handle as a novice.

3.06 Analysing & Verifying the Inquiry

In this research, I analysed the data in three 'phases', immediately after the interview, upon receiving back the amended transcript from the participants and then in the weeks that followed. I did this in order to ensure that I both took an initial snapshot of each interview, identifying broad themes (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) and also to ensure that I gave the "repeated inspection" suggest by Silverman (2005 p. 215).

3.06(a) Analysing the Inquiry: Preliminary Analysis

I had initially planned to analyse the interviews in Phase 1 and 2 only. I had not foreseen that I would, of course, start to analyse as soon as the interview was done; as I transcribed I was drawing conclusions and identifying themes. Freeman (2007) points out that hermeneutics accepts that we speak to understand; we orientate ourselves to our world as individuals who seek to understand and thus we are ever in dialogue with our own understanding. Analysis from the moment that the interview commences is, therefore, inevitable. Ross (2006) further supports this, exploring Gadamer's notion of *tarrying* (Gadamer, 1992). Ross (2006 p. 101) suggests that the 'quality of time during tarrying is it's definitive feature', and the time I spent tarrying with the initial interview data was certainly quality time; as I transcribed I inevitably immersed myself in the data, drawing conclusions and identifying questions which I felt worth pursuing in the post-interview meeting.

3.06(b) Analysing the Inquiry: Phase 1

After I had carried out the interview, I transcribed it fully and returned it to the participant at a mutually agreed time. We met one week later to discuss changes to meanings the participant may have made and to clarify any issues which had arisen whilst transcribing. I realised that I had taken the right decision in only carrying out one interview per participant as the data I had was rich and deep, however the changes in meaning which had been made by the participants allowed me to be reassured that the data was valid in terms of the deeper processes and meanings for each participant (Kvale, 2007). More than this would have been unwieldy in terms of this research and might have meant that I fell into the 'trap' of cyclic research becoming a self-indulgent exercise without adding meaning to the understanding gained (Cohen, Kahn & Steeves, 2000b)

In order progress with the phase 1 analysis, I assigned each participant a piece of flipchart paper and put their name in the centre. I then split the space around into four sections: three main themes and the links between what they said and the themes of other participants, also. These three themes for each participant form the basis of Chapter 4, where I discuss the results for each participant.

3.06(c) Analysing the Inquiry: Phase 2

Once I had a clear idea of what each participant had said and identified their individual and shared themes, I analysed the interviews in terms of the taxonomy of professionalism forwarded by Goodson & Hargreaves (1996), as I had identified it as closest to my individual framework (Figure 8). I set out to identify in which questions people referred to terms which I could assign to the taxonomy, and quickly came to the conclusion that all aspects might be

discussed by any participant in any question although it must be clearly stated that at no point did I discuss the taxonomy with the participants, I used it as a means of analysis not a point of discussion. The results of this analysis are identified in Chapter 5.

3.06(d) Verifying the Inquiry: Validity & Reliability

It is clear that questions of validity and reliability present a problem in interpretivist qualitative research: interviews especially pose issues of fallibility (Wengraf, 2001). Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) suggest that 'usual' definitions of validity and reliability are meaningless in terms of interviews; however, achieving validity is gained through following the seven stage process of interviewing (Figure 17). As Kvale (2007) posits, it is important to treat each thing that the participant says as valid. He is clear that validity is something which is socially constructed, but conversely is the only measure which can be applied to qualitative interviews with any degree of certainty. Certainly, this work is limited in terms of its generalisability but I would argue that it identifies issues and themes which would be identified in any piece of work of it's nature in any college in the country.

I will demonstrate detailed analysis in Chapters 4 and 5, but here it seems sufficient to say that this analysis affords, perhaps, some degree of reliability and validity; certainly a clear justification of my interpretations in light of theoretical underpinnings adds validity to the arguments made (Wengraf, 2001). To end this chapter it is worth noting once more that this research sought explication of professionalism in Further Education via semi-structured interviews which were influenced by hermeneutics. That there are no rules or underpinning theory created from this fits in with the explicatory nature of this research (Stainton-Rogers, 2006).

Chapter 4. Results

Chapter Aims:

This chapter provides an account of the individual participants before moving on to consider six over-arching themes found in the research, structured according to the three shared lenses of time, place and language.

4.01 Chapter Introduction & Summary.

This chapter summarises the interviews with each individual participant from the amended transcripts which the participants returned once they had checked for meaning. Previously (Chapter 2, Chapter 3) I have discussed the three shared hermeneutic lenses which I have used as a structure. In this chapter, I consider the findings via these: defining professionalism through the shared lens of language (4.03), policy & professionalism as shared time (4.04) and finally issues of intellectual love then HE in FE through the lens of shared place (4.05).

It is important that these sections are seen in context of this chapter and Chapter 5. In this Chapter, I describe the individual findings, then discuss the six themes identified, structured around the shared lenses which have shaped the work (Table 9). In Chapter 5, I analyse in more detail the two overarching 'findings' from this work.

Section	
4.1	Chapter Introduction & Summary: *Introduces the chapter and clarifies the sections.*
4.2	Individual Participants *Each participant's individual findings are discussed, briefly identifying the main 'flavour' of their interview.*
4.3	Shared Language: Defining Professionalism *The interviews are analysed in relation to the shared lens of language; looking at the reality of professionalism in FE and applying the interviews to the taxonomy of Goodson & Hargreaves*
4.4	Shared Time: Policy & Professionalism *Analyses the interviews in relation to the shared lens of time and considers the impact of policy on the participants.*
4.5	Shared Place: The FE Environment *This section considers the shared lens of place, looking at the participants' identification of intellectual love and their experience of HE in FE.*

Table 9: Overview of Chapter 4

I now move on to a brief overview of the eight participants before identifying their individual interview findings.

4.02 Participants.

There are eight participants, four male and four female. A detailed vignette of all participants is in Appendix A.

*Name**	*Gender*	*HE or FE***	*Notes*
Alice	F	HE	
Charlie	F	FE	Youngest participant in the study.
Colin	M	F/HE	
Edward	M	HE	
Jan	F	F/HE	
Julie	F	HE	
Norman	M	FE	
Victor	M	FE	Newly trained lecturer.

*All names have been changed to ensure anonymity ** HE here refers to a HE lecturer in an FE environment

Table 10: Overview of Participants

4.02(a) Alice (Female/HE)

Alice came to education late and started the interview by describing how this gives her a unique perspective on professionalism from both 'sides of the fence'. She undertook the degree that she now teaches on, something which she is very proud of and which, in her eyes, deepen her understanding.

> *"I mean… I can understand them. I don't just say that, I've been there and they respect that, I think. I've been here on the other side, and I know how hard they work. I'm not some lofty academic from somewhere they've never heard of, I'm like them."*

Alice's focus is the students, which she tempers with a strong moral aspect to her actions. Alice gives a clear metaphor for the actions of a professional lecturer, who she likens to a bus driver. Should a young child get onto the bus without the correct fare, a bus driver who is acting professionally will not take any money, will drive the child to their door and will ensure their safety. Alice

likens this to professionalism as a lecturer, someone who is prepared to go the extra mile with their students, who does not see it as 'just' a job and who cares about more than results.

Alice believes that professionalism is an all-encompassing aspect of life. It is not confined to the staffroom, the classroom or even the campus; every aspect of behaviour in and out of work is vital to maintaining professionalism. She is very concerned with hierarchy and loyalty, referring often to her line manager and the gratitude she feels for her (she was also Alice's PGCE mentor). She is very aware that she has transitioned from student to lecturer in the same institution which gives her, in her eyes, definite credibility. The university are far away to Alice, her focus is on the here and now that she experiences.

4.02(b) Charlie (Female/FE)

Charlie is relatively inexperienced as a lecturer which obviously has an impact on her as she discusses the need for her to prove herself both explicitly and implicitly throughout. She describes professionalism, at the beginning of the interview in quite a "tick box" manner, listing a number of factors which she considers professionalism to be.

She discusses the importance of the students having a quality experience, which often means going above and beyond the requirements of management. The need to achieve the best results, be the best lecturer that she can be was something that Charlie was quite explicit about. She compares herself to others in the staffroom, measuring her success by being the best at her job in her environment. This means going above and beyond the basics and pushing herself as hard as possible. One major frustration for her was the lack of understanding shown by her line manager, whose priorities seem very different to Charlie's own. She finds this situation very difficult and has worked out a

number of strategies to work around it, including working with the manager's deputy and skipping her entirely, going to the member of senior management with responsibility for her department. Charlie is aware that this is frowned upon by her manager, but feels that she has a 'duty' to do this.

As the interview progressed, Charlie started to consider her own professional identity more carefully and at a deeper level. She admitted to feeling underappreciated and overworked, but accepted that often she placed unrealistic demands on herself. She accepted that the member of senior management who she spoke to saw a bigger picture than she did and that therefore, sometimes, had different answers than Charlie would like; she did not apply this to her manager, however, who she felt was clearly unprofessional.

4.02(c) Colin (Male/HE & FE)

Colin has worked in both FE and HE for 12 years. He describes professionalism as being different with each group of students – but something with a 'bottom line'. Professionalism, to Colin, is something which means meeting the students' needs, as they identify them.

Colin is struggling to achieve the work-life balance he identifies as the remit of professionalism. He identifies workload as being enormous and suggests that the first thing to achieve is the ability to manage workload and ignore pressures from above, either from managers or government. He describes the constant push from these pressures as being a barrier to professionalism and success. The ultimate measure of professionalism, to Colin, is the results gained from the students in the form of final grades ~ but he is clear that these results are dependent not only on teaching staff, but also middle and senior management as well as Government.

Colin discussed policy more than any other participant through his interview, stating his own interest in politics and his party loyalty a number of times. He suggests that FE is subject to the whims of government, stating that education is the first area to be "improved" in any government manifesto or upon election. Because FE is more vulnerable than the schools sector, in his eyes, it gets a 'stronger dose'.

> *Schools have some… some protection from the battering. We don't because no one really knows what we're doing. That's the media, too, but it's the policy makers. How can we fight that? We're in a ship in a storm and the storm is government, but the winds that are battering us are the economic pressures and that's us as a College. As a sector, we're desperately trying to navigate this ship in the dark, as a College we're held in a storm and don't know whether we're going to get hit by lightning any second and as a lecturer, I'm just clinging on to this bit of wood and hoping I'll survive, but I'm drowning…. That's all a bit dramatic, isn't it?*

Dramatic analogy notwithstanding, Colin is clear that the work-life balance which he seeks might be simply impossible in contemporary FE. He has, he admits, considered seeking employment in a different sector but his loyalty to the College and the students has, thus far, stopped him from doing so.

4.02(d) Edward (Male/HE)

Edward believes the primary task of any professional in FE or HE is to meet students' needs. He was very clear that these needs were not always the desires of the students, linking to the specific nature of HE in FE. Edward believed HE in an FE students are needier than traditional HE students.

> *We have to remember, particularly in an arena with a lot of non traditional undergraduates, we must offer a safety net here. And that safety net has to look to the poorer student by its very nature, the student who struggles.*

> *Within that arena though, of professionalism, we have to encourage the one who can go further*

Edward's notion of professionalism is not entirely focused on the student; he speaks of the need for staff *on the ground* to protect each other with the support offered in the staff room as vital to maintaining professionalism. His interview had a number of instances of distinctly anti-establishment statements, apparently seeing the staff room, and his colleagues, as a safe place where he can go and get advice and guidance. This is more welcome from his peers than from his managers, as Edward seems to distrust them. Edward only ever refers to his managers by their second name. These are the only people that he does this to, with the exception of one student, who he calls a *nasty piece of work* who had made a complaint about him.

Edward expresses frustration at the short sightedness of management, and their lack of understanding of professionalism. He describes a very important aspect of being a good HE lecturer as being someone who is up to date, which is not possible on the teaching workload demanded by an FE College.

He bemoans the opportunity to

> *"sit down with a colleague and start to think 'right.. let's write a publication'. You just realise that you're on a kind of treadmill that's pushing you down a road and that in a way prevents you from being what you could be."*

Educated to PhD level with a number of publications, Edward believes that practice informs professionalism. He is clear, however, that this is not the response that one would get should they ask the question of someone who worked in a purely HE institution. He believes it to be the gift that FE has given HE ~ the understanding that practice is fundamentally much more important than theory.

4.02(e) Jan (Female/HE & FE)

Jan has worked in FE for 10 years, a job which she says she has a love-hate relationship with. She is very positive about the contact with the students, but finds the constant administrative demands to be close to overwhelming. She discusses professionalism as being something that can not be measured as it is not quantifiable. She believes professionalism is different from case to case and so is vehemently against codification as it focuses on the lecturers rather than the student. She states that professionalism should be defined by student need and student experience.

The student experience is not the remit purely of the teacher for Jan, however, she explains that all groups involved must maintain this focus. This is where the problem occurs, Jan is clear. Good teachers are focused on the student, whereas those further up in the hierarchy are required to focus on economy in order to ensure that the college continues to function. This dissonance means that students are at the receiving end of a 'tussle' between those who have power to significantly influence their experience. Therefore, it is important a lecturer maintains their focus purely on the student and provides the best experience for them. Sometimes this will be in direct opposition to their manager or the pressures from further above. Jan is clear that the over emphasis on administration and the *culture of blame* is detrimental to the students. She sees it as her job, and the job of all professional lecturers, to *make up* for the problems which ministers create and which senior management must work within the confines of.

Jan is a vocational lecturer who teaches on courses where she identifies her students as being failed by the system. Professionalism is to see the potential in the student, to always focus on them rather than on the constrictions of bigger demands. The most professional person for Jan is someone who can manage

this situation, adhering to the demands of the students and policy without losing a love of the job.

4.02(f) Julie (Female/HE)

Julie is a carefully controlled individual who considers her responses throughout the interview. She is clear and precise in her speech, and checks the meaning of my questions regularly. Julie started by discussing with me how she had been thinking about professionalism since being asked to be a participant. Julie stressed the importance of morality in professional behaviour. She expressed the need to maintain boundaries within the student – professional relationship, which for her was the underpinning issue. However, these boundaries must be clearly stated and a large part of professionalism is the managing of expectation.

Within the confines of these boundaries, Julie discusses the need for ensuring students are cared for appropriately. She is explicit that the role of the professional is to go above and beyond the need for merely teaching ~ a professional cares, truly cares for their students and does everything within their power, within all-important boundaries, to ensure the students' success.

A major factor of the interview with Julie was her consideration of her own professional identity in the run-up to her retirement at the end of the academic year. She has worked in a number of universities in her professional life and she identifies HE in FE as a truly unique creature. She describes the lack of autonomy as astonishing to her:

> *When I first came here, I was amazed. I'm expected to be at my desk when I'm not teaching? It was quite a culture shock. I knew that there would be a lot more teaching, and there is. But the lack of freedom, the lack of independence, it's like nothing I've ever experienced before. It's… unnerving. I felt that I wasn't trusted personally for a while, then I realised that everyone is under the same regime.*

The specifics of HE in FE is something which Julie returned to a number of times, always expressing confusion over it and not being clear on what the boundaries of it were.

4.02(g) Norman (Male/ FE)

Norman has been a lecturer in FE for over ten years now. Before that, he worked in industry. He identifies professionalism as a set of rules or guidelines which can be followed in any situation. He talked about professionalism as socially constructed rules which must be followed in order to achieve good results.

One idea Norman uses is that professionalism is about expectation, rules which are not written down but which are determined by society. He cites the example of the scandal regarding politicians' expenses; his standpoint is that the politicians behaved in a manner which was completely acceptable and, therefore, were being professional. It was something which was accepted and, therefore, they were not in the wrong. Now, however, that it has become obvious that this behaviour is not acceptable, to continue would be to behave unprofessionally.

Norman is clear that professionalism is *not rocket science*, but **is** something which needs to be taught in Initial Teacher Training, to arm those who are about to enter the system with the tools they will need. He believes that the main issue surrounding unprofessional behaviour is that people are unaware of the boundaries. He explains that FE is

> *Notoriously difficult to understand what you're meant to be doing. We have such a vast array of students; teaching a second year A'level Physics student is very different from a First Diploma Public Services student, but they are all FE students. How do we develop boundaries of behaviour when we don't even have boundaries of students? It's an impossible task.*

But nonetheless, Norman believes that this task is complicated by the IfL and the codification of FE. Not because it's a bad idea but because the professional standards have to be so broad as to be utterly meaningless. His vote is for more specific codification, rather than the abolition of codification as a whole.

4.02(h) Victor (Male/HE)

Victor began the interview by emphasising the importance of being student-centred. He has recently completed his PGCE and kept coming back to the *gap analysis* between the theory of the PGCE and the reality of the classroom. He finds the administration to be highly frustrating, and expresses this frustration eloquently

> *It's ridiculous. I thought that once the PGCE was finished it would be the end of pointless paperwork. But sadly, that's just not true. I'm faced with the decision to either focus on the students in work and get the paperwork done in my own time, or not give the students what they need. It's a catch-22, I either drive myself to burnout or don't meet the students' needs.*

He admits that he is working hard to find the correct work-life balance, and he feels that he is getting it, albeit slowly. When discussing professionalism, Victor describes it as being able to achieve that balance, to be able to provide the students with what they need whilst protecting himself from burnout. He describes the search for efficiency as very important to professionalism, as someone who is efficient can meet the needs of the students and achieve the work-life balance that Victor seeks.

Victor speaks of the pressure to produce and complete paperwork as being something that is monitored by the *pencil police*. He believes that there is an imbalance between the demands of administration and finance and keeping the focus on the students. He suggests that the thing to do is to go back to basics with regards to knowing what's important, focusing on the priority which should be focused on; namely, giving the students the best educational experience they can have. For Victor, being *student centred* is very important; he used the phrase over twenty times during his interview and he is clear that this student centred approach is best facilitated by management and government giving lecturers the autonomy to do what they need to do. Over regulation is something which Victor is vehemently against, but he sees it as a growing reality in the future of his career.

Having considered the individual participants I now move on analyse the emergent themes in relation to the shared lenses which have structured this work. First, I consider the shared lens of language and analyse the interviews against definitions of professionalism and professionality before moving on to Goodson & Hargreaves' (1996) seven point taxonomy of professionalism, which I identified at the outset as that most closely linking to my own initial framework. The interviews were analysed against the seven point taxonomy of Goodson & Hargreaves (1996). Appendix E summarises this analysis, identifying which questions participants linked into which aspects of the taxonomy.

4.03 Shared Language: Defining Professionalism.

There was evidence of internalisation of mentalities and attitudes throughout, marking professionalism as a discourse, although based in reality for each individual (Masschelein, 2001). Although embedded in reality, professionalism encompassed more than behaviour and was seen as a way of thinking, believing and behaving with all participants, as suggested by Robson et al, (2004). Most participants were discussing their professionality, (Evans, 2008).

> *It's about all the important stuff, isn't it?* (Alice)
>
> *To me, professionalism is about behaving in a congruent, moral manner for the good of the students first and the College second* (Julie)

This was not always the case, some of the participants engaged in a discussion of skills, knowledge and procedure, specifically Norman and Charlie. These two participants discussed professionalism in a much more concrete manner than the others, best exemplified by Norman.

> *It isn't complex, really. It's difficult and it's time consuming, but there are clear procedures in place. It's easy to think of lecturing as acting in isolation, but you aren't, any more than one cog in a larger machine is. Due process is clear and, when it isn't, the hierarchy is"*

There was little evidence of democratic professionalism; participants seemed to be acting, with the exception of Edward, as islands on their own. Edward discussed relationships within the staff room, explaining alliances as safety and security. He was the only one who spoke about collaborative working, although Jan briefly mentioned team teaching as a thing of the past due to economic reasons. There did not seem to be much evidence of collaboration within the lecturing profession, or between lecturers and other stakeholders (Sachs,

2001). However, as I questioned deeper into the meaning of the word professionalism, Alice, Jan and Colin focused on their place within the staff room hierarchy, specifically informal staff hierarchies which were perceived by them rather than formally laid out in pay scale or even in contract term and type.

> *We know, I mean, we all know who's where in the staff room. There's a 'hot desk' for sessional staff. But if <name> is in, it's her desk. I'm full time and I wouldn't sit there!* (Alice)

> *Well, we don't have lecturer and senior lecturer roles like they do at.. you know, at proper universities. But if you want to know about which students are going to cause trouble you speak to one person in particular. He has all the insider knowledge on what's going on.* (Colin)

Autonomy was key to all interviews. Each participant used the word within the first half of the interview, and used the word at least four times throughout. Some disparity was apparent between what participants thought autonomy to be; Edward sought complete autonomy from managers whereas Colin and Alice discussed something closer to the heteronomy identified by Goodson and Hargreaves (1996), with Alice specifically discussing the need to work for *the good of the College*.

> *And it isn't just when I'm in work, either. I mean, I'm a lecturer and I've got a… well I've got a duty I suppose. I don't think that the principal would like it if I was off out drinking with the students, or behaving in a way that isn't acceptable, even if it is outside of college hours. It's my job. And whether I'm in work or out of it, I've got to be mindful of the good of the College.* (Alice)

4.03(a) Professionalism in FE

Participants often referred back to previous 'identities', those held before they became teachers. This was not evident in the case of Alice, Victor and Charlie, all of whom are relatively inexperienced. The other participants discussed previous jobs and their previous identities were interwoven throughout the interviews (Colley et al, 2007).

Those who were relatively inexperienced spoke about the nature of ITT and Victor specifically discussed this extensively. He was clear about ITT not providing guidance regarding professional identity, which he identified a need for, suggesting a module considering it; this sentiment is echoed by Edward, who was Victor's PGCE mentor:

> *What are we preparing these new professionals for? If mentors don't tell these new lecturers how it really is, how can they learn? It is clear to me that they should be given stern talks about protecting themselves, what is expected of a professional in this field. It has become a tick box system of teacher education and that saddens me* (Edward)

> *I don't know what it means to be a lecturer and I'm doing it. I feel like I should have explored that in my PGCE really. I mean… I designed a curriculum but I never really asked, what does being a lecturer mean. That seems the wrong way around to me* (Victor)

There were differences in notions of professional identity dependent on length of experience in FE. The more experienced looked at their professional identity as a small part of a large whole, with much more of a feeling of cynicism throughout. In the interview with Colin, for example, he spoke about pressures from above forcing him to change his behaviour, forcing him into an unwanted identity. He has become very focused on results, not what he aspired to when he joined the profession, when he aimed to make a change to his students' lives. He describes a crisis within his identity,

> *I mean, I know what I want, but I'm torn between what I want to be and what I have to be. I hope that others in the department want to be what I want to be too, but we've got to conform, in order to be an "efficient team member".* (air speech marks)

The notion of an identity crisis is seconded in an analogy of a bonsai tree used by Jan.

> *It's like… we've been trimmed and cut and constrained so much that we don't resemble anything we used to. I mean, what we're in.. the shape we're in now that is… I mean, it's pretty. It's beautiful. But it isn't natural, it isn't normal, and it's not the beauty that it could be. It's shaped by someone else, rather than being allowed to grow…*

This is, for Jan, an excellent analogy to the situation that a lecturer is in, restricted constrained and lacking the identity that they would have should they be left alone. The range of professional identities participants held before entering FE may add to individual confusion, participants echo the notion of FE experiencing an identity crisis (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005). The less experienced participants such as Victor discussed ways to build their professional identities, with the more experienced ones such as Edward looking at ways that they can hold on to it. However, for both group work load was a clear issue, explicitly stated by all. Far from the suggestion of Timperley & Robinson (2000), it was nowhere apparent that the participants found change difficult, but rather found it hard to keep up with constant and conflicting demands. Certainly the individuals seemed to feel as though they were fighting to create their own identity, lacking any sense of hegemony (Troman, 2000).

> *I have to be too many people for too many people. I can't keep up* (Julie)

> *I have to… We have to just bounce from level 2 students to level 5 and be tutor and lecturer and agony aunt. And the paperwork has to be done now, but it's the teaching that's important. I feel like I can't be all the people I need to be on any given day* (Jan)

4.03(b) Applying Goodson and Hargreaves

Having discussed professionalism as a concept, I now move on to apply the taxonomy of Goodson & Hargreaves (1996), considering the interviews in light of each aspect of the taxonomy which I initially identified as closest to my own framework.

(i) Discretionary Judgement

All participants identified the lack of discretionary judgement as a source of frustration for them in terms of tensions on their professionalism and professional identity. Colin certainly exemplified the lack of autonomy and level of insecurity which Nixon et al (2001) identify;

> *It's just not worth it. We're not in a risk-taking culture and we're not in a place where risk-taking is encouraged. I mean, you know how it is, you sit in the big meeting at the beginning of the year and you get told that we welcome ideas, we want to expand and all staff must remember that there's an open door policy. Like hell there is. If I decide that I want to do something new, something different, then it gets shouted down and we stick with doing it the way it's always been done. I can't make changes, there's no point pretending I can.*

This level of despondency was unique to Colin, but was echoed at lesser levels in all participants. All participants echoed Hall & Schulz (2003) suggesting that autonomy in FE is non-existent. The ways in which this was expressed varied enormously, however, both Jan and Edward used the word itself, whilst Alice

spoke of not being ‘trusted’. Charlie was least concerned with the lack of autonomy, expressing that structure is necessary, but was still frustrated:

> *I feel sometimes that I am stopped from doing my best because of external demands. My judgement is not always respected by those who employed me, which I find odd since they chose to give me the job. I would say that I don’t feel trusted, basically. It’s rather like I must have been the best of a bad lot and so they have to watch over me constantly. I know that isn’t the case, of course, as it’s the same for everyone.*

Edward states even when he is theoretically able to exercise judgement, he does not feel he can do so since he perceives his position to be very precarious:

> *I could remedy that situation, of course, I could have given the student an extension, informally. But it’s not that simple. If it was found out then <surname of manager> would be hanging me out to dry. So we did it her way and now I get the student complaint.*

Edward gives a number of examples when, as suggested by Nixon et al (2001) he saw a way forward he could have taken within his remit, which he did not take for fear of repercussions from management. However this is juxtaposed to the almost hopeful notion of the moral purpose of professionalism. All participants responded to the question of the most unprofessional person they had met by discussing a person who did not engage with the moral aspect of educating.

> *He was… there was a member of staff and every time I walked past when he was teaching, he was sitting and reading a book. Because the students had gone to research. I mean, I send my students to research things, to discover things. But I'm there with them. It's not right to be being paid whilst reading a novel* . (Colin)

> *For me? Oh, that's. When I was working at <name of other institution> we had a member of staff who was negative about other staff members to the student. Really, nasty and slated them at any opportunity. You don't do that, it unnerves the students. It's… well, it's not good as a human being, but…. Well, as a lecturer, it's beyond bad.* (Alice)

(ii) Moral & Social Purpose

Alice, for example, considered the moral aspects to be one of the most important, identifying how teaching and engaging with its moral purpose gives her a sense of self, echoing Malm's (2008) suggestion that the key is to develop emotional understanding. Many of the participants discussed how increasing demands of paperwork cause them to step away from engaging with the topic or students in the need to simply 'deliver'.

> *I know it sounds over the top, but I think if you're not looking at the big picture and the morality of what you're doing, then you shouldn't be teaching. We have a responsibility to our students, to the College. It's not just a job, is it?*

Jan described a meeting attended by both herself and Charlie, to discuss delivery of an Access to HE course. Jan expressed how the new syllabus would mean that she could not teach to an acceptable level of depth.

> *How can I stand in front of them and look them in the eye, trying to sell them something which I wouldn't buy? It isn't right, it really isn't. I know what will happen, they'll pass this course, go to uni and then not achieve because they don't have the depth of knowledge they need. How is that fair? How is that Access?*

The defence of the new syllabus was that they would have a greater breadth of knowledge, but Jan was insistent that she was being asked to compromise her professional judgement. She was very clear that, since the course was to prepare students for HE, it should be the requirements of HE, not the awarding body, which were paramount. Jan's professional identity was linked with power and self-concept, and she felt strongly that she was being asked to compromise in a manner which really impacted her (Kolsaker, 2008).

(iii) Collaborative Cultures

Victor, who has been a lecturer for the shortest amount of time specifically discussed the desire to collaborate on a more meaningful level. In terms of collaborative culture, Victor was eloquent, perhaps because he has just completed his PGCE and identifies this as a successful experience for him, as suggested by Yandall & Turvey (2007).

Whilst Victor is unique in seeking out a much deeper level of collaboration than any other participant, the majority identify collaboration as important. Alice, for example, echoes the findings of Biesta et al (2007) by stating

> *I'd love to collaborate more. I mean, it's silly isn't it? We're reinventing wheels left right and centre. Sometimes I think I'm a battery hen, locked in my own little box. The hen next to me has worked out how to lay twice as many eggs in half the time, but I'm so busy laying that I haven't got time to talk to her! I'd just like to be able to share resources and learn*

> *from more experienced members of staff. But there's never time, even when there should be we're usually fire fighting.*

Despite the mixed metaphor, there is a real feeling here of wanting to collaborate, but simply having too much to do.

(iv) Occupational Heteronomy

Neither occupational heteronomy nor self directed search for continuous learning were directly identified in the interviews. However, when I asked if there were any questions or points the participants would like to add at the end, there was a real feeling of heteronomy from Alice, who identified her relationship with her line manager in terms of heteronomy. Alice saw herself as part of the greater 'whole' of the college. This was described by her:

> *I feel very proud to be a lecturer on <name of course>. When I tell people what I do I always tell them what course I teach on. I'm really proud to be part of the college, too, I have this big swell of pride whenever I tell people I work here. [….] whenever <manager> tells me to do something, I think that I'm doing it for <name of Principal>, for the College and for L <direct line manager>.*

The majority of the other participants were different, Jan and Edward especially describing a lack of the sort of community heteronomy identified by Bathmaker and Avis (2007). Interestingly, these are the longest serving participants.

> *The College doesn't care. It doesn't care about me only in so far as I can deliver what it needs to the students. It cares about the students, I really believe that, but that's because without them we wouldn't be here.*

If I drop dead from overwork tomorrow, they'll employ someone cheaper in my place (Jan)

I'm under no illusion. I'm a small fish in a big pond and I'm a replaceable fish at that (Edward)

(v) Self Directed Search for CPD

In terms of continuous development, participants identified the requirement to undertake 30 hours of CPD a year to be something which had restricted them. Victor described it as a

Mechanistic means of social control which just takes away any hope of innovation from the search for CPD.

In Victor's case, however, this was part of a larger discussion on the structure of the PGCE and specifically the LLUK standards and how they have, in his opinion, restricted his ability to self-direct his search.

Each interview involved a discussion of the care of students. It was only Colin and Norman who did not mention this explicitly, even so they discussed the need to look after and to empower students. Malm (2008) suggests that the student – teacher relationship is the foundation of the student experience, and this was echoed by all participants. None of the participants suggested that knowledge acquisition was their sole goal, although Colin did speak about results far more than learning.

> *At the end of the day, though, I don't care that the College think that way. I'm not here for the corporation, I'm here for the students. We make a difference, I have to believe that. The finance guy might not think I'm irreplaceable, but my tutor group do. That's what's important to me* (Jan)

(vi) Commitment to Care

All participants discussed this throughout the interviews. In fact, this was the only aspect of the taxonomy which was discussed in some form in every question of the interview (Appendix E). The commitment to care was evident throughout most of the interviews, certainly, the participants echoed the lack of work life balance suggested by Guest (2002), suggesting they were working more at home than they would like to. Alice and Victor are both relatively new teachers, both of them reported hugely disproportionate amounts of time in order to 'keep up'.

Jan and Julie both identified the commitment to care very clearly, Jan suggesting

> *That's what's important in this job. If you've done your best for your students, really done your best, then they know that. I care about my students. Not because they pay my wages, they don't. I know that we have this whole business thing going on, but they aren't customers. They are young, vulnerable and often disaffected people who need someone to give a <expletive> about them. I couldn't look them in the eyes if I didn't and they need to know that.*

Julie put it more carefully, but echoed the sentiment.

> *Students know who they can trust. We must be congruent with them, and that means ensuring that we put time, energy and commitment into everything we do for them. There is the dichotomy. We do it for the students, but the College pay us. Doesn't that mean that, fundamentally, the pay is secondary to the real thing that gives us job satisfaction?*

The care for students is evident in both of these participants, as was throughout all interviews.

(vii) High Task Complexity

Finally, in terms of the taxonomy of Goodson and Hargreaves (1996), the complex nature of their job was raised by all participants, always identified as something negative as the complexity meant that the workload was unmanageable. Certainly all participants seemed to be striving for professionalism whilst firefighting attempts at de-professionalisation from institutional and external factors (Colley et al, 2007), Jan and Edward specified the concern of de-professionalisation, although no one mentioned the threat of being re-professionalised as a bureaucrat, all of them specifically discussed the administrative role they currently serve. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5, where I consider the notion of supercomplexity in more detail.

4.04 Shared Time: Policy & Professionalism:

Throughout the interviews there was agreement on what Humphreys &Hoque (2007) have called the 'professional swindle' of FE lecturers Although the participants verbalised a real push against the focus on retention and achievement, that Humpreys and Hoque (2007) also demonstrated , there was no evidence of any participant feeling as though they were taking part in the

decision making process with regard to wider College issues, although it is entirely possible that their managers would believe that they are engaged in participatory management. Certainly, there is a theme throughout all interviews which clearly shows how the demands of external stakeholders are impacting upon the professionalism of the lecturers, a factor also identified by Whitty (2008). Plowright and Barr (2012) identify that the IfL, which were still overseeing the compulsory CPD etc at the time of the interviews, worked to deprofessionalise FE. Participants agreed wholeheartedly, irrespective of age, gender or course on which they taught. Julie perhaps gives the clearest response here

> *Well, what are they trying to achieve? It simply doesn't fit with any of the models of good practice. They are trying to pigeon hole whole groups of people who evidently don't fit into the space they are trying to put them in. It isn't professionalism, it's a mockery of what professionalism should be…. The sad thing is that it's a mockery of what it could be, in truth.*

The participants who were more experienced expressed a deep level of cynicism regarding the constantly changing nature of FE. The sector was described as a *merry-go-round of policy* (Victor) whereby structural and operational changes were implemented at national levels on an almost annual basis. The LLUK standards were identified as being *more of the same* (Norman), another gimmick by the Government to attempt to codify and define a sector which defies either of these. Certainly, as Friedmann &Phillips (2004) indicate, the compulsory CPD and requirements for licensing were identified as being things which threatened professional judgement and autonomy, fitting in with existing theory. Less experienced staff, however, considered 'Professional Formation' as the solution rather than the problem, suggesting it as the way forward for FE, allowing the FE sector to gain the identity which it has so long sought.

4.05 Shared Place: The FE Environment

There was no sense of national coherence or of belonging to a national picture from the participants, echoing the broader literature (Lucas, 2013). At the time of interview, the LLUK had not ceased to operate, and so the environment which the participants worked in was different to that which, if they are still employed, they are currently in.

The disparate group of participants, even though we arguably shared lenses of time, place and language indicated Hodkinson et al (2007) were correct in their identification of FE as a sector filled with difference and uniqueness. All of the participants were personal tutors for student groups, one of the commonalities within FE identified by Gleeson and James (2007). However, participants spoke of different experiences within that role, depending on the student group and level, echoing Edward et al (2007).

All of the participants agreed that they went above and beyond their role, either implying that they engaged in emotional labour or stating it directly. Alice spoke clearly on this

> *I think maybe the most unprofessional person would be the person who only ever did what was in their contract! I mean, work to rule would be the best kind of strike… industrial action sort of thing, but we wouldn't do it…or… I wouldn't anyway, it's too debilitating for the students. I do four times as much as the minimum and I could tell you a whole list of things that I wish I had time to… time to do.*

Certainly Hodkinson et al (2007) discuss this kind of underground working in terms of the tutor role, but Alice is speaking here of her teaching. The tutor role was discussed much more in terms of FE rather than HE in FE with my participants, possibly echoing Coffield et al (2007), who identified that students who had experienced negativity and needed to reinvent themselves did so in

FE. Presumably, by the time a student reaches HE, they have either experience or some level of qualification.

4.05(a) Intellectual Love in FE

Some participants discussed and exemplified this, although with foci on different types of enquiry identified by Rowland (2005). Stereotypically, those who taught FE only spoke of Teaching, whereas those who taught HE either exclusively or alongside FE spoke of Scholarship. Edward was the only participant who spoke of Research, even he discussed it in terms of what he had done, rather than what he was doing or would in the future. There was no evidence of Spinoza's (1665 cited in Rowland, 2005) idea of intellectual love, certainly none of the participants talked as though at the pinnacle of happiness in terms of their subject. To follow an analogy I used in Chapter 2, in terms of the work of Maslow (1970 cited in Boeree, 2006), the participants described being much further down the hierarchy of needs than achieving peak experiences. They describe more that they are trying to impart skills for living with uncertainty or, at best, monitoring their existing uncertainty, reinforcing the link between Rowland's (2005) types of enquiry and Barnett's (2000) principles of uncertainty, an aspect of supercomplexity which I deal with in more detail in Chapter 5.

Conversely, participants did express that they recognised their own ignorance, the first step towards experiencing intellectual love (Rowland, 2005). Charlie explains:

> *I want to be able to stand in front of the students and have real.. well, I suppose the word would be currency. I have my degree, and that works, but it's out of date. They don't know that, but I do. Things have moved forward and I've been left behind.*

Jan, however, sees it differently

> *It's the ridiculous idea that we can ever leave this job behind. I can't. I don't know anyone who does it well or for any length of time who can. I… the thing is, Sociology moves on, new research comes out, new theories. I've got to know them or I'm not giving the students the grounding they need. I need to make sure that they're ready for HE, so they've got to be up to date. So I've got to be. I used to enjoy that part of it, but I just don't know where the time comes now.*

These two exemplify the differences between FE only and HE within FE participants. Charlie accepts that she is out of date, but focuses on teaching what she does know. Jan, however, sees that scholarship and being familiar with what is known is important to her. Although Jan is discussing the desire for scholarship, she is clear that she does not have the freedom which Rowland (2005) is clear is needed in order for intellectual love to flourish. This lack of time and space is spoken of by all participants, with no evidence of any of them achieving the sort of activist professionalism which they seem to seek (Sachs, 2000). It is evident that the shift in the zeitgeist which Rowland (2005) suggested is necessary for intellectual love to exist has not happened and the participants struggle with that, searching for phronesis where none exists (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

4.05(b) HE in FE

The reality of HE in FE, for those participants who work in that environment, was one which is fraught with complications. Edward identified the non-traditional nature of students undertaking HE courses in an FEC, whilst Colin highlights the very real difference in the HE students to those who would be found in a traditional university. This is put forward as a rather obvious point by the participants, but those who work in both FE and HE are clear that the difference in teaching style which they have to employ with the HE students is quite enormous. Colin discusses the HE students having a much bigger gap between where they are and where they need to be than the FE students do

upon entry. He explains that the journey for the HE students involves a much 'steeper slope' than for those entering in FE. Edward identifies a point made by Hoelscher et al (2008) eloquently;

> *Any given September I'm standing in front of a group of people who are in a place they wouldn't have chosen if they had options. But they don't. Our undergraduates don't choose to come here because of our academic standards <laughs>. Our students come here because they can't leave the area, because they have children or because they know they'd never survive in a proper HE institution. That's not a bad thing. It's just a thing, and it's important, but we ignore it. Because although they don't care about our academic standards, we do. Our external examiners do. The university does. So how do we take that group in September and turn them into real HE students? I'm starting to wonder if we ever do.*

This rather morose consideration is juxtaposed with Alice's ideas on the topic

> *We take people who wouldn't have the opportunity and we transform their lives. That's what it did for me, it transformed my life. Look at me now! We give people possibilities, open doors they wouldn't have opened otherwise. That's what professionalism is, isn't it? Seeing beyond the here and now to the what could be…. What they could be.*

There is a common theme amongst those who are teaching in HE, either exclusively or with FE as well, that the ethos of the College is one which does not understand the reality of HE lecturer. This is summed up by Julie

> *It isn't anyone's fault, per se. I know sometimes it's frustrating and I get frustrated too. However, I think…..that is… well, on reflection the reality is that we have relatively small numbers of HE students compared to the daily bread and butter students in FE. Also, add in to that the fact that the decision-makers, Senior Management, they aren't HE in FE lecturers. It's right that they aren't, they can't represent every type of course in the College, but that means that sometimes to me their*

> *decisions are unfathomable. Of course, I'm sure that my request are equally so to them.*

There is no evidence of collaboration between institutions, with little evidence of collaboration within one staffroom, let alone at an institutional level. Certainly, Connolly et al's (2007) idea that collaboration between HE and FE is fraught with pitfalls and yet is beneficial is evidenced throughout the interviews.

Having considered the individual interviews and the six main themes as viewed through the three shared lenses, I now move on to Chapter 5 where I will consider the two overarching findings of this research; gender issues and the notion of liquid supercomplexity.

Chapter Summary:

This chapter has considered the individual participants' interviews before moving on to identify six main themes which arose from the three shared lenses of time, place and language.

Chapter 5. Discussion

5.01 Chapter Introduction:

Chapter Aims:

This chapter will discuss the two prominent themes which emerged from the interviews, namely the complexity of gender and the supercomplexity of FE and the idea that HE in FE is, in fact, a liquid supercomplexity. It will then consider and evaluate the methodology used.

Having focused on the six themes shaped by the three shared lenses identified in Chapter 4, I I now move on to analyse the two most significant issues identified by the participants (Table 11). First, I discuss the theme of gender (5.02) then how the notion of supercomplexity can be applied to the FE environment before arguing that HE in FE is something beyond supercomplexity (5.03). Finally, (5.04) I evaluate the methodology of this research and consider the validity of the results.

Section	
5.01	Chapter Introduction & Summary: *Introduces the chapter and identifies the structure.*
5.02	Supercomplexity in FE *In this section I discuss how the notion of supercomplexity, originally applied to HE fits with the realities of FE as described by all participants.*
5.03	Liquid Supercomplexity: HE in FE *Here I discuss the reality of HE in FE and how the participants who work in both describe something beyond supercomplexity, which I have dubbed liquid supercomplexity.*
5.04	Evaluation *In this section, I evaluate my research methods and consider the validity of the results.*

Table 11: Overview of Chapter 5

Before embarking on detailed analysis, it is worth restating that there were eight participants in this study with a mix of length of service, gender and FE or HE teaching (Table 12).

Name	*Gender*	*HE or FE*	*Notes*
Alice	F	HE	2 years service.
Edward	M	HE	Over 20 years' service – most experienced.
Julie	F	HE	7 years' service – oldest participant
Norman	M	FE	9 years' service
Charlie	F	FE	3 years' service -youngest participant.
Colin	M	Both	11 years' service
Jan	F	Both	14 years' service
Victor	M	FE	Newly trained lecturer – first year teaching.

Table 12: Participant Overview

5.02 Supercomplexity

All of the participants in this study are either delivering Higher Education or Level 3 courses which prepare students for such. Barnett (2000) speaks of the death of the university as it once was, moving away from the traditional into a much more fluid notion of HE learning. My participants echoed this, they spoke of their role being to 'prepare' their students for something which seemed largely unknown in a constantly changing climate. Jan, however, spoke eloquently on this subject

> *A lot of my BTEC students are going on to degrees all over the country. That's scary for me, because what if they get there and I've not given them what they need? I mean, my Access to HE students tend to be people who will be staying here, most of them going on to Foundation Degrees in <institution>. I can prepare them for that. But what's it like to be eighteen and go to University miles away? I have no idea any more. I mean, I did it, but it's a different world. That's my job, to prepare them for something that I don't understand.*

To Jan, professionalism meant you prepared your students well, and she found this very challenging. This falls exactly into Barnett (2000) notion of supercomplexity, the state where one's own notion of the world adds to the pre-existing hyper-complexity. Jan is facing hyper-complexity in a multitude of frameworks. But it goes further than that. HE in FE following the Dearing Review meant that the 'Cinderella sector' (Simmons, 2008) took on another role, the delivery of HE. The poly-contextual nature of the FEC was something commented on even when the participant did not deliver HE.

> *I suppose that they (the College Senior Management) have to have that big picture. I deliver on the courses I deliver on, but they understand all the things that the College does. It's enormous, really. We have the 14 – 19 agenda students, the Access to HE students, the basic literacy students and we have degrees too. That's a lot of different student groups to try and juggle the needs of, isn't it? Maybe that's why they don't understand me!* (Charlie)

> *I would like to develop into delivering HE, I think. There's more… well it's much more demanding and I feel like I'm ready for that challenge. Although it's a different world, isn't it? I can only begin to imagine how different it is* (Norman).

Norman picks up here on Barnett's (2011) consideration of 'being a university'. Norman speaks of the higher education 'space' and seems to consider that the HE level delivery is the pinnacle of what an FEC can offer. Jan sees differently.

> *I love my HE lecturing, don't get me wrong. But. It isn't like I thought it would be, though. I mean… the thing I love about tutoring my BTEC group is that I make a real difference to them. I really do. I didn't expect to do that for my HE students too, but I do. It's hard to explain, really. I suppose it's because of being a college, but my FdA students need me to support and encourage them and tutor them. It's not like… well it's not like my university experience and I don't think they'd get this level of support if they were at a real university* (Jan).

This certainly resonates with Leahy (2012) who argues the inevitability of change. Perhaps what Jan is describing is the shifting and dynamic space Barnett (2005) identifies, with the university losing it's boundaries. Alice does not think so

> *They (the university) don't know what I'm doing any more than I know what they're doing. It's a different world and if they knew what we deal with here, they'd understand a bit more how it is when you're teaching so much every week that you can't do more than keep your head above water. We don't have all their admin staff, we don't all have our own offices. It's a different world….. …. And I think theirs is better.* (Alice).

To her, the university is a destination which one achieves. Alice seems to, as suggested by Leahy (2012), adopt an FE identity which she does not fit into, despite having never taught anything other than HE in FE. Young (2002) notes that HE in FE lecturers exist in a different place to lecturers in a HEI. On the doxa of HE in FE not being 'real', Alice agrees with Leahy (2012), clearly; as does Edward

> *Well, this isn't real HE. If <principal> thinks for one minute that what he's offering is real HE then he's even more deluded than I think. So wrapped up in regulations and pencil policing, they've not a clue what a true academic is* (Edward).

Colin, who teaches at both HE and FE, identifies the Janus Identity explored by Feather (2014) eloquently.

> *It's about juggling all the time. I have to be seen to have my toe on the party line, or <manager> will be down on me. But sometimes, sometimes you have to give a little too. The students, no matter which students they are, BTEC or A'level or Degree, the students sometimes need you to just bend those rules a little. To let them come into the classroom with a cup of coffee, or to wander in ten minutes late because they can't afford to put their children in nursery a whole extra hour a day… but I just let that go.*

Barnett (2000) identified the university as traditionally having clear boundaries but where those are now inevitably blurring.

5.03 Liquid Supercomplexity: HE in FE

Bauman (2000) suggests liquid modernity as even more fluid, complex and in a state of flux than those modernities either side of it; the FE in HE professional seems to exist within a 'liquid supercomplexity'; rather than denying the supecomplexity of FE or HE, accepting that HE in FE is a liquid reality ebbing and flowing between the two, already supercomplex realities. In this place, uncertainty must be the norm and Julie, found the whole process of thinking about her professional identity difficult. Indeed, at the end of the interview when I asked her if she had any questions or comments, she did. She had thought about it a lot, she said, in the run up to this interview and it had made her uncomfortable.

> *I'm retiring at the end of this year. Thinking about this feels uncomfortable. I'm looking forward to retiring, and I've been looking forward to it for a while. But, the thing is, I'm retiring and I've come to the conclusion that I've lived my professional life in failure. I don't know what my professional identity is, and even worse than that, I don't know what it's meant to be. I don't think that would happen in any other profession would it? It's all a bit depressing, really, and I hadn't thought about it that way*

Julie's words suggest that she is experiencing the 'uncertainty principle' suggested by Barnett (2000 p. 69) which arises from the constellation of fragility (Figure 13). This was best summed up by Edward, a very experienced lecturer who has worked in HE for all of his teaching career. He claims there is no such thing as a professional identity for anyone who works in an FE college, a situation exacerbated by being a HE lecturer. Professionalism for a HE in FE lecturer is unachievable; the demands on professionalism from FE is in constant conflict with the demands of professionalism from the University. He identifies it as

> *...impossible to work within the restraints put on us by the FE pencil-police, and completely impossible to do that within the restrictions of HE in that. And that's before we even set foot in to the classroom with all the issues that our students bring...(Edward)*

Certainly, this was echoed by all of the participants who worked in HE in an FE college. They identified, along with their FE counterparts, the demands made by the conflicting cultures which they saw as unachievable and impossible. However, those who worked in FE stopped their description there whilst, unanimously, those who worked in HE, either exclusively or alongside an FE timetable, then went on to describe how they were asked to adopt a professional identity by the university which was often at direct odds with the FE ethos. This links in to the notion of supercomplexity of academic identities, moving beyond the 'normal' supercomplexity of working as an FE lecturer in an FE college and entering into a new realm (Barnett, 2000). This was, perhaps, best summed up by Julie who said

> *I feel sometimes like working in HE here is like being back in school and not even the chess club understanding me. Management expect one thing, students another and even my own sense of appropriate professional behaviour is blurred sometimes. It's just too much to ask for one identity when this is so many roles*

Also, Alice spoke of a deep conflict which she finds frustrating and hard to explain to management beyond her immediate line manager, L, who shares her frustration.

> *I want to publish. I want to study. I want to get my doctorate and be able to walk into a class and say 'Hello. I'm Dr Alice. I'd feel like the University actually took me seriously then. To the University, I'm a scummy little dweeb on the ground who isn't really qualified enough but will have to do. To the college … […] the college think if I really want it I'll do it in my own time. I haven't got any time, I'm a HE lecturer!*

Alice went on to speak about the demands that HE lecturing put on her. She echoed Colin's perception – as a HE lecturer, Alice felt that FE lecturing was easier. However, Jan, who lectures across both FE and HE told a different story.

> *The issue is that I want to develop myself, develop my professionalism. But I teach on FE and HE. FE means just constant demands, constant pressure. There's always a carrier bag in the corner and it's always filled with marking. That's not the case with HE, the marking is much more structured, although it's big when it comes! But HE marking only comes twice a year, there's no let-up on FE marking. The difference is, with HE there are expectations. I've got to be up to date, I've got to know the journals. I've got to do that. For me, FE asks me to be reactive and HE asks me to be pro-active. It's hard being both.*

Edward speaks of the changes that he has seen in his teaching career

> *The university is a different creature now. Not here, this isn't a university and never will be. We're children playing at dressing up in our parents' clothes. But the university itself. When I started lecturing at University it was completely different; you knew your students. I suppose it's ironic that back then you knew your students, which is more like here. But then, universities meant something. They meant prestige,*

> *kudos. Now, they've turned into FE colleges ~ they spew out automatons who haven't got the skills needed. They aren't what they were. But then none of us are.*

The university has not died, according to Barnett (2000), but a new university has been born, one which is in a symbiotic relationship with an ailing twin, attempting to be from a different parent. Universities exist within and add to the uncertainty principle, whilst studying it and thus attempting to explain it and help to make sense of it. This was apparent throughout the interviews – the HE in FE lecturers reported how difficult it was to fit in to the university or the college ~ Alice specifically suggests the difficulty is more than complex

> *It's like... well, what it's like is that the University isn't clear what it wants us to do. I think that the University isn't clear on what it wants to do, so because they can't define themselves, and they're scared witless someone's going to notice, they try and make sure that we're doing all the things that they think they should be but aren't. Rubbish it is. They don't know who they are, so we've got to be all singing and dancing.*

This links with the idea that the current situation of the university is not maintainable; as Barnett (2000) suggests, the university has not died, but nonetheless is trying to resurrect itself. He paints a picture of not disavowing the predecessors, rather we pay homage to them whilst claiming to be resurrected and therefore exist in situation of being both alive and dead at the same time.

Were this simply the case, however, it would be undoubtedly interesting but not new. However, I believe that these HE in FE lecturers were experiencing something beyond supercomplexity. Certainly, Jan (who teaches both HE and FE) summed up Barnett's (2000) notion of the university taking on the role of both cathedral and supermarket.

> *If someone asks me to do something in the staff room and I'm teaching FE, then it's almost like that doesn't matter. But if I say I can't because I'm teaching on the Foundation Degree, it's almost like people take a step back in awe. Which is crazy. But the same's true the other way, you know. When HE staff find out I'm teaching FE, they shake their heads in*

> *disbelief. I guess that might be because they wonder why I'd bother, actually. It's all a bit bizarre.*

This seems rather more morose than Barnett's (2000) idea of the new university arising from the ashes of the old university, rather like a phoenix. There is more confusion here from the participants, aware that some parts of the university have died, aware also that they are working in a 'new' context which is meant to be more appropriate to the non traditional undergraduates with which they work. This links with the work of Hoelscher et al (2008) who identify the link in policy discourse between growing vocational numbers in FECs and co relational growth in vocational HE which is not borne out in reality. Participants suggested that rather than A leading to B, the context of HE in FE is highly complex in itself, harking back to Barnett (2000) who notes the blurring of previously clear boundaries.

Young (2002) notes that there is a difference in the identity of those who lecture HE in an FEC and those who work solely in a HEI. There was certainly evidence of this throughout, which seemed to take two aspects. Firstly, there was the opinion held of HEI staff who were seen as different to all FE employees. Victor described this when considering the benefits to him of undertaking this research

> *I've really thought about who I am. And I'm much more than someone who doesn't have the students as priority. To university lecturers, the students are a sort of inconvenience. They'll never be that here, never be that to me. To me, they're the reason I come to work. If I went to a university, they'd be a distraction from the push to publish. I don't want that – if being a lecturer isn't about being in front of a group of people, then I don't want it. So I won't ever move from FE, I know that.*

I questioned Victor further on this and he described a feeling of being superior to the staff working at HEIs, specifically because he remembers what it is that is important in education and they, he is sure, have forgotten it. He came back to this towards the end of the post-interview meeting and explained that he was

sure that wasn't true of all HEI staff, but it was something that the institution expected and maybe even demanded. This links with Young (2002) who suggests that this distrust of academics is endemic throughout FE. Certainly Victor and the other participants mostly expressed an identity of being an FE lecturer, throughout the interviews and even when this identity was challenged deeply. Notable exceptions to this, though, and much more congruent with the ideas of Leahy (2012) are Alice and Edward. They approach this topic from different ends of the same spectrum, with clear links. Alice states:

> *I'm not a proper HE lecturer yet. I will be though, when I get to a proper University. I mean, then I'll have the proper experience of being a HE lecturer. This is standing me in good stead*

When I asked her what a proper HE lecturer was, she thought about it and then replied that they are someone much more academic, someone who publishes and writes and can inspire students too. She clearly expressed the notion that HEI lecturers are intellectually and educationally superior to HE in FE lecturers. This is a 'stepping stone' for Alice, not a destination.

On the other end of this was Edward, who clearly feels that HE in FE is a 'step down' also.

> *I'm only here because it's convenient and I'm too old and tired and close to retirement to put up with the publish or perish mentality. I've done my time there, I don't want it any more. Also the fact that I'm a real HE lecturer gives me clout with the pencil-police here. That helps me stay under the radar.*

Both Alice and Edward see HE in FE as a 'poor reflection' of 'proper' HE, which is interesting and entrenched in their identity. Alice reaffirmed constantly that she was a HE lecturer, not an FE one, and Edward is very clear that this is *'small fry* in comparison.

However, being a HE in FE lecturer was seen as a very positive experience for the majority of participants, Jan especially was pleased at the opportunities it had given her, and how it forced her (in her perception) to remain up to date and to undertake more qualifications. Jan was, in fact, stereotypical of the findings of Young (2002), whose participants found HE in FE teaching a very positive and challenging thing but which led to a feeling of isolation from their FE counterparts. Jan is, of course, a lecturer in both FE and HE, which she identifies as a difficulty, as she has to fit in to more micro-dynamics.

Jan, in fact, describes teaching HE in an FE environment in terms reminiscent of Barnett (2000). She explains

> *I'm two things that work fine, I think, but they're stuck together and so they don't work so well any more. I'm trying to be a good HE lecturer for <HEI> and a good FE lecturer for <principal> and I'm being neither whilst being both. It's crazed*

There was very much a feeling from all of the participants of facing not simply a polycontextual institution, but poly-supercomplexities. If being a HE lecturer is a supercomplexity, then being a HE in FE lecturer adds another dimension to it, as does being a HE and FE lecturer in FE. Throughout the interviews I grew to understand that what they were expressing was that we worked in a supercomplex context which was being merged with another supercomplex context. Sitting in the section in the middle of that particular Venn-diagram led me to seeking a word for beyond supercomplexity. The impact that this had without a doubt was on the identity of the staff concerned. This is perhaps best summed up by Victor who eloquently described what I heard (and expressed) in a variety of different ways.

> *I'm like ice cream. I'm fourty two flavours. I'm lecturer, teacher, social worker and all the things that this place expects of me. But if I just had to be what <name of College> expects of me then maybe that would just be impossible. But on top of all that I've got these stupid LLUK standards, the HEA whoever they are but apparently I've got to join them so I can teach HE in September, the University and my own sense of what's right. I'm a quiet voice in that clamouring and it's a*

> *cacophony. I can't be all those people, I can't do all those things. So I get swallowed up. (Victor)*

There is no doubt that this poly-supercomplexity has had an effect on Victor and the other participants. They each describe it as a massive impact on their professional and personal identity, it has an enormous influence on their realities and on the stories they tell (Dyer & Keller-Cohen, 2000). Certainly the participants reported that their poly-contextual supercomplex reality is further complicated by power relationships within and between their contexts. Indeed, the majority of participants explain power in a way that underwrites everything they do, every role they have, linking back to Mann (2008), who suggests that power is all pervasive and discursive. Jan is clear about this

> *You can't talk about power and staffrooms like it's just something that you know about. There's big bosses and little bosses and then there's people in the staff room who have more power than others. It's not an easy concept – I've got people who can make demands on my time and energy from a hundred different directions ~ I'm surrounded!*

Jan talks a lot about disadvantage and lack of power, disempowerment and restriction rather than focusing on what power actually is. This has a major impact on her identity especially, of all the participants. She is unclear about where her professional boundaries lay and she expresses this regularly. It is a cause of frustration for Jan which impacts on her identity, linking with what she perceives as mixed messages regarding her role.

> *We go to a staff meeting and I'm told that the priority is the students – that's great. That's what it should be. But then, there's a problem with some paperwork and I'm pulled out of teaching. Someone goes off sick and there's no cover. I'm told that I have to complete the stupid, pointless pieces of paper which mean that I can't get my marking done on time. How is that prioritising the students? It's not. This place is run by hypocrites – but they've got to be hypocrites to do their job. And so have I, I guess.*

Alice, however, takes a completely different stance on this, taking refuge in the clarity that she has from the hierarchy, both within the College and outside of it. She explains that what she has to do is to spend some time reflecting on her place in the hierarchy and when she has gained a personal understanding of it, she feels security from knowing where her identity lies. When I questioned her further, Alice described where she had placed herself in the College hierarchy and the hierarchy of the University. This is not reproduced here for reasons of confidentiality, but it was very clear to me that she placed herself firmly in a subservient position ~ by placing herself at the bottom of the hierarchy, she gave herself structure and, by virtue of this, identity. Alice was unique amongst the participants for this, but it was a very strong message throughout all of her interview. Power and structure needed to be very black and white for her, unlike the other participants who saw it as a much more fluid concept. That notwithstanding, Alice hung her identity far more on her understanding of structure and hierarchy than any other participant.

Conversely to the demands of being a HE lecturer in an FE environment, all those who were interviewed mentioned the status ascribed to lecturing at HE level. To those participants who worked solely in FE there was a sense of kudos to being granted lecturing in HE. Only those who had a proven track record were considered ‘good enough’ for the lecturing. Although qualifications were not asked for, at least one of those who worked exclusively in FE felt that HE lecturers were much more qualified than FE, probably all of them having doctoral level qualifications. The perception of the HE lecturers was that they were lecturing the ‘best’ students, and did not have to put up with the often atrocious situations that FE lecturers found themselves in. Alice, for example, was quite clear about not wanting to work in FE as it would mean dealing with people who did not want to be there. She identified HE as being ‘difficult enough without that added pressure’.

One perception that was common amongst all participants was that HE lecturers were expected to have more of an individual identity, with publication and academic status being important to them. Jan, a FE lecturer identified status as important to HE staff, because HE was more important to the college itself. This was mirrored by Colin, who commented ironically that his management is concerned with how the staff look, with the reputation and the appearance, but not with making any improvements or working at a grass roots level.

Having considered the data and the three main emergent themes, it must be recognised that this research had flaws in the gathering of it and it is to an evaluation of the methodology which I now turn my attention.

5.04 Evaluation

I will evaluate the research following the same seven stages of interview inquiry used to shape the methodology (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), evaluating each stage.

5.04(a) Thematizing the Analysis

In evaluating my methodology, the first and most overarching realisation is that I bit off far more than I could chew. Initially I had decided to carry out entirely hermeneutic research and the realisation that I simply could not achieve that meant that I had to reconsider what it was that I was doing and how. Ricoeur (1988) was the main hermeneutic influence and I ensured that my participants were people who I believed I shared the three hermeneutic lenses of time, place and language tradition with. However, in the undertaking of this, my attempt was flawed; I miscalculated the amount of *preunderstandings* which I shared with my participants, and as it became obvious that they used different language in terms of professionalism, I realised that my own shared language was much stronger with the female participants, for example, than the males. However, transcribing the interviews and returning them to the participants

mitigated that by allowing me query my own preunderstandings (Cohen, 2000a) of what they had said and to distanciate myself from these preunderstandings (Young & Collin, 1988). So, in the way that returning the transcripts and holding a post-interview meeting with each participant allowed me to see that the differences in notions of professionalism between genders were not as I initially perceived them as being, it also allowed me to realise that perhaps I did not share those lenses as strongly as I had believed. Did I achieve, as Clark (2005) suggests hermeneutic research should, my world and the experiences of the participant? Judging by the depth of interview data, I would say yes. The transcription and post-interview meeting allowed both myself and the participants to consider that the texts which represented our interviews had the range of interpretations identified by Ricoeur (1988). This was especially useful in terms of the issue of gender as it allowed for more detailed consideration of what appeared to be one thing but was quite another.

On reflection, the research itself did seem to exist in both the interpretive and critical paradigms, journeying from one to the other (Lund, 2005) but it has not so much brought about personal praxis, but has led to deepened understanding (Usher and Bryant, 1989) that the discontent which I believed I felt was not my actuality. I discuss this more in the next chapter, but suffice it to say here that the paradigm standpoint identified in Chapter 3 was robust. I accepted that I fundamentally shaped the research allowed for reciprocal discovery and reflection (Debesay et al, 2008). The depth of this which I achieved is, I believe, evident in the depth of interview data.

5.04(b) Analysing the Design, Procedure & Ethics

The basic procedure, as identified in Chapter 3 happened with all participants.

This procedure served its purpose, although my immediate reflection is that it would have strengthened my data had I recorded the pre and post interview meetings. My participants reported the need to create their own capital with regards to professionalism throughout the whole process, not simply the interview itself (Vygotsky, 1978). I felt that in some cases, the *phenomenological nod* which I had sought was gained in the post interview meeting, which I had not recorded (Van der Zalm and Bergum, 2000). The pre-interview meeting also allowed a clearer explanation of our preunderstandings and shared lenses and would have been better recorded, in light of the 'big picture'. In terms of the interviews themselves, they seemed to identify truth as the participants saw it (Le Voi, 2006).

In analysing the procedure, the question must be asked; were these the 'correct' or even 'best' participants. I chose them because of a belief that I shared three lenses with them. They were not sampled, although I query whether a sample is appropriate in this instance (Maxwell, 2005; Rubin and Rubin, 1995). Homogenously, they represented a range of demographic features (Flick, 2007a).

The ethics of 'insider research' is fraught with pitfalls (Humphrey, 2013) and this was no different. I chose participants purposely who I did not have a friendship relationship with but who I identified as sharing three lenses with. I did this to avoid a reshaping of my friendships as identified by Taylor (2011). However, that happened anyway as I have since, and as a result of these interviews, become friends with two of the participants. I felt and feel that being an insider researcher allowed me to obtain richer data as suggested by Bannick and Coghlan (2007), my participants spoke of internal structures and policies freely, which they might well not have with an 'outsider'. Initially, I felt that the warning

Darra (2008) gave of the emotional stress for the first time insider researcher was not relevant to my research. But I discovered that, weeks and even months after the interviews, Alice and Jan would seek me out to discuss issues of professionalism to them. I could not and would not engage with this, but it was only weeks later that I experienced the 'marginal positioning' which Darra (2008: 253) warns of.

5.04(c) Analysing the Analysis & Verification

The analysing of the interviews posed one problem, which was that stopping was nigh on impossible, there was always more which I could look at one more time. Indeed, drawing a line was difficult, but this is not unusual, especially for the first time researcher (Kvale, 2007). It was time consuming and frustrating and difficult to contain. More than once I wished that I had ignored my supervisors suggestion not to use software to help but in retrospect, it was absolutely right that I did not. My own understandings have deepened because of this and I have, I believe, become a better researcher.

I now move on to the final chapter, the conclusion where I attempt to draw together the themes and to 'make meaning' of the research.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

Chapter Outline:

This chapter considers the research questions and analyses what answers have been found. It then recommends how the research can be taken forward, both in terms of theoretical understanding and practice.

6.01 Chapter Introduction:

This research sought to find out what professionalism meant to a small group of participants. I was influenced by a partially hermeneutic framework; transcripts were returned to the participants and amended for meaning and the participants were all individuals who shared the lenses of time, place and language with me. This chapter concludes the research (Table 13) identifying the conclusions which can be drawn from my analysis (6.02) before moving on to look at recommendations which arise from the research, both in terms of theory (6.03) and practice (6.04). Finally, I look back at the research and consider the journey undertaken (6.05).

Section	Content
6.01	**Chapter Introduction**
6.02	**Conclusions**
6.03	**Recommendations**
6.04	**Further Research**
6.05	**Concluding Statement**

Table 13 Overview of Chapter 6

6.02 Conclusions

I began this research identifying my frustration with the differences in how I see professionalism to the sector skills council at the time. I felt that I did not 'fit' and that somehow what I understood professionalism to be was different than the way that those who impacted upon my job did. In summary, throughout the research I came to the following conclusions:

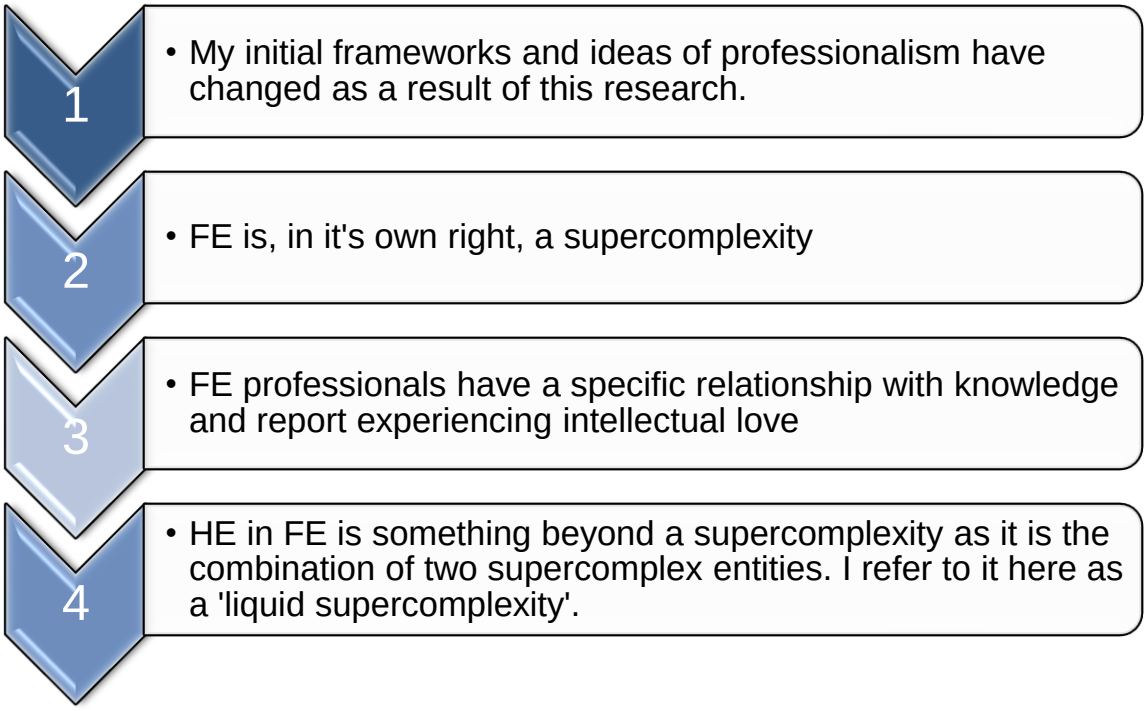


Figure 7: Summary Conclusions

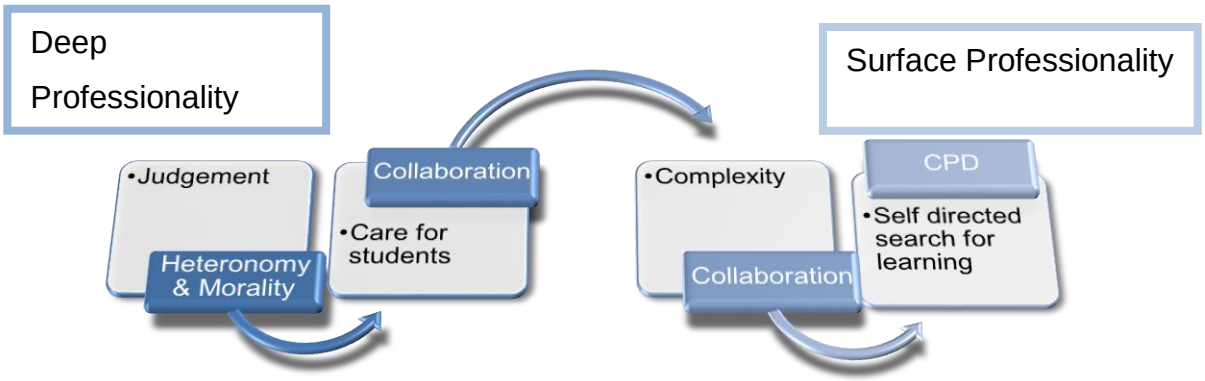
6.02(a) Changing Initial Frameworks

Undertaking this research allowed me to consider and revisit my initial frameworks in terms of professionalism. I identified this as professionalism having three aspects; praxis, theory and morality. My 'checklist for professional behaviour' has not altered, but I have grown to understand the checklists for others. However, in terms of theory, I have shifted somewhat. Orr (2009)

identifies the complexity of FE as a sector unlike any other. In my consideration of Gale et al (2011) I realised my own frustration with the 'theories' of professionalism in FE. They are mostly written by people who work in HE. FE is not only the "Cinderella" sector, but it has research done unto it rather than within it. As I considered Gale et al's (2011) suggestion that

> "…they should perhaps move away from their traditional conceptions of scholarly activitiy […] Instead they should consider Boyer's (1990) seminal idea of a 'scholarship of teaching and learning'…" (Gale et al, 2011 p 166)

I realised that whilst, perhaps, my conceptions of scholarly activity are quite traditional, I see nothing wrong in that. I undertook this research because I want to understand the sector where I work; in it's own right and not as an outsider. A number of the researchers who now work in HE and write about FE have previously worked in FE, but I feel that it is such a rapidly changing sector that even that is a step too far away. In terms, however, of theory, I in Chapter 2 I identified my own interpretation of Goodson and Hargreaves, reproduced here



In terms of whether this has changed for me in light of this research, it very much has. I have discussed these aspects of professionality with my participants and the way that I now view this has changed enormously. If I were to represent it in diagrammatic form, it would look much more like this.

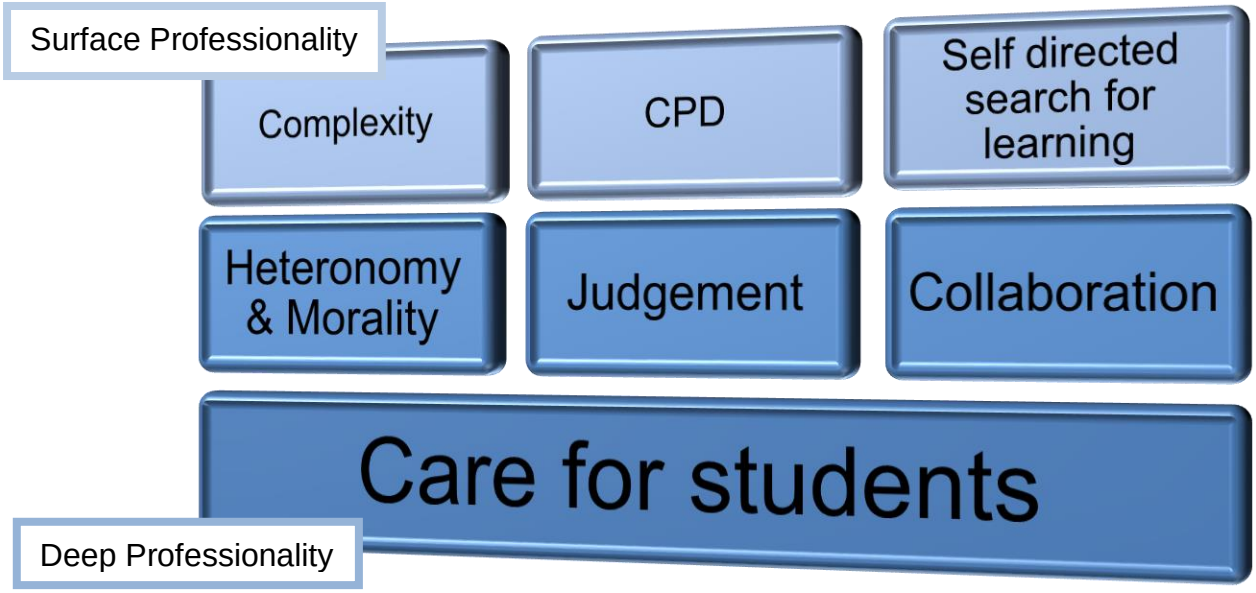


Figure 8: Revised Adaptation of Goodson & Hargreaves

It is not a continuum, firstly. The reason for this is that I have realised that, for me, care for students is at the basis of professionalism. Throughout the interviews, I found that there were many different ways in which my participants expressed this, from the more mechanistic notions of Norman to the more impassioned ideas of Jan; but although they used different words, they were expressing the same deep notion. Above that, the middle ground of morality, judgement and collaboration are all important to me in terms of professionalism, but only when underpinned by the care for students. In Chapter 2 I suggested that there was little if any judgement in existence in FE. Again, my ideas have changed, participants made judgement calls about a number of issues, from granting of extensions (or not) to how they dealt with issues within staff teams. I had fallen into the trap suggested by Bathmaker and Avis (2005a) and making generalisations where they could not be made. And perhaps ironically considering the argument I make regarding the need for scholarship and ownership of the same, I place complexity, CPD and self directed search for learning as the most surface aspects of professionalism. Whilst they seem like

things which ‘professional’ professionals would undertake, they formed little part of the discussions around professionalism which were most meaningful. Thus, I place them as having least importance.

6.02(b) FE is a Supercomplexity

Barnett (2000a) suggests the notion of supercomplexity although he refers to it in relationship to ‘the university’ and Higher Education generally. Although originally I considered this in light of HE in FE, I now argue that this notion is equally applicable to the FE sector. Participants in this research described very clearly Barnett’s notion of supercomplexity. The supercomplexity of FE was described and explored by the participants, the idea that it was beyond hyper complex clearly identified; and indeed the participants were clear that their own world views added to the complexity of their daily working lives.

Indeed, applying Barnett’s (2011) consideration of ‘being a university’ there are further parallels to draw – he considers what it means to ‘be’ a university in a constantly fluctuating social dynamic. He also reminds that the supercomplexity is as experienced by the student as the lecturer. Certainly FE exists in a constantly fluctuating dynamic which is as ever changing as Barnett (2011) describes. Coffield et al (2008) describe their futile attempt to illustrate the FE sector visually as producing a diagram which was enormously complex. Perhaps the difference here and why it has not previously been applied to FE is that, in a very real sense, the constant change is entirely ‘situation normal’ for FECs and has been since their inception. Barnett (2011) speaks of the types of universities which have occurred historically, reminiscent of the five periods in which FE has developed, identified by Green & Lucas (1999). Barnett (2004) identifies seven aspects of supercomplexity in HE, which I suggest can be very easily applied and adapted to FE.

- Globalisation

  Education exists in a global economy. FE colleges and Adult Education Centres are the main providers of basic skills, literacy and numeracy, and English as a second or other language based courses (Robson and Bailey, 2009). The number of international students continues to grow – and this is across all areas of provision, from Entry Level to Level 7. Edward especially was concerned with this, aware of the need to exist in a global market economy – since the incorporation of FE, they exist in an economic reality which can not be ignored.

- Digital technology

  This has become part and parcel of the FE professional's life (Orr, 2013). FE now is delivered via DLEs (Dynamic Learning Environments), some of which are via intranets, but many of which are accessible on the internet. All participants except Charlie commented on the push for everything to be utilising the most up to date, exciting and innovative technology. With the high numbers of adult return learners in Access to HE and HE in FE provision, this often requires basic ICT skills being taught.

- Equal access and opportunity

  FE Colleges are held to the same legislative requirements as HEIs in terms of equality of access and opportunity.

- Interpenetration of FE and wider society

  FECs have historically been seen as, and functioned as, part of wider society (Orr, 2010). This is not new but is fundamental to the identity of the sector. While this has been a major change for HEIs, it is 'situation normal' for FE.

- Marketisation

  FE was incorporated in 1993. Smith (2007) considers the impact of market forces on the sector in the time since and comes to the conclusion that FE is driven by market forces from without, while educators attempt to ignore them from within.

- Competition

  McTavish (2003) cites competition as a major impact of FE incorporation, forcing a performativity culture with an ethos of competition, rather than the collaborative culture previously seen. As purveyors of products driven by market forces, competition is an inevitability.

- Nation/State sponsored quality evaluation measures

  FE falls under the quality evaluation measures of OfSTED and HEFCE, depending on which programme is being evaluated. HE courses are subject to the same TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework) rating and Institutional Review as HEIs.

  Since these are the seven aspects identified by Barnett (200a) as constituting a supercomplexity, FE is as clearly in this category as HE.

If these are the seven aspects of supercomplexity, then they are certainly applicable to FE, and many of them were mentioned by participants. The 'constellation of fragility' identified by Barnett (2000a) is equally applicable to FE. Participants spoke of many of these seven aspects.

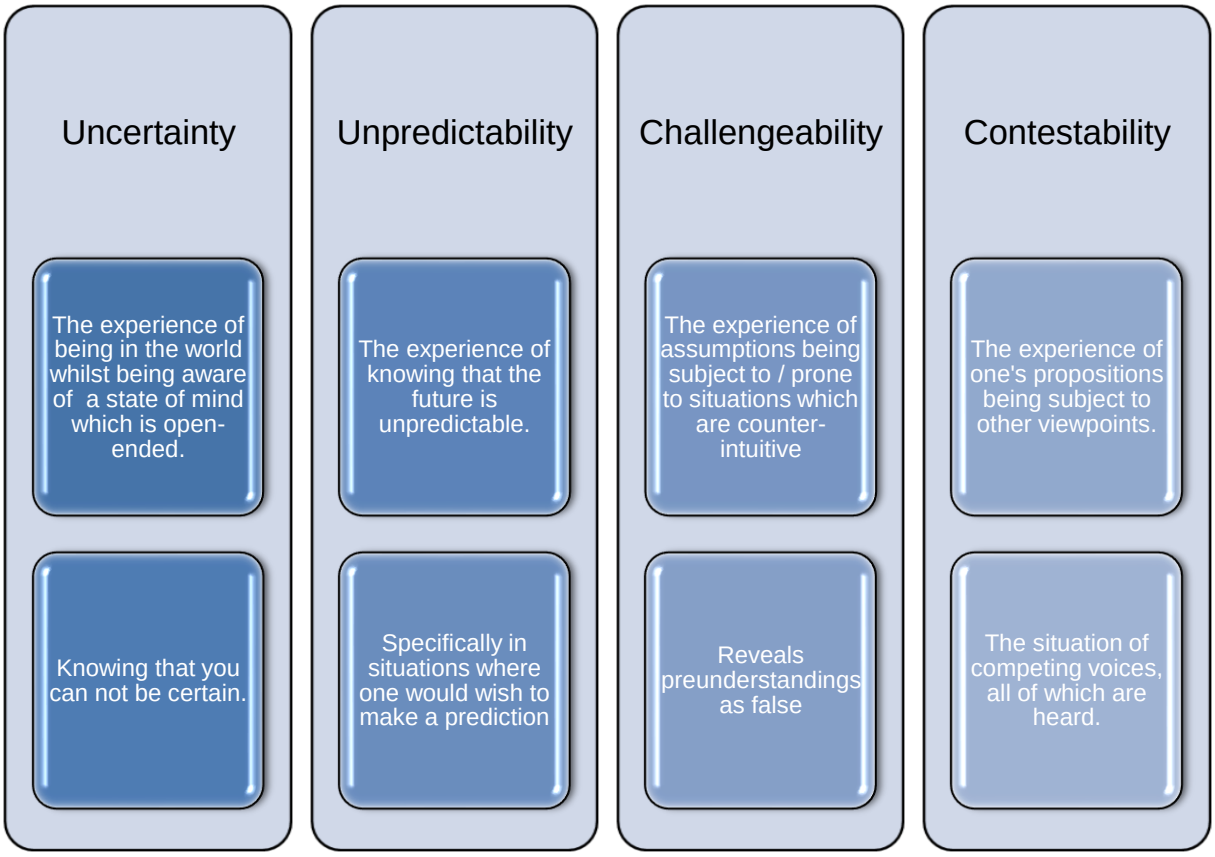


Figure 9: Four Aspects to the Constellation of Fragility

Certainly, both the work of Orr (2009) and Gleeson et al (2005) identify these aspects and the participants speak of the constant changes which face the FE professional. Barnett (2000a) is clear that this constellation of fragility means that the university contributes to and maintains uncertainty. I argue that this is as true for FE. Walker (2001b) identifies research as fragile and uncertain because everything is change and in the case of FE, the “Cinderella Sector” is arguably the least researched and most subjected to change (Simmons, 2008). Also, as Child (2009) notes, research is done ‘to’ FE professionals, rather than ‘by’ them. Certainly the participants in this study, be they HE in FE, pure FE or both seemed to be, as Barnett (2008: 197) suggested them to be ‘caught amid tensions and fluidity’, every participant spoke of how much change they had seen and how they had to shift and change on a daily basis in order to meet the demands of their job. All the participants seemed to be existing with a

supercomplexity and I suggest that this state of being is not unique to the university but is, in fact, a daily reality for FE professionals.

6.02(c) FE Professionals, Knowledge & Intellectual Love

Barnett (2000b) suggests that knowledge in it's previous form is ending, specifically in the way in which the university has historically held it. He does not believe that this means the end of the university, but rather that it will transform. Every participant in this research, if they talked about HE they talked about knowledge, whether they taught HE or not. It became evident that those who were HE professionals felt that keeping up to date and on the 'cutting edge' was vital. Barnett (2000b) says that the end of knowledge has three forms, discussed in Chapter 2. However, I argue here that as this knowledge end has happened in the university, so too has a mirrored process occurred whereby FE has gained 'knowledge status', perhaps even leeched from the university itself. The figure below (Fig. 11) identifies what I would argue is the conclusion of the 'end of University knowledge, namely the 'beginning of FE knowledge.

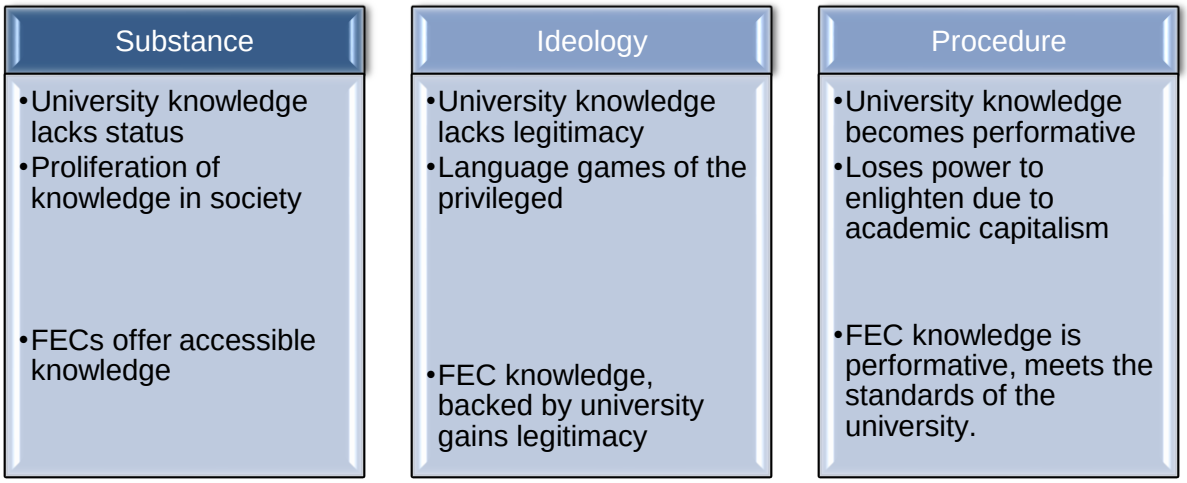


Figure 10: The Beginning of FE Knowledge?

But this accessible, legitimate knowledge offered by FECs is impacted by the wider context of FE and HE, both of which I argue are supercomplexities. Certainly, participants in this study identify the fragile and complex nature of their daily professional lives, linking to the participants in Lea and Callaghan (2008) who reported the same. Although my participants did not utilise the phrases of the micro-context and macro-context, they discussed ways in which their day to day job was not understood in the bigger picture. Like Barnett (2000c) suggests, participants are clear that each aspect of the FEC exists in a state of supercomplexity; every micro-context of their professional life is beyond complexity. To add in the supercomplexity of being 'part of but apart from' the university is further confounding.

Further, participants in this study described something very similar to Rowland's (2005) idea of intellectual love. They certainly were cognisant of their own ignorance, the first stage in experiencing intellectual love. However, what they really demonstrated, each one, was the notion that the passing on of knowledge, their role as lecturer was important to the future. Rowland (2008) identified intellectual love as being the relationship between the knower and the known, but in the case of these participants it was beyond that; it was about transformation and access, about providing opportunities for non-traditional learners and for truly widening participation. They identified this ability to truly widen participation as being challenged by the performativity culture, which has been identified by Bathmaker and Avis (2005a) as rife in FE. Rowland (2005) agrees, this stifles and kills intellectual love. Participants in this study spoke clearly that it was about more than the living which their students will make, but it is for them about the life they will lead; this is a step in intellectual love which Rowland (2006) believes that universities have not yet taken and is very much the ethos for each of the participants in this study. Since intellectual love is, according to Rowland (2005) a bridge between teaching and research, perhaps the words of Gale et al (2011) will be important here; it is possible that as HE in

FE grows a new type of research and scholarship will emerge, but none of the participants in this piece seemed to be engaged in such.

6.02(d) HE in FE: Beyond Supercomplexity?

Barnett (2000b) identifies the changes to the 'knowledge function' of the university, part of this change is, arguably, the growth of HE in FE. Certainly this links with Block (2014) who argues that boundaries inside and outside the university are blurring, Boundaries between HEIs and FECs are certainly blurred, with dual sector institutions for both. The HE in FE professional seems to be in a state of multi-supercomplexity. They must adhere to and meet the standards, rules and regulations of the HEI whilst needing to do the same for the FEC. My final conclusion here is that HE in FE professionals work in a state which I have dubbed 'liquid supercomplexity'.

I assert this believing that there is a very strong argument that both HE and FE are supercomplex. The reality of either one is beyond complex and so, to attempt to function in both – duty bound to the restraints and restrictions of both also - harkens to the notion of 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2000): 82.

> "What was some time ago dubbed (erroneously) 'post-modernity' and what I've chosen to call, more to the point, 'liquid modernity', is the growing conviction that change is the only permanence, and uncertainty the only certainty. A hundred years ago 'to be modern' meant to chase 'the final state of perfection' -- now it means an infinity of improvement, with no 'final state' in sight and none desired."

The constant change in FE is more than well documented (Block, 2014; Leahy, 2012; Burke, 2008; Rowland, 2002). The participants all were clear about the supercomplex nature of FE generally and those in HE in FE certainly all suggested that it is a unique and different field than FE or HE alone, as Leahy

(2012) argues. This field is one which combines supercomplexities and thus, the only constant is change. For the participants in this study, that was repeated time and time again. Even those who did not teach in HE all commented at least once on the difficulties of HE in FE – those who did it were much more vocal, but it was seen by all participants as the most complex, and demanding role in the sector.

Participants in this study who lectured in HE in FE were faced with dealing with two overlapping supercomplex realities, seeking to identify and live within their own frameworks for professionalism whilst aiming to truly widen participation and instil intellectual love in their students. This 'cross of the FE professional' (Figure 33) makes practice in the micro-context of the classroom something beyond a supercomplexity.

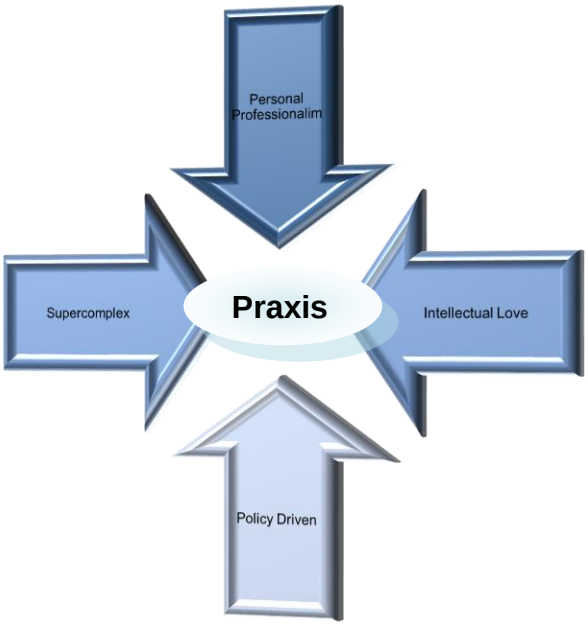


Figure 11: The Cross of the FE Professional

Throughout this research it became more and more apparent to me that the situation that my HE in FE participants were faced with was beyond a supercomplexity; ironically, though, it has a solution. The solution is simple; it can not be done and my participants were faced with the choice of stepping away or continually attempting to achieve the impossible dream. The

combination of the supercomplexity with the truly liquid nature of FE has led to HE in FE lecturers existing in what I term a ‘liquid supercomplexity’ Certainly, the supercomplexity appeared to be existing in a state of liquid modernity identified by Bauman (2000). FE exists in a permanently transitional state, with the FE professionals and specifically the HE in FE professionals very much being the ambivalent outsiders who have learned to walk on quicksand, to utilise phrases which Bauman uses regularly.

Barnett (2011: 109) suggests that one of the futures of the university might include what he terms a ‘liquid university’. I would suggest that the participants in this study identify their realities as being in that state, although I argue here that there is no such thing as a ‘liquid university’ but that FE has taken that space which Barnett (2011) identified as one of four possible futures for the university. The university has not died, participants in this study certainly saw it as a very strong institution; not disavowing it, in fact much more paying homage to it.

Certainly, as Barnett (2011) suggests, this liquid state of professional life leads to very liquid identities for those within it. This was echoed throughout this study; participants felt that they had to be different things for different roles, even within one classroom. The participants in this study are existing in two supercomplexities, one of which is in a state of constant flux. Fundamentally, the HE in FE professional is in a liquid supercomplexity, an impossibility which they have to make work.

6.03 Recommendations

It is challenging to make recommendations when the conclusion that I have drawn is that my job is impossible. However, there are a number of recommendations which I would suggest in terms of this research:

The most important recommendation for me is that this liquid supercomplexity must be recognised by both the HEI and FEC wherein my participants work. They are expected to deliver the same number of hours per week as any other FE lecturer, a number which is vastly in excess of what they would be required to do should they work in the HEI. Yet the HEI demands the same standards be achieved. The partnership which started in light of the Dearing Report has met the needs of both institutions and has, I would argue, certainly achieved the widening participation of students. But it has created a job role which is untenable. As and when The College gets an OfSTED inspection, HE will form no part of that, it will be reviewed by QAA ~ yet lesson observations in HE are graded according to the OfSTED framework. This makes sense on a strategic level, but operationally the participants report it is dysfunctional.

The participants who work in HE in FE in this study saw it as a 'nowhere ground' in the wider academic world. A consideration of the reality of HE in FE at a wider governmental level might shed light on how it has changed; a central consideration has not been given since Dearing, although a lot has changed since. But the overwhelming sense of being 'out of control' from the participants suggests to me that this reconsideration of what HE in FE actually is should come from within the sector, not without it. This would, fundamentally, mark a shift in ideology, however. FE as a sector has been 'done unto' in terms of policy, research and funding for so long that taking any sense of empowerment will require some significant culture shifts. However, anything is possible in a liquid supercomplexity.

6.04 Further Research

As is, I suspect, usually the case: upon completing this research the thing I would really like to do is start it again and do it better this time. However, that aside there are a number of issues which would warrant further research arising here.

Firstly, is the notion of a **liquid supercomplexity** specific to these participants in this time and place? I purposely chose them as sharing time, place and language tradition with me. As with any piece of research, widening the participants would allow for greater generalisability. Adjacent to that is the **hermeneutic influence** of this research. Revisiting these participants for a number of unstructured interviews seeking shared, negotiated meaning might well produce deeper, more meaningful results.

The **HE in FE professional** seems to be a creature unique within a unique sector and this warrants further investigation. It would be interesting to focus on this group and consider their notions of scholarship and intellectual love in more detail.

However, if I was going to take this research further, to me it is clear what needs to be considered next. Herein I have considered the experience of a few individuals but not considered the **wider context.** The participants tell me that their managers believe this or enforce that. How do middle managers, senior managers in both The College and the HEI experience HE in FE? This is one side of a multi-faceted shape and the larger picture must be considered before any actual conclusions about reality can be drawn. Within that, of course, are **the student body** and how they experience HE in FE. There are myriad perceptions and experiences still to explore.

6.05 Concluding Statement

Throughout this research I have experienced a vast change in my self-concept, both as part of completing this process and due to external events. I am not the person I was when I began this qualification, but I am clear that neither are my peers or supervisors and an element of that has to be the apparently inordinate amount of time it has taken. However narcissistic it may be, though, I believe that the changes I have undergone have been more than is usual in the timeframe; I have been widowed, remarried and adopted a young child in the time that this thesis was written. These are relevant if somewhat indulgent points; my notion of self has been utterly bombarded but I find that I end the thesis where I started it. I love my job. It is frustrating, annoying and I am faced with new and ever more difficult needless frustrations on an almost daily basis. Yet still, I love my job.

FE is, for me, a transformative place. The culture is such that we change lives and when I joined the profession, some 20 years ago, I was determined to subscribe to the ethos of 'subversion from the chalkface'. I still subscribe to that ethos, albeit from a different chalkface. It has been suggested to me a number of times in the past years that I should work in a 'proper' university; but I can not even begin to want to. FE is transforming, it is changing and it is staying resolutely the same in being the sector which changes constantly. I find myself in a place, at last, of clarity. Where else would I be but somewhere which is as contrary as I am?

In undertaking this research I have reached a simple, clear conclusion. My notions of professionalism are different to those that the government, the policy-makers and the 'big picture' would suggest. But I make a difference daily to the lives and education of the people I teach. What else, therefore, would I do? My

ideas are sometimes different from those I must appear to subscribe to and that makes me frustrated but my ideals are the same.

Fundamentally, after twenty years of teaching and seven years of work on this thesis alongside the births, deaths and marriages that happened along the way, I have realised the simple truth of that statement and that, basically, I am quite happy with it. Therefore, there is no grand move, no change in what I do but instead I have achieved a moment which perhaps Pooh-Bear would understand and so I leave the final words to A.A Milne (1926: 32), the very quote where this thesis began but with the final sentence added in:

> **"Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it. And then he feels that perhaps there isn't."**

Chapter Summary:

This chapter concludes the research, identifying the conclusions drawn and considering the impact of it in terms of both theory and practice.

List of Appendices:

Appendix	Title of Appendix Documentation
A	**Participant Vignettes**
B	**Twelve Aspects of Interview Knowledge**
C	**Consent Form (Draft & Final)**
D	**Initial Proposal**
E	**Analysis of Interviews: Overview**
F	**Exemplar Transcript: Pilot Participant**

6.06 Appendix A: Participant Vignettes

These participant vignettes are summaries of the "demographic" data collected from each participant. They are summaries of the following:

1. Age (approximate) and gender of the participant.
2. Very brief academic background / current role.
3. Answer to the question "As part of this research, I am going to create a short vignette of you. How would you describe yourself for that short vignette?"
4. Answer to the question "I will then go on, in the vignette, to write a few sentences on why you became a lecturer. Could you tell me?"

Name	Vignette
Mark **50s** **Male** ***PILOT***	Mark has spent a lot of time working in the FE sector. He now works in HE within FE, working as a teacher trainer. He has worked in management and in a variety of lecturing jobs during his professional life. He describes himself as someone who has "made a career out of subversive education", who has fallen into management, and then fallen back out again. He is a self declared cynic who believes that education is, when it is being 'done right', a transformative experience. He says that he became a teacher trainer because of a lack of vocational focus. He started life as a geography teacher, and then developed a growing interest in politics.

	When asked why he became a lecturer, Mark explained that he saw himself as an active environmentalist who became a lecturer because he needed to pay the bills.
Edward **50s** **Male**	Edward is a man in his fifties who has spent a lot of time working in Higher Education in both Universities and FE colleges. He came to education later in life, following a successful career in banking. He describes himself as someone who is doing their best for his students, despite the ridiculous pressure that he and his colleagues are put under by management and government policy. He has a strong sense of duty to his students, who he believes tend to be the disaffected non-traditional students who would be failed elsewhere in the education system. He says that he became a teacher because he was tired of the ethos of banking and wanted to go to University and follow his passion.
Norman **40s** **Male**	Norman is a man in his forties who has worked in the FE sector for the last 15 or so years. Before that he worked in industry and he lectures predominantly on business courses. He describes himself as a professional lecturer, who does his best to deliver a quality product for his students. He does not wish to have a job which takes up his whole life, however, and so he feels that the work-life balance is important. He stresses this from the first interview. When asked why he became a teacher, Norman considered this quite carefully and replies with the notion that he does not really know. It seemed like a logical thing to do and it allowed

	him to pursue the lifestyle that he wishes to pursue. There is no sense of planning in his entry to teaching, but he is very positive about it as an experience.
Colin **40s** **Male**	Colin is a man in his forties who works in the FE and HE sector. He has been employed at the same institution for the past twelve years, where he works as a lecturer in IT. He describes himself as someone doing his best, but not doing so very well. He is concerned with his work-life balance and he is quite sure that he is not managing this well. When asked why he became a teacher, Colin laughs and then explains that he did it because it allowed him to remain a student for another year. He undertook a full time PGCE and so could continue to live the student lifestyle. He was lucky enough to 'fall in' to something that he enjoys.
Victor **30s** **Male**	Victor is a man in his thirties who is new to lecturing. Before entering education, he was a student and a self employed businessman. He is a lecturer in Health & Social Care where he specialises in psychology. He describes himself as someone who wants to touch people's lives in a positive way, irrespective of academic achievement but rather focused on what is important. He is very student focused, and works hard to ensure that he is "bridging the gap" for those students who might otherwise be failed by the system. He is currently undertaking an MSc, although he mentions often that he is not really doing particularly well. When asked, it transpires that his current grade average is 76%.

	When asked why he became a lecturer, Victor immediately replied that he did so to give chances to those who might otherwise fall by the wayside. This is obviously something that has a resonance with him, as he felt it was an outcome that he might have had were it not for external support and encouragement.
Alice **30s** **Female**	Alice is a woman in her thirties who is relatively new to the FE sector. She has only ever worked in HE in FE, where she lectures on the course that she undertook herself as an undergraduate. This means that some of Alice's colleagues were once her lecturers, as she was a student in the institution where she now works six years ago. Alice describes herself as an "eternal student who has found my dream job". She is very passionate about the importance of education and believes that it is something that one is never too old for. She is currently undertaking a Doctorate, with the hope of securing full time employment at the college where she works (she is currently sessional). When asked why she became a lecturer, Alice is clear about wanting to help people to achieve what she has achieved, and emphasises the importance of choice, especially for non-traditional learners.
Julie **60s** **Female**	Julie is a woman in her sixties who has worked as a counsellor for the majority of her professional life. She is relatively new to the FE sector, although she has worked in HE for a number of years before. She now works in HE within FE on a fractional contract.

	She describes herself as someone who is “doing the best I can in the run up to retirement”. She is firmly of the belief that being an educator is a moral duty and she wishes to pass on as much of that as is possible to her students. She is very clear about wanting to do the best for her students, but is equally clear about having firm boundaries and protecting herself in the ‘blame culture’ of FE. When asked why she became a lecturer, Julie states that she became a lecturer in order to secure a consistent income. She is very clear, however, about that not being the reason that she continued in the job, which she does because she believes most strongly in the value of education and the importance of valid and detailed counsellor education.
Charlie **20s** **Female**	Charlie is relatively inexperienced as a lecturer which obviously has an impact on her as she discusses the need for her to prove herself both explicitly and implicitly throughout. She describes herself as someone who is focused on the students having a quality experience, which often means going above and beyond the requirements of management. The need to achieve the best results, be the best lecturer that she can be was something that Charlie was quite explicit about. She compares herself to others in the staffroom, measuring her success by being the best at her job in her environment. This means going above and beyond the basics and pushing herself as hard as possible. Charlie became a lecturer because she felt that it would be challenging and rewarding, allowing her to progress in her career whilst continuing to learn as she did so.

Jan **40s** **Female**	Jan has worked in FE for 10 years, a job which she says she has a love-hate relationship with. She is very positive about the contact with the students, but finds the constant administrative demands to be close to overwhelming. When asked to describe herself, she explains that she is someone who is working hard to maintain her work-life balance in a struggle which she knows (or believes she knows) will be ultimately futile. She is someone who is maintaining their focus purely on the student and providing the best experience for them. Sometimes this will be in direct opposition to their manager or the pressures from further above. When asked why she became a teacher, Jan is clear that she did so in order to provide opportunity for people by giving them choices, which she clearly states can begin to overcome inequality and deprivation.

6.07 Appendix B: Twelve Aspects of Interview Knowledge

Kvale (2007, p. 12) suggests that there are twelve aspects to a qualitative interview

Aspect	Description:
Life World	In many ways, this is the "fundamental" of the qualitative interview. The interview is able to capture the experiences and the lived world of the participant. This kind of understanding is the understanding of the individuals' world from the perspective of the individual themselves.
This research is seeking to make sense of the life world of the participants, but with specific reference to their professional life and their understanding of the word professionalism. Situations which have shaped their views may be relevant, but it needs to maintain that focus.	
Meaning	Having looked at the lived world of the individual, the next kind of understanding is the understanding of the meanings ascribed to the themes of the lived world. This is the type of understanding which focuses on meanings of the participants' words.
This is fundamental to this research. I am seeking meaning and thus utilising some aspects of hermeneutic research. Useful to identify words and phrases where meaning might be unclear then?	
Qualitative	It seems obvious to say that the qualitative interview seeks qualitative knowledge, but it is important to note that it is knowledge expressed in words, not in a quantifiable form. It is this kind of understanding which requires precision on the part of the transcription and interpretation.
Keep aware – but should be fine due to the nature of my questions?	

Descriptive	Although it could be argued that any answer to a spoken question is a description, the qualitative interview seeks to bring about detailed description from the participant ~ this should be as deeply descriptive as possible, allowing for a real understanding of the diversity and uniqueness of experience.

Important to remember this – and to consider the importance of further questioning. Managing silence will be key for me.

Specificity	A qualitative interview is interested in finding out about specific situations / attitudes / opinions. It is not about generality, but instead seeks to find the individual and specific truth for the person. General questioning can provide some interesting and thought-provoking answers, but it is usually used as a means into discussing specifics.

Specific situations / attitudes are exactly what I'm looking for – but it is such a 'common sense' topic that getting people to that depth will require careful handling.

Qualified Naïveté	This suggests that the interviewer needs to maintain an open mind with regard to whatever phenomena they are discussion, without predetermined categories or interpretations. Although this may appear as a simple and obvious aspect of the interview, achieving it is highly complex.

This is going to be tricky! I have strong opinions about professionalism and I will have to be careful not to situate myself into the interview or the processes. One to watch – and to make sure that I avoid. Consider: limit myself to ten words per iteration?

Focus	The qualitative interview is focused on a specific theme ~ although there may be a number of general questions relating to the theme which ensures that the focus is maintained. In this way the qualitative interview is usually not fully structured, but maintains its focus throughout.

Important to remember this in terms of maintaining the focus on the internal professionalism – consider –am I really researching professionalism or am I actually research professionality?

Ambiguity	It is important to remember that the qualitative interview accepts ambiguity as part of its process. The interviewer must determine whether the ambiguity in an answer is due to a lack of communication or is due to the participants' genuinely ambiguous feelings. The first needs to be clarified, while the latter is accepted as a meaningful description.

You seem ambiguous about that – is that ok as a prompt? I guess yes, especially in light of this consideration. The post-interview meeting will help with this, because if they were ambiguous due to a lack of communication, they have a chance to put it right.

Change	The action of being questioned can cause participants to change their ideas of what they are talking about. This can lead to change in the answers given, or an apparent inconsistency in the opinions voiced. It is important to remember that the process of being interviewed can cause reflection in the participants, causing them to change their voiced opinions.

And maybe subconsciously this is what I'm seeking? I don't know. Maybe I am seeking that for myself. But in the post-interview meeting, they will have read the transcript so that means that they can see those inconsistencies for themselves.

Sensitivity	This refers to the need of the interviewer to remain sensitive to the topic. This might mean an indepth knowledge of what is being asked about, namely the focus. There are issues here when the interview is being carried out for another or in order to ascertain opinions on something that one does not fully understand.
I'm hopeful that this isn't a problem – in fact, the opposite might be – because with the sharing of the three hermeneutic lenses, I should be able to remain sensitive to the topic. Also, I have taught on all the courses that my participants currently teach on (as in, A'levels etc – not necessarily the topics / subjects)	
Interpersonal Situation	A qualitative interview is a situation where knowledge is created and constructed. The interview is not a one-way street and is a reciprocal sharing of knowledge, opinions and beliefs. This means that the interview is an interpersonal situation between two people, whilst taking into account the power relationships which are probably apparent.
This is the aim of these interviews – I really don't want to have the situation of being 'in control' of this – it's a dialogue – I aim to avoid power relationships where possible, although I understand they are inevitable.	
Positive Experience	It is usual, and usually aimed for, that the qualitative interview is a positive experience for the participant. Certainly the interviewer should aim to ensure that the experience is just that as much as is possible. This can lead to issues when the time comes to terminate the interview.
Hopefully dealt with by the post-interview meeting?	

Adapted from Kvale (2007)

6.08 Appendix C: Consent Form (Draft & Final)

Exploring notions of professionalism:

Theory and Practice: DRAFT 01

Principal Investigator: Annie Ostapenko-Denton

Contact Details: <email address>

Work telephone number (w)

01872 262721 (h)

PURPOSE: You have been asked to participate in this study because you are a lecturer in the <name of> Department at <name of> College. The purpose of this research is to come to an agreed meaning with you regarding the term "professionalism" and how you understand this word in terms of your own theories and your practice.

PROCEDURE: You will take part in a number of interviews with myself. You will, in the first interview, be asked some general background information and then we will discuss the parts of your life which have shaped your understanding of the term "professionalism". The interviews, which will last for approximately one hour each, will be tape recorded, transcribed word for word and then analysed. No information that identifies you will be included on the written copy of your interview. Your name and the names of others you mention will be replaced by a pseudonym. Between each interview I will contact you with a copy of the interview write up, asking that you check it to ensure that I have accurately portrayed the events which took place. It is

possible that I will ask you to complete a questionnaire or to write about your experiences in some way between interviews also.

RISKS: You might experience some inconvenience due to the time involved in being interviewed. You may feel uncomfortable discussing this topic in your work place. If this happens, we can move to another setting at your request.

BENEFITS: Possible benefits for you include the value of reflecting on your experiences and coming to an agreed meaning of a term vital to your daily work. You may also wish to bring about changes in your own practice following the examination of this topic.

ALTERNATIVES: The alternative to participating in this research is to not be involved. If you do decide to be involved, you are free to withhold any information you prefer not to discuss and can refuse to answer any questions. You can participate in the first interview and refuse to talk at later times. At the end of each interview, I will ask again if you are happy for that information to be used.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The confidentiality of your interviews will be maintained at all times. Records of the interviews will be stored until the end of the study and then destroyed. In the unlikely event that you discuss harming yourself or others, confidentiality will be maintained only to the extent allowable by law.

COERCION AND WITHDRAWAL: You are under no obligation to take part in this study. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT: There is no cost to you from

participating in this research. This research affords no financial benefit to yourself.

NEW INFORMATION: Any new information that is developed during the course of research which may relate to your willingness to continue or discontinue participation in this study will be provided to you.

AGREEMENT: Your signature indicates that you have decided to participate having read the information provided above.

Signature of Participant: _____

Signature of Witness: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____

Date: _____

Exploring notions of professionalism:

Principal Investigator: Annie Ostapenko-Denton

Contact Details: annieo@trurocollege.ac.uk

01872 267009

01872 262721

PURPOSE: You have been asked to participate in this study because you are a lecturer in <name of > College. The purpose of this research is to come to an agreed meaning with you regarding the term “professionalism” and how you understand this word in terms of your own theories and your practice.

PROCEDURE: You will take part in an interview with myself. You will be asked some general background information and then we will discuss the parts of your life which have shaped your understanding of the term “professionalism”. The interview, which will last for approximately one hour, will be tape recorded, transcribed word for word and then analysed. No information that identifies you will be included on the written copy of your interview. Your name and the names of others you mention will be replaced by a pseudonym. After the interview I will contact you with a copy of the interview write up, asking that you check it to ensure that I have accurately portrayed the events which took place.

RISKS: You might experience some inconvenience due to the time involved in

being interviewed. You may feel uncomfortable discussing this topic in your work place. If this happens, we can move to another setting at your request.

BENEFITS: Possible benefits for you include the value of reflecting on your experiences and coming to an agreed meaning of a term vital to your daily work. You may also wish to bring about changes in your own practice following the examination of this topic. The interviews will also count as time spent on CPD.

ALTERNATIVES: The alternative to participating in this research is to not be involved. If you do decide to be involved, you are free to withhold any information you prefer not to discuss and can refuse to answer any questions. At the end of the interview, I will ask again if you are happy for that information to be used.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The confidentiality of your interview will be maintained at all times. Records of the interview will be stored until the end of the study and then destroyed. In the unlikely event that you discuss harming yourself or others, confidentiality will be maintained only to the extent allowable by law.

COERCION AND WITHDRAWAL: You are under no obligation to take part in this study. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT: There is no cost to you from participating in this research. This research affords no financial benefit to yourself.

Conclusion

NEW INFORMATION: Any new information that is developed during the course of research which may relate to your willingness to continue or discontinue participation in this study will be provided to you.

AGREEMENT: Your signature indicates that you have decided to participate having read the information provided above.

Signature of Participant: _____

Signature of Witness: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____

Date: _____

6.09 Appendix D: Initial Proposal

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER Graduate School

Research Proposal:

Digging deep for clues to higher ground:

An investigation into changing notions of professionalism in FE lecturers.

Annie Ostapenko-Denton

Submitted: 21st May 2008.

Section 1: Area of Study:

The area of study for this piece of research is individual's notions of professionalism, and how those notions of professionalism have changed over a specific period of time.

I believe that the concept of professionalism is a discourse; an idea or concept that is commonly held or widely discussed but having little or no basis in wider reality. Therefore, I want to look at the individual "realities" of each professional, and consider not only their day to day professional practice but also how their notions of professionalism influence their wider lives.

Section 2: Focus:

The focus for this research is looking specifically at how notions of professionalism have changed in FE over a course of time (probably in the last 20 years, but that depends on availability of participants).

I want to focus on the idea of professionalism and how it affects practice ~ how it changes self-image and builds on daily routine etc. I want to ask people to consider “critical incidents” or “specific instances” where they look at times in their lives (either personally or professionally) which challenged their notions of professionalism, or strengthened them. I currently label these moments “pegs”. Initially, I visualised them as like the pins that one would stick into the map denoting an individuals professional journey – but I think they are more than pins stuck in, they are what one would hang things on for the future – so in my mind I have developed the metaphor and now see them rather as coat pegs. The image of that for me is like a line of coat pegs in a child’s school. The pegs are all there, but rather than being filled with a variety of different coats, those pegs are used to drape a long and multi-coloured ribbon around – sometimes there’s a lot of ribbon between two pegs, sometimes not much at all. If the frame of the coat stand is a metaphor for time, then the pegs would certainly not be at equidistant points, but the ribbon, (symbolising here notions of professionalism) winds around them all. The imagery is clumsy, but very clear in my minds eye!

I would like to take each of these “pegs” and explore it with the participants ~ in in-depth interviews consider what their memory of those ‘pegs’ are and really explore how each one changed their notions of professionalism. At the same time, I’d like to embed each in a historical context if at all possible, and have the historical framework like the pieces of multi-coloured laminated cards above each “peg”, denoting the name of the child it belongs to.

I know that this imagery is clumsy and doesn’t quite work yet, but it’s the result of a lot of reflection on what I’m trying to find out ~ I will undoubtedly refine this metaphor with time, but at the moment that’s the best I can do!

So, the initial interview would be to look at the participants notions of professionalism in the current moment, and then to take them back along their

own journey, identifying the “pegs” that they have hung their notions on and exploring each one. Later interviews could then consider the relevance and importance of each peg, going into more and more detail of the participants’ ideas of professionalism and looking at a shared understanding of their journey.

I imagine that there will be a number of wider issues which will come out here, and I want to explore the participants wider lives in relation to their professional identities ~ since FE is generally considered to have a changing and incoherent concept of professionalism, if it has one at all, it would be interesting to know what aspects of the participants life shapes their notions.

Section 3: Research Question:

It horrifies the psychologist in me that I can not easily identify one particular question here – I want to find out how, if at all, individuals’ notions of professionalism have changed over time and how that affects their current practice both in terms of what they do in the classroom and their wider lives. So the research questions are:

How have the participants notions of professionalism changed over time?

What particular incidents seem to be important to the participants in terms of changing their notions of professionalism (i.e.: what are their pegs?)

What relevance / significance does this have to the participants with regards to their wider lives? (social / professional / academic / self-image / gender etc)

What agreed shared meaning of professionalism can I come to with the participants? Is it different with each one? If so, how?

Section 4: Boundaries:

I have considered the following as the main boundaries to this work:

4.1 Location:

This research will be carried out in my own institution, for reasons of practicality. This will mean that it is highly specific. I think that this research is something that could have wider implications, but since I want to aim for depth here rather than breadth, and considering the word limitation to the thesis document itself, I thought that this made the most sense. This, of course, loses all sorts of depth, and does not consider the changing notions of professionalism in someone who is working, for example, in a FE college in an inner city area. I am more than happy to change this, and indeed this is one of the first issues I wish to explore with my supervisor, as I do have access to colleagues around the UK. However, as it stands it is specific to my own institution.

4.2 Scope:

This research is specific to FE ~ and the profession of teaching is something that is far, far wider than that. I am not looking here at teachers in compulsory education, nor at University lecturers, but rather looking specifically at FE lecturers. This is a purposeful decision on my part as it allows me to focus in on a group that I know, that I hope I understand and that I can bring myself to. Whilst I could bring my own experiences to this research were I to carry it out with school teachers as the participants, I feel that the “gap analysis” of their jobs and mine might well overtake the search for shared meaning.

4.3 Participants:

The notion of professional lecturers leaves out a whole variety of people who could look at this. There would be another thesis in the changing perceptions of students to what professionalism in teaching is. Certainly, the perceptions of my participants may well vary significantly to the perceptions of their line managers. But I can not look at all aspects of this ~ were I able to compare two groups, in actuality it would be the perceptions of students with the perceptions of staff. But for the purposes of this research, I feel that it is best constrained by looking at one aspect deeply, and so I will consider the viewpoints of lecturers. The perceptions of students may be the remit of a second Doctorate!

Section 5: Significance:

This research adds to a wider body of knowledge which has looked at notions of professionalism. However, although it is hinged on a broad theoretical base, I want it to be significant to the participants first and foremost. Rather than looking to have a broad understanding, I want to focus on depth of knowledge here, and depth of meaning. So in a broad sense, the significance is limited.

However, I think that there is a likelihood that it will be generalisable to a small degree, as the people I interview have been in FE for a varying amount of time and so are likely to have had a variety of experiences which may well be quite diverse. However, this is something that I will not be able to tell until the research is well underway. I am not seeking to have a piece of research which is generalisable to all, but rather which focuses on individuals and their experiences. My perception is that notions of professionalism and professional identities have been eroded in FE over the course of the last 20 years and I would like to see whether that perception is true simply for myself, or for my colleagues also.

Section 6: Theoretical Basis:

(Extract borrowed heavily from Assignments 3 and 5, with changes appropriate to my growing understanding of the topic)

The specific and highly flexible nature of FE has led to marginalisation within the sector. The FE lecturer of today is a professional who is marginal to the hierarchy of professionals, not fitting neatly into categorisation, but also exists in a vacuum, marginal from their colleagues and lacking a unifying culture. The contemporary FE lecturer must strive for professionalism which requires flexible and highly creative responses to de-professionalisation from external and institutional factors as well as fighting the threat of re-professionalizing as an administrator or bureaucrat (Colley et al 2007 p. 176). It is for this reason that I want to focus specifically on FE, rather than on teaching as a whole.

As a discourse, as a symbol, “profession” does not describe any one particular occupation but rather represents a way of thinking about a group of occupations perceived in a certain way. The term professionalism, then, is the behaviour of a group of people within these occupations, when they are behaving in a way that is appropriate to their occupation (Robson et al 2004 p 184). My interest here is whether lecturing staff feel that they identify themselves in terms of being “a lecturer” or whether they sub-categorise further and have different rules for professionalism and professional behaviour determined according to those sub-categories rather than their more generic occupational identity. I am also interested in the idea of people behaving in a way that is “appropriate to their occupation” (ibid). This is surely the crux of the matter in many ways ~ how different groups of lecturing staff define their occupation to themselves, and whether that definition has changed over time.

The idea of professionalism is one which is discussed in many texts on Further and Higher Education and seems to be some sort of skill which, once achieved, can not be lost (Colley et al 2007 p173). Discussion with trainee FE lecturers in a piece of research on the construction of professional identity has led to

identification of a lack of professional identity amongst FE lecturing staff (Bathmaker and Avis 2005). This seems to suggest that professionalism is context-specific and that in the field of FE there is difficulty in understanding exactly what it means to be professional (ibid).

Hall and Schulz (2003 p372) cite Goodson and Hargreaves as suggesting seven principles for defining the post-modern professional. Hall and Schulz use these seven principles as their own framework for discussing teacher professionalism. So far, I have been unable to get a copy of the original work, but it is on order. However, as far as I can ascertain with reading about it rather than reading it, I plan on using these seven principles as a focus for the interviews, hopefully as an aid for the participants to help them identify their own understandings. The reasons for this are that it is the one definition of professionalism that I have found that best fits my own beliefs, values, epistemology and ontology regarding what it is to be a professional and also because it is sufficiently detailed to allow analysis and detailed discussion.

Section 7: Methodologies

The search for methodologies has been a bit of a long road for me in the preparation for this proposal. As far as I can I aim to not allow myself to be "stuck" in the methodologies and paradigms of my academic background. After a long and winding road, I feel that this research falls into an "almost-hermeneutic" framework. I seem to be searching for a shared meaning of something that I can not separate myself from and so I feel that I must put myself completely in the research with the participants. My understanding of hermeneutics is still very limited, but I am becoming more sure that it is the way forward for me and this research. Within that, there will be aspects of historical research (identifying the "name tags" above each "peg" and placing it in a historical context) and ethnographic research.

With regard to my individual concepts, the article which made it all “fall into place” for me was “Travelling Beyond Dangerous Private and Universal Discourses: Radioactivity of Radical Hermeneutics and Objectivism in Educational Research” by Mustafa Yunus Eryaman ~ this article, published in 2006, gave me some level of understanding of radical hermeneutics, which the author criticises throughout. Although this article focuses on the manner in which we interpret texts, I feel a deep resonance with the idea that we can move beyond interpreting and into action.

In this particular piece of research, my leaning is towards working within the critical paradigm as I feel that my aim is, in its simplest form, to achieve some level of praxis regarding my status as a professional. I do not wish to merely interpret the situation, but wish to engage in action to change the situation as it stands, as well as working with my participants to aid their self-reflection and change (should they wish it). My instinct is that this research would begin in an interpretive framework, identifying and interpreting the social realities around me and would conclude being in a more critical paradigm as the search for praxis. As there are no differences in the actual methods used within the interpretive and critical paradigms, this is not a contradiction as I see it (McCormack and Titchen**Error! Bookmark not defined.** 2006 p259). So when I consider what paradigm I wish to work under in this research, the only conclusion that I can come to is that it falls into both interpretive and critical paradigms, although the focus is likely to be a journey from one to the other, rather than both at any one time.

So, in summary, this research will begin with an interpretive focus, using the seven principles outlined by Goodson and Hargreaves as a focus for interpreting and identifying the levels of professionalism felt by a group of lecturers, in their current situation and historically. As that initial interpretation develops, I plan on moving to a more critical paradigm where I consider how the

lecturers in question manage to construct their own notions of professionalism when faced with issues that they have identified.

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Section 8: Methods

The methods of data collection used will be primarily interviews. I am intending on carrying out a number of detailed and in-depth interviews with a relatively small number of participants. I envisage carrying out at least four interviews with each person, allowing me to gain real insight into our shared exploration of the topic itself.

I have also considered focus groups as a possibility, here, which would add another dimension. These could be a chance to identify commonality and difference in a disparate group ~ and to find out if there **is** a difference in notions of professionalism over time.

Finally, I considered constructing a questionnaire which I would ask the participants to fill in between interviews. I do not envision this as being overly long, but I just wanted to give them the chance to formalise their thoughts and feelings in the aftermath of the interview. If this did not seem worthwhile upon attempted construction, perhaps asking participants to write a reflection on a specific topic would be more beneficial.

However, I am aware that this is probably too much data for the word length, and so I will need to refine this as the research itself becomes more “real”.

Section 9: Ethics

Ethical issues in this research will be many and varied. I plan to use the BERA Ethical Guidelines as my guide for ethical issues. In relation to that, I have considered the following as immediately needing to be addressed:

9.1 Voluntary, Informed Consent:

I will need to make sure that I am very clear with participants from the outset about what it is that they will be asked to do, and the time commitment that they are undertaking. I will prepare a 'consent form' which both the participants and I sign and keep copies of showing our shared understanding. This form will show that there is no **deception** involved (clearly laying out the research question) and reminding participants of their **right to withdraw**. Also, this form will identify the limits of their anonymity and point out my legal and moral obligation to disclose criminal activity, etc.

9.2 Confidentiality & Privacy:

The research participants are such that they are likely to be easily identified in some ways. If I carry this out in my own institution then anyone working there can probably identify the participants relatively easily. For example, there is only one male working in the Health & Social Care department.

I can really only overcome this aspect by being clear with my participants and doing everything I can to ensure that their identities are kept as confidential as possible. Of course, that is assuming that they wish to be kept anonymous ~ in the 'consent form' I will ensure that they are given the option of being explicitly named. I will also reiterate the right to anonymity to all participants when the research is finished, allowing them to change their mind and either have their identities made explicit or anonymised.

Of course, throughout the research I will ensure that pseudonyms are used and I will not directly name the institution in which I work, referring to it as a “college of FE in the South West”.

Data collected will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet to which I have the key. This will be kept at my home.

Section 10: Potential Problems.

There are a number of potential problems as I see it. I will discuss here the three main issues:

10.1 Bringing myself to the research.

Although I want to do this, I want to ensure that I reach a shared meaning of professionalism and a shared understanding of how their ideas of professionalism have changed over time; I am concerned that I might “over egg the pudding” so to speak. I think that the notion of bringing myself to the research to be something that I will need to keep an eye on as it is certainly something that will challenge me.

10.2 Access to Data:

This is going to be less problematic for me than for many of my peers, I am sure, but nonetheless there are issues here. I am hoping to carry out this research in my institution. There is, of course, a possibility that the principal will not allow me to do that, although I have already gained his consent “in principle”.

Also, there are potential political issues within this work as, if my principal agrees to me carrying out the research, I will need to approach a number of DTLs (deputy team leader) to introduce myself and point out what I am doing (my principal is very keen on everyone being aware of things like this). Since my DTL is an ex-student on the course there may be issues, there. However, should that arise I will simply work within other departments in the college. I am not planning on using any DTLs as participants, as they are management rather than “lecturers on the ground”.

The research that I am doing is going to ask a lot of my participants. I am hoping that I will get enough people willing to undertake it. I have already secured acceptance from three colleagues, in principle. However, if I do not have enough data, then I need to consider branching out. I am still, at this stage, unsure of whether I should carry out this research solely in my own institution or in institutions across the country ~ both options have positive and negative points. As this idea resolves itself, I will look more at access to data.

10.3 Interview Techniques

I have never carried out interviews in such an in depth manner as I plan to here. I know that the counselling training that I have done will stand me in good stead, but if I am unable to reach the depth of skill that I need I will need to revisit my entire thesis. However, I can not really do much about that except practice my skills and reflect carefully on each of the interviews I do.

If I find that I am not getting the depth of data that I need, I will need to seriously consider the proposal and if/how it can be “salvaged” at that point.

6.10 Appendix E: Analysis of Interviews

Interview questions	Discretionary Judgement	Moral & Social Purpose	Collaborative Cultures	Occupational Heteronomy	Self Directed CPD	Commitment to Care	High Task Complexity
Definition of professionalism							
Events shaping professionalism	Linked. 5/8 ppts	Linked. 5/8 ppts	Not Linked.	Not linked. Participants tended to talk about autonomy, rather than heteronomy. Not discussed with regard to professionalism of self or others. Mentioned as an aspect of political tensions, but alluded to rather than explicitly so.	Two aspects not linked in initial interviews.	Linked. 4/8 ppts	Not linked
What professionalism is not	Not Linked.	Linked. 8/8 ppts	Linked. 7/8 ppts			Linked. 4/8 ppts	
Most professional person met	Linked. 4/8 ppts	Linked. 3/8 ppts	Linked. 5/8 ppts			Linked. 6/8 ppts	
Most unprofessional person met	Not Linked.	Linked. 8/8 ppts	Not Linked.			Linked. 7/8 ppts	
Professional identity	Linked. 8/8 ppts	Linked. 6/8 ppts				Linked. 5/8 ppts	Linked. 1/8 ppts
Professional values	Linked. 2/8 ppts	Linked. 4/8 ppts				Linked. 5/8 ppts	Not Linked.
Tensions on professionalism	Linked. 8/8 ppts	Not Linked.	Linked. 3/8 ppts			Linked. 6/8 ppts	Linked. 4/8 ppts

6.11 Appendix F: Exemplar Interview Transcript

Interview Transcript ~ **First Draft**

Time: 28th March 2009.

Place: My living room.

Key: Interviewee speaking Interviewer Speaking

Emphasis

... = pause, short. (p) = pause, long.

Ok. It's 25 to 4 on the 28th March and we're in my living room. That may make a difference. Firstly, thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. What I'd like to do is talk to you about the word "professionalism" and what you understand by it. So, can I just ask you to try and sum up what you understand professionalism to mean? (p) start with an easy one!	
To me personally?	
Yeah	
....professionalism is about meeting the shared objectives and values of a group of people who have uhhh through some process or another uhhhh achieved skills within an activity. So therefore someone who is a professional is someone who has those skills and who carries them out to the best of their ability within a community of people.	
Ok... that's a very concise and well thought out definition. Thank you very much. Umm.. within your... your role as an educator, can you be more specific about what professionalism means to you as a FE lecturer and a HE lecturer . Cos that's your role, isn't it? You're both.	
Yeah. Well, I teach HE in FE	
Yeah.	

Ummm... well there's certain basic.. ummm.. requirements of any teacher... umm.. I suppose one is to uhhh not abuse your students (chuckles) ummm.. to not seduce them, to not beat them up, to not punish them and to recognise that they're human beings who have as much right to be on this planet as you do. Ummm.. I'm not sure that all members of the profession actually (chuckles) subscribe to all of those rules, but certainly that's important. So, in other words you **have** a legal and moral duty of care ummm.. and I think, given a conflict between those two I would put the moral one as being the more important than the legal	
Ok	
Basically, you have to do what you think is best for the people that you're working with, the students. Another requirement is obviously that you know about what it is you're supposed to be helping your students to learn, so you need an .... an expertise in your subject, a subject knowledge, whatever you want to call it. Umm. At the same time your job is actually one of (p) well, it's two things. One, it's communicating what you know in a way that's helpful to the students and the other its actually structuring that process in such a way that **they** actually do some learning (p) ahh... and since I teach... education .. uhhh.. I've come to understand that learning is about what ...what the **learner** does, it's not about what the teacher does. The learner will learn if the learner attempts to learn. Your job is to create a structure within which they can do that more efficiently and more effectively.	
Ok. So... when you started your career as a teacher	
Hmmmm	
Was that the way you thought... thought of professionalism then?	
(p) Uhhh.. no I was actually quite sceptical of some of that moralistic stuff (chuckles). Ummm I saw it as a job ummm one that I thought	

would interest me. I was probably very selfish, it was probably I was thinking about **me**, I was thinking about it would be quite enjoyable to do that umm it would be a way of earning a living, I didn't know what else I wanted to do, I didn't think I had any talent for anything in particular so I didn't know what to do so... I started teaching. I actually started teaching a subject that I didn't set out to teach. Ummmm	
What was that?	
I'd set out to be a Sociology teacher, uhhh spent 25 years teaching Geography and Environmental Science. (p) Uhhhmm but then that's typical of Further Education. (p) So, to backtrack I really didn't know what I wanted to do after my degree so I did a PGCE and at the end of that I thought "I really ought to be looking for a teaching job" and the one I ended up getting was teaching Georgraphy...uhh.. at around about the same time I started to become very interested in the environmental issues and so what I was teaching very much also captured my interests as a person and so I was able to make my life outside of ...work uhhh relevant and meaningful to what I was doing inside and obviously the other way around – that what I was doing as a teacher was valuable to me because of what I felt I was doing as a human being outside of work.	
So.. to go back to something you said earlier, you just said umm that's fairly typical of FE, now you've worked in FE for quite a while and you've worked in HE	
38.. 38 years in FE	
38 years in FE? How does ... no, that's leading.. **does** the context of FE make the job, particularly, different to, for example, the content of.. sorry, context of a sixth form of a school. How is the.. how do you see the context as being important?	
(p) (sighs, thinking) I went into Further Education because I'd been a grammar school boy ummm but I knew a lot of people in my area who	

hadn't gone to grammar school and hadn't had the opportunities that I had and the 6th form and University were huge eye openers to me as a person and I wanted to create those opportunities uhhh I was living in an area with selective education, in fact it still has selective education (p) and I wanted to create something that was more comprehensive more all encompassing and the only place that there was a sixth form for those other students from secondary modern schools was in the College.. umm.. and... so that's why I went into the College. In terms of the difference in the context I think that.. that's hugely variable, I mean Further Education isn't a single area. Uhhh. There are some Colleges which are just sixth form colleges, there are other Colleges, the one I currently work in, which is a huge sixth form College with a fairly large Further Education College bolted on to the side of it and.. umm... and so you've got at one end, you've got students doing International Baccalaureat and at the other end you've got umm craft level construction and hairdressing uhh you've got Foundation Degrees and Degree courses and even Masters Level work and on the other end you've got Level 1 literacy and numeracy for students who got grade "G" at GCSE at school.	
Do you think that that massive variety that you're talking about – does that impact on (p) what a notion, what somebody's notion of professionalism is do you think there can be...	
Hmmm (eagerly) yeah. Yeah. But also I mean I'm aware from my own job and my own role that.. that there's ummm there's research evidence that some staff in colleges see themselves as (p) carpenters who happen to teach, other people see themselves as (p) social work trainers who **used** to have a career in social work so for some people their current definition of themselves as a professional is as a teacher, for other people it's as a vocational expert who happens to be teaching	

or training. Ummmmm and I would probably fall into the group that sees myself ...primarily... **now**... as a teacher.	
Primarily **now?**	
Yeah (eagerly)	
Previously would you have...	
Yeah, yeah... because previously, previously when I taught geography and environmental science I saw myself primarily as an active environmentalist who happened to pay the rent by teaching.	
Right (p) Had that...has that transition changed your idea of what it means to be a teacher, your idea of what professionalism is?	
Oh yes, but .. I mean, yes absolutely, but also my role as a teacher trainer has changed my.. my view of education totally.	
So if you had to pick one thing that had changed your view of education, had ... had shaped your view of professionalism, what would it be?	
The first time I was made redundant	
Right.. can you tell me about that? And how it changed your view of professionalism	
Umm.. I moved from.. gradually.. from teaching into low level management ...and.. umm.. my college went through a restructuring ahh.. and it had... it decided at that point that it had something like 56 middle managers and it decided to make all 56 redundant and reapply for their jobs and it created 22 new jobs... and I didn't get one of them... umm.. obviously ... obviously that was personally quite a... (p).. that was quite a challenging situation to go through.. umm.. what was worse was that.. umm.. for various reasons I was being offered jobs back as a teacher... umm.. with people that I knew I couldn't work with. ... and rather than take that teaching role.. umm.. I asked if I could be redeployed into a teacher training role. It was something I'd been	

interested in but didn't really know very much about.. and.. umm..uhh.. the College ultimately agreed to .. umm consider me for the teacher training role .. the requirement for which was that I did a Masters' level qualification. Which the College paid for, so I was redeployed from a managerial role teaching my subject into teacher training where my role was one of ummm... both doing a teach..doing the teacher training but also developing new courses umm and working with things like HE validation and that sort of thing. Uhh.. and doing a Masters' and the combination of my new role and the Masters totally changed my way of seeing my subject... or my..my... my professionalism, rather.	
Ok. So how did it change it? What.. What did it change it from and to?	
Wow. Well, I think that for the first time ever umm and I ... remember by this time I'd been teaching for about 25, 26 years	
Ok	
The first time ever uhhh I started to think about the process of teaching, before then I'd just done it. The subject was there and I tried various ways to do it. Umm.. I'd started off as a very didactic teacher.. but... after about 10 or 12 years I got very bored with that (p) and I'd latched on to a very very good syllabus which was very creative, very... involving for the students it was very.. applied rather than pure geography if you like, it was a lot of environmental... work in it and I found that really really stimulating, really exciting. And my my..my way of teaching changed but I'd never really thought about **how** I teach.. but once you get into teacher training when you absolutely have to focus on going and observing.. other people teaching and trying to identify what they're doing well and what they could be doing better...uhhh... and so the process of actually sitting in classrooms, in effect **judging** other people's teaching skills uhhh is by far the best way of teaching you how to be a teacher that there can possibly be	

(p)and so it just.. it just altered totally the way I teach..my attitude to what learning is...umm..and to what my role in the classroom is.	
That's really interesting. You're talking about "the classroom". Is that where professionalism is situated for you? Is that where your professional identity is situation or or .. or is it... wider than that?	
(p) I think most teachers would probably say that that is where their professional identity is located ... uhh I preface that .. what I'm going to say by another comment and that is after I'd been in .. college for about (p) 8 or 9 years I was elected as a staff governor .. and.. when I eventually left my last college off and on I'd been an umm.. a member of the governing body for 18 years. (p) So I've also been intimately involved in ...seeing... the process of management of education colleges both before and after incorporation (p) Outside of college I've also been very involved in what one could.. what..what one could call with a small p political activity..ummm.. and so I was very engaged with how decisions are made, how you influence decisions and the political forces that underlie them. So...I'm doing two things at the same time... umm.. I'm... I'm **teaching**, I'm teaching in the classroom but I'm also, through my own personal... uhh...development... very able to critique what is going on in management and having had, for a period of about six or seven years, uhh a low level management role I've also seen how that management works (p) and subsequently I did my Masters it eventually turned into a Masters in Educational Management which of course is rather ironic because I'd just ceased to be a manager.	
Ok.	
I've subsequently taught educational management to third year undergraduates!	
I was going ask you that! So, did you use the educational management experience?	

Yes, I taught it on the BA which was the follow on from the teacher training course	
Ok (p) and... do you think that your experience of having been made redundant and then moving on to.. to teacher training in that way. It's.. it's obviously something that's stayed with you and changed your perception. Would you go back to management now?	
(p) Uhh.. in a sense I'm back on the.. the low management role of management. My.. my official title is...umm... is manager (chuckles) I won't give you the full title..umm... and so yes, I do manage, although it's very interesting I got the job as manager uhh went along to..uhh.. my first day at work to meet my line manager said 'well, umm, ok so umm how many staff do I manage?' uhh... and she said 'none'	
Right.. ok	
In fact, I sort of manage uhhh... two members of staff umm... but even the administrator is actually managed by another administrator not by me (p)	
So how.. how is that job... how do **you** see that job? Do you see your job as management?	
Umm	
Titles notwithstanding	
I see my job as administration... I think my manager would like me to have management skills but I also don't think my manager would actually...want to devolve those responsibilities on to me. I don't think she could... could uh..ummm devolve those responsibilities on to me. I don't think the hierarchical structure of my current college would allow that to happen	

I see. Ok. When.. to go back to what you are doing in the classroom now, when you're there with your students and you're teaching them to think about what it is to be teachers. DO you ever discuss professional identity with them?	
Yeah. But that's because its part of my job. The.. the first unit we have to teach is the "Role of the Teacher" and it's about the definitions of... of professionalism and so I.. I look at the professional code of conduct uhh set up by the professional body uhhh look at the legal responsibilities ummm.. but also, all teacher training is based on this notion of reflective practice and therefore that that... the key thing with a professional is the ability to umm evaluate their own performance and to identify ways in which they can improve. So I see my job as being twofold ~ one is to help to give the trainee teachers the skills to do that ehh but the second is also to give them, where it's necessary, help to motivate them to see that that is the role. Because a lot of people come into teaching say "I can teach, I can train I know this subject I don't need to reflect on what I'm doing, I don't need to think about how I could be better" My students are all asking "why do I need to be better" So it's both about creating a degree of uncertainty, and I actually think that that uncertainty if you like that self doubt and that self policing which is implicit in the notion of a professional and obviously through researching the literature, which I've had to do both as part of my job and as part of my own study uhh I'm very aware that that underlies the thinking of uhh I suppose it goes back to to Donald Schon and people like that and Chris Eygeris?(SP) but actually.. it actually underlies the whole ... the whole basis of what is professionalism.	
Ok so.. for you then in a .. in a sort of nutshell professionalism is about the ability to reflect effectively and to make changes based on that reflection? Is that what you're saying.	

It starts.. no.. no it goes back to what I said before. It starts off by being competent at what you're doing	
Yes	
Or, for.. actually, no, I don't like the word competent. (p) being capable...in what you do both in terms of.. understanding your.. area of expertise and also being able to communicate it so it's about subject knowledge, it's about communication skills (p)...uhh and it's also about umm that underlying constant push to do better.	
Ok. The underlying and constant push to do better, coming from within oneself.. the reflection.. the self policing	
<agreeing noises> Yeah.	
How is that helped.. or hindered.. or not effected at all... how does the management structure and the management practices put onto teachers how how is that.. underlying push you talked about influenced by the management of teachers as you see it now	
(p) I think its both heightened and diverted. It's heightened in that on top of all you own self doubts and self pressures and one of the things I notice about teachers is the great extent to which **good** teachers doubt themselves. Far more than bad teachers...uhhh so there's almost an inverse relationship between one's ability to teach and one's doubt about one's own ability to teach. If you build on that.. it's almost a guilt complex.. if you build upon that guilt complex you could be doing better via huge external pressures uhhh you will marginally increase the effort that people make to do better. But you will also far more increase the stresses on people, the strain on people by... from the systems to meet all the targets.. the .. criteria and all that sort of thing. But also it diverts it because.. and you know.. again, I know that this is not just me this is common throughout the.. throughout the profession.	

It diverts the attention of that drive to improve from the students that we're working with onto the system that we're working within. Umm and so it's also.. it's also.. it's about pass rates, not about whether you're doing the best for each and every student in the group. It's .. you know.. it's it's it's the thing that that everybody points out, you know we have statistical failures of students who leave college and these are students who came to college with no confidence, no communication ability, no self belief and who leave college half way through because they now know what they want to do. They go out and they get a job. Now I think that helping them to go out and get a job is a success, but statistically it's a failure. That's what I mean by diverting us from what we should be doing.	
Okay. So do you feel that teacher training, specifically initially teacher education prepares new teachers for that that real push-me-pull-you that you're describing there.. of the "I want to reflect and self police" and then you've got the pressures from management that enhance that and also divert it? Do you think we prepare teachers for that?	
I'm not umm in a way the current system of teacher training does that because the .. the structure, the enforced structure of the qualification which is enforced by government in effect, or enforced by it's bodies that structure forces trainees to engage with all of these diversionary elements ummm and constantly is expecting them to complete bits of pointless paperwork to uhh carry out activities that are not necessarily directly relevant to what they're doing. So all of that prepares them anyway, so if they're going to get through the course they're going to understand all of the all of the negatives. Also, however.. uhh... anybody who's surviving in teacher training is almost always commited to the profession, committed to what I would regard as the right aims of the profession, which is to enable people to work really effectively for the good of their learners and so I think I think that.. that what drives teacher trainers is that desire to turn out good teachers despite the system rather than because of it.	

Subversion from the chalkface?	
Uhh.. I suppose... well I've had a career in education as a subversive.. uhh.. virtually the first year that I was in teaching ummm after about uhhh the first year I was asked to take up some environmental studies and I found an article that said "Environmental Studies As A Subversive Activity" and I pinned it on the staff room wall and I haven't looked back since.	
So... when you're with you students and you're..you're sitting there making a judgement about the students.. umm.. ability to teach ~ you're sitting in their classroom. How do you (p) or do you make judgements about their professionalism	
(p) Yes, I think you do umm for a start there's how they treat the students (P) ummm... and it's... it's difficult to teach because you're.. you actually have to learn to relax in a very stressful situation and nevertheless not lose one jot of control about what's going on.(p) ummm.. the nearest thing that I can come to, which is a form of acting and you take on this role of the teacher and you have to be totally believable and totally natural in that role. At the same time you have to be absolutely clear and certain what it is you want to do, what everybody else in the room is doing and why they're doing it and how you're going to react effectively to what they're doing. For example, if somebody is ignoring you, looking at a telephone and texting, whatever, is it appropriate to ummm draw their attention to the fact that you know? Is it appropriate to go over and quietly tell them to put it away and in certain circumstances different responses are appropriate uhh if you know that their mum's in hospital and they're waiting for information about her and how her operation's gone you obviously don't go over the top and shout at them or whatever so you're constantly having to make judgements and when I'm observing I'm looking for the ability to make those judgements, to respond to (p)	

both the collective atmosphere of the class and the individual umm... signals mostly non-verbal, coming off everybody else. So are you watching how many of the students have got their arms crossed? Looking at them. Cos if most of the students have got their arms crossed their bored as hell and you really ought to be doing something else. So you watch what they're doing uhh.. you watch the tone of voice – is it a warm human tone of voice? Or is it a.. an impersonal delivering or controlling tone of voice? Umm and are they able to switch between the two because you have to switch between the two sometimes in order to keep in control of what's going on. So you watch all of those signals, so yes I'm looking for professionalism both in behaviour and obviously also in terms of their treatment of other people.	
And do the students. Do your students know the... criteria that you're judging them on? In that regard, in regard to professionalism?	
Yes although umm.. as with all learning it takes them a while to actually really get to grips with it umm because we have a nice set of standards which we issue them with on Day 1 which has gone up now, from about 120 to about 180 uhh whereas in school teaching the number of standards has gone down uhhh as they progressively realise that the more standards you have the less likely you are to hit them all.	
Are these the LLUK standards?	
These are the LLUK standards.. yeah I mean.. they.. they are repetitive, they're badly written, they're banal uhhh.. yes, they're all about relevant things but they are.. they are an appaling set of standards.. uhh..my main mission before I leave the profession would be to umm.. sink the whole ship that contains those standards uhh and hopefully never find any trace of them at the bottom. So no, I think you really need to have a view of yourself about what what the job is.. what the profession is and what you're trying to get out of that... and I know	

that the colleagues I work with they're probably.. even more vocal about it than me, they'll turn around and say "well, this job used to be about turning out good teachers, now it's about turning out people who can tick boxes"	
And do you feel that that's true?	
Yes, except that ummm... having worked a long time in Further Education I know that 20 years ago people were being employed and weren't even being trained at all, so even though we might have good training with a bad set of standards, ummm 20 years ago most.. many of the staff were not getting trained and we had no standards. So we have actually moved forwards ummm but not as.. as well as as like, you know, as well as we'd like to think. But again, I.. I'm a political person so I tend to see this in context so I don't see this as being isolated within education uhhh I think it's indicative of of the whole political system of this country for the last 20 years.	
Ok	
Or more...25 years	
Do you think that.. I mean, absolutely literature suggests that Further Education is very much "riding the waves" of the politicial.. uhh.. the political ocean. Do you think that's true?	
(p) No. I think we're the semi-submersible	
Both laugh	
No.. I mean we are still, despite the rhetoric we are still the forgotten sector umm.. you know I.. I tell this as part of my speel to the students, I say 'look, you know, did you realise that most A'levels are not taught in schools? Did you realise that most A'levels are taught in Further Education? Did you realise that most people in Further Education are not doing A'levels? And did you realise that there is now uhh	

something like 30% of all Higher Education now taught in Colleges and not in Universities? So we're doing a significant proportion of the A'levels, a significant proportion of the Higher Education and all of the Further Education... the Learning and Skills Council.. is the largest single publically funded body in the whole of Western Europe with a turnover which has doubled in the last 8 years and is now in the order of £17 billion each year. It's this huge body and umm at the same time the school system is failing it's failing students and FE is expected to pick it up. 50% of the people leaving schools don't have adequate skills in English and Maths, and yet teachers in FE are expected to turn those skills round even though they are hairdressers, plumbers, builders or (p) history teachers or whatever.. you know, social work trainers. They're supposed to turn this round and it...it.. it's just completely barmy. We nevertheless succeed with the vast majority of students who come to us. We send them out uhhh better people, better educated, better trained than when they came in and most of them get jobs and most of them , if asked in a five years time, where they benefitted most in their education will say Further Education. Having been successful at dealing with the people who effectively have failed in schools uhh we've now introduced a system to try and give some parity to those vocational qualifications through the 14 – 19 diploma's and the first act of the current government was to take the control of those 14 – 19 diplomas and put them in the school sector, which doesn't even teach them.	
So.. there's a frustration there for you, obviously	
It's semi-submersible and sinking.	
Yeah	
(chuckles) The sub is taking in water.	
At a high rate of knots?	

(p) It's a... uhhh.. it's a very. I can't see how ..how the sector's going to survive the next ten years. Uhhh 50% of the workforce are due to retire in the next five years uhh I can't see many of the people coming in... sticking with the regime of overwork (p) re..relatively poor pay – compared to what other people receive I don't think it's poor pay but it's.. it's poor pay compared to what you can get outside. The working conditions are worse than you would get in most other sectors, possibly social work is worse uhh and the prison system. Apart from that, I think this sector is the worse... and ummm... most people are disaffected. And most people are not working as well as they could do because of all the diversion into the irrelevant things that we do.	
Do you think that you experience that sort of disaffection?	
I've seen it in my colleagues. I've seen it in people who've left. Very good teachers, very committed people who've just given up. I've seen it in newly trained people, people who've done a year of the post graduate course I teach who, at the end of that year, having done six hours a week of teaching and seeing what... all the work and effort that goes into it, actually don't want a full time job. Because they know its too much, umm I was talking to a Deputy Head of Department a few weeks ago who subsequently left to go back into industry. And his view was that.. the average ummm person working in Further Education today wants a 0.7 job. Because on a .7 job you can just about get away with between 50 and 60 hours a week of work. If you take a full time job to do it properly requires more than that and most people simply - both physically and socially - can't contribute that.	
So you talked about people that you've seen experiencing this disaffection. How about yourself, have you experienced it?	
(p) uhhh... (p) Yes. Constantly. Ummm I think... (p) partly colleges tend to breed.. cultures which either switch off from what the main college is doing ... or... uh are actively antagonistic towards it. Umm and that's	

partly because colleges are very large organisations and very diverse organisations they.. they are almost impossible to manage I don't actually blame most of the managers because basically to become a principal of a college you have to be.. a) pretty thick skinned b) pretty sycophantic and c) totally mad because the workload is even more unmanageable than that of a teachers.. ummm so you have to be a huge egotist to even want to get there, you have to be prepared to bend with all the madness and stupidity that is foisted on us by umm ultimately government uhh and you have to be prepared to drive yourself and then usually in that situation having driven yourself you don't see why everybody else shouldn't contribute the same sort of effort levels.. (p) so I don;t, I don't think that umm.. I don't think that.. as a sector we're healthy	
Ok	
In fact I think we're probably pathological	
And (laughs) how's that how do you think that impacts on..(p) people not in initial teacher education but but people just working in the FE you know.. to go back to the old days of being geography and environmental science.. that.. pathological nature of FE, how does that impact on the day to day feeling of being a professional person?	
(p) going back to when I was teaching my subject, I think that I mean.. obviously it's got worse, it's got progressively worse in the last fifteen, sixteen years ummm so I don't think it's... I don't think that you can just sort of ... uhh compare the two. I think if I was... (p) I think if I had a skill that I could sell outside ummmm ... most of the time I would be sorely tempted to do that. If you look at the people who work in vocational areas of Further Education, their either working in jobs that aren't particularly well paid like umm... social care, hairdressing.... uhhh aspects of motor vehicle and therefore working as a lecturer is actually relatively lucrative.. uhhh people working in things like.. construction you get to an age where working out in all weathers isn't	

particularly nice and it's actually warmer and drier, even inside some of the drafty workshops that we have. So I think there's certain people there for whom it's.. it's actually a.. it's a career improvement. For people who've come from a more academic background uhhh.. I think people just take refuge in the two things that they really love which is their subject and their students and there's this huge dichotomy and I know that's true because I've read lots and lots and lots of research which says exactly the same thing.. ummm... I've been lucky in that I've constantly been able to re.. create my career to go in different directions uhhhh I don't think I've... although I've spent .. stayed for example in one college for a very long time, I was always, every two or three years doing something different changing my job role..uhh.. so I never got bored.. umm.. but I don't know how people who teach the same subject year in, year out stop from getting bored ummm.. I suppose the only thing is that they're so always changing the syllabus, changing the regulations, changing the paperwork that you don't actually have time to get bored.	
To go back to something you just said, you talked about the difference between people who have got.. arguably practical skills and people who've got theoretical knowledge and and how.. their experience of being a teacher may be different	
Hmmm	
From your point of view do you think.. do you think that that's true.. do you think people experience being a teacher differently? Do they experience professionalism differently depending on whether they're theory or practice	
I think they do... uhhh.. and as I said earlier, I think there's research that that.. that suggests that's the case...uUmmm...(p) I thnk also there's age differences ummm.. younger people coming in perhaps are aware of .. the... pressures outside of college to increasingly work	

harder and harder. I mean in this country again the evidence is that we work harder and less efficiently than other countries.. ummm.. and in some senses if you're coming from a a culture of overwork in the primary sector and moving to a college ummm then its.... it's actually an improvement and therefore people, when they're younger, can be quite enthusiastic. The longer you've been in the area and obviously the more you've seen that.. that the conditions worsen, obviously the more difficult it is to maintain enthusiasm overall. But people... I think what.. what's what's interesting about it is as a.. as a job the rewards that you get out of working with students and with... many of your colleagues umm are what keeps people going.	
Ok I'm going to go right the way back to some stuff you said earlier...I kept my fingers crossed to remind me! You talked about after you'd been made redundant needing to go and do a.. a Masters Degree and you're currently studying for your Doctorate	
Hmm (yes)	
How much has that impinged on your practice? Those... those areas of your education?	
Ahhh... right... ahhh... (p) I wish that my understanding of educational management had impinged on my management practice more than it has. Ummm.. I'm not a particularly good manager... I'm ok.. but I'm.. I'm not I'm not that good. I've seen better ones...Ummm...(p) Uhhh.. in terms of my understanding of how people learn... I think it's done two things.. it's it's enabled me to ... explain what I previously just sensed, in other words it's enabled me to conceptualise my experience.. uhhh.. and of course I now know that that is actually how you learn, you conceptualise your experience. Ummm...It has also opened up to me huge areas of understanding which I didn't have before. Uhhh... for example on my Masters I did a unit on mentoring... which was valuable in two senses. First of all it it explored with me the mentoring role which I hadn't myself really been involved in and that was very	

interesting in terms of making me think about other ways in which you support learners, the whole mentoring-tutoring function.. I've .. I've become much more aware of how important that is. I think I was always a good tutor but I didn't know why I was a good tutor. Now I do know why I was a good tutor...Ummm and also actually, the two guys who delivered it who came from the secondary sector.. uhh.. one was a maths teacher and one was a history teacher.. and umm.. they were ...brilliant teachers and they showed me by example... ways of teaching that I.. I wasn't using and wasn't particularly adept at uhhh and which now I make much more use of ummm.. they were you know, quite exponents of active learning and although I think I was groping in my teaching for more active learning, I wasn't particularly good at it and I now understand some of the skills that are needed to do it and do it effectively. Umm it was probably a bit too late for me so.. I'd probably become a bit too much of a didactic teacher by that stage of my career but uhhh I'm getting better. I think by the time I retire I might actually be a reasonably good teacher.	
How much of that would have been because of the practice and how much of that would have been because of theory that you've been exposed to in your..your many and varied roles?	
Well, you know what.. what the answer is and the answer is actually the correct answer and that is that it will be the *praxis*.. it will be my ability to conceptualise what I'm doing and to practice what I know works uhhh and I'm still only just getting adequate at it.. uhh.. I.. I've improved in the last two years as a teacher, immeasurably. Ummm... hugely(p)	
Why? What's prompted that improvement?	
Ummm... having to work in a team of staff who.. I sort of manage uhh who are all better teachers than me. (p)	

Well, could that come back to the thing you said earlier about people who say they're the worse teachers are actually the best... there's this inverse relationship?	
No. I know what I'm good at.. I know what I'm good at. I'm a good orator... uhhh.. I'm **very** good at conceptualising... I'm **very** analytical uhh I'm very good at organising analytical information and I know how good teaching should be done. Uhhh but I'm very poorly disciplined so I don't always deliver it.	
Ok	
I..I..I'm lazy and ill disciplined.	
...and possibly ridiculously overworked?	
Oh and definitely ridiculously overworked I mean.. to the extent that, you know, three times a week I think of resigning.	
Okie. I'm going to call it a day there because I think we've done a lot. Is there anything that you want to add before we do that, though?	
(p) only that umm I'm very taken by the uhhh explanation of professionalism.. which is that it's origin uhhh ummm is an ecclesiastical origin and it comes from the fact that a ..a.. preacher is someone who professes their faith and I think that one of the reasons why the teaching profession is particularly conflicted is that it is professing a faith in something which society uhh actually doesn't understand the .. what we're doing and doesn't actually want us to do and that's why I said earlier that I think all aspects of teaching are subversive they're subversive to the extent that we actually want people to think about how society **should** be rather than.. than preparing them for how society is. Because the one thing we know about the future is, that it's not going to be like it is now.. so we can't educate people for today's world...	

Conclusion

That's **really really** interesting and I'd like to follow that up, if we can next time.. if I can interview you again if that's ok?	
Well, you know you can't stop me talking	
Oh, I'm happy with that.. that's good... are you happy to be interviewed again?	
Absolutely	
Fantastic. Thank you very much	

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