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**The perceptions of FE teachers about the impact of in-service initial  
teacher education on their professional development and practice**

**Titilola Olukoga**

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education

The University of Huddersfield

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## Abstract

Since 1997, successive governments in England have consistently introduced a range of interventions aimed at developing the quality of training of FE teachers. It has been suggested that these should engender better teaching, which in turn should improve achievement of learners, and subsequently produce a workforce with global competitive advantage. This study explores and analyses the views of a sample of FE teachers and their managers on the impact of an in-service initial teacher education programme on teachers' development and practice. The case study research uses online questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to collect data from participants drawn from both academic and vocational curriculum areas of a large FE college.

The study employs Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus*, *field* and *capital* and Giddens' structuration framework of *structure* and *agency* to interpret and explain social practices and actions. Even though the past can frame agents' dispositions, agents also have the capacity to accommodate and integrate new conditions in shaping future practices. An understanding of power relations within and between *fields* has been useful in explaining practitioners' actions, and the concept of *capital* has been beneficial in analysing practitioners' influence, and some factors that drive their actions. Initial findings from this study indicate that while structure can constrain agents' actions, it can also be enabling.

Although teachers have faced some constraints and challenges whilst on the training programme, there is a significant positive perception of the knowledge, skills and competencies that they have acquired. Findings also indicate that the social-cultural construction of knowledge approach and teachers' own passion are significant to their professional development. The thesis proposes a case for *reflexive breakout*, a phrase used to portray the transformative capacity of teachers in developing their professional practice. This perhaps has some implications for further research in understanding the professional development of trainee teachers.

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## Glossary of Abbreviations

ATLS	-	Associate Teacher Learning and Skills
BEC	-	The Business Education Council
BERA	-	British Education Research Association
BIS	-	The Department for Business Innovation and Skills
BTEC	-	Business and Technology Education Council
CERT ED	-	Certificate in Education
CPD	-	Continuing Professional Development
DfE	-	Department for Education
DfEE	-	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	-	Department for Education and Skills
DTLLS	-	Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Sector
eNVQ	-	Online route to achieving Vocational Qualification
ERA	-	The Education Reform Act
ETF	-	Education and Training Fund
FE	-	Further Education
FEFC	-	Further Education Funding Council
FENTO	-	Further Education National Training Organisation
HE	-	Higher Education
HEI	-	Higher Education Institution
IFL	-	Institute for Learning
ITE	-	Initial Teacher Education
ITT	-	Initial Teacher Training
LLUK	-	Lifelong Learning UK
LSIS	-	Learning and Skills Improvement Service
LSS	-	The Learning and Skills Sector
NCVQ	-	National Council for Vocational Qualifications
NTO	-	National Training Organisation
NVQ	-	National Vocational Qualification
OfSTED	-	The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PCET	-	Post-Compulsory Education and Training
PGCE	-	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
QTLS	-	Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills
QTS	-	Qualified Teacher Status
SVUK	-	Standards Verification UK
WPK	-	Work Process Knowledge

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*“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom.  
And in all your getting, get understanding”.*  
(Proverbs 4:7, The Bible).

## **Section 1**

### **Gathering the Evidence – Background and Strategies**

Section 1 of the thesis comprises the first five chapters and contextualises the research. It also discusses the underpinning philosophical assumptions and the data collection methods employed in the study. Chapter 1 introduces and locates the research and provides the rationale for conducting it. Chapter 2 considers the most prominent educational reforms and policies that have shaped the Lifelong Learning sector and specifically FE teachers' practice. Subsequently, Chapter 3 reviews some of the key concepts and literature on FE teachers' initial training and development. Chapter 4 presents ontological and epistemological perspectives and the philosophical assumptions of the study. The research approach and two theoretical perspectives on structure and agency which have been integrated into the theoretical framework underpinning the study are also evaluated. Chapter 5 then reviews the approaches to data collection and strategies for data analysis that have been adopted in the study. A thematic analysis of data is presented and some significant emerging themes identified.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 – Introduction and Aims of the Study

People are always wanting teachers to change . . . Few people want to do much about the economy, but everyone – politicians, the media and the public alike – wants to do something about education.  
(Hargreaves, 1994, p. 5)

Since the incorporation of English FE colleges in 1993, the FE sector - once referred to as being a ‘Cinderella’ service (Randle and Brady, 1997) - has experienced a plethora of government policy initiatives and reforms which have sought to raise standards of teaching across the sector (Lucas, 2007; Avis and Bathmaker 2004). In seeking to redress a prolonged period of uncertain economic growth, perceived skills deficits and persistent youth unemployment, New Labour positioned education, knowledge and skills as the most productive economic investment and thereby sought to put learning at the heart of their ambitions (DfEE, 1998).

In their view, building a workforce with imagination, confidence and a global competitive edge should involve the development of a culture of lifelong learning. For them, the opportunity that this learning brings is multifaceted as it potentially benefits individuals, businesses, communities and the nation as a whole. This underlies the so-called ‘competitiveness settlement’ (Avis et al, 2003; Avis, 2007); a notion of an economy that is characterised by a highly skilled and educated workforce, which generates economic success, and is able to successfully compete globally.

Because of its vocational and second-chance nature, the FE sector therefore became important for governments' agendas in facilitating post-16 education and training, and the key to social mobility in supporting disadvantaged learners (Randle and Brady, 1997; Hyland and Merrill, 2003). This then placed the sector at the cutting edge of government's aspirations and led to a commitment to FE as the producer of a future highly-skilled and flexible workforce. However, this ambition subsequently emerged as an ongoing policy agenda - by successive governments - to place a significant part of the responsibility for raising student achievement on teachers, and to improve the quality of teaching. In turn, the agenda entailed greater central government control and the regulation of teachers' practice (Lucas, 2004a). For the first time, in 2001, the FE teachers' qualifications regulations (England) (SI 2001), which applied to any individual who became employed as a teacher in an institution within the FE sector in England on or after 1st September 2001 came into force. The initial training of teachers therefore became a priority for the sector.

Other policy initiatives which have aimed to raise participation in education and training, student achievement and the standards of teaching include: *The Learning Age Green Paper* (DfEE, 1998); *Success for All* (DfES, 2002); *Equipping teachers for the future* (DfES, 2004); *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances* (DfES, 2006). Apart from these initiatives, professional standards for the FE sector were also introduced which set out the skills, knowledge and attributes of those who undertake teaching, training and other related roles within the sector. The first of these were the FENTO standards which were developed to: inform the design of accredited awards for FE teachers; inform professional development activity; and support specific activities



within institutions (FENTO, 1999). The second were the LLUK overarching professional standards which were developed in response to Ofsted's calls for clearer standards that new teachers, trainers and tutors in the sector are expected to demonstrate (LLUK, 2007). More recently, the new professional standards which define the professional requirements of teachers, trainers and tutors were introduced (ETF, 2014).

These successive systems of professional standards made their journey from policy makers and awarding bodies to providers, where they were developed and delivered as teacher training curricula (Lucas, 2004a; Nasta, 2007). However, the journey has been argued to be problematic and will be examined further in chapter 7. In the context of the present study, the standards have been related to a Postgraduate Certificate in Education and Certificate in Education (PGCE/Cert Ed) curriculum as developed by the large HEI provider. However, whilst it can be argued that the introduction of professional standards and governments' centralised control of teachers' practice can be viewed as a re-professionalisation or a new professionalism by policy makers (Hargreaves, 1994), some contend that these interventions have had a negative effect and have led to the de-professionalisation of FE teachers (Gleeson et al 2005; Lucas and Nasta 2010).

Although teacher training programmes and qualifications have been deemed essential by successive governments, perhaps merely equipping teachers with qualifications does not necessarily make them better teachers. It has been argued that there are other issues to be considered such as teachers' motivation, understanding of learners' cognitive and emotional needs, and teachers' own professional development (Duckworth and Tummons 2010). In addition to these, the socio-political context of

teaching and the nature of the qualifications need to be given due consideration. To this effect, the study reviews some pre-incorporation policy initiatives in chapter 2.

In consequence of criticisms of the limitations of professional standards by a number of authors and the issues raised with the measures introduced to regulate teachers' professional development (Nasta, 2007; Lucas, 2007; Hoyle and Wallace, 2007), it is worth analysing the effectiveness of existing government initiatives and investments in preparing teachers for professional practice. Although some studies have been conducted on FE ITE, these are limited (Jephcote et al 2008a; Jephcote and Salisbury 2009), and mostly focused on pre-service trainees on full-time initial teacher education courses (e.g. Bathmaker and Avis 2007). At the time of its publication, Harkin et al's (2003) research was the biggest study conducted on FE initial teacher training, however, the authors recognised some limitations and suggested further research in the area (see 3.4).

The general aim of this study therefore is to understand and evaluate the impact of a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and the Certificate in Education (Cert Ed) in-service programmes, offered through a large HE-FE partnership, on teachers' professional development and practice. The research is structured using the LLUK 2007 standards which provided a national framework and benchmark for FE teachers' practice.

The study initially seeks to clarify the views of practitioners on the concept of teacher professionalism. It then explores the specific skills and knowledge that practitioners

have developed on the course and how these have influenced their professional practice. As recommended by Harkin et al (2003), it is envisaged that findings will help to identify those factors that contribute to effective training and professional development of FE teachers.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

Howe (2003) asserts that there is a critical relationship between research questions and methods of data collection and analysis: that is, research questions steer or direct the techniques for data collection and analysis. This view is echoed by Blaikie (2010) who contends that the use of research questions is a neglected aspect in designing and conducting social research, and argues that the formulation of research questions is the most significant aspect of a research design. Hence, the research question is the hub of any research project and this determines the direction, type, scope and anticipated success of the project. In developing research questions, Agee (2009) argues for a reflective and interrogative process which gives shape and direction to a study and which clearly articulates the researcher's intention. She also asserts that the development of new questions usually happens during the enquiry process and sometimes during data collection and analysis when the researcher finds "that the initial focus of the research question is too limited to fully address the phenomenon under study" (p. 436). This was the case with the fourth research question for this study, which developed as the study unfolded and which sought to evaluate the impact of support structures on teachers' development:

- 1) How do teachers and their managers conceptualise teacher professionalism?
- 2) What are teachers' perceptions of the knowledge, skills, competence and experience gained on the PGCE/Cert Ed course?
- 3) How have teachers' pedagogical approaches developed since completing the PGCE/Cert Ed course?
- 4) What support structures have influenced teachers' professional development whilst on the course?

### **1.3 Methodology and Location of the Study**

Using an interpretivist perspective, the study adopted a case study approach to address the research questions. Data was collected from a sample of teachers and their managers using online questionnaires and detailed semi-structured interviews - managers were included in the study in order to obtain a more holistic perspective of teachers' development and practice. A combination of King's (2004) template analysis approach, Auerbach's and Silverstein's (2003) coding approach, and Merriam's (1998) levels of data analysis was adopted in analysing the data collected. The theoretical framework for the study was drawn from Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital, as well as Giddens' conceptualisations of the constraining and enabling attribute of structure on agency. Both were employed in different capacities to analyse and interpret the research findings.

The study is set at a large FE college (henceforth referred to as "the college") in a major city in the North of England. Following a merger in 2008, it is now one of the largest further education colleges in Europe, with more than 80,000 learners across 15 sites and campuses.

The college states that its mission is “to improve lives and economic success through learning and skills”. It provides education and training to tens of thousands of learners and clients across the city and beyond; and employs around six thousand staff in academic, administrative or support roles. I currently work in the college as a teacher educator - a position I took up around four months to commencing this research. This role involves the delivery of the in-service PGCE/Cert Ed and the BA in Education and Professional Development programmes. Prior to this, I was the college Information and Learning Technology (ILT) Champion for six years, with the responsibility for inspiring, developing and supporting the use of learning technologies across all curriculum areas. Before joining the college, I had eight years of experience as an Information Technology teacher/lecturer in post-compulsory education. My relatively new position as a teacher educator (at the start of the study) meant that I did not teach any of the respondents in this study while they were on the PGCE/Cert Ed in-service course – a milieu that should minimise influence of power relationships.

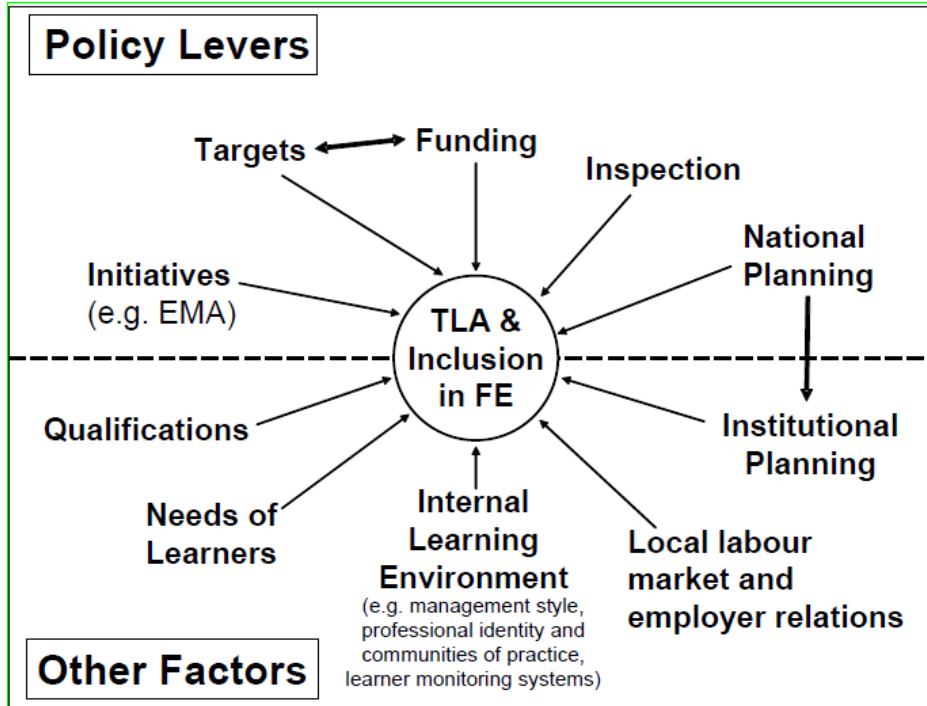
## Chapter 2: The Policy Context

This chapter initially explores the concept of policy levers, and then reviews the main educational reforms and policy initiatives that have influenced FE teachers' practice; from the 1988 Education Reform Act to the 2014 New Professional Standards for teachers and trainers in education and training. It investigates successive governments' intentions and strategies in driving the competitiveness education settlement, and in developing teacher professionalism for FE, in particular the introduction of: a marketised education system; a regulated market; and the regulation of FE teaching. Subsequently, the consequences of these policies on teachers' practice are explored from a range of perspectives. Finally, the chapter considers an account of the initial teacher education of FE teachers and how it has metamorphosed over time.

### 2.1 Policy Levers

Policy levers have been used as central instruments by governments and their agencies to implement a range of educational policies including the setting of standards and regulation of services and quality (Newman, 2001). Spours et al (2007) in their study on the impact of policy levers on FE colleges identify five policy levers (*national planning, targets, funding, inspection and policy initiatives*), and five other factors (*institutional planning, local labour market, internal learning environment, needs of learners and qualifications*) which have major influence on learning and inclusion (Figure 1). These levers have also been identified as: "performance targets, standards, audit, inspection, quality assurance processes and powers to intervene where public services are 'failing'"

(Steer et al, 2007, p. 117). Steel et al argue that New Labour’s approach to modernisation which introduced competition through efficiency measures and performance auditing thus became “central instruments in a system of *arms-length regulation*” (ibid).



**Figure 1 - Some policy levers. (Spours et al, 2007, p. 196)**

These policy reforms and legislations also generate cultures of marketisation, managerialism and performativity where significant emphasis is placed on *productivity* and *quality* (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005). Bathmaker and Avis argue that these cultures have led to increased competition between learning providers and the introduction of efficiency measures and prescribed targets as a survival strategy. Consequently, teachers’ work has been intensified as they have had to deal with additional pressure of

being responsible for delivering a service that has been prescribed and is regularly monitored for quality and efficiency.

Building on Ball's concept of 'policy trajectories', Steer et al (2007) conceptualise interactions around the implementation of policy levers in four ways:

- Interactions at different levels of the governance system
- Interactions at the level of 'local ecologies'
- Interactions that occur at the institutional level and at various levels within institutions
- Interactions that occur between policy levers (pp. 5-6)

On interactions that occur at the institutional level and at various levels within institutions, they argue that these lead to situations where policies are mediated in specific ways, and which eventually lead to their misrepresentation at the end of the policy chain. According to them, national policy initiatives are 'translated' into college policies, which are then re-translated by middle managers into departmental policies, and finally implemented by teachers at the classroom level – a process referred to as 'policy mediation'.

Spours et al (2007) also argue that institutions do translate policies into systems that meet their own needs and which may not accurately reflect intentions of those who designed the policy. They assert that colleges respond to the demands of external environment (e.g. policy levers) by turning these into internal plans, systems and practices, through a complex mediation and translation process. In their study, they developed three related concepts to explain the policy-college edge; "mediation", "translation" and "local ecologies", where "mediation" is described as "a general process



by which a range of actors interact with policy” (p. 194) and “translation” as interpretative acts by practitioners and policy makers within the mediation process. For them, the act of translation is a complex process of “interpretation and reinterpretation at different levels within the LSS” (p. 204). Examples of these in context will be further considered in chapters 7 and 10.

## **2.2 The Education Reform Act (ERA) 1988**

Although local government involvement in FE dates much earlier, the 1944 Education Act placed a statutory duty on Local Education Authorities (LEA) to provide ‘adequate facilities’ for further education (Dawn, 1995). Afterwards, for a period of three decades, LEAs developed FE provision through the creation and funding of colleges (Simmons, 2008). Whilst this period saw a rapid growth in the sector, it was uneven as each LEA operated, to varying degrees, at a level of autonomy which enabled them to influence the size, remit and ethos of colleges under them (ibid). On the whole, FE under LEA control in this period was described as “a mishmash of brilliance . . . and diabolical practice” (Ainley and Bailey, 1997, p. 103).

Towards the end of the third decade, Jim Callaghan, then Labour prime minister, initiated a great debate on the purpose and future of education. His speech (Callaghan, 1976) which called for a national discussion with parents, teachers, learners and professional bodies to formulate and express the purpose of education was seen as central government interference with education. Also, one of the goals of the Conservative government from 1979 onwards was to revolutionise a perceived failing

education system, especially at a time when the economy was in recession and unemployment and inflation rising. The goal which centred on improving the economic status of the nation by raising standards in education subsequently culminated in the Education Reform Act (1988). The ERA, which was described at the time as “the most important and far-reaching piece of educational lawmaking for England and Wales since the 1944 Education Act” (Maclure, 1988, p. 1), heralded opportunities for privatisation and competition in state education, and extended parental choice of schools and colleges (Ball, 2008). Market forces of choice in education and privatisation were promoted as the solution to transforming the culture of public services and improving performance; this entrepreneurial and competitive edge in the management and delivery of education services was seen by the government as fundamental in cultivating a knowledge economy (Abbott et al, 2013).

The ERA strengthened central government control of education by placing restrictions on the power of the Local Education Authorities (LEAs), as schools and post-compulsory education were taken out of LEAs’ control and financial and management responsibilities were delegated to governing bodies (Shain and Gleeson, 1999). It also dictated the composition of Further Education (FE) colleges’ governing bodies which stipulated a minimum of 50 per cent industry and business representation and a maximum of 20 per cent local authority representation (ibid).

Some other aspects of the ERA were: the introduction of a national curriculum; the testing of students and the publication of results; and the inspection of schools. A national curriculum, which was favoured by previous Education Secretaries as far back

as the 1960s was introduced as an attempt to standardise the content taught across schools. This was considered by the then Conservative government as the key to raising standards in schools (Abbott et al, 2013). The national curriculum document was however considered as being too prescriptive and disregarding teachers' own perspectives on curriculum development. The testing arrangement in schools and publication of results in league tables provided parents with data on the academic status of schools and informed their choice; however, this also engendered competition in schools and colleges. The ERA also initiated the setting up of inspection teams to revise the inspection of schools which was formerly carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) and local authority advisers. The inspection teams were required to have a 'lay inspector' who was not recruited from the education establishment and who would be the neutral voice in the team.

To sum up, the establishment of the national curriculum is viewed as another means of central control over the curriculum, and the operation of schools and colleges outside LEA control advanced a shift towards a free market ideology, privatisation and competition (Abbott et al, 2013). The drivers of this move were a combination of the notion that market forces would improve the quality of educational provision, as well as a strategy to curtail the influence and power of LEAs, many of which were controlled by either the Labour party or the Liberal Democratic party (Goodrham & Hodkinson, 2004). The managerial control of teachers' work in respect of a prescribed curriculum and new accountability measures introduced through revised inspection regimes seem to set the scene for subsequent educational reforms.

## **2.3 Educational Reforms in the FE Sector: marketisation and budget cuts (1992 – 1996)**

Historically, the FE sector has suffered under-funding and a lack of strategic direction, but following the 1992 Further Education Act, the sector has received substantial attention from the government. Whilst this may seem a noble idea, as indicated in chapter 1, it has been observed that governments often resort to education and training to achieve their policy objectives, and they hold a tight rein on their education systems to service national economy and broader social agendas (Avis et al, 1996; Hyland and Merrill, 2003). The 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, which removed colleges from LEA control, granted FE institutions independent status, and colleges became corporations governed by non-elected boards which were drawn mainly from business and industry (Gleeson and Shain, 1999; Hyland and Merrill, 2003). This brought to an end around 50 years of municipal responsibility for FE (Simmons, 2008), and meant that colleges became responsible for their own finances and operational management.

Although incorporation meant that colleges were freed from LEA control (Ainley and Bailey, 1997), they were centrally funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), which controlled the colleges in three different ways (Goodrham and Hodkinson, 2004). The first of these was the introduction of a series of prescriptive government regulations. This was followed by complex funding and finance mechanisms which were dependent on student recruitment, retention and achievement. An external inspection system was also imposed on colleges which has also seen some changes over the years to the way it inspects schools, further education and skills, and initial teacher education. The impact of the new funding mechanisms placed immense

financial strains on colleges in the first five years following incorporation as they experienced a reduction of over 20 per cent in the amount of funding received per full-time equivalent student (FEFC 1998). This placed pressure on the FE sector greater than that experienced by any other part of the public sector up to that point (Burchill, 1998).

The incorporation of English FE colleges was rooted in neo-liberal ideology with its “belief that traditional forms of public sector organisation, such as LEAs, are inherently flawed, wasteful and inefficient in their operation” (Simmons, 2008, p. 360). This, Simmons argues, is an assumption that seems to deviate from the policies of the post-war welfare state settlement which viewed the public sector as a valuable part of the economy. As previously indicated, there was also the belief that the introduction of market forces was the most viable way to raise standards and reduce costs in public services. Conversely, incorporation stimulated a competitive business approach through institutional rivalry and government prescriptions. This included control over the types of courses that would attract funding, the levels of funding and timings of payments: “in many ways, incorporation effectively forced colleges to operate under a system of state capitalism rather than in an environment of private enterprise” (Simmons, p. 363).

Jephcote and Salisbury (2009) perceive incorporation as a watershed which marked the end of “a period of relative autonomy for teachers and managers, and a time when the curriculum and teaching dominated debate and actions” (p. 968). For them, incorporation signaled a new era of marketised economy and competition between colleges which diverts focus from the primary function of the development of curriculum

and learning, and which forced some teachers to adopt teaching styles which maximised government's imposed outcomes. In other words, teachers resorted to innovative survival strategies in order to satisfy external bureaucratic requirements and to ensure that their learners still attained qualifications (which was linked to income generation) regardless of reductions in allocated teaching hours and increased workload (ibid). Following incorporation, there was a decline in the proportion of full-time staff and an increase in staff on part-time contracts as 25 per cent of the workforce was lost due to redundancy, early retirement or illness (Burchill, 1998). Some of these were replaced by assessors, learning technologists and learning support workers (Robson and Bailey, 2009); a step viewed by many lecturers as "lecturing on the cheap" (Shain and Gleeson, 1999, p. 450) and which reflected an increasingly casualised sector.

## **2.4 The Regulated Market (1997 – 2010)**

### *2.4.1 Policy Initiatives and Reforms*

In 1997, the first Labour government since 1979 was elected with a large majority, and incorporation was followed by some significant financial investments in FE under the New Labour governments between 1997 and 2010. For instance, average growth in education spending during New Labour's tenure was noticeably high with the highest average real term growth of 5.1% per year being recorded in the decade between April 2000 and March 2010 (Chowdry and Sibieta, 2011).

In short, education also became a priority sector to the New Labour government, and the ideologies of the market economy and many education policy reforms initiated by the

previous Conservative government were adopted. For instance, many of the changes in education that were aimed at developing a market-led system with the ultimate goal of enhancing the nation's economic performance under the previous government were either continued or extended (Hodgson and Spours, 2006; Abbott et al, 2013). The *Learning Age Green Paper* (DfEE, 1998) acknowledges the demands of the information and knowledge-based revolution of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the challenge to stay competitive in the global economy. It posits that the most productive investment is linked to highly educated and trained workforces which can be achieved with better skills, knowledge and understanding. Whilst recognising examples of innovation and flexibility in FE, it specifies students' rights to high standards of teaching in reaching their goals and achieving their full potential, and presents proposals for raising standards in further education (DfEE, 1998, Ch 5).

As previously observed, consequently, the FE sector was identified as significant to the development of human and social capital (Avis 1999), and has experienced successive government interventions and policy initiatives that underpinned the competitiveness settlement which "claims that by developing the knowledge and skills of the workforce a vibrant and dynamic economy will be created, able to compete successfully in the global marketplace" (Avis et al, 2003, p. 192). The notion that a highly skilled and educated workforce is the key to a competitive and globalised economy is however questionable. It has been argued that there is not enough evidence to substantiate any direct relationship between education and economic growth. For instance, Coleman and Keep (2001) argue that skills are not necessarily the key to competitive success and they should only be viewed as one of a number of available competing models. Similarly, Tett

(2014) argues that the connection between education and economic development is complex, and that the notion that education automatically boosts the economy is a fallacy. Avis (2007) also contends that the push for an educated workforce “plays down the presence of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, which nevertheless remain central to the economy and to many people’s working lives” (p. 23). He argues that the demand for the unskilled and low-skilled categories is predicted to increase, with some occupations which require little knowledge base thriving. Hence, the view that high-skilled work is the solution to competitiveness is perhaps an assumption. Although for an individual, there is a clear indication that higher levels of skills and qualifications lead to higher returns in the job market, however, this is not so for lower levels of skills (Wolf 2002, 2005; Finlay et al, 2007). Nonetheless, there is a range of non-economic benefits of education, such as, information literacy skills and the ability to analyse issues and make informed choices (Ewell, 2013). Ewell also argues that higher levels of education engender a range of social benefits that far exceed financial benefits e.g. safer and healthier lifestyles.

One of the key principles in achieving the ‘value for money and world-class standards’ identified in *The Learning Age* relates to raising the quality and standards of teaching and learning in post-16 education. This then brought about changes to initial teacher Education (ITE), development of standards of teaching, and a redefinition of professional knowledge (Furlong, 2008). In order to raise the standard of teaching however, it was thought necessary to introduce national standards which could be used as a benchmark for teachers’ performance.



Although the issue was repeatedly raised, until the late 1990s, FE teacher training was mostly unregulated by government (Orr and Simmons, 2010). The training of teachers in further and adult education tended to be “voluntarist, haphazard and uneven” (Lucas, 2004b, p. 93); and, in comparison to the schools sector where teachers were required to have teaching qualifications, the FE sector was regarded as a neglected sector. Nonetheless, the situation eventually culminated in the introduction of a requirement for FE teachers to hold a recognised qualification. In 2001 therefore, it became mandatory for newly appointed full and part-time FE lecturers to achieve a recognised teaching qualification within a set period i.e. “(a) two years from the date on which the relevant course started, where the teacher is employed full-time; and (b) four years from the date on which the relevant course started, where the teacher is employed part-time.” (SI, 2001, p. 3).

In 2002, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) further developed its reform strategy in *Success for All* (DfES 2002). The white paper acknowledged some ‘post-Incorporation’ issues in consequence of the substantial autonomy delegated to colleges and an ensuing lack of clear framework for accountability or standards. It also identified some important steps that New Labour have taken to address the problems, including:

- Additional targeted investment in capital, standards and pay, particularly in colleges;
- Introducing a new national framework for raising standards with independent inspection against a Common Inspection Framework across all providers; and
- Bringing together responsibility for planning, funding and quality assurance for all publicly-funded learning and skills provision within the LSC.

(DfES, 2002, p. 6)

Subsequently, the white paper presented four key goals intended to raise the quality of teaching and learning in the sector. These were: “meeting needs, improving choice; putting teaching and learning at the heart of what we do; developing the teachers and leaders of the future; and developing a framework for quality and success” (p. 8). It is clear that in the main, these goals concern the improvement of the quality of teaching. In implementing the strategy, New Labour planned to establish a new Standards Unit and to involve all learning and skills providers in the design and implementation of their policies. Also, each of the strategic objectives had its associated operational instruments and structures that stated how they will be achieved, however, in the concluding chapters of the document, emphasis is placed on what will be done at the strategic level whilst implementations through the structural levels are partly addressed (Finaly et al, 2007).

Nevertheless, some authors have challenged the assumption that the quality of teaching was the real issue that needed to be addressed in raising the standards of learner achievement in the FE sector (e.g. Reeves, 1995; Ainley and Bailey, 1997; and Wallace, 2002, 2007). According to them, the overall context in which teachers within the sector operate was a challenging one which raised some concerns about the process and the quality of learning. For instance, the emphasis on work-based curriculum/qualification was neither motivating nor enjoyable for students. Also, there was an emphasis on post-16 education which brought about a massive influx of unemployed learners who were not necessarily in education by choice. In addition, there were funding issues to grapple with, and which impacted on class sizes, learning resources and the quantity of teacher-

learner contact. These and others were contextual issues that they argue have impinged on the quality of learners' experience.

Finlay et al (2007) take issue with a centralised, micromanaged governance of the learning and skills sector (LSS), and contend that "putting learning and teaching at the heart of the system requires more than writing the words in the text" (p. 151). For them, there are certain basic requirements which need to be addressed, including: a fundamental shift in current practices, and a rethink of the strategies that would guide the system in a culture where teachers in post-compulsory education are valued, well-resourced and supported. Finlay et al's standpoint is similar to Coffield's (2007) analysis. Whilst Coffield acknowledges a distinct improvement in placing teaching, training and learning 'at the heart of what we do' in this reform, he observes that "there is no discussion of, and not even a definition of, the central concept of learning, ... yet the whole programme of reform is dependent on some unstated notion of what constitutes learning, and especially, how we become better at learning" (p. 18). For Coffield, there does not seem to be any indication that the New Labour government's intention to improve the quality of learning was well thought through, as it did not give due consideration to the central concept of learning vis-à-vis an appropriate theory of learning which should inform the process.

Following concerns over the quality and standards of initial teacher training in FE, in the academic year 2002/03, HMI, inspectors from the Adult Learning Inspectorate and other inspectors conducted a major national survey of inspection of the quality and standards of ITT in eight HEIs and 23 FE colleges (Ofsted, 2003). The report, among other things,

concluded that the FENTO standards on which the existing system was based provided an inadequate foundation for the professional development of teachers (Lucas and Nasta, 2010). It identified weaknesses relating to management and quality assurance, and quality of training, among others, and provided some recommendations. The DfES responded through an initial teacher training (ITT) reform for the learning and skills sector. The consultation paper, *Equipping our Teachers for the Future*, builds on the 2002 reform (*Success for all*) and in particular, it explores the training and development of teachers in the learning and skills sector, including FE (DfES, 2004).

The reform according to Kim Howells, then minister of state for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher education, was backed up by substantial new funding, and was set over a three-year timescale. It holds the vision of all learners being taught by qualified teachers who will become role models for lifelong learning; it is envisaged that this will result in greater public esteem for teachers, their institutions and the sector (DfES, 2004). Significant to this is the quality of training received by teachers which the reform agenda linked directly to the achievement and life chances of their learners. In other words, from government's perspective, better training will lead to better teaching which will engender improved educational attainment of learners, and subsequently, improved achievement. The paper thus advocated a commitment to lifelong professional development of teachers in order to keep their skills up-to-date as the needs of their learners change. Among other developments, the paper also argued for a recognised status for those working in the Learning and Skills sector mirroring the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for teachers in schools. It was proposed that teachers within the sector

who fully meet the stipulated standards would be awarded the status of Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS).

The quality of workplace practice and partnerships was also considered critical to effective initial training through links between colleges and higher education institutions and other providers. Another essential step in the reform was the “revision of standards - by spring 2006” (p. 17). Whilst it appears that *Equipping our Teachers* can be viewed as an attempt to enhance teachers’ professional status, serious limitations of the new framework and ensuing implications for understanding the notion of professionalism within the sector have been broached (Kendall and Herrington, 2009). According to them, the reform might be viewed “as evidence of an increasingly frantic impulse to regulate teacher education” (p. 2), and a further attempt to implement the government’s political agenda of addressing a perceived skills deficit and enhancing economic productivity through the lifelong learning sector.

Two years later in 2006, the White Paper *Further Education: Raising Skills Improving Life Chances* (DfES, 2006) was published in order to pursue the goal of economic competitiveness through further education. In its Foreword, the White Paper proposes that:

Our economic future depends on our productivity as a nation. That requires a labour force with skills to match the best in the world. This is a huge challenge, because there are some deep-seated and long-standing weaknesses in our national skills ... We must set out a new ambition to tackle once and for all those skills weaknesses. The colleges and training providers that make up the Further Education sector are central to achieving that ambition. There is much to be proud of in our Further Education system, with some excellent

colleges. But at present, Further Education is not achieving its full potential as the powerhouse of a high skills economy (DfES, 2006, p. 2).

In spite of the significant increase in the level of post-16 participation in education; the increased proportion of 19 year-olds gaining level 2 qualifications; and the overall improvement in success rates; by global economy standards, the government still felt that the sector was under-performing. Again, integral to this new reform was the role of colleges and training providers in developing the knowledge and skills of the workforce so as to achieve government's aspiration. Although the government acknowledged the performance of some excellent colleges, it maintained that FE was not achieving its full potential as the "powerhouse of a high skills economy" (DfES, 2006, p. 1). Consequently, the reform places FE at the centre of attempts to tackle skills weaknesses by raising the quality of teaching and learning in vocational education and training (DfES, 2006).

Reflecting on both the *Equipping our Teachers for the Future* (DfES, 2004) and the *Further Education Raising Skills Improving life Chances* (DfES, 2006) reforms which aim at 'full professionalisation' of teaching in the Learning and Skills Sector, Simmons and Thompson (2007) acknowledge the government's attempt to "raise the bar in terms of professional status" (p. 176), but also argue that "the effect of the regulatory and curriculum reforms since 2001 would be to further underpin the government's increasing intention to direct, monitor and control provision in this area" (ibid). They posit that the New Labour government was more inclined to enforce its own agenda and regulations, and did not necessarily act in FE teachers' or their learners' best interests. As an

example, whilst there have been significant investments in supply-side interventions through the allocation of funds to various policy initiatives and educational reforms, demand-side interventions have received less attention with trainee teachers being required to pay their tuition fees.

Keep (2006) likens the post-compulsory education and training system to an elaborate and complicated train set operated by central government and its agencies. Steer et al (2007) concur that since 1997, “the processes whereby national governments have withdrawn from direct control over the administration of public services and have increasingly used a range of different levers to steer policy” (p. 176), have been extended by the New Labour government to the post compulsory education and training sector. In the same vein, Finlay et al (2007), whilst acknowledging the commitment of the then current government to the FE sector, argue that “there has been a steady stream of policy texts emanating from the relevant departments that have served to define the LSS and the government’s priorities for the sector” (p. 138). Customarily, these policy initiatives or reforms tend to boast a common aim of raising the standards of teaching and learning in the FE sector, extending beyond the kind of attention given to the Higher Education (HE) sector with regard to autonomy and professional status. As Orr (2012) points out, “while the professional standards for Higher Education in England are set out in a four-page booklet, the professional standards for FE amount to forty pages” (p. 3).

#### *2.4.2 National Occupational Standards for FE Teachers: 1999 FENTO Standards, and 2007 LLUK Overarching Professional Standards*

It has been observed that in the era of 'standards', writers use the term in different ways without bothering to explicate the variations in meaning that they entail (Andrew, 1997; Stanley and Stronach, 2013). Sachs (2003) presents some of the different uses of the term: in one sense, standards are used normatively to indicate the minimum levels of achievement in different aspects of teachers' practice. This defines what teachers are able to do and what they should know. In another sense, however, she indicates that the term is used as a measure of accountability and quality assurance and has a clear evaluative implication. It can be argued that the latter concept of standards denote the 1999 FENTO and 2007 LLUK standards which were introduced to enhance the status of FE teachers (FENTO, 1999; LLUK, 2007). It has been argued that standards signify professionalism that promotes adherence to a list of practices which are centrally prescribed (Clow, 2001; Gleeson and James, 2007). Similarly, in analysing the external world of standards, Stanley and Stronach (2013) assert that state agencies use them to wield their power to set the agenda for professional competence, a move which is usually clouded in performativity and audit mechanisms.

As previously discussed, there has been a range of government policies and regulations concerned with raising the standards of teaching in FE (Lucas, 2004b). In 1999, the first national standards for teaching in FE emerged with the establishment of the National Training Organisation (NTO) by the New Labour government. FENTO was launched to develop, quality assure and promote occupational standards for all teaching staff in the FE sector, including the qualification of new and in-service FE teachers (FENTO, 1999).



The standards stipulated the skills and knowledge perceived as essential for tutors and teachers in the FE sector and focused on eight key areas of skills which were further broken down into 26 sub-standards.

Whilst the standards were broadly welcomed as a move away from narrow competence based approaches (Lucas, 2004a), as previously discussed, Wallace (2002) questions government's strategies and argues that there is an assumption implicit to both the Learning Age and the FENTO standards that teachers are the main problem that needs to be solved, and that better trained and better qualified teachers are the answer to raising standards within the FE sector (see also section 2.4.1). For her, this assumption has silenced or pre-empted answers to the question about what causes low standards in FE. Wallace's argument is that students' attitudes and behaviours are key determinants of their success and achievement, and that these could neither be traced to deficiencies in their lecturers nor "addressed through the rewriting or expansion of initial teacher training for lecturers" (p. 88). Longhurst (1999), in an earlier study that investigated the reasons for student absenteeism in an FE college, concluded that students' level of commitment to education rather than dissatisfaction with their courses and lecturers are significant determinants of students' absenteeism. This perhaps links to broader social conditions as exemplified in the findings of a Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) study which explores teachers' and students' prior experiences, disposition towards and expectations of learning (Jephcote et al, 2008b).

The findings suggest that students' complex social lives are brought into the classroom and this can affect their level of participation and engagement in learning. On another

note, it has been argued that standards are ineffective in improving teaching as they are examples of prescriptive, descriptive, narrow and a deficit model of education and training (Bleakley, 1999; Wallace, 2002).

Lucas (2004b) agrees that the FENTO standards were flawed and that their implementation was problematic, suggesting that the main emphasis is “regulatory” rather than “developmental”; where regulatory refers to the use of the standards as a tool to improve teachers’ performance by standardising the diverse practices of FE college teachers. Whilst subscribing to some form of regulation in fostering a greater coherence to initial teacher education and staff development programmes, Lucas notes that it has ignored the difficult balance to be struck between the regulation of existing programmes and the need to improve the quality of practice across a diverse range of courses meeting the diversity of learner contexts in the FE sector.

According to him, “FENTO found itself stuck with a set of occupational standards that were not designed for developmental purposes” (p. 104). Because each FE College is characterised by a range of traditions based upon the industrial and occupational backgrounds from which their teachers are drawn, it is difficult to posit a unifying professional identity for FE teachers (Robson, 2001). Another problem was the sheer volume of the standards, which when broken into statements of what teachers should do and understand was a staggering 300 individual descriptors (Nasta, 2007). Nasta concludes that this posed huge difficulties for teacher-educators to interpret and translate into qualifications and training programmes.

Although FENTO's own evaluation of its endorsement process indicated a positive response (FENTO, 2002), it was criticised by Ofsted (2003). As noted earlier, in 2003 Ofsted presented a summary of the survey of the initial training of further education teachers which highlighted gaps in the provision of an acceptable foundation of professional development for FE teachers at the start of their careers. While the good quality of the taught elements of the course was affirmed, it noted that few opportunities were provided for trainees to be skilled in teaching their specialist subjects. In addition, the inspection indicated a lack of mentoring support in the workplace. Recommendations provided by Ofsted included the development of trainees' expertise in teaching their subject and the consideration of trainees' needs in designing training programmes.

In response to Ofsted's critique however, Fisher and Webb (2006) argue that the nature of subject specialism in FE is complex and open to contestation. Firstly, LSS and mainstream FE colleges consist of hundreds of subject specialisms due to the breadth of traditional and contemporary vocational curricula offered. Secondly, the Business Education Council (BEC) and its successor organisation, the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) introduced pedagogic culture in the sector through a student-centred curriculum as well collaborative practice. These, according to them, have had significant influence in transforming the role of FE lecturer as an instructor to that of a facilitator, hence, they argue that most FE practitioners do not now consider themselves as subject specialists (ibid).

Following the criticisms contained in the 2003 Ofsted ITT survey, the FENTO standards were eventually withdrawn (Nasta, 2007). A new set of overarching professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning sector for all newly appointed teachers and lecturers was developed by the sector skills council, Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), to support the other reforms (LLUK 2006). This was on the basis that employer-led organisations should be responsible for setting standards for training and making decisions about future development needs (Lucas 2004a). As before, this development was part of the drive to aspire to learner achievement and excellence, again, by improving the quality of teaching, training and learning across the Lifelong Learning sector, and to provide a national FE qualification system that would raise the professional status of teachers in the sector.

The reform claimed to take into consideration the skills, knowledge and competence required by new teachers, tutors, trainers, lecturers and instructors in the FE sector, and required them to be professionally registered and licensed to practice by the Institute for Learning (IfL) which was the new professional body for the FE sector. The licensing involved training to a level that allowed them to achieve either Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status or Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS) status. The government regarded the development as representing a crucial move in building a new framework of qualifications for teachers in the FE sector (LLUK, 2007).

Even though the new LLUK professional standards were intended as an improvement on the FENTO occupational standards, paradoxically, the approach was similar to the FENTO standards which assumed that national standards and regulations would translate into changed pedagogical practices in the multifaceted world of FE (Lucas et

al, 2012). Nasta (2007) questions how standards (FENTO and LLUK) can adequately reflect the knowledge, experience and abilities of professionals. Hadfield and Atherton (2008) assert that for all their apparent precision and prescription, the standards are not based on empirical evidence and that: “the lack of empirical data as to what teachers, as practitioners, need, may of course account in some measure for the passion with which the prescriptions are embraced by their proponents” (p. 4).

The LLUK standards have also been perceived by some authors as an attempt to increase central control of the FE workforce. As an example, Orr and Simmons (2010) argue that the 2007 reform “is integral to a policy thrust intended both to improve teaching and learning and to ‘professionalise’ the PCET workforce” (p. 6). According to them, the quality and content of FE teacher training has been subjected to close regulations by the State as a considerable proportion of the training content is prescribed by government agencies, with ITT providers being presented with extensive specifications and monitoring against external standards. In a similar vein, Lucas and Nasta (2010) refer to the LLUK standards as an intense assessment and regulatory regime which seeks to control professionalism in the FE sector. Also, Thompson (2010) asserts that the “professionalisation agenda” (p. 124) may be regarded as both an attempt to improve the quality of service through re-skilling or up-skilling of the FE workforce, as well as an extension of central and local managerial control.

Previously, Hoyle and Wallace (2007) contend that despite the reform initiatives and the level of funding over the years, there is little evidence that interventions and initiatives have had the anticipated impact on improved quality of education, and overall the

responses of teachers to the reforms have been mostly negative. Levin (2010), from his experience of the Canadian context, asserts that within the last few decades, attempts have been made to address education issues through the implementation of reforms which have been ineffective, partly because of specific complexities and constraints on what can be done, and a lack of focus on what constitutes reliable research evidence and what is known about effective teaching. He argues that governments are inclined to fiddle with the levers that control most directly (e.g. decentralisation, competition, inspection, accountability), whether or not those are the main influences of outcomes.

## **2.5 Marketisation and Deregulation (2010 – 2014)**

The Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government came into power in 2010, and the lifelong learning sector continued to be on the receiving end of educational reforms. In the same year, the Coalition government published two strategy documents: *Skills for Sustainable Growth* (BIS, 2010a) and *Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth* (BIS, 2010b) which outline the future direction of the reform of further education for adults aged 19 and over. Avis (2011) draws out similarities and tensions between the Coalition government policy and that of the Labour Party in respect of similarity of themes, overlapping concerns and strong affinities in education policies.

However, some new developments have highlighted a philosophy of voluntarism and deregulation that leave FE teacher training to market decisions. According to recommendations from Lord Lingfield's review (see below), the legislation on minimum thresholds of training and staff development for FE teachers should be revoked and the

decision left to the discretion of employers. The implication here is that judgement about value and choice are devolved to employers and service-users (who would naturally require value for their money). This idea is underpinned by new liberalism, which again is another form of market-based educational policies introduced by the previous Conservative and New Labour governments. This has been viewed by teachers, teacher trainers, managers and experts in teaching and learning as a challenge to FE teacher professionalism and an erosion of their professional status (Chowen, 2013).

### *2.5.1 The Lingfield Review, 2012*

In 2012, the FE sector experienced another major landmark with Lord Lingfield's review which promised a radical shake-up of government approaches to professionalism in the sector. The final report acknowledges previous governments' interventions and control and a subsequent weakening of "the very characteristics successive governments have wished to nourish ..." (BIS, 2012, p. 1), and presents the proposal to remove external controls on the sector wherever appropriate. Lord Lingfield was commissioned by the government to work with an expert panel to explore how the status of FE professionals could be raised and to offer a resolution to the dispute that had arisen over payment of subscription to the IfL (BIS 2012).

The review panel, through consultations with staff and leaders in FE systems both locally and internationally, attempted "to define how professionalism, in the absence of registration might be characterised and supported in the context of further education" (p. i). The implication according to the review is that the FE sector should be "left alone, in near autonomy" (p. ii) to perform its role in serving learners, local communities and

employers. The review panel's perception of professionalism in the absence of registration however manifested in the revocation of the 2007 regulations which required teaching staff within FE and training providers to be qualified as teachers. This has now been replaced "with largely discretionary advice to employers on appropriate qualifications for staff and continuing professional development replacing compulsion" (p. 6). It also recommended that the IfL revert to its original status as a voluntary body. The final report asserted that New Labour's good intentions in supporting professional values in FE by the registration of practitioners with the IfL had little effect, and that conversely, it has led to controversies and difficulties; hence, the decision to make its membership voluntary.

The revocation of the mandatory teaching qualifications for FE teachers seems to undermine teacher's professional standing which unsurprisingly then raises concerns in many quarters (Chowen, 2013). Right from the proposal stage, the move was seen by some as a retrograde step especially in terms of the proposed parity of esteem between Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for teachers in schools and Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) for teachers in the FE/lifelong learning sector. According to a survey of IfL members which was conducted in response to the Coalition Government's consultation on the revocation proposals (IfL, 2012), teachers and trainers in the sector overwhelmingly rejected the initial proposal to abolish mandatory teaching qualifications in the sector and to replace this with a preparatory award in further education. They argued that it would not only erode teachers' professional status but also damage learners' education. The survey indicates that 81% of respondents concur "that the level at which someone is 'qualified' is central to being recognised as a professional" (p. 5).



This perhaps indicates the value that the respondents place on their initial teacher training. It also resonates with the perception that the move away from statutory teaching qualification neither places value on a robust knowledge base nor enhances “professional closure or exclusivity” (Robson 1998, p. 586).

On the whole, all of these underline the fact that the very idea of qualifications for FE teachers remains a contested concept, hence their value is questioned. Also, the drive for parity of esteem between school teachers with QTS and teachers in the FE sector (currently without any obligation to be qualified to teach) has now been undermined. What can be deduced from the recent changes is that the liberal conservatism philosophy of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government has proved to be even more market-driven than the regulated system of professional development adopted by the New Labour (Thompson, 2014).

### *2.5.2 The 2014 Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training*

Following the revocation of the 2007 regulations, a set of new education and training qualifications was introduced to simplify and eventually replace the existing qualifications. Although there is now no legal requirement for teachers in the FE sector to be qualified, the Coalition government (based on an online survey of those working in the sector) deemed it fit to introduce a new set of ‘aspirational’ professional standards for teachers and trainers in post-compulsory education and training in England that would “engage and motivate practitioners and their employers” (ETF, 2014, p.3). The Education and Training Foundation (ETF), a body set up to raise quality and

professionalism of teachers and trainers in the FE and training sector, worked in collaboration with both a steering group and practitioner group (representing education and training providers) to develop the new professional standards which was launched in May 2014 (ETF, 2014). The new standards assert that teachers and trainers are committed to maintaining and developing their expertise as dual professionals, and also 'define' the requirements that underpin good teaching practice (ibid).

It is worth noting that, whilst the previous 1999 FENTO standards comprised 300 descriptors, and the 2007 LLUK standards 190 statements, the 2014 professional standards are narrower, initially covering only 3 main sections which are amplified by 20 associated statements. However, curricula are still quite closely prescribed for ITT qualifications.

## **2.6 Initial Teacher Education of Further Education Teachers**

It may be a false assumption but it nevertheless has been assumed that one way of changing the nature of teacher professionalism is to change the structure and content of initial teacher education. (Furlong 2001, p. 118)

Furlong argues that initial teacher training was seen, at least throughout the Conservative party's tenure of office (1979-1997), as a significant vehicle for changing the nature of teacher professionalism. Consequently, it has experienced a shift from the backwaters of education policy to a strategically significant position. Beck (2009) takes the same view by arguing that successive governments and their agencies have

prescribed and controlled the knowledge base of the teaching profession; an approach he labels as based on a *behaviourist psychology*.

Following the McNair Report (1944) - one of a series of government reports which aimed to develop FE teacher education - three technical teacher training institutions were established in Bolton, London and Huddersfield (Thompson, 2014). The Crowther Report of 1959 led to the creation of the fourth teacher training institution in Wolverhampton. Initially though, emphasis was on the need for teachers to keep up to date with their specialism within industrial settings (Robson, 2006). These institutions which later became universities subsequently introduced part-time in-service training which to date remains a popular route for FE teacher training. They are also now part of around 50 HEIs which now provide ITT courses for the post-compulsory sector in partnership with FE colleges (Bridge et al, 2003).

Traditionally, FE teacher training programmes have been offered at both HE and sub-HE levels by universities and national awarding bodies through FE colleges and training organisations. The sub-HE levels have been essential because of the nature of FE teachers, many of who come from vocational or craft backgrounds with limited academic experience. During the New Labour years, both the universities and awarding bodies were obligated not only to accommodate a range of academic levels, but also to design their qualifications and courses to incorporate the FENTO and subsequently LLUK standards. Universities designed their ITT qualifications to cater for trainees entering at

both pre-graduate and graduate levels through the Certificate in Education (Cert Ed) and Postgraduate Certificate in Education qualifications (PGCE)<sup>1</sup> respectively.

The content and assessment of these qualifications reflect the LLUK mandatory units of assessment as endorsed by Standards Verification UK (SVUK) (now defunct) which in 2005 became responsible for the verification of initial teacher training for FE and other workforce training and development for the lifelong learning sector (SVUK 2005). Similarly, City & Guilds as the largest national awarding body for FE teacher training has for many years provided qualifications at sub-HE levels (730 series) as a less academically rigorous route for trainees from largely vocational backgrounds. It has also offered qualifications at HE level on the requirement of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) which is responsible for regulating qualifications delivered by awarding bodies outside the university sector.

HEIs and the awarding bodies have however mapped the standards in different ways based on their practices. City & Guilds have used its traditional competence-based approach where the standards have been based on assessment outcomes, while universities have tended to use assignments, teaching practice and knowledge outcomes (Nasta, 2007). Lucas et al (2012) found that even within university ITE programmes, there are extensive variations in the structures of the programmes. As an example, there are variations in the levels and titles of the qualifications awarded (e.g. DTLLS, Cert Ed, PgCE, PGCE). There are also differences in the credit ratings, level

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<sup>1</sup> Accredited at Masters level (or level 7), and the Professional Graduate Certificate in Education which is accredited at Honours level (or level 6).

and numbers of modules taken, and different assessment demands. Considering that all these qualifications have been supposedly mapped to the new framework, it casts a shadow of doubt as to the consistency of the qualifications and, more fundamentally, it raises questions about how effective central control was in practice.

Another issue is the diversity within FE teacher training which has led to a difficulty in providing adequate support in developing specialist teaching skills. Hence, it has focused on general pedagogical knowledge in contrast to schools' teacher training which affords subject specific grouping of trainees (Lucas et al, 2012). Some HEIs have however sought to address this issue through the delivery of subject specialist modules which facilitate subject specific collaboration with mentors and trainees across consortium colleges. Subsequent to Ofsted's criticism of a lack of systematic and effective mentoring and support systems in the workplace and their suggestions (Ofsted, 2003), the consultation paper; *Equipping our Teachers for the Future* (DFES 2004), recommended that "mentoring, either by line managers, subject experts or experienced teachers in related curriculum areas, is essential" (para 3.6). The overarching professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the FE sector (LLUK, 2007) also highlighted ways in which it is claimed that mentoring can enhance the development of professional skills and knowledge that will enable teachers to teach their own specialist subject more effectively.

A further significant feature that defines FE teacher training is its in-service nature. Thompson and Robinson (2008) note that the majority of ITT in the sector was in-service rather than pre-service. This in-service nature implies that training is carried out

on a part-time basis concurrently with teaching responsibilities. This distinguishes FE from primary and secondary teacher training which operate mainly through the pre-service route.

With many FE colleges originating from technical colleges and mechanic institutes, the trade backgrounds of the majority of teachers in this sector and their expertise in their vocational areas have meant that in most cases, they have entered the sector on those strengths which seemed adequate and sufficient to teach their specialist subject (Ministry of Education, 1959). According to Harkin (2005), there might have been an assumption that FE teachers' vocational expertise takes pre-eminence over pedagogic, theoretical and procedural knowledge. This analysis was echoed by Robson (2006) who claimed that: "the assumption has been ... that if I know my subject, I can, by definition, teach it to others" (p. 14). There was therefore no obligation to obtain a teaching qualification even after the McNair Report (1944) which considered the supply, recruitment and training of teachers and youth leaders. As previously noted however, from 2001, the Further Education Teachers' Qualifications legislation obligated teachers in the FE sector to achieve a teaching qualification (SI, 2001): nevertheless this requirement has now been superseded by the Lingfield review.

Following Ofsted's (2003) report, which found what was referred to as serious deficiencies in the attainment of trainees, its national inspection survey of ITT also indicated some shortcomings in the way that standards have been translated into teacher training programmes (Ofsted, 2006). Gaps in the implementation include:

a striking contrast between the quality of the taught element of ITT courses, which is generally good, and the quality of the practice elements, which is inadequate ..... Although the attention given to assessing the quality of trainees' teaching has improved since the publication of the 2003 Ofsted survey, the procedures for assuring the accuracy of the assessment of trainees' teaching performance still lack rigour. In many colleges, senior managers still give insufficient attention to the quality of ITT provided for their staff, despite the obvious link between the quality of teacher training and the standards of teaching and learning in the colleges they manage (p. 2).

A key issue here is how theory is put into practice and the poor level of attention given to the ITT courses by college managers. But then, inspectors also found that trainees use a wide range of teaching methods and approaches, they have high expectations and are committed to raising students' achievement. Perhaps it can be argued that "most of the national effort has been made in the wrong place: towards standards, regulations and compulsion, rather than towards fostering a deep and shared commitment to real 'bottom up' professionalism among FE employers and staff" (BIS 2012, p. 14).

The initial training of FE teachers has also raised other concerns at the local level. Lucas and Unwin (2009) in their study on in-service trainee teachers in FE colleges in England conclude that many of the FE colleges surveyed in their study offered little or no financial support to their staff who were undertaking mandatory teacher training. Also, the colleges provided insufficient remission from trainees' normal lecturing timetables to reflect and study:

... too many colleges are characterised by restrictive features of job design and work organisation. In addition, too many colleges do not respect the important principle of bestowing on trainees, the dual identity of learner (trainee) and worker, with all that entails in providing practical support to trainees from more experienced colleagues and a reduced teaching load to provide time for trainees

to benefit from off-the-job learning and to reflect upon and experiment with their learning (p. 431).

### *2.6.1 Initial thoughts from authors' lenses*

It is evident that successive governments have sought to raise the quality of teaching and teacher development, and one significant strategy in developing and controlling the skills and knowledge of teachers has been through a review of their initial teacher training (Furlong et al, 2000), through the introduction of standards.

In reviewing government approaches to teacher development, it has been suggested that despite the spate of reforms, none of them have given priority to teachers, their professional skills or their professional development (Barber, 1995). Barber also argues that previous reforms have missed the essential part of education that concerns the classroom interaction of learners and teachers, and the exceptional ability of teachers to generate sparks of learning which are of significance to society. Whilst Stevenson (2001) has reservations about the validity of the use of standards and qualification statements in unpacking the range of workplace activities, Nasta (2007) clearly challenges the use of the FENTO (1999) and LLUK (2007) standards in representing or describing tacit knowledge in written statements:

Both sets of standards make an implicit assumption that it is possible to capture in written statements-codified knowledge-the richness and complexities involved in the process of teaching. Whilst codification may have some significant advantages in making knowledge transparent and accessible, there is far from common agreement about whether it is possible to capture in this form, the fundamental knowledge and practices of professionals operating in complex teaching and learning environments (p. 3).



Nasta's contention is that what teachers 'know' and can 'do' are far more than can be said or written in sets of standards. These abilities are also usually context based and socially constructed within communities of practitioners. In making a distinction between the two types of knowledge; situated (socially constructed) and non-situated (codified) knowledge, he questions the effectiveness of codified knowledge in the contexts that FE teachers practice (Nasta, 2007). Similarly, Maxwell (2009) asserts that there is a profusion of prescriptions for becoming a 'good teacher' in the LLUK professional standards, but that the government neither understands how trainees' ideas and practices develop nor recognises the complexities of their journeys.

In this chapter, attention has been drawn to the plethora of educational reforms and policy initiatives introduced by successive governments, and ensuing impacts on the training and development of FE teachers. However, these and the nature of initial teacher education for FE teachers raise a question about the value placed on FE teacher professionalism.

## **Chapter 3: A Review of Professionalism in the FE Sector**

This chapter analyses some perspectives and approaches to understanding FE teachers' professionalism, and situates them within the influential capacity of professionals as well as the hegemony of external interventions. The dual identities of FE teachers, in comparison with school teachers, are also outlined; firstly, as professionals in their primary professions and in teaching, and secondly, as teachers and learners simultaneously. Furthermore, the chapter explores a range of sociological views on how teachers construct professional knowledge, and some ensuing implications for teachers' professional development are highlighted. Lastly, in order to secure a better understanding of FE teachers' initial training and development, existing studies on initial teacher education for the FE sector are analysed, and key themes deriving from these are considered.

### **3.1 Conceptions and Perspectives of FE Teacher Professionalism**

There is a general lack of consensus on the concept of professionalism in teaching as its meaning changes in response to external pressures, public discourses and scientific developments (Helsby, 1999; Demirkasimoglu, 2010). Hoyle (1975) describes professionalism as the "strategies and rhetorics employed by members of an occupation seeking to improve status, salary and conditions" (p. 314), and coined the term *professionality* which he refers to as the knowledge, skills and procedures utilised by teachers in the teaching process (1974). Pratte and Rury (1991) view professionalism

as an ideal that individuals and occupational groups seek in order to distinguish themselves from other workers. They consider status and prestige as key determinants of professionalism through expert knowledge, membership control, and commitment to welfare of the client.

Friedson (1994) interprets profession as “an occupation that controls its own work, organised by a special set of institutions sustained in part by a particular ideology of expertise and service” (p. 10). Friedson’s interpretation focuses on the activities of the professions rather than their characteristics. For him, “much of the debate about professionalism is clouded by unstated assumptions and inconsistent and incomplete usages” (p. 169). Ozga (1995) however evaluates professionalism from the context of policy and sees it as an exploration of the value of the service offered by the members of that occupation to those in power; this interpretation seems to connote a top-down control of teachers’ practice and the prescription of specifications by those in power.

Hoyle and John (1995) advocate a concept of professionalism which is derived from high status professions and which focuses on 3 key issues which are linked to the traditional concept of professionalism, namely: *knowledge*, *autonomy* and *responsibility*. They argue that professionals possess and apply technical and specialist knowledge-based skills which have been developed through long periods of training and which lay people do not possess. Closely linked to this is the argument for autonomy, which places discretion above routine and which promotes flexibility and freedom in making independent judgements. The third aspect, responsibility, necessitates the consideration of values and principles of effective practice in daily activities.

In the same vein, Robson (2001) draws on three strategies that professionals adopt to seek improved status and which are particularly relevant to a discussion of FE teachers in the UK. Based on data gathered from research on trainee teachers, she proposes 3 key determinants: *social closure, professional knowledge and autonomy*. Social closure refers to the tactics that professional bodies employ to secure their power and close opportunities to outsiders. This can be achieved “through processes such as developing and ‘credentialing’ the knowledge and skills associated with a profession’s work” ... (p. 3). However, Robson argues that this type of professional boundary is weak within the FE sector due to the diversity of entry routes and the lack of collective status or identity, hence the profession lacks closure.

As previously considered by Hoyle and John (1995), Robson also draws on professional knowledge. This perhaps comes with its hierarchies; with value-free, ‘hard’ scientific knowledge holding more prestige than the value-laden ‘soft’ knowledge of the humanities. Again, the education sector can be seen to fall within the latter category of less well-defined professional knowledge which carries low prestige. The third aspect, professional autonomy, again, similar to Hoyle’s and John’s (1995) concept, focuses on the ability of the professional to make individual decisions free from external pressures. Robson (2001) contends that “In FE in the UK, the claim is often made that competence-based curricula (notably, our National Vocational Qualifications or NVQs) have de-skilled professional practice by reducing the scope for autonomous decision-making” (p. 5). Nevertheless, she points out that new opportunities are being presented to FE teachers in order to enhance their status including: compulsory training and the

introduction of standards for FE teachers; bursary payments for trainees; and a new professional body for FE.

Drawing on broader literature on professionalism, Colley and James (2005) explore two approaches to constructing professionalism in FE teaching. The first “takes the form of a list of defining characteristics, functions or ways of working that set professions apart from other occupations” (p. 3). This they explain as a job description which entails such things as ethical codes, and teachers’ status in relation to their students; an *epistemology of professionalism*. This is similar to Stronach et al’s (2002) exploration of “outside-in” stories (p. 125), which involves practice that is informed by externally determined procedures and standards. Their second approach focuses on what the professional actually does, the real thing; an *ontology of professionalism*, which they explain as person specifications. Again, this mirrors Stronach et al’s (2002) examination of “inside-out” professionalism (p. 125) which rests on Aristotle’s concept of *phronesis* and on the notion of the virtuous professional.

Bathmaker’s (2006) typology of professionalism draws attention to major factors which contribute to an understanding of the development of professionalism, and seeks to clarify issues raised by researchers deliberating on the concept. The first category in this classification is *corporate professionalism* which is mainly associated with new forms of public management, a shift towards entrepreneurial ethos with colleges operating as independent corporations and having responsibility for all aspects of their work. However, as colleges have also been subject to more stringent systems of market competition, performance targets and accountability through structures of auditing and

inspection, it has been argued that notions of autonomy are translated into forms of implicit control where employees are expected to be self-reliant and in control but in practice are supposed to meet targets set by others. Although corporate professionalism seemingly denotes a discourse of learner centredness, widening of participation, and autonomy, Bathmaker (2006) argues that on the ground, the adoption of corporate professionalism triggers a shift in value which aligns with performance indicators and competition. In other words, this form of professionalism is laced with strategies that are employed to compel teachers to conform to the corporate aims of their institution rather than those values that underpin their work e.g. social justice and equal opportunities.

In contrast to corporate professionalism is *critical professionalism* which has been advanced in response to the dominance of corporate professionalism. This form of professionalism is rooted in concerns for social justice and equity (Bathmaker, 2006), and one form of it is the notion of authentic professionalism which is defined as:

having an understanding of oneself as a teacher and a person; having an awareness of and interest in others especially students; having a concern for the relationships between teachers and students; having an awareness of the context in which learning takes place; and engaging in critical reflection about one's practices and the context in which these take place (Newman and Associates, 1996, p. 13).

It has been proposed that critical professionalism which is useful to practitioners, needs to be open to critiques from practitioners in spite of the ideals of social justice and the common grounds in learners' development. In other words, although this type of professionalism advocates a fair and just educational system, there is a risk that it can

neglect issues that are fundamental and significant to teachers e.g. the daily practices of teaching and learning (Bathmaker and Avis, 2013).

Other conceptions of professionalism or professional identities are *personal and collaborative professionalism*. Personal professionalism stems from teachers' responses to their own educational experiences; their commitment to supporting students and their individual commitment to their specialist areas. Collaborative professionalism on the other hand links with Lave's and Wenger's (1991) construct of communities of practice, as well as the work of others on forms of collaborative cultures. The main thrust of this professionalism is the relations and partnerships with colleagues as a form of joint strategy in dealing with external constraints and pressures as well as a means of overcoming the isolation of personal professionalism (Bathmaker, 2006).

Gleeson and James (2007) affirm that FE professionalism remains an elusive and paradoxical concept and that there are many theories and models which seek to define what it is to be a professional. For them, traditionally, this concept has been approached by social science in two ways that seek to understand why professions exist. The first defines professions based on shared occupational attributes and the positive roles and functions performed in society which may include: "a set of skills based on a body of theoretical knowledge, a clear route to qualification for practitioners, a code of conduct, an ethic of altruism and relatively high rewards" (p. 456). The second is an ideological perspective which typifies professionalism "as a strategy for establishing occupational dominance and for gaining a monopoly position, and examines the extent to which professionals' declared altruism is a mask for self-interest" (p. 456). The functionalist

perspective focuses on the service oriented characteristics of professions which set them apart from other groups, while the ideological perspective focuses on their strategies for control. The latter also aligns with the interactionist tradition which lays emphasis on “what professions actually do in everyday life to negotiate and maintain their special position” (Robson, 2001, p. 1).

Evans’ (2008a) interpretation of professionalism centres on the influential capacity of professionals which positions teachers as key players. She posits that a key element of professionalism seems to be commonality, a collective notion which is shared by many as in communities of practice. Like Boyt et al (2001), Evans perceives “professionalism to be what perhaps may best be described as, in one sense, the plural of individual’s professionalism orientation: the amalgam of multiple professionalities ...” (p. 26). Evans’ concept of professionalism signifies one which evolves within rather than one imposed by external agencies; one that is influenced and adopted by the professionals, and one that is perceived as a reality as opposed to an idealised concept. Ironically, Evans observes that this commonality or homogeneity becomes threatened or undermined when professionals with a diversity of values, attitudes, ideologies and approaches enter into the equation as in the FE sector. Consequently, she proposes three types of professionalism:

- professionalism that is *demande*d – this reflects the professional service level or requirements made of an occupational group .
- professionalism that is *prescribed* – this reflects the envisaged or recommended service level perceived by analysts.



- professionalism that is *enacted* – this reflects professional practice that is observed, perceived and interpreted by those from outside or within the occupational.

Adapted from Evans (2008a, p.29).

According to Evans, professionalism that is enacted is the only one which reflects the reality of daily practices as well as a general ethical code. Hence she defines professionalism as:

professionalism-influenced practice that is consistent with commonly-held consensual delineations of a specific profession and that both contributes to and reflects perceptions of the profession's purpose and status and the specific nature, range and levels of service provided by, and expertise prevalent within, the profession, as well as the general ethical code underpinning this practice. (Evans, 2008a, p. 29).

Moreover, from teachers' perspectives, a policy paper on the quality of teachers by the Association for Teacher Education in Europe identifies some significant indicators that reflect the quality of teachers, and regards teaching as "a profession that entails reflective thinking, continuing professional development, autonomy, responsibility, creativity, research and personal judgements" (ATEE 2006, p. 7).

In examining the range of interpretations of professionalism in this study, a common trend of autonomy and independence is clear. However, the implementation of the FENTO and LLUK standards casts doubts on FE teacher autonomy or discretion. It can be argued that outcome-based strategies and the centralisation of control of all aspects of teachers' practice (Humphreys and Hyland, 2002) have led to an erosion of professional autonomy. This is echoed by Lucas (2004b) who asserts that the implementation of occupational standards has generated an official impoverished or restricted definition of FE teachers' professionalism. Consequently, this perceived

marginalised profile of FE teachers which has resulted in government prescription and a shift of power from teachers has been referred to by some as a de-professionalisation rather than a new professionalism (Hyland, 1996; Sachs, 2003; Furlong, 2005; Gleeson et al, 2005). The implementation of the FENTO and LLUK standards in 1999 and 2007 respectively represent Evans (2008a) conception of professionalism that is *prescribed*.

### **3.2 Dual Professionalism and Dual Identities – *Hallmarks of FE Teachers***

One of the differences between teachers in schools and teachers in the FE sector, is that a significant proportion of FE teachers have already become experienced and established in other occupations before becoming teachers in FE (Robson et al, 2004). Diversity the FE teachers' profile with most coming into teaching as a second or subsequent career from a wide range of backgrounds, to teach subjects which are related to their primary specialism or trade. A high proportion of FE teachers hence operate within the context of dual professionalism; being a professional in their specialist area (vocational or academic) as well as a professional teacher. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service<sup>2</sup> (LSIS, 2012), which aimed to accelerate the drive for excellence in the learning and skills sector, described dual professionalism as entailing two equally important parts. The first is an up-to-date specialist subject expertise, and the second is a sound grasp of pedagogical skills.

This feature of the FE sector can perhaps be analysed in two dimensions. The first is the opportunity that it affords learners to benefit from teachers' vocational or industrial

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<sup>2</sup> now defunct

expertise, and their pedagogical skills. The other is the potential obstacle that the fragmentation and dualism pose to the advancement of FE teaching profession and teachers' identity. Arguably, the wide range of entry routes into FE teaching creates a weak professional boundary (Robson, 1998) as it is difficult to specify the level and nature of entry qualifications for staff. Robson contends that this however is not the case for school teachers who require a degree qualification before entering the profession. This "professional gate" protects interests and enhances the professional status of teachers within the school sector. Another issue is that FE teachers' link with their former occupation may lead to the reluctance of some to consider themselves as professional teachers, and may explain the imposition of strict standards by the government on what constitutes professional practice (Orr, 2008).

The discourse of dual professionalism within the FE sector also takes another twist; that which creates tension with regard to the allegiances that teachers hold to their vocational or industrial experiences (Robson, 1998). For instance, ongoing identity with teachers' initial occupation could cast shadows on their secondary profession and their role as teachers. In a small-scale study of the discourse of professionalism adopted by vocational teachers in further education colleges, Robson et al (2004) came to the conclusion that FE teachers seek to be protective of the status and identity of the professional group from which they come:

In moving from one occupational area (in industry or commerce) to another (education and training), most further education teachers retain strong allegiances to their first occupational identity. In their talk about the work of teaching, therefore, one might expect to find reference to these prior identities, to the values and understandings of a professionalism associated with the first workplace and its

culture, as well as to wider discourses of professionalism and teacher professionalism (Robson et al 2004, pp. 187-188)

This sentiment was highlighted in Goodson's (2003) work in respect of scholars developing first allegiance to their 'home' discipline. Although this kind of allegiance has been viewed as a barrier to vocational and academic integration, Fisher and Webb (2006) argue that irrespective of allegiances, there is an expectation for teachers to develop and maintain both subject specialist knowledge and pedagogic skills.

Fazaeli (2009) asserts that "teachers and trainers in the sector are dual professionals who have subject or vocational expertise as well as teaching or training expertise" and that "through CPD, they maintain their subject specialism and the skills and knowledge required to teach it effectively, thereby strengthening both aspects of their professionalism" (front page). The Institute for Learning (IfL) advocates that "continuing professional development (CPD) means maintaining, improving and broadening relevant knowledge and skills in your subject specialism and your teaching and training, so that it has a positive impact on practice and the learner experience" (IfL, 2009a, p12). This involves keeping up-to-date with developments in teachers' specialist areas as well as developing pedagogical skills and approaches. The IfL<sup>3</sup> sought to promote a model of dual professionalism which prioritised both parts of professionalism and encouraged balanced CPD activities (IfL, 2009b). However, in context, it is not usually the case that teachers engage in CPD within their former or first profession (see section 8.5). This is probably due to the fact that under FE conditions, the range of CPD activities and

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<sup>3</sup> now defunct

opportunities are usually based around pedagogical developments and practice rather than subject specialisms.

Harkin (2005), who also conceives dual professionalism as a combination of a teacher's subject knowledge and knowledge of pedagogy, argues that it is crucial to empower teachers with the professional skills and knowledge required to facilitate learning rather than solely relying on a crude approach in transmitting technical expertise or specialist knowledge and skills. However, it is one thing to encourage the development of dual professionalism, it is another to effect and sustain it; as with Evans' (2008) conceptions of professionalism that are prescribed and enacted. In developing dual professionalism, the question then is does the means justify the end in terms of institutional resources, personal time and effort expended? Also, how does one evaluate "whether CPD actually makes a positive difference to individuals, to professional institutions, to the workplace, and to society?" (Peel, 2005, p. 124).

Apart from teaching being mostly a second career choice for FE teachers (Chowen, 2014), the professionalism of FE teachers is complicated by the issue of dual identities (as learners and teachers simultaneously) which has also fuelled the inequality between school teachers and FE teachers, with 90% of the latter completing their initial teacher training on a part-time in-service basis (UCET, 2009). It can be argued that FE trainee teachers more or less take on the added responsibility or burden of combining full teaching caseloads with their studies, which may leave little or no time to fully develop in both areas, as employer support which could alleviate this burden has not always been forthcoming. Fuller and Unwin (2003) conclude that some organisations provide

*expansive* environments (where learning opportunities are fostered), whereas others create *restrictive* environments (where learning opportunities are limited). Lucas and Unwin (2009) assert that trainee FE teachers often receive minimal organisational support and there is a lack of appreciation of their dual identity of trainee and worker and the corresponding workload. Arguably, this approach is likely to hinder rather than enhance the professional development of FE teachers.

### **3.3 Constructions and Conceptualisations of Professional knowledge**

There is an ongoing debate about the nature of knowledge, but the consensus is that knowledge exists in many forms and that there are many approaches to conceptualising it (Saunders, 2006). Moreover, the construction of knowledge is a dynamic and active process that involves comprehension and interpretation (among other things), and which draws on a knowledge base of understanding, beliefs and attitudes (Spillane et al, 2002). It is therefore necessary to explore, from a range of perspectives, how teacher professional knowledge is conceptualised and constructed. More importantly, as the development of teachers' professional knowledge is one of the key areas that this study aims to explore.

One conception of teachers' professional knowledge is rooted in the epistemological assumption that knowledge is objective and fixed; this type of knowledge has also been referred to as "formal, explicit and technical" (Saunders, 2006, p. 16). Shulman (1987) organises knowledge into seven categories: *content knowledge*, *general pedagogical knowledge*, *curriculum knowledge*, *pedagogical content knowledge*, *knowledge of*

*learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values* (p. 8). According to him, the types of knowledge that trainee teachers need to develop entail broad principles and strategies of classroom management, 'tools of the trade' for teachers' use, forms of professional understanding etc. However, Shulman's categories seem to represent those which could be codified and presented in a textbook (Maxwell, 2010). Maxwell's concern is that this typology does not take into consideration the different ways in which individuals construct knowledge and the contexts and communities where this happens; an omission that Shulman recognised in his later work.

A more contemporary conceptualisation of teacher professional knowledge is based on the socio-cultural construction of knowledge which assumes that knowledge is provisional, fluid, informal, tacit and social (Saunders, 2006; Maxwell, 2010). It is understood that practitioners' knowledge develops in various forms and there is an evolving agreement that much of this happens through complex interactions in a variety of settings. Putnam and Borko (2000), argue that new ideas about the nature of knowledge, thinking and learning, also known as *situated perspectives* "are interacting with, and sometimes fuelling, current reform movements in education" (p. 4). Brown et al (1989) also posit that participation in communities of practice is the most appropriate way to develop work based knowledge.

Other situative theorists (e.g. Lave & Wenger, 1991) challenge the assumption of knowledge that is independent of context and intention, and argue that the acquisition of knowledge and skills, the situation in which it occurs and the interactions of individuals

are fundamental to learning. These *interactions* imply that the role of *others* in the process of learning and the construction of knowledge are significant as the discourse and practice of communities provide the tools necessary to develop knowledge - for Lave and Wenger (ibid), “a community of practice is an intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge...” (p. 98). In exploring issues pertaining to the nature of knowing and the processes of learning, Putnam and Borko (2000) also assert that social and situated cognition are significant to the development of teacher learning and practices, and that teacher knowledge and learning should be considered from a situative perspective.

Bringing the LSS ITE reforms into focus, Maxwell (2010) raises issues with some aspects of the initial teacher training curriculum in developing trainees' knowledge. One of her criticisms is the use of national standards which are based on an objectivist, fixed and external epistemological assumption that professional knowledge and skills can be codified in a set of written statements. As analysed above, this negates the emerging consensus about the significance of informal, tacit and fluid learning, and socio-cultural conceptions of professional knowledge. Maxwell's (2010) small-scale study suggests that trainees' practices are strongly influenced by workplace learning and their descriptions of knowledge development align more closely with the socio-cultural theories of learning than the objectivist model of knowledge construction which is implicit within the standards. Notwithstanding, some of the units of assessment of the LLUK professional standards will be used to analyse teachers' perceptions of the knowledge, skills, competence and experience gained on the ITT course. This is necessary as they



were the national framework that specified benchmarks for teachers' professional practice whilst they were on the course (LLUK, 2007).

Another conceptualisation of knowledge which derives from the idea of tacit knowledge is the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis*, which has been referred to as an ancient but enduring concept (Spence, 2007). *Phronesis* can be referred to as knowledge and actions (which will result into practical benefits to those concerned) based on practical wisdom (Aristotle, 1925), and intuition and which are not necessarily rooted in objective or deductive knowledge or skills. As opposed to formal knowledge, this notion, which entails knowing that is translated into actions, views teachers' practice as an intrinsic calling and a commitment to employ tacit skills in meeting learners' needs. It has also been explained as a combination of knowledge which produces a discernment or a knowing of what is fitting in a particular situation which goes beyond a mere skill (Grundy, 1987), and an obligation for practical action within a pedagogical context (van Manen, 1990).

Aristotle's concept suggests that *phronesis* is not a skill that can be gained through teaching but rather that which is obtained over time from experience; it provides the opportunity to deliberate on issues and after careful considerations to arrive at a decision. The implication here is that in the context of the teacher and their practice, there will be instances when they will have to make decisions based on their intuition and careful deliberations as they face circumstances (and have to handle issues) for which they have not been previously prepared. This reflects Humphreys' and Hyland's (2002) argument that teachers "... react to circumstances on the spur of the moment" (p.

10). In other words, emphasis is placed on the intuitive capacity of teachers in respect of creativity and imagination when faced with unexpected events. In these instances, practical wisdom rather than taught/formal knowledge will have to take preeminence. The argument then is that *phronesis* cannot be codified.

### **3.4 Existing Studies on FE Initial Teacher Education (ITE)**

Although there has been a growth in academic research interest within the FE sector, initial teacher education in FE is still relatively under-researched (Jephcote et al 2008a; Jephcote and Salisbury 2009). In most instances when research has been conducted, it has focused on the minority of pre-service trainees on full-time initial teacher education courses (Bathmaker and Avis 2007). In their study, Parsons et al (2001) draw implications from a comparative study of the perceptions of trainee teachers and their lecturers. Firstly, they assert that if it is agreed that a perspective transformation is desirable, the curriculum should facilitate deep reflection. However, according to them, government's approach through the introduction of the FENTO standards did not seem to facilitate a desirable reflective approach. Secondly, they contend that the way trainee lecturers are inducted and supported should be reconsidered in order to reduce the sense of marginalisation as "being part of a community of practice is not something that can be taught, it is experienced" (p. 13).

Bathmaker and Avis (2005) in their study on how trainees become lecturers in FE in England also observe a deep sense of marginalisation among trainees. Their study suggests that significant changes (lack of management support, lack of resources, and

poor workplace conditions) that have taken place in the sector prior to the study have resulted in trainees becoming demoralised. In particular, they draw attention to the fact that trainees encountered difficulties in accessing communities of practice which they expected to engage with. Also, in other cases, the communities that trainees were able to access operated a totally different culture from that which matched trainees' own professional identity which then served to alienate them. These trainees in having to reconcile their ideals with the reality of their experiences subsequently developed low morale in engaging with particular communities of practice; a situation that needs to be redressed in order to build new forms of professionalism for the future. It is worth noting that the findings from these studies support the arguments for the socio-cultural construction of knowledge (section 3.3).

In a prior study, Avis and Bathmaker (2004) explore how current changes may be affecting the development of lecturers' professional practice, specifically in relation to an ethic of care, critical pedagogy, and performativity. They use trainees' accounts of their *lived experience* to reveal a range of possibilities, limitations, tensions and contradictions. Their findings suggest that although trainees are inclined to fostering caring and engaging relationships with their students, their intentions are usually thwarted by the actions of those learners who are neither committed nor hard-working. This situation however leads to a contested notion of critical pedagogy which although is keen on social justice and emancipation, draws a boundary on learner resistance. Avis and Bathmaker attribute these tensions and contradictions to pedagogic and policy contexts in which trainees work, and the nature of the curriculum and its relevance for

the learners. In offering possible options, they acknowledge the constraints that performativity and the policy contexts within FE practice present to practitioners.

Other studies on teacher training in the FE sector include the occupational socialisation of teachers (Salisbury 1994); the impacts of changing policy and reforms (Gleeson and Hodkinson, 1996; Avis, 1999; Simmons and Thompson, 2007; Thompson and Robinson 2008); discourses of professionalism and FE teacher identities (Robson, 1998; Robson et al, 2004; Gleeson and James, 2007; Orr and Simmons, 2010); and national/professional standards and ITT (Harkin et al, 2003; Lucas, 2007; Nasta, 2007).

Harkin et al's (2003) study was considered the largest study of initial training for further education (at the time of its publication). The study explores FE teachers' perceptions of their initial teacher training using key pedagogical and support areas identified in the FENTO (1999) standards. Although its findings indicate a very strong support for the initial training of FE teachers, there were variations in the quality of learning experienced by individual participants. A possible explanation for this is the diverse nature of FE teachers in terms of their prior experience of teaching, age, academic background and subject specialism. Harkin et al propose that the initial training of new teachers should be carried out preferably within the first two years of entering the profession.

The study highlights the importance of practical skills development including course inputs, coaching, peer collaboration and learner engagement, especially in respect of the disengaged and disadvantaged groups. The meaning and role of theory in initial training are also significant to the study. Having initially acknowledged the ambiguity in

student teachers' perceptions of theory (published and personal) and how it is perceived, the study indicates that all theory is not applicable except those which resonate with the student teacher and which work in practice. Furthermore, findings suggest that the concept of reflective practice is key in ITT programmes and this seems to be the reason why it is a more developed concept than that of theory. One aspect of the strength of ITT programmes is the significance of teaching observation and good-quality feedback provided. However, they identify some gaps and propose the need for further research in this area in order to consider the development of the content and process of ITT programmes, considering the great heterogeneity of staff in the sector. They also recommend an exploration of "... a national template for good practice in the initial training and career-long development of teachers in the sector" (Harkin et al, 2003, p. 36).

### **3.5 Conceptual Clarity**

In avoiding ambiguity, Yin (1999) suggests that phenomena should be defined operationally at the onset of a case study, as inadequate definition can lead to findings not reflecting the presumed case. Two concepts in the title of this case study (*professional development and professional practice*) require some clarifications (see below) in order to avoid any misconceptions and to be able to communicate the right meanings attached to each of the terms. Apart from improving clarity, this approach should also enhance the validity of data collected.

### *3.5.1 Professional Development*

According to Fullan (1995), professional development is “the sum total of formal and informal learning pursued and experienced by the teacher in a compelling learning environment under conditions of complexity and dynamic change” (p. 265). For Day (1999), professional development can be defined as “the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives” (p. 4). Furthermore, Bredeson (2002) considers professional development as “learning opportunities that engage educators’ creative and reflective capacities in ways that strengthen their practice” (p. 663). In summary, these three interpretations and definitions suggest that professional development involves the pursuit and extension of learning which leads to the development of knowledge and skills that are significant in enhancing and improving own practice. In this study, this will include all aspects of formal and informal learning that trainee teachers engage in to foster learner engagement and achievement, as well as the range of skills and knowledge that they acquire in their daily practices of teaching and in enhancing their status. Chapters 7 and 8 of the study deal with these in further details.

### *3.5.2 Professional Practice*

There are differences of opinions regarding what constitutes professional conduct in developing teachers’ professional practice (Tummons, 2010). Exploiting the narratives of experienced practitioners who participated in Gleeson and James’ (2007) study, there is

a perceived dualistic understanding of professional practice; one that is subjected to external rules, control and constraints and the other that is self-determined by individuals. The former depicts issues of structure (*see section 4.5 for further discussions on structure and agency*) in respect of conditions set by the government, employers, institutions or policy-makers, while the latter centres on subjective agency which includes those autonomous “added value” characteristics; independent judgement, insights, and reasoning exhibited by teachers in the discharge of their duties. One concept of professionalism emphasises the formal processes of structure and external indicators which is viewed as a control mechanism over all aspects of teachers’ work and an erosion of professional autonomy. The other concept (professionalism), lays emphasis on the influence of the practitioner on professional practice and entails the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour employed by teachers in the process of teaching (Hoyle, 1974). Similarly, Delamont (1995) explores teachers’ practice in terms of indeterminacy and technicality, where the latter denotes technical skills and knowledge which are the codified part of the job and the former; “the hidden curriculum of the job performance: all the tacit, implicit, unexamined facets of any job” (p. 7).

As discussed in the previous chapter, Evans (2008) proposes a unified conception of professionalism that reflect the reality of daily practices, one which integrates professionalism with the general ethical code underpinning practice. In the context of this study, and similar to Evans’ view, professional practice relates to a combination of the “demanded” and the “enacted”. In other words, a combination of the formal functional processes of external performance indicators which are the LLUK professional standards for teachers, trainers and tutors in post-compulsory education and training;

and the informal attitudinal processes which embrace a range of rational autonomous practices adopted by teachers. It encapsulates what counts as an improvement to knowledge, skills and the quality of practice within the subjective organisational and the broader LLUK standards.



## **Chapter 4: Research Perspectives, Approaches and Design**

As presented in chapter 1, this study aims to explore teachers' and their managers' perceptions of the impact of an in-service PGCE/Cert Ed course on their professional development and practice. Fundamental to addressing the aim are four main research questions which have been developed through a reflective and iterative process:

- 1) How do teachers and their managers conceptualise teacher professionalism?
- 2) What are teachers' perceptions of the knowledge, skills, competence and experience gained on the PGCE/Cert Ed course?
- 3) How have teachers' pedagogical approaches developed since completing the PGCE/Cert Ed course?
- 4) What support structures have influenced teachers' professional development whilst on the course?

According to Blaikie (2010), when the research questions have been formulated and established, then research strategies and the data collection methods and analysis should be selected. To conduct this study effectively, appropriate choices have to be made about the research perspectives/paradigms and approaches, as well as the theoretical frameworks to be adopted. This chapter presents an analysis of, and a justification for employing a mainly interpretivist perspective/paradigm. It also expounds a case study approach to research, Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital, and Giddens' structuration theory.

## **4.1 Research Perspectives and Paradigms**

### *4.1.1 Ontological and Epistemological Considerations*

Ontology has been defined as “a branch of philosophy concerned with articulating the nature and structure of the world” (Wand and Weber, 1993, p. 220). It is the study of what exists or ‘what is out there’, the nature of being, assumptions about existence and how these are categorised and understood. Ontological assumptions relate to the very nature or make up of the social phenomenon being investigated. There are two ideal types of ontological assumptions; the first views social reality as external, single, independent and objectively real while the second views it as socially constructed and subjectively experienced (Sikes 2004). Epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge or how we come to know (Krauss 2005). It poses some key questions such as: what is the relationship between the knower and the known? How do we know what we know? What counts as knowledge? The notion of truth is central to this; for instance, in terms of the validity of the data collected, and how the researcher communicates the knowledge obtained from the research. Although ontology and epistemology are two distinct philosophical concepts, there is a relationship between them in that whilst ontology is about the nature of the social phenomenon, epistemology relates to how knowledge of the social phenomenon is constructed.

These two philosophical concepts; ontology and epistemology, thus underpin a research procedure as they determine the process and methods of inquiry. According to Taylor (2010), the way researchers view the social world affects the way they believe they can understand and know about it. Sparkes (1992) posits that all researchers make some

kinds of assumptions which naturally influence the approach and method(s) of investigation that they employ. He contends that researchers do not enter the process as empty vessels and that their “ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions which have methodological implications for the choices made regarding particular techniques of data collection, the interpretation of these findings and the eventual ways they are written about in texts and presented orally at conferences” (p. 14). This implies that the researcher’s perception of the nature of reality determines what is to be known and subsequently how this knowledge is construed; the relationship between the knower and the known. In other words, the researchers’ basic beliefs and worldviews lie behind their methodological approach in terms of the nature of reality; what is to be known and subsequently how this knowledge is acquired or constructed.

#### *4.1.2 Axioms of Positivist and Constructivist/Interpretivist Paradigms*

##### Positivist Paradigm

Positivism is usually associated with the French philosopher August Comte (Bruce and Yearly, 2006), and focuses on the assertion that knowledge can only be derived from the experience of human senses through observation and experiment. Oldroyd (1990) asserts that positivism places significant emphasis on empirical evidence as the source of knowledge; and would discard from science or philosophical discourse anything or anyone that operates outside empirical investigation. In his review of the positivist paradigm, Sparkes (1992) affirms that those operating within this framework believe that the social world can be investigated in much the same way as the physical or natural world and that the methods, techniques and modes of operation modelled on those within the natural sciences are best for exploring the social world. Hitchcock and Hughes

(1995) agree that positivists make key assumptions about human behaviour; the first of which is that human behaviour is predictable and is caused by and subject to internal and external forces. The second assumption is that these can be observed and measured. This notion suggests that human actions can be studied, understood and subsequently predicted; thus in the same vein as Sparkes' interpretation, presupposing that there is no qualitative difference between the natural and social world.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that positivism centres on at least five assumptions:

- An ontological assumption of a single, tangible, external reality
- An epistemological assumption that separates the knower from the known; a dualism (or mutual exclusivity)
- The possibility of generalisations (nomothetic statements)
- The possibility of causal linkages which involves finding empirical regularities where two or more things appear together or in some kind of sequence (determinism)
- Inquiry is value-free and observations and interpretations are as unbiased as possible (derived from p. 28).

### *Positivist Ontology*

According to the positivist ontology, reality is independent of the researcher. In other words, reality is objective and external to the researcher and there is no relationship between the knower and the known. A passive and neutral role is played by the

researcher in the investigation and does not intervene in the phenomenon of interest (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991).

### *Positivist Epistemology*

The positivist paradigm subscribes to the epistemological assumptions that knowledge is objective, value free, generalisable and independent of the knower (Wellington 2000). This implies that knowledge is discovered and verified through direct observations or measurements of the phenomenon being studied. Trochin (2000) argues that the purpose of science is simply to stick to what can be observed and measured, and knowledge of anything beyond this will be held impossible to a positivist. Furthermore, in a positivist view of the world, science is the ultimate way to get at truth, to come to an understanding of the world in order to be able to predict and control it.

In positivist epistemology, valid and reliable knowledge is derived through the application of scientific methods which in turn are generated through verifiable observation or experiments. This is assumed to be necessary in order to keep the research free of the values and opinions of the researcher. According to Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991), positivist studies generally attempt to test theory in a bid to increase the predictive understanding of phenomena. They adopt some criteria for classifying studies as positivist as follows: evidence of formal propositions, quantifiable measures of variables, hypothesis testing, and the drawing of inferences (deductive approach) about a phenomenon from a representative sample to a stated population. Preferred data collection methods are those that produce data that can be tested and quantified e.g. surveys and structured interviews. Although positivism has its criticisms, it has been

argued that positivist assumptions are essential as they underpin a great deal of empirical research (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995; Taylor, 2010).

### Interpretivist Paradigm

Interpretivism is an umbrella term for describing a range of research traditions and approaches that are in direct contrast and a significant reaction to positivism. The perception here is that the natural and social sciences require the use of different research procedures and techniques, and that reality is not to be observed but rather interpreted. The research approaches that align with this paradigm include; ethnography, hermeneutics, naturalism, phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, constructivism, ethnomethodology, case study and qualitative research (Sparkes 1992).

According to Sparkes, Dilthey, an influential figure in the interpretivist movement, argues that the focus of the social sciences is on the person and their associated subjectivity, interests, emotions and values. Dilthey (who is credited with the first critical attack on Comtean scientism), also maintains that in the human sciences, the relationships between the object and subject of study are inseparable and that natural reality and social reality are diametrically opposed to each other, hence their investigations require different methods (Crotty, 2003). Weber, also one of the main influences in the interpretive tradition, revises Dilthey's original position, by proposing that the social sciences are to be distinguished from the natural sciences not according to the object of research but on their orientation towards individuality (Corbetta, 2003). This orientation is described by Weber as the clear comprehension of the motivations underlying the

behaviour of respondents i.e. putting oneself in the position of another in order to be able to facilitate rational interpretation and understanding (*verstehen*).

Some of the main characteristics of the interpretivist paradigm are that:

- Interpretivist perspective focuses on understanding (*verstehen*)
- Interpretivists are interested in the ways communities, cultures and individuals create meaning from their own actions
- Interpretivists view the social and natural sciences as distinct and requiring different methods and approaches of study.
- Interpretivism is anti-foundationalist i.e. it gives credence to insights inductively gathered from observation and experience.
- Interpretivism is based on the theory of emergence; which acknowledges that things are constantly subject to renegotiation; and reject the formalist, rigorous approaches.
- Interpretivism embraces a multiplicity of perspectives and possible interpretations.

Littlejohn and Foss (2009, p. 560).

### *Interpretivist Ontology*

In this case, reality is relative and multiple, hence, interpretive researchers do not assume that there is a single, external reality which is independent of the researcher's perception. They believe that each person experiences a different reality from their own point of view, hence there are multiple realities. With the interpretive ontology, researchers study meaningful social actions and gather comprehensive qualitative data in order to gain detailed understanding of how meaning is created in every day life in the real-world (Mack, 2010).

### *Interpretivist Epistemology*

Interpretivist epistemology assumes that knowledge can only be produced and understood from the perspectives of individuals (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006). As such, human action has to be interpreted and understood as opposed to being verified through direct observations and evidence as in the case of positivist epistemology. Knowledge and meaning are created from the point of view of both participant and the researcher. The interpretive researcher helps in the understanding of human thought and action in the organisation/social context, and is interested in knowing how people understand and interpret events (Corbetta, 2003). According to Hatch and Cunliffen (2006), "Interpretive epistemology leads us to use methods designed to access the meanings made by others and describe how they come to make those meanings" (p.13). The understanding of others is however sifted through the researcher's own experiences and hence it is difficult to be objective about the interpretations made about others. This value laden characteristic is one of the criticisms of interpretivism. Interpretivists however tend to minimise this bias through rigorous self-reflection which seeks to separate researcher's own interpretations from the participants'. Hatch and Cuncliffe (2006) suggest that:

Taking an interpretive epistemological stance helps you to become sensitive to how people make meaning to the point where, while you will never be able to fully understand or predict the meanings others will make, you can develop your intuitive capacity to anticipate the range of meanings that are likely to emerge in given circumstances by specific people with whom you share adequate intersubjective understanding (p. 15).

This study therefore employs the use of theoretical frameworks and previous findings from literature to interpret, interrogate, analyse and synthesise data collected from teachers and their managers in order to help understand and make sense of their views



and actions. This approach also helps to develop and sharpen the intuitive capacity that Hatch and Cuncliffe suggest by factoring in some established conceptualisations of FE teacher development.

#### *4.1.3 Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, and Triangulation*

Strauss and Corbin (1990) define qualitative research as “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (p. 17). A qualitative research approach is used when a study seeks meanings, perspectives, interpretations and understanding which, in general, generate narratives (Quinn and Cochran, 2002, Robson, 2002). As an example, it is used in studies that entail the understanding of experiences, beliefs, feelings and values of individuals or groups of people (in this study, teachers); and the description of these (Wisker, 2008). Qualitative research approach uses a variety of data collection methods including; interviews; focus groups; participant/non-participant observations; ethnography etc. Quantitative research approach, on the other hand, involves the explanations of people’s thinking or a particular phenomenon from statistical and numerical viewpoints. Quantitative research approach also uses a variety of data collection methods including questionnaires; structured interviews; surveys etc. The main difference between the two methods is the use of narratives in the case of the former and that of statistical and numerical data in the case of the latter (Mack et al, 2005).

Triangulation means the use of more than one method or approach in a study. It is used to enhance the quality of findings (as it potentially combines the strengths of the

methods or approaches used), and also to validate findings (Denzin, 1978). He distinguishes 4 forms of triangulation: *Data triangulation*; *Investigator triangulation*; *Theoretical triangulation*; and *Methodological triangulation*. Methodological triangulation, which is the most common, refers to the use of more than one method of data collection. This form of triangulation has been used to collect data in this study through the use of online questionnaires and semi-structured interviews (please refer to chapter 5). This triangulation which Denzin also distinguishes as a 'between-methods' triangulation has been used to enhance validity of findings as it has provided the opportunity to cross-check, substantiate and authenticate initial findings from the online questionnaire completed by respondents.

## **4.2 Philosophical Assumptions for this study**

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) assert that the positivist approach has been a widely used and influential model of social research, and has played a significant role in providing the basis for much educational research. The interpretive approach has also been used as an alternative way of making sense of social reality (Sparkes 1992). It is apparent that both the interpretivist and positivist approaches have been employed in social research, but then both have been acclaimed and criticised by researchers with different ontological perspectives. Traditional positivists argue that sociology and educational research should follow the methods of natural sciences in obtaining knowledge that is objective, value-free, generalisable and replicable. Conversely, interpretivists contest that reality is a human construct and places emphasis on the role of the observer in exploring perspectives and sharing meanings in order to gain insight and understanding

(Wellington 2000). A major criticism of positivism is “the reduction of meaningful statements to those which explain things logically, mathematically or scientifically (Pring, 2000).

Proponents of positivism (linked with quantitative methods) criticise the interpretive paradigm (linked with qualitative methods) on its value laden approach and lack of rigour, reliability, validity and generalisability (Lincoln and Cannella 2004). However, advocates of interpretivism argue that the subject matter of the natural sciences and that of the social sciences vary fundamentally, and that the framework of the scientific model follows a sequential and ordered pattern which cannot be applied to social behaviour (Hitchcock and Hughes 1995). Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 2) put it thus:

Quantitative scholars relegated qualitative research to a subordinate status in the scientific arena. In response, qualitative researchers extolled the humanistic virtues of their subjective, interpretive approach to the study of human group life.

Stake (1995) argues that interpretation is significant in all research and there is an equal balance in both quantitative and qualitative research, and Howe (2003) contends that educational research can never be value-free. Reacting to attacks on the perceived subjectivity and the lack of rigour in qualitative research, Lincoln and Cannella (2004, p. 181) argue that:

... qualitative research may be even more rigorous simply because it makes its premises, biases, predilections, and assumptions clear up front, whereas the values that undergird a more conventional piece of research may not be stated at all.

The lines of reasoning above provide a basis to argue that no single paradigm is entirely infallible and that the strengths of paradigms might be integrated to produce a more

robust mechanism for investigation. Using their book as an example, Guba and Lincoln (2005, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2008) assert that “the various paradigms are beginning to interbreed such that two theorists previously thought to be in irreconcilable conflict may now appear, under a different theoretical rubric, to be informing one another’s arguments” (p. 256). They acknowledge the huge possibilities that the integration of multiple perspectives and interweaving of viewpoints afford. This “blurring of genres” is evident in their table which incorporates Heron and Reason’s (1997) model of the participatory/cooperative paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 2008, pp. 264-265). Although Guba and Lincoln have incorporated perspectives from major non-positivist paradigms, they primarily orientate towards the interpretive/constructionist perspective as they contend “that a goodly portion of social phenomena consists of the meaning-making activities of groups and individuals around those phenomena” (p. 264). These meaning-making activities according to them are of central interest to social constructivists as these shape action and further steps.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) prescribe the need for ontological and epistemological assumptions to be made explicit before embarking on any research project. The question for the researcher is what is the nature of the social phenomenon under consideration? The answer to this question will significantly influence how a research study is conceived and conducted. As previously indicated, one’s perception of the nature of reality impinges on the methodological approach adopted. It is thus essential at this stage to revisit the aim of my research study and the main research questions emanating from this.

The main aim of this study is to evaluate the impact of the ITE programme on teachers' professional development and practice from the points of view of trained teachers and their managers within a Further Education (FE) college. As an understanding of the views, opinions or perceptions of teachers and managers is being sought; an interpretive approach seems most appropriate. As previously indicated, tied with this approach is an ontological assumption of multiple realities and social construction of reality. The epistemological question, "What is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108) will be answered consistently with the interpretive epistemological assumption that "understanding social reality requires understanding how practices and meanings are formed and informed by the language and tacit norms shared by humans working towards some shared goal" (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991, p. 14).

However, in consideration of the perceived weaknesses associated with interpretive research, I adopted Howe (2003), and Guba and Lincoln's (2008) recommendations of an eclectic approach and the interweaving of viewpoints in identifying and minimising bias in the understanding of social phenomena. This study therefore employs a strategy that not only explores an in-depth understanding of teachers' perceptions of the impact of the ITE course, but also one that "adds rigour, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth" (Flick 2002, p. 229) through a combination of methodological practices, empirical materials and perspectives.

### **4.3 Research Approach – Case Study**

Yin (1984) defines a case study research as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (p. 23). This implies that the phenomenon is not replicated in a simulated setting in order to better understand it but exists in its natural milieu. Stake (1995) describes case study as “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi). It is worth observing that “whereas Yin’s writing tends towards the positivist (or scientific) paradigm” (Bassey 2009, p. 27), Stake’s (1995) view of case studies is drawn from the interpretivist paradigm and pays less attention to quantitative measurements. However, this divergence in the nature of a case study fits well with the philosophical position adopted by this study; an eclectic, complementary and inclusive approach (Howe, 2003; Guba and Lincoln, 2008).

Anderson (1993) asserts that case study is concerned with “how” and “why” things happen in a specific context which facilitates an understanding of complex real-life activities, and the gap between what was planned and what actually occurred. One of the strengths of a case study approach is that it enables the researcher to gain a holistic view of a phenomenon (Gummesson, 1991). Another strength is that it can be useful in understanding some particular problem or situation in great depth, and especially where one can identify cases rich in information (Patton, 1987). The case study approach has however been criticised on its inherent subjectivity. It has been argued that it is not only the logically weakest method of knowing, but also that the study of individual cases,

careers and communities is outdated and attention needs to be focused on patterns and laws of historical research (Smith, 1991). Johnson (1994) criticises case study as lacking in scientific rigour and reliability and not addressing the issues of generalisability. Stenhouse (1985) however contends that “generalisation and applications are matters of judgement rather than calculation, and the task of case study is to produce ordered reports of experience which invite judgement and offer evidence to which judgement can appeal” (p. 49). The work of Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001) echoes the value of case study by demonstrating the possibilities of generalisations in the sense that:

- Theory can be transposed beyond the original sites of study
- Findings can “ring true” in other settings
- Case studies can provide provisional truths, in a Popperian sense (pp. 11-12).

Popper argues that it is unfeasible to verify a hypothesis from a theory; as such, it is more acceptable to seek to falsify a proposition. This implies that a claim to knowledge should always stand as provisional until evidence disproves it.

The importance of theory in case study is crucial to Yin (1984), whether in its development or testing. In generating theory from case study, he advocates analytical generalisation over statistical generalisation. This implies that “a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study. If two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, replication may be claimed” (p. 31). In a similar vein, Stenhouse (1980) asserts that the most important distinction in educational research is that of the study of samples and the study of cases and that both lead to generalisation. He proposes that the study of samples lead to

predictive generalisation while study of cases lead to retrospective generalisation. Predictive generalisation (accumulated from scientific data) is seen to be synonymous with Yin's statistical generalisation while retrospective generalisation (accumulated from historical data) is at par with Yin's analytical generalisation (Bassey, 2009).

In spite of the arguments above, there are still concerns about case study generalisation, but for Stake (1995), the real business of case study is particularisation not generalisation:

... we take a particular case study and come to know it well, not primarily as to know how it is different from others, but what it is, what it does. There is emphasis on uniqueness and that implies knowledge of others that the case is different from, but the first emphasis is understanding the case itself (p. 8).

Arguably, this understanding stems from examination of meanings and possible redirection of observation to substantiate meanings in order to generate and maintain vigorous interpretations. Similarity of cases can afford the opportunity for other researchers to use previous findings as templates in developing their own work. On this basis, researchers are able to draw their own conclusions which Erickson (1986) refers to as assertions, a form of generalisation. Correspondingly, Melrose (2010) argues that case study can contribute to naturalistic generalisation. He explains naturalistic generalisation as:

... a process where readers gain insight by reflecting on the details and descriptions presented in case studies. As readers recognize similarities in case study details and find descriptions that resonate with their own experiences; they consider whether their situations are similar enough to warrant generalization. Naturalistic generalization invites readers to apply ideas from the natural and in-depth depictions presented in case studies to personal contexts (p. 599).



In effect, consideration has to be given to how the particular study bears relevance to other cases and how applicable and transferable they are. Hence, it can be proposed that the findings from my case study research could possibly be applied to similar local colleges in similar settings, and who are delivering similar in-service teacher training courses to similar categories of staff.

On the validity and reliability of case studies; Stake (1995) argues that the quality and validity of case study research could be enhanced through data triangulation. Yin (1999) also proposes the use of a variety of techniques (among other desired characteristics); according to him, the greater the variety of techniques used in one study the stronger the case study evidence tendered. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001) however argue that there is no simple checklist of criteria for judging the validity and/or quality of a case study and conclude that judging the value of a case study research calls for an understanding and careful thinking and consideration of some key questions:

Do the stories ring true? Do they seem well supported by evidence and argument? Does the study tell us something new and/or different that is of value in some sort of way? Is any theorizing better or more valuable than alternative models? (p. 12).

In discussing the strengths and weaknesses of case study research, Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001) identify some significant themes that lend credence to its value. An example is the grounding in “lived reality” which provides the opportunity to get close to the sense of what happened and why. This transpired in their study of teacher training through the retention of the “noise” of real life which subsequently proved to be significant in constructing feasible interpretations when contradictions were observed

and conflicts arose. According to them, “teachers always work with noise” (p. 4) because of the complexity of their context, and an excluded noise may be a significant part of the narrative. The chance to revisit their prior data in order to construct a feasible explanation of some unexpected findings afforded them the significant opportunity to eventually explicate what went wrong and why.

Those who lean towards the positivist perspective have argued that the inability to make generalisations is a limitation of case study (Flyvbjerg 2001), also, the approach has been “stereotyped as a weak sibling among social science methods” (Yin 2003, p. xiii) and this perhaps gives it a low status. Nevertheless, rather than minimising the value of case study, perhaps it potentially enables it to offer something unique in social scientific inquiry, something that is different from generalised knowledge and which Thomas (2011) refers to as “exemplary knowledge” (p. 21). Thomas argues that exemplary knowledge is located in *phronesis* which he refers to as “practical reasoning, craft knowledge or tacit knowing” (p. 23); the potential of intuition.

The discussions above have provided a justification for adopting a case study approach for this study from two perspectives. Firstly, it permits the exploration of a ‘real-life’ situation, in this case, the professional development of teachers who are located in a large FE college and who have undertaken an initial teacher education course with a single university. In other words, it facilitates the investigation and interpretation of the views and perceptions of these teachers and their managers on the impact of the in-service course on teachers’ professional development and practice. Secondly, the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not always distinguishable in a case

study (Yin, 1984), which then corresponds to the contextual settings within which the teachers in this study practice, and which are central to the investigation process. An example of this is the working conditions and support mechanisms in specific curriculum areas which cannot be divorced from the factors influencing teachers' professional development whilst on the course. Also, as the strengths of using a case study far outweigh its perceived limitations, it makes it a useful approach to adopt in answering the research questions raised in this study.

#### *4.3.1 Types of Case Study*

Yin (1984) classifies case study research into three types: exploratory (as a lead to other studies or research questions), descriptive (one that provides narrative accounts), and explanatory (one that tests theories). Stenhouse (1985) however categorises case study research into four broad styles namely: ethnographic, evaluative, educational and action research case studies. Stenhouse describes evaluative and educational case study respectively as follows:

In evaluative case studies a single case or collection of cases is studied in depth with the purpose of providing educational actors or decision makers ... with information that will help them to judge the merit and worth of policies, programmes or institutions.

Educational case study (is where) many researchers using case study methods are concerned neither with social theory nor with evaluative judgement, but rather with the understanding of educational action .... They are concerned to enrich the thinking and discourse of educators either by the development of educational theory or by refinement of prudence through the systematic and reflective documentation of evidence.

(p. 50).

This case study research employs in the main, Stenhouse's educational case study.

## 4.4 Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical framework of a research provides the structure for data collection and analysis. In this study, the conceptions of Bourdieu (habitus, field theory and capital) and Giddens (structuration theory) will be employed to analyse the external influences on teachers' practice as well as teachers' own capacity to engage in actions that influence their practice.

### 4.4.1 Bourdieu's Concept of Habitus

The French social theorist Pierre Bourdieu has had a huge impact on aspects of education and pedagogy and his ideas have been cited by sociologists in education in explaining the concepts of class, status, and power in educational contexts. Bourdieu's theory of practice attempts to transcend and reconcile the dichotomy of objectivity and subjectivity in social science and educational research by employing a robust theory which is both objective and generalisable, and yet accommodates subjective thought and action (Grenfell and James, 1998). Bourdieu (1977 p. vi) cites Marx as follows:

The principal defect of all materialism up to now - including that of Feuerbach - is that the external object, reality, the sensible world, is grasped in the form of *an object or an intuition*; but not as *concrete human activity, as practice*, in a subjective way. This is why the active aspect was developed by idealism, in opposition to materialism - but only in an abstract way, since idealism naturally does not know real concrete activity as such.

For Bourdieu, objectivity should take account of human activity and can only manifest in the nature of individuals' practice. This balance perhaps fits in well with the epistemological stance for this study which seeks to explore teachers' perceptions (subjectivity) whilst enhancing rigour, validity and generalisability (objectivity).

Bourdieu's framework of habitus and field seeks to address this issue and these conceptual tools should therefore be useful in analysing the structure of teachers' and their managers' professional lives and the interactions or relationships that exist within the structure including teacher-teacher, teacher-manager, teacher-institution relationships and their influence on practice. It will also be used to explain the effect of prior experiences and individual dispositions (habitus) on professional practice.

Bourdieu (1990) describes habitus as:

systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them (p. 53).

This structure encompasses dispositions which generate perceptions, appreciations and practices in individuals. Bourdieu initially proposes that habitus is acquired unconsciously at an early stage, is resistant to change and as a system of dispositions produces both individual and collective practices. It is a reproduction of the acquisitions of the predecessors in the successors and is embodied in the individual and expressed in durable ways of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking (Bourdieu, 1990). As argued by Mutch (2003), there is a clear link between social conditions and patterns of thought, with specific social conditions producing specific forms of habitus. Bourdieu (1990) describes this as "embodied history, internalised as a second nature and so forgotten as history" (p. 56). He argues that habitus is embodied, and serves as a precondition for co-ordination of practices as well as practice of co-

ordination as evident in the instinctive or spontaneous harmonised practices of members of the same group or class:

Habitus is a kind of transforming machine that leads us to 'reproduce' the social conditions of our own production, but in a relatively unpredictable way, in such a way that one cannot move simply and mechanically from knowledge of the conditions of production to knowledge of the products. (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 87).

Although habitus permits individual agency, it inclines agents towards relatively constant patterns of behaviour which are rooted in the perception of past and present conditions:

“dispositions guide the actions of social agents through future-oriented perceptions of chances for success or failure. An illustration of this lies in the emotions of negative self-image discerned in the habitus of working-class children at school, as they anticipated the failure that awaited them”. (Reed-Danahay, 2004, pp. 108-109).

These dispositions analysed by Reay (2004) as “habitus and agency” (p. 433) are viewed as both opportunities and constraints framing an individual's early life experiences. Although agents have their subjective individual dispositions which influence practice, they occupy objective positions within a social space (field). As a link between the objective and subjective, habitus unites objective social structures and subjective personal experiences. Reay (ibid) observes a dualism to Bourdieu's concept of habitus in that in as much as individuals (agents) are actively engaged in creating their social worlds, there are predefined objective structures of race, gender and class relations which also influence practice. She analyses this multi-layered concept as “habitus as a compilation of collective and individual trajectories” (p. 434). Levels of habitus can be overlaid one on another with the deep early versions at the subjective individual level and the latter versions at the objective social level. Hence, habitus offers both individualised and collective theoretical potential. As an example, in the education

sector, Reay (1998) posits that apart from the individual habitus, each institution has its own 'institutional habitus'.

Habitus is a link "between past, present and future and also between the social and the individual ..." (Maton, 2008, p. 53). The agent's experiences are not isolated as they are shared with others of the same social background. Exposures to particular social conditions lead to the acquisition of unconscious schemata or patterns of thoughts which are shared by people with homologous experiences even when these people have their own unique tendencies (Wacquant, 2006). This perhaps relates to the aspect of habitus that is embodied, and where social traditions and behaviours are internalised over time. For instance, people from similar social cultural backgrounds, gender, nationality etc share similar experiences in terms of their structure (Maton, 2008). This is engendered in social reproduction where people follow or take pre-defined routes as exemplified in a study on working class kids getting working class jobs (Willis, 1977).

According to Bourdieu (1990), practices are not only deduced from the present conditions which provoked them or the past conditions which produced the habitus. They can only be explained by relating the social conditions in which the generated habitus was constituted to the social conditions in which it is implemented. In other words, it is explained by performing the interrelationship of the two social conditions (the generated and the implemented) accomplished by the habitus. This also relates to the aspect of habitus that accommodates and integrates new social conditions with existing social conditions. It can be further explained that in each individual in varying degrees is the unconscious past. Bourdieu advocates that the present is essentially insignificant

compared to the long period of the past which though indirectly felt is deeply rooted within the self, and internalised as a second nature which is unconscious; making the habitus “a spontaneity without consciousness or will” (p. 56).

As a durable system it has dispositions that are long-lasting (Bourdieu 1990) and accordingly, “it transcends different social circumstances to produce characteristic dispositions to act” (Mutch, 2003, p. 396), which implies that agents characteristically act in similar ways in different circumstances. Bourdieu (1990) effectively argues that habitus is related to the social conditions of its production, and agents cannot escape the habitus which they have acquired.

However, it has also been asserted that the durability is transformable as there is evidence that habitus undergoes a continuous restructure as agents experience new social conditions:

The habitus acquired in the family is at the basis of the structuring of school experiences ...; the habitus transformed by the action of the school, itself diversified, is in turn at the basis of all subsequent experiences ... and so on, from restructuring to restructuring (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 134).

For instance, although habitus is a disposition that has been acquired from early experiences, it continually undergoes a process of restructuring through the agent's experiences. In respect of habitus as comprising a “structured and structuring structure” disposition (Bourdieu 1984, p. 171), it is *structured* by past and present circumstances e.g. family background and educational experience respectively. It is *structuring* as it



helps to shape present and future practices, and it a *structure* as it is systematically ordered (Maton, 2008).

Response to change (albeit gradual) was observed in Bourdieu's work on the economic practices of peasants in Algeria who eventually adopted the money economy which was imported and imposed by colonialism (Maton, 2008). Also, Bourdieu himself broke the pattern (as do many working class people), rising from a peasant background to the "heights of Parisian academic life" (Mutch, 2003, p. 391). These thus seem to support the evolving nature of habitus; which though steeped in history, is malleable and creative and ... "does not act as a mere mechanism of mechanical reproduction of the conditions from which it has resulted" (Costa, 2006, p. 877). In summary, any dimension of habitus though difficult to change may be changed through what has been referred to as a process of "awareness and pedagogic effort" (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 45). In the context of this study, this pedagogic effort has taken the form of a range of teaching and learning approaches adopted by some of the teachers interviewed to enhance their learners' experience, and to make the learning process more accessible. For instance, some of these teachers have used more interactive and creative learning and assessment approaches that have formed part of their learning whilst on the ITE programme to foster participation and achievement in their own learners. These teachers have also considered their new and broader range of approaches to be more effective and engaging than the didactic ones they themselves have experienced whilst they were in school – an example of the evolving nature of habitus (see section 8.1). Reay (2004) analyses this theme as "Habitus as a complex interplay between past and

present” (p. 434). This aspect of Bourdieu’s work will be evaluated further in Chapters 6 and 8.

Bourdieu establishes the distinction of habitus from other notions in that past accounts have emphasised regular practices or habits instead of their underlying and generative principles. For him, his concept goes deeper in exploring possible significant hidden relationships which are essential in understanding the social world. He asserts that the value of this concept is essentially in its explanatory power in empirical analyses; according to him, early experiences will be critical in determining future responses as agents react to new experiences by integrating them to the pre-acquired generative principles. The concept of habitus suggests the need to pursue the social and educational origins of a chosen group in order to examine their effects on current practice - an interlink between the past and the present. In other words, practice can be better understood or explained by looking at the antecedents to practice (Mutch, 2003). Habitus as a conceptual tool can therefore be used to construct the social agent and to explain their practices.

#### *4.4.2 Bourdieu’s Concept of Field – field dynamics and capital*

Bourdieu used his concept of field to explain and understand cultural reproduction (Hodkinson et al, 2007). It is a system of positions as well as the relationships among positions, “a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions objectively defined in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions” ... (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 39). Wacquant (2006) identifies three distinguishing properties of Bourdieu’s conception of field. Firstly

it is “a structured space of positions, a force field that imposes its specific determinations upon all those who enter it” (pp. 7-8). Each field has its own internal logic and regulatory principles that govern it, and entrants to a field, in order to succeed, must conform to the rules and regulations imposed by their respective social space or sphere of life. This implies a binding to the structures of social space which Bourdieu (1996) refers to as “the product of two fundamental principles of differentiation – economic capital and cultural capital” (p. 5). He perceives the educational institution as one of the foundations of domination and legitimation of domination as opposed to the myth of the “school as liberating force” (p. 5).

Secondly, a field is “an arena of struggle” (Wacquant, 2006, p. 8), a dynamic and ever changing battlefield where agents and institutions incessantly dispute over the bases of identity and hierarchy. Agents operating within a field contest over resources and status; for example the ranking of institutions, disciplines, journals and so on. The clout of an agent depends on the position they occupy within a field which in turn is determined by the ownership of resources. Bourdieu refers to this field-specific resource as capital. “Capital may be viewed as the specific cultural or social (rather than economic) assets that are invested with value in the field which when possessed, enables membership to the field” (Naidoo, 2004 p. 458). According to Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the *embodied* state (as in long-lasting dispositions), in the *objectified* state (as in cultural goods like art pieces, books, pictures etc.), and in the *institutionalised* state. Bourdieu (1996) describes an institutionalised form of cultural capital as ‘academic capital’ which also relates to educational qualifications, repute or standing. Also in education, cultural capital takes the form of knowledge (Grenfell and

James, 1998). In this study, I will consider the maintenance and reproduction of institutionalised cultural capital within the FE sector and specifically among research participants.

Thirdly and lastly, the field manifests a degree of autonomy by which it insulates itself from external or intruding influences and maintains its own defining principles (Wacquant, 2006). Thompson (2011) posits that this relative autonomy enables the field to “conceal its contribution to social inequality, by focusing our attention on its specific characteristics rather than the homology between field positions and social positions ...” (p. 17).

Hodkinson et al (2007) employ a tacit analogy of ‘market’ and ‘game’ in elucidating Bourdieu’s field. They propose that “a field is like a market because it is a defined social space in which there is inequality but also mutual dependency” (p. 422). The inequality or differences between customers are based on their purchasing power; which may take a range of forms including economic capital, social capital or cultural capital. In likening the field to a game, they concur “that people are in competition for the maintenance or increase of capital of one sort of another, and over the rules of the game” (p. 422).

In contrast to the habitus which informs practice from within, the field structures actions from outside by offering agents possible opportunities that can be taken advantage of, each with its respective costs, benefits and potentialities. Furthermore, the position occupied by agents in the field influences specific patterns of thought and behaviour with those occupying leading positions displaying more loyal tendencies in the field than

those occupying less significant positions. As such, long standing members are more likely to preserve the regulations and existing order in the field to their benefit (Wacquant, 2006). There is therefore a cognitive/'know-how' and conditioning relationship between habitus and field.

The field usually consists of multiple overlapping *sub-fields*; as an example, within the college, overlapping fields may include: FE segment, HE segment, PGCE qualified tutors, Cert Ed qualified tutors, managers etc. Position-takings occur within these overlapping fields; a concept which Bourdieu refers to as a product of permanent conflict (Naidoo, 2004). This is similar to objective positions occupied by the agent based on their possession of a form of capital.

#### *4.4.3 Structuration theory*

Whilst Bourdieu's theoretical frameworks are effective in analysing the dualism of structure and agency as representing different phenomena; they leave a conceptual gap in analysing the interdependent relationship between structure and agency, and the influential capacity of agents, which the findings from this study present. However, structuration theory offers a more useful framework for exploring and analysing the dynamic relationship between structure and agency.

Structuration theory, which illustrates the creation and reproduction of social systems, offers a resolution to the issue of structure and agency dualism which was prevalent in educational research (Shilling, 1992). For whilst the structuralist/functionalist view discounts human actions, the voluntarist/subjectivist view focuses exclusively on human

actions; structuration theory therefore is an attempt at reconciling structural determinism and functionalism on one hand, and voluntarist and subjectivist notions on the other hand (Hodgson, 2004).

The concept of structure is central to structuration theory and in developing a theoretical understanding of society, Giddens' (1984) conceptualisation of structure deviates from the "orthodox sociological usage" (p. 16), for him, "the rules and resources drawn upon in the production and reproduction of social action are at the same time the means of system reproduction (the duality of structure)" (p. 17). Structuration theory draws on the premise that structures are not seen as social facts which exist apart from actors but are viewed as *rules* and *resources* recursively used by actors in interaction. Giddens regards the *rules* of social life as "techniques or generalisable procedures applied in the enactment/reproduction of social practices" (p. 21). *Structural rules* can be explained as practical knowledge of social principles which actors apply in day-to-day social interactions (e.g. social norms, and formal/informal rules in conversation). On the other hand, structural resources are "structured properties of social systems, drawn upon and reproduced by knowledgeable agents in the course of interaction" (p. 15). These are explained as media through which power is exercised by agents in enacting social interactions. *Resources* can be allocative (command over material phenomena) or authoritative (command over actors or human agents). The latter, authoritative resource, which involves the coordination of the activities of actors or social agents is of relevance to this study.

For Giddens, action (human agency) and structure are implicated in that although an individual's agency is influenced or shaped by structure; structures are sustained and modified as individuals exercise agency. In other words, social structures shape action through rules and resources e.g. in the context of this study; stipulated remission hours per week, support mechanisms etc. Human agents then draw on these rules and resources but correspondingly, their actions influence or transform the rules and resources (structure) which then contribute to the reproduction of the social system; a recursive relationship with rules and resources generating other unanticipated consequences.

In Giddens' theory, social practices lie at the root of the individual and the society, and these are accomplished by knowledgeable agents who possess causal powers or "transformative capacity" (Giddens, 1984, p. 14) to make a difference. According to Giddens, power itself is not a resource but involves the exploitation of authoritative resource and allocative resource. Giddens asserts that humans are purposive agents who are aware of the consequences of their actions; also, social practices are not random but are ordered and stable across space and time; implying that they are routinised and recursive. This presumes regularised relation of autonomy and dependence between actors in social interaction. However, all forms of dependence provide some resources which enable subordinates to influence the activities of their superiors. This is referred to as the "dialectic of control in social systems" (Giddens, 1984, p. 16). For Giddens, the agent although constrained, is also free and capable of reflecting on and reacting to their circumstances. Therefore, "structuration theory is based on the proposition that structure is always both enabling and constraining" (ibid,

p. 169), and that agents both produce and reproduce the structures which both constrain and enable them. Consequently, “this places agents at the centre of social reproduction, rather than as passive recipients” (Russell et al, 2011, p. 93).

The production and reproduction of rules and resources across time and space is explained as the double involvement of individuals and institutions, where “we create society at the same time as we are created by it” (Giddens, 1984, p. 14). Hence, agency and structure do not exist independently as in the case of dualism, but are a duality:

Giddens regarded agent and structure as a duality: where both human subjects and social institutions are jointly constituted in and through recurrent practices, and where no element has ontological or analytical priority over the other. In Giddens’ theory, structure and agency are mutually symmetrically constitutive of each other. (Hodgson, 2004, p. 31).

However, structuration theory has been criticised on various fronts, one of which concerns the conflation of structure and agency. Archer (1996) in agreement with Lockwood’s original conception contends that the conflation of structure and agency weakens their analytical power and that in order to account for why things are “so and not otherwise” (p. 679), it is essential to maintain analytical distinction between social and system integration (agency and structure).

Although Giddens’ theory has been criticised on different levels, it however provides a new way of exploring social interactions and the reproduction of those structural principles which characterise society and “it also has important implications for the study of education policy...” (Shilling, 1992, p. 84). As analysed by Shilling, the implication of Giddens’ structuration theory for the education system is that it places policy makers,



teachers and students at the centre of social reproduction, with each actor influencing and making a difference to the system by exercising some sort of power in their daily lives. She argues that a major concern should be how education policies are formulated, implemented, mediated and opposed in ways that seek to bond social systems in time and space as they draw on rules and resources which characterise the institutions where they work. According to her:

... individuals are neither completely autonomous (as pre-existing rules and resources are heavily implicated in most people's lives), nor do they create situations anew (as teachers, for example, always act in an existing school system) (Shilling, 1992, p.80).

This undergirds the notion that “all social research has a necessarily cultural, ethnographic or anthropological aspect to it” (Giddens, 1984, p. 284).

#### *4.4.4 Conceptual Implications*

For this study, habitus will be used to interrogate the data collected; this implies that it is necessary to take into consideration the background and prior experiences of research participants in order to explore possible implications on participants’ current practice and perceptions. It goes without saying that teachers’ biography plays a significant role in professional identity formation as evidenced in the tradition of biographical research into FE teacher identities (Knowles, 1992; Sugrue, 1997).

Bourdieu’s concept of field will be used as a conceptual tool to identify and explain field dynamics in terms of intra-relations between dominant fields and inter-relation to the wider field. Also, the influence of institutionalised cultural capital will be used to analyse teachers’ professional development.

The constraining and enabling feature of structure on agency is significant to this study and presents a suitable theoretical framework for analysing the positions of teachers and their managers in the social system. One of the justifications for utilising Giddens' structuration theory is to employ it to examine how teachers resolve the tensions between the implementation of perceived bureaucratic procedures and the responsibilities that their dual identities as teachers/trainees entail. As an example, how they have been able to consciously influence and transform rules and resources to their advantage.

In this study, the use of both Bourdieu's structured and structuring concept of habitus and Giddens' structuration theory seeks to reinforce the evolving and dynamic capacity of agents and the duality of structures. Although there is a latent determinism in respect of Bourdieu's conceptualisation of habitus as it is conditioned by social structures (Reay, 2004), as a structured and structuring structure however, it also has the capacity to change and influence the dynamics of the social system (Fuchs, 2003 and Morrison, 2005). Nevertheless, there is a divergence between the two in respect of the significance given to conscious intentions and reflexivity. Whilst Bourdieu's standpoint is viewed as objectivist, Giddens' is viewed as subjectivist in nature (Perez, 2008). In other words, from Giddens' perspective, social actors have the ability and power to act on their intentions and to reflect on their actions in any given situation.

## **Chapter 5: Data Collection, Approaches to Analysis and Initial Findings**

This chapter explains how data for this study was collected and analysed. As previously indicated, the research questions drive or direct the research perspectives and approaches, which in turn justify the data collection process and analysis. The data collection process was therefore shaped by the main research questions for this study and the conceptual considerations in Chapter 4. This chapter initially considers some ethical issues and then uses a purposive stratified sampling strategy to select research participants. Online questionnaires and semi-structured interviews are used to collect data. Subsequently, a combination of King's (2004) template analysis approach, Auerbach's and Silverstein's (2003) coding approach, and Merriam's (1998) levels of data analysis are employed to analyse the data.

### **5.1 Ethical Considerations**

According to Wisker (2008), in order "to ensure that no research processes infringe on human rights, cause any kind of harm, or reveal the confidential nature of the individual participant's involvement" (p. 86), researchers must ensure that they take ethical issues into consideration and address these appropriately. The British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011), in recognition of the potential problems that educational research might present, offer some guidelines which are presented as a set of principles and advice for educational researchers. According to the BERA (2011) guidelines, some of the ethical issues that may arise in a research process and which demand some

responsibilities on the part of the researcher include: voluntary participation, informed consent, right to withdraw, disclosure, anonymity and confidentiality, privacy, incentives, detriment from participating in a research etc.

The nature of this study and the research questions posed necessitated the evaluation of teachers' own practice; also, managers had to discuss issues relating to their staff and their performance. These are very sensitive issues that needed to be tactfully explored; thus, effective strategies were employed to protect their rights and privacy (and that of others), in accordance with BERA (2011) guidelines. Initially, information about the research was sent to the college principalship in order to seek and obtain approval to proceed with the investigation. Subsequently, research information was sent out to curriculum managers and consent was obtained to recruit their staff to participate in the study. Potential participants were assured that anything they said would be kept confidential and that their views and identity would be anonymised. In addition, information about the nature of the study, including research participants' rights, was given to potential participants. Following the receipt of responses from teachers and the managers who were willing to participate in the study, consent forms were sent out, completed and signed by each research participant (*see Appendix 1*). None of the respondents received incentives in order to participate in this study, and efforts have been made to minimise the possibility of identifying respondents by using pseudonyms.

## 5.2 Sampling

Stake (1995) asserts that “case study research is not sampling research” (p. 4). In other words, a case is not studied mainly to understand other cases, but rather to understand the particular case being studied. Hence, emphasis should be placed on the best way to understand the case in question. In achieving a systematic approach to data collection, Merkens (2010) advocates that two conditions must be fulfilled: “first there must be a clear idea of the case to be investigated, and secondly there must be documentation of feasible techniques in the taking of samples of individuals, events or activities” (p. 167).

As the study seeks to explore the perceptions of FE teachers about the impact of the in-service PGCE/Cert Ed course, it was crucial that participants would have completed the PGCE/Cert Ed course. Also, it was important that participants who have completed the course within 3 years (as at data collection stage) were identified and invited to take part in the study. The logic behind this was that respondents who had recently completed the teacher training course would be better able to recollect their experiences on the course. Furthermore, in order to include both PGCE and Cert Ed qualified teachers, it was important that participation was sought from both academic and vocational areas within the college. This is due to the fact that PGCE qualified teachers usually deliver courses within academic curriculum areas whilst Cert Ed qualified teachers are more represented within vocational curriculum areas.

To facilitate a systematic approach to data collection (Merkens, 2010), a purposive and stratified sampling strategy was employed in selecting staff that have completed the PGCE/Cert Ed course within the college. It was purposive as it involved the selection of

a group of people with specific characteristics (Bowling, 2002), and who would be able to provide rich and valuable data for the study. A note of caution has however been sounded in respect of purposive sampling. Lehmann and Hodges (2005) suggest that “biases of the selector creep in too easily when the items for the sample are selected purposively by the exercise of judgement” (p. 40). Nevertheless it can be argued that in this study, the purposive sampling strategy adopted was used to restrict participation to those who completed the teacher training within 3 years; and not for any other specific reason.

Furthermore, it was stratified as PGCE and Cert Ed qualified teachers and their managers were deliberately recruited from various academic and vocational areas and across different college sites - an attempt to represent the diversity of staff within the college. The combination of purposive and stratified sampling strategies adopted thus generated participants/representations from the following academic and vocational curriculum areas: Hair and Beauty, Information Technology (including creative media, programming and networking), Construction, Automotive Engineering, Hospitality and Catering, Health and Social Care, and Business Administration.

It has been proposed that in qualitative research, generalisability can be enhanced when the sample is representative of the case being investigated (Merken, 2010). He argues that this does not necessarily suggest that the distribution of features is represented in totalities but instead it focuses on what is typical of the phenomenon being investigated.

### **5.3 Data Collection**

The main data collection tools used in this research were online questionnaires and detailed semi-structured interviews. Denzin (1978) considers the use of multiple methods as a strategy for validating data; in this study however, it was also used as a strategy to provide more robust evidence in constructing meaningful propositions about the social world. In other words, as a means of eliciting teachers' and managers' perceptions of the PGCE/Cert Ed course.

#### *5.3.1 Online Questionnaires*

Two types of questionnaires were designed; one for teachers and the other for managers. Both questionnaires contained a combination of multiple choice and text options (short and long). Also, the two questionnaires were designed to initially collect data on demographics, including: gender, ethnicity, age group, curriculum area etc. The teachers' questionnaire contains 23 questions and it was constructed to obtain information on what motivated teachers to teach, feelings prior to starting the PGCE/Cert Ed course, reasons for the feelings, most valuable aspect of the course, least valuable aspect of the course etc (*Appendix 2*). On the other hand, managers' questionnaire contains 15 questions which sought to obtain managers' initial views on the impact of the PGCE/Cert Ed course on their teachers' skills development (*Appendix 3*). In short, the questionnaires provided a standardised and efficient means of obtaining respondents' demographics, and an initial attempt to address the main research questions of the study which then informed the areas to be further explored during the interviews.

### 5.3.2 Pilot

Initially, the online questionnaire was piloted with one of the teachers and one of the managers who volunteered to participate in the study. This was to identify any anomalies in the questions and to address these before making them available to respondents. Feedback provided on the pilot was constructive and helped to clarify some potential issues. One of the teachers who was involved in the pilot had this to say:

- *No major improvements, it was very easy to complete. Minor amendments:*
- *I would define the acronyms re: the Lifelong learning guidelines etc... also maybe give an example of what you mean as I struggled to recall. This may result in some people answering 'no' to the question when really they just didn't realise what was meant by it.*
- *Also you could make the 'teaching subject' select a multiple choice as some people may teach across both/several etc...*

Following amendments to the questionnaire, an invitation to participate in the study was sent out to 70 former PGCE/Cert Ed trainees and their managers in curriculum teams across the college. This attracted a total of 35 respondents who initially completed the online questionnaire (which represents 50% of the total population). The respondents comprise of 26 teachers/team leaders and 9 managers with a gender split of 18 females (13 teachers/team leaders and 5 managers) and 17 males (13 teachers/team leaders and 4 managers) - (*Table 1*).

Data was collected through online questionnaire over a period of 11 months spanning from March 2011 to January 2012. The online questionnaire was used to collect demographic data on the respondents, and it also initially sought their perceptions of the



structure and delivery approaches of the PGCE/Cert Ed course (Appendices 2 and 3). An initial observation was that the majority of teacher respondents indicated that the course structure and delivery approaches met their needs.

### Online Questionnaire Respondents

	Females	Males	Total Number
<b>Teachers/Team Leaders</b>	13	13	26
<b>Managers</b>	5	4	9
<b>Total Number</b>	18	17	<b>35</b>

*Table 1*

#### 5.3.3 Semi-structured Interviews

From the initial cohort of 35 teachers and managers (Table 1) who completed the online questionnaire, 20 respondents (16 teachers and 4 managers) with a gender split of 9 females and 11 males eventually volunteered to participate in the interview process (Tables 2, 3 and 4). It has been observed that one of the implications of using a small sample size is that it limits generalisability. In general terms, the sample size for this study could be perceived as small, however, it could be considered appropriate for a qualitative study of this scale. As an example, Kember and Kwan (2000) in their study on the conceptions of lecturers' approaches to teaching collected interview data from 17 lecturers from 3 departments in a University. Similarly, Gonzalez (2009) citing other literature suggests that small samples of less than 20 participants are common. From

my own experience in this study, the sample size has afforded the opportunity to spend valuable time with each respondent in examining some complex aspects of their views and experiences.

In-depth semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with two groups of participants - teachers and their managers (*Appendices 4 and 5*), between October 2011 and April 2012. These types of individual interviews have been referred to as “conversation with a purpose” (Burgess 1984, p. 102) as they aim to illuminate the complexity of the phenomenon being investigated by the researcher. The interviews thus explored key issues related to the main research questions; and to shed more light on teachers’ and managers’ experiences and views, the interview process allowed respondents to freely express their opinions even when these were not expressly related to the issue being investigated.

### Interview Respondents

*(those who initially completed the online questionnaire and subsequently volunteered to participate in the interview process)*

	Females	Males	Total Number
<b>Teachers/Team Leaders</b>	7	9	16
<b>Managers</b>	2	2	4
<b>Total Number</b>	9	11	<b>20</b>

*Table 2*

**A breakdown of Teachers' Profile:**

Teachers	Curriculum Area	Gender	Pathway	Pre-qualification teaching experience (in years)*	Post-qualification teaching experience (in years)*
Sarah	Hair and Beauty	Female	Cert Ed	0	2
Liz	IT (including creative media, programming and networking)	Female	PGCE	2	2
Mat	Construction	Male	Cert Ed	1	2
Phil	Automotive Engineering	Male	Cert Ed	10	1
Janet	NVQ Business Administration	Female	Cert Ed	2	3
Nick	Construction	Male	Cert Ed	1	1
John	Automotive Engineering	Male	Cert Ed	5	3
Rachel	Health and Social Care	Female	PGCE	5	1
Joe	Hospitality and Catering	Male	Cert Ed	5	3
Sam	Construction	Male	Cert Ed	1	2
Jamie	IT (including creative media, programming and networking)	Male	PGCE	0.5	1
Chris	Automotive Engineering	Male	Cert Ed	2	1
Anna	NVQ Business Administration	Female	Cert Ed	4	1
Zak	IT (including creative media, programming and networking)	Male	PGCE	0	2
Esther	NVQ Business Administration	Female	PGCE	0.5	3
Debbie	IT (including creative media, programming and networking)	Female	PGCE	4	1

**Table 3**

*\*(as at data collection stage)*

### A breakdown of Managers' Profile:

Managers	Curriculum Area	Gender	Teaching Qualification
Beth	Hair and Beauty	Female	Yes
Leah	IT (including creative media, programming and networking)	Female	Yes
Mike	Construction and Automotive Engineering	Male	No
Andy	IT (including creative media, programming and networking)	Male	Yes

**Table 4**

*(see Appendices 2, 3, 4 and 5 for online questionnaires and interview questions)*

#### 5.4 Transcription of Interview data

Teachers' and their managers' interviews for this study spanned from between 16 to 79 minutes each (*Appendix 6*), and were recorded on a digital recorder having obtained permission from respondents. The benefit of capturing an accurate record of the strings of words uttered in an interview has been advocated (Flick, 2002; Kowal & O'Connell, 2004); which was what the footage afforded. Subsequently, I transcribed the data verbatim for analysis, this is considered as the first stage in the analytical process (Elliot, 2005). In transcribing the recordings, and as suggested by Kowal and O'Connell, I paid careful attention to documenting fleeting conversational gestures and the acoustic forms of words in order to enrich the data e.g. pitch height, laughter, throat clearing, pauses etc. Although the process of verbatim transcription was time consuming; in this case, a period of 8 months, it afforded me the opportunity to become more familiar with the

content of the data. Moreover, as proposed by Kvale & Brinkman (2009), the transcription process reawakened and brought to life particular aspects of the interview.

## **5.5 Approaches to Analysis**

The techniques considered and adopted in analysing data collected in this study are a combination of King's (2004) template analysis approach, Auerbach's and Silverstein's (2003) coding approach, and Merriam's (1998) levels of data analysis. Template analysis can be used to analyse data from a wide range of epistemological positions and it involves the development of a coding template which presents and organises themes that have been identified by the researcher as significant to the study.

Usually, analysis starts with some *a priori* codes that are pre-conceived to be relevant and to guide the process (King 2004). Transcripts are then scrutinised and information that is considered to be significant to the research questions is annotated closely for insights to participants' experience and ontology; also referred to as coding. The emerging codes are then catalogued and recurring patterns or themes identified. In this approach, coding is flexible as new themes can emerge and existing ones refined or even abandoned. Auerbach's and Silverstein's (2003) approach is similar to template analysis with the abstraction of "relevant text" and "repeating ideas" from research transcripts. Relevant texts are those which are related to the specific research focus while repeated ideas are similar words and phrases used to express the same ideas. The repeated ideas are then organised into themes. Subsequently, the emerging themes are abridged into theoretical constructs which link research data to theory.

Merriam's (1998) model of analysis on the other hand proposes three basic levels of data analysis for case study research; these are description, category construction, and theory building. Each of the three levels informs the other and allows some flexibility in generating theory.

The three techniques employed in this case study research are based on their strengths in respect of their systematic approach to analysis, iterative nature and flexibility. This combination of techniques of analysis is envisaged to be useful in integrating insights gained from using the different analytic approaches (Willig, 2008).

## **5.6 Categorising and Coding**

Coding is the process of grouping interviewees' responses into categories that bring together the similar ideas, concepts or themes you have discovered, or steps or stages in a process.  
(Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p. 238).

In short, coding is used to organise and label the data within corresponding categories. King's template analysis approach and Merriam's levels of analysis were initially adopted to categorise and code broader themes from the research transcripts. Merriam (1998) suggests that categories should be exhaustive; mutually exclusive; sensitising; conceptually congruent; and should reflect the main purpose of the research project. However, there was some flexibility in accommodating new and unexpected results in this study. As previously indicated, the initial categorisation and coding of data was guided by a tentative *a priori* list which reflected areas already highlighted as significant to addressing the main research questions and theoretical conceptualisations of FE

teachers' practice. King (2004) argues that the main benefit of using *a priori* lists is that they can quicken the initial coding phase of the analysis; fortunately, this has proved to accelerate the initial coding process in this study as data was analysed into themes based on the interview questions. Secondly, categorisation and coding of the data was informed by identifying recurring ideas and common issues raised by teachers and managers. Thirdly, some of the areas where respondents have differing views and opinions were included in the categorisation and coding process.

Descriptive coding and an element of axial coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) were used to summarise relevant text that seemed useful in addressing the research questions, and repeated ideas that evolved from interview transcripts. Descriptive coding is a phrase which summarises the thrust of the excerpt, whilst axial coding is used to identify the connections (or to build relationships) between codes. The codes were then transferred and tabulated into corresponding columns in a spreadsheet file i.e. *categories, relevant text and repeated ideas, and codes*. Relevant text and repeated ideas were colour-coded in the spreadsheet, which then facilitated easy comparisons and a more manageable and efficient data analysis process (*see Appendix 6*).

## 5.7 Emerging Themes

The combination of the three factors taken into consideration in the approaches to analysis section (i.e. *a priori* list, recurring ideas and divergent opinions) generated 15 categories and codes from data collected on teachers' interviews (*Table 5*). However there were some overlaps of information between the initial categories which then necessitated the merging of categories. As an example, data relating to Lesson Observations (LO), Assessment strategies (AS) and Learning theories (LT) were subsumed into that on Skills, Knowledge and Competences gained on the Course (SKC). Likewise, data on Delivery Day and Time (DDT) was combined with information on Suggestions for Development (SDP).

### Categories and Codes

Categories	Descriptive Codes
Entry into the Profession (ETP)	<i>Slippage, Longstanding Aspiration, Identified gifting</i>
Perceptions of Professionalism (PFS)	<i>Enacted, Prescribed, Credentialing</i>
Skills, Knowledge and Competences gained on the Course (SKC)	<i>Learner engagement, Differentiation, Lesson planning, Reflective practice etc</i>
Lesson Planning (LP)	<i>Teamwork, Effective, Not-effective</i>
Subject Specialist Module (SSM)	<i>Challenging, Beneficial, Habitus, Agency, Habitus, Capital, CoP</i>
Support Mechanisms on the Course (SMC)	<i>Valuable, Unhelpful, CoP, Structure, Agency etc</i>
Support Mechanisms from the Department (SMD)	<i>Excellent, Marginalised</i>
Mentoring Process (MNT)	<i>Effective, Adhoc</i>



<b>Categories</b>	<b>Descriptive Codes</b>
Own Continuing Professional Development (OPD)	<i>Progression, Social capital</i>
Pedagogical Skills Development (PSD)	<i>Teaching methods, Resources, Mindset, Reflective practice, etc</i>
Teaching and Learning Strategies on the Course (TLS)	<i>Varied, Limited</i>
View of/Experience on the Course (EXP)	<i>Flaws, Strengths, Own interests</i>
Suggestions for Development (SDP)	<i>Biography, Time, Management support</i>
The role of Reflection in own Practice (RFL)	<i>“On action”, “In action”, Tick-box exercise</i>
Modules taken on the Course (MOD)	<i>Preference, Agency</i>

**Table 5**

The next stage of data analysis entailed the classification of established categories into broad themes which involved a combination of pre-determined codes and categories as well as contrasting and unexpected ideas. This method has proved valuable in this study as it potentially reinforces the reliability of the coding process by not only employing pre-determined codes but also by taking into consideration issues of reflexivity in respect of multiple interpretations of data. The isolation into broad themes was also informed by the selection of “repeating ideas” from the categories (Auerbach’s & Silverstein’s, 2003). This was facilitated by a thorough scrutiny of the interview transcripts and identification of repeated ideas. The selected texts were subsequently colour coded and grouped based on:

- Major ideas emanating from respondents’ comments - these are concepts and issues that recurred in teachers’ and managers’ responses and which were considered to be essential and potentially enlightening to the research study.

- Established ideas which were confirmed by respondents' comments
- Some contradictory and unexpected ideas

Further overlaps in responses and interpretations however led to the initial categorisation being axial coded into 6 main themes (initial categories in brackets):

1. FE Teacher's Identity – (ETP)
2. Teachers' Perceptions and Interpretations of Professionalism – (PFS)
3. Knowledge, Skills and Competence gained on the PGCE/Cert Ed Course - (SKC, LP, SSM, MOD, TLS)
4. Pedagogical Approaches following the PGCE/Cert Ed Course – (RFL, OPD, PSD)
5. Support Mechanisms while on the Course – (SMC, SMD, MNT)
6. Suggestions for Improvement – (EXP, SDP)

## Section 2

### **Investigating the Evidence – Findings and Discussions<sup>4</sup>**

This section contains the next five chapters and presents the discussion, synthesis and conclusions of the findings from the study.

In chapter 6, teachers' biographies and their journeys to FE teaching are initially explored. Subsequently, teachers' and their managers' interpretations of teacher professionalism are analysed and those factors which framed their notions are evaluated. Chapter 7 considers the knowledge, skills and competence that teachers have acquired on the initial teacher training course and Chapter 8 explores how these have been developed in their practice since completing the course. In Chapter 9, the support mechanisms that have influenced teachers' development whilst on the training course are examined. The evolving themes in chapters 6 to 9 provide some insight into the 4 main research questions for this study. Finally, Chapter 10 presents the main findings and conclusions.

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<sup>4</sup> In this section, quotations from participants have been italicised.

## **Chapter 6: Teachers' and Managers' Conceptualisation of Professionalism**

FE teacher professionalism has been referred to as an elusive (James and Biesta, 2007) and paradoxical concept (Gleeson and James, 2007) which is clouded by assumptions and inconsistent usage (Freidson, 1994). There is another viewpoint, however, as according to Swann et al (2010), “theoretical and political perspectives on the nature of professionalism in teaching are abundant, but little is known about the views of teachers themselves” (p. 549); and as suggested by Johnson and Hallgarten (2002), “most of the debate on the future of the profession is taking place outside the profession” (p. 3). There is little doubt that there are different interpretations and conceptualisations of teacher professionalism; but while scholars and policy makers have their own interpretations, it is useful to tackle “this neglected issue” (Gleeson and James, 2007, p. 451) by exploring the views of the interpreters and implementers of policy. Hence, in this study, FE teachers' and their managers' notions of teacher professionalism were explored. This stance, is congruent with “professionalism that is enacted, that is, professional practice as observed, perceived and interpreted (by any observer – from outside or within the relevant professional group, and including those doing the ‘enacting’)” (Evans 2008, p. 29).

Central to this is an exploration of teachers' biographies and their reasons for entering FE teaching. In their study on learning and identity in Literacy programmes, Tett and Crowther (2011) argue that there is a strong relationship between learning and identity in that an individual's identity influences their learning and vice versa. In other words, an

individual's background and values can shape their outlook, self-image and the quality of their learning. In the context of this study, it has been necessary to consider those factors that have triggered teachers' interests or attracted them to FE teaching in order to be able to examine how biographies or occupational experiences could have interacted with or influenced their notions of professionalism, and in a way, their training and learning. In addition to this, professionalism has been explored from the standpoint of how teachers' views of the notion might have evolved during and following their initial teacher training. Furthermore, it has been necessary to contextualise how teachers view other aspects of their training.

## **6.1 Teachers' Biographies**

“No social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history, and of their intersections within a society, has completed its intellectual journey” (Wright Mills, 1970, p. 12).

It has been argued that having a notion of how we have become and of where we are going enables us to have a sense of who we are (Taylor, 1989). Halford & Leonard (1999) take this further by asserting that professional identity is shaped among other things by the agency of the individual teacher. In a similar vein, Jephcote and Salisbury (2009) propose that “FE teachers' biographies can shed light on the interactions between professional identity and agency and how these impact their professional practice” (pg 968). For them, biography plays a role in determining and explaining teachers' classroom practice and in the formation of their professional identities. However, Denzin (1991) has a different opinion of a biographical approach to

understanding lives, as according to him, it diverts attention from social structures that have oppressed its victims. Albeit it is useful to explore the possible influence that teachers' own value systems has on their professional identity and their individual orientation to practice and teaching (Tedder and Biesta, 2007; Jephcote and Salisbury, 2009). Data collected for this study is therefore employed in considering teachers' journeys into the teaching profession.

### *6.1.1 Trajectories into FE Teaching*

Initial findings reveal that motives for entry into FE teaching are diverse and include: chance; promptings from friends/family; unemployment/imminent redundancy; and longstanding aspirations (*Table 6*). This reflects the general view that many enter FE teaching without teaching experience or teaching qualifications. Gleeson et al (2005) assert that "...entering FE is, for many, less a career choice or pathway than an opportunity at a particular moment in time" (p. 449).

Liz, a teacher in the hair and beauty department recalled that FE teaching was for her a back-up plan because the demand for hair stylists dwindles with age. According to her, she had observed her employer losing clients to younger hairdressers and dreaded this happening to her in the near future. "... *it's ok whilst it lasts but then as younger stylists come in, clients seem to want the younger stylists, so I decided I needed a back-up plan*". Similarly, Sam a Construction teacher opted to teach because he could not find a job in the building trade "...*it was one of those things, the building trade had gone bad like it is now. It had gone bad, and it was one of them (sic) things, you've got to find a*

*job ... to be honest with you I had no inkling of becoming a teacher nothing at all".* In the same way, Janet an NVQ assessor considered teaching following redundancy:

*Well, I'd come into a part in my career that was in business externally at the age of 45 and I was able to take redundancy and I wasn't sure what I wanted to do but I look into ... you know obviously I have to work ... and I found a job that was for NVQ assessing ... so I applied to about 5 colleges at the time and ... I was accepted by 4 of those.*

Mat, a plastering teacher who had worked in the trade for around 17 years, saw the advert in the local newspapers, and just went for the job. He indicated that his becoming a teacher was just by chance. In another twist of chance, Rachel a childcare teacher was initially asked by a manager in the department to help with some assessing, and the rest was history; as she ended up covering a class and was subsequently offered a teaching post in the department.

Nick, another construction teacher indicated that entering the profession was also due to chance as well as a recognised latent gifting. Whilst working in partnership with a local school to teach basic joinery techniques to apprentices, he got asked by a manager in the school to cover a class:

*...it is by pure chance that I stumbled on teaching...they employed teachers to take kids on basic joinery courses and one day one of the tutors phoned in sick and I got asked to take over.*

Nick later came to believe that he had "a little bit of a gift" in teaching others and he decided to apply for a position in the college. Perhaps, in this case, his flair for training underpinned the opportunity which arose, which then spurred him to seize the opportunity to teach rather than passing it over. In another case, Chris, an automotive engineering teacher, entered FE following prompts from a friend who worked at a

college. When a vacancy for someone with motor mechanics skills came up in the college his friend persuaded him to go for it:

*I believe I must have done a good job and then from there I ended up spending 12 months doing some part-time teaching in the automotive section.*

While the majority of respondents entered the teaching profession by chance rather than by choice, for some it was a longstanding aspiration borne out of past training experiences as well as a love for teaching as indicated by Jamie, an IT teacher:

*I think it was more of a case of I knew I wanted to do it because I've worked in previous training roles within sort of commercial context and I enjoyed it ...so I was sort of happy to take that pay cut for a period of time anyway.*

Debbie a Media teacher, also expressed how a deep-rooted desire was fulfilled:

*Ok, well I've always enjoyed teaching and I've always been involved in some sort of education or teaching ... So, I looked into it and I realised that going into FE/HE will be a good solution.*

Out of the sixteen teachers interviewed, four of them had longstanding aspirations to teach, the remaining twelve entered FE teaching as a result of life contingencies or 'slippage' (Thompson, 2010, p. 126). This reflects evidence in the literature that few FE practitioners had an established desire to teach in FE (Gleeson and Mardle, 1980; Gleeson et al, 2005). In other words, their choice of teaching career has more or less been an opportunity or a chance at a crossroad.



## Triggers for entering FE Teaching

Teachers	Triggers for entry to FE teaching
Sarah	Back-up plan for imminent shortage of clients
Liz	An opportunity which came up
Mat	Happened by chance
Phil	Recommendation by a college tutor who spotted own effective teaching skills on the workshop floor.
Janet	Post-redundancy option
Nick	Happened by chance, but had some interest in teaching
John	Recommendation by acquaintances
Rachel	Got asked to assess a childcare course whilst working as a nursery officer – happened by chance
Joe	Happened by chance, but had some interest in teaching
Sam	Back-up plan for imminent unemployment
Jamie	Longstanding aspiration
Chris	Recommendation by a friend
Anna	Happened by chance
Zak	Longstanding aspiration
Esther	Longstanding aspiration
Debbie	Longstanding aspiration

**Table 6**

## **6.2 Conceptualisations of Teacher Professionalism**

The interview data reveal a wide range of views about teacher professionalism. Some pervading themes and notions included: individualised professionalism; subject knowledge expertise; rapport with learners and ethic of care; learner engagement; teacher dispositions; classroom management skills; relevant experience; developed pedagogical skills; authority and influence; flexibility; professional qualifications; and externally prescribed professionalism. In effect, teachers' and managers' (i.e. respondents') views include, what teachers do to influence their daily practices (Hoyle and Wallace, 2007); and the characteristics that teachers bring to their practice or those status-related elements of their practice (Gleeson and James, 2007). As discussed in chapter 3, Colley and James (2005) propose two approaches to constructing professionalism: an ontology of professionalism (a person specification) and an epistemology of professionalism (a job description). These classifications will be employed in structuring teachers' and managers' notions of professionalism in this study.

### *6.2.1 An Ontology of Professionalism – a person specification*

What resonates clearly from the interviews is the relationship with learners and the influence of the teacher in making a difference to their practice. This can be otherwise explained as a self-driven practice which seeks to enhance the quality of service (Hoyle, 2001); where individual agency takes precedence over prescribed notions of professionalism as respondents assert their individual roles and responsibilities in shaping their practice. Sarah, a hairdressing teacher had a preference for individual agency:

*... I think it's personal to each person, professionalism to me, I probably learn it in the salon, how to conduct your day-to-day life in an appropriate manner but that's suitable for your audience... I think you work towards it and then you've got your own standards, and I think everybody's professional standards or the view of professionalism aren't the same, it's different for everybody.*

Likewise, Zak an IT teacher, viewed professionalism as a self-driven practice and felt that intrinsic motivation is significant to the concept of teacher professionalism:

*I think it's very different for the individuals... I think essentially if you are going to be a professional, it's not something that can be dictated in that way. It's got to be something that is inside of you. You've got to be dedicated to it, you've got to have passion for it, you've got to have a love of it... So without that, it's just a shallow pretence of what it's trying to be.*

Similarly, some of the teachers interviewed considered the practitioners' conduct, disposition and attitudes as significant aspects of professionalism. John, a teacher in the automotive engineering department felt that professionalism is more about the type of attitude that the practitioner brings into their practice:

*... I think it's the way the person sort of acts in their role....I think it's preparing..... all the preparation that goes into the lesson before hand. Making sure that you know your learners, .. I think it's the way you behave as well ... the way you behave to students, obviously, there's got to be some sort of link between you and the students.*

Likewise, Janet an NVQ assessor and trainer argued that professionalism goes beyond the delivery of a service as an expert in a particular field, for her, it is about improving practice as well as efficiency. Rachel, a teacher in health and social care also indicated that professionalism is about being able to deliver sessions that are engaging, interesting and which motivate learners to learn. This perception was echoed by Anna, another NVQ assessor/trainer who felt that professionalism is synonymous with being

prepared for her lessons in order to be able to deal with every eventuality. This, according to her, entails and requires active and reflective listening skills which should enable her to improve her practice.

The above interpretations of professionalism shed some light into how teachers construct meaning and identity. Their views gravitate towards teachers' ownership of their practice, and agents with power (Gleeson & James, 2007) who are able to define their practice ethics. These notions of professionalism also reflect Boyt et al's (2001) interpretations of teacher professionalism which highlight the capacity of the professional, in this case the teacher, to shape their professionalism. They argue that "professionalism consists of the attitudes and behaviour one possesses towards one's profession. It is an attitudinal and behavioural orientation that individuals possess toward their occupations" (p. 322). It has also been argued that professionalism is about the enhancement of the quality of service and practice rather than the enhancement of status (Hoyle 2001). Some of the teachers' and managers' perceptions presented in this study can also be understood from the standpoint of Bathmaker's (2006) concept of personal professionalism that inclines to a strong service ethic.

The notion of professionalism which centres on the enhancement of classroom practice was widely held by the majority of the managers interviewed, with them advocating pedagogical skills and learner engagement as key factors that define the notion of teacher professionalism. According to Andy, a manager in the IT department, being a professional involves the ability to facilitate learning through effective teacher-learner interactions and questioning techniques. Mike, a manager in the automotive department,

had similar views. He asserted that expertise, technical knowledge or experience is not sufficient and that the ability to enhance and inspire learning is essential.

Leah, a manager in the IT department interprets professionalism as being able to meet learners' needs, irrespective of those needs. Moreover, she felt that a professional teacher should be able to efficiently use a range of effective teaching and learning methods in order to be able to facilitate learning. Some of the teachers also felt that classroom management skills and classroom authority are essential aspects of professionalism. For Liz, an IT teacher, the practitioners' subject knowledge is secondary to their ability to command respect in the classroom and to positively influence the learning process:

*... I always thought of my tutor as the one that has more ... not necessarily more subject knowledge because he didn't know anything about IT, but he knew more about classroom management, how to manage the classroom ...*

This management of complexity is one of seven key elements of professionalism suggested by Hargreaves and Goodson (1996).

Zak's notion, indicated earlier, can be understood in terms of Evans' (2008a) concept of professionalism. Evans contends that professionalism should be perceived as "a reality – a real entity" (p. 27) and not a hypothetical or idealised concept. She posits that professionalism is a real entity when it is operational or enacted:

To be real, professionalism has to be something that people – professionals actually 'do', not simply something that the government or any other agency *wants* them to do, or mistakenly imagines they are doing (p. 27).

Bourdieu (1989) in his analysis of symbolic power, an implicit mode of cultural and social domination by privileged social agents, argues that agents with cultural, symbolic, economic and social capital possess the ability to maintain dominance in the field of power. In the context of this study, it can be argued that education policy makers, who are at the top of the hierarchy, possess the power to impose their values on practitioners and to prescribe what they conceive as effective professional practice. The influence of power is significant to the development of teacher trainees, as in the context of their training; they are recipients of external policy reforms, as well as agents who have more or less power to effect professional changes. There is therefore a gap between what is prescribed by policy makers and what practitioners yearn to enact; which has been identified as the two contrasting concepts of FE teacher professionalism – recipients of external policy or agents of change (Gleeson et al, 2005).

Ott (1989) describes enactment as a proactive process by which reality is shaped and structured. It also concerns the active role taken to create the reality that is desired by professionals. Hilferty (2008) defines enacted professionalism as “an active process of social engagement through which teachers shape their own worklives” (p. 162). In this study, those things that professionals actually “do” are what some of the teachers and managers perceive as professionalism, and these manifest in the way that practitioners behave; their approach to improving their practice; a commitment to developing learners which stems from the knowledge of their learners and their needs; and the strategies put in place to generate interests and motivate learners to reach their full potential. An ethic of care is also evident in some of the teachers’ and managers’ responses. Most of the teachers seem to prioritise their learners’ needs in different ways, and the majority of

managers consider the ability of practitioners to positively engage their learners and to foster successful learning as key characteristics of teacher professionalism. These commitments to practice and convictions are what Stronach et al (2002) refer to as “ecologies of practice”.

As a caveat, it is unclear whether the extent of managers’ opinions are wholly altruistic or whether they are borne out of a motive to enhance retention and achievement figures; a performance management strategy, or an “economy of performance” which manifests in terms of performance measures (Stronach et al, 2002). However, some of the teachers’ perspectives reflect the findings of a study conducted by Jephcote and Salisbury (2009) on FE teachers’ professional identities which propose that they are committed to their learners and privilege their learners’ needs and interests even when these are at variance with the demands made on them by college managers. Their study suggests that teachers are inclined to establishing nurturing relationships and adapting their teaching styles in order to develop their learners’ potentials. This then draws attention to the reworking of professionalism from outside the changing conditions of FE practice as well as from within (Gleeson and James, 2007). Jephcote and Salisbury (2009) agree with this reworking: “on the one hand, we see FE teachers as professionals increasingly subject to external standards and codes of practice, and, on the other, FE teachers exercising their own agency, in control of and constructing their own professional identities” (p. 971). They conclude that a teacher’s role is not static but responds to the wider context and provides an explanation of the social processes inside their classrooms. This perhaps sheds further light on the notion of teacher professionalism. It can thus be argued that in spite of the external pressures they face,

teachers have the inclination and the potential to influence the quality of their work, which reflects their capacity to exercise agency.

### *6.2.2 An Epistemology of Professionalism – a job description*

Fewer teachers in the study however tend towards the concept of prescribed or defined professionalism which is conditioned by external rules and regulations. The impact of power, scrutiny, quality measures, compliance and an erosion of autonomy can be gleaned from some of the teachers' responses. Esther viewed professionalism among other things as being adaptable, open to change (however often this happens) and compliant:

*a professional tutor will be someone who is organised who is adaptable, who doesn't complain when things change, because things have constantly been changing; I've been doing this for 5 years and I think if I wasn't open to change I don't think I'll be able to cope with it, especially with changes in funding, the qualification, the eligibility, people we could take on. ... and just being very organised and making sure that you've got the right paperwork, the right resources, you've got your plans in place in case somebody wanted to see them, you know if you didn't have them you'd be in a big mess.*

For some of the teachers, professionalism is about prescribed standards. According to

Joe, a hospitality and catering teacher:

*I think it's got to do with the standards you're working towards. Like in any trade you have to have a certain professional standard you are going to work to.*

Similarly, an IT teacher's interpretation of professionalism hinges on validation based on previous experience and teaching qualifications gained. For Debbie, the attainment of prescribed standards is primary and validation plays a crucial role. She emphasised



the importance of prior experience and qualifications as prerequisites for professionalism. Mat, a construction teacher also felt that teacher professionalism is about the practitioner's expertise or subject knowledge, training, experience and qualifications:

*... I would say somebody who knows his job and would show that he knows his job by his actions. So if somebody is a professional, you will be able to tell that he is a professional by looking at him, by listening to what he says and then also his experience as well will show.*

Likewise, Nick, another teacher from the construction department felt that training and experience are significant:

*... I served on apprenticeship. I went on a 3 year training and I think any sort of course that you go on like the Cert Ed course, you need that training, you need that experience. I know it took me 2 years but that does give you the underpinning knowledge to go about your job.*

Sam summed it up this way:

*...There is probably a definite definition of it but I think it's one in which people are trained and qualified then they become professionals at what they preach or practice.*

As these quotations suggest, these perceptions may have stemmed from these teachers' experiences in their previous careers as apprentices who learnt their trade and craft by completing set training programmes and by learning from others.

Beth, a manager in the hair and beauty department also considered professionalism to be synonymous with knowledge and experience among other attributes:

*... I think they should be confident, knowledgeable ... I know you can be professional even if you are brand new, I think experience*

*helps with that professionalism and how you're supposed to behave.*

Teachers' and managers' conceptions and interpretations of professionalism in this study seem to reflect a diversity of perspectives including enacted professionalism; the functionalist theoretical perspective; and the ideological/interactionist perspective which views professionalism as a way of establishing professional status, occupational dominance and social closure (Gleeson and James, 2007). As indicated in the literature review, those attributes or characteristics identified in the functionalist perspectives (which seem more dominant in this study) may include a set of skills which are rooted in "a body of knowledge, recognised training, the application of a code of conduct, an ethic of altruism, and high rewards" (ibid, p. 456). The functionalist perspective has however been criticised on the basis of its limitations as a self-fulfilling concept (Hoyle & John, 1995). They contend that some professions do not always have all the set attributes; thus it becomes difficult to distinguish professionals from non-professionals.

Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) also argue that a view of professionalism that is situated in personal knowledge, such as expertise, restricts the teacher's role to practice within the classroom alone. For them, practitioner control and proactivity are key defining features of teacher professionalism. This view supports some of the teachers' and managers' conceptualisation of professionalism in terms of what is enacted, what goes on in the classroom and the teachers' ability to facilitate learning irrespective of the nature of the learner group and their needs.

Overall, teachers' and managers' notions and interpretations of teacher professionalism do not seem to have been influenced by a motivation for status or prestige (Hoyle 2001). Conversely, as earlier presented, data collected in this study suggests that their conceptualisations portray teacher professionalism which combines both an "inside-out" professionalism which rests on commitment to public service, and an "outside-in" professionalism which relies on specified rules and procedures (Stronach et al, 2002, p. 125). Data also suggests a notion of teacher professionalism driven by a commitment to improving the quality of service and an allegiance to learners' motivation and development.

Robson et al (2004) argue that prior vocational experiences inform teachers' professional identity, which in turn influence their practice as teachers. The views and perceptions of professionalism recounted above reinforce established notions of both enacted professionalism and prescribed professionalism. However, there is no clear-cut correlation between perceptions of teachers from trade/vocational backgrounds or those from academic backgrounds in respect of notions of enacted or prescribed professionalism.

### **6.3 Factors structuring teachers' and managers' notions of professionalism**

In constructing meaning from the data collected, it is useful to consider the factors that have influenced teachers' and managers' notions of professionalism.

The dual professionalism of FE teachers seems to imply that they are professionals in their own subject area prior to joining the teaching profession. Teachers and managers interviewed have had different academic and vocational experiences, diverse professional identities, and different value systems. One thing they however have in common is that they are subject specialists who through prior training and/or experience possess theoretical and/or practical knowledge of their subjects. This suggests that they bring to the sector considerable expertise from their varied backgrounds. Another area of diversity or multiplicity relates to their motives for entering the teaching profession; while some were keen to become teachers (based on some initial teaching experiences), others began teaching as a result of imminent redundancies within their primary careers (*Table 6*).

The initial questionnaire data on teachers' feelings before starting the programme also indicated different views and reactions on enrolling on the PGCE/Cert Ed course. While some of the teachers were enthusiastic and excited, others were reluctant. Interestingly one of the teachers who initially felt reluctant but who later found the experience beneficial attributed their initial concern to their managers' lack of support, and some impressions of colleagues who had already attended the course. It has been suggested that the diversity of identities and inclinations account for teachers' varied opinions, and in some cases, an overlap of opinions. Malm (2009) asserts that "prospective teachers'

existing knowledge and beliefs have been found to play a crucial role in how they experience and/or envision their professional role” (p. 82). Similarly, Jephcote and Salisbury (2009) argue that teachers’ biography is a factor which determines and explains their classroom practice. Moreover, their research suggests that teachers’ value systems, beliefs, attitudes and occupational experiences shape their professional identities.

In terms of occupational experiences, three of the teachers from vocational areas seem to identify with the culture within their first profession which reflects the apprenticeships tradition. For instance, Nick, Joe and Sam viewed a professional teacher as someone whose experience, appearance and actions fit the role; and someone who has been trained ‘on the job’ and has underpinning knowledge. A form of Bourdieu’s (1994) concept of habitus, vocational habitus, which has been developed by Colley et al (2003) can be used to explain these teachers’ perceptions. They used the term vocational habitus to explore the processes of identity formation involved in vocational courses in preparation for specific occupations. According to them:

vocational habitus proposes that the learner aspires to a certain combination of dispositions demanded by the vocational culture. It operates in disciplinary ways to dictate how one should properly feel, look and act, as well as the values, attitudes and beliefs that one should espouse. As such, it is affective and embodied, and calls upon the innermost aspects of learners’ own habitus (p. 488).

This definition of vocational habitus which places emphasis on becoming the “right person”, posits a combination of subjective personal dispositions and collective predispositions which is structured by the context (field) within which the individual is located; an affective and embodied concept. In other words, vocational cultures are

constructed by the cultures and practices of particular occupations and also by the individuals interacting with these cultures. This perhaps could explain the way some of the teachers from trade or vocational backgrounds have interpreted the notion of teacher professionalism, which arguably has been influenced by the tradition and culture of the field, and its *modus operandi*. This in part is reflected in apprenticeship training i.e. the way skills are taught and developed within the vocational industry.

On the other hand, Liz, Jamie and Zak who have come from academic backgrounds had divergent views and did not consider subject knowledge a defining factor of teacher professionalism. For them, the ability to effectively facilitate lessons, intrinsic motivation, dedication to the job, passion, classroom management skills, in other words, an “inside-out professionalism” (Stronach et al, 2002, p. 125), are key to the notion of teacher professionalism. Their opinions however contrast with that of Debbie who is also from an academic background but who felt that a qualification in education and/or validation defines a professional teacher. Then again, some teachers and managers from vocational backgrounds advocate teachers’ classroom practice as a key notion of teacher professionalism; which clearly contrasts with the interpretation favoured by other teachers from trade and vocational backgrounds. It thus becomes problematic to make generalisations which correlate teachers’ responses with their occupational backgrounds.

According to Maton (2008), Bourdieu uses the term *habitus* to discuss a broad range of phenomena and another attribute of the concept offers a useful tool in analysing and understanding the contrasting views indicated above. This attribute of *habitus* comprises

*a structured and structuring structure*; it is 'structured' by teachers' and their managers' previous and current practices including their educational backgrounds and their experiences as practitioners in the FE sector – a tendency towards self and system reproduction (Morrison, 2005). With regard to the 'structuring' property of habitus, it can be proposed that due to their capacity to exert agency, practitioners' dispositions are transforming and have shaped their current notions of professionalism which may not necessarily be in harmony with their previous experiences.

This chapter has analysed the concept of teacher professionalism from the perspectives of both teacher and manager respondents. Initially however, teachers' biographies have been explored in order to shed more light on possible links between occupational experiences and notions of professionalism. Although data collected indicates a range of views and examples of what constitutes FE teacher professionalism, overall, the perceptions have been organised into two main approaches using Colley's and James' (2005) ontology and epistemology of professionalism classifications. Whilst in some cases teachers' biographies and occupational experiences have influenced some of the notions of professionalism presented, in other cases, it has not been possible to link teachers' perceptions with their biographies. Even though teachers' and managers' notions of professionalism are fragmented, it is clear that they seem to have their own perceptions of teacher professionalism based on their subjective personal experiences, beliefs and value systems. This subjective stance suggests the tendency that teachers have to exert agency – an attribute that will be further analysed in future chapters.

## **Chapter 7: Knowledge, Skills and Competence gained on the PGCE/Cert Ed**

### **Course**

In interpreting and analysing FE teachers' perceptions of their initial teacher training, Harkin et al (2003) used the key areas in teaching and supporting learning identified in the FENTO standards to elicit, among other things, perceptions of the usefulness of the initial teacher training experience. This was due to the requirements of the then Labour government for all teachers to be trained to the FENTO standards. Four years on, in 2007, the FENTO standards were replaced by the LLUK professional standards which at the inception of this study were the national framework for the initial teacher education curriculum for FE teachers. In other words, they specified the skills, knowledge and competence that are considered essential for teachers in the FE sector. As Nasta (2007) notes, teaching qualifications in the sector were in theory mapped to the standards as they are the benchmark for training and qualifications, regardless of the criticisms of the standards. This study therefore employs the following key areas of the LLUK standards to explore the knowledge, skills and competences gained on the PGCE/Cert Ed training programme in preparing teachers for professional practice:

- Learning and teaching – *Domain B*
- Specialist learning and teaching – *Domain C*
- Planning for learning – *Domain D*
- Assessment for learning – *Domain E*



On the whole, the chapter will also explore how trainees developed professional knowledge, skills and competence whilst on the course.

## **7.1 Learning and Teaching – Domain B**

Data collected from both teachers and managers provide indications that the teaching and learning strategies gained on the course are significant and relevant to their practice. In discovering how the experience has prepared teachers for classroom practice, some of the key areas identified by the teachers are; *Learner engagement, learning preferences and differentiation*. Some of the teachers, whilst acknowledging the importance of learners' development of subject knowledge, regarded the provision of holistic support and teacher-learner relationship as crucial aspects of their practice. Motivation, engagement, and the creation of a dynamic and positive environment where learners feel comfortable to participate are also strategies that were considered essential by respondents. As expressed by Sarah, she gained skills in delivering lively lessons which are interactive and which engage the learners:

*... it was all about motivation, engaging the learners, em, differentiated activities, different things like that. Making it an upbeat lesson, do you know it's that that seems to have stayed with me more than the paperwork side of it. Obviously I know you've got to deliver certain subjects but it was more of the engaging of the learners and you know getting a bond with them and a relationship with them and making it fun rather than you're just here to learn this, write this, go. No, I want them to have fun when they are with me, you know trust me and ... so I try to create like a fun environment, where you do talk and have a laugh as well.*

Perhaps teachers' emphasis on learner motivation and engagement is a consequence of government's social inclusion policies which shift "teaching to welfare" and which place responsibility on practitioners and tie them "to a hegemony of performance" linked to inspection, audit and surveillance (Gleeson et al, 2005, p. 453). This also could explain why some teachers' notions of teacher professionalism focused mostly on learner-centredness.

Some of the teachers indicated that they would not have been able to cope with the demands and challenges involved in facilitating learning without the skills gained on the PGCE/Cert Ed course. Janet, an NVQ assessor/trainer who had no prior teaching experience and who took up teaching after retiring from industry said that the Cert Ed training was fundamental to the development of her teaching skills:

*But I can honestly say that if I haven't had those tools given to me in that course, I couldn't do what I do now, everyday... twice, three times a day that I'm delivering a course I refer back ... it's like a little light switch moment ... I think probably because of the way I was taught way back. Everybody was taught the same speed, the same pace ... If you didn't pick it up that was you, you fell behind ... I knew people were different but I just thought we herded them all in and they all did it together ... and it's very different, you've got to find out what part of that person's understanding, need, want, desire will make them engage with what you're doing. So, it's about delivering it in a different way ...*

For John, an automotive engineering teacher, the training prepared him for what he sees as his role as a teacher:

*... I think probably before I did the Cert Ed, I was more sort of teaching the students what they needed to know without really involving them so much in the learning, whereas, during the Cert Ed I became more aware of different strategies, more student participation in the sessions, questioning, answering, probably more the use of IT equipment as well ...*

In a similar vein, Phil, a teacher in the automotive engineering department, now felt that he had a better appreciation of the importance of using a range of differentiation techniques in facilitating learning. He appreciated that each individual is different and learns differently:

*I have to adjust how I teach to suit them better. So instead of just explaining something once in the way I think it's going to come across, I may have to elaborate on what I am saying or doing and usually you get a sense of when the penny actually drops with the people.*

The positive impact of the training was again echoed by Sam, a construction teacher, who reiterated that:

*It wasn't until the Cert Ed when it started becoming, you know, more apparent the different things you can do with them, the different theories of learning, and everybody is different and the chalk and talk stuff doesn't work ... I think it does prepare you for how you can plan and prepare your lesson.*

However, the teaching and learning experience was not wholly positive for all the teachers interviewed. While some came out of the 2-year training feeling equipped with a range of pedagogical skills, two of the sixteen teachers interviewed expressed unmet expectations. As an example, Rachel, a childcare teacher, highlighted a perceived shortfall:

*What I felt was missing from it was learning different teaching styles. I thought I would go on that course and come away with a nice range of teaching method styles that I can then go back and use with my learners. But I just felt that that was sort of missing.*

Similarly, Zak, an IT teacher, considered the training too rigid:

*One thing I did find incredibly lacking was the actual teaching side of it. It seemed to be virtually completely removed from the teaching. Nothing on how to rapport (sic) with people, how to*

*manage a class, how to get them in, how to change language, how to adjust these things.....All we've done is how other people had a model of it and trying to force it into that model rather than paying attention to what is going on in the classroom. So I found in that respect ... it was a bit too defined and it was defined on the wrong things.*

On the other hand, although Sam attested to the breadth of skills gained on the course, he felt that these do not entirely equip trainees for what happens in a classroom situation:

*... but it doesn't prepare you for the students and how sometimes it just goes totally off-track as well as being 16-17 ... nothing prepares you for sometimes the volatile situation with 16 year olds 'effing and jeffing' and walking out.*

This clearly highlights the issue of classroom management and perceived gaps in adequately preparing teachers to cope with this. Perhaps all the skills required to facilitate and manage learning may not necessarily be acquired on a teacher training course and through codified knowledge. Classroom management seems to be of significance in real world practice; which is different and far removed from a simulated environment of the classroom where case studies have perhaps been used to solve similar issues. Sam's observation and views strengthen the argument for the value of the more contemporary conceptualisation of teachers' professional knowledge which is rooted in the social-cultural construction of knowledge, where knowledge is acquired through informal processes and in a variety of settings (Saunders, 2006; Maxwell, 2010; Putnam and Borko, 2000). Furthermore, from Sam's viewpoint, the most effective setting in the development of classroom management skills is the classroom or environment, where his learners are inclined to display challenging behaviours. This resonates with the value and importance of authentic contexts or "situatedness of

activity” in the construction of knowledge as advocated by situated learning theorists (Lave and Wenger’s, 1991, p. 33).

On another note, a small number of the teachers interviewed also felt that there was an expectation to perform. Joe, who teaches hospitality and catering, and who indicated that he acquired some useful teaching and learning skills and techniques on the course, was of the opinion that expectations to perform and deliver far outweigh teacher development on the course:

*There is a lot of emphasis on tutors to perform, it’s like there is a growing demand on performance all the way through the year...*

While these issues were blamed directly on the course structure and indirectly on teacher trainers, perhaps it can be argued that the latter operate in a performative framework and have limited control over the content of the curriculum, being at the end of the policy chain and driven by an outcome-orientated model of professional practice (see for example, Lawy and Tedder 2009). Nonetheless, and as previously discussed, Spours et al (2007) argue that ‘policy mediation’ which entails the multiple acts of translation, interpretation, and retranslation may lead to what is referred to as ‘misreading’ by policy makers. In other words, as policy is mediated by middle managers and teachers it may lead to “unintended outcomes” (p. 204). Such unintended outcomes might have also influenced the experience of trainee teachers in this study e.g. the completion of specific documentations whilst on the course.

Based on the varying learning experiences of the teachers interviewed, it can be suggested that although teacher educators follow the same curriculum learning criteria

and outcomes, their approaches to facilitating learning do differ, possibly depending on their experience and expertise. This implies that teacher educators have the capacity to influence what transpires in their practice, which then supports the argument about the level of autonomy (or agency) enjoyed by teachers in their classroom in the context of a prescribed curriculum (Robson, 2006).

Whilst it can be argued that the same curriculum content can be delivered using different approaches, it is uncertain if the impact on the recipients will be similar, which may then enhance or marginalise their learning in different ways. In evaluating the pedagogical strategies employed on the course, Esther, an NVQ assessor/trainer, provided a range of examples including: group work, presentations, guest speakers' input, IT skills development, research, questions and answers etc. Although these all look robust, Jamie, an IT teacher had a less affirmative perspective:

*... the delivery structure was ok, it tended to be the case of information, information, workshop and it was ok. I wasn't always astounded by the way things were delivered, but I wasn't disappointed either.*

Again, these perspectives are dissimilar and could have made a difference in the skills development of these teachers.

What is explicit here is what can be described as the ultimate consequence of policy lever as a result of policy mediation i.e. how policy is interpreted and ultimately enacted. On one hand, it can support and enhance the skills development of trainees, especially when teacher educators tap into their repertoire of expertise and facilitate effective learning using a range of effective pedagogical principles; as in the example provided by

Esther, who felt that she benefited immensely from her teacher's approaches. On the other hand, the skills development of trainees can be marginalised when the approaches used by teacher educators to deliver the same learning outcomes do not raise trainees' expectations; as in the example provided by Jamie. It can thus be argued that in the cases discussed here, even though both trainees studied in the same institution, the quality of their learning and development has been left to 'fate' with regard to the values and expertise of respective teacher educators and how they chose to model those teaching methods and strategies that they want their trainees to adopt in their own practice (Loughran and Berry, 2005). What is apparent here is the agency of teacher educators.

Findings here strengthen the discourse about the impact of social structures in constraining or limiting social action through rules and resources, and the capacity of social actors to exercise agency (Giddens, 1984). The constraining and enabling aspect of Giddens' structuration theory is therefore useful in analysing the identified structure-agency tensions and interrelationships in respect of the hegemony of structure and the ensuing empowering capacity of the agent to intervene. In this study, the theory helps to identify and explain the mutuality between the control and authority of structure and the reactions of purposive social actors. In other words, although policy dictates are meted out, specifically in this instance, the influence of government prescribed curriculum, educational institutions and practitioners still have a way of responding to the influence of structure by mediating and translating policies or curriculum, and this in the most constraining settings.

## 7.2 Specialist Learning and Teaching – Domain C

As indicated in chapter 2, there has been an ongoing debate about the nature of subject specialism in FE (Fisher and Webb, 2006), especially in response to Ofsted's (2003) recommendation for the provision of specialist subject and mentoring support for trainee teachers. In this case study, subject specialist input is handled in two ways. Firstly, at the beginning of the training, each trainee is supported by a subject specialist mentor from their curriculum area. Secondly, towards the end of their training, trainees participate in a two-day Subject Specialist Conference event at the university which is attended by other trainee teachers from partner colleges, and where they present a conference paper on a topic of their choice.

Specialist learning and teaching has been designed as an online module which focuses on the development of skills in a teacher's own specialist area. As part of this development, trainees work online in specialist subject groups, supported by a specialist tutor, to develop the specialist conference paper. The specialist learning and teaching module was considered effective by the teachers except for the online aspect which some rated negatively. Sarah, who teaches hairdressing, found herself in a strange environment which was different to the support system she was used to:

*I found the online tutor thing awful to be honest with you, I didn't feel like I got much if any support, it went backwards and forwards on the online thing. I didn't like it at all ...I felt like I was going into the unknown with this online thing and you have to be in this forum and say all these different things, and when I went I just did not enjoy that two days at all.*

Chris, a teacher in automotive engineering considered the process isolating and challenging. The online aspect of the module took him out of his comfort zone:



*I'd been in class, we've been given assignment work, we've done things in a way and then all of a sudden, I was online, I was opened up into the university networking and I felt a little isolated and you know... and it took an awful lot of hard work to get to the end result for me personally.*

Janet, an NVQ assessor/trainer, also found the online system challenging, and the support from both the university and the college rather poor.

Although the online element was not popular with some, others found the experience very productive as they had prior online learning skills and/or coping strategies. Here again, is an example of where structure can enable or constrain the actions of trainee teachers (Giddens, 1984). It was enabling for trainees who had good IT/online learning skills as they were able to complete set tasks without any problems. However, it was constraining for those who came on the course with limited IT/online learning skills as they found the whole concept challenging, alien and isolating which then turned out to be a barrier to their learning.

Whilst the issue of minimal IT skills might have marginalised these trainees who have had to work online, perhaps their conceptualisation of what learning is could have also been a crucial factor in this respect. The more traditional mode of learning entails the presence of 'others' (e.g. teacher and peers) who would have provided immediate support within the learning process, however, their experience on the online learning platform was different. Bourdieu's (1990) concept of habitus as embodied can perhaps be used to explain this in respect of patterns of behaviour and dispositions which are

rooted in the perception of the past, and which agents are naturally more comfortable with.

Generally, however, the development and delivery of the specialist conference papers proved to be a more useful experience for the teachers. One reason that can be attributed to this is the opportunity that the teachers had in choosing their own conference paper topics (in contrast to the highly prescriptive nature of the other assignments); perhaps a fleeting moment of *power* which then generated the incentive to prove their potential. As expressed by Phil:

*... at the beginning I didn't see much point in it to be honest. However, when I started doing my module, I started doing the writing work ... I actually found that it's something that I feel quite strong about and I'm actually proud of the paper that I put together for it because .. I feel like I put my heart into it really and it seems to come across very well. At the end of it, I actually gained quite a lot and I enjoyed the conference as well.*

Phil valued the opportunity to discuss something he is passionate about and this gave him the impetus and optimism to conduct what he considered an in-depth research on the topic. He deemed the outcome worthwhile as he not only benefited from the learning and development process but also produced a paper that he was proud of. Similarly, Sam found the opportunity to choose a preferred conference paper topic liberating:

*... but then in terms of doing the specialist subject, that was good, you've got to pick a subject ... without doing that I would not have done all the research, gone through the websites, the department of education website to find out actually how bad we are and how bad we've become for such a long time and what the government is trying to do.*

Although these are not directly linked to the development of teaching and learning skills, engagement with research and specialist literature seemed to have broadened teachers' knowledge base on specific issues within their curriculum areas. This experience in itself can be classed as professional development for some of the teachers who had never had to conduct research prior to starting the PGCE/Cert Ed training.

Again, these findings can be analysed using the enabling aspect of structure specifically the influence and power of agency of trainee teachers. One of the conceptualisations of a position of *power* is one in which the individual has the ability to carry out their own will by overcoming the resistance of others (Rogalin et al, 2007). As previously indicated, this also relates to individual/social action or *agency* (Giddens, 1984). Here, trainees exercised agency in respect of their capacity to act independently and to make their own free choices and the opportunity to freely assert own preferences without imposition (Barker, 2005). The fact that teachers were able to exhibit individual agency in their choice of their presentation topic seems to have made a positive impact on their motivation and development even when they felt marginalised by the online aspect of the specialist subject learning. In interpreting the data collected, it can be suggested that individual teacher's actions determined by their *agency* is a contributory factor to their development and practice. This can also be explained from Bourdieu's (1986) concept of a form of cultural capital, a non-financial asset that strategically positions the teachers in this study to develop their research skills.

### *Subject Specialist Conference*

Aside from the specialist module assignment, the brief experience of the university environment made a lasting impression on some of the teachers on the Cert Ed pathway who have never studied at a university. It was a *status* and prestige factor for some as it was the first time they had ever been in a university environment as a student, and for Janet, she saw it with hindsight as something she should have done at a younger age:

.... but the actual end result ... I really enjoyed that and it was the first time I've ever been in a university environment ... as a student, you know, later in life. But it was worth it ... that was another light bulb moment thinking if I could have my time again, I would have gone here at the age of 18 ... and you know, what I've missed out. I really enjoyed that experience. I liked the delivery of it ...

Although Janet found the online aspect difficult, the University environment, the atmosphere and the whole experience made such an impact on her that she felt she had missed out on an opportunity earlier on in life; and came back from the conference with a more positive perspective and attitude about her learning and personal development. Arguably, it seems that these types of experiences have contributed to teachers' professional development.

### *Mentor Support (see section 9.3)*

Linked closely to the subject specialist skills area is the subject specialist support provided by mentors. From most of the teachers' perspectives, there is a strong indication that the mentoring process was very successful in preparing them for practice; although, some of the teachers also felt that support provided by some of the mentors was adhoc (further discussions in the next chapter). However, the reported support received from mentors, although very constructive and timely, was mainly generic in

nature and included such things as lesson planning, delivery strategies, classroom management, help with PGCE/Cert Ed assignments, general advice etc. Even though these were not government's primary intentions for subject specialist support provided by mentors, conceivably, the pertinent and prime needs of trainee teachers are not necessarily limited to subject specialism, but also entail day-to-day and practical aspects of teaching and learning which the teacher trainers were not always able to meet due to time constraints. This is similar to one of the limitations highlighted by Hobson et al (2009) in their study on beginner teacher mentoring.

Such is the value placed on the mentoring system by teachers in this study that it can be postulated that the mentor as a teacher and subject specialist is probably better positioned to provide the day-to-day support needed by trainee teachers. From managers' point of view, weaknesses in the mentoring process were attributed to lack of time on the mentors' part to fully perform their role. According to Mike, a manager in the automotive department:

*Where we're putting them with people wider within the department, even outside of the department, I don't think it works as good as it could. But again, I think it's a time restriction thing everyone is busy aren't we? ... I think a lot of it is about human nature. At the moment everybody leads very busy lives and it takes the right sort of people to take the time to work with somebody. I think it could be through case-loading point of view that they were actually allocating people time to do it, but then the constraints we get put within as managers to deploy people and bring work in makes it difficult.*

Shain and Gleeson (1999) assert that managerialism is "an attempt to elicit the compliance of FE lecturers in new modes of control over their work" (p. 448), and Clarke and Newman (1997) argue that the rise of the New Public Management (NPM) or 'new

managerialism' is a strategy to economise education through the introduction of private sector approaches to public sector management. According to Beckman and Cooper (2004), advocates of new managerialism argue for the need to maximise economic efficiency and to be responsive to the needs of a flexible global market. However, they contend that there is a focus on a narrow view of efficiency which is based on cost savings rather than the quality of service provision which can potentially turn out to be damaging instruments of control. This is the case with the subject specialist mentoring process at the college which whilst potentially beneficial to the development of teachers' expertise, can become jeopardised by rigorous human resource management measures.

The mentor support process in this study echoes the value of situated and collaborative learning in the development of trainee teachers' professional knowledge and skills. As discussed in chapter 3, this form of knowledge development which acknowledges the interaction of individuals, the role of *others*, and the learning context, has been argued to be more effective in developing practitioners' knowledge (Saunders, 2006; Maxwell, 2010; and Lave and Wenger, 1991).

### **7.3 Planning for Learning – *Domain D***

Planning for learning, on the surface, seems relevant and useful to some of the teachers as they were able to use strategies taught on the course and background information to structure their lessons as well as put theory into practice. Liz, an IT teacher, said:

*It helped me structure the way I was going to prepare my lesson ... we discussed all the theory side of things and because it was part-time, I could then put these into practice in the week.*

Jamie, another IT teacher, also found the experience invaluable;

*I suppose it sort of got me into the correct mindset for effectively managing and running my own course.*

However, most of the teachers found planning for learning a glossed-over, rigid, prescribed, tick-box exercise. These views starkly contrast that of learning and teaching method where most teachers lay claim to significant improvement in their practice.

John, who teaches automotive engineering, said:

*... maybe some aspects of the session planning wasn't explained fully well; why you need to do certain things.... so maybe tailoring the session towards what I needed rather than just it being a paper exercise. – no, I don't think there was a lot of time spent really on that. So I think maybe I sort of picked a little bit during the course rather than specific teaching on that area.*

For Sam it was all about pleasing the inspectors: *...”and it's there for Ofsted isn't it? It's about that at the end of the day”*. This clearly questions the value placed on the process and places premium on meeting prescribed targets – an economy of performance (Stronach et al, 2002) and performativity measures, which emphasises productivity (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005, ). Moreover, Zak argued that a good teacher does not need to follow a fixed plan to deliver an effective lesson as the pace is more or less determined by the teacher's skills and the nature of the group. He found the lesson planning process far too rigid and the timings too prescriptive but in order to please the system he complied with the regulations:

*... it's a conversation, it's an interaction, I'm trying to get my passion for the subject knowledge into these people and share it with them, you can't allocate 45 mins to do that ... you know, so I*

*sort of learnt the rules, learnt the boxes and so on, but realised that largely it's irrelevant to be perfectly honest ...*

These views support the argument presented by Humphreys and Hyland (2002) about excellent teaching being rooted in intuition and improvisation:

The best teachers are not only well prepared but also practised and skilful improvisers. As teacher trainers we can certainly provide instructions on how to write learning outcomes, draw up lesson plans, create schemes of work, analyse resource implications and manage time effectively but all this is ultimately formulaic ... p. 11).

Here, Humphreys and Hyland advocate the more practical and flexible approach over the prescribed or imposed.

Data collected on lesson planning suggests that this is a controversial area. Although some of the teachers felt that the essential aspects were covered on the course, majority of the teachers thought that it was a wholly tick-box exercise. In the main, there are two contrasting views in respect of lesson planning; the first perceives gaps in developing skills in planning for lessons and the second questions its value. The latter views lesson planning as a drive towards evidence-based teaching practice, and not necessarily a useful tool in facilitating learning. In other words, significance was placed on codified approaches while more intuitive practice was less valued. This perhaps reflects the concerns raised by James and Biesta (2007), that new managerialism and the audit culture within educational institutions can introduce a form of compliance which generates fabrication and gamesmanship. This enforced or artificial compliance does not necessarily change the teacher's mindset or practice and the question is; if teachers do not value lesson planning as a facilitation tool, will they be committed to developing skills in this area?



From a theoretical perspective, this is an example where structure manifests as *rules* and *resources* that are implicated recursively in social reproduction and which agents use as both the medium and outcome of reproduction of practices (Giddens, 1984). In this context, social reproduction denotes the sets of social practices and justifications that constitute lesson planning and which are thought to have been prescribed by the college management and teacher trainers. However, practitioners' actions which have been constrained by the government and college management have not actually contested the *rules* and *resources*, conversely, their actions have perpetuated existing practices and reproduced *rules* and *resources*. For instance, Sam's and Zak's views about the value and relevance of lesson planning to their practice, and their ensuing 'strategic' reaction to this issue illustrate how agents in their actions produce and reproduce the structures that constrain them. It will not be surprising if in the future, they, as managers, also enforce what they have strategically complied with.

#### **7.4 Assessment for learning – Domain E**

For most of the tutors, the PGCE/Cert Ed training experience has broadened their skills in the use of a wide range of assessment strategies. These include the use of different types of formative assessment techniques and peer assessment methods. According to Mat, a plastering teacher, who had minimal previous teaching experience, the training enabled him to gain skills in using different assessment strategies. For him, his skills development was more around the use of peer assessment strategies:

*...I found out what peer assessment is, it gets the group involved, so, I will say peer assessment out of everything ... yes I gained that on the course.*

On the range of formative assessment techniques gained and used in own practice

Nick, a teacher in the automotive engineering department, had this to say:

*I use a lot of interactive games on the computer ... I tend to use a strategy ... split the group into 2 and then they compete with each other, that has been useful.*

On his part, Chris, another teacher in the automotive engineering department, now has a better understanding of the relevance of questioning techniques:

*...things like group discussions, direct questioning and things, although I may have been doing that in the past, it made me realise that when I was doing that, these are forms of assessment and I was able to tap into the forms of assessment which helped me to move the learners along ... because I could understand them ...*

Phil, an automotive engineering teacher, now uses a more inclusive approach in assessing in his learners:

*... I did learn to be more diverse in how I went about assessing people and instead of making assumptions ... because I have been guilty of doing that in the past and it's only now when I look back that I think actually I could have contributed to this person's poor development.*

Joe who teaches hospitality and catering indicated that he was familiar with a good range of assessment strategies before the PGCE/Cert Ed course, but what it did for him was to be able to embed these strategies in facilitating learning:

*... a lot of that information I was aware of ... obviously direct observations, questions and answers, written exams, assignments, photographic evidence of dishes that are produced in the kitchen ... but it makes you re-assess the way you are teaching with a lot of emphasis on it.*

Here again, the agency of trainee teachers is at play. For example, out of a wide range of assessment strategies they have been able to select specific aspects that meet their

perceived needs. Rather than mechanically adopting new assessment approaches and conforming to a general set of principles, they have exercised their ability to make informed choices to their advantage.

It was however implied by some of the teachers that the skills gained in this area were mostly acquired through collaborative efforts and practices which they found beneficial.

Zak, an IT teacher, reflected on this:

*Yes, I mean the vast majority didn't come from the course itself, but from the people in the classroom, and I do think that is one of the massive benefits of the course, when you are sat (sic) in a classroom with teachers. I think that is a real benefit, not necessarily the curriculum, and, it would be just like that free flow sharing of ideas: "I've tried this, have you considered a presentation?" "Oh yeah, I'll do that".*

The perceptions of knowledge and skills acquisition discussed in this chapter are clear examples of conceptualisations of teachers' professional knowledge and how these transpire in practice. Again, as previously analysed, the more traditional conceptualisations of teacher professional knowledge are based on formal, fixed and objective epistemological assumptions which are generally codified and prescriptive (Shulman, 1987). However, more contemporary conceptions, as exemplified in the reflections above, propose that practitioners' knowledge development evolves in various forms and contexts most of which are situated in practice and developed through collaborative practices (Saunders, 2006 and Maxwell, 2010).

Findings from this chapter also provide clear evidence of the ability and willingness of teachers to drive their development in ways that are not limited to those prescribed by

the ITT curriculum. The structured PGCE/Cert Ed curriculum has not wholly prepared teachers for what entails in practice on a day-to-day basis, which then implies that teachers have had to make necessary adjustments in their practice. As an example, Sam explained how he had had to deal with unruly behaviours in the classroom; a situation he was not prepared for by using learner centred approaches. Zak also benefited from peer support and collaborative sharing of ideas and experiences in developing his practice.

On another note, the trainee teachers were able to exercise agency in the choices they have made. For instance, they have been able to select the types of assessment strategies that they have employed in practice, a process that has been informed by specific needs within their context. They have also been able to express agency in their perceptions of the training programme and the pedagogical skills that they have acquired or under-developed. In addition, trainees have been able to choose a preferred topic for their specialist subject paper which then empowered them to put their personality and preferences to constructive use. On the other hand, the constraining aspect of structure has been apparent, especially when trainees with limited IT/online learning skills have struggled to cope with the demands of the online learning aspect of the subject specialist module.

The value of social-construction of knowledge in learning contexts has also been alluded to in this chapter. As an example, trainees have developed professional knowledge and skills by working collaboratively with their peers and by gleaning from their mentors' expertise.

## **Chapter 8: Development of Pedagogical Approaches following the PGCE/Cert Ed Course**

“A reflective practitioner is not only taught to repeat established practices, but to go behind them, to criticize, refine and develop these practices and discard them if necessary” (Audunson, 2007, p.104).

Teachers’ responses to how pedagogical approaches have developed since completing the initial teacher training have been categorised into 5 main sub-themes, based on similar and repeated ideas which emerged during data analyses and coding. For instance, teachers referred to changes in their teaching strategies and approaches in inspiring learner participation. Planning for learning, reflective practice and teachers’ own experience also seemed to have made some impact in their development. Teachers also indicated that they have engaged in a range of continuous professional development opportunities following their initial teacher training. The emerging sub-themes are as follows:

- Teaching Methods, Learning Resources and Learner Support
- Lesson Planning and Curriculum Structure
- Classroom Management
- Reflective Practice and Experience
- Own Continuing Professional Development

## 8.1 Teaching Methods, Learning Resources and Learner Support

Developments in pedagogical practice most often identified by the teachers are: teaching and learning strategies used in facilitating learning, provision of differentiated support to learners and the bank of resources employed in developing learners' knowledge and skills. The focus on meeting learners' needs and the development of pedagogical strategies observed in this study are comparable to the view that teacher trainees develop more engaging approaches to teaching as they recognise the importance of harmonising their delivery strategies with their learners' needs (Spenceley, 2007).

All the teachers interviewed stated that the way they facilitate learning has changed since completing the PGCE/Cert Ed training. The urge for learner participation, based on the awareness of their strengths, weaknesses and individual needs was said to have been significant in employing specific approaches. The knowledge of the learner is the first step in this process; followed by the use of a bank of alternative strategies in completing tasks. The use of learner centred approaches and diverse questioning techniques to facilitate deep thinking and learning has also proved effective. John reflected on the range of techniques he now uses:

*... I think the whole way that I teach has changed since the Cert Ed ... just involving the learners more in the session ... so if you've got a learner that is struggling in a particular area, and you've got all the people that are doing really well, I've got more background on how to sort of cope with that and different strategies to use in that way.... the main methods that I try and use is getting the learners to problem solve so they can transfer what they see in the classroom, they can then relate it into the workshop situations as well.*

Similarly, Phil indicated that his new approaches have put him in a good position to facilitate learning. Nick provided some examples:

*... apart from theory, we have a lot of practical in the workshop, and some of the approaches is that we have students who might not have grasped a certain type of joint that we are doing in carpentry. So, differentiation, I'd like to bring a computer in ... there are different ways to do the same joints and it's more visual for the students to understand. Sometime if I try to explain it they might not get it, but if we've got a video at hand, then it's ideal, and someone then becomes engrossed in what they do... I think it's had quite a good impact, because it shows different methods to get to the same result.*

The use of learner-centred approaches was also echoed by Sam, who used to write a lot of information on the board for his learners to copy down. Now he creates a more conducive atmosphere for learning through the use of more engaging approaches including starter activities and re-cap exercises: *"Less of me talking, more of them doing"*. On learning resources and learner support, teachers have developed, and now use, a wide range of tools with their learners, and the ideas for most of these were picked up while on the programme. Liz has developed a bank of useful resources:

*Any resources that I might have needed at the beginning I might have got from peers ... but now, I have my own resource bank that I just keep tapping into and pulling bits out when I need to. So, there is a difference now from when I first started.*

These learner-centred approaches employed by teachers could be viewed as techniques or sets of tools or *structural rules* (Giddens, 1984) that they draw on to enact constructive changes or to reproduce practices. In this case, teachers have been able to reflect on their practice and have adopted those strategies that they considered more effective in developing their learners' skills levels, which conceivably epitomises the enabling (rather than constraining) capacity of structure. It can be argued that teachers'

actions also mirror the structuring capacity of Bourdieu's concept of habitus as it "carries with it the genesis of new creative responses that are capable of transcending the social conditions in which it was produced ..." (Reay, 2004, p. 435). Also, in this context, teachers have been able to exert agency as they develop new creative responses to the specific needs within their curriculum areas.

Thinking about some of the changes that have taken place, Janet, an assessor/trainer, could only attribute them to her experience on the course:

*I probably go to look at my room before I start, make sure it's set right, I ask about the heating, the lighting, can they see the screen, I'm prepared with different coloured papers. I wouldn't have done any of that before ... I don't even say "does anybody need this?" because they're dyslexic... I might say "I've got different coloured papers because of the lighting" and somebody might say "I know, I read better on blue". They don't have to tell me anymore, but I know then that perhaps they might need a little bit more support without saying anything to them... If they're writing something I can say "oh, I can send you something that'll help you with that, you know", I know people don't want to write, they like to listen... so none of those things would have ever occurred to me without doing that, so that's why your practice changes, I don't think for one minute you change it purposely. I think it just evolves because you think I've listened to that, I've read about that, we've discussed that and I know there's gonna be people who might need that. And it just comes second nature, so I couldn't say .... but it's got to be ... going on the course did that.*

There seems to be a general consensus among teachers that effective pedagogical approaches have made positive impacts on learner participation and engagement; a far cry from their own experiences when they were in school. Mat talked about his experience at school:

*...It was the case of chalk and talk because when I went to college that was what it was like ... it was a tutor in front of us for 2 hours, 3 hours, just talking.*



Mat's view was similar to what Janet alluded to in respect of her experience at school where everyone was taught at the same pace. Joe also had this to say:

*...I seemed to be controlling my teaching quite a lot and it was how I was taught in school. In a sense it gave you a negative experience because the teacher stood in the front, writing on the board and if you didn't take the notes on time, you just didn't get them and there was no interaction ...*

As in practitioners' notion of professionalism, Bourdieu's theoretical concept of habitus as a "structured and structuring structure" (1984, p.171) can be used to analyse the interrelationships between these teachers' previous experiences and their current approaches. According to Bourdieu, habitus is 'structured' by past experiences as well as present conditions, and it is 'structuring' because it helps to shape both present and future practices (Maton, 2008). Also, this notion of habitus "enables creativity and constrains actions and practices ..." (Morrison, 2005, p. 314). In this context, it can be proposed that teachers' previous practices and approaches to facilitating learning which have been shaped by their own past experiences in school (personal history) have been constrained, and creative approaches to facilitating learning (which they consider to be more effective) have now been developed and enabled. Here also, Giddens' theory of the enabling capacity of structure can be brought to bear as teachers have been able to exercise choice and exert agency in developing those specific approaches which they have found to be more liberating for their learners. As argued by Morrison (2005), these findings suggest that Giddens' duality of structure and Bourdieu's concept of structuring capacity of habitus do actually have a similarity.

In respect of these teachers' own experiences at school, Freire (1970), like some others before him, contests the banking concept of education, a teacher-centred approach where the teacher as the active participant controls thinking and action. He contends that this form of transmission of knowledge is inhibitive and argues for an inclusive pedagogy which liberates learners' creative power. Freire's work laid the foundation for critical pedagogy which most, if not all, of the teachers in this study have freely adopted by questioning the value of existing practice, and by actively engaging their learners in the learning process as well as helping them to develop holistically. As some of them have attested to, this interactive way of learning is not only more effective but is also preferred by both teachers and their learners.

Mat found the training invaluable in setting him on course. Coming from industry with no prior teaching skills, the experience has provided him with the range of skills required to facilitate learning. He has been able to identify learners' specific needs and used a holistic support approach to develop their social skills.

*I have a learner who has a lot of issues and he has dyspraxia, so the problem he has is that if he's arguing with people, he doesn't see the need to stop, he will just carry on arguing ..... so on many occasions, I have to pull him aside and say you don't have to do that. As you get older, people will want to have a go at you, you need to be able to just let things go. So I find I'm doing that more often than teaching him how to plaster a wall. So I am giving him skills for life really that he'll be able to take with him. I think that's an example.*

This holistic approach substantiates researchers' views of the current role of teachers which emphasises a caring concern for their learners over the development of knowledge and skills (Atkins, 2008; Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009). This perhaps also

reinforces the criticism of codified knowledge as the counselling role described and adopted by Mat is not usually written on paper.

Mike, a curriculum manager for automotive engineering and construction, said that most of the teachers come straight from the workshop floor or the building site without any teaching experience, but the initial teacher training has made a difference to their teaching skills. Leah, a manager in the IT department, also indicated that on the whole, the training has had some positive impact on teachers' pedagogical skills. According to her, it provides awareness and stimulates innovative practice. Specifically, she asserted that her teachers have developed skills in the area of assessment as the training has helped them to understand the effective use of different types of assessment strategies. However, she did not feel that it has had a positive impact on teachers' skills in lesson planning. For her, this is an area where teacher training courses in general, not just those delivered at the college, need to focus more efforts.

Andy, another manager in the IT department said that his teachers' pedagogical skills tend to thrive when they have completed the initial teacher training and are able to confidently apply theoretical concepts to their practice. This view supports those of some of the teachers (e.g. Sarah and Liz) who said that they felt more confident in themselves after completing the course. This perhaps has influenced their ability to boldly broach new territories and introduce new approaches to teaching and learning. This provides another example of how some teachers have been able to transform their practice especially following the training.

More importantly however, Andy felt that teachers' pedagogical skills developments are influenced by their personal dispositions and their teaching experience prior to starting the course. He considered two categories of teachers; the enthusiasts, and those who are set in their ways and are therefore resistant to new challenges. Those in the first category, according to him, are usually new to teaching, younger, more driven, and passionate about applying theory to practice. They are also more inclined to using new approaches to teaching, and sometimes may have to be restrained from going overboard. On the other hand, those in the second category would have had some teaching experience and are usually less enthusiastic about employing new pedagogical approaches to their practice.

However, findings from the data did not provide any indication that age has a bearing on teachers' motivation to employ new pedagogical approaches in their practice. Interestingly, the two teachers who are in the 51-60 age range were very passionate about introducing new strategies to positively engage their learners. Equally, the teachers who have had most years of teaching experience were very open to adopting new pedagogical approaches.

Whilst some of these new strategies employed by teachers can be deemed as premeditated and rational, there is evidence to suggest that some of them could be based on intuition and spontaneity. This capacity that teachers have to be able to think on the spot, make reasonable decisions or use practical wisdom (*phronesis*) has been evinced in the data. As an example, Chris who falls within the mature age bracket recalled a unique experience with one of his learner groups where a recapitulation

session took longer than expected. He had intended to conduct a quick review of the previous session before introducing a new topic, but subsequently discovered that his students had not fully grasped the previous topic:

*... I just did a lesson the other week and I was supposed to recap on a previous session and then move on to a new unit - we never got to a new unit, we recapped for an hour and a half, because what came out of the recap initially was that the learners haven't understood what we've done ... so I made a note on my lesson plan, say recap took so long and reasons why ... and I thought well, that's ok, I can live with that ...*

Whilst conducting a recap session for one and a half hours presumably was not a strategy taught on the programme, Chris indicated that he felt obliged to abandon his original plan for the session. These factors also possibly indicate the confidence in own ability to develop own professional practice in a unique way. Hence, in terms of Andy's assertions, perhaps teachers' motivation to develop their practice could be about confidence rather than age. On the other hand, Chris' claims could be viewed as an attempt to use his newly found confidence to cloud perceived ineffective practice.

Liz has also developed pedagogical skills above and beyond the call of duty. An example of Liz's commitment to her practice was her passion for her students' development and achievement. For her, students attend classes to achieve a goal and they should by all means do so with the help of the teacher:

*I had one student once ... I had him for 2 years and I dragged him through to just pass each unit eventually with constant nagging everyday. ... on the very last day, we went on a paint bowling trip and ... he sat and chatted on the bench with me ... for about an hour and a half just saying how grateful he was. Because I hadn't given up on him, I hadn't you know said to him you stupid ... you know you shouldn't be doing this, because he wasn't, he could do it and he was just really, really grateful that I'd believed in him and he*

*just wanted to thank me for it and he sat there for literally about an hour and a half ... and I've always remembered that and he came back 2 weeks later with a card and some chocolates.*

Again, in this section, the transformative capacity of some of the teachers in improving their practice is demonstrated.

Although Beth, a manager in the hair and beauty department, could see the relationship between theory and practice, she would, however, associate her teachers' pedagogical skills development more to their experience on the shop floor:

*I think it does to some extent, but I think they learn teaching on the shop floor, I think actually involved in it and I think that's why it's so important to have them learning their knowledge side of stuff with the Cert Ed course and education and the history of education and that kind of thing first, that's what the Cert Ed doesn't teach them. It doesn't teach them how it's going to be. ... they don't know .... as soon as they go in, it could be completely different from just talking about it in the classroom, looking at the history behind it and different theories that have come through about education, they learn all about that which is good, but then putting it into practice ...*

Teachers' and their managers' perceptions again reiterate the issue around how teachers' professional knowledge is developed. As highlighted in chapter 7, the kind of teacher professional knowledge that is being expressed here goes beyond those that are rooted in codified knowledge or a set of rules or tips that can be dipped into at will; but a knowledge base which has been developed through interactions in social contexts. Teachers and their managers have overtly indicated the impact of social and situated learning on teachers' skills and knowledge development both on the training and in their classrooms/workshops. There also seems to be an evidence of some emerging deep-seated knowledge structures which some of the teachers have

described as a natural, second nature occurrence. These tacit skills and actions, which have been unconsciously nurtured over a period of time and which are entrenched in inductive reasoning or knowledge, can be linked to the power of discretion, intuition or practical wisdom as theorised in Aristotle's concept of *phronesis*.

Data collected from teachers' and managers' interviews strongly indicate the positive impact of the initial teacher training on teachers' practice as there seems to be a general consensus that pedagogical approaches have made positive impacts on learner participation and engagement. Even those who felt that the skills and knowledge gained on the course were negligible have been able to identify some specific changes that they have made in their practice during and after the course. As an example, Zak reflected on the progress made on classroom management following his first lesson observation on the course:

*... I suppose isolating into group work .... even though the room layout is incredibly awkward for that, I'll put people away from the computers and we get in quite a close circle and have that rapport on a close basis, not only does it save the voice, but they are not distracted, they've got you and you can focus on them there is nothing in between and that particular one came out of a bit of feedback from my learning observations in my first year where I did have some issues controlling the class and that was one of the suggestions and I have used it actually in every single lesson and it is brilliant.*

Another significant area of change was noted by Sarah who had a very poor learning and teaching observation result in her department. According to her: *"It was awful, it was just absolutely awful, I don't think I could physically speak, I was stuttering and stammering but ... I've turned it into, well, yes, I can show off now..."* According to her,

it was her teacher on the course who stepped in and inspired her to effect the seemingly impossible changes:

*she just offered a few words of wisdom that I've never forgotten really and she said if you know your qualification, if you know your book, the standards and you know what's expected of your learners and you're covering everything within that qualification, no one can really touch ... You need to know your qualification inside out so that's what I went and did. .. Do you know? She was right what she said, so now I think I can show off now. They can't question me – well they can do, cause I know everything about the qualification.*

## **8.2 Lesson Planning and Structure**

Rachel indicated that she now provides more effective learning experiences to her learners. She has also now found lesson plans useful and justified the need for using one as part of the session planning process; a paradigm shift from her perspective when she first came on the course.

*Yes, I always have a lesson plan now. As much as I like to think that on the odd occasion if I didn't have one it didn't really matter, actually, there is a difference, because when it is written down everything gets done. But if it's not, then sometimes you can go away and think ... I meant to do that and I didn't, and it's also like evaluating at the end of the lesson as well ... and I think I'm more aware of ... having a varied lesson plan, so not all PowerPoint, you know like after 5 minutes make sure they break up into group work and then they might look at a case study and then discussion...*

Rachel also engages her learners in a variety of activities. According to her however, the development has mainly come from her peers on the programme rather than the teaching. On his skills development in lesson planning and schemes of work, Mat said:

*“... before the Cert Ed, I may not have done a lesson plan or thought about a scheme of*



*work, but since the Cert Ed, I've always done a lesson plan, always done a scheme of work".* There is also a turn around for Liz. Since completing the course, she now plans more effectively and this has enhanced her confidence. This was also linked to subject and curriculum knowledge. The impact was also reiterated by Esther who absorbed the new methods and skills gained on the training programme and found these a confidence booster:

*I just sort of took on board everything that we were taught and it probably made me more professional and sort of structured in what I was doing as well as the paperwork, the lesson plans, what a scheme of work looks like...*

Perhaps the significance placed on lesson planning by these teachers can be traced to some kind of symbolic performance of professionalism which positions them as the good and effective teacher. Lesson planning is a significant requirement for teachers and the managers who supervise and monitor their performance, and it is also demanded by awarding bodies and other regulatory agencies. It is thus uncertain whether these teachers' skills development in this area is based on its usefulness in structuring the learning process or in its symbolic capacity as a form of capital which positions them as 'effective practitioners'. Bourdieu's (1986) concept of capital will be used to explore teachers' motives for professional development later on in this chapter.

### 8.3 Classroom Management

This is another area of debate as teachers' opinions differ due to a diversity of experience. A minority expressed gaps in the development of classroom management skills. However, the majority referred to this when asked about specific pedagogical skills acquired on the course. Sam now uses music to enhance the ambience of the classroom.

*I turn the music down and then when they are doing like a BTEC assignment, generally, I turn the music high, not at a ridiculous level. But I warn them, any messing about, it goes off. I have found out that since I've been doing that the management is so easy in the classroom, the disciplinaries have dropped to nothing and they just come in, they know what's expected of them...*

For Nick, it is the sitting arrangement and group work that has made a difference to group dynamics and drawn learners' attention:

*... if you move desks around, get them close together, you can instil more of a work ethic in them, and obviously if you use flipcharts, get their ideas down on flipcharts ... and debates on the session as well; that was pretty good.*

The effect of room layout in classroom management was also expressed by Zak, even though the layout in the computer room is not very flexible (see 8.1). Although in Zak's view, the training was weak in the transfer of pedagogical skills, his comments however suggest that his classroom management skills were developed through feedback from observation sessions. Perhaps what seemed to be lacking in direct and overt instructions and guidelines was made up for in tacit skills development strategies employed by teacher trainers.

## 8.4 Reflective Practice and Experience

In some cases, the teachers interviewed felt that pedagogical skills development did not come directly from the training programme but from experience over time. Sarah, a hairdressing teacher, said:

*... massive difference... but I still think that it's come with experience and things I've encountered while in the classroom have made me into the person that I am.*

Similarly Janet perceived the changes as coming from experience:

*Possibly, what I've got is more confidence. So when someone says, "you know, you've left me with this work to do, I don't understand it". I can perhaps identify why they're not interested in it, so I'll say to them "ok, let's think of other ways, have you got any ..." and I might tape it or do something else. I don't think that has changed through doing the Cert Ed, I think that has come with experience.*

Learning through experience and subsequent skills that accompany this is also a point that an IT manager raised. He asserted that the ability to prepare a lesson and collate resources within a limited period comes from experience and not necessary by being taught:

*... you might only have half an hour to prepare a class, you need to move quickly, and then the materials that you find you need to put together, that's the skill that comes with time, so I don't think they can acquire that ...*

Reflection-on-action has been significant to the development of pedagogical skills as expressed by Anna. According to her, the main thing that she took from the course, which she did not consider previously, was the reflective practice element. There is now a change in her mindset; instead of delivering a lesson and forgetting about it, she is now more flexible in her approach as a reflective practitioner:

*I think initially when I first started at the college ... a lot of it was just do it, just do it, just do it, and I think now, it's a case of let's do it, let's look at it, let's all look at it, let's tweak it, let's change it, let's see how we can develop it, drive it forward and take out what doesn't work. And I think it's a case of ever evolving.*

Janet now values the role of reflection in developing her practice and she now motivates her learners to do the same as part of their learning process. This is achieved by asking them to write down activities that they have completed, and re-visiting them after some time in order to identify areas that can be improved. She relates this to one of the NVQ modules that she delivers:

*... if you have the opportunity to serve that customer again would you do it any differently? Now, if you go away and said "No, I did everything right", then there is the reflection. But there are numbers of people who have said ..... "if I had my time again, I would do it like this" or "I wouldn't have got as upset" when they did that. They're learning from it... I didn't reflect to the level I do now.*

Reflections on her lessons are now conducted through the use of a tape recorder.

*... just leave the tape running in my class so I can listen to see if I say "hmm", "OK", you know if I'm repeating myself ... and if I was in that class would I have picked up on it or learnt from it. So I just listen to it myself.*

According to Debbie who teaches two different groups at two sites, reflection has been a useful developmental tool in her practice. She now reflects on how each session was conducted and makes appropriate amendments. Anna also described how reflection-in-action potentially enhances her practice. According to her, the ability to think on her feet and make seamless changes to her approaches without creating disruptions to the flow of her lesson has been remarkable.

Some positive impacts of the role of reflection-in-practice have been cited by some of the teachers. However, none of the teachers discussed the role that models and theories of reflection play in this. This perhaps suggests that the term is taken at face value. The question then is do these models of reflection actually have significance on teachers' practice? Zak concurred that the role of reflection is vital to professional practice but argued that it comes naturally. For him, in a bid to link the process to a reflective theory or model, there is a danger of formalising and compartmentalising it to a point where it loses real meaning:

*You think to yourself I already do that, why do I need to follow somebody else's way of doing it if I'm already doing it and getting the objectives? ... again, that was an issue I had with the theory being a bit too important in the PGCE. If you didn't conform to say Kolb's model you weren't conceived to be reflective. If you haven't got a model, a reference for it, you couldn't be reflective, yet everybody naturally reflects, it's just some to greater degrees of sophistication than others, so it's often presented as black and white reflection, you do or you don't.*

Similarly, Rachel had issues with the way reflective practice was presented and taught on the course:

*I did feel on the course, you know, we were always being asked, do a critical reflection, do a critical reflection, do a critical reflection, you know, critical incidents don't happen all the time like you are asking us to keep filling these forms out. It should be more natural, embedded into your practice, but not mandatory 'fill-a-form-out' like this... be aware of it and make it part of your practice as opposed to fill a form out, fill a form out just because we said so, because that's not how you teach and that's not how you reflect...*

It is worth noting that the other teachers who were positive about the role of reflection in their practice did not challenge the use of reflective theories or models; they just simply ignored the cycles and motions and conducted reflections in ways that suited them. This

action could perhaps be interpreted from two perspectives. Firstly, linking reflective models might be too much an academic and complicated process which would have necessitated the use of active memory and correct interpretations. Secondly, the examples of reflections provided are quite subjective and according to Finlay (2008), imposing a model could limit the scope for teachers to utilise their own intuitions, values and priorities. Perhaps the latter perspective seems to work better for the teachers as it enabled them to exert agency – a transformative capacity.

## **8.5 Own Continuing Professional Development**

Since completing the course, some of the teachers have been given additional responsibilities to either co-ordinate courses or mentor colleagues. In other cases, some of the teachers from vocational curriculum areas; proud of their achievement and confident of their research and academic writing skills, have taken on further academic challenges by enrolling on either the BA in Education programme or the Level 5 Literacy course. The drive for academic achievement again demonstrates the capacity of teachers to ‘breakout’ (see 8.6.1) and actively develop their practice.

John went on the BA programme immediately after completing his Cert Ed qualification, and achieved high grades:

*... after finishing my Cert Ed, I started my BA in Education and Training, so I've just finished the 3rd year of the honours part, so I've completed that. I got a First Class degree.*

From Nick's perspectives:

*... yeah, I believe my professional knowledge has gone a bit better.....yeah, I've enrolled .. I'm actually on the 2nd year of my BA honours programme.*

Joe also progressed onto the BA in Education programme after the Cert Ed course:

*... the existing skills that you had, further development you want to do ... the degree certainly helps in terms of progressing from that.*

Chris opted for the Level 5 Literacy course:

*... I felt more confident in assignment writing, far more comfortable in research within myself, so, I didn't want to leave that lying, so I thought literacy, there's a lot of literacy involved in Cert Ed isn't it? So I thought I'd go into literacy and I did my Level 5 Literacy so I moved into that.*

Sarah now teaches on a higher level course and is on the first year of the BA degree programme:

*... like I said I finished that, then got put onto level 3 and it's only me that teaches on it here, so, I knew it was like my baby type of thing, ... so I feel like because that's happened, I've grown ... since my Cert Ed and then decided to do my BA, so I'm still keeping my finger in.*

In some cases, however, it can be gleaned that the motivation to do a degree goes beyond the development of academic skills, as there are elements of status attached to their desire. Sarah indicated how proud her parents were of her sister's achievements; she then decided to do the degree to prove her capability:

*... because I just think my mum and dad are supportive as they are, they always used to say like when they are introducing us to friends like me and my sister, "B is a manager .. and S is her sister" and I always used to feel like ... and I felt embarrassed ... and I just thought that I can get a degree you know. I think it's that, I know it's childish as it sounds, but it's that really. I want my mum and dad to be proud of me and to think yeah, I can achieve really...*

With FE teachers as dual professionals, it is however interesting to note that only one of the teachers interviewed has engaged in CPD within their first or former profession. As

Zak stated:

*after a couple of years of PGCE, I wanted to take some time back and focus on my specialism ... we have to re-certify every couple of years; our professional qualifications, which I've done recently.*

## **8.6 Motive for Development**

It is perhaps important to consider what guides and inspires the process of development after the PGCE/Cert Ed course. Firstly, one notable area of development since completing the training is in the area of continuous professional development (CPD). Five out of the 10 Cert Ed qualified teachers interviewed have gone on to do higher level qualifications (4 on the BA in Education course and 1 on the Level 5 Literacy course). Apart from those mounting the academic ladder, some of the teachers have embarked on gaining professional and other related qualifications in their specialist areas, while others have been promoted to managerial positions in their departments. More often than not, the pursuit of academic advancement can be attributed to the desire to up-skill, and perhaps also to the confidence in own ability to cope with the demands associated with the level of academic rigour required. However, this is not always the case and it is fascinating to note that for some of the teachers, the desire for continuous development was driven by the insatiable quest for self-worth and status.

Duckworth and Tummons (2010) would question the fact that more qualifications make better teachers as according to them, gaining more qualifications do not always equate



to being more motivated, driven by learners' needs, or being prepared to go the extra mile to support learners in reaching their potential. However, as discussed earlier, one of the teachers talked about proving her academic abilities to the members of her family as she wants them to be proud of her. Another teacher from a vocational background felt that gaining a degree in Education will enhance his status as an FE teacher as well as his future career prospects.

Bourdieu (1986) argues that the influence an agent has within a field is determined by the ownership of field-specific resources referred to as capital. Institutionalised cultural capital which is most relevant to this study manifests in the drive for academic excellence and achievement and is a type of resource used by practitioners to exert their influence or position within a specific field. He refers to this as "scholastic investment strategies" (p. 48), which he posits are related to the whole set of educational strategies and to the system of reproduction strategies. This institutionalised state of cultural capital is objectified in the form of academic qualifications "which confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture..." (p. 50). In this context, the notion of institutionalised capital can be used to conceptualise teachers' feelings of esteem in gaining the teaching qualification.

Andy, a manager in the IT department could perhaps observe the influence of this type of asset on his teachers' persona:

*... well, it gives them a professional qualification, I think they feel like professionals when they've got the certificate ...*

It can also be used to analyse teachers' aspirations to achieve further qualifications beyond the Cert Ed, especially when they have had to self-fund their studies, and also when there have been no immediate financial rewards or recognition from the college. It can be argued that the benefit for the teachers in this study is the fulfilment of personal and individual aspirations which in turn engenders prestige. The other side to this is the potential that this form of capital affords these teachers in putting their assets into effective use as a strategic leverage to enhance their position; hence validating Bourdieu's (1986) perception of "the performative magic of the power of instituting, the power to show forth and secure belief or, in a word, to impose recognition" (p. 51).

Apart from CPD guiding and inspiring the process of development, it is notable that although the teachers who participated in this research had gone through the same teacher training curriculum, they have developed and deployed their pedagogical skills in a variety of ways. Spenceley (2007) in her study on teacher trainees asserted that some in-service teacher trainees identify with learners whose nature and experiences align with the trainees' own experiences of education. It has also been argued that disposition is one of the factors that influence an individual's learning (Eraut, 2004). In this study, some of the teachers have used effective strategies to minimise disruptive behaviour; some have fostered deep learning through learners' cognitive development; some have exploited the principles of reflective and reflexive practice; some have used innovative assessment strategies; and still some have employed the use of a range of multi-sensory learning techniques to spark learning; and the list goes on. It can be proposed that these spectrums of actions have been shaped by each teacher's interactions between objective structures and their personal experiences which have

influenced their practice. Also, it can be suggested that the range of strategies used can be linked to the nature of the learner group, and the capacity, characteristics and dispositions of the individual teacher; as informed by their habitus.

In respect of teachers' inclinations, Bourdieu's (1990) concept of habitus as a *structured and structuring structure* can again be used to analyse teachers' subjective and individual dispositions which have been developed through their past and current experiences and which continue to influence their practice. Also, Giddens' argument of the enabling capacity of structure is useful in understanding teachers' actions. In other words, teachers are capable of exercising agency in respect of their choices irrespective of the influence of social structure.

In terms of teachers' capacity, teacher confidence has been perceived by both teachers and managers as a contributory factor to the development of pedagogical approaches. Beth, a manager in hair and beauty felt that confidence plays a crucial role in her teachers' pedagogical development:

*... I think confidence. I think they've actually thought, I've got the qualification now ... sort of more worthwhile that they've got that in the bag now and they feel quite pleased that they've completed that. They maybe feel that beforehand they were just learning and everybody knew they were just learning but now they were a proper teacher almost, I think yeah confidence level.*

Similarly, some of the teachers, including Sarah, Liz, Janet and Jamie also emphasised that their confidence has grown as a result of the initial teacher training. According to Jamie:

*...so towards the end of the PGCE your confidence is up there and as soon as that's signed off, you know you are qualified to do the job, so I suppose my confidence was a lot stronger following the PGCE. I think that made me more open to try new things...*

Confidence has been defined by Erwin and Kelly (1985) as “assuredness in oneself and in one’s capabilities” (p. 395). Similarly, Lawrence (1999) asserts that “confidence is self-esteem in practice and has two aspects: (i) confidence in abilities (ii) confidence in personality” (p. 92). In analysing the role of confidence in Lifelong Learning, Norman and Hyland (2003) identify “learning, experiencing and achieving” (p. 268) as part of the themed factors that increase student teachers’ confidence. Correspondingly, respondents’ perceptions of confidence in this study seem to reflect the definitions and analysis presented by the authors above especially in terms of teachers’ new found knowledge, skills, abilities and achievements.

Findings from this study also indicate that teachers have been able to learn from their experience on the training programme and are now better able to use new pedagogical approaches with learners. In addition, they seem to be more secure in their skills and are also able to justify their new strategies and approaches. Furthermore, a good number of vocational teachers have been inspired to gain further qualifications in education rather than in their respective vocational areas; an observation that perhaps refutes Robson’s (1998) argument that FE teachers owe allegiance to their vocational or industrial experiences. On the other hand though, these teachers’ decisions to pursue qualifications in education could have been based on the continuous or seamless opportunities presented to progress from the Cert Ed training to the BA in Education programme rather than other occupational reasons.

### *8.6.1 The notion of 'reflexive breakout'*

Findings presented in chapters, 6, 7 and 8, suggest that teachers are able to exercise agency; have a voice; have developed a sense of themselves; and are seemingly inclined to be creative in developing their practice irrespective of their age, gender or academic/vocational backgrounds. They have also demonstrated the capacity to 'push' and mentor their students to succeed as in the case of Liz and Mat respectively. In terms of their own development, they have been able to tackle challenging practices that seemed to marginalise them as in the case of Zak. In respect of their perceptions of what constitutes teacher professionalism, most of them have chosen to align with the more subjective and flexible notions as against those that are prescribed and influenced by external rules and regulations. Where there have been gaps in developing knowledge, skills and competence, teachers have employed other means and ways of knowing to close the gaps. Specifically, collaborative learning either through peer interaction or mentor support has been a significant resource that trainee teachers have drawn on in developing their professional skills and knowledge. Also, some of the teachers indicated how their confidence has developed, and findings suggest the significant influence that this has had on their practice. It can be proposed that the power of agency and the potential of intuition have been significant in helping teachers to take rational approaches in addressing challenging issues that they encounter.

On another note, teachers have demonstrated a reflexive capacity to question their assumptions, change their perceptions and implement changes to their practice in different ways. For instance, some of them have now recognised and imbibed the value of things that they had initially questioned, resisted or underestimated. This was the

case with Rachel who initially argued against the significance of a lesson plan in structuring sessions but who subsequently acknowledged the difference a lesson plan can make in organising activities, fostering accountability and evaluating her lessons. Similarly, Janet who initially struggled with the online aspect of the subject specialist module had a remarkable experience at the specialist conference which she referred to as a *light bulb moment*. This according to her has transformed her attitude towards her practice and how she inspires her students. She indicated that she no longer facilitates learning the way she was taught, but now employs a range of strategies to make her students' learning experience count. She also described the transformation that she noticed in some of her colleagues during the course:

... we had lots who said oh, I could do without being here ... but I did see the transformation in some of them and some of those went on to do other things afterwards. But not only that, I remember the same year somebody having a debate, and thinking I remember last year when he was saying "I don't want to be here, it's rubbish" and there he was having, you know, this really eloquent debate and I remember thinking where has he found that word, is there a dictionary today?

Some have also employed the skills gained on the course to make adjustments to their professional practice. As an example, Sarah who was initially terrified of learning and teaching observations was able to glean some significant strategies from her tutor on the course. Henceforth, she was able to considerably change her approach to delivering her subject, resulting in enhanced self-assurance and better learning and teaching observation grades – a feat she initially thought was impossible.

Following their new experiences on the course, teachers in this study have been able to step back, re-evaluate their initial perceptions about how their practice could be

developed, and have made desirable changes even when these were seemingly at variance with their previous inclinations. Overall, the examples provided demonstrate teachers' willingness to accommodate change and their transformative capacity to enhance their professional practice, which then reflects the argument that teachers are transformative intellectuals (Giroux and McLaren, 1986).

It can thus be proposed that in this study, teachers have been able to 'breakout' of the norm to enhance their practice, and for some of the teachers, these developments are big changes that have happened in a fairly restricted short period whilst on the course.

## **Chapter 9: Support Structures whilst on the Course**

Above and beyond teachers' intrinsic motivation to develop their practice as discussed in chapter 8, data analysis suggests that a range of support structures have contributed to their professional development and practice. Support in this chapter entails those received from teacher trainers and peers, managers and subject specialist mentors; and it has to be interpreted in a range of ways depending on the initiator and the context. The chapter initially outlines the findings, and then for each area discussed, it shows how the theoretical frameworks in the thesis can be used to analyse them. These include the impact of social construction of knowledge using Lave and Wenger's perspectives, the reproduction of practices which is linked to Giddens' structuration theory, and the power or influence of institutional habitus using Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital.

### **9.1 Teacher Trainer and Peer Support**

Findings indicate that teacher trainers' expertise and experience have been influential in the professional development of most trainee teachers. As reported in the previous chapter, Liz, an IT teacher, spoke about how effective the lessons were and how brilliant her teacher was. Esther benefited from her tutors' wealth of experience and the tutorial sessions where additional help was received. Similarly, Sarah was very positive about the input from her teacher trainer especially in helping her to overcome her fears of lesson and teaching observations. Apart from inputs and individual support, the flexibility and understanding of the course tutors in alleviating the pressure and



demands on trainees' dual roles have been significant to some of the teachers. Debbie alluded to this:

*"I had a good tutor, he was understanding of the pressure of studying a course like this and teaching and leading on a course. So, I found, there's a lot of support, good feedback, timely feedback as well. But I think the best bit of it was understanding the other pressures that we have while studying".*

Whilst most of the teachers interviewed placed a high value on teacher trainers' expertise and competence, some felt that some areas could be developed. Janet would have benefited from the expert guidance of the teacher trainer in the first year but unfortunately this was not the case:

*"The first year, we were given a very new tutor to the department ... I think personally, I could have done with somebody who has a lot more experience that 1st year ... she didn't have the answers and that's not so bad because she would go away and get the answers, but I think just purely how I learn I'd prefer somebody to have the answers".*

In the same vein, John, an automotive engineering teacher, compared his tutors' different teaching styles, stressing that some motivated and engaged the trainees better in the sessions than others. This experience enabled him to reflect on his own practice, and consequently he was able to adopt a more learner-centred approach in facilitating learning.

In general, trainees have alluded to the effective collaborative practices among peers and the impact that these have had on their development and practice. These practices, which represent Bathmaker's (2006) collaborative professionalism in terms of concerted efforts, include both intra-departmental and inter-departmental support on the course.

Some of the teachers from vocational areas (e.g. automotive engineering, construction, and business administration) felt that having intra-departmental support from their team members, who were also on the teacher training course, gave them the opportunity to work together and share resources. Janet explained how the intra-departmental collaboration worked for her:

*... I had 2 colleagues with me throughout that journey. And it was just fantastic because not only did we work together, we shared an office together, we did the same job ... if you've forgotten something, somebody else would remind you. If you were going to put something in place, you had 2 people who were equally as skilled to do it as you ... whether it would have been different, had I been on my own, I can't say that.*

Then again, the inter-departmental support was also valued by Anna who reiterated the impact of shared practice on the course:

*I thought the peer support was excellent. I thought it was a really good group that I was in ... although it was on occasion not easy that they weren't from my environment and didn't teach what I taught, because they were from such a diverse range of backgrounds I think that was really beneficial ... I think because you know we had people that were from the skills trade like air conditioning, and we had some people who were chefs, ... there are lots of different ways of looking at one thing and for me that was great ...*

Rachel, a teacher from the childcare department also echoed the value of peer support:

*... peer support was great, really good ... I think the peer support is kind of what got us off during the 2nd year because quite often we were just sent off to go and research ... If someone was sort of stuck doing something in the computer suite, someone else would recognise and say do you want me to have a go, I've just done that myself ... really good. Peer support was excellent.*

Similarly, Zak thought that peer collaboration was the best part of the course and was sad to leave the group. A further example of the value of peer support was provided by

Debbie who confirmed the benefit of group discussions on case studies from respective curriculum areas. This type of forum, according to her, facilitated the sharing of good and effective practices.

The recognition of the significance of peer collaboration is not restricted to teachers, some of the managers also reiterated its effectiveness. As an example, Leah said that she witnessed the range of support that teaching staff provided to one another and for her, this has proved very effective in skills development.

Hargreaves (2000) advocates the value of teacher collaboration and argues that the role of the teacher has evolved to embrace a range of joint partnerships which in a world of “accelerating educational reform” (p. 162) can help teachers to share resources and build up collective responses in meeting the growing demands on their practice. Similarly, Tett and Crowther (2011) advocate the strength and robustness of a social theory of learning which acknowledges the impact of the significant others e.g. tutors, and peers. Grangeat and Gray (2007) in exploring the ‘work process knowledge’ (WPK) model - a model of professional development that is applicable to teaching and which emphasises the collective nature of work activities - argue that interactions with colleagues enhance teaching skills and professional development. Furthermore, in a study investigating the views of in-service teachers on their professionalism and professional development, Fotopoulou (2011) found *collaboration with colleagues* as one of the most important factors contributing to respondents’ professional development. He asserts that “collaboration with colleagues appears as a powerful force within the teaching profession, which has effects on teachers’ professionalism and professional

development” (p. 45). However, the caveat here is that this type of support could perpetuate the status quo, reinforce prejudices and reproduce rather than challenge existing practices. As argued by Giddens (1984), these rules and resources drawn upon in the production and reproduction of social actions are also the means of system reproduction.

It can therefore be argued that learning as participation or communal learning plays a significant role in workplace learning. Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that learning is an aspect of social practice which involves the whole person and which implies a relation to social communities and becoming a full participant and member. In developing the conceptualisation of learning in terms of participation in communities of practice, they explain the term community of practice as “participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities” (p. 98). This advocates learning that entails participation and engagement rather than that which involves a process of formal instruction. This is similar to the preference that some of the teachers in this study have for peer-learning and support, and which they indicated have had considerable impact on their development.

This again reiterates the relevance and value of the contemporary conceptualisation of teacher professional knowledge which centres on informal and social construction of knowledge which takes diverse forms and which is situated (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Putnam and Borko, 2000; Saunders 2006; Maxwell 2010).

## 9.2 Manager Support

Half of the teachers interviewed indicated that they received additional support from their managers as they were given extra study time while on the training programme. For some, the support took the form of managers timetabling classes to give them the afternoon off after their morning classes. This enabled these teachers to utilise the time to complete assignments, engage in extended reading, or focus attention on other aspects of their training such as developing resources. Mat said:

*... again for me, it wasn't a problem. They set time aside for me to go on the Cert Ed, and I didn't have any trouble doing my assignment or looking after a class I had at the time, so it didn't clash at all.*

Debbie valued her uninterrupted day-release arrangement from the department. She said that she was given extra time after the PGCE/Cert Ed classes to complete assignments or to study. This according to her went a long way in enabling her to cope with the demands of the course. These approved activities are a form of capital or material resource which can be analysed in terms of Bourdieu's (1986) concept of allocated resources which confers power and legitimises privileges.

One trainee had his teaching caseload reduced so as to enable him to spend more time on the course. Zak's manager brought in a colleague to take over some of his classes. Zak found this highly beneficial and felt that without the support from his department he would have abandoned the course and left the college. In other cases, it was about the open and egalitarian nature of respective managers. For instance, Janet indicated that her manager supported herself and her colleagues who were on the course; her

manager was always open to suggestions, and allowed them to make constructive changes to the practice within their department:

*“... if I said to her, we learnt this, we’d like to do this or we’d like to put this in place, if she could see a benefit for the bigger team, she would support it and she would support us at team meetings and she’d say why we were doing it.*

The last two accounts suggest that these teachers have agency as they had the capacity to justify the need or the opportunity to make changes in their practice, and were quite successful at this.

However, the support described above was not consistent across curriculum areas and with all managers as some of them withheld this valued support. Some of the teachers felt marginalised in this respect and complained about how they have had to juggle their busy schedules as full-time teachers as well as trainees studying for an academic qualification. As an example, John felt that the value placed on the Cert Ed training by his manager was marginal, and he suspected that it was seen as secondary to the department’s curriculum programme as the focus was more on the number of classes that had to be covered. This could be linked to some of the managers’ notion of professionalism which although values the development of learners is unclear whether it is more rooted in retention and achievement figures than in an ethic of care (see 6.2).

Moreover, some of the teachers did not feel able to approach their managers for support as they felt that their managers were not interested in their professional development, and perhaps were also too busy to care. Phil echoed John’s feelings about a lack of support from his manager. He had to report back to the department after

his PGCE/Cert Ed classes and was not given a time allowance to complete assignments, which he knew others on the course benefited from. Chris, another teacher in the same department, doubted that managers appreciated the level of efforts involved in juggling full-time work with teacher training. For him it was “*a case of you’re doing it, get on with it*”. As reported in the previous chapter, this was also the experience that Rachel had. Sam on the other hand, had a *rose-tinted* view of managers’ support at his interview before joining the department. He said that some of the promises made were not kept.

Gleeson and Shain (1999) in their case study of middle managers in FE, argue that the disciplines, the language (which reflects business culture), and management styles of the market have found their way into further education. They further assert that these powerful mechanisms of control and surveillance have been transferred from central government control to local colleges where professionals have, through budget control, been successfully turned into managers of reform who demand accountability. They contend that the new managerialism has driven a wedge between the interests of senior managers and their lecturers who are on the receiving end. In examining the position of middle managers, Gleeson and Shain contend that they play a complex role as “mediators of change” (p. 461), who are “caught in between” (p. 468) senior managers and their lecturers as they mediate messages between the two. This could explain the situation that Phil, John, Chris, Rachel and Sam faced with their managers who were perhaps caught between senior managers’ orders and teachers’ needs and demands.

In clarifying the issue of the level of support provided in the department, one of the managers interviewed in this study indicated that the college only allows specific remission hours for attendance on the course, and curriculum departments are not allowed to give teachers more than the stipulated hours. However, what they tend to do in their own department is to come up with strategies that will free their teachers up without so much as violating the college stipulations.

As an efficiency measure, the senior management in the college had specified a maximum of three hours remission per teacher trainee. However, some middle managers have their way of translating and implementing policies to minimise potential conflict of interests. In this study, some middle managers have been able to filter messages from above in order to mediate tensions between senior management and the teachers within their department. This implies that managerialism and performativity can be mediated at the local level, and as noted previously in this study, this is another clear indication of where strategic compliance has been adopted and where policy has been mediated at the local level; and where the constraining and enabling aspect of rules and resources (Giddens', 1994) can also be brought to bear. For those departments that have followed college stipulations to the letter, it was constraining, whereas for those departments that have mediated the stipulations to their advantage, it was enabling.

On another note, the findings suggest that the management culture within each department has implications for how staff are either supported or unsupported, irrespective of the college's principles of efficiency. This culture perhaps is informed and



undergirded by managers' backgrounds or habitus as around half of the teachers felt that some of their managers do not appreciate the pressure and responsibilities of combining full-time employment with part-time study because they have never been through the process.

However, some properties of Bourdieu's (1996) concept of field can be appropriated to this context. The first attribute of the theory considers a field as *a structured space of positions*, a force field which is governed by internal logic and regulatory principles with each field having its own values and principles (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). In this study, teachers' respective departments can be likened to mini-fields within a wider field which is the college. The departments that only provide the stipulated remission hours can be likened to force fields that impose their regulations on those who enter it, and where entrants have no choice but to conform to the rules and principles that operate within the field. This possibly explains why some of the teachers who were not given extra study time while on the PGCE/Cert Ed training accepted their fate and just got on with it; some of them would not even approach their managers for the extra support that they really would have benefited from.

The second attribute of Bourdieu's field is that it is *an arena of struggle* where agents contend for desirable resources. The field works like a market where agents compete for specific benefits; it therefore follows that agents occupy more or less advantageous positions (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), with those in less advantageous positions having less influence. Again, this could explain why some of the teachers who felt unsupported by their line managers conformed to the rules within their department and

juggled responsibilities, whilst Zak who was from another department and who felt marginalised had a discussion with his manager and was subsequently supported. Perhaps, Zak, who possesses a form of 'academic capital', was able to negotiate conditions to his advantage because he was more assertive, and adept in arguing his case based on the pertinent skills gained from his prior experiences in higher education. In comparison to the limited experiences of Phil, John, Chris, Rachel and Sam, arguably, teachers' backgrounds or their limited 'academic capital' had marginalised their capacity to challenge existing norms and practices within their respective departments.

The third attribute of field relevant to this study proposes that it manifests a *degree of autonomy*, and with this comes the different capacities for resisting or reshaping policies or procedures (Naidoo, 2004). In other words, the field has differentiated abilities to maintain its own principles and to insulate itself from external influences. This attribute can potentially be used to conceal good or bad practice from intruding influences. However, in this instance and in a constructive way, possibly, the departments that have come up with special arrangements to support their trainees have benefited from a degree of relative autonomy which has been used to conceal their unofficial arrangements as a measure to resist symbolic violence exerted by the wider dominant field of the college management.

### **9.3 Subject Specialist Mentor Support**

As previously indicated in this study, the Ofsted report on the initial teacher training of FE teachers during the 2002/03 academic year identified gaps in the programme (Ofsted, 2003). One of the issues raised was the limited level of opportunities provided for trainees in developing skills required to teach their specialist subjects. Ofsted criticised the lack of systematic and effective mentoring and support systems in the workplace, and made some recommendations which included the need for workplace mentoring support to be put in place to develop the necessary skills that trainees require to teach their specialist subjects. This recommendation was taken into consideration in; *Equipping our Teachers for the Future* (DFES 2004) - (see 2.4). The overarching professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the FE sector (LLUK, 2007) also highlighted ways in which mentoring can enhance the development of professional skills and knowledge that will enable teachers to teach their own specialist subject. However, it is appropriate to indicate that Ofsted's 2003 survey was not representative of all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in England; and the HEI that the college is affiliated with was not included in the survey. Besides, "teaching a specialist module" is one of the modules that are delivered on this HEI's PGCE/Cert Ed programme which the college also runs.

Findings from this study indicate that whilst the support received from managers has been variable, the mentoring process has proved mostly effective; and for some of the teachers who found the process useful and relevant, it can be likened to a survival kit. It is worthy of note that this view cuts across curriculum areas, and in contrast to the negative experiences that some teachers had with their managers, the data suggests

that those mentors, who were also mentees while on their teacher training course, have been better able to provide support to their mentees. It seems that both the pedagogic and subject specialism needs of trainees have been well supported by these mentors because of their teaching experience coupled with their subject knowledge. Mat felt that the support provided was relevant and useful as his mentor has been through the process already and was therefore well positioned to provide appropriate suggestions and support. It thus seems that having a mentor who has recently completed the training and who appreciates the needs of the teacher trainee is important. Phil, a teacher in the automotive engineering department also took this view:

*... it was good because you've got somebody there. I can't speak for everybody because somebody might have a mentor who did the Cert Ed 10 years ago and who has forgotten some of the elements. My mentor, as I said had done it, had finished it within the 12 months previous, so it was still quite fresh in his mind, so he was actually a big help ... yes, we always had the mentor meetings ... I was aware that on my Cert Ed, I probably could have forged some of these mentor meetings and nobody would have known but actually I benefited from mine, because he did give a lot of ideas, put me right on a few things, I found that I benefited from that greatly to be honest.*

Anna also found the mentoring process valuable and made some tangible differences to her practice as a result of her mentor's intervention. These include the design of more detailed lesson plans, and the introduction of strategies to support differentiation. John recollected how his mentor would discuss his progress and would make valuable suggestions, and saw the mentoring process as an important part of the training. Liz was also an advocate of the mentoring process based on her experience which she found very productive. Her mentor was always at hand to provide the much needed

additional support and this according to her went a long way in being able to put theory into practice.

Debbie indicated that one of the first and one of the best pieces of advice that she received from her mentor was about her physical presence in the classroom and the way she positioned herself to make learning more interactive. Whilst she confirmed that she had learnt these strategies on the training, the application in practice was, according to her, lacking. Arguably, Debbie's and Mat's perspectives reflect how practices are reproduced (Giddens, 1984). In both cases, the ideas that have value for the mentors have been presented to the trainee teachers and have been seamlessly reproduced as acceptable practice.

Nonetheless, very few teachers interviewed regarded the mentoring process less positively. One found it *ad hoc* as mentor meetings were not always held, and tangible support was not provided. Zak felt that his mentor did not devote enough time to the process which then led to him fabricating information needed for the mentoring process records. Sarah however indicated that she did not take full advantage of her mentor's role. The reason she gave was that her mentor was also her line manager, and that most of the issues she would have raised were already dealt with at her appraisal meetings. She also felt that she always had other colleagues at hand who helped her with any pedagogical issues that arose. Zak's opinion seems to corroborate the haphazard nature of the mentoring process as reported by the Ofsted report (Ofsted, 2003).

Chris decided to choose a mentor who would be committed to providing the necessary support that he would require:

*... for me it was really good. I chose somebody that I knew was really good I'm afraid ... he kept a distance, yet was always available when required and I like that because I didn't want anybody to do my work for me... when I got to my professionalism assignment at the end, it was very very difficult. I had lots of support at that time, you know taking papers away and reading it and giving me feedback and amendments and we had a few meetings over the period of time as well, so it was really good, really good.*

Even though most of the teachers paid tributes to the mentoring process, remarkably, support and guidance from the mentors were not necessarily on subject specialist pedagogy but rather on generic teaching skills, which should ideally be provided on the PGCE/Cert Ed course. This reflects findings from Hobson et al's (2015) research which identify the lack of subject specialist support as a limitation of institution-based mentoring for teachers in FE. It is however worth noting that on completing the training, some of those who benefited from the process have in turn become mentors to other trainee teachers. Jamie, who has now taken up a mentor role, asserted that the mentor provides everyday guidance which is almost unrealistic for the teacher trainer to provide. This possibly explains an overlap of pedagogical support provided by the mentors in this study. On his current role as a mentor, Jamie concluded:

*I suppose the system has been good to me in the sense that I've got what I needed from it, so it's good to help others really, absolutely.*

As in the case of support from managers, perhaps a similar inference that can be drawn here is that those mentors and managers who have previously been through the PGCE/Cert Ed course seem to have been more empathetic and have provided better

support to trainees; which again can be understood using Giddens' social reproduction. For instance, those mentors who have provided effective and constructive mentoring support have inspired their mentees to walk in their footsteps as some of them have also now become mentors who are determined to provide valuable support to their mentees – a perpetuation of practice and in this instance, a reproduction of social structures.

The findings from mentoring support in this study reflect those of Tedder and Lawy (2010). On the role of mentors in implementing professional standards, they found that some of the trainees interviewed have developed excellent personal relationships with their mentors, and that the mentoring process made constructive impacts on trainees' personal and professional development. However, Tedder and Lawy also found that other trainees had mentors whose contributions to their development were only marginal, which again is similar to the findings in this study.

## **Chapter 10: Conclusions**

### **Introduction**

In attempting to improve teaching and learning in the FE sector, successive governments have intervened in the training and development of teachers through policy initiatives centred upon the initial training of teachers in the sector. Governments' influence on the teacher training curriculum over the years has however met with criticism from a range of authors who have questioned the value of external standards and specific government regulations (Nasta, 2007; Lucas, 2007; Hoyle and Wallace, 2007; Lucas et al, 2012).

As observed in chapter 3, although there have been many studies conducted on ITT, FE ITT is a relatively under-researched area (Jephcote et al 2008a; Jephcote and Salisbury 2009), and in comparison to research on full-time pre-service FE ITT, the in-service route has received less attention (Bathmaker and Avis 2007). In adding to the body of knowledge in this area, this study adopted a case study approach to critically evaluate the perceived impact of an initial in-service teacher training course (PGCE/Cert Ed) on teachers' professional development and practice in the context of a large FE college in a major city in the North of England.

This chapter initially presents the main research questions and summary of findings from the study. Next, it analyses the value of the theoretical frameworks that have been employed in explaining and making sense of some of the findings. Subsequently, it



offers specific contributions of the study to the wider body of knowledge. Lastly, it discusses the limitations of the study and proposes specific recommendations.

### **10.1 The Enquiry and Findings**

This study has investigated the perceived impact of the in-service PGCE/Cert Ed course on FE teachers' professional development and practice. Adopting, in the main, an interpretivist approach to constructing knowledge, the process has involved addressing the following four research questions that are pertinent in discovering teachers' perceptions of the impact of the in-service teacher training course on their practice, as well as understanding those factors that influence their development:

- 1) How do teachers and their managers conceptualise teacher professionalism?
- 2) What are teachers' perceptions of the knowledge, skills, competence and experience gained on the PGCE/Cert Ed course?
- 3) How have teachers' pedagogical approaches developed since completing the PGCE/Cert Ed course?
- 4) What support structures have influenced teachers' professional development whilst on the course?

10.1.1 *How do teachers and their managers conceptualise teacher professionalism?*

Teachers' and their managers' perceptions of professionalism were diverse and covered a range of factors including personal/individualised professionalism; subject knowledge/expertise; classroom management skills; rapport with learners and ethic of care; relevant experience; developed pedagogical skills; credentialing; authority and influence etc. These notions could be categorised into two viewpoints: what teachers do to influence their practice and the knowledge they bring in.

The diversity of teachers' backgrounds, academic and/or vocational experiences as well as value systems - a defining characteristic of the FE sector (James and Biesta, 2007) - ring clear from the data analysis. On another note, it has been difficult to relate teachers' professional backgrounds with their specific value systems as data collected indicated that teachers from similar vocational or academic backgrounds tend to have divergent views about what constitutes teacher professionalism. In the case of the managers however, 3 out of 4 construed teacher professionalism as centering on the development of pedagogical skills and learner engagement. As previously indicated, it is unclear whether this notion was wholly altruistic or whether it was influenced by the drive for performance management and targets.

Whilst the influence of power, via externally-driven policies and centrally-prescribed curriculum, has been significant in current understanding of FE teacher professionalism, on the whole, teachers' and managers' notions of teacher professionalism seem to be driven by a commitment to improving the quality of service and learner achievement.

Also, their perceptions seemed to be rooted in their personal experiences, beliefs and value systems. This perhaps is a reflection of how teachers are capable of exercising agency (Gleeson et al, 2005), and it seems evident in this study.

*10.1.2 What are teachers' perceptions of the knowledge, skills, competence and experience gained on the PGCE/Cert Ed course?*

There is an overwhelming positive perception of the knowledge, skills and competences gained on the course and this seems to be one of the unifying aspects of teachers' and managers' views.

An evaluation of previous studies on teacher training and development exposes the interventions of successive Conservative and Labour governments and their agencies through a series of policy levers which control and influence teachers' practice. These coupled with the nature of the FE trainee teachers in terms of their dual professionalism and dual identities have been seen to have posed some challenges to teachers' practice, and in addition, the mediation of policy by the college has not always favoured teacher trainees. Nevertheless, the analysis of findings from this study indicated that teachers have been able to turn seemingly negative consequences or limitations to their advantage. As an example, trainee teachers have been able to exercise agency in different situations and in the choices they have been able to make, which have enabled them to enhance their development. They have also been able to use their initiative, engage in collaborative practices within their PGCE/Cert Ed groups, and in some cases, have tapped into their mentors' expertise in developing knowledge, skills and

competence. The thesis proposes the notion of a “reflexive breakout” (see section 10.3.2).

### *10.1.3 How have teachers’ pedagogical approaches developed since completing the PGCE/Cert Ed course?*

The development of pedagogical approaches following the PGCE/Cert Ed varied for the teachers interviewed. The key areas identified by teachers are; *teaching methods; learning resources and learner support; lesson planning and curriculum structure; classroom management; reflective practice and experience; and own continuing professional development*. Central to these are teachers’ desire to meet their learners’ needs and to develop their pedagogy to inspire and foster learner participation. Findings suggest that the specific approaches developed by each teacher have been informed by the nature of the learner group or the teacher’s own personal preferences and perceived priority area(s). On the whole, teachers recounted how their delivery, reflective and assessment strategies have evolved as a result of, and following the PGCE/Cert Ed course. The approaches adopted by teachers go beyond utilising interactive or differentiation strategies and have involved building relationships with learners, and on occasions, taking up counselling roles. In these instances, less emphasis has been placed on the curriculum content but more on learner engagement and support in the learning process.

In terms of teachers’ own continuing development since completing the course, it is apparent that a number of the respondents have engaged in academic and professional

studies which are certified. Whilst it can be argued that gaining more qualifications do not necessarily equate to effective professional practice, some of the Cert Ed qualified teachers in this study have been inspired to gain more qualifications as a result of their new found confidence in academic studies. On the other hand, within the ambits of this study, it can be proposed that some motives have stirred up teachers' professional development and practice. The main one being the pursuit of *cultural capital* which Bourdieu (1986) presents as "scholastic investment strategies" (p. 48) – in this study, this can be analysed in terms of credentialing which can be used as a leverage to enhance status and to achieve desired goals.

These accounts have perhaps been most influential in driving teachers' professional development against all odds and empowering them to chart territories that were previously undiscovered; another case for a "reflexive breakout".

#### *10.1.4 What support structures have influenced teachers' professional development whilst on the course?*

Findings from this study highlight some support structures which have influenced teachers' development during their training. These are: tutor and peer support; manager support; and subject specialist mentor support. Most of the teachers valued their teacher trainers' subject knowledge, their wealth of experience, expert guidance, timely feedback and their willingness to allow trainees some flexibility especially when under pressure of work. An overwhelming majority of teachers however placed value on peer support and collaborative practices whilst on the course. These practices were also

recognised by some of the managers who were interviewed. An area of contention however is that of managers' support. Trainees had significantly different experiences whilst on the course; whilst some felt supported and empowered by their managers, others felt marginalised in terms of their heavy caseloads and the limited remission time provided. However, in a particular instance, one of the teachers who felt marginalised approached his manager, argued his case and ultimately had his caseload reduced. Again, a key implication here is that even in a regulated system of ITE, trainee teachers both need to and are able to exercise individual agency. It can be argued that without this ability to exercise agency, some of the teachers would have struggled. Subject specialist mentor support has also been significant to the professional development of teachers. However, the support received from mentors has not necessarily been specialist subject specific but pedagogic in nature, which again is consistent with findings from a recent study on mentoring (Hobson et al, 2015).

## **10.2 Theoretical Perspectives for the Study – Conceptual Implications**

In analysing issues of power relations; relationships between structure and agency; and the perceived influence of management, this study employs Bourdieu's conceptual framework and Giddens' structuration theory. On one hand, the cross-use of Bourdieu's conception of structured structures and Giddens' duality of structures has been effective because of "an elective affinity" and "a mutually potentiating similarity" (Morrison, 2005, p. 313) as they both offer the potential to aptly explain or theorise social reproduction – through practices or conscious actions respectively. On the other hand, Bourdieu's framework has been useful in expressing a static picture in respect of why things stay

the same (e.g. embodied practices), whilst Giddens' theory has been effective in analysing the dynamic relationships between agency and structure (e.g. the ability to exercise individual agency).

These frameworks have been valuable in providing suitable explanations for the influence of habitus, field and capital in context; the constraining and enabling aspects of structure; and the potential power of agency.

#### *10.2.1 Bourdieu's theoretical frameworks of Habitus, Cultural Capital and Field theory*

Bourdieu's (1990) concept of habitus presents a structure of unconsciously acquired dispositions which presents a link between social conditions and patterns of thoughts, and the capacity to reproduce those social conditions. In other words, habitus maintains and reproduces cultural and social legacy to which an individual belongs. An example of this in this study is that teachers' actions or conduct are linked to their cultural or educational backgrounds. Teachers have developed and deployed pedagogical skills in a variety of ways, and further analysis showed that this has been mostly based on the nature of learner groups and teachers' own characteristics and inclinations as informed by their backgrounds and prior experiences.

However, Bourdieu also argues that habitus is about what connects social conditions then and social conditions now; the "structured and structuring structure" (Bourdieu, 1984, p.171) capacity of habitus. This implies that habitus is continually restructured by

the individual as they interact with the outside world (Reay, 2004). This property of habitus became useful in explaining the difficulties in linking some of the actions and perceptions of respondents to their backgrounds or prior experiences – a case for the structuring capacity of habitus. For instance, in some cases, a parallel could not be drawn between respondents' opinions and their educational/vocational backgrounds or prior experiences. As an example, in respect of teachers' and managers' notions of professionalism, some of the teachers who already had a bachelor's degree did not feel that credentialing is significant to professionalism. In contrast, some of the teachers from vocational backgrounds felt that this is important. Also, the *structured* and *structuring* capacity of habitus as an ongoing process that shapes both present and future practices can be used to interpret how teachers' current approaches to facilitating learning have been influenced by the interactions between past and current experiences (*structured*) as well as present and future practices (*structuring*).

It can be argued that teachers have not necessarily reproduced the conditions that produced them but have transcended the constraints of their habitus; what can be interpreted as an evolving vocational habitus as explained in the structured and structuring capacity of habitus. This again can be explained by Bourdieu's (1990) subsequent argument about the transformative capacity of habitus as it undergoes changes as the individual interacts with the outside world.

Bourdieu's (1996) conceptual tool of cultural capital was also useful in this study. This is a form of asset or status which empowers the owner and enables them to gain access to privileges. An aspect of cultural capital that was useful in analysing findings is



institutionalised form of cultural capital which engenders academic credentials or educational qualifications. The symbolic profits and importance of this institutionalised form of capital was used to explain why some of the teachers who complained about their heavy caseloads and the challenge of combining these with study have nurtured the desire to go ahead to study for higher qualifications after the initial teacher training course.

As previously discussed, half of the teachers on the Cert Ed pathway have gone on to complete bachelors' degrees and other level 5 qualifications, and some have also gained professional qualifications in their specialist areas. The quest for academic repute or status was evident in the motive of some of the teachers interviewed. For one teacher, it was not so much about developing intellectual ability but about improving her status and proving her worth to the members of her family. Another teacher's motive for gaining a higher qualification was to enhance his status as an FE teacher and his career prospects. In this case, the leveraging capacity of institutionalised form of capital can be brought to bear. Currently, there are some opportunities for vocational FE teachers to be employed in seemingly more prestigious educational sectors in England (e.g. secondary schools and academies); however, having a qualification at a bachelor's degree level seems to put them in good stead for this. This is where a degree qualification may provide better chances for career mobility in other sectors of education with better terms and conditions. It can thus be proposed that these teachers were motivated against all odds to acquire further qualifications as a status symbol, and for better career prospects.

Bourdieu's field has also proved useful in conceptualising social structures in this study. The field as *a structured space of positions* acts as a force field which enforces its rules, values and principles on those entering it (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). The college departments in this study could be likened to *sub-fields* which exert their values and principles on the teachers in their departments. In some departments, teachers were not given additional time on top of the remission time which has been stipulated by the college. As such, after attending the PGCE/Cert Ed training sessions, trainees had to carry on with their teaching duties as normal. In other departments however, teachers were freed up after the PGCE/Cert Ed training sessions. Unfortunately, teachers in the previous *sub-fields* (department) of stipulated remissions had to conform to the procedures and regulations within their departments irrespective of their feelings, which reflects the subservient culture within the department and how it stands in relation to the dominance of the wider field of power (i.e. the college management).

Another property of the concept of field that has been used to explain findings is that of *arena of struggle* - the "buying capacity" of agents and their ability to influence and effect changes can be employed in this case. As previously discussed, Debbie bought into her mentor's value system on the significance of a teacher's physical presence in facilitating interactive learning, and she considered the mentor's recommendations as one of the first and best pieces of advice that she received from him. It can be argued that Debbie's mentor, who was operating in a field of power, was unquestionably able to legitimise his personal value systems.

The third property of Bourdieu's field that has proved useful in analysing social structures in this study is that the field manifests a *degree of autonomy*. Using the analogy of college departments as *sub-fields*, the *sub-fields of flexibility* which are the departments that have mediated college policy on remission hours, have been able to maintain relative autonomy. Although the trainees interviewed were aware of the dichotomy in practices between departments, those departments that have been able to provide extra remission hours have been seemingly insulated from external pressures to change their practice.

#### 10.2.2 *Giddens' Structuration Theory*

In his structuration theory, Giddens (1984) asserts that the rules and resources (structure) which agents draw on in the production and reproduction of social action are at the same time the means of system reproduction. This explains his concept of the duality between structure and agency which implies that agents and structure are mutually constituted and that there is an interactive and reciprocal relationship between human actions and social structures. Structuration theory also acknowledges the "transformative capacity" of the agent to make a difference. Giddens argues that although the agent could be constrained, they have human agency in terms of the power and the capacity to manipulate circumstances in their favour. He refutes the concept of structural idealism that ignores human agency in favour of systems that dominate and control, and also criticises macrostructuralists that ignore the reflexive capacities of actors (Turner, 1986). This aspect of structuration theory has been useful in analysing some of the findings in this study and reinforces the notion that teachers are capable of

individual agency in terms of the choices that they make and the changes they implement in their practice.

The issue of case-loading has already been discussed in this study and the case of the teacher who has been able to confront his manager and demanded additional support has been analysed using Bourdieu's theoretical construct of the field as an *arena of struggle*. The other side of the coin is how those who have not been able to confront their managers have dealt with the situation, and this is an aspect where the enabling and constraining aspect of structuration theory has been useful in conceptualising teachers' actions.

On one hand, the issues with case-loading and time release might be perceived as limitations and obstacles constraining teachers from successfully completing the PGCE/Cert Ed course. On the other hand however, this study has observed the emergence of teachers who are capable of adopting *individualistic* strategies (Hollis, 1994) to not only achieve but exceed their goals and aspirations. As an example, Nick talked about the strategies he has put in place to support and focus his students. Likewise Rachel, who felt that there was room for improvement in the delivery approaches in her second year of the teacher training course, reflected on using her initiative and taking responsibility for her own professional development in order to achieve her goals. According to her, a lot of what she has been able to achieve has come from her own interests and extended study on how to improve her teaching strategies, an experience she referred to as "*positive*". This resonates with Chris' approach who clearly articulated his commitment to his own development in respect of

the Cert Ed course and the Level 5 course he was doing after the teacher training course. He felt that he has been able to drive his own development by successfully juggling his responsibilities and workload.

The point here is that instead of his experience on the Cert Ed course limiting him, he has learnt from this and has been able to work as best as he can within the restrictions of structure. Another example is the case of Sam, who used his initiative to manage disruptive behaviour in his lessons by adopting a simple strategy that enhanced the ambience of his classroom. He subsequently expressed a preference for his classroom sessions over workshop sessions.

As discussed earlier, four out of the 10 teachers on the Cert Ed pathway (one of whom was discouraged from coming on the course by his colleagues in the department) have gone ahead both to start and complete academic degree courses. Also, one of the 10 Cert teachers has completed another level 5 qualification. These teachers initially came on the Cert Ed course to fulfill the demands of the college by obtaining a teaching qualification, but they have voluntarily proceeded to higher qualifications. The emphasis here is that they succeeded despite having to deal with heavy caseloads, minimal time allocation and lack of support from some of the departments whilst on the teacher training course. In this respect, they have been able to “shape their own responsiveness to problematic situations” (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, p. 971) in order to make desired choices, give directions to their aspirations and achieve their goals. These support Giddens’ (1984) argument that humans are “purposive agents” (p. 3) who also manage their own interests through the structures that are in place.

In elucidating the production and reproduction of social systems and the constraining and enabling aspect of structure, it can be explained that structure limits personal agency through rules and authoritative resources. In return, the agent's motivation for action is borne out of the influence of structure (rules), which then implies that rules can serve as a motivation (and consequence) for action which again produces new rules and regulations (structure). Structure and action can thus be perceived as two sides of the same coin which are involved in a looped symbiotic relationship; the duality of structure.

### **10.3 Contributions of the Research**

#### *10.3.1 Biographies and Perceptions*

Among other issues, this study has explored teachers' and managers' perceptions of teacher professionalism and the factors that structure those notions. The notions of professionalism from this study have been classified into two broad categories based on Colley and James' (2005) ideas: (a) what the practitioner does in context or how they act in their practice, which has been interpreted as a person specification - an ontology of professionalism. (b) a list of defining characteristics which is explained as a job description; an epistemology of professionalism. The former is rooted in teachers' own self-determined actions, while the latter is based on extrinsic factors and informed by externally determined procedures and standards which prescribe teachers' actions

It has been argued that teachers' biographies influence their identity (Knowles, 1992) which in turn influence teachers' commitment, efficiency, motivation, sense of purpose, etc. (Day et al, 2007, Jephcote and Salisbury, 2009). In this study however, it has not

been possible to expressly relate teachers' and managers' backgrounds, qualifications and experiences to their perceptions of teacher professionalism. As an example, teachers and managers from vocational backgrounds (and who still work in vocational curriculum areas) were split on their notions of professionalism. For some, it is based on experience, tutelage and qualifications, while others leaned towards the concept of enacted professionalism and what the teacher brings to their practice in order to foster learner development and achievement – a tension between the ethic of care and influence/authority. The point here is that respondents' notions are fragmented and arguably, these have been based on their personal agency, their subjective beliefs, personal dispositions and value systems which have been difficult to link to their professional backgrounds. It is thus difficult to assume a vocational or professional habitus which prescribes idealised and realised dispositions in becoming the right person for the job (Colley et al, 2003), which then proffers an ambiguous professional identity. This supports the perceived contradictory tensions between vocational cultures and personal identities that Colley et al (2003) observe in their study.

### *10.3.2 Reflexive breakout*

Liberal education theorists propose the notion of rational autonomy where individuals manifest the capacity for independent judgement. In contrast to liberal education however, critical traditions argue that individual emancipation cannot happen without societal emancipation which implies that agency is not an individual achievement but one that “is connected to contextual and structural factors” (Biesta and Tedder, 2006, p. 5). The main thrust of my argument here is that the emphasis is not on the impact of ‘control’ or how the impact can be controlled, rather, it is on the capacity of the individual

to shape their own actions and take control of their lives, which again can be strengthened by Giddens' (1984) argument that structures can be enabling as well as constraining. In this study, the concept of rational autonomy can be explained as the process through which teachers develop their ability to make independent decisions which empower them to drive their professional development and practice. This synchronises with some of the teachers' earlier constructs of professionalism as analysed in the first research question, and as underpinned by Boyt et al's (2001) notion of teacher professionalism that advocates the ability of the professional to influence their professionalism.

Findings from this study have helped to construct an alternative view to the dominance of external influences on teachers' practice and professional development. It can be argued that the teachers in this study are not passive receptors of the influence or dominance of structure. In spite of the challenges that they face, they have been able to make intuitive and effective use of the perceived limited opportunities at their disposal to develop their skills and practice. Nevertheless, this has not necessarily been achieved through resistance or strategic compliance but by teachers taking a reflexive approach to their experiences, and being aware of their own potential and their ability to effect desired changes. Moreover, their approach has not essentially been about employing coping strategies but by teachers proactively taking responsibility for the development of their practice.

This study therefore puts forward a case for "*reflexive breakout*", a phrase I have used to describe my perception of teachers' efforts and successes in making strides and



accomplishing feats in spite of some constraints that they have encountered. This has been through their commitment and passion to developing their practice. As analysed in chapter 8, teachers have drawn on discretion, intuition, tacit knowledge or practical wisdom (*phronesis*) in developing their professional skills and practice. Some have been able to question their assumptions, transformed their perspectives and learnt to do things differently. In addition, apart from teacher educators' input, some have also availed themselves of the additional support from their peers and mentors. Furthermore, some of the teachers have been inspired to pursue academic studies following their initial teacher training course.

### *10.3.3 Conceptualising Teachers' Professional knowledge and enhancing teachers' practice and professional development*

In considering the future development of teacher trainees, it is essential to initially evaluate in context, factors that have contributed to teachers' development. As a starting point, the epistemological question: "how do we know what we know?" has been explored in this respect i.e. how did teachers construct knowledge while on the PGCE/Cert Ed course? Although a range of approaches has been proposed in conceptualising teachers' knowledge (Saunders, 2006), it is difficult to prescribe and capture teachers' professional knowledge and skills through national standards because of the diversity that typifies the sector, among other factors. In this study, the socio-cultural conception of teacher professional knowledge (Maxwell, 2010) which advocates collaborative sharing and informal learning has been most useful in analysing how teachers construct knowledge and skills.

Whilst teachers have found some of the prescribed curriculum and approaches on the teacher training course useful, significant value has been placed on the impact of effective collaborative practices among their peers whilst on the PGCE/Cert Ed course, and this has been both within and between departments. For some of the teachers, this has been the best part of the course. One of the managers interviewed also recognised the positive impact that peer support and teamwork have had on their teachers' skills development. As previously indicated, the opportunity to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds and with various skills and experiences seems to have broadened teachers' perspectives, helped develop their knowledge and skill bases, and equipped them for practice.

The study also suggests that mentoring is valuable in developing teachers' practice. Where the support has been well arranged and structured, teachers reported that they have benefited immensely from mentor input - the caveat is that mentoring support identified in this study has mostly been on general pedagogical skills development. Furthermore, the study suggests that mentor input is more effective when mentors have completed the PGCE/Cert Ed course themselves and can better appreciate the needs of their mentees, and are also able to model effective strategies. Also, those who have volunteered to mentor their colleagues have shown more commitment than those who have been coaxed into the mentoring programme.

In other cases, teachers have autonomously explored strategies which helped to inspire learning and enhanced their learners' skills in context. Examples of this include: being proactive in developing learner understanding even when these go beyond 'reasonable

time frames' on the session plans; taking on non-subject specific roles to foster learner engagement; the creation of informal environments that minimise disruptive behaviours etc.

#### *10.3.4 Mediation of College Procedures*

This study contributes to the body of knowledge on how policies and procedures are mediated from inception to their final destinations (Spours et al, 2007, Rouleau and Balogun, 2007). At a local level, the findings have uncovered the ability and the power of some middle managers to influence and implement college policies. Some curriculum departments in this study manifest a sense of autonomy in making decisions without being challenged by senior management. It is also a case of these departments having their own rules and regulations which are introduced and strategically controlled by the respective departmental managers. This orchestration has however been a constructive intervention for the trainees in that some of the middle managers have shaped the college policy to benefit them rather than transmitting unfavourable instructions. Whilst Rouleau and Balogun (2007) attribute middle managers' strategic prowess to "sense making" and "practical knowledge", the findings from this study suggest that power is implicated in this process as middle managers possess a form of institutionalised capital as well as a degree of autonomy (Bourdieu 1986) which they have employed to wield and sustain their influence. This form of capital also represents the allocative resources that they benefit from within these departments e.g. high level of achievement and performance, and the student numbers which invariably help to generate income and to raise the profile of the college.

#### **10.4 Limitations of the study**

The research questions for this study necessitated in the main, the use of the interpretivist philosophical assumptions in understanding and constructing meaning from respondents' points of view and experiences. Also, the strategies adopted sought to enhance validity and reliability of the data collected in order to strengthen the rigour of the research. As an example, suitable respondents were selected to participate in the study. Furthermore, questionnaires were used to initially seek opinions from potential participants and subsequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted to further explore ideas. Although efforts have been made to strengthen the methodological approaches used in this study; as with all research, there may be potential weaknesses in the methodological approaches employed.

It has been proposed that, in its most general form, the goal of a case study approach is to present an enquiry where both the researcher(s) and educators are able to reflect on particular instances of educational practice. Case study research has been valued in respect of its narrative format which then affords a better chance of impacting on the practice of both new and experienced teachers (Shkedi, 1998). Also, as argued by Stake (1995), the benefits of qualitative case study methodology evolve from the uniqueness of cases, its contextual nature, and the subjective experiences of practitioners. The caveat here is that the complexity of case study methodology might imply that findings might be unique to the participants in a particular study and "theorised in a vacuum" (Freebody, 2006, p. 81). Hence, case study approaches have been conceived to be weak in their capacity to make generalisations. Nevertheless, triangulation can enhance the quality and validity of case study research (Stake, 1995).

According to Yin (1989), this typically combines data collection methods such as archives, questionnaires, interviews and observations. In this study, two data collection methods, questionnaires and interviews, were employed due to logistical issues and time constraints. Perhaps a third data collection method could have been used (e.g. participants observation of teachers in classroom or workshop sessions) to further enhance triangulation.

Another aspect of the study that could have had some implications pertains to the trustworthiness of self-reported data, especially when teachers had to describe their own progress since completing the course, and when managers had to talk about their staff.

The point here is that self-reported data is based on listening to teachers' accounts of what they told me that they do as opposed to what I have observed them doing. These perhaps are self-esteem, affective and sentimental issues that might have been somewhat masked, or laden with bias and/or exaggeration. However, as the main aim of the thesis was to evaluate teachers' and their managers' perceptions of the impact of the initial teacher training course on their development and practice, their views are critical to the study.

A purposive, stratified sampling strategy was adopted in this study. In context, this implies that a specific group of teachers i.e. those who have completed the PGCE/Cert Ed course within 3 years as at data collection stage; from both academic and vocational areas and from different college campuses were selected. The intention was to recruit respondents who would be able to contribute appropriate and relevant data in answering the research questions, and who were representative of the diversity of the college's

staff. Whilst the purposive aspect was achieved, the stratified sampling was not fully representative of PGCE and Cert Ed qualified teachers from both academic and vocational areas of all the college campuses, the main reason being that participation was voluntary and only those willing to contribute to the study and to be interviewed were recruited. 12 out of the 16 teachers who were interviewed came from vocational areas, while 4 were from academic areas. Also, there were no representations from 3 of the college campuses. The imbalance in the number of participants from academic and vocational areas might have implications for some of the findings. Whilst it has been difficult to relate teachers' and managers' perceptions (as in the case of conceptualisations of professionalism) to their academic or vocational backgrounds, it could have had implications for the number of teachers who were able to command confidence, actualise power and challenge authority based on some form of symbolic capital. Likewise, the data collected on the development of pedagogical approaches in terms of teachers' motives could have been different. However, useful findings were derived from teachers represented within each group in spite of the disparity in numbers.

## **10.5 Further Research and Recommendation**

This study has evaluated the impact of the PGCE/Cert Ed initial teacher training curriculum (which derives from the LLUK 2007 professional standards) on teachers' professional development and practice. The LLUK professional standards have been split into 6 main domains with each domain covering 3 specific aspects: *Professional Values; Professional Knowledge and Understanding; and Professional Practice*, which are broken down into 190 statements of the skills, knowledge and attributes required by

those who work in the sector. Whilst the PGCE/Cert Ed curriculum has been framed by these standards, they have not necessarily been presented to trainees by teacher educators as the main standards to be met in achieving the initial teacher training qualification. One of the questions in the teachers' online questionnaire at the start of the study asked about knowledge of the LLUK standards, and only one out of 26 respondents indicated knowledge of the standards. Others were unaware of the standards or had little knowledge of them. However, the only respondent who indicated that they had knowledge of the standards did not participate in the interview process. Hence, those interviewed did not seem to be aware of the overarching professional standards, and they did not think in terms of the LLUK standards explicitly, but in terms of the PGCE/Cert Ed curriculum. It has thus been difficult to explore teachers' perceptions of the value of the LLUK standards (in its entirety) and their corresponding statements to their practice.

The perceptions of teachers and their managers have been sought in this study, however, teacher educators seem to be strategically positioned in the continuum of policy initiation and curriculum delivery as their role is significant in the implementation or mediation of government reforms on initial teacher training. As intermediaries in the process, their opinions should be able to shed light to some of the issues raised in this study as well as to further inform the teacher training practice. As there is a gap in literature in this area, there is scope for evaluating FE ITT from teacher educators' perspectives.

Two of the limitations identified in this study relate to the issue of making generalisations in case study research, and the imbalance between the numbers of PGCE and Cert Ed qualified teachers who were interviewed, as well as a potential impact that this might have on findings. A multiple-case study of 2 or more FE colleges and one which addresses the imbalance between the PGCE qualified and Cert Ed qualified respondents would be useful in order to obtain a more compelling evidence which should corroborate findings from each of the cases studied.

Although this study suggests that the teacher training curriculum is mediated as it is translated into practice, there is still a critical concern that the values, principles and assumptions that underpin teachers' professional practice have not necessarily been informed by their recipients. It has been argued that no education system is better than its teachers and that if teachers' discretions are removed, the system stops working (McKinsey and Company, 2007). It is therefore essential that practitioners be involved at the local level in shaping the curriculum; this study thus proposes a model of professional development that takes the views of practitioners into consideration.

Furthermore, in view of the findings from this study that significantly support and advocate the informal, tacit and collegial model of knowledge construction, it is recommended that a 'community of professional development and practice' which extends beyond the PGCE/Cert Ed course be introduced; one which provides PGCE/Cert Ed graduates with the opportunity for occasional re-unions where practitioners from different curriculum areas and campuses can engage in dedicated



sessions that facilitate the sharing and exchange of new pedagogical experiences, skills and strategies.

Finally, the notion of reflexive breakout that this study proposes could help advance a better understanding of the professional development of FE teachers. Perhaps in the future, the process of FE teacher development should engender a change in attitude that does not necessarily promote the acquisition of more knowledge, but that which also galvanises *reflexive breakout*. However, further study in this area is recommended.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Participant Consent Form for Doctoral Research

**An exploration of the perceptions of FE teachers about the impact of an In-Service PGCE/Cert Ed course on their professional development and practice.**

- I have read the Information on the research study and understand the process involved in the research
- I acknowledge that I am not under any obligation to participate in the research and that I can withdraw at anytime
- I understand that information I provide, and my identity, will be made anonymous by the researcher in any reports or publications arising from the research
- I understand that data collected on me can be accessed by me as desired
- I acknowledge that the focus group interview will be held at a mutually convenient time and venue
- I understand that interviews and/or focus groups will be audio-taped and that the tapes will be stored securely by the researcher
- I understand that the principalship and respective line managers have been informed about this research study
- I understand that I will not be put at risk by participating in this research
- I would like interview transcripts returned to me for checking YES/NO

**I agree with the above statements and I am willing to participate in the research:**

**Name:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Department:**

*Please send the completed Consent Form by internal mail to Titilola Olukoga, Teacher Education ... Thank you.*

## Appendix 2 - Online Questionnaire - Teachers

\* Required

Please enter your name in the box below \*

Please select your age group \*

- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- Over 60

Please select your gender \*

- Male
- Female

Which of the following best describes your ethnicity? \* If your ethnicity is not included in the list below, please specify your ethnicity using the "Other" box

- White British
- White Other
- Asian/Asian British
- Black/Black British
- Other:

Which of the following subject categories best describes your subject specialism? \*

- Health and Social Care
- Construction
- Hair and Beauty
- Science (including Maths)
- IT (including Creative Media, Programming and Networking)
- Automotive Engineering

Which qualification level do you teach? \* Please select all that apply

- NVQ Levels 1-3
- GCSE/A Level
- Advanced Diploma
- Foundation Degree/Degree
- Other:

Please select your Segment \*

- 14-19
- Adult
- HE
- Other:

Please select your highest qualification prior to commencing the PGCE/Cert Ed course \*

- Level 3 in Subject Area
- HNC/HND
- First Degree (e.g. BA, BSc)
- Post Graduate (e.g. MA, MSc, PhD)
- Other:

Which of the following best describes your job role while on the PGCE/Cert Ed course? \*

- Tutor
- Course Coordinator
- Programme Team Leader
- Divisional Lead Manager

What is your current job role? \*

- Same as above
- Other:

What is your current employment status? \*

- Full-Time
- Part-Time
- Other:

How many years teaching experience did you have prior to commencing the PGCE/Cert Ed course? \*

How many years industrial experience did you have prior to commencing the PGCE/Cert Ed course? \*

What motivated you to teach? \*

Please select your teaching qualification(s) from the list below \* Select all that apply

- PTLLS
- CTLLS
- C & G 7303/7304
- Certificate in Education (Cert Ed)
- Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)

When did you complete the PGCE/Cert Ed course? \* Please indicate the year e.g. 2008

Which of these best describes your feelings prior to starting the PGCE/Cert Ed course? \*

- Excitement
- Indifference
- Skepticism
- Reluctance

What would you attribute the feelings to? \*

What do you consider as the most helpful part of the course? \*

What do you consider as the least helpful part of the course? \*

How much do you know about the Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) Overarching Professional Standards for teachers, tutors and trainers? \*

- Nothing
- A little
- A lot

Do you think the LLUK Standards (which are translated into PGCE/Cert Ed course modules) reflect the skills, knowledge and abilities required by teachers in FE Colleges? \*

- Yes
- No

Do you think the structure and delivery approach of the PGCE/Cert Ed course met your needs at the time? \*

- Yes
- No

Would you be willing to take part in an interview to further discuss the issues raised in this questionnaire? \*

- Yes
- No

### Appendix 3 - Online Questionnaire - *Managers*

\* Required

Please enter your name in the box below \*

Please select your age group \*

- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- Over 60

Please select your gender \*

- Male
- Female

Which of the following best describes your ethnicity? \* If your ethnicity is not included in the list below, please specify your ethnicity using the "Other" box

- White British
- White Other
- Asian/Asian British
- Black/Black British
- Other:

Which curriculum area(s) are you responsible for? \* Please select all that apply

- Business
- Construction
- Hair and Beauty
- Automotive Engineering
- IT (including Creative Media, Programming and Networking)
- Science (including Maths)

Please select your segment \*

- 14-19
- Adult
- HE
- Other

Which of the following best describes your current job role? \*

- Course Coordinator
- Programme Team Leader
- Divisional Lead Manager
- Curriculum Lead Manager

How many years teaching experience do you have in an FE College? \*

How many years experience do you have as a manager in an FE College? \*

Please select your teaching qualification(s) from the list below \* Select all that apply

- PTLLS
- CTLLS
- C&G 7303/7304
- Certificate in Education (Cert Ed)
- Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
- None

What impact do you think the course has made on the professional competence (as defined by the LLUK standards) of your staff who have completed the course within the last 2 years? \*

What would you attribute your evaluation to? \* Select all that apply

- Support received on the course from tutors and peers
- Good quality of training
- Staff's motivation, commitment and drive
- Lack of support on the course from tutors and peers
- Poor quality of training
- Staff's lack of motivation, commitment and drive
- Other:

Do you think the LLUK Standards (which are translated into PGCE/Cert Ed course modules) reflect the skills, knowledge and abilities required by teachers in FE Colleges? \*

- Yes
- No

What is your perception of the structure and delivery approach of the PGCE/Cert Ed course? \*



Would you be willing to take part in a focus (group) interview to further discuss the issues raised in this questionnaire? \*

- Yes
- No



## Appendix 4 - Interview Schedule – Teachers

### Introductions

Make interviewee feel comfortable

Thank interviewee for agreeing to participate in the study.

Recapitulate on the research protocol including ethical considerations

### Questions

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your journey into the teaching profession?  
*(Identify patterns, explore intentions)*
2. Can you tell me about your current job role?
3. What do you think are the essential knowledge, skills and competences required for this job role?  
*Are some are more important to you than others? (investigate, explore)*
4. I would like to explore your experience in some areas of your teacher training:
  - a) Professional values and practice
    - What is your view of a professional tutor?
    - To what extent do you think the course has equipped you with the skills, knowledge and competence to function as a professional tutor?
  - b) In the area of teaching and Learning
    - Can you describe the teaching and learning strategies gained on the course? *(prompt if necessary - creating an inclusive environment, using a range of learning resources, classroom management)*
  - c) Specialist learning and teaching
    - One of the modules you took in year 2 was a subject specialist module:
      - i. How would you evaluate its effectiveness in your own professional development?
      - ii. How effective was the online learning aspect?  
*(prompt if necessary)*
  - d) Planning for learning
  - e) Assessment for learning
  - f) Own development and progression
5. Which of the modules did you find most relevant to your practice and why?  
*(explore responses)*
6. What were the most desirable aspects of the course? *(explore responses)*
7. How would you describe the support received from your:
  - a) course tutor
  - b) peers on the course

8. How would you evaluate your experience of the mentoring process (and your relationship with your mentor) – (*probe*)
9. What support did you receive from your line manager? (and colleagues in the department?) – (*probe*)
10. Since completing the course, how have your teaching and learning approaches changed? (*please provide specific examples*)
11. Which teaching and learning approaches have you developed in your practice?
  - What impact do you think your approach has had on you and your learners?  
(*Please provide specific examples*)
12. What gaps do you perceive in your own development on the course? (*probe*)
13. How do you think tutors' professional development can be enhanced?
14. What is your own notion or view of teaching and learning?
  - a. What role do you think reflection plays in this?
15. In your own view, how has the PGCE/Cert Ed course prepared you for your role as a tutor?  
(*Please provide specific examples*)

Ask if interviewee has additional comments

Thank interviewee again for participating in the study.

**Appendix 5 – Interview Duration Breakdown – *Teachers and Managers***

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Duration (minutes:seconds)</b>
Sarah	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2012	28:16
Liz	17 <sup>th</sup> November 2011	33:06
Mat	2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2011	31:07
Phil	12 <sup>th</sup> January 2012	32:04
Janet	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2012	39:26
Nick	8 <sup>th</sup> December 2011	30:22
John	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2011	36:15
Rachel	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2012	37:01
Joe	8 <sup>th</sup> March 2012	49:08
Sam	2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2011	43:36
Jamie	18 <sup>th</sup> November 2011	26:51
Chris	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2011	42:08
Anna	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2012	35:18
Zak	19 <sup>th</sup> October 2011	79:25
Esther	25 <sup>th</sup> April 2012	29:10
Debbie	25 <sup>th</sup> October 2011	45:20
Beth	11 <sup>th</sup> January 2012	33:31
Leah	23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2012	19:14
Mike	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2012	16:22
Andy	20 <sup>th</sup> October 2011	35:58

**Appendix 6 - Sample Spreadsheet of Data Analysis – Teachers – (Sheet 2 of 18, Perceptions of Professionalism)**

Analysis					
Category	Respon- dent				
Perception of Professionalism	PFS	Relevant Text and Repeated Ideas (highlighted)	Codes		
			Enacted	Credentialing/Q ualifications e.g. Training, Knowledge, Expertise, Experience	Prescribed externally imposed -
	PFSLiz	<p>oh, I'll just say all tutors should be classed as professionals because they are in a professional field, if they've got subject specialism and that's what they are deemed as. Em, that's how I feel. Em I always thought of my tutor as the one that has more .... not necessarily more subject knowledge because he didn't know anything about IT, but he knew more about classroom management, how to manage the classroom, how to plan effective lessons. So I took him on from that point of view as being a professional in that sense. Tried to take that on board and then tried to relay back in the classroom myself to then make me a professional teacher. yeah, because there can be two different things. You can have people that are professionals in their field and they can be excellent technicians or what have you but you could put them in the classroom and they wouldn't necessarily know how to handle a group or handle different groups as well, cos we have such diverse groups in the college (laughs) whether it be all girls or all boys, the mixture of race, mixture of culture, learning to deal with all that. It doesn't matter whether you know your subject or not; being able to cope with the other side as well is a challenge. And that was the bit that I wanted to focus on.</p>	<p>Em I always thought of my tutor as the one that has more .... not necessarily more subject knowledge because he didn't know anything about IT, but he knew more about classroom management, how to manage the classroom, how to plan effective lessons.</p>	<p>oh, I'll just say all tutors should be classed as professionals because they are in a professional field, if they've got subject specialism and that's what they are deemed as. Em, that's how I feel.</p>	

Perception of Professionalism	PFS	Relevant Text and Repeated Ideas (highlighted)	Enacted	Credentialing/Qualifications e.g. Training, Knowledge, Expertise, Experience	Prescribed externally imposed -
	PFSMat	<p>I would say somebody who ..... who knows his job and would show that he knows his job by his actions. So if somebody is a professional, you will be able to tell that he is a professional by looking at him, by listening to what he says and then also his experience as well will show. That's what I have in mind about professionalism. for me, it would be em, it would be definitely experience, because you can tell someone who has been plastering for so many years to somebody who is new. I would say also appearance as well will be important.</p> <p>well appearance, when you're plastering, the first thing we tell students is that you have to be neat, you have to be neat and tidy and then that's when you get other jobs because people know that you take care in your job. So if the tutor is neat and tidy and looks professional then it gives the right message to the students. So experience, appearance and also the way he deals with the students, making sure he's not using bad language, he's talking to them with respect, with dignity and I think that shows professionalism. hmm ... I think it can be taught, I think some people are natural and do have it naturally, but I think you can, you can teach people but it just takes a bit of a period of time for them to get to that standard.</p>	<p>I would say somebody who ..... who knows his job and would show that he knows his job by his actions. So if somebody is a professional, you will be able to tell that he is a professional by looking at him, by listening to what he says and then also his experience as well will show..... So experience, appearance and also the way he deals with the students, making sure he's not using bad language, he's talking to them with respect, with dignity and I think that shows professionalism. hmm ... I think it can be taught, I think some people are natural and do have it naturally, but I think you can, you can teach people but it just takes a bit of a period of time for them to get to that standard.</p>		

Perception of Professionalism	PFS	Relevant Text and Repeated Ideas (highlighted)	Enacted	Credentialing/Qualifications e.g. Training, Knowledge, Expertise, Experience	Prescribed - externally imposed
	PFSPhil	my own view? Em, professionalism comes in many guises really. Professionalism ... since I did my Cert Ed, I've learnt more about professionalism. Before I did my Cert Ed, I always thought professionalism was what you did on the shop floor, what I did teaching and how professional I was doing that but obviously, after I did my Cert Ed there was a lot more to be incorporated about professionalism, <b>everything that you do goes towards professionalism.</b>	<b>everything that you do goes towards professionalism.</b>		
	PFSJanet	well, that was part of the course that we did and I think em, it might be an age thing I don't know, in my day a teacher and a doctor and probably above a policeman, a lawyer, a judge, they were the professionals, so at that point I would have never aspired to it. They were a different type of people that achieve that success. <b>And it was only I think probably when I went onto the course that I realised that a professional is really only about delivering a service as an expert in that particular field and not the ..... you know ..... I'm sure these people will say "I'm a great teacher" and it's only a name if you drill down they are not a great teacher. "I'm a great solicitor" and if you drill down they're not. Professionalism is being able to do the job and do it well within the timescale set .. you know .. the students whatever the student is at the heart for us .., we've got to ensure that their journey has been the correct one</b>	<b>And it was only I think probably when I went onto the course that I realised that a professional is really only about delivering a service as an expert in that particular field and not the ..... you know ..... Professionalism is being able to do the job and do it well within the timescale set .. you know .. the students whatever the student is at the heart for us .., we've got to ensure that their journey has been the correct one</b>		

Perception of Professionalism	PFS	Relevant Text and Repeated Ideas (highlighted)	Enacted	Credentialing/Qualifications e.g. Training, Knowledge, Expertise, Experience	Prescribed externally imposed -
	PFSNick	em, basically, I come from a more professional background where I was a time save joiner. I served on apprenticeship. I went on a 3 year training and I think any sort of em, course that you go on like the Cert Ed course, you need that training, you need that experience. I know it took me 2 years but that does give you the underpinning knowledge to go about your job.		I served on apprenticeship. I went on a 3 year training and I think any sort of em, course that you go on like the Cert Ed course, you need that training, you need that experience. I know it took me 2 years but that does give you the underpinning knowledge to go about your job.	
	PFSJohn	em, I think it's the way the person sort of acts in their role. From a personal point of view, I think it's preparing,... being prepared in all the necessary ..... all the preparation that goes into the lesson before hand. Making sure that you know your learners, .. I think it's the way you behave as well ... the way you behave to students, em, obviously, there's got to be some sort of link between you and the students. I'm not sure you have to become too friendly with them. I think it's probably about respect, I think the students respect you if you treat them right and you behave right	em, I think it's the way the person sort of acts in their role....I think it's preparing,... being prepared in all the necessary ..... all the preparation that goes into the lesson before hand. Making sure that you know your learners, .. I think it's the way you behave as well ... the way you behave to students, em, obviously, there's got to be some sort of link between you and the students. I'm not sure you have to become too friendly with them.		

Perception of Professionalism	PFS	Relevant Text and Repeated Ideas (highlighted)	Enacted	Credentialing/Qualifications e.g. Training, Knowledge, Expertise, Experience	Prescribed - externally imposed
	PFSRache I	I think similar again, keeping current with your practices and not relying on the training that you did like all those years ago. Like for me back in the mid 90s, it's em .... your profession is an ever changing profession so to be professional is to keep up with those current changes and practices. and I suppose with the teaching side is plan, plan what you intend to do, how you're going to get from September to June and ensure that everything is delivered in a way that interests people. Not teaching by rote perhaps. I was as a child, you know making it exciting and making the learners want to learn.	.... your profession is an ever changing profession so to be professional is to keep up with those current changes and practices. and I suppose with the teaching side is plan, plan what you intend to do, how you're going to get from September to June and ensure that everything is delivered in a way that interests people.		
	PFSJoe	professionalism is down to .. not particularly your academic background but how you come across. I trained as a professional chef cause you are world class standards I think it's got to do with the standards you're working towards. Like in any trade you have to have a certain professional standard you are going to work to. I don't think it's like a status or qualifications but I think it's the approach you have to your job.	professionalism is down to .. not particularly your academic background but how you come across..... I don't think it's like a status or qualifications but I think it's the approach you have to your job.		I think it's got to do with the standards you're working towards. Like in any trade you have to have a certain professional standard you are going to work to



Perception of Professionalism	PFS	Relevant Text and Repeated Ideas (highlighted)	Enacted	Credentialing/Qualifications e.g. Training, Knowledge, Expertise, Experience	Prescribed externally imposed -
	PFSSam	<p>I think professionalism is in our field, it is being a teacher, you are a professional person, you've got professional qualifications and you are looked upon by the students. You are like that role model as such, you know in the way professional footballers are people like that they are role models. You can .. because you've got the experience, you've got site experience and you are now in this position because you are at the top of your game and you are taking them through. You can have 18 students in front of and they all look up to you and when they leave here hopefully they look at you and think "I remember it, M.. told me that". They look upon you like you are a professional person, It's like passports (laughs). So. It's one of em... I had this on my Cert Ed and it's like one of them ... I don't know, what makes people professional everybody is a professional in their own right really. You know, the canteen workers there, are they not professionals in what they do? It's one of them grey areas. There is probably a definite definition of it but I think it's one in which people are trained and qualified then they become professionals at what they preach or practice.</p>	<p>I think professionalism is in our field, it is being a teacher, you are a professional person, you've got professional qualifications and you are looked upon by the students. You are like that role model as such, ..</p>	<p>There is probably a definite definition of it but I think it's one in which people are trained and qualified then they become professionals at what they preach or practice.</p>	

Perception of Professionalism	PFS	Relevant Text and Repeated Ideas (highlighted)	Enacted	Credentialing/Qualifications e.g. Training, Knowledge, Expertise, Experience	Prescribed - externally imposed
	PFSJamie	I suppose it's a tough question because I suppose what springs to mind is someone that is qualified to actually carry out that job, that being said I suppose also it's the conduct of the person and the way the person engages and behaves in that role. So to an extent, it might be wrong to make the judgement that it's somebody who is just qualified and it's really ... it should just be somebody who is capable of effectively fulfilling the role.	that being said I suppose also it's the conduct of the person and the way the person engages and behaves in that role..... it should just be somebody who is capable of effectively fulfilling the role.	I suppose what springs to mind is someone that is qualified to actually carry out that job,	
	PFSChris	em, my view on professionalism is that everybody has to have a level of professionalism which em, kind of fit their job role really, in respect of if somebody works behind a coffee back and delivers coffee or tea and cakes to people, they still have to have a level of professionalism, I don't think you need to be a solicitor to fall under the professionalism banner those carry the professionalism with them because of the status of that but I still think myself as tutor, a cleaner ... we all have a personal standard of professionalism that we should maintain I feel, that should fit what we're doing. I think that helps us to do that job well.	... we all have a personal standard of professionalism that we should maintain I feel, that should fit what we're doing. I think that helps us to do that job well.		

Perception of Professionalism	PFS	Relevant Text and Repeated Ideas (highlighted)	Enacted	Credentialing/Qualifications e.g. Training, Knowledge, Expertise, Experience	Prescribed - externally imposed
	PFSAnna	<p>em ok, from my point of view, I think professionalism then is making sure that I'm prepared, that I know my topic, that I have tried to think of every eventuality that may come out of it. I think it's listening again, active listening and reflective listening, taking on board anything that happens and dealing with it and not being faced or daunted by anything that could happen or that will happen within my teaching.</p>	<p>I think professionalism then is making sure that I'm prepared, that I know my topic, that I have tried to think of every eventuality that may come out of it. I think it's listening again, active listening and reflective listening, taking on board anything that happens and dealing with it and not being faced or daunted by anything that could happen or that will happen within my teaching.</p>		

Perception of Professionalism	PFS	Relevant Text and Repeated Ideas (highlighted)	Enacted	Credentialing/Qualifications e.g. Training, Knowledge, Expertise, Experience	Prescribed externally imposed -
	PFSZak	<p>I think its .. it's very different for the individuals. One thing I did have when we were doing the PGCE is that professionalism is largely a waste of time. Em, I equated it to like reality and realism. Realism is just a pretence of reality. Professionalism is just a pretence of being a professional. Em I think essentially if you are going to be a professional, it's not something that can be dictated in that way. It's got to be something that is inside of you. You've got to be dedicated to it, you've got to have passion for it, em you've got to have a love of it. Em, one needs to get that information to people. Without that, it's just a shallow pretence of what it's trying to be. That is one of the big issues I did have on the PGCE, you can't give people that. You can't construct a shallow professionalism around it because it doesn't .. its just then a hollow shell and its very fragile and doesn't work very well. It's got to be an absolute lovable subject. that is the origins of the word profession its just that you profess, you say that you are, so in order to be a professional teacher, you just have to say that I am a teacher and that's going round back to the origins of it. If it gets too structured then you lose what actually makes you a professional, what makes you want to say I am a teacher. (mumbles).</p>	<p>I think its .. it's very different for the individuals....I think essentially if you are going to be a professional, it's not something that can be dictated in that way. It's got to be something that is inside of you. You've got to be dedicated to it, you've got to have passion for it, em you've got to have a love of it. Em, one needs to get that information to people. Without that, it's just a shallow pretence of what it's trying to be.</p>		

Perception of Professionalism	PFS	Relevant Text and Repeated Ideas (highlighted)	Enacted	Credentialing/Qualifications e.g. Training, Knowledge, Expertise, Experience	Prescribed externally imposed -
	PFSEsther	<p>em, a professional tutor will be someone who is organised who is adaptable, who doesn't complain when things change, because things have constantly been changing; I've been doing this for 5 years and I think if I wasn't open to change I don't think I'll be able to cope with it, especially with changes in funding, the qualification, the eligibility, people we could take on. So you know, being respectful, supporting your colleagues, we work very well as a team, em, so if somebody is stuck with something, you have a look at it with them or if they are short on resources or they needed to invigilate an exam em, we try and help each other out. That's being professional, because you hear of some teams where you know they don't help themselves as much. I can't imagine being in that sort of situation. And obviously being courteous and respectful with your students no matter how challenging they can be, and just being very organised and making sure that you've got the right paperwork, the right resources, you've got your plans in place in case somebody wanted to see them, you know if you didn't have them you'd be in a big mess.</p>	<p>em, a professional tutor will be someone who is organised who is adaptable, who doesn't complain when things change, because things have constantly been changing..... being respectful, supporting your colleagues, we work very well as a team, em, so if somebody is stuck with something, you have a look at it with them or if they are short on resources or they needed to invigilate an exam em, we try and help each other out.....And obviously being courteous and respectful with your students no matter how challenging they can be, and just being very organised and making sure that you've got the right paperwork, the right resources, you've got your plans in place in case somebody wanted to see them, you know if you didn't have them you'd be in a big mess.</p>		

Perception of Professionalism	PFS	Relevant Text and Repeated Ideas (highlighted)	Enacted	Credentialing/Qualifications e.g. Training, Knowledge, Expertise, Experience	Prescribed externally imposed -
	PFSDebbie	<p>I remember this module (both laugh), and it was so stressful to understand it. When we did professionalism, it was quite a debate because it was often seen that you are not a professional if you're in em FE or HE, you are only a professional once you have a certain qualification, it became very muddy the boundaries of what is a professional. Now I would class myself as a professional, because this is my profession (laughs). But, em, I don't know, I think it's determined by a qualification now. my own, ok then right, that's a good question. Who is a professional tutor, I would say then that that's down to validation, so that would come from either your previous experience or your previous qualifications and your qualification in the education environment. So, myself I did the 7407 and then I did the PGCE, so then I would say that validation would qualify me as a professional teacher, because there is a lot of teaching that goes on generally day to day you know but the validation would qualify you.</p>		<p>Qualified - I would say then that that's down to validation, so that would come from either your previous experience or your previous qualifications and your qualification in the education environment. So, myself I did the 7407 and then I did the PGCE, so then I would say that validation would qualify me as a professional teacher, because there is a lot of teaching that goes on generally day to day you know but the validation would qualify you.</p>	