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POLICY AND PRACTICE IN FURTHER EDUCATION: MANAGING THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

GEOFFREY ELLIOTT

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Education
in the Faculty of Social Sciences, School of Education

March 1995

ABSTRACT

The central thesis of this dissertation is that there are limits to the penetration of the economic paradigm into the practice of further education lecturers. The impact of government intervention on the structure and governance of further education colleges, and the restructuring of vocational education, have been both rapid and wide-ranging. However, it is hypothesised that the impact of recent policy initiatives, and ensuing college management practices, has been muted 'at the chalkface' by lecturers' own teaching, organisational and administrative strategies. These strategies are grounded in lecturers' cultural-political orientations and are employed both to protect and preserve existing practices, which are considered by lecturers to be of value, and to deflect what are regarded as negative consequences of educational policy and ensuing managerial decisions taken by senior college managers.

The research focuses upon a detailed case study of a large urban further education college, and upon empirical data, primarily derived from documentary material and semi-structured interviews with a group of creative arts lecturers. The interview data are both selectively quoted in the study itself, and available in a separate volume as a 'case record'. Important initiatives which impact upon the organisation and management of teaching and learning are discussed in relation to their impact at the level of lecturers' practice. Particular attention is paid in the study to the introduction into the college of formal quality assurance systems, and the Training and Development Lead Body standards for accrediting lecturers' assessment practice. These are considered as examples of the importation of business practices, and the concomitant rise of a culture of 'managerialism', within the further education sector. Whilst the lecturers in this study were supportive of many aspects of the changes affecting FE, including incorporation and the external review and evaluation of their practice, elements of the managerialist culture are found to contrast sharply with lecturers' support for reflective practice and commitment to a student-centred pedagogy. Implications for the theory and practice of management, and the making and implementation of educational policy, are drawn from the qualitative research methodology and the substantive findings of the study itself.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the expertise, advice and friendship of my Dissertation Adviser, Dr Michael Crossley.

I am also grateful for the insights and ongoing counsel freely offered by the Ed.D Programme Co-ordinator, Dr Valerie Hall, and by the Module Tutors.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Mr Don Withnall, Director of Academic Development, and other colleagues at Worcester College of Higher Education, for their support and enthusiasm for research in general, and my personal effort in particular.

To the interviewees who willingly gave of their time, entrusted me with their confidence, and shared with me their reflective practice, my sincere thanks and appreciation.

In common with many academics I share a debt of gratitude to the many students I have taught who have demonstrated the potential of collaborative and co-intentional models of learning and teaching.

I shall miss the opportunities to share experiences and to reflect on practice with fellow Ed.D participants; there remain fond memories of the many lively debates and arguments carried on in UG11 and elsewhere.

The School of Education library staff have been enormously helpful in offering specialist advice and in supporting part-time study in many practical ways.

A special thank you to my mother and father for their unstinting love and encouragement.

I must make mention of my two fine sons, Sam and Joe, for not disturbing daddy on the numerous occasions when he was working in his study.

And finally, to my wife Trudi, for her enduring love and forbearance, I am deeply grateful.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I certify that this dissertation is my own work and that it has not been previously submitted for any other university degree.

Signed .... Date March 28th 1995

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

Background and scope of the study

The Further Education (FE) sector is undoubtedly a significant destination for government resources. In 1993-4 £2 billion was spent on educational provision for three million students in 464 colleges in the sector throughout England and Wales. Given its size, its budget, and the range of provision, it is perhaps not surprising that the FE sector has consistently been characterised in the education management literature as one of high diversity and complexity (eg Pratley 1980, Baker 1989, Gray 1992). In the 1970s, the range of available FE provision was described as a "maze" (Fowler 1973). In the 1980s, Twyman (1985: 329-30) depicted the FE sector as "in the main, one of fragmentation, confusion, complexity and competition". In the 1990s, complexity remains a key characteristic of the sector. Responsibility for FE has in recent years been shared between the government Education and Employment Departments, described by Waitt (Ed. 1980: 207) as a "complex and confused situation".

The confusion may well have been fuelled in part by the political necessity to impose a succession of different employment training schemes in response to the growing

youth unemployment of the 1970s. The various schemes, including Youth Opportunity Schemes and Youth Training Schemes, followed the reorganisation of vocational and industrial training within the Employment and Training Act 1973, which also set up the Manpower Services Commission, which itself funded a considerable amount of FE provision.

It is important to recognise the theme of complexity in the sector, since it has provided an impetus for the most recent educational reforms to have affected FE. Vocational education and training (VET) in the UK has a chequered history. There have evolved some 600 accrediting and awarding bodies which award about 6000 different qualifications to students on vocational courses. The three major awarding bodies are City and Guilds, Royal Society of Arts, and the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC), whose qualifications were separately developed and differently structured to each other, and non-interlocking. The system was described in the FE Staff College report on the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) as "a jungle of qualifications" (Hall 1987). The diversity of provision, the inferior status of vocational qualifications compared with the 'A' level 'gold standard', and the low proportion of qualified people in the workforce when compared with some economic competitors, combined to prompt government to act.

In April 1985, the government set up a working group, the Review of Vocational Qualifications, to review the whole range of vocational qualifications in England and Wales, and "to recommend a structure which was relevant, comprehensive and accessible, which recognised competence and was cost effective" (Deville 1987, p. 10). The key outcomes of the working group were the setting up of the NCVQ to address the lack of coherence which was widely felt to characterise VET, and the recommendation of the development of a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) framework, designed and implemented by the NCVQ. The General National

Vocational Qualification (GNVQ), was rapidly developed, piloted, and has now taken a firm hold (with 1/4 million registered students in 1994-5) in FE colleges and an increasing number of schools.

Closely related to the desire to reduce diversity in VET was the desire to increase efficiency within the sector. The FE provisions contained within the 1988 Education Reform Act (1988 ERA) (DES 1988a) reflected the government's view of the direction FE should take, and the prevailing political climate which sought less local government control and more business involvement in education. The seminal report, *Managing Colleges Efficiently* (DES 1987), proposed a radical agenda for colleges, which included applying performance indicators, most notably the staff-student ratio, to assess college efficiency, and the application of unit costing as an efficiency factor.

The 1988 ERA also established a new quango, the Polytechnic and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC[1]), which took responsibility for the funding of non-university HE institutions (HEIs) away from local authorities. From the start the PCFC signalled its intention to improve efficiency in the HE sector, and encourage entrepreneuralism (Maclure 1992: 99). The same funding model, presumably for similar reasons, was applied to the FE sector four years later, when the Further and Higher Education (FHE) Act (DES 1992) set up the Further Education Funding Council for England (FEFCE) and took the 'free market' view of educational institutions to its logical conclusion by giving FE colleges corporate status. Direct comparisons between the government's intentions for the FE and HE sectors with respect to funding, control and political direction became even easier to draw after the appointment of the Director of the PCFC, who had led that body through its formative period, as Director of the FEFCE. In many respects, the FEFCE has

[1] The PCFC has since been replaced by a new quango, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

mirrored the PCFC in its policies, including the imposition of a 'clawback' of funding if colleges failed to meet funding targets or persuade staff to sign new contracts, the introduction of a competitive bidding system for growth in student numbers, and a range of quantitative performance indicators.

Despite changes in the structure and funding of the FE sector, following incorporation, diversity remained a significant feature. Governing bodies were advised that the change in status of colleges to corporate institutions would bring about "a new form of independence, a new maturity, which brings with it new rights, duties and responsibilities" (Cuthbert 1988:5). FE college principals and governors found themselves in a highly competitive market-led business. Colleges were required to bid for funding for work-related FE courses to the Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs): quangos with a majority of business representatives appointed to their boards of directors. New vocational qualifications, requiring different funding, resourcing and organisational arrangements, were introduced to accompany existing ones. Alongside the various government sponsored training schemes, and the vast number of vocational qualifications and courses, colleges provided a significant number of non-vocational and pre-vocational full-time and part-time courses, a range of special needs programmes, and specialist provision for mature students including Access to Higher Education, Foundation Year, Return to Learn, and Learning for Work courses. In addition, an increasing amount of HE work has been located within FE colleges, with the active encouragement of the HE sector and, until recently, of the government.

These introductory comments provide the context for two complementary ideas. First, that the market orientation of the FE sector came about gradually, rather than suddenly and unexpectedly, as is often implied in the literature. The multiplicity of bodies with the potential to influence the FE curriculum - including government,

LEAs, FEFCE, TECs, NCVQ, Awarding Bodies, students, parents, lecturers, college managers, governors, other educational sectors - each played a part in contributing to an enduring complexity. The influence of factors usually associated with the market in education, including performance indicators, accountability, and vocationalism, have been key features of the FE sector since the mid 1980s, and arguably for much longer than that. The 1992 FHE Act is often described by commentators as revolutionary, in that it is assumed, of itself, to have brought about a shift from a democratic to a market model of FE. This study suggests that, for practitioners at least, the development of a market-led conception of FE was evolutionary, and that its antecedents can be found in the broad collectivity of reforms across all educational sectors brought about by preceding government legislation, associated government sponsored reports, and an increasing inclination within the sector itself to provide a responsive service to a wide range of customers and clients (Theodossin 1989). The FE curriculum, in particular the introduction of the NCVQ framework, has been a particular focus of market demands as specified by the NCVQ employer Lead Bodies, the TECs, and other employer interest groups.

The second idea follows from the first. It is commonly assumed that the incorporation of FE has brought about major changes in the working practices of lecturers. However, it appeared to the writer, working with lecturers in the FE sector, that they had often developed a range of strategies to thwart attempts to impose external systemic and specific changes perceived to be at variance with their core values. In other words, lecturers did not seem to respond unthinkingly to externally imposed new curricula or administrative tasks. As key stakeholders (Harvey et al 1992) in the educational institution and system they seemed to assess and evaluate proposed changes and innovations against a benchmark described by their experience and their practice. Furthermore, and crucially, they played a decisive part in filtering and adapting externally generated reform and innovation.

A key influence upon lecturers' practice appeared to be their orientation towards their students and their commitment to a student-centred style of teaching which took for granted:-

- that lecturers and students worked together as equal participants in the educational process
- the relevance of learning to the students' needs as well as vocational contexts
- the centrality within the curriculum of opportunities for the development of a questioning, critical, active intelligence in students.

The evidence of the writer's personal experience as a lecturer in the FE sector, conversations with colleagues, discussions with other practitioners, some previous academic work in the field, and the evidence of the data reported in this study, supports a perspective which points to the possibility of tensions between policy and practice in FE; between the reality and rhetoric of policy and its implementation. This tension is, in part, a consequence of the often contrasting and contradictory demands on, and expectations of, those who work in a complex and changing FE sector. These demands include political pressure, through the National Targets for Education and Training (NTETS), for 16 - 19 participation and achievement rates to match those of other European countries; calls by the FEFCE for increased efficiency and inspection arrangements designed to give greater accountability; action by college managers to introduce Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies, including the imposition of the new College Employers' Forum (CEF) 'professional contract' for FE lecturers; the radical curriculum reforms of the NCVQ; and the everyday

engagement of lecturers, support staff and students in varied and flexible teaching and learning processes. It is the tension between these influences and the ideological orientation of FE lecturers which has provided the theme for this dissertation, and which provides the focus for the research problem described in the ensuing section.

The external demands experienced by the lecturers in this study were felt by them to be imposed by a Senior Management Team (SMT) which was responding to governmental pressure to implement wide ranging reforms, many of which were designed to increase efficiency and meet quantitative performance indicators. The cumulative effect of reforms of the structure and curriculum of the sector has been, it is argued, to create contradictory and oppositional forces within FE. In the case study college this was evidenced by a pervasive market ideology, willingly imposed by an SMT who embraced a managerialist culture, and actively resisted by lecturers who held an alternative and competing democratic ideology underpinned by a commitment to a student-centred pedagogic culture.

The lecturers' alternative world view led them to voice strong criticism of government policies which they widely saw as imposing an inappropriate market ideology upon educational practice. At the same time, however, they well understood the structural and system demands upon the college posed by incorporation, and were ready to acknowledge the need for realistic, efficient and effective management strategies which were required to ensure survival in an increasingly competitive market.

This dissertation explores these issues through an investigation of the ways in which policy changes have impacted on the teaching and organisational strategies of creative arts lecturers in one division of an incorporated FE college in England. The study reports and analyses data drawn chiefly from semi-structured interviews with

the lecturers, discusses the issues arising, develops a theoretical framework which characterises lecturers' practices as loosely-coupled to policy shifts at both government and college level, and highlights the significance of the findings for educational management studies.

The research problem

There is a growing tendency for studies, reports and academic papers on FE to reflect a market-led paradigm. A limitation of such work is that it assumes an economic determinism which, in the writer's experience, ill fits with FE lecturers' own interpretations of their work and the policy context in which that work is carried out.

The economic market model is part of a broad-based theoretical and practical development which is widely acknowledged to have had a pervasive influence upon policy analysis, policy making and management generally. It is a common assertion within the FE literature that colleges have changed radically in response to external market forces and in light of government policy, including the incorporation legislation, the setting up of the FEFCE, the emergence of the TECs as major stakeholders in training, and the standardisation of vocational accreditation through NVQs and GNVQs.

However, personal experience and research suggest that the impact of educational policy upon managers and lecturers is not the same, and that the impact at the practitioner level may well be more muted than might be expected. An earlier small-

scale participant research study by the writer (Elliott 1994a) reports several strategies adopted by FE lecturers across three departments in one FE college. Set against the background of the radical innovations proposed by the FHE Act it was found that in the face of multiple changes in educational and institutional policies, lecturers commonly persisted in following tried and tested strategies when it came to a key arena of their practice - the teaching and learning process. Other strategies, including more overt resistance, adaptation and co-optation were found to be employed by lecturers. The present study picks up and develops these themes within the post-1992 FE policy context, and questions to what extent FE lecturers' practice is informed by core values, and how those values are sustained in a market-led context.

The dissertation topic was steered by the view - grounded in personal experience - that many main grade and senior lecturers are uncommitted to the philosophy of market forces in education and to the implementation of managerialist policies which are seen to be derived from such a philosophy. This is not to say that they are idealists - many have experience of working in industry and other settings, and recognise the importance of getting the business side right. At the same time, they work in a vocational training environment, which calls upon them to deliver NTETS which are themselves predicated upon a market model (Elliott 1994b). This study therefore maps the territory where lecturers' reported educational values are held to be in tension with the values which underpin market-driven educational reforms, and the managerial implementation of such policies. The concern on quality, and the NCVQ inspired accreditation of lecturers' assessment practice, are indicative and significant examples of this tension between values. The quality assurance of learning and teaching processes, and the nature and focus of assessment practice, are persistent and powerful areas of contestation within FE, as elsewhere, and represent, for many lecturers, a key site of the battle between competing definitions of what is worthwhile and important in education.

Aims

In light of the structural and systemic changes which are variously impacting upon colleges from outside, and which they are themselves initiating, the study aims:

1 to review critically government policy initiatives for the FE sector and to explore:

  1.1 the phenomenon of a market-led orientation in FE

  1.2 the responses of college managers and lecturers to a market model of FE, viewed from the lecturers' standpoint

2 to examine, in light of trends in FE policy and practice, the relevance, to lecturers' own accounts, of the literature on:

  2.1 the creation of a market in education by the government

  2.2 perspectives on FE lecturers' practice

3 to apply qualitative research methods in a study of educational policy and practice in the FE sector, and evaluate their potential for management studies

4 to document and access lecturers' understandings and interpretations of the policy initiatives in one FE college and what they understand these mean for their practice

5 to develop a critique of the impact of FE policy in the light of the review of the international literature and the analysis of fieldwork data

6 to explore the broader theoretical implications which arise from the study

Rationale

The topic has current importance in the light of the number and range of educational policy initiatives, introduced across all educational sectors in the UK during the 1980s and 1990s. These initiatives are an expression of an economic paradigm that has legitimated a market forces ideology and generated the greater part of educational policy embodied in the 1988 ERA. Recent educational legislation has been criticised for contributing in a significant way to a deskilled, deprofessionalised and demotivated teaching and lecturing workforce (Lawn 1989). At the same time a new culture is gaining ground within the incorporated FE sector - one which has its origins in business and industry, and which prioritises market values and quantitative indicators of performance and evaluation. Evidence of the managerialist direction and intention of this culture can be seen in the worsening of lecturers' conditions of service proposed within their Colleges Employers' Forum (CEF) 'professional contract' (NATFHE 1994a; Uttley 1994), and in the casualisation of part-time lecturers brought about by the proposed new 'College Lecturing Services' Agency, offering college managers a central pool of lecturers at cut-price rates (Charter 1995). It is also apparent in the rash of appointments to college senior management teams of accountants, personnel directors and estates managers, and in the loading of governing bodies with industrial nominees and representatives. If these trends

represent a policy shift towards an increased market-led orientation and a managerialist culture, it is highly relevant to the prospects of the FE sector in the context of a government growth target of 25% over the three years 1993-96, to find out how such policy is being translated into practice by FE lecturers, and to explore the organisational strategies which might impact positively or negatively upon the process of managing change in newly incorporated colleges.

It is essential for all involved in FE - lecturers, managers, employers, administrators, teacher-educators, researchers, policy analysts and policy makers - to be aware of the interrelationship between educational policies and administration on the one hand, and practice at the level of teaching and learning on the other (Shipman 1990: 55-62). Teaching and learning is a critical dimension of lecturers' practice, and it is therefore important to examine how lecturers view their interaction with students and the strategies they use to preserve good practice in the face of pressures for change. Research of this nature is under-represented in the FE literature. Despite a wealth of policy initiatives and official documentation with respect to the FE sector, there is a dearth of literature which directly addresses the impact of policy upon FE lecturers' practice. It has generally been assumed that what Shipman (1990: 62) calls "linear implementation of top-down decisions" has taken place. This study therefore attempts to break new ground by examining how lecturers manage change in the political-cultural context of incorporation, and generating new FE-located theory.

One of the most significant changes to affect the FE sector in recent years is related to the institutional status of all colleges following their incorporation in April 1993. From this date, LEAs no longer had responsibility for the sector, and all colleges by statute became incorporated bodies with charitable status and thus responsible for their own administrative, financial, legal and personnel affairs. Colleges are now principally funded directly by the FEFCE, and the government has maintained

forcefully that incorporation has given colleges greater freedom to determine how to respond to the country's education and training needs. This has given rise to a paradox. The mass of centralised curriculum reforms in the school sector (notably those concerning the imposition of the National Curriculum and Assessment framework) have been matched in FE by a flood of centralised curricular innovation in the wake of the RVQ in 1985. The establishment of the NVQ framework was as interventionist, comprehensive and radical in ambition and scope for FE as the National Curriculum and Assessment was for the school sector.

A major issue, therefore, is to address the paradox of simultaneous movements towards centralisation and autonomy. The thrust of present government policy is that massive intervention leads to greater freedom in the sense that colleges are free to be subject to the vagaries of market forces. But, as Ball (1993b) has pointed out, one of the consequences of such a view of education is that it tends to underestimate the impact of pressure towards the maximisation of income, at the expense of the quality of the teaching and learning process. In order to survive in the new competitive environment, colleges may have little choice but to constrain spending and reduce their unit costs, in order to remain competitive and to avoid insolvency in the face of a funding mechanism committed to reducing the unit of resource. Colleges' freedom is thus circumscribed by a highly constrained and determined education and training policy, tied into NTETS , which are centrally determined and funded.

The relationship between the concepts of centralisation and autonomy as they impact upon colleges and lecturers needs to be explored in order to formulate a defensible theoretical framework within which each can be explained. Skilbeck's (1990: 18) idea of a two-way power shift, which he characterises as "concentration of policy and dispersion of responsibility for action", will be applied to FE policy and practice, by ascertaining to what extent lecturers are aware of the nature of the issues

they are caught up in, how they articulate the problems, and what strategies they report to address / resolve the tensions therein.

To fail to take into account the perceptions and practices of practitioners within the educational system in question is to run the risk of becoming confused and misled by policy rhetoric and managerialism, and of underestimating the importance of ambiguity in educational organisations (Cohen and March 1974). There are many signs that policy in the FE sector is driven by ideologies that are neither informed by the understandings of practitioners, nor by a theoretical framework which recognises the centrality and values orientation of the teaching and learning process. The imposition and impact of formal quality assurance systems in FE, and the Training and Development Lead Body (TDLB) assessor awards for lecturers, are highlighted in this study as significant and indicative examples of externally imposed ideologically-driven initiatives which the various stakeholders involved define and interpret differentially.

The topic is a significant one for college managers. If colleges wish to alter lecturers' conditions of service and their teaching practices as a response to new markets, varying opportunities and changes in funding, it is important to be clear about lecturers' attitudes to policy initiatives, change strategies and the implementation of innovations. Employers need to understand under what conditions lecturers are able and willing to modify and change their practices, and what factors affect this process.

It has been predicted by the Director of the FEFCE (Stubbs 1992) that there will be a shake out of the sector over the next few years (THES 1993: 1), and that only the colleges who can effectively manage their resources will survive. The present study has the potential to inform college managements about the factors that will need to be

taken into account in bringing about the successful management of change with respect to existing practice. The study points to some significant potential areas of common ground between lecturers and managers on some significant and substantive issues, but there is evidence that poor communication and alternative and competing priorities may have diverted attention away from shared perceptions and fuelled oppositional cultures. Lecturer appraisal is one area where it is vital that college managers acquire useful and usable information about the issues which matter to lecturers, their teaching practices, and the ways in which they organise their work. However, the extent to which college managers do in practice make use of qualitative information in order to control, predict and manage successful change, particularly real change in teaching and learning, is an open question (Elliott and Crossley 1994) which is addressed in Chapter Six.

The study is designed to enable implications for policy studies to be identified and discussed, by focusing attention upon the limitations of existing practice, which often takes a limiting and deterministic view of the impact of educational policy upon organisational behaviour in FE colleges. The importance of adequate feedback mechanisms which re-inform policy makers, like those indicated by Adelman (1989: 179-80), is confirmed by the study.

The dissertation topic is consistent with the writer's personal experience in higher and further education, and complements his previous work on educational policy analysis, FE, management of change, and reflective practice.

Finally, it is argued that it is important for educational managers in FE to be more aware of the valuable role that qualitative research methodologies can play in helping them to understand their personnel and their colleges as organisations. Through such studies, the management process can be better informed, adding to, but not

replacing, information gained by quantitative survey methods; more management decisions can be evaluated at the level of action; and a self-critical model of educational management and educational decision-making can be facilitated.

Theoretical orientation

The primary theoretical orientation of this study is that it :

- uses a phenomenological qualitative research perspective in order to
- explore the dynamic of the relationship between educational policy and practice with a view to
- generating a grounded FE-located theory of lecturing as reflective practice.

The model of lecturing as reflective practice affords a comprehensive description and explanation of what lecturers do. Part of its usefulness is that it becomes possible to reconcile, at a theoretical and at a practical level, the impact of the socio-political context within which lecturing takes place, with the notion of lecturing as an activity essentially concerned with core values, requiring participation and partnership between lecturers and students in the educative process.

The theoretical orientation of this research is derived from two major sources:

1. International research literature exploring aspects of reflective practice
2. Personal experience and previous research

These sources are described and integrated in the next Chapter.

Methodology overview

An early decision was taken to carry out participant research within an interpretive theoretical orientation. There were three main reasons for the chosen approach:

1. The theoretical orientation of the study is one which uses "as a basic validity criterion the immediate and local meanings of actions, as defined from the actors' point of view" (Erikson 1986). This framework underpins the substantive focus of the research, which is lecturers' interpretations of policy and practice in FE.

2. The literature suggests that there is a greater prospect of addressing the subtle and complex issues underlying the research problem by investigating a situation with which the writer was thoroughly familiar as a participant.

3. Opportunity was also a factor. The existing relationship and rapport which the writer had developed with colleagues offered an opportunity to carry out in-depth investigation of lecturers' perspectives upon their work situation. This may not have been possible or practicable in a 'strange' setting.

Some limitations of the participant researcher model are acknowledged in Chapter Three (See Hockey 1993 for a full discussion of this topic). As with all methods, there is a balance of strengths and weaknesses which must be weighed. However, the advantage of gaining access to data not available to non-participants weighed heavily in favour of the chosen approach (Adler and Adler 1987).

The primary sources of data were the critical review of the literature, participant research in the case study college, the writer's own reflective practice, transcripts of

informal and semi-structured interviews with lecturers which comprise a case record, national policy and college documents, and research field notes.

An important methodological principle has been to avoid preconceived design by maintaining an open stance towards the data, data analysis and theory generation as the research has progressed. As Glaser and Strauss (1967) put it:

> *Generating a theory from data means that most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research*
>
> (1967: 34).

As categories and concepts have become progressively sharpened and formalised, insights gained in the earlier phase of the study have been employed progressively to focus questioning of respondents. Particular issues and concerns highlighted by lecturers themselves have in this way been explored in depth, and have informed the data collection process. The qualitative interview is particularly well suited to this task. An advantage of this approach is that it can help to ensure that the categories and codes allocated by the writer were meaningful to, and significant for, the respondents.

This approach to presenting and analysing the data was informed by the emerging categories which appeared to underpin what the lecturers were saying about life in college. The notion that there existed, within the case study college, different, coexisting but competing, shared cultures, was not significantly foreshadowed, but emerged gradually from the analysis of the fieldwork data. The extent to which the lecturers were cognisant of the priorities of management and the way in which they conceived of the articulation of their own practice with business priorities, also emerged during the fieldwork phase of the study. Johnson et al (1994) in their study of teachers' views on school discipline, have recently drawn attention to the

importance of the "social and ideological dimensions of teachers' thinking. . . " (1994: 264); this study confirms the centrality of lecturers' perspectives for an understanding of educational practice and the management of educational change. The existence of tensions between the world views and institutional realities of lecturers and managers signalled the need to develop a socio-political theoretical framework which could take account of the tensions and articulations between the culture of lecturers and managers, and provide an explanation for their persistence. The precise form which these differing perspectives take, and the proposed analytical framework within which they can be interpreted, is further explored in Chapters Four and Five respectively.

Structure of the dissertation

An overview of key issues which stimulated and organised the study is presented in this Chapter. The next Chapter critically reviews the literature which provided a theoretical orientation for the research and sensitised the writer to key aspects of lecturers' orientations to their work. Chapter Three discusses the research methodology employed, and acknowledges the limitations of the study. Chapter Four presents data derived from the the interview transcripts, together with documentary material, and is organised around sub-themes which emerged during the period that the writer was a participant researcher in the case study college; Chapter Five picks up these sub-themes, integrates and contextualises them within wider substantive and theoretical issues. Chapter Six draws out some implications of the study for lecturers and managers in FE, and comments upon the potential of qualitative methods for informing management studies and development. A full list of references cited is provided. The case record, comprising edited transcripts of the interview data, is a separate volume, available to researchers by request to the writer.

Chapter Two

CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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A rationale and framework for the literature review

The primary focus of this study is upon the disjuncture between the reported effects of a developing government market-based education policy for FE and the practice of FE lecturers. It is held that a consequence of tension between the government marketisation of education, and FE lecturers' alignment with a different values orientation, is the creation of a "site of struggle" (Althusser 1971: 140) within FE colleges and the FE sector as a whole. It is the potential for contextualising a theoretical framework within which this tension can be explained which is the guiding principle behind the literature which is reviewed here. The two themes which are explored are:

1 The phenomenon of a market in education

2 Perspectives on the practice of FE lecturing.

It is the inter-relationship between these two themes which the literature review attempts to draw out.

The topic of this dissertation could, in the abstract, lend itself to a number of

The primary rationale and criterion, therefore, for the selection of the literature reviewed in this Chapter, is that it uses a theoretical perspective on FE which has not been previously applied, whilst at the same time identifying linkages where appropriate with established perspectives.

The phenomenon of a market in education

The tension between individual values and market policies

The trend in recent years towards a radical conservative market orientation in education policy has been well documented (Ball and Bowe 1991; Simkins et al 1992; Ball 1990, 1993a, 1993b), and has been correctly identified as part of a broader movement in British government "of which the efficiency strategy, decentralisation, performance monitoring, management information systems and devolved accountability to executive agencies are among the main pillars" (Raab 1991), and as part of "Europe and worldwide manifestations of the market, responsiveness, entrepreneuralism and corporatism" (Parkes 1991: 41). Hopkins (1991) has pointed out the pressures on educational institutions created by "seemingly contradictory pressures for centralisation (ie increasing government control over policy and direction) on the one hand, and de-centralisation (ie more responsibility for implementation, resource management and evaluation at the local level) on the other" (1991: 1).

Dale (1989) has suggested that the broad consensus (or more accurately, in his terms, 'settlement') which followed the 1944 Education Act, and then the period around the Great Debate in the mid 70s, broke down with the 1988 ERA, and the introduction of explicitly consumerist policies, dominated by the free market and

individualistic impulses. McNay and Ozga (1985) and Lawton (1992) have also noted this trend. White and Crump (1993) have documented the extent to which education policies, developed during the 1980s and 1990s, were ideologically removed from former policies which were the outcome of a pluralistic system of policy making in which teachers, the unions and the LEAs played the major role (1993:421).

Riseborough (1994: 85) describes this "wholesale reconstruction" which has reshaped the structural forms, curricular, pedagogical and evaluative contents of schooling during the term of office of the present government. Within the FE sector there has been a marked upsurge in instrumentalist, highly specified activity, such as training for work, and the use of competence testing, and quantitative performance criteria and evidence indicators (Elliott and Crossley 1994). Measuring college performance had long been a hit-and-miss affair (Latcham and Birch 1985) in the hands of individual colleges and LEAs. The Department of Education and Science report *Managing Colleges Efficiently* (DES 1987) was an important milestone which shaped in large measure the planning framework required of FE Colleges in the 1988 ERA, and introduced specific performance indicators required of all colleges (although still "rudimentary" [Sallis 1992]), most notably the staff-student ratio (SSR) and unit costing. Following the 1992 FHE Act, which brought about FE incorporation and the setting up of the FEFC, the measurement of college performance has become a highly refined operation, upon which funding levels are dependent (FEFC 1992, 1993b). Market principles are being applied to guidance services for young people through competitive tendering for careers service contracts (Watts 1993). NCVQ national standards for Customer Service are starting to be introduced for lecturing staff in some FE Colleges (Collins 1993). The education press is replete with features with titles such as "Academics attack market madness" (Dean 1993: 2). Government pronouncements are unambiguous in identifying the

business orientation that is required of FE colleges:

> *There is nothing incompatible between education and business - each can enhance the other since both worlds have common interests. Colleges are in the market place and the successful ones can call the tune. They know they have no captive clientele and must use the language of business for business - in order to get business.*
>
> (Boswell 1994)

Bowe and Ball, (1992) in their analysis of the relationship between education, values and the market culture, make it clear that the market "celebrates the superiority of commercial planning and commercial purposes and forms of organisation against those of public service and social welfare" (1992: 53).

One of the most contentious issues to have surfaced as a direct consequence of conceiving of education as a market is the concern with supposedly 'declining standards' (Bowe and Ball 1992; Pring 1992). The preoccupation at all levels of policy formulation with 'quality assurance' is an obvious manifestation of a market ideology, since the overwhelming concern is with quantitative performance indicators which are derived from industry (Elliott 1993; Holmes 1993), and which lead to an inevitable bureaucratisation of education (Pring 1992; McElwee 1992) and encourage a drift towards creeping "managerialism" (Becher and Kogan 1992; Merleau-Ponty 1993).

West-Burnham (1992) is a strong advocate of the introduction of formal quality systems into educational institutions, yet he freely acknowledges the dissonance between such institutions and the industrial / commercial sector within which such quality systems were developed. He calls it "inappropriate and foolish to propose that what worked for Japanese industry is appropriate for British industry let alone British schools" (1992: 14). The same point is made by the FEFC in their Quality Assessment Circular 93/28 (FEFC 1993: 7).

Many working in FE feel that the sector has mislaid its sense of direction, that meaning and coherence have been rooted out by a new market-orientated philosophy (Hyland 1992a). What has been lost is what Walsh (1993) calls "the strategic relationship of education with other practices, its foundational complicity with scholarship and the arts, working life, citizenship and politics, growing up and personal relationships, the life of the spirit, etc." (1993: 190). This tendency has prompted a vocal backlash in the literature, which is underpinned by an orientation towards the core values of teaching and learning. The contemporary re-emergence of the notion of a 'learning society' (Husen 1974) is consistent with the theoretical orientation underpinning the work of Stenhouse (1979a), who consistently privileged the process of education over the extrinsic outcomes of the education process. This approach emphasises attributes such as personal development and participatory democracy, which are dependent upon "a new moral and political order" (Ranson 1992:79).

Notions of education as a democratic endeavour, and the idea of ascribing a moral and ethical core values orientation to lecturing, may not be thought appropriate to FE colleges, due to their association with business and training, and the instrumentalist character of the employer-led qualifications which they offer. And as argued elsewhere (Elliott and Hall 1994), institutional autonomy is challenged both through the centralising tendency of central government policy towards FE, and also through the increasingly widespread adoption and imposition of HRM policies and procedures for FE lecturing staff, which reinterpret their value as "resourceful humans" (Bottery 1992: 6).

It is important, however, not to assume that because there is a long tradition of industrial and commercial orientation within FE, that there is no prospect of an

alternative values orientation taking hold. Many innovatory learning strategies and curriculum developments, which eschew market values, have been nurtured and developed from within the FE sector which has been described as "an appendage of the factory " (Brook 1970: 183). Hyland (1994), for example, has recently highlighted the strong tradition of experiential learning methods in FE, and signalled how these conflict with the requirements and stipulations of the competence-based NCVQ qualifications framework.

It is vital, therefore, not to assume that only market-led values orientations are possible within FE colleges. Whilst the influence of the market upon the FE sector is no doubt strong, as shown in this study, it is not deterministic, and it is important to point out that seldom, if ever, are policies mechanistically translated into practice. The interaction between the two is complex, and cannot be explained within a uni-dimensional model of policy and practice which assumes that policies will automatically and unproblematically become implemented; a multi-level model is required (Bowe and Ball 1992: 19-23) in order to highlight both the control and unitarist assumptions of HRM (Beaumont 1992: 33) and other managerialist systems, and the potential for multiple stakeholder perspectives.

Policy, culture and human intervention: a multi-level model

The model of policy formulation and implementation developed by Bowe and Ball (1992) proposes the adoption of a multi-level approach to policy analysis. They suggest a cycle of mutual dependence between the contexts of influence, text production and practice. One benefit of such a model is that it can highlight the area of discrepancy which may exist between the ideological intentions of policy makers (shaped by interest and lobby groups), the policy text itself, and the level of

implementation where adaptation of policy can take place according to the values of those who operate at the local or institutional level. As they point out, "policy is not simply received and implemented within this arena (of practice) rather it is subject to interpretation and then 'recreated' " (1992: 22).

Whilst the overtly political character of the policy-making process has been forcefully argued (Apple 1989; Dale 1989), over-deterministic accounts consistently underplay the influence of the individual and the institutional context, in highlighting the macro-political context.

A multi-level approach is supported by Jenkins (1978) who argues that the complexity of the political arena demands that "any analysis of policy and the policy process can only be achieved through the linking of a number of differing perspectives" (1978:21).

The importance of taking multiple perspectives into account is similarly endorsed by Apple's (1989) view that in order to understand the role of ideology, and the state in educational policy, it is necessary to "focus on what actually happens in schools, on the agency of teachers and students, on how policies are actually made in the political area, and on what the contradicting tensions are in the reality of schools" (1989:2).

Power (1992) concurs that it is necessary for policy analysis to embrace "what goes on inside the school gates" (1992:499). Similarly Bines (1992) has pointed out that experience, within the schools sector, "of implementing the National Curriculum and LMS suggests that our educational system may still be impervious to the more extreme aspects of government ideology; the same may yet be true of post-compulsory education" (1992:116). Huberman (1973:42) has also emphasised the "slow diffusion and low durability" of changes within the education system. Hall

and Wallace (1993:112) have demonstrated how other factors, such as demographics, can limit the penetration of central government policy at the local level. Riseborough (1994) in his ethnographic interview study of two teachers, in an urban working class secondary school, highlights the way in which the influence of the school context bears upon policy in practice:

> *. . . schooling is not epiphenomenal to the economy and polity in which policy-in-practice can be simply 'read off' from the prescriptions made by the Captains of Industry and the City, the promulgations of educational quangos or the Secretary of State for Education, etc. In-school mediations, as described, are 'value-added' social constructions of reality which are not crudely reducible to economic retrenchment and state power. The state may set the political and educational agendas but this does not mechanistically determine the lived experience of institutional life.*
>
> (1994: 100)

This study, therefore, is informed by a multi-level approach which reflects and gives due emphasis to the complex interrelationship that exists between government intentions, managerial strategies, and the impact of FE policy upon the organisation of teaching and learning in an FE college. To understand policy effects, the differing perspectives of the participants in educational institutions need to be taken fully into account, in order to explore what Fullan (1991: 32) calls "the importance and meaning of the subjective reality of change". Calling to mind the model elaborated by Getzels and Guba (1957), the starting point of this process is that of recognition of the ideographic dimension, that is, the existence of the diverse understandings, beliefs and expectations held by staff in the institution.

Competing visions and conflicting cultures have been demonstrated to be important potential constraints to the successful management of change (Leithwood and Jantzi 1990: 22). A key theme of management studies is the central place of culture in determining organisational excellence:

> *Without exception, the dominance and coherence of culture proved to be an*

essential quality of the excellent companies . . . . In these companies, people way down the line know what they are supposed to do in most situations because the handful of guiding values is crystal clear.

(Peters and Waterman 1982:6)

The problem, however, for FE colleges is that the cultural *sine qua non* is unclear. A clear lesson to be learnt from work on the management of educational organisations is that cultural change cannot be imposed top down. The work of Cohen and March (1974) has been influential in suggesting that US post-compulsory educational institutions are organised anarchies, one of the main characteristics of which is problematic goals, or "a variety of inconsistent and ill-defined preferences" (1974: 109). They make the crucial point that educational organisations can only be managed if managers understand that "Although a college or university operates within the metaphor of a political system or a hierarchical bureaucracy, the actual operation of either is considerably attenuated by the ambiguity of college goals, by the lack of clarity in educational technology, and by the transient character of many participants" (1974: 112).

Astuto and Clark (1986) in summarising the lessons of work on the management of educational institutions draw out an important implication for the present study. They conclude that effective educational managers should concentrate on developing their ability to work with culture, rather than attempting to create it. This strategy acknowledges the existence of multiple cultures, and highlights that some cultural elements may be counter-productive to management intentions. They urge the manager to focus upon the interpretations of organisational participants (1986: 63). This viewpoint closely follows that of Weick (1982) whose loose coupling model of educational organisations warns managers against adopting hyper-rationalist solutions:

. . . managers need to attend particularly to the issues of distinction (culture)

and empowerment (participation) to capture the strength of their environment and avoid its weaknesses.

(1982: 675)

Effective management therefore requires that full account is taken of organisational cultures as expressions of closely held and widely shared value systems (Deal and Kennedy 1982; Firestone and Corbett 1988), since "the enactment and consequences of a change strategy are contingent on these contextual characteristics" (Firestone and Corbett 1988: 333). To neglect the existence of different and various cultures of teaching (Feiman-Nemser and Floden 1986) reduces the likelihood of progress towards the achievement of any common organisational culture and vision. Nor can there be any reasonable expectation of successful management of change (cp. Everard and Morris 1990: 231-6; Fielden 1991).

Thus far, this review has emphasised the importance of generating theory which accommodates the operation of the state apparatus, organisational characteristics, and individuals' perceptions and experiences (Ozga 1990:361). Another way of putting this is that a deterministic account of the impact and penetration of market-led education policy may well conceal the extent to which organisational systems, cultures and human interventions may divert policies from their intended outcomes. At the same time, attention must be paid to the phenomenological critique of organisation theory, to ensure that the educational organisation is not reified at the expense of the competing priorities of individuals (Theodossin 1982:3). The focus in this study upon the practice of lecturing in FE recognises and gives due weight to the influence of national, institutional and individual contexts, and the need to point out that FE lecturers structure teaching and learning within the external context of policy and the internal context of implementation by college managers. It is important to make clear that FE lecturers' actions have a clear cultural and socio-political dimension.

Perspectives on the practice of FE lecturing

A key focus of this study is upon the practice of FE lecturing. The literature which has been drawn upon of necessity includes work on teaching, since little has been produced which specifically addresses FE lecturing as a practice. The three models which are considered here are FE lecturing (i) as a profession, (ii) as work, labour and occupation, and (iii) as reflective practice.

FE lecturing as a profession

Little work has been done specifically on FE lecturing as a profession; the work in this area is predominantly school-based. Educational theory has relied heavily upon the notion of teacher professionalism in order to describe and explain teachers' educational conceptions and their view of the world (eg Hoyle 1969, 1980; Darling-Hammond 1989; Ozga 1992). A difficulty with the notion of profession is that it invites unhelpful comparison between different professions (Lawn 1989; Pietrasik 1987). A second difficulty is that the concept of teacher professionalism or professionality meets with little consensus either in the literature or amongst practitioners (Hughes 1985: 269). Another is the difficulty in reconciling both the institutional context of lecturing (Hoyle 1975) and the increasing prescription and demarcation of lecturers' activities through new contractual arrangements and competence-based accreditation of assessment practice, with traditional models of professionalism which centre around notions of autonomy (Dennison and Shenton 1990: 312).

Meyer and Rowan (1988), reviewing the organisation and structure of US educational organisations, reject the notion of the professionalisation of teaching,

arguing that teachers themselves do not believe it. They cite the irrelevance of teacher training as judged by teachers themselves, the lack of teacher autonomy over what teachers should teach, and the generalised locus of responsibility for planning and co-ordination, as evidence that teachers are not professionals, and argue that what they term "the myth of professionalism" has arisen because teachers have much discretion within a loosely coupled system (Weick 1988), and is maintained because it serves the requirements of public confidence and good faith in the performance of teachers and pupils (Meyer and Rowan 1988: 96; 106). Ozga and Lawn (1981: 11-12) have noted the difficulty of arriving at a definition of 'professional' which is not a reflection of the value position adopted by members of leading professions themselves.

A telling case is made by Grundy (1989) in her critique of the relevance of professionalism to teaching. She argues that the self-critical, reflective practitioner must inevitably be in a different power relationship to the client than would a professional, that is, a relationship which minimises control and coercion and maximises mutual respect and cooperation. Behind this view is the assumption that a professional's primary duty lies towards colleagues. This view is consistent with Illich's (1973) position that a key agenda for professionals is the defence of their profession, which can limit their commitment to those who are in receipt of their services.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) take a different view of the primary focus of professionals, which underlines the elusiveness of the term. For them, a "distinguishing feature of professions is that the overriding commitment of their members is to the well-being of their clients" (1986: 8). Despite this differing emphasis on where the responsibilities of professionals lie, they also spell out "the limited extent to which teaching, as we know it today, can legitimately be regarded as a professional

activity" (1986: 8).

Avis (1994) criticises the notion of professionalism as applied to teachers on the grounds that "ahistorical and essentialist notions of professionalism, as expressed in trait approaches and those which fall back upon definitions of knowledge and skill that constitute expertise", cannot address issues of social antagonism and social difference (1994:65).

A looser use of the term 'professional', indicating "commitment, self-organisation, and a certain status" (Pietrasik 1987), underlies contemporary debate on FE lecturer's terms and conditions of service (eg McBean 1994:6; NATFHE 1994b), and is implicit in the CEF so-called 'professional contract' (CEF 1993).

Hoyle (1992) has noted that "there appears to have been a semantic shift in the connotation of *professional* as adjective and noun which has somewhat uncoupled the term from its original reference to profession" (1992: 5) [original emphasis]. It is the very attractiveness of some of the attributes traditionally associated with professionalism and professionality which has led many to wish to retain the link between teaching or FE lecturing and professionalism. Some of these attributes are the idea of expertise, or a job well done, as in 'a professional job'; the idea of autonomy, which is a very powerful concept for FE lecturers in the context of increased centralisation of educational policy; the idea of specialist knowledge, another powerful concept when appraisal mechanisms and teacher accreditation procedures are held to be de-skilling FE lecturers; the altruistic ideal of education for its own sake; and the idea of the exercise of critical judgement and creativity in deciding the best approach to meeting learners' needs. Salaman (1979: 137) presents a profile of organisation-based professionals which incorporates a number of these attributes. The value of professionality as a notion for teachers and lecturers

themselves may be found in its potential to legitimate autonomy.

The slippage in the use and application of 'professional' represents a significant danger of marginalising lecturing as a profession in colleges, where other professions and different professional values, are given more status and esteem. College managers might legitimately reduce staffing levels, contact hours, and replace lecturers with technicians and demonstrators, whilst at the same time claiming to serve the students' best interest in terms of 'service to the customer', 'value for money', and increased throughput - notions which can be, and frequently are, sustained by a use of the term 'professional' which is founded upon the ideology of a business efficiency ethic.

Lecturing in FE as occupation, work or labour

Occupational and work characteristics of teachers are referred to by Hodkinson (1992) and Ball (1993b). Other accounts highlight the extent to which teaching is open to influences which are held to be bureaucratising (Darling-Hammond 1989), de-skilling (Ayres 1990; Hyland 1992b), deprofessionalising (Trow 1993: 21) and proletarianising (Apple 1986; Ozga and Lawn 1988). All of these factors gain a particular force when applied to lecturers in FE. The use of competence-based education (CBE) approaches to the accreditation of FE lecturers, through the use of occupational standards, are argued to be evidence of this kind of trend.

Pietrasik (1987: 169-70) argues that teachers are turning to trade unionism to secure better pay and conditions, rather than appealing to professional status. In a school context, Lawn (1989), has argued that "teachers' work is going to be (or already is) more clearly defined, more fragmented, more supervised and more assessed, and

that teachers are losing control over it" (1989: 154). In FE, HRM strategies underpin a view of the labour force as an allocatable resource (Elliott and Hall 1994).

Teaching qualifications of any kind have never been a pre-requisite for lecturing in FE, but there is a growing concern at the mandatory imposition of low-level competence-based testing procedures upon experienced FE lecturers (Ashworth 1992; Chown 1992; Chown and Last 1993).

Hyland (1992c) has been influential in arguing that the development and implementation of Training and Development Lead Body (TDLB) occupational standards for the FE sector undermines the lecturing role. His critique of the introduction of a competence-based approach to lecturer training is largely based upon the limitation of the lecturers' role which is implicit in the performance specifications of the TDLB Assessor and Verifier Units. He also signals the inherent danger, consequent upon functionalist occupational mapping, of producing compliant staff "who are uncritical of change but well able to perform the tasks and duties required of them by college management" (1992c: 11).

Hyland then proceeds by implication to flesh out a view of what the lecturing role might entail and, at the same time, what it is about the role that cannot be described by the occupational work role criteria which underlie the TDLB framework:

> ***The pace of change in the post-school sector in recent years has resulted in a fluid and uncertain state of affairs in which lecturers are required to be flexible, critical, reflective and knowledgeable about a vast range of curricular and organisational matters.***
>
> (1992c: 11)

In a later paper, Hyland (1993) argues for a model of lecturer professionalism based upon the notion of "professional expertise". The circularity of this position

considerably undermines his application of the term professional in this context. In fact, the literature he cites to support his notion of 'professional expertise' in almost all cases focuses upon 'expertise' rather than '*professional* expertise'. Hyland himself acknowledges that the literature on experts points to certain common traits which "seem particularly appropriate in relation to the 'reflective practitioner' model" (1993: 129). Carr (1993), in his discussion of the knowledge and professionalism of teachers similarly has recourse to the idea of the reflective practitioner to summarise what he means by professional when applied to teaching (1993: 253).

Rationale for a reflective practitioner model of FE lecturing

The changing circumstances in which incorporated FE colleges find themselves suggests that this might be an opportune moment to take a new look at FE lecturing. As lecturers find themselves working for managers with employment experience outside education, and who allocate resources according to business priorities, it may become more necessary for lecturers to affirm the territory of *their* expertise. Occupational standards which emphasise competences demonstrated in a designated workplace may be found to be too limiting in the way in which they circumscribe lecturers' practice, whilst viewing lecturing as a profession, on the other hand, carries with it the danger of legitimising a wide range of assumptions and activities which focus attention and resources away from the teaching and learning process. Drawing upon literature from educational management, and the sociology, psychology and philosophy of education, some ground rules can be proposed for a new conceptualisation of FE lecturing.

In order to be meaningful and valid for the practitioner, the new conceptualisation should be grounded in lecturers' own understanding and experience of their working

practices, and it should adequately reflect the range of these practices, as well as their epistemological and ethical basis (Day and Pennington 1993: 251). It should reflect a phenomenological perspective towards organisations, which recognises the centrality of understanding individual's orientations (cp Maslow 1954), and that "organisations are to be understood in terms of people's beliefs about their behaviour within them" (Greenfield 1975: 83). It should also be capable of supporting theoretical and political opposition to attempts to redefine practitioners' shared educational values (Avis 1994). This last point is increasingly important in light of attempts by the CEF to apply the term 'professional' to their new restrictive and widely opposed (Utley 1994) FE lecturers' contract of employment.

A key limitation of the model of FE lecturing as a profession is that it implies a consensus and common orientation among FE lecturers which the literature does not support (Little 1984; Fullan 1990; Huberman 1990). An important advantage of the concept of reflective practice over the concept of professionalism is that the former is more consistent with a micropolitical perspective, recognising the different interests, biographies, careers, priorities, subjects, status and pedagogical orientation of FE lecturers.

Hargreaves, in his work on contrived collegiality (1991), teacher individuality (1993a, 1993b), and balkanisation (1994), highlights the importance of taking teachers' individual differences into account in understanding the working practices and assumptions of teachers. He warns against assuming the existence of a shared culture amongst members of an organisation, arguing the possibility that "some highly complex organisations may have no shared culture of any substance" (1991: 50). This view is supported by Astuto and Clark (1986), who argue that some educational institutions may be "culture light" (1986: 62).

A second important characteristic of the notion of reflective practice is that it is capable of encompassing moral and educational values as well as specific 'professional' practices (cp Elliott 1989; Grace 1993). This is not insignificant at a time when college managements are under pressure to re-define their own roles and those of their staffs, away from pedagogical orientations towards a model of professionality which has more to do with a business and market orientation which "bespeaks a philistine simplism" (Stones 1989: 8), or towards what Carr (1994) has called "a technicist conception of educational professionalism focused largely on the development of superficial tricks of the trade" (1994: 50). In circumstances where the role of the education professional may come to be re-defined by other stakeholders, then a conceptual re-orientation may be timely, since it is only through the "grounding of our actions in our values that we can recognise the nature of the competing rationalities we face and find means of coping with them, whether as managers or as those being managed" (Bennett et al 1992: 15).

A third feature of the proposed model of reflective practice specifically addresses the criticism raised by Avis (1994) of the reflective practitioner notion presented by Schon (1983, 1987) and Elliott (1991). Avis characterises the idea of the reflective practitioner as solely concerned with " (meeting) clients, collaboration, holistic understanding and self reflection . . . . absent however is an engagement with power, politics and difference" (1994: 67). He presents reflective practice as a facilitator model of teaching, similar to the role of counselling, which he claims ignores the social struggles surrounding education, and rests on the premise that professional educators really do know best, and which understands "teaching as a neutral enterprise, only compromised by values orientated towards the educational development of all - a quasi-neutrality - that fails to address the politics involved and the very real conflicts and social antagonisms surrounding education" (1994: 68). However his position is quite ambiguous, since he acknowledges that whilst "the

technological rationality of traditional professionalism is deemed dysfunctional and thereby fails in its own terms. . . . a dynamic model of professionalism embodied in the reflective practitioner is valuable, in that it does encourage us to examine the taken for grantedness of our practice, to indulge in autocritique" (1994: 68). In suggesting that the limitation of the reflective practitioner model is that "it is compromised by its lack of a politics" (1994: 68), Avis fails to recognise that reflection, critique, and examining taken for grantedness - reflective practice in *his* terms - are essential prerequisites for political action, either at a micro or macro level (Blase 1991: 11; Griffiths 1993: 158; McCulloch 1993: 300). Indeed it is only through reflective practice that the "preoccupation with the personal, and the relative neglect of the social and political (which) is a chronic condition of post-modernity" (Hargreaves 1993b) can be avoided. At bottom, Avis' position is rooted in a single, rather than a multi-level, analysis of political action. He fails to acknowledge that it is necessary for individuals to adopt a reflective practice in order to draw coherent linkages between institutional and national contexts.

The model of reflective practice which underpins Freire's (1972: 15-16) notion of 'conscientisation' fully meets Avis' objections. For Freire, conscientisation refers to the development of a critical consciousness (rather than consciousness-raising, in a patronising sense) to a level where individuals can achieve a sufficient degree of social and political awareness to understand contradictions within society and, crucially, to work to transform it. As Hargreaves concludes:

> *In what we do with teachers and in how we study teachers and their development, it is time to 'get real'; to reconnect the system with the self, as part of a critical, collaborative and deeply contextual agenda for change.*
>
> (1993b: 110)

FE lecturing as reflective practice

It is an unfortunate and limiting characteristic of a good deal of educational research that it fails to recognise the antecedents of some of the central issues and concepts with which it deals. Thus, the idea of the reflective practitioner is often attributed to Schon (1983; 1987). Whilst the term can be attributed to him, the origins of the idea go somewhat further back.

The idea of reflective practice can be demonstrated to be at the centre of British philosophical discourse, from the seventeenth century philosopher Locke's (1690) concern with appropriate knowledge and judgement as vital to well-informed rather than ill-informed understanding, through Mill's (1843) concern with the centrality of inferential thinking to the exercise of good judgement. John Dewey (1933: 29; 287-8) was the first formally to apply the idea to the educational situation. His definition of reflective thought is predicated upon its status as a conscious, voluntary and purposeful activity. Dewey believed that reflective thinking was an artistic rather than scientific endeavour, and that it represented the ideal human mental state (1933:29; 287-8), and an antidote to a restrictive preoccupation with "those things that are immediately connected with what we want to do and get at the moment" (Dewey 1970 [1929]: 159).

Stenhouse (1979b) recognised the key role of reflective thinking for educational practitioners, in arguing that what is learnt from comparative studies can "tutor our judgement" (1979b: 6). Schon (1983: 62-3) develops Dewey's notion of the essential artistry involved in the intellectual process of reflecting on action. It is the *creative* dimension of reflective practice which enables practitioners to deal effectively with inconsistent or incompatible demands, and which thus makes it such a powerful framework for understanding action in non-rational, unpredictable

organisations.

The unpredictability of much classroom knowledge is also acknowledged by Eisner (1967: 89), who distinguished between learning characterised by behavioural, instructional objectives, and that characterised by novel or creative responses, and argues that pre-specified behaviourist approaches to learning and educational evaluation are inappropriate for the latter, since the student's behaviour cannot be specified in advance (Eisner 1969: 93).

Eisner's model of classroom knowledge as created, shared and unpredictable is evocative of the work of those, such as Freire (1972: 44), who reject bureaucratic teaching and learning procedures in favour of a critical student-centred pedagogy. Central to this model is the notion of teacher and student as of equal status as subjects: "the students - no longer docile listeners - are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher" (1972: 54). Freire contrasts this model with the prevalent banking model of education, where "knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (1972: 46).

As Gore has pointed out (1993: 42) it is the attention which Freire pays to the elaboration of an alternative critical pedagogy, rather than the generation of abstract educational theory, which makes his contribution so valuable and potent. By reconceptualising the task of the lecturer it is possible for the lecturer to make a significant impact upon the quality of students' educational experiences. Freire's pedagogy requires teacher and student, jointly, to engage in the educational process as partners, each having an active and valuable contribution to make within a negotiated curriculum. This approach can also be conceptualised as a "dialectical learning relationship" (Fryer 1994:19). As Trow (1993) notes:

Teaching is not an action, but a transaction; not an outcome, but a process; not a performance, but an emotional and intellectual connection between teacher and learner. Therefore it cannot be assessed as an attribute or skill of a teacher or a department, independent of the learners who have their own characteristics which affect whether and how much they learn (about what) from a particular teacher, and, indeed, how much they learn from them.

(1993: 20)

The conception of teaching as an activity underpinned by 'core values' is a persistent one in the literature which attempts to characterise teaching and explore its key attributes. Carr (1987), for example, claims that "a definitive feature of an *educational* practice is that it is an ethical activity undertaken in pursuit of educationally worthwhile ends" (1987: 165-6). He cites Peters' argument that these ends "are not some independently determined 'good' to which educational practice is the instrumental means. Rather they define ... the 'principles of procedure' which constitute a practice as an educational practice and justify its description in those terms" (1987: 166). For Altrichter and Posch (1989) education is essentially a moral practice aimed at the realisation of values, and for Sockett (1989), more specifically, teaching is concerned with moral values such as care, courage and truth. This emphasis upon core values would, as Elliott (1989) points out, refute an 'objectives' model of curriculum development, and lend weight to Stenhouse's (1980) 'process' model. In Whitehead's (1989) terms, the values of education are realised through educational practice, not through a prescribed and predetermined set of objectives or outcomes. Reflective practice, then, can be construed as epistemologically and ethically linked to philosophical and pedagogical traditions which assert "that the educational character of any practice can only be made intelligible by reference to an ethical disposition to proceed according to some more or less tacit understanding of what it is to act educationally" (Carr 1987: 166).

The focus upon core values locates the reflective practitioner model within a cultural,

epistemological, and essentially ethical tradition which transcends economic, political and administrative expedience (cp. Gadamer 1980: 249-262). Viewed through this lens, it is not difficult to see why CBE approaches which focus upon the activity, rather than the context and worth of the action, have fuelled a powerful critique which focuses upon the extent to which CBE impoverishes the educational experience. It is the extent of the radical centralist CBE-based curriculum reforms introduced by NCVQ (Hyland 1994), and the degree to which they have undermined the core values associated with teaching and learning (Smithers 1993: 9-10), which has led to the most vocal critical comment. Hyland (1994: 235) has illustrated the pervasive power and influence of the NCVQ framework, and has pointed out that the CBE strategies which underpin the NCVQ framework are diametrically opposed to the conception of learning and development held within the reflective practitioner model. He argues that the development of what he calls a "learning culture" (1994: 242) in post-school learning requires a closer look at strategies concerned with learning *per se*, rather than performance or outcomes. In Eisner's (1967: 89) terms, a weakness of CBE would be that it fails to distinguish between the application of a standard and the making of a judgement.

Summary and questions arising from the literature review

This review of the literature has focused upon the phenomenon of a market in education, and perspectives on FE lecturers' practice. The transfer of quality assurance systems from business to education, and the CBE approaches which underpin the TDLB awards and the whole of the NCVQ framework, were viewed as a significant and indicative example of the imposition of a business-derived model dependent upon the use of quantitative methods, behaviourist in origin. The critique of this model held that it is reductionist, denying the value of education as a shared

learning experience.

The literature review surveyed notions of teaching and lecturing as a profession, as work, labour and occupation. These were found to be inappropriate, confusing or limiting for FE, and a rationale for the development of a reflective practitioner model of further education lecturing was given. A framework for the model, which highlighted core values and was grounded in a critical pedagogy, was proposed.

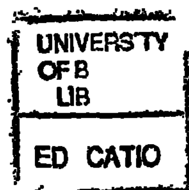
The literature did not, however, support the notion that the business orientation of FE is so pervasive throughout the system that there is no prospect of alternative values orientations taking hold. Neither did it support the assumption of shared cultures in educational institutions. These caveats pointed the study towards the use of a phenomenological perspective, which can highlight multiple meanings, investigate the existence of shared values within and between cultures, and give due weight to the multi-level cultural-political context of FE policy and implementation.

The present study aims to extend the literature by generating FE-located theory which draws upon the areas of reflective practice and critical pedagogy, in order to offer a reconceptualisation of lecturers' orientations to their work. Key questions arising from the review of the literature, which are relevant to the aims of the study, and which are pursued within it, are: how do FE lecturers themselves define their task, and what has been or will be the likely impact of market-led policies for FE?

The next Chapter describes, and gives the rationale for, the qualitative methods that were chosen and employed to investigate the foreshadowed problems identified in Chapter One, and the issues raised in this Chapter by the literature review.

Chapter Three

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



Chapter Three

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Epistemology

The research methodology employed in this dissertation was not predetermined from the outset, but was open, shaped and developed gradually, as a consequence of the writer's understanding of, and engagement with, the research problem. Once the importance of lecturers' reflections upon their own practice and work context (Schon 1983, 1987) was established, it became clear that a participant researcher model would be the most appropriate. It was, then, the nature of the research problem which determined the precise form and range of data collection and analysis.

The methods employed reflect an epistemology which privileges grounded data (Glaser and Strauss 1967). At the same time there is a strong sense in which the researcher, as a participant, brings preconceived notions, perspectives and frameworks to the research situation (Rowan and Reason 1981: 134-5; Hammersley 1993: 57ff). It would be disingenuous to attempt to deny that this is so. The high level of involvement of practitioners in their work, and the large extent to which practice is based upon theoretical orientation, are both highlighted in this study. So it is for the participant researcher. This study acknowledges the potentially problematic tension between, on the one hand an 'open' methodological stance, and on the other, the prior assumptions and expectations which the participant brings to a study of colleagues. This point is well made by Wagner (1993):

Participant researchers can pursue research projects that are as demanding and sophisticated as those pursued by non-participant researchers. However, as a result of full engagement in non-researcher roles, participant researchers also face the same institutional opportunities and constraints as their non-researcher co-participants.

(1993: 4)

'Foreshadowed problems' and 'progressive focusing'

A way forward, which has proved productive in developing a theoretical orientation for this study, is given by Malinowski (1922) who in his anthropological studies of societies in the Western Pacific developed the notion of 'foreshadowed problems':

Preconceived ideas are pernicious in any scientific work, but foreshadowed problems are the main endowment of a scientific thinker, and these problems are first revealed to the observer by his theoretical studies.

(1922: 9)

Foreshadowed problems are issues which are identified from any source as likely to be significant. Research in the field is informed by, but crucially not determined or limited by, the foreshadowed problems. They are used to guide initial analysis. They have been identified from the writer's awareness and experience of relevant and significant issues as a reflective practitioner in the case study institution within the FE sector, from his theoretical orientation, from the review of the literature, and from issues encountered during participation in Ed.D programme modules. Foreshadowed problems have pointed both to the topic of this dissertation and suggested its potential significance in understanding the tensions between policy and practice in FE.

Once in the field, progressive focusing gives a cumulative impetus to the research, by building upon prior insights drawn from earlier data gathering to sharpen the

researcher's sensitivity to the social situation and the data, and to refine the research instruments.

Thus in this study, questions explored with participants became more focused upon the issues which lecturers, interviewed early in the study, defined as problematic. The researcher's developing awareness, which arises from a comprehensive engagement with a particular research problem, is also a crucial resource in progressive focusing.

However the emergence of unanticipated problems, and the need to do what Johnson (1975) describes as "defocusing field research" (1975: 65), have required that the research design remain open during the process of the study itself. In this respect, Malinowski's (1922) distinction between preconceived ideas and foreshadowed problems is important to the present study for similar reasons as he himself suggests, that foreshadowed problems allow theory and data to interact, but also that new information and understandings may require the research to move away from the preconceived design:

> *If a man sets out on an expedition, determined to prove certain hypotheses, if he is incapable of changing his views constantly and casting them off ungrudgingly under the pressure of evidence, needless to say his work will be worthless.*
>
> (1922: 8)

The foreshadowed problems have been foregrounded in this study through the identification of topic areas for discussion and exploration with the participants. There has been some progressive focusing of pertinent issues, through the linear timetabling of interview sessions at monthly intervals between May 1993 and January 1994. In this way, issues highlighted as significant during the review of the literature and early data-gathering have been specifically explored in detail during

subsequent sessions, whilst maintaining alertness to the possibility of new pertinent issues being raised during the later stages.

In the early stages of the research, the following were identified as foreshadowed problems in the above sense:

- How has incorporation affected lecturers, and has its impact been consistent throughout the institution?

- What has been the significance of the NCVQ vocational education framework for lecturers?

- What are the characteristics of the new market-led culture in FE, and how do lecturers view it?

- Is an alternative culture (to a market-led one) shared by lecturers?

- How are alternative value systems maintained within the college, and how are contesting visions worked through?

- Is reflective practice a meaningful way to conceptualise lecturing? What are the alternatives?

- What has been the impact of college management?

- How do lecturers integrate the diversity of high and low level activities which make up their working day?

Not all these foreshadowed problems proved to be significant to respondents. Others took on a greater significance than was anticipated. This process of variable development of conceptual frameworks and notions offers a rich source of ideas to the researcher and, it is argued, underwrites the value of an open-ended research design for accessing participants' reflective perspectives upon their practice.

Participant research and the participant role

Participant research strategies require some explanation, since there is more than one possible significance that can be attached to the term 'participant'.

Wagner (1993) distinguishes between 'participant research' and the 'participant observation' methodology given prominence by sociologists following Pearsall (1956), Becker (1958), and Whyte (1964). The distinction is that the sociological tradition of participant observation "refers usually to the research method of direct observation, not the prospect of occupying an official position within the organisation or group being observed" (Wagner 1993: 4).

A key consideration in the design of this study was the nature of the work relationship, including power relations, between the researcher as a manager and colleagues who were lecturers, or senior lecturers, as respondents. The writer's role in the college was strategic planning director. This involved oversight of four curriculum areas with a loosely-defined line management responsibility for the respective curriculum directors (CDs). Thc post was newly created to meet the perceived system demands of incorporation. The chief focus of the role was, from the point of view of the SMT, to ensure that CDs complied with instructions to implement policies and make required data returns. The previously introduced 'flat'

structure lacked any effective hierarchy, with the result that the 25 CDs either became invisible within the system, or created unmanageable pressures upon the SMT's time.

The writer's own position in the case study college greatly facilitated the carrying out of participant research. As a strategic planning director it was possible to gain insight into the operation of the SMT in relation to strategic planning, which was an area of activity which impacted directly upon the lecturer group in the study. Since the role of strategic planning director focused upon the CDs and the SMT, there was no line management responsibility for any of the staff in the study, except for the one CD interviewed.

It was crucial to establish how far respondents would feel able to express their true feelings openly. It is argued here that many factors were relevant to this, and combined to ameliorate any effect due to the difference in status between researcher and researched. There were close working and personal relationships with all respondents. A rapport existed, based upon a strong divisional identity and shared experience. Genuine assurances were given by the researcher regarding confidentiality, and a basis of trust was established. The respondents were agreed upon the significance, for them, of the dissertation topic, as its focus became clear to them during the period of the study, and they were willing and supportive participants.

Added to these considerations is the evidence of the interview transcripts themselves. The data reported in this study show strength of feeling, openness about the roles and style of the senior management team, frankness about personal success and failure, and a preponderance of highly critical and perceptive responses, which together lend support to the view that the respondents were not intimidated or stifled

by their working relationship with the researcher. It is surmised that the writer's role in the college did not discourage any respondent from speaking freely.

The writer's role within the college gave access to a plethora of internal documents, including memoranda, letters, circulars, bulletins, file notes, policy statements, guidelines and handbooks. Meetings regularly attended between CDs and the SMT also provided useful background information on the stated priorities of both groups within the college, whilst physical location within the site which housed the Media and Performing Arts staff gave the writer free access to meetings held by those staff, as well as informal conversations and comments.

The curriculum areas, other than Media and Performing Arts, within the writer's band were: Electronic Engineering, Motor Vehicle and Hair and Beauty. Formal and informal meetings were held with the CDs responsible for these areas, in order to agree and countersign visiting lecturer claim forms, approve arrangements for internal verification, and collate responses to SMT requests for information and data of various kinds. More strategically, the role also involved giving a certain amount of support, where appropriate, to the CDs in drawing up strategic plans, accommodation and equipment requirements, resource budgets, staffing schedules and staff development plans. For the most part, however, the role was quite loosely conceived by SMT, and priority was frequently given by SMT to the control aspects of the role, for example in trimming visiting lecturer budgets, prioritising physical resource demands, and providing data returns for the computer MIS.

Sources of data

Variety of methods employed

The primary methodology for the study draws upon the qualitative, semi-structured or open-ended interview. In questioning the assumptions of the positivist tradition in social science, the open-ended interview draws upon a broad range of methodological principles (Bogdan and Biklen 1992: 3), which focus to a greater or lesser extent upon the documentation of participants' perceptions and accounts of their practice.

There is a strong sociological tradition which makes extensive use of the qualitative interview, or what some call the ethnographic interview (Whyte 1943; Becker et al 1961; Glaser and Strauss 1967). Within this tradition, conceiving of and conducting interviews as conversations (Burgess 1984) demands that the researcher has established a relationship of trust with respondents. Such a relationship is essential when inquiring into working practices which may vary with government policy and institutional guidelines.

It is acknowledged that much valuable data is available to the ethnographer through formal and informal contact with subjects, and through subsequent thinking and reflection. It is therefore important to select data gathering methods which allow the inclusion of conversations, discussions, observations of dialogue, in short, whatever seems to be relevant at whatever stage of the research process (Johnson 1975: 187, 198). At the same time, there are a number of key issues, drawn from the review of the literature, personal reflection, and foreshadowed problems, about which all respondents were questioned. Hence the mixed economy of data gathering methods employed in this qualitative study.

Critical review of the literature

This contextualises the study, points up key issues, provides the basis for the theoretical framework, and provides a basis for comparison between the present study and other research in similar and related areas. The focus of the literature review was given in part by the identification of the research problem. The limitations imposed by the relative paucity of research done on the FE sector were balanced by the freedom to apply and test theory developed within other contexts. The literature review was also influenced by the modules taken on the Ed.D programme, in that concepts which had been identified, researched and successfully applied to an FE context in modules and assignments provided a useful starting point.

An important consideration in the selection of literature for review has been its direct relevance to the research problem, and its judged potential for informing a critique of current policy trends within the FE sector. As a counterbalance to a deterministic tradition within FE-located theory, the literature focuses instead upon a tradition which asserts the potential of the practitioner, whilst at the same time recognising and fully taking into account social, cultural and political influences.

The literature review employed in this study not only contextualised and provided a focus for the main data collection phase, but in an important way contributed to the data collection itself. The interrelationship, during the timescale of the qualitative interviews, between the ideas and concepts explored in the literature review, and the analysis of the interview data, is discussed later.

Participant research

The focus of the study is on policy and practice within an FE college as identified and articulated by a group of full-time lecturing staff. Detailed responses were required to a range of policy and pedagogic issues. It was, therefore, necessary to spend time with respondents in a variety of settings in their workplace, in order to sensitise the researcher to their concerns, and to aid understanding and analysis of their responses. Additionally, access to appropriate documentation was required. The twin demands of maximising contact with subjects, and access to restricted information, were successfully realised through participant research in the writer's college.

The writer's full-time in post in the college where data was collected facilitated access to all staff of the college, all sites, and, if required, to members of the senior management team.

Before completion of the scheduled interviews, the writer took up a post elsewhere, which clearly had a significant impact upon the degree of access subsequently possible. It was decided, after careful consideration, not to complete the scheduled interviews. The rationale for this was that the social situation which linked researcher and researched would no longer obtain, since the writer was no longer a participant researcher in daily contact with the respondents. There was, however, an advantage to the new situation. It became possible, by consulting earlier field notes and draft chapters, and through reflection upon developing concepts, to compare researcher perspectives in the field with those out of the field. This has become an invaluable additional source of insight, now through an external lens, into the cultural territories in which the writer was previously immersed. This is to acknowledge that many of the ideas, concepts and notions explored in this study have emerged from reflection

upon the writer's own practice. Whilst the entrée and inside knowledge afforded by an insider position was fully exploited, the joint benefits of hindsight and comparison with a new institution have the potential to impose an additional rigour and objectivity upon data analysis and theory generation.

Documents and field notes

Use was made of a range of documents, some of which were crucial in mapping participants' perspectives and the institutional and national contexts. The writer had access to all college documents of which he was aware, including a college policy and procedures manual which is updated regularly, BS5750 documentation, and some restricted items. Other relevant documents such as memos, circulars, letters, and ephemera were collected. National policy documents were sought out and purchased or located in the University of Bristol School of Education library.

Documents such as policy papers, letters to staff concerning incorporation, proposed new contracts and conditions of service for lecturers, strategic and development plans, union circulars, staff bulletins, and internal memoranda were collected, collated and referenced in a card index alongside book and journal sources. Their use both informed and complemented other data. These references were kept and updated throughout the research period.

Research field notes were made of observations, meetings, ethical issues, methodological problems, schedules and unanticipated data. These notes were kept on computer files, and became a valuable source of reference for contextualising the data. The notes helped in the process of progressively focusing upon key issues within the college as the impact of incorporation became clear. They also served the

purpose of helping to ensure that the limitations of the study (discussed later) were noted and taken into account.

The qualitative interview

This section describes how the interviews were carried out and how data was produced from them. The methodology of data analysis is discussed later.

An open-ended interview schedule was prepared with two objectives in mind. First, to focus the interviews upon the key substantive issues which had emerged from the literature review, participants' own concerns as expressed in conversations and meetings, and the writer's own reflective practice, without imposing an over-prescriptive framework. Secondly, to allow for progressive focusing of questions and discussion. The schedule developed and changed during the time scale of the interview phase, to take into account ideas and points which emerged during data collection. This tiered approach, which staggers data collection and analysis, allows the researcher to engage in "constant comparison" (Glaser and Strauss 1966: 277), and to formulate ideas and concepts which can be applied to later data collection.

The interviews took place in the writer's study which was away from curriculum areas, and which enjoyed relatively few interruptions. A relaxed atmosphere was created by the use of easy chairs, the careful timing of interviews (usually late afternoon or evening), clear and frank explanation about the purpose of the interview, and genuine assurances about confidentiality.

Each interview lasted between one and one and a half hours. A small, unobtrusive cassette tape recorder with built in microphone was used to record each interview,

and verbatim transcripts were made. Each interview was replayed and compared with its transcript several times to ensure accuracy. The transcripts were made using the word processing software 'MacWrite II', run on an Apple Macintosh computer. Each transcript was then printed to paper within a left hand column, leaving a right hand column for notes and observations.

The case record

The principal evidence gathered in this study is transcripts of interviews with lecturers in the case study college. This evidence is directly drawn upon in the next two chapters, and has also substantially informed subsequent reworking and reanalysis of the project as a whole.

There are compelling reasons for the researcher making what Stenhouse (1978: 32) terms the 'case record' available, "both as grounding for his own reportage, and as a resource for communal use by the community of educational researchers" (1978: 33). The guidelines suggested by Stenhouse for presentation and availability of the case record have been followed in this instance:

> *. . . the preferred case record is an edited version of the full transcript which attempts to present the school as it is perceived by those who are participant in it.*
>
> (1978: 34)

The aim of the researcher in editing the transcript "is not 'telling it like it is' . . . . but it is an attempt at 'telling it as it feels to be in it', that is to say, telling it as it phenomenologically is" (1978: 34). This case study, therefore, reflects the archetype proposed by Stenhouse, and can be characterised as : "an interpretive presentation and discussion of the case, resting upon, quoting and citing the case record for its

justification" (1978: 37).

The case record is a separate volume, and is available to researchers, by request to the writer.

The interview group

The staff who would be interviewed were originally to be a total population, in the sense that they would constitute all staff on full-time contracts within a single division of the college. No staff declined to take part out of a divisional complement of nine full-time staff. All specialist areas of the work of the division in question are represented by the staff who did participate in the interviews, although, as noted above, the researcher left the field prematurely, so that only seven out of the originally intended nine interviews were able to be completed. All of the interview group were colleagues, and working relationships were always close and constructive.

Hourly-paid staff, although a significant group of staff within the division of the college, were excluded from the group. One of the key issues which was foreshadowed was the impact of new contracts of employment for full-time staff. This matter would have had little immediate relevance to hourly-paid staff. An additional reason for excluding such staff was the need to keep the respondents to a manageable number.

The final interview group was comprised as follows:

- All are lecturers in the creative arts division of the case study college

- All are on permanent full-time contracts

- They represent the full spread of curriculum specialism across the division

- All are either on the main lecturer or senior lecturer grade

- All had, at the time of interview, between 1 and 4 years' experience as FE lecturers

Of the seven lecturers in the group, 6 are male and 1 female. The specialism and experience of each respondent is given in Figure 1.

Lecturer Code	Gender	Specialism	Lecturing Experience
A - 101	Male	Writing and directing	2 years
A - 102	Male	Communications	4 years
A - 103	Male	Music composition & performance	4 years
A - 104	Female	Physical theatre and dance	2 years
A - 105	Male	Drama and theatre studies	4 years
A - 106	Male	Media studies	3 years
A - 107	Male	Music technology	1 year

Figure 1 The lecturer group: gender, specialism and lecturing experience

The lecturer group were all full-time staff within the Curriculum Directorate of Media and Performing Arts. They were all relatively new to lecturing in FE, although some of them had other teaching experience. Some background information is presented here in order to enable the reader to contextualise both their comments and the ensuing analysis and discussion of the interview data.

A-101 was initially employed by the college as a part-time lecturer at the invitation of the CD (A-105), whilst working as a theatre writer / director. He has worked on a number of commissioned theatre and drama projects, including material for the Arts Council and Channel Four. He has a degree in Drama and a PGCE, but had never taught previously in an educational institution. His lecturing subjects are writing and directing for theatre, and he teaches exclusively on BTEC First and National programmes in Performing Arts.

A-102 qualified as a psychologist and worked for the National Association of Youth Clubs before moving into theatre-in-education and arts projects. He took a Masters in Film Studies, following which he was a visiting lecturer in Media and Performing Arts, prior to his appointment as lecturer with responsibility for Communications. He teaches his specialism on both Performing Arts and Media courses, and also teaches Communication Studies and Film Studies at GCE 'A' Level.

A-103 took a degree in Music with Education, followed by a PGCE. He taught for four years at an inner city school, and was acting head of Music for one term, before being appointed to his present post as lecturer with responsibility for Music. Since his appointment, he has written course submissions for BTEC in Popular Music, and these programmes at First and National level now supplement the Performing Arts offer. He is course

leader for the National Diploma in Popular Music.

A-104 was originally dance trained as a performer, and on giving up dancing as a career took a BA Honours in Drama, focusing on community based dramatic arts. She has worked in rep, and has been involved in a variety of dance and theatre projects. Having started an MA in Theatre and Education, she changed course to take an MA in Educational Management. She is co-ordinator of Performing Arts, and course leader of the National Diploma in Performing Arts.

A-105 graduated with a first degree in English Literature, and then took an advanced postgraduate diploma in Theatre Arts. After a year's school teaching, some fringe theatre work and a couple of years travelling, he was employed as a teacher/actor in a theatre-in-education company, following which he helped to set up a rural theatre company and community arts project, eventually becoming Artistic director for eleven years. he then taught in a school for four years, before being appointed co-ordinator and then curriculum director for Media and Performing Arts.

A-106 worked as a warehouseman in a factory for a couple of years, then as a stage hand and gallery attendant in a local theatre. He then moved into the computer industry, as an operator, operations manager, programme analyst and finally staff trainer. He then ran a recording studio for four years before going to college to take GCE 'A' levels and then on to university where he gained a first class honours degree in film studies. He spent a while "doing a few odds and sods" before being appointed as a lecturer in Media, and then Media co-ordinator and course leader for the BTEC National Diploma in Media.

A-107 gained a craft qualification (full technological certificate) in electronics, and then spent some years in the electronics industry before developing a career as a popular musician. Moving on from guitar playing to the technical area, he became a recording engineer and also designed and built sound recording studios. He had some experience of teaching guitar and recording studio techniques before being appointed as a lecturer in Popular Music, initially as a visiting tutor, and then full-time as a course leader for the BTEC First Diploma in Popular Music. He was the only one of the lecturer group to have been appointed within the new conditions of service.

One of the aims of the study was to access and document lecturers' understandings and interpretations of the policy initiatives in one FE college and what they understood it meant for their practice. In order to gain the fullest understanding of how lecturers interpreted their situation the writer decided to focus upon lecturers within his own curriculum area, that is, in the curriculum directorate of Media and Performing Arts. This also carried with it the advantage that these lecturers were able and willing to articulate their views on a range of educational and political topics, and saw themselves as agents of change within the newly incorporated college. Thus although the interview group is not a representative one, it does represent a voice outwith the management layer of the college.

The decision on the number of respondents was largely dictated by two factors:

1. the need to limit the length and scope of an Ed.D dissertation to a reasonable and workable size given the timescale involved

2. the need to take into account the detailed analysis which it was planned to

carry out on the qualitative interview data

The first point refers to a common factor in all Ed.D dissertations, and the rationale is set out in the Programme Dissertation Guidelines (University of Bristol School of Education 1993: 1-2).

The second point is of considerable significance. It is an advantage of open-ended qualitative interviews that the data which they produce is capable of analysis at considerable depth. In drawing out shades of meaning and interpretations, it was felt sensible to limit the group size, in order to allow adequate coverage of the full range and implications of the respondents' statements, and their significance for FE policy and practice.

The methodology of data analysis

Glaser and Strauss's (1967) constant comparative method was employed for data analysis. This is an inductive form of data analysis in which the generation of theory is a continually developing process. Tentative categories are generated from the data, and subsequent data are used to 'test' the validity of those categories. This method is consistent both with the identification of foreshadowed problems, and the progressive focusing that is built into the research design.

Accordingly, it was felt appropriate to model the analysis of the qualitative interviews upon a five stage procedure proposed by McCracken (1988) which incorporated the above strategies. Each interview was carefully read through many times. An attempt was made to adhere to two important principles. The first principle was that during the first stage of analysis, individual statements were to be judged for 'intensive'

meaning, that is, with little concern for their larger significance. An attempt was made to pay little attention to the supposed importance of the data to the research problem. The aim during the first stage of data analysis was to avoid unconsciously imposing preconceived understandings and assumptions upon the data (Rowan 1981). An important precondition, therefore, was that the researcher needed to be as aware as possible of the danger of in-built unexamined preconceptions and bias.

It was intended to delay, until the second stage of analysis, application of the ideas and concepts explored in the literature review to the interview data. During both the first and second stages, each interview was analysed as a unique project, and considered in isolation from the other interviews. The experience of making a genuine attempt to adhere to these two principles was interesting. It is true to say that maintaining an open stance towards the data, (Glaser and Strauss 1965), thus avoiding premature closure, whilst applying concepts generated from the review of the literature, appeared to pull in opposite directions. It would be fairer to say that a creative tension was maintained, where the focus would shift between the intrinsic meaning of the data and the extrinsic meanings and interpretations generated from the literature, personal experience and other influences. At best, an awareness of the problem of meaning imposition was achieved, and a genuine attempt to avoid it was made. A significant amount of looping back did occur between Stages One and Two, and between interviews, however, and McCracken's model of the stages of analysis of the long qualitative interview has been adapted accordingly (see Figure 2). The second stage of analysis thus involved developing the ideas which arose from the first stage, sorting and grouping those with a common focus, and expanding their implications. The more general interpretations generated were then related back to the whole transcript of the interview. As noted above, however, separating stage one and stage two was not always possible - nor, it can be argued, is it consistent with a developing and emergent analytical process.

In the third stage, analyses of each interview were compared, and further interpretations were developed of a more general nature.

The fourth stage involved making judgements as to the emergent themes which were

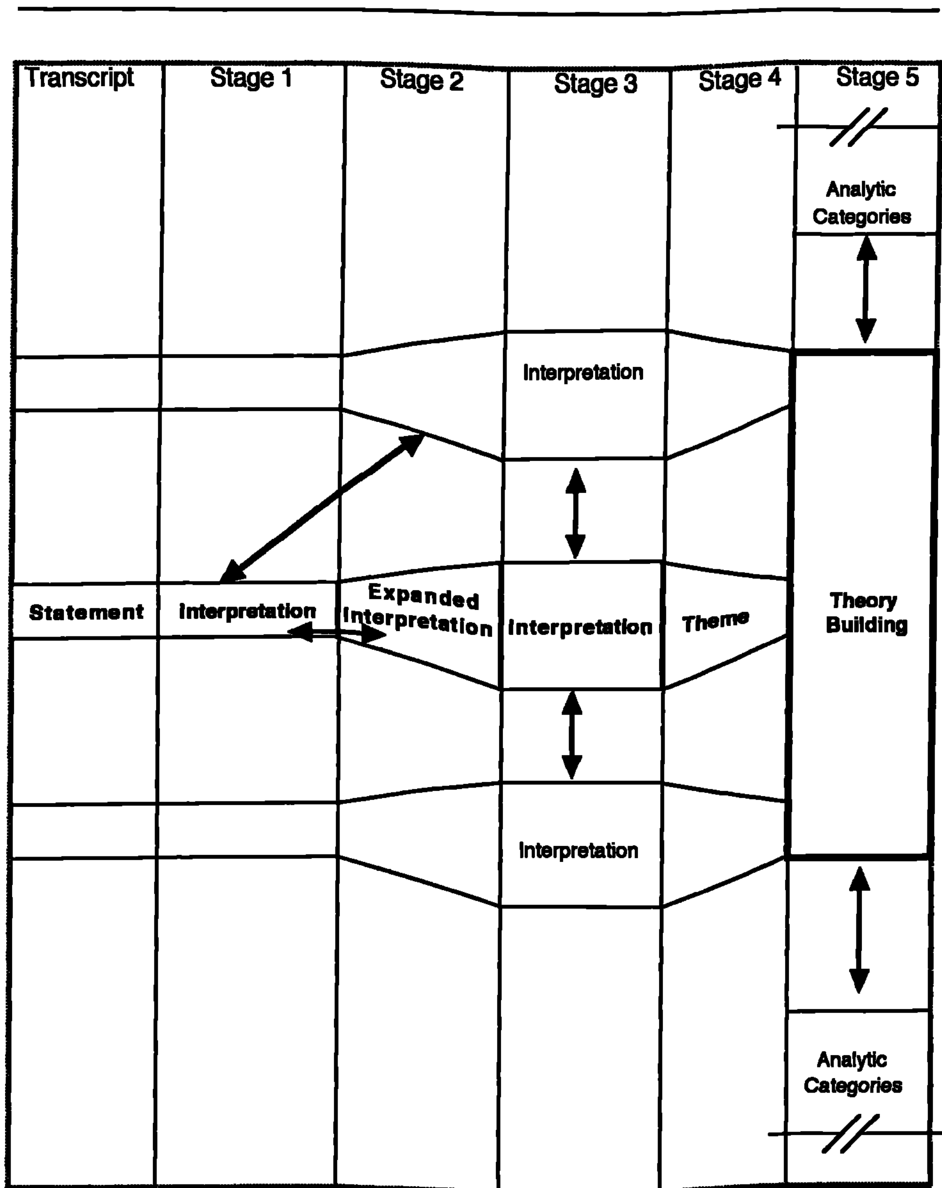


Figure 2 The long qualitative interview: stages of analysis (Adapted from McCracken 1988: 43)

implicit in the interpretations of the interviews. A large number of sub-themes were identified at this stage, but they were gradually subsumed within a smaller number, which can be termed 'meta-themes'.

The final stage was a review and comparison of meta-themes across interviews, with the aim of generating analytic categories, and theory building.

Since the formatted interview transcripts comprised over 300 pages, it was appropriate to use a simple data string search capability within the word processing software used, MacWrite II. The edit command 'Find/Change' locates any occurrence of a user defined word, partial word, or phrase. This facility has not, it must be stressed, been used as an alternative to the immersion in the data which can only be gained from reading transcripts, research notes, and so on. Rather, its value is to check that *all* occurrences of a particular word or phrase have been considered, and to aid data sorting and categorising.

Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study fall into three linked areas: theory, methodology, and generalisability.

Theory

The dearth of research on the relationship of reflective practice to policy in the FE sector generally has benefits and drawbacks. For example, a difficulty is that the study has to move beyond its immediate focus in order to demonstrate linkages to

existing theoretical analyses, and it needs to draw upon a broad educational literature, where theoretical work on the basis of teachers' practice is located. On the other hand, there is the advantage of originality, in that for the same reasons the study will be breaking new ground by looking specifically at FE lecturers' articulated perspectives upon their practice and related policy issues.

The point was made earlier that not all the foreshadowed problems proved to be significant to respondents, and that some others took on a greater significance than was anticipated. Whilst this offered a rich source of ideas which informed the study, a developing and emergent theoretical orientation is not without its difficulties for the researcher. One consequence and disadvantage of the grounded and tiered approach to data collection and analysis described in this Chapter is that as the focus of the study shifts, even if only to a small degree, then aspects of the literature reviewed become less central, and other, hitherto excluded, literature becomes more so. Thus the review of the literature can not be said to be definitive of the theoretical orientation, but has evolved as the study has progressed, with changes and adaptations being made during both the data collection and data analysis phases. Rather than seen as a limitation, this process should be highlighted as a positive aspect of qualitative research methodologies, which are thus able to take account of changing circumstances in the field and the interaction of perspectives between theory, researcher and participants.

Methodology

The methodology for the study draws heavily upon the role of the participant researcher and the technique of the qualitative interview. An important criticism of participant research is that the research site can be over-familiar to the investigator,

so that familiar routines are taken for granted (Becker 1971: 10) with the result that events which are commonplace to a participant are overlooked and their significance can be lost (Measor and Woods 1991: 70). The literature on participant observation methodology is helpful here. It points to the need for the researcher who employs this method to maintain an anthropological strangeness to the situation (Erikson 1986: 121), a sense of "critical enquiry" (Adler 1993: 161). The writer used the guidelines given by Burgess (1984) in an attempt to overcome the problem:

> *First, researchers should continually pose questions about the settings within which they are located. Secondly, researchers should write down in as much detail as possible what they have observed. Thirdly, observation should be regularly reviewed and cross-referenced to other activities and events that have been observed so that themes can be developed and in turn linked with the theoretical perspective that is deployed within the research project*
>
> (1984: 28)

The writer's forced withdrawal from the field has, it can be argued, ameliorated the danger of over-familiarity with the research setting.

In questioning the assumptions of the positivist tradition in social science, open-ended interviews and interviews as conversations (Burgess 1984) draw upon a broad range of methodological principles (cp Bogdan and Biklen 1992: 3), which focus to a greater or lesser extent upon the documentation of participants' perceptions and accounts of their practice and the work context. An important factor in deciding to carry out open-ended interviews was that they enabled the writer to capitalise upon a technique advocated by Burgess, that of deliberately asking naive questions to explore the taken-for-granted meanings held by respondents. Through reviewing the literature on participant research, a strategy was formulated which involved developing an interview method and style which at once distanced the researcher from the familiarity of the setting, and at the same time encouraged respondents to describe and analyse their taken for granted experience.

The qualitative interview is a well-established technique with a strong sociological tradition which supports its use (Whyte 1943; Becker et al 1961; Glaser and Strauss 1967). The substantive focus of this research is upon lecturers' accounts: the recording of lecturers' perspectives, their reflections on their practice and upon related policy, and policy implementation in the corporate institution. As Bogdan and Biklen (1992) note, whether termed 'unstructured', 'open-ended', 'nondirective' or 'flexibly structured', the in-depth interview can be used by "the researcher (who is) bent on understanding, in considerable detail, how people such as teachers, principals, and students think and how they came to develop the perspectives they hold" (1992: 2). This approach can be criticised for failing to take lecturers' actual practice into account. While to do so would require a study of significantly larger scope, a study of lecturers' accounts can in itself illuminate important aspects of practice, and it is part of the writer's challenge to existing research on FE that lecturers' accounts of their practice are seldom taken seriously as a basis for theoretical analysis. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), in their primer on ethnography, emphasised this point:

> *We can use the accounts given by people as evidence of the perspectives of particular groups or categories of actor to which they belong. Indeed, knowledge of these perspectives may form an important element of the theory being developed.*
>
> (1983: 106)

They also suggest that the ethnographic interview has distinct advantages over observations of behaviour in natural settings:

> *To the extent that the aim in ethnography is not simply the provision of a description of what occurred in a particular setting over a certain period of time, there may be positive advantages to be gained from subjecting people to verbal stimuli different from those prevalent in the settings in which they normally operate. In other words, the 'artificiality' of the interview when compared with*

'normal' events in the setting may allow us to understand how participants would behave in other circumstances, for example when they move out of a setting or when the setting changes.

(1983: 119)

The key point here is that the advocacy in this study of the reflective practitioner model makes it essential that lecturers' views are accessed, since they are central to the elaboration of the model itself, and to understanding lecturers' own constructions of reality. Lecturers' views, and the meanings which they attach to their educational experiences, would be more difficult to acquire using alternative methods.

Generalisability

It is important to be clear and unequivocal regarding the extent to which the findings of the interviews used in this study can be generalised outside of the case study college, or even within the college itself between different curriculum directorates. The decision to interview a small number of lecturers, all within Media and Performing Arts, brings with it the obligation to forego any claim to population validity or what Stenhouse calls "predictive generalisability" (Stenhouse 1978: 22). This is readily acknowledged, since all research designs carry with them both advantages and drawbacks, and it was felt that limiting the lecturer group, in this case to seven, brought with it clear compensating benefits in terms of the depth of data more readily available to the "full participant" (Wagner 1993), representativeness within one curriculum area, and manageability. There was also the significant advantage that those lecturers in the group who had worked elsewhere shared a common experience of involvement in arts and media organisations, which provided useful insights into possible influences upon their approach to lecturing and management.

It would have been unrealistic, given the resources at the writer's disposal, to interview a large number of respondents and to attempt in-depth qualitative analysis of the resulting data. This study is concerned with useful research and generating theory located in further education, in order better to inform the policy, management and practice of teaching and learning processes in the FE sector.

It is a problem for qualitative research, such as that reported in this study, that in dealing with relatively small numbers of respondents, expressions of quantity such as 'many', 'most', and 'some' force the commonly understood meaning of these terms. It is nonetheless important to give the reader an indication of how common - or uncommon - certain responses are, within the strictly defined boundary of the lecturer group. At the same time, it is felt by the present writer to be inappropriate to quantify responses in the majority of cases, except where a particular view is held by one lecturer or by all lecturers in the group. This is because to do so would give an unwanted and misleading quantitative dimension to qualitative data, and encourage potentially unhelpful statistical interpretations.

Given the above caveats, it is nonetheless possible to attach to this study a notion of generalisability which is different in kind from predictive generalisability, which is dependent upon statistical sampling techniques not employed in this study. The alternative notion of generalisability is what Stenhouse (1978:22) terms 'retrospective generalisability', which rests upon an individual respondent or a whole study being regarded as an instance rather than a sample. Stenhouse (1978) identifies an important distinction between predictive and retrospective generalisation in relation to case study methodology. He makes the point that:

> ***. . . the basis of verification and cumulation in the study of cases is the recognition that a case is an instance, though not, like a sample, a representative, of a class and that case study is a basis for generalisation and***

hence cumulation of data embedded in time. It is the classic instrument of analytic as opposed to narrative history.

(1978: 21)

The case record based upon the field data of this study is one systematic way of mapping participants' experience. Making the record available to other researchers can achieve the aim of "creating a critical and analytic contemporary history of education fed by recent, current and future case study" (1978: 22).

Other interpretations of this model of generalisation are sometimes referred to as 'relatedness' , 'comparability' or 'recognisability'; these variants share the idea that if qualitative research is disseminated to the participants, or to others who have experience of the setting within which the research has been based, it should read "as it feels to be in it" (Stenhouse 1978:34). The implication of this is that if this study rings true to those within in the case study college, and more broadly within the FE sector, then the benefits of generalisability may attach to the study, even though statistically speaking the appropriate caveats, as described above, would of course apply. As Stenhouse puts it:

Retrospective generalisations are attempts to map the range of experience rather than to perceive within that range the operation of laws in the scientific sense.

(1978: 22)

It is entirely appropriate, within the context of an Ed.D Dissertation, to contribute to such a mapping exercise, within the constraints and limitations identified within this Chapter.

Acknowledged limitations can also have positive aspects. As a part-time researcher it has been important, as hinted above, to recognise the restrictions of time and resources which accompany the role. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the methods employed are not only appropriate to the subject and context

of the research, but are also manageable and within the resources available to the individual.

Balancing scope and coverage with involvement as a participant has, it is argued, strengthened the study by stimulating a productive interaction between practitioner insight, theoretical orientation, and the application of a focused research methodology. Small scale educational case studies, carried out by practitioners in their workplace, can be used as the basis for comparative studies across and between educational sectors. In this way, it is possible to argue that ecological validity can be established through a comparative survey of individually separate, but theoretically or substantively related, cases.

It is one outcome of the progressive focusing which both structured the data collection, and provided an emergent theoretical framework, that the next Chapter is organised around themes which became clearly evident during the conversations, interviews and reflections which took place during the active participant-researcher phase in the college. These themes confirmed the significance of some of the foreshadowed problems which were conceived at the outset of the study. However, the cultural-political context, in which the lecturers expressed concerns and priorities were found to be located, was not foreshadowed, but emerged as a consequence of the interaction which occurred between theory and practice, concepts and data.

This emergent model of lecturer practice is presented as both grounded in the reported perspectives of FE lecturers upon their work, and inspired by, and consistent with an important theoretical tradition of critical pedagogy. It is suggested here that the qualitative methods employed in this study have contributed in a major way to its theoretical outcomes. Careful attention to foreshadowed problems based

upon the writer's own reflective practice and experience, willingness to adopt open-ended semi-structured interviews in order fully to explore issues reported as significant by participants, and a commitment to an emergent theoretical framework informed by progressive focusing, have proved to be highly significant, appropriate and powerful methodological procedures within this study.

The ensuing Chapter details the results and findings of the study, linking these to the national and institutional context of the incorporation of the FE sector.

Chapter Four

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

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The college context

The study was located in a large urban FE college, which consisted of 25 curriculum directorates, nearly 200 full-time teaching staff, and 4,000 full-time equivalent students. The college was the only provider of general further education in the borough, having formally merged with the College of Art during the academic year preceding the incorporation of the sector. Prior to that the colleges had shared a governing body, and joint strategic planning was carried out annually at the Staff College by the senior managers and the LEA Officers. It was agreed between the colleges prior to the merger that the principal of the Art College would retire, and that the vice principal would join the SMT of the combined college. All other staff retained their former curriculum responsibilities and conditions of service, until SMT decided to impose new conditions upon all lecturing staff, through the introduction of the CEF contract, following incorporation.

The structure of the college was based upon groupings of staff course teams under the leadership of a curriculum director (CD). The CDs met weekly with the service managers and senior management team, and comprised the middle management tier of the college. The senior management team (SMT) consisted of the principal, vice

principal, assistant principal (curriculum), assistant principal (quality), finance director and director of personnel. Formal meetings of the SMT occurred weekly, but informal meetings were held more frequently. The SMT were roomed in a management suite, which was separated from the rest of the college by locking doors. Appointments were normally necessary for staff who wished to see SMT members, and a waiting time of up to a week for such appointments was not uncommon.

Written communications between the SMT and the staff comprised a monthly college newsletter, occasional circulars and memoranda on specific topics. A comprehensive set of college guidelines and procedures was produced by SMT and circulated to CDs. A series of letters to staff were written by the Principal in the period leading up to, and immediately following incorporation, when staff were proposing to take industrial action, including striking, over the proposed new conditions of service. The following extract from a letter dated 28.5.1993, in which for the first time the Principal signed herself 'Principal / Chief Executive' illustrates the combative climate in which industrial relations were conducted:

> NATFHE has notified the College Management that it is calling on its members to participate in a programme of secondary industrial action which will include the refusal to mark registers and provide other statistical data to the College.
>
> I want to stress to you that any action which prejudices (College) vis a vis competing Colleges and private providers at this crucial time is a very serious matter.
>
> 1. Lecturers who refuse to mark registers are in breach of their contract of employment.
>
> 2. It might be that the Corporation takes the legal view that staff who are unwilling to work should not be required to work at all and that salary is withheld until normal working is resumed.

The relationships between teaching staff and management staff were frequently strained. It was not unusual for individual members of staff to be summoned by a

secretary of one of the SMT at very short notice, to give an account of actions seen to be outwith the college procedures. The weekly meetings between CDs and the management team were usually occasions on which one or other member of SMT would berate CDs, as a group, for their alleged under-performance. They would be reminded, in most forceful terms, of the queue of staff who would be only too willing to take their place should they leave. Lecturers were believed by managers to work only the minimum number of hours required by their contract, to be sloppy in administration, and unsupportive of management efforts to keep the college 'moving forward' and solvent. There was a clear undertone to the effect that CDs were under scrutiny, were perceived to be failing in their duty, and that increasing pressure would be exerted upon them by SMT, to include formal disciplinary procedures to deal with instances of 'non-compliance'. On one occasion, the Principal stated, during a CDs meeting, "if any of you doesn't like it (ie conforming with college procedures on marking registers), you can walk out of that door now; there are thousands of you out there who would take your place just like that" (CDs Meeting, 26.2.1993).

Teaching staff, on the other hand, frequently complained of SMT's hard-nosed attitude and over-enthusiasm for business strategies, including efficiency measures designed to increase the workload of staff. Such measures usually related to administrative tasks and organisational arrangements, which would be specified without consultation and rarely with any opportunity for discussion. The following extract from a memorandum sent by the finance director to all academic staff on 2.9.1993, is typical of a number of such documents circulated to staff following incorporation. It illustrates the SMT's preoccupation with control by its emphasis upon quantifying and measuring every minute of the lecturers' working day:

> The register is a legal document, and needs to be completed for all class contact...
> As far as the class contact time is concerned, if the student attends the College

> for a class which includes a break, the contact time will exclude the break. For example, if the student attends the College for a two-hour class which includes a fifteen minutes break, the contact time will equal to 1.75 hours. It is this class contact time that should be allocated to the Lecturer . . . .

A high proportion of teaching staff belonged to the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE), the largest lecturers' union. During the period of industrial action in FE at the time of the incorporation of the sector, the case study college provided one of the highest proportions of all lecturing staff in favour of industrial action. The principal received an overwhelming vote of no confidence from the lecturing staff for the peremptory and heavy-handed way in which industrial relations were approached in the college.

The college structure was described to the writer by the principal as "very flat", by which she was referring to the few layers of management that were in place. Other than service managers, who were responsible for student services, MIS and the library, the CDs were the only management layer between main grade lecturers and the SMT. There were other senior lecturers and principal lecturers in place, but this was an historical legacy from the period before the arrival of the new principal when the college had a traditional departmental structure.

During the Christmas holiday before incorporation the SMT created an additional layer of management between the CDs and the SMT. These staff, five in number, between them were responsible for oversight of the strategic planning of a number of diverse curriculum areas. They were variously termed 'band leaders', 'strategic planning advisers' and strategic planning directors', whose job was to act as go-betweens, interfacing with CDs and SMT. They saw their role , to a large extent, as one of ameliorating the excesses of the SMT, re-interpreting their demands with the aim of gaining the co-operation, or at least the acquiescence, of an often down-hearted and bemused CD group. The writer was a strategic planning director during

the period of the present study, and the focus of the study has, in some significant ways, been sharpened by the demands and opportunities of the role. (See pages 52-4 for a fuller discussion of this aspect.)

The case study college was widely known amongst other colleges and the unions in the region as one where a "climate of fear" (Goodfellow 1994) was in place. This can be illustrated by the approach taken by the SMT to the introduction of the new 'professional' contract. Sections of staff were targeted for signing: first SMT, followed by the CDs and other middle managers, and then main grade lecturers. The latter two groups spoke of signing under extreme duress; one CD spoke of feeling "stressed, demoralised and devalued" by the process; another considered that the SMT's management style was not to be found in any management textbook, and the actions of one senior manager were described as "a mixture of bullying, arrogance and discourtesy" (conversations with staff October 1993). One main grade lecturer signed his contract believing that as a relatively new member of staff he would be targeted for redundancy if he did not sign. One of the SMT was described in a letter from the Union Branch Secretary as "hell-bent on confrontation" over the new contract issue (letter to branch NATFHE members, 17 August 1993). The following extracts from letters sent by the Principal to staff in the month before incorporation illustrate the climate of instability which she, together with the SMT, set about creating:

> We are in a competitive situation with other FE Colleges and other providers in our attempts to increase student numbers over this 3 year period . . . It is simple really:
>
> | | | | | | |
> |---|---|---|---|---|---|
> | | **Fewer students** | **>** | **Less money** | **>** | **Fewer jobs** |
> | **or** | **More students** | **>** | **More money** | **>** | **Growth** |
>
> (Letter from Principal to staff, 3.3.1993)
>
> Our business depends on students having confidence in you meeting their contractual terms, we can only support all of you so far as you undertake to

support the business we are in. We personally believe this is the only important issue.

(Letter from Principal to staff, 9.3.1993, the day before NATFHE strike action).

These observations provide an overview of the institutional context for the study, and also an indication of the root of some of the 'foreshadowed problems' noted in Chapter One. The next section addresses the wider policy context of the study, which is also highly relevant.

The business orientation of further education

Policy, the market and incorporation

The case study interviews took place during the academic session in which colleges of further education became incorporated. Incorporation brought about major structural changes which included a new funding body and new inspection arrangements. A major influence upon the way in which colleges dealt with human resource issues was the establishment of the CEF to act on behalf of college managers in framing and introducing new terms and conditions of service for lecturers in the sector, replacing those formerly negotiated between NATFHE and the local authorities, their former employers. Other significant externally imposed initiatives current at the time of the study included the introduction of new quality assurance arrangements in colleges, notably BS 5750; the introduction of the TDLB assessor and verifier awards for lecturers; lecturer appraisal; and increasingly sophisticated college performance indicators, which required college managers to collect and submit a broad range of data to the funding council. These initiatives were live issues in the case study college at the time of the interviews, and were seen by most lecturers as inspired by central government, and experienced by them as

implemented and imposed by an ill-prepared but compliant college management. At the same time, there is evidence within the interview data that the lecturers were open to and welcomed many aspects of these initiatives, but were unhappy about the way in which they were implemented, and the emphasis that tended to be placed upon a formalistic interpretation. The number of such initiatives, and the speed with which they were introduced also appears to have been a significant factor in bringing about negative responses by the lecturers. Many of the initiatives were required to be in place in order for colleges to continue to receive FEFC funding for their core work, which gave college managers little opportunity - even if they wanted to - to resist them. The implication that central government policy for education was out of sympathy with the concerns of educational practice led one lecturer to argue that government is imposing an economic paradigm upon education:

> . . . under the current climate, there are so many aspects of education that are being pushed down from central government, from a distance, from people whose contact with practical education is minimal.
>
> (A-101/6)

The Principal made clear the position as she saw it in a letter to staff on 10.5.1993:

> We are in a competitive environment. The FEFC have said that they have no allegiance to keeping any one College in business. Staying in business is dependent on satisfying student and customer aspirations.

One of the dangers inherent in the emerging view of colleges as businesses was foreshadowed by another lecturer:

> . . . the college as it stands at the moment is a business, or we've been told it's a business and if it is a business then, if we see it in those terms, then this business is going to go down the pan because you always have a head team of management who knows who their customers are, what their customers want ... and this company doesn't know. . . .
>
> (A-104/65)

There was evidence to suggest a concern that the desire by government to move

colleges towards a business orientation, and to subject them to increased competition within an educational market, had taken place without adequate preparation and ground laying at the college level. One lecturer, for example, liked the idea of colleges as "autonomous organisations who offer something and attract students to it" (A-102/25), but insisted that the policy had been undermined by the lack of adequate development support for college managers.

Another noted that the imposition of policy-driven changes upon colleges may have brought with it a lack of ownership of external initiatives on the part of educational managers, making the important point that by this strategy "you're encouraged to have a negative attitude, even by the people who are presenting it" (A-103/50).

For most lecturers, incorporation had simply not delivered what had been promised. The following view was typical:

> Well I have to say I've found it very difficult to see any tangible benefits in terms of the kind of promised land that was held out to us when the discussions originally took place. In terms of funding I've not seen any huge benefit, I mean there was a great deal of talk about there not being sticky fingers from the local authority or whatever, most of the monetary advantages that were perceived to exist don't seem to have turned into anything you can touch, feel or use, so I mean at the chalk face or whatever I can't see that there has been a huge benefit.
>
> (A-106/98)

The idea of competition, and the introduction of an increasingly competitive ethos following incorporation, emerged as a strong issue of concern to the lecturers in the study. They felt under pressure from college managers to make efficiency gains, for example by employing more part-time staff who came cheaper than full-timers, in order to become more competitive. Staffing and equipment budgets were continually being reviewed and trimmed, and an internal bidding system was introduced for capital expenditure. This competitive ethos was regarded by lecturers with caution. Most lecturers disliked the idea of the college being placed in competition with

schools, and had even greater reservations about internal competition. As one put it:

> One has become very aware within the college that there is a cake and you're competing for the slices of it; competing for the bigger slices, that's obviously out of one's hands.
>
> (A-101/17)

Competition had a clear effect upon staff's relationships with each other, and promoted "challenges about resources and about which area's more important" (A-107/112).

The language in which the following extract from a paper written by the Principal for SMT is written illustrates the extent to which she had embraced a market philosophy:

> We need to revamp our staff development policy / personnel policies in line with Investors in People, and encourage staff to train in customer care to support BS5750 developments and Total Quality concepts . . . The government will hold money back from us unless our Appraisal Scheme is properly introduced and this must be linked to contractual changes (original emphasis).
>
> (Principal's paper to SMT 3.9.1993)

There are negative consequences in business terms of introducing a competitive market in education. Staff were worried about practical issues like the loss of economies of scale and the prospect of a smaller pool of resources, as well as broader concerns to do with lack of accountability, the inadequacies of college management in terms of their business acumen, and the extent to which college managers were under-prepared to deal with incorporation.

Many lecturing staff perceived that there would be a period of uncertainty and entrenchment for college management, whilst they got used to their new responsibilities and powers under incorporation. This theme of uncertainty

reappeared in most lecturers' accounts of the impact of incorporation. The SMT was frequently characterised as having an 'organic' management style, which was a euphemism for their reactive and unpredictable behaviour. The impression of one lecturer was both incisive and typical:

> Initially I see that management will still be scrabbling about trying to establish their own identity rather than having the cushion of a local authority; they'll try and establish their own identity so they might tread on a few people while that's happening. The lecturing staff, I think, won't be taken into account for the next 18 months, 2 years. Perhaps after that, once they achieved a suitable balance, they might start consulting again.
>
> (A-107/121-2)

The lather of activity into which SMT were placed also led to a view held by some lecturers that SMT were incompetent to deal with many of the issues that they were asked to address. One lecturer observed that the Director of Quality Assurance "doesn't know what she's doing, so she doesn't know what her job entails, and she's bringing her personality too much into her own job, covering her own back then the job isn't going to work anyway" (A-104/72).

The introduction of a business efficiency model of education was declared by nearly all lecturers in the study to be undesirable. Reducing costs of the sector was seen by one lecturer as part of a deliberate government objective to bring "downward pressure on funding (in) the long term" (A-103/45). For another lecturer, the impact of increased enrolments upon the employment totals and a shift in emphasis from education to employment training, had turned FE into "not so much a dumping ground, but a way of off loading certain kinds of problems about training and education" (A-106/107).

The model of education was recognised by most lecturers to operate across sectors:

> Well, I mean the great opting out schools thing seems to be the land of milk and honey . . . . and a number of schools have drifted headlong into that, and taken it

up with some enthusiasm, and time will tell whether or not they are best served. I think there is generally a movement towards wanting to teach more people more cheaply, and this is true in HE . . . .

(A-106/98)

Most lecturers rejected in strong terms the notion of applying a business model to education, which might be considered surprising, given the assumed business orientation of the sector as a whole:

I hate it! I hate the idea! It's what sort of college plc is, it's forcing the college even more, it's forcing colleges to operate as businesses. They shouldn't be, they should be subsidised to a huge degree.

(A-101/8)

There was a strong sense of blame attached to the government which introduced reforms without adequately preparing those whose task it would be to implement them. In the view of one lecturer, the creation of a newly independent FE sector and the government expectation that college managers should somehow be equipped to deal with the new circumstance in which they find themselves, was flawed:

I think a lot of the problems are stemming from their ignorance, and I don't use that as a negative - that's a point of fact - they are ignorant about how to operate in that sector.

(A-102/25)

The removal of responsibility for education from the state into private hands strikes against a strongly-held ideological position of most lecturers. The strength of feeling on this issue, signified in the ensuing extract, was expressed during the interview cycle by almost all lecturers in the study:

Education should be the responsibility of government or the state, I suppose (by the state I mean us as a democratic state) - it is within that province, it shouldn't be a private enterprise. The idea of it being a private enterprise is anathema to me, and that's the way it's moving at the moment . . . the sense that the resources that a student can count on are dependent on the business efficiency,

and the competitive business efficiency, of an educational organisation is appalling. It makes me angry - I get inarticulate about it because I get so angry.

(A-101/8-9)

Another lecturer argued that the direction of government policy for the FE sector was towards an inferior two-tier education system, which ties quality to ability to pay and consequently brings about social inequality:

... I am generally very concerned, and worried if you like, that we are going for cheap, mass education. And that we're moving to a society where, if you can pay for it, you will get quality, and if you can't you will get a basic, competence based training if you like, and therefore the gap, if you like, the social gaps, they're going to widen. ...

(A-105/82)

A strong thread which linked most lecturers' accounts of the impact of the market upon education was the recognition of political influences. Many lecturers recognised that the government's educational policy of centralisation of power and decentralisation of responsibility was part of a wider policy direction towards public sector services and organisations as a whole:

... I just do not believe that the values of the market, the market place can be simply dropped, imposed upon the public services, the professional services, the services to people, education, health, whatever - I think it will lead to disaster, I think there is evidence coming out of the health service now that it has lead to disaster, the kind of disaster that it will lead to in education will obviously be different to that, but will be equally serious I think.

(A-105/86)

Lecturers mostly recognised that the direction of government policy was not covert, nor was it limited to the fields of education and health. As one put it:

I've seen a steady decline in public subsidy to the arts .... it's not even covert - it's absolutely stated arts organisations have to be efficient businesses. They have to look at their work as a commodity which sells.

(A-101/9-10)

A common view, graphically presented by one lecturer, was that such reforms were expressions of a pervasive government ideology which drew power to the centre by increasing central control of resources and intervention in policy decisions formerly held at the local level:

> I think the government's policy is to centralise everything, and to reduce that buffer between central government and the people that has always been there in local authority . . . . and one way of centralising is to keep all the money back and send policies out from the centre . . . . I think it's fundamentally about money because we have a sort of, like - an anal retentive government about money at the moment.
>
> (A-102/26)

Quality assurance systems

One of the clearest expressions of the impact of business upon further education was for many lecturers to be found in the increasing use of quality assurance systems, notably BS 5750, drawn from manufacturing industry. The use of such systems was criticised on the grounds that they added nothing to the quality of the teaching and learning process, but gave the appearance of being more effective than they really were:

> It's a load of bollocks, it really is, isn't it . . . . I mean do you get a stamp on your bottom? . . . . Again it's quantitative rather than qualitative isn't it . . . . The problem with any kind of those statistics is that they don't tell the whole story or they can tell whatever part of the story . . . . they appear to be objective but they are subject to subjective interpretation.
>
> (A-101/14-15; 18)

It is important to note that it was the language and insensitive application of formal quality assurance systems more than the procedures themselves that was often the main focus of criticism. This lecturer acknowledges the need for a formal approach to quality assurance:

> I do think there is a need in terms of quality, I do think there is a need for us, I think we are all aware of it, I am anyway, there has been, for quite some time, a need for us to formalise more the way in which we record and monitor what we do . . . that is only a process of formalising something that in a sense already either exists or ought to exist.
>
> (A-105/86, 90)

The most inexperienced lecturer in the interview group found some aspects of the BS5750 system in use valuable:

> Some of the procedures which I found in the book are quite good, whether that's just a college based thing or the principle of BS5750 I don't know. Some forms and procedures laid out in there seem to be very helpful.
>
> (A-107/116)

There were, however, a range of views weighted against the mechanistic model which underpins the BS5750 system. One lecturer insisted that kitemark quality systems embody an external and inappropriate value system based upon the market, making the point that fundamental assumptions, "about what is the product of education, who the customer is in education, and so on . . . ." (A-105/86), remain unaddressed. Another joked that 5750 was "just a number that comes out of a bingo hall. My experience of it so far is not at all positive . . . it's just a number of a job just to fill somebody's post" (A-104/71). It was pointed out by another lecturer that kitemark quality assurance systems are not only inappropriate models for use in education, but are also going out of fashion in industry and commerce. One lecturer felt that college management blur the distinction between quality as a system, and quality as a value, manifested as a commitment to resourcing measures to improve the quality of the student learning experience:

> . . . I'm never sure whose idea of quality is being assured, or to what end it's being assured. I mean working here you couldn't help but be sceptical when you felt that there were all these moves in place to make sure we were given this badge of quality or whatever, and yet there didn't appear to be much serious effort to put the resources in place to allow any quality of delivery to take place.

> And so quality became a word which was largely devoid of meaning.
>
> (A 106/101)

Whilst SMT recognised that staff had objections to the use of BS5750, they failed to recognise the critical problem with BS5750:

> To overcome some of the philosophical difficulties which staff have expressed with BS5750, it is being written with the curriculum as the major focus. This ensures that the quality of the students' learning experience is our central concern, rather than the bureaucracy which is customary with BS5750.
>
> (Director of Quality Assurance, College Newsletter, August 1993, p.2)

Focusing quality assurance upon "the quality of the students' learning experience" (ibid) was an objective shared by all of the lecturers in this study. However, contrary to the declared intention, the implementation of BS5750 in the college was immensely bureaucratic, and dozens of forms were issued as part of the 5750 quality manual. For the lecturers, focusing quality assurance on the quality of the students' learning experience was more to do with understanding everyday interactions between lecturing staff and students. For them, this focused decision-making upon the 'lowest' level within the organisation, the practitioners themselves, which could bring both qualitative and pecuniary advantages:

> . . . if they're to bring decision making down to a lower level you'd be able to maintain quality and probably make savings if you make it in the interest of the people concerned with the actual curriculum delivery to save the money.
>
> (A-103/48)

What was being suggested here was a re-examination of the locus of decision making for colleges as a strategy both to improve quality and save money. This theme was picked up by several lecturers in this study. A preferred approach to quality, expressed by the majority of lecturers, was one which drew upon notions of

individuals and teams reflecting and reviewing. One lecturer considered that performance indicators should be internalised by staff:

> . . . performance indicators - you shouldn't have to be told to do that, you should be working at that yourself anyway within thc institution.
>
> (A-104/67)

Another agreed that "I think that it's up to us to set our performance indicators - if you like" (A105-91). A contrasting view is offered by this lecturer, who had concerns about the veracity of internal performance indicators:

> There are too many temptations with internal asscssment of performance indicators I think. Whether or not you necessarily agree with what those performance indicators are, if they are being externally asscssed then you do fccl that they are being assessed on some sort of rational and fair basis.
>
> (A-106/104-5)

As well as sharing the view that performance indicators were useful, lecturers also agreed that quality could be assured through their everyday existing practice of reflecting upon their work, both individually and as members of course teams:

> We constantly sit around informally, in pairs or whatever, talking about how one can do things better. We have formal structures at team meetings, where we're reflecting on our working practices on the past on the future, it happens then at divisional level when we talk a lot about operational procedures and things. But also there have been, and I've been there, when we've talkcd about the philosophy of things, and how we're going about things, and they're the most valuable and most enjoyable things that one does.
>
> (A-101/20)

As another lecturer put it, "we are constantly reflecting on what we're doing. . ." (A-105/95).

An interesting conclusion drawn by one lecturer, observing the impact which quality assurance systems have had in education, was that education has itself been to blame for allowing a vacuum to form which was rapidly filled by "mechanistic approaches"

(A-105/87) once it became necessary for quality assurance systems to be put into place in order to secure continuation of funding.

Industry lead body standards in further education

Lecturers in this study saw the impact of the market upon their college and their practice as deep-seated and pernicious. A significant and indicative example of the introduction of business practices into the college was the adoption of industry lead body standards for the key activity of assessing students, carried out by lecturers. Formerly, there were no requirements in place for FE lecturers to hold formal teaching qualifications of any kind, although these were available in a small number of HE and FE institutions providing initial teacher training and in-service certification. Following the introduction of the NCVQ VET framework, it became obligatory for lecturers and others who were involved in assessing students for these awards to have, or to be working towards, the assessor and verifier occupational standards specified by the TDLB. A major part of the case study college staff development budget was allocated for TDLB training, and most lecturers were registered by the college with an awarding body for the appropriate qualifications.

The TDLB assessor and verifier qualifications are themselves part of the NCVQ framework, and were specified at Level 3 (A-Level equivalent) which seemed to have been a contributory factor towards the suspicion with which they were regarded by lecturers. Another factor was the competence-based model which the qualifications employed, which again led them to be considered as a low-level award, patronising with regard to lecturers' status, and inappropriate to lecturing practice within the FE sector.

A major criticism of the qualifications is that they disaggregate processes related to assessment, and that they divorce assessment from subject knowledge. This procedure is consistent with guidelines issued for those implementing the GNVQ qualifications, which specified that the grades of 'merit' and 'distinction' were to be awarded for processes, rather than knowledge displayed by the student. For one lecturer, the implications of this approach made it an inappropriate model for all but low-level training activities:

> . . . it presupposes no specialist knowledge, other than ability to assess. That might be OK with riveting bits of metal, but in other areas it's not going to be possible.
>
> (A-103/53)

Another lecturer also mocked the limited scope of the TDLB awards:

> I'm willing to listen to things, I'm always willing to listen to new ideas because I think those are important, but I think it's, yet again, so sort of crabby. I see almost people with quill pens crabbily writing, 'Oh yes, I'm going to do that, yes I'm going to do that' . . . . it doesn't seem to be grown up, it doesn't seem to be expressive, it doesn't seem to be adult.
>
> (A-102/35)

This view was consistent with that held by another lecturer, that the imposition of the TDLB framework, in view of its very basic level, its competence-based structure, and its apparent lack of status as a qualification for lecturers, was evidence of the de-skilling of FE lecturers.

It was not the process of reviewing and evaluating assessment procedures which is rejected by these lecturers, but the atomistic methods through which the TDLB awards accredit assessment practice which is problematic:

> Well, having attended an introductory workshop on D32 and D33 the work that I as a lecturer am expected to do in no way differs from the work I'm already doing, it's just formalising it on a piece of paper.
>
> (A-104/72)

Another agreed that "you're simply being asked to carry on doing what you're already doing" (A-105/89).

Most lecturers, however, welcomed the opportunity of giving scrutiny to the assessment process; the following two opinions are typical:

> I have no problem with assessing anybody, everything is assessed and should be, but it's the criteria by which you're assessed that is debatable.
>
> (A-102/35)

> I think the standardisation of certain kinds of techniques, in terms of assessment anyway, is very useful.
>
> (A-106/103)

The focus of the TDLB awards, upon the demonstration of competence by particular students on a particular occasion, both undermined the centrality of the process of learning for these lecturers, and encouraged an artificial pigeon-holing of students, which was contrary to their normal practice:

> . . . we're supposed to examine a strong student and a weak student, or as they call it a special needs student. Now the special needs student would be basically, is somebody who lacks confidence . . . . it doesn't make sense, you can also have a very good student who goes to work on a particular project and lacks confidence in that area, so that's a loophole of it.
>
> (A-104/72)

The emphasis upon the learning process was a strongly recurring theme for all of the lecturers in this study. The outcome that was considered of value was not the qualification, but the students' engagement in the learning process, skills achieved, and progression opportunities. However, there was some concern expressed as to the implication of a government policy on NTETS expressed as percentages of the

population gaining accreditation by a specified date. A policy based upon such specific targets was seen to carry with it the danger of reducing the standard required to pass the qualification, in order to meet the pre-specified targets:

> . . . if the government sets a target of so many people passing NVQs by such and such a date, then the only way to meet it is by knowing the quality threshold and passing them all through it . . . . Performance indicators, payment by results - those sort of things have some obvious flaws. It's obviously possible to just pass people, because you get funded that way, even though really you'd fail them . . . .
>
> (A-103/53-4; 60)

At the heart of a policy which encourages lowering of standards is a policy-driven mechanistic and instrumentalist view of education: a view strongly opposed by all of the lecturers in the study, whose criticisms of current trends were invariably grounded in an alternative view of the purpose of education, that is, as a force for enabling and empowering students.

FE lecturers and student learning

A major theme, which was returned to frequently by all lecturers in the study, was that of the need to keep students at the centre of the educational process. Whilst recognising the need for efficient and effective management in colleges, they were increasingly fearful of a shift in the core business and focus of colleges, from the development of students' potential to a preoccupation with balancing the budget. The majority of the lecturers in the study, on the other hand, expressed the view that "the students should be priority" (A-107/111). This led them to share a concern that the vocationalisation of the FE curriculum was endangering the educational character of FE provision, shifting the focus of provision away from serving the needs of the students to serving the needs of the labour market. As one lecturer put it:

> . . . I have a concern about the move to totally competence based and vocationally based focus within the FE sector. I regret there is some loss in losing that kind of general educational background that always - did exist . . . . I mean I do recognise the need for a skills based workforce in the country, but my perception of the successful economies is that they not only skills based but they also have a level of understanding and awareness across a range of issues . . . .
>
> (A-105/81)

Another condemned the drift within vocational education towards basic, vocational skills, and away from a more rounded, higher level, education:

> . . . some of that critical edge is being lost and a lot of courses are much more to be concerned, I suppose, with how to use those manipulative skills rather (than) . . . . to understand why that process of persuasion is taking place and to understand something about the ideological notions that are ascribed to certain forms of communication etc.
>
> (A-106/103)

Most lecturers understood that they had a responsibility to look beyond the immediate needs of industry, as identified in labour market surveys and the like, to future economic patterns and, crucially, to the needs of the *students* in relation to those future trends. The following extract underlines the extent to which the lecturers were concerned to ensure that their everyday practices articulated with the needs of the wider market within which colleges operate:

> . . . looking at education as a whole and seeing where education should be going, looking at the students in the group and thinking, 'what do they need, what's out in the current market, what's going to be happening five or ten years down the road?' Trying to predict rather than accepting what's happening now, and just trying to get through day to day.
>
> (A-104/63)

The emphasis, for this lecturer, should be upon review, renewal, innovation and discovery, as opposed to time-serving and focusing upon paper qualifications:

> . . . if all the students come out with, oh nothing, they just come out with a qualification, but no inspiration, no motivation, what's the point of that with the art form? And I think that should be the same for any area, whether it's

> maths or physics or you know - there's still got to be something new to be discovered and when you've got somebody sitting on a pedestal, who end up telling you: 'you shouldn't do that, that's too dangerous. Why don't you just play safe and do A, B, C, D?' Fine but it's not developing.
>
> (A-104/69)

All lecturers in the study perceived that they had a facilitative, enabling role in working with students, and typically expressed this role in terms of a student-centred pedagogy:

> . . . enabling students can be a simple process of orientation through delivery and then they start to use themselves and any kind of physical and library resources and yourself as a resource, and they're up and running.
>
> (A-106/101)

The high value placed by the lecturers upon creativity led them to a highly democratic notion of the lecturer/student relationship:

> I find the easiest way for a student to understand is for them to create themselves, whether it's a product - you know a large scale production or whether it's a scale model of something - or whether it's their own ideas. I mean I always say to students none of your ideas are wrong.
>
> (A-104/70)

Thus were students encouraged to develop a critical, questioning intelligence which enabled them to "understand what processes they're being subjected to" (A-106/103).

The emphasis within this model of lecturing, highlighted by most lecturers, was not upon the omnipotent and all-knowing lecturer, nor upon the content of what is taught. It was, rather, upon the process in which lecturers and students equally engage. In this engagement, the relationship is not expressed as one which involves lecturers filling students with subject knowledge. One lecturer described his role as

one of a facilitator in an educational setting providing access to knowledge - which is not the same as providing knowledge[2] - and also ensuring essential feedback into the process. Another put it in terms of his responsibility for creating an appropriate learning environment, which provides progression opportunities.

The model which emerged from the interview data was a long way from the idea of the lecturer as someone who pours knowledge into empty students:

> . . . we're not here to lecture - er and we're not here to teach - we're here to access knowledge. So I see lecturers as facilitators, people who can provide opportunities to access knowledge.
>
> (A-104/70)

This widely shared student-centred pedagogic framework denies a narrow, prescriptive, and mechanistic view of the task of further education, and insists that it "should be about enabling individuals to - not fit that system, not to socialise them, but to train them in ways that they can be critical about that system, because only by being critical can you make progress" (A-102/32).

Lecturers are required to apply the same standards to their own practice as they do to students:

> I don't see lecturers as omnipotent and knowing everything. I think a good lecturer always admits when they don't know something. If they don't know they'll go away and find out, because you expect a student to do that so why shouldn't you do that.
>
> (A-104/70)

[2] As Dr Johnson noted, "Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it" (*Boswell's Life of Johnson* Ed. G B Hill, revised edn. L F Powell, 1934: 365).

FE lecturers and college managers

Managerialism: the failings of top-down management

A practical consequence of the broadly-conceived student-focused model of lecturing supported by these lecturers is that classroom contact was seen to be central to the education process. Attempts by college managers to meet deadlines imposed upon them by the FEFCE and others, by cascading paperwork, including MIS data returns, multiple registers, and other requests for information, were largely resisted by these lecturers on the grounds that they were time consuming, of little immediate or longer term relevance to their practice, and wasteful of time that could be more usefully spent with students or on curriculum-based tasks.

One reaction to the increasing demands for paperwork was to withdraw co-operation, which was seen to be a reasonable strategy, falling short of active resistance. Most lecturers were dilatory in their observation of paper systems, and ascribed the reason for this to the failure of college managers to understand and appreciate their problems and the nature of their day-to-day work:

> The type of work that I think we're trying to undertake here, and the type of considerations that we are preparing to undertake here, doesn't seem wholly compatible with the kind of management led rather hard nosed culture that seems to emanate from [main site].
>
> (A-106/106)

Another lecturer perceived that managers had "a lack of understanding of the courses the college are actually running" (A-107/111). This was a commonly held view. This lecturer's first impressions of the college were proved to be mistaken, as his experience of working as a full-time lecturer gradually revealed a mismatch between the aims of college managers and those of lecturing staff:

> I was under the impression that the college was fully behind the lecturing staff, and that if a lecturer's keen to do his job to the fullest extent they would get a lot of support, and encouragement to actually go ahead and to actually strive for the students, but that doesn't appear to be always the case.
>
> (A-107/115)

The lack of support felt by lecturing staff gave rise to a frustration which they felt, based upon a perception that college management had little purchase upon the core activity of teaching, and the associated resource requirements which were seen as vital to the successful implementation of lecturers' practice:

> We scratch around for things for the students, they spend things on themselves and that is a big mistake - it may be indicative of their attitude to their role, and it could be that in their greatly exalted position they see student needs as less important than lecturers do. I think that is probably a moral issue. . . .
>
> (A-103/58)

The teaching of students was seen to be undervalued by college managers and a distance was put between them and lecturers and students, through the creation of unnecessary hierarchical college structures.

The problem with such structures for lecturers was that they were self-serving, and management practice became an end in itself, at a distance from lecturers, teaching and learning, whilst students are marginalised:

> . . . it actually sets up, again, the idea that management is more important than the lecturing or the teaching, that management is an end in itself - which it isn't - management is there to serve the institution which is there to serve the students. It seems to me it's distancing from the ideal of the students . . . Students are referred to not as students, FE something . . . . FTEs , yeah. I hate that. It makes me mad, it's not an FTE, it's a student, it's not a numerical unit, it's a student. That to me is both symptomatic and symbolic of a managerial attitude which should have nothing to do with education.
>
> (A-101 19)

Symbolic practices, so described, reveal a context of misunderstanding and

[3] Full Time Equivalents

miscommunication. Further evidence of the extent of this attitude is found within a letter from the Principal to staff dated 14.9.1993 informing them that they would lose 1/190 salary for each day they failed to work normally:

> I have written to you a number of times reiterating the nature of the competitive environment in which we now operate. Students are the currency that drives the College and most particularly enrolment is just the start, we have to retain students and enable them to satisfactorily achieve their examination outcomes.

In expanding upon the gulf which he perceived to exist between lecturers and college managers, this lecturer made clear that it was not simply a matter of poor communication; he believed there were deep-seated ideological differences:

> A managerial style has to show that it's operating on the same wave length as you are, it's not enough to assume it, yes, there should be people taking care of the business, but you need to have the confidence and the faith that they're taking care of the business in the way that you believe in, that is in accord with your philosophy, with a philosophy of education, which I'm not confident that it is . . . .
>
> (A-101/21)

This difference in philosophical orientation between college managers and lecturers recurred as a theme in the accounts of most lecturers in the study. One lecturer commented upon the management style of the senior management team as "heavy handed" and "hierarchical", whereas he felt that the management role should try "to enable lecturers to do the work they want to do with the least difficulty, given the interference from government" (A-103/54, 57).

These differences of perception as to the purpose and function of college managers found their expression in the identification of a range of issues of contention, including tight control of resources, poor communication, lack of staff consultation, reactive and autocratic agenda-setting, and brinkmanship. These issues underlined the twin concerns of lecturers, first that incorporation had brought about an FE structure which pushed managers to adopt what were seen as hard business-oriented

strategies, particularly in relation to HRM, and secondly, that management decisions had been taken at too great a distance from the level of practice of the lecturers. Both concerns were expressed by this lecturer:

> . . . there seems to me to be, the overriding concern of management at the moment is not to spend any money. They put in place what they have to put in place, strategic plans and the like, supposedly by consultation, but even that's different to what's put in and the management seems to have taken it upon themselves to change things, presumably because they consider themselves to be in a better position and to know what our target ought to be in terms of student numbers. . . . The staff seem to think of them, or the ones I've spoken to, almost like running about like headless chickens, running around panicking about the latest issue, and shouting to somebody about it, and responding to crisises rather than having a definite, an active plan to invigorate the institute and get it operating the way it will meet whatever plans they lay out. . . . they stay up there, they don't respond to memos, they don't meet meetings unless they want to, and they seem to have to be pushed right to the edge to actually do anything.
>
> (A-103/54-5)

The suspicion and hostility towards the SMT, which is recorded within most lecturers' accounts, was variously attributed to managers' poor communication, lack of direction, anxiety and incompetence. One lecturer detected a management strategy which seemed to be "based on a kind of brinkmanship and crisis" (A-106/105). Another called the management style "confrontational" (A-102/38).

Lecturers in this study were not seeking to carp against and criticise management for its own sake. The difficulties and pressures under which colleges had to operate, following incorporation and the subsequent loss of external support systems previously provided by the LEAs, were recognised:

> I think senior management need to remind themselves from time to time that a lot of what is being imposed, is being imposed on them as well, is being imposed by government directive . . . . people that go on to senior management, and are responsible for cross college applications of their skills and so on - I think that's a bloody difficult job - at the same time I do think it's their job to find out as much as possible about those areas, I think some do, but I don't think it's common enough.
>
> (A-105/79; 84-5)

What was not considered acceptable were circumstances where college managers failed to take account of the specialist and particular needs of curriculum areas - which represented the primary context in which the lecturer was enabled to interact - or prevented from interacting - with the students. As one lecturer put it:

> I certainly have a concern that there isn't an understanding, or that there is no particular attempt by senior management to understand the particular strategies that are needed to deliver the area that I'm interested in and am responsible for teaching and that, if you like, what there seems to be all the time is an attempt to fit everybody into a sort of common box, so that teaching is something that you do in a certain kind of way, it doesn't matter what the content is or what the subject matter is, or even what vocational area it's related to, you do it in the same kind of way. . .
>
> (A-105/84)

An alternative approach to management: a bottom-up model

This primary focus of this study is upon the lecturers' world-view. The hostility expressed by many lecturers towards the top-down style of management practised in this college is strongly evidenced within the interview data. Yet there is an equally strong theme emerging from the data which points to a viable, alternative model of management, derived from the lecturers' perspective and grounded in pedagogical culture. At the same time, it is a model which is realistic, in that it recognises a competitive environment and the consequent need for the college to be well-run. Whilst most lecturers voiced strong opposition to the idea of the college as a business, they well appreciated the extent to which it was necessary for the organisation to be efficient, and to be run in a businesslike manner, in order to be effective:

> I believe in efficiently run organisations, but I don't believe in 'efficiency' and 'in business' being a priority which overrides the concerns and the needs of

> students and, in fact, of staff as well . . . There is a place for this, business management is important.
>
> (A-101/6-7)

The position represented by this lecturer, and others, was not that management is unnecessary, but that "progress has to be linked to what is best for the student, not to what's best for the business, (so) that managerial team needs to bear in mind all the time what that business is for and who the business is for" (A-101/20).

The key point is the differential emphasis placed by lecturers and managers upon business and educational values. Lecturers felt that, for the college managers, business methods had become an end in themselves, sustaining a 'control' ethos and a managerialist culture. A common complaint was that college managers seemed to have lost sight of the core business of student learning and achievement - they no longer saw students as students, but as units of funding. On the other hand the lecturers in this group, prioritised learning and teaching processes. Crucially, however, they were not unaware of the need for the college to be competitive in the newly created quasi-market, or naive about the need for management efficiency. One lecturer showed a sharp sense of realism in relation to the funding of his curriculum area:

> I know that funding is going to be tight and therefore you try and do the best you can within that circumstance to try and do the things you want to do within a particular department, and if you can't do it one way you find another way to achieve it.
>
> (A-103/57)

Another considered that whilst the college management did not know where to contract, "it knows where to expand but is very cautious about putting the money forward (quite rightly - that's good business practice)" (A-104/65).

A third acknowledged that colleges should be externally accountable, but with the enigmatic caveat that accountability must be consistent with high standards:

> Part of me says yes, I mean any industrial body who are investing money into colleges should expect a certain standard when they have people trained by the college. My other half says that's fine but if the college has got to cut corners to try and meet those standards or if the college standards were above that which the industry were expecting I don't think they should cut them. I believe they should try and acquire the highest standard possible for the students.
>
> (A-107/118)

Whilst incorporation had heightened, and to a large extent symbolised, the encroachment of a market in further education, it is important to note that its effects were not uniformly regarded negatively by this group of lecturers. There was a view, which the following extracts illustrate, that independence could bring certain advantages:

> I suppose that as far as experience goes in practice it is rather early days . . . freedom from various changes in political control could be an advantage.
>
> (A-103/45)

> I think there are advantages in institutions having the freedom to decide what they should do without artificial constraints and without the mix and match funding that you've had before. In theory I think it was an excellent idea and I was strongly in favour of it . . . .
>
> (A-102/24-5)

Even for some of the lecturers with major reservations concerning incorporation, some of the effects are regarded as potentially short-lived. A poor response to staffing requests led one lecturer to express a "hope that that was simply a matter of incorporation and it just happened and they were sorting out themselves, and that now that would have happened a lot better this time" (A-103/57).

A benefit of incorporation was thought by one lecturer to be the extent to which it could foster ownership of strategic planning by management:

> Now if under incorporation they're free to a certain extent to decide what changes to take place you can expect a sense of ownership from the management, which might result in them presenting it more positively.
>
> (A-103/50)

One lecturer identified the lack of training and development received by college managers to prepare them for change, rather than incorporation itself, as the underlying issue:

> I think senior management of all institutions have been well dropped in it by the Government . . . because they've had no training, because they've had no development.
>
> (A-102/25)

Insofar as the lecturers were critical of management, there are also signs that most lecturers had a shared and clear view of what would constitute an appropriate model of college management. It would be sensitive to the primary concerns of lecturers:

> From my point of view if a management team is responsible for running a college there should be certain people responsible within that upper management circle for being acquainted with the needs of every course so they should be able to monitor those needs, to see if they are adequately fund or to see if they're being over funded ie draw back some of the money from them and if you like, they should be accountable for the way which college funds are spent and for the efficiency of sites and the general efficiency of the college. Making sure the advertising is quite right to attract the students to fill the courses that are on offer and if you like investigate possible growth areas for them.
>
> (A-107/119)

It follows from this that there should be common ownership of the strategic plan:

> (Linking institutional and personal development) seems to me very sensible with certain caveats because that presupposes that everybody in the institution shares

ownership of the strategic plan and if that doesn't happen then there are going to be problems with the strategic plan.

(A-102/27-8)

There was a widely shared view that managers should communicate their own values to lecturers:

> You know it's perfectly likely that there are people here who are very sympathetic to the needs and aims of the college senior management team if anybody ever told us what they were.
>
> (A-106/106)

This gives further weight to the argument that the lecturers were not operating in an isolated or idealistic context; they understood the demands made by incorporation upon management, but found their own value orientation undermined by the way in which the SMT embraced the use of a new educational management jargon, which reflected the needs of accountancy rather than pedagogy, and exacerbated the problem of communication of management purposes:

> It may be a problem in educational management that our changes are never presented that well . . . I have to say that part of their problem is that they don't communicate very well with the staff . . . I mean I don't think they communicate what their plans are, they don't actually have a presence in the college.
>
> (A-103/49, 55)

Many of the management failings that were mentioned by the lecturer group were seen to emanate from an inconsistent and unclear approach to the management of the college. *The following extracts again show an awareness of the need for* management, but take issue with the lack of clarity and purposefulness displayed by the SMT:

> I'd much prefer a strategy that was clear and I disagreed with than the apparent confusion and fog that we are suffering from at the moment.
>
> (A-102/28)

Another lecturer agreed that clarity of management style was important:

> I feel if I knew what it was, if it was simple, top down line management or whatever, based on whatever comes down from the top I could at least cope with it, but just as you feel that you've got a grip on whatever particular style is being employed this week it seems to be different the next week.
>
> (A-105/91)

The issues of clear decision making, individual managerial responsibility and effective communication are clearly highlighted within the following extract as both significant and problematic within the context of the case study college:

> . . . you need to know who, on the senior management team, has a brief for a particular problem that happens to be on your desk at that particular moment. You may not need to take it to senior management, but you need to know that if you did, or if it got to that stage or if you couldn't deal with it or whatever that happened - it takes you days to find out and when you have found out or you think you've found out then it's not actually them. And what does concern me that it seems that most of the senior management team, the senior managers of the college, are behaving as though they are simply advisors, in other words if you've got a problem then they can advise you on various routes you might take, but they won't make a decision. Now that seems to me fine at divisional level, but it's not fine at senior management level because I don't go to a senior manager unless I've got something that I really need to say: 'look this, quite clearly, is your responsibility and I need you to make a decision, can you ring me back and let me know?' You don't go to senior managers for any other reason, I've no need to, there's really not a great deal of point. And there's not a great deal of encouragement here to have an ongoing sort of dialogue with senior management.
>
> (A-105/92)

It is clear from what this lecturer says that the model of management which is being rejected is one which does not assume responsibility for the effective communication and implementation of its policies. A 'dialogue' is expected, even assumed, and it was largely the absence of opportunities to engage in dialogue which drove wedges between lecturers and senior managers. The formalised management style adopted

by the SMT, symbolised by the change in title of the Principal to Chief Executive, the embracing of business jargon, the use of confrontation politics in the run up to incorporation, and the sense which the lecturers had that management did not understand, care about, or value the curriculum activity, all contributed in a major way to stifling dialogue, and prevented even beginning to build upon the areas of commonality which existed.

The evidence of emergent and oppositional cultures within the data reported in this Chapter directed analysis towards the existence of a shared lecturer culture and its characteristics. This territory seemed a fruitful one to pursue, since lecturers themselves clearly felt that the cultural dimension was important to the successful implementation of their role within the incorporated college. It also appeared significant to the writer, since the extent and degree of change which college managers were asking lecturers to take on, including acceptance of new contracts with more flexible working arrangements, and the operation of a new qualifications framework, appeared to be in jeopardy for as long as cultural-political differences between lecturers and college managers were allowed to persist unaddressed. There did seem to be common ground between lecturers and managers, which was not being recognised and therefore capitalised upon by managers. The following Chapter, then, not only develops the themes of difference and diversity in cultural orientation between lecturers and managers, but also explores the importance of the points of articulation which have been identified in the interview data. It identifies the key elements of the lecturers' culture, notes its strength and persistence, and suggests that the extent to which conflict and consensus are resolved within the FE sector is a critical issue for government and institutional managers to address. The final chapter develops this theme further, suggesting that advantages for management development might accrue through a focus upon identifying the range of lecturer

cultures which exist within colleges, their characteristics, and the potential for common or shared meanings and understandings.

Chapter Five

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

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Re-statement of the research problem

A reading of the literature which explores issues related to FE policy and lecturers' practice confirms a broad consensus on the scope and impact of market forces upon the FE sector. Whilst concurring that the pressures towards the creation of a market in education are strong, and particularly difficult for college managers to resist, personal experience and prior research led the present writer to question the penetration of such forces at the level of lecturer practice.

The study therefore set out to explore the territory where lecturers' reported beliefs about educational values are held to be in tension with market driven educational reforms and the institutional responses to such policies. The quality assurance of learning and teaching processes, and the nature and focus of assessment practice, are persistent and powerful areas of contestation within FE, and were anticipated to be key sites of the battle between competing definitions of what is worthwhile and important in education.

The research question which focused the study was: 'do FE lecturers have core values which inform their practice, and, if so, what are they and how are these maintained and articulated in a market-led college context?'

The market, managerialism and lecturers' practice

It is argued in this Chapter that the FE lecturers in this study negotiated their way through the demands of a managerialist culture by maintaining an alternative shared culture centred upon the key arena of their expertise - the teaching and learning process - and which may be termed a pedagogical culture. The degree to which all lecturers share this culture, and the existence or otherwise of other cultures, remains an open question (Hargreaves 1991: 50), although the study by Lortie (1975) of school teaching suggests that the degree of value pluralism among teachers is "modest" (1975: 115). If the interface between lecturer and management culture represented a site of struggle in this FE college, then two of the major battlegrounds were the introduction of competence-based approaches to the accreditation of key aspects of lecturers' practice, and the introduction of formal quality assurance procedures for colleges, including the management and operation of courses. These initiatives are discussed in this Chapter as significant influences which cut across lecturers' understanding of quality and assessment practice, and contributed towards the growth of a managerialist culture within the college. The analysis then proceeds to explore and juxtapose some key features of the pedagogic and managerialist cultures.

The lecturers in this study articulated tensions which remain prevalent in the incorporated further education sector. Foremost was the tension between the lecturers' pedagogic orientation with regard to the purposes and benefits of education, and the contradictory values of the market place which were transparently present in the policies of government and the managerialist culture which informed the practice of college managers. The interview data show quite clearly that lecturers were alive to the realities of incorporation, and in some cases not unsympathetic to some of its advantages:

> I can't say I was in favour of incorporation . . . But in terms of enterprise, in terms of opening up the opportunity to capture markets that weren't there before and so on I think yes it is a good thing.
>
> (A-105/80)

The lecturers shared a concern to develop students' practitioner skills, help them to achieve qualifications and generally facilitate their progression into employment or higher education; these factors were important considerations when the decision was taken by them to offer a full range of BTEC vocational courses in Media and Performing Arts. However, it was the needs of the students rather than those of employers and the labour market which determined the curriculum offer. For these lecturers, whilst acknowledging the external demands of the market, and the students' need to be well prepared and equipped through core skills, work experience and practical competence, the students' engagement with the educational process was paramount. Key dimensions of this process for lecturers were student-centred teaching styles, student-led assignments, negotiated learning, learning by discovery and experiential methods, and fulfilment of student potential. Qualifications were seen very much as means to an end, rather than ends in themselves.

The managerialist culture

The lecturers were fully aware that the pressure to develop financially efficient systems, and to satisfy formula funding criteria, made it inevitable that national and institutional policies were informed and validated by numerical data gathered, coded and analysed using an overwhelmingly quantitative methodology. As one lecturer put it, " it's all to do with numbers, to do with how many people are achieving at such

and such a level, and that will obviously affect how much - it will affect your resources or, in fact, whether you exist as an institution or not" (A-101/18). This trend is characterised in this Chapter as one feature of a managerialist approach which college managers were adopting in order to meet the requirements of incorporation. Lecturers' challenge to this phenomenon is a theme which permeated their responses, reflected in the data presented in the previous Chapter. A particularly revealing indicator of the extent to which the market ideology had penetrated following incorporation is the language register in use by college managers. As one lecturer observed, "almost overnight, we are starting to be encouraged to use a particular language to describe what we do, which in a sense, which has come, which has simply been imported, lock, stock and barrel from the market sector, from the commercial sector" (A-105/86). In some public documents originated by the SMT, there could be found a kind of 'doublespeak' which integrated both business and educational points of reference:

> It is important that we stay ahead of our rivals both now and in the future. There is no monopoly of good ideas within the organisation. If anyone thinks they can improve any of the marketing and enrolment processes, even at this late stage, and whilst they are being operated, we will certainly listen to you. I know that all staff will want to ensure that out students at (College) receive the best education and training possible and that they are well supported throughout their programmes of study. For the organisation to be successful the efforts have to be corporate. We all have to believe that this College can continue to improve and provide a high level of service to all our customers. To achieve this, everyone has to play their part efficiently and effectively in the coming year.
>
> (College Newsletter, August 1993, p. 1)

At internal meetings with CDs, and within management briefing papers, the Principal was a good deal more bullish in terms of market orientation:

> We have to be competitive and cost effective to retain funding, we above all have to deliver a high quality product in a tighter and tighter economic squeeze over the next 3 years (see FEFC 93/24 Recurrent Funding Methodology).... We need to be more business like, we should introduce new contractual terms for staff, we

> need an organisational structure with clear lines of responsibility and accountability.
>
> (Principal's Paper to SMT 3.9.1993)

As pointed out elsewhere (Elliott and Crossley 1994) there is a strong managerialist thrust in the FE sector, which parallels that in HE (Trow 1993: 20), "which emphasises quantitative approaches to the collection of numerical data for performance indicators and as evidence of 'quality' " (Elliott and Crossley 1994: 192). The lecturers, on the other hand, seemed to want to challenge what Becker (1970) has called "a hierarchy of credibility" (1970: 126), and to question whether those with power in the college really did have a more complete and relevant information base than the lecturers themselves.

The making of a managerialist model within the FE sector has certainly not been a one-way, government-led process. FE colleges, which have typically characterised themselves as adaptive and responsive (Theodossin 1989) have generally been quick to respond to their characterisation as businesses by the present government. In the case study college, for example, the Principal reported to Governors in 1990 that the enrolment process was "highly customer-orientated" (Principal's Report 26.9.1990). The enterprise ethic had been well established in FE institutions for some time prior to incorporation, due in no small part to the fact that historically, FE planning has been primarily led by the Employment Department rather than the (then) Department of Education and Science. The FE response has been formulated chiefly in terms of a realignment of its core activity (courses) towards national training schemes and targets, with a wholesale commitment to the delivery (through 'programmes' rather than courses), of NVQs and GNVQs. The economic imperative driving this realignment has been put sharply into focus by the setting up of the FEFCE, whose continued funding is heavily outcome-dependent.

The lecturers worked in a curriculum area which at the time of the study had not yet fully developed NVQs or GNVQs, and their approach to the NVQ framework was chiefly to adopt a 'wait and see' approach:

> I remain open to, you know, I want to see what the lead bodies and so on come up with and actually look at them.
>
> (A-105/88)

Another lecturer thought that the principle of occupationally specific NVQs was a good idea, but had reservations about the way in which they have been introduced:

> I can see advantages provided the NVQs would be written more specifically for certain areas, rather than just having say an area of sound engineering which covers the majority of just film work and missing out the musically side of it completely, which is - I won't say totally different - but quite a different scale to the sound field. So I think fundamentally it's a good idea but the way they're implementing it is not very good.
>
> (A-107/117)

The impact of these curriculum developments upon the lecturers in this study extended beyond the proposed transformation of the courses with which they identified their key functions as course leaders and tutors within a course team framework. It was a requirement for lecturers and others who assessed students for NCVQ qualifications to have, or be working towards, the TDLB assessor and verifier awards. The low regard which the lecturers in this study had for the TDLB awards, and their perceived ineffectiveness when applied within the FE sector for distinguishing good practice, were, it is argued, associated with the inappropriate transfer to an educational context of a model devised for and by management in business and industry, rather than with any reluctance on the part of the lecturers to review their assessment procedures. The TDLB assessor and verifier awards accredit key aspects of lecturers' practice, such as assessment of students' work, operation of accreditation of prior learning, co-ordination of assessment and internal

verification. The awards have their origin in business and industrial training, and were challenged by the lecturers in this study as inappropriate and counter-productive to the key task of learning and teaching. As one put it:

> Well, I think it's a load of nonsense to be honest. I don't think it has any credence at all. Everybody knows that the college has got to get us through it so they probably will - we'll do a bit to make sure they can, I suppose. I think the whole strategy is off the wall. You know, that something that we've been doing for some time, now they come, now we have to supposedly go through some qualification based on what we already do, well we already do it, what's the whole point, why not just hand it out then and post it to everybody?
>
> (A-103/52)

It is the extent to which the awards separate out and isolate procedures which are integral to the broader process of review and analysis of lecturers' own practice which is the target for criticism by some lecturers. Others, whilst welcoming the opportunity to spend time focusing upon assessment which their involvement with the awards provided, nonetheless had reservations about the criteria by which assessment practice was to be assessed. None of the lecturer group considered that work towards the TDLB awards had improved their assessment practice. One reason for this may be the practical difficulty with the use of competence-based approaches for assessing the 'softer' skills which distinguish the expert practitioner, such as the exercise of judgement, intuition, weighing up ethical issues, behaviour under stress, intellectual ability, and balancing competing demands. Such skills are extremely difficult to reproduce - for example by role-play - outside of the work context; they are extremely difficult to infer from observable behaviour; and there is the additional problem of how in practice an assessor might observe performance which may occur spontaneously, infrequently, or worse, only in one-to-one contacts, or in small group contexts, between lecturers and students. The extent to which these approaches undermined the collaborative effort of successfully diverse teams (Belbin 1981) within the division was also problematic. Individual competence is not the same as team or overall competence in this context, and the search for individual

competences as a measure of lecturer effectiveness is misdirected.

The lecturers in this study, who rejected the application of low level competence-based occupational standards to their practice, did so on the grounds that they were reductionist, demeaning, and failed adequately to reflect the range, level, complexity and sophistication of tasks in which they were engaged. One lecturer called it "reductio ad absurd . . . taking it down to the basic level of knowledge, I mean, this person can pick up a pipe and put it down, great, but it tells you nothing about what they can do" (A-102/33). The interview data confirm the view that the use of the TDLB competence framework has further evidenced the de-skilling of lecturers by applying what can be regarded as mechanistic and functional competence criteria to the task of assessing and accrediting students.

Criticism of the use of NCVQ CBE approaches is not limited to their application to lecturer assessment; there is also opposition to their use in determining and defining the limits of the college curriculum. The nomenclature adopted by NCVQ reveals its strong assessment-driven thrust, de-emphasising students, tutors and courses, in favour of candidates, assessors, qualifications and the workplace.

The term candidate is strongly suggestive of a singularity and instrumentalism which de-emphasises group contexts, shared learning experiences, and understanding through enquiry, risk-taking and experimentation. As Hyland (1992d) has argued, this reveals the NCVQ's underlying conception of knowledge as essentially something which can be owned, which is a conception of knowledge that is, he says, "wholly inadequate, viciously materialistic and utterly subversive of educational contexts in which teachers and students are engaged in rational teaching and learning encounters" (1992d:10). The focus upon qualifications, which can be taken and awarded independently of participation in collaborative learning

experiences, de-emphasises the value of such experiences, whilst at the same time undermining the importance of courses, and more especially the value of the teaching and learning process, which is the territory of expertise for the lecturer. A view expressed by one lecturer was that CBE had brought with it a shift away from "letting people develop, express and change opinions and points of view about the place they work in and how it should go on and so on" (A-105/81).

A further pressure upon FE colleges to generate and collect quantitative data was consequent upon the importation of quality assurance systems from manufacturing industry. Such systems operated at both institutional and course level. At the forefront of institutional quality assurance systems being developed in the FE sector at the time of this study was the British Standard (BS) 5750 (BSI 1987). Most TECs were en route to gaining BS 5750 accreditation, and indicated that once accredited, would deal only with colleges and other training providers who themselves had BS 5750 accreditation.

BS 5750 relies upon a system of document control. Fundamental to the system is a manual, which provides the only acceptable evidence that there are procedures in place, to specify what those procedures are, and to detail what happens when something goes wrong. BS 5750 requires member institutions to have fully developed procedures in place for all operations which impact upon their 'product'. Most colleges defined their product as 'student learning', and thus were required to have in place procedures for such operations as student services, course review, assessment strategies, appeals procedures, course management, teaching and learning strategies, and resourcing. Only those procedures deemed by the BS registered institution to be 'within document control' were taken into account. It is not, therefore, difficult to understand why the use of such a procedure was attacked as reductionist when applied to the teaching and learning process; good practice

which fell outside of the manual was not taken into account - nor was bad practice.

The objectification of student learning which results from the above process reflects the restricted epistemological basis upon which the view of student learning as 'a product' is predicated. It is a view grounded in behaviourist psychology, a view which excludes non-observable and non-quantifiable features of action and unintended effects, in favour of the predictable and measurable. Such a view can be empirically sustained by the development and use of quantitative methodologies which can collect, code and analyse the data required for the BSI, to the exclusion of real understanding of educational action, and what Stenhouse calls "improvement of judgement" (1978: 30). Such a reductionist epistemology in fact underlines the whole conceptualisation of education and training upon which the UK NVQ movement is based, and which forms the bedrock of the FE sector. A recent FEFC inspection report on NVQs in FE colleges confirms that NVQs pay less attention to background knowledge, understanding and core skills, compared with the traditional vocational qualifications which they are replacing (FEFC 1994).

Disaggregation of learning is neither unique to the FE sector, nor to this country. The tendency towards "an industrial technocratic mode of operation with the division of labour and learning into digestible units of work" has been noted as a key limitation of distance education as commonly practised (Crossley 1990: 139). It is vital for any analysis of the implications of such rationalist approaches (Lawton 1973), and as preparation for a qualitative critique, that the nature and form of the underlying educational concepts being employed is laid bare.

The introduction of BS 5750 as a quality standard in the case study college provided, for the lecturers in this study, a profound and indicative example of the promotion by college managers of an initiative rooted in a managerialist culture. A key determining

characteristic of quality assurance systems in education has been recognised, by the FE sector's own research and development body, to be the clear preference expressed for quality systems imported from industry (FEU 1991: 3). The requirement, noted above, for the college to specify what it is that it designates as its 'product', provided a clear signal to college managers to apply hard business methodology to their operations, accelerated the process of commodification of the learning and teaching process, and encouraged managers to draw a narrow and technicistic interpretation of the role and function of the college and its staff.

In the case study college it was almost impossible to engage with work on course monitoring, evaluation and review, or to attend a meeting with the SMT, without having to take account of BS 5750 procedures. The procedures defined and modified what lecturers were authorised to do within the college, and provided a measure by which lecturers' actions could be monitored and evaluated. Internal inspection of the system involved lecturers from outside the division acting as auditors by checking that documentation was in place and up to date.

The operation of BS5750 as a quality assurance system had little to do with the sense in which the lecturers in this study refer to the quality of the student learning experience. Whilst, as has been shown, they had no difficulty with formal assessment of quality, the use of performance indicators, and the general notion of external accountability, it seems clear that around the notion of quality within the college there was a major ideological battleground. Within the managerialist culture, the term had been inseparably linked to notions of efficiency, accountability to a mechanistic and inappropriate standard, and cost-effectiveness. This association was supported by government policy which did not see any contradiction between notions of efficiency or competition in education, and quality of learning; on the contrary, it would argue that the operation of market forces gave students a better

deal.

The key issue at the heart of the debate concerning the use of quality systems concerns the multiple understandings by stakeholders in the system about notions of autonomy and freedom. Certainly the lecturers in this study felt that managers were pressing to gain more control over the teaching and learning process following incorporation - what one lecturer called "the blanket approach" (A-103/48) - and they were agreed that the proposed new conditions of service for lecturing staff were symptomatic of such a trend (Ward 1993).

In the case study college some staff felt obliged to implement many of the new systems, including BS 5750, in order not to cause difficulties for themselves and their students. As one lecturer put it:

> Where funding is according to outcome and the kind of funding that you're going to have for your course next year, and the kind of resources that you're going to be able to put into place next year, then there's clearly a conflict of interests, because you don't want to be seen to be not achieving the required standard, you don't want students to fail if it's going to impede your ability to deliver to your next cohort of students.
>
> (A-106/104)

However, a warning note for college managers is that compliance does not necessarily mean that innovations will be implemented in full (Joyce and Showers 1988), and it can breed mediocrity (Becher and Kogan 1992: 180).

The hostility of most staff to managerialist culture found its expression in what Firestone and Corbett (1988: 324) call 'co-optation'. In one instance, a failure to take the pre-existing practices of the division into account in determining human resourcing policy led to less efficient part-time staffing allocations being made. A policy which had served its purpose in other divisions was applied without question

to a division which was, in fact, operating a more efficient system. The combination of myth, division of SMT responsibility and uncritical application of numerical formula to dynamic practice was enough to undermine one of the key elements of the managerialist culture: that of the efficient and effective college. This worked against the development of a sense of ownership of the managerialist culture (Miles 1987). The consequences of this were that the ability of SMT to manage essential strategic functions was called into question, and a negative-efficiency factor was built into everyday practice.

The SMT's policy of not empowering staff, but holding onto decision-taking roles, ran counter to Fullan's (1991) prescription for successful change processes, which are "characterised by collaboration and close interaction among those central to carrying out the changes" (1991: 349). This perspective was strongly endorsed by one lecturer, whose view was a typical one:

> I think that if the college wanted to find ways of saving money, which seems to be their one goal in life, then that could be done if the decisions were put in the hands of the people delivering the curriculum, because they would know what is achievable and what isn't . . . .
>
> (A-103/48)

There were a large number of 'bad' management decisions, variously described by lecturers in the study as heavy-handed, hierarchical and incompetent, which impacted upon the day to day working practices of staff in an irksome and unpleasant manner. Resentment built resistance, which served to feed a counter-culture, sustained and supported by the activity of undermining initiatives which were designed to build a unified corporate culture.

For the lecturing staff in this study, it is where managerialism impacted and impinged upon the area of work which they regard as their central concern - the teaching and

learning process - that most opposition occurred. What one lecturer described as "almost an ivory tower mentality" (A-103/55) amongst the college managers was recognised by all lecturers in the study. They were without exception appalled by the reductionist notion of education as a business, because business prioritises different values to education. One lecturer highlighted the different philosophical basis of managerialism:

> It is actually a change of philosophy from what is the most important thing is the student, the individual student, the individual pupil - what now appears, or what my perception of it is, is that the most important thing is an efficiently run organisation.
>
> (A-101/6)

Lecturers' opposition to managerialism expressed itself in a variety of ways, depending upon the nature of the perceived threat - did it threaten to impact upon valued practice, or was it something that could be ignored or mocked? Where the threat was perceived as to be to the quality of teaching and learning, then lecturers responded with the resources at their disposal. Their response was not bloody-minded, nor was it without sympathy or understanding for the predicament in which college managers found themselves in having to implement government and FEFCE policies. Sometimes the resistance was overt, where, for example, only one of the lecturers in the study complied with the requirement to keep the BS5750 manual up to date. In other cases, lecturers engaged in what one called "subversive, rather than overt, confrontation" (A-103/58); creative timetabling, and post hoc completion of registers, were common practices of this kind. However variable their responses may have been, and they differed in scope, type, and style, they were invariably grounded in an epistemological certainty as to the enduring value of lecturer-student interaction. This certainty was expressed through a firm belief in the lecturer's responsibility to meet the needs of the student, rather than institutional or systemic needs. As one lecturer put it:

> I think sometimes there is a kind of agenda for FE which serves the political

> needs of a particular government, or a set of ideas, rather than the educational needs of the people that it claims to serve.
>
> (A-106/107)

This view confirms the centrality, for lecturers themselves, of fully taking into account the orientations of the learner (Guy 1990: 203). Underlying this belief was a recognition of the essential humanity of the student, and the importance, for the development of the potential of the student, of the lecturer's influence, guidance, and communication of knowledge and understanding. This commitment on the part of lecturers was often expressed practically in terms of "trying to create a learning environment" (A-103/51).

The pedagogic culture

It is difficult to overestimate the genuine concern and frustration felt by lecturing staff at the position in which college managers had been placed by government policy for the FE sector, and at the ways in which their managers had chosen to interpret and carry through their tasks. Whether the SMT were predisposed to a managerialist ethos prior to incorporation is beyond the scope of this study to determine. What seems clear, however, is that incorporation had provided both an impetus and a rationale for such an ethos. The lecturers were left with an overwhelming feeling of frustration, which is summed up by the following comment:

> . . . the staff aren't motivated because they don't know what the heck's happening because of incorporation, because it's a business now.
>
> (A-104/65)

Lecturers felt at odds with the increasing dominant managerialist culture, evidenced

by HRM approaches to college management; the use of quality assurance systems, which prioritised business methodology which lecturers found alien and inappropriate; the application of the TDLB awards to a critical aspect of the lecturing role itself and the perceived reductionist character of these awards; and the undermining of the very task of teaching and engaging in shared learning experiences with students, through the adoption of a competence-based qualification framework under NCVQ which prioritised work-based experience over classroom experience.

Lecturers themselves, on the other hand, within this study, managed to maintain a view of their task which enabled them to satisfy the increasing calls upon them to meet the requirements of industry, whilst at the same time preserving a strong student-centred focus. The interview data point to a model of teaching and learning which was collaborative, affirmed equality of status between lecturer and student, and which privileged the exercise of a critical intelligence as an essential part of the preparation of students for higher education and employment. This model is, it can be seen, one which is very appropriate for the FE sector, where an increasing proportion of students are mature adults who are returning to an education system which may have failed them in the past. It is one which can meet the objectives and preferred learning outcomes specified by NCVQ, but in ways which give added value, over and above a narrow mechanistic following of an outcome-based competency framework.

A significant achievement of these lecturers was to achieve success in examination results for their students, whilst at the same time rejecting the narrow definition of their role which seemed to them to be introduced through the imposition of business culture within the college. The strong sense of dismay and outrage felt by the lecturers in this study, at the lack of understanding and communication on the part of

the college management, provided a sharp counterpoint to their view of the appropriate relationships to be developed with students.

It is perhaps not surprising, at a time when educational values and the value of education seem to be under maximum threat from policy-driven initiatives, directed towards the achievement of NTETS, and externally imposed performance indicators, that lecturers have been concerned to articulate and confirm their commitment to a counter-balancing theoretical orientation which underpinned their practice, and sustained it in the face of a strong managerialist alternative. This orientation was expressed in terms of a student-centred approach shared by the lecturers in the division which is the focus of this study.

However it is significant that the lecturers in this study were prepared to go along with the notion of the application of performance indicators, and formal quality assurance procedures to their work in the creative arts. In the case of the TDLB awards, they were criticised less for their intention than for the language associated with them and their wholesale introduction in what was seen to be an inappropriate and insensitive manner. Very similar objections were raised about the introduction of quality assurance systems in general, and BS5750 in particular. The lecturers were not against the notion of external accountability, or the need to formally assure the quality of the curriculum offer. One lecturer, who had previously worked in arts organisations, could see no problem in applying performance indicators to education:

> Again I really don't have a problem with applying some sort of judgement as to whether things are successful or unsuccessful - we do it all the time in the theatre and we know very well in theatre, more so than you do in fine art - that if you have something that people don't like they won't come and you have an empty house the second night and we test our ideas whether we have achieved what we set out to do . . . How you do that we can discuss, but I don't mind my performance being judged.
>
> (A-102/36-7)

Another lecturer, who was consistently critical of the importation of business procedures like BS5750 into education, nonetheless understood, through his experience of working in fringe theatre, the demands of the market upon non profit organisations:

> . . . organisations like small theatre companies have been forced to become much more businesses.
>
> (A-101/10)

None of the lecturers had concerns over the use of external assessment and evaluation of aspects of their work. The following comment was typical:

> . . . if a performance indicator is assessed externally it seems to me that whether or not you agree with the criteria which is being assessed, it is at least a genuine assessment.
>
> (A-106/104)

Similarly, there was general agreement amongst these lecturers that management appraisal of lecturers could be a positive process as long as it was carried out at an appropriate level and by appropriate people:

> . . . it seems to me that appraisal is a perfectly reasonable process to take place as it does in industry and so on and elsewhere . . . I have no objection in principle to an appraisal system, but I think it has to be seen as very positive not as a very basic level of checking people's competencies and ability.
>
> (A-105/82, 83)

> I think appraisals are a good idea, but there's always a danger that if it has to be by other professionals who are involved within the field, rather than someone who has no knowledge of the technicalities of the course that's going on . . . I mean I wouldn't like it to happen very often, but I would think that every so often it's fair.
>
> (A-107/113)

The lecturers were highly supportive of applying the process of monitoring and review to all their activities, and recognised the need to formalise the process in order

to ensure that time is allocated to it:

> I think monitoring of what you're doing is fine. I've got no objection to appraisal at all, in fact I welcome it quite often, appraisal is an opportunity for you to appraise what you're doing, you don't always have time unless there is system that enables you to make time to do that, so I'm actually in favour of it.
>
> (A-101/11)

Similarly, there is evidence to suggest that these lecturers would support an approach, such as that used within the 'Investors in People' initiative, where individual needs are evaluated in light of their correspondence with the needs of the organisation:

> . . . your training or your personal development will be supported as long as it fits in with the organisation. That's the same with any organisation . . . you only get things paid for that benefit the organisation.
>
> (A-101/11)

In their relationship with their students, the lecturers rejected the trappings of the market and the language of business and perceived of themselves as co-investigators; their language reflects notions of sharing, participating, and exploring with students. As one put it, "you're throwing lots of responsibility back onto the students and you're fighting with that responsibility, you're giving them the choice . . ." (A-104/64). On the other hand, in their relationship with college managers, the lecturers seemed to feel themselves to be the oppressed - of little value, recipients of top down communication, and not to be trusted or taken into confidence.

Faced with this situation, it was the reflective practice of the lecturers which enabled them to sustain a sense of value and worthwhileness in terms of their interaction with students, and in the strategies which they employed in order to ensure that the relationship with students and the teaching and learning process was not diminished.

The lecturers were thus engaged in a political struggle on behalf of their students, who were being let down and failed by a system in process of being re-designed by college managers to serve the needs of administration and managerialism, rather than of pedagogy and learning.

The collaborative teaching and learning model suggested by the data is very close to Freire's (1972) notion of co-intentional education introduced in Chapter Two. Co-intentional and banking models of educational practice both describe and explain the relationships between lecturing staff and students on the one hand, and college managers on the other. By according the teaching and learning process the highest priority, the lecturers in this study were asserting the relevance and importance of their expertise, and at the same time rejecting the imposed business ethic which would have diluted their contribution. This model rejects the commodification of education, which has been accelerated by the use of quantitative performance indicators and quality assurance systems. In practice the lecturers' were realistically aware of the competitive environment in which they worked, but nonetheless were at pains to prioritise what they saw as the core business. The view of education as a 'product' which they give or pass on to students was rejected by these lecturers. By asserting the centrality of a pedagogical orientation which centres upon students' needs, lecturers presented a powerful alliance for managing change. Educational policy and managerialist strategies which were regarded by them as subversive of critical pedagogy were resisted. On the other hand, opportunities to underline their pedagogical orientation, through adaptation or other strategies, were seldom missed, in order to buttress their position within the institution, and safeguard the arena of their expertise.

Central to all this was the political dimension of the lecturers' critical pedagogy. The aim of it was to direct themselves and their students towards an understanding of the

socio-economic conditions within which teaching and learning took place. In other words, to develop an understanding that education is political in nature. Attempts to undervalue the contribution and role of lecturers, to limit the curriculum to a narrow range of vocationally related competences, and to gauge the effectiveness of the FE college by a set of quantitative indicators derived from manufacturing industry, are manifestations of the politicisation of education which has been launched by the present conservative administration, and perpetrated by college managers who have been given little option but to implement governmental reforms, often with little training or development to support them in the task.

It was noted in Chapter Two that Freire's notion of 'conscientisation' refers to the development of a critical consciousness to a level where individuals can achieve a sufficient degree of social and political awareness to understand contradictions within society, and to work to transform it. This notion is in accord with the rationale used by the lecturers in this study for the priority which they accorded in a working day to engagement with their students. Many of the lecturers frequently spoke in terms of 'empowering' students, and making them aware of the economic and social influences upon them. One lecturer saw his role as to encourage in students "an understanding of being able to read and interpret the things that they see and do . . . because it shapes their perceptions" (A-106/102-3). No lecturers, however, perceived of this role in isolation. The changing context of the FE sector, and the internal changes within the college gave the framework for the lecturers' actions, and underlined, in many cases, the critical importance of holding onto a learner centred perspective. These twin concerns are put into focus by this lecturer:

> . . . there are institutional needs, but a good lecturer should take institutional needs into account. That to me is part of the definition of somebody who's worth the job or not. They have to constantly balance those institutional needs with student needs and whatever individual needs of course, that's part of the process.
>
> (A-105/91)

It is the high level of awareness in relation to the social and institutional context of action which lends weight to the notion of conscientisation which is characterised by critical enquiry, rather than pre-formed answers.

The importance which Freire accords to communication and dialogue, in allowing individuals to realise their humanity, resonates strongly both with the lecturers' belief in developing rapport and dialogue with students, and with their resentment at the refusal or inability of the SMT to communicate its strategies and policies to the staff as a whole. As one lecturer noted, "there seems to be no respect for the teaching staff at all . . . . They are not prepared to take an interest in what courses involve, I mean to personally come down and see what's happening" (A-107/110-11).

For Freire, the development of a critical awareness of self is a central task, which is achieved by the development of 'praxis' - the synthesis between reflection and action. This squares the circle, for it is here that we return to the notion of the lecturer as a reflective practitioner, and repeat the key point that reflective practice is a political act.

It should be pointed out that Freire's notions of critical pedagogy, praxis and conscientisation are lenses through which the lecturers' reported views are interpreted, rather than terms which they themselves use. The value of the notions, however, is in identifying a basis for an FE-located educational theory which is grounded in the central concern of lecturers, viz: teaching and learning as reflective practice - as a political and self-critical process - and locating this in relation to existing theoretical analysis.

This Chapter has presented an analysis and interpretation of the data which has been

suggestive of the existence of a pedagogic culture amongst a group of FE lecturers. This culture has been characterised as embodying a perspective of reflective practice which balances a concern with the improvement of the quality of the student learning experience with an understanding of, and a pragmatic, measured response to, the reality of a competitive market in education. It has been argued that this perspective has influenced lecturers' responses to prevalent policy trends in a college which is run by an SMT with a strong managerialist culture. It has been suggested that managerialist and pedagogic cultures co-existed in this college, creating and sustaining cross-cutting tensions and contradictions, fuelled by failures in communication. There are many signs - in press reports, union publications, and published research - that the trends noted in this study are not isolated or local phenomena. There are urgent implications arising from this study for the FE sector. Also, given the broader context within which education must be set, and the widely acknowledged impact of the market upon education and other public sector services internationally, the implications of this study may resonate beyond the English FE sector from which it is drawn.

The final Chapter highlights the potential of this study for conceptualising FE lecturers' practice, and for informing the agenda and methodology of management studies.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSIONS: UNDERSTANDING LECTURING AND ITS IMPORTANCE AS A MANAGEMENT ISSUE

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This final Chapter draws together and focuses the key themes and issues raised by the study, and highlights their strategic importance for college managers. The first two sections highlight the implications for lecturers and managers in the FE sector, whilst a final section explores the potential of qualitative research methods for management studies and the staff development of college managers. It is suggested that qualitative research and evaluation methodologies can both be illuminative for college managers in revealing the epistemology underlying the current preference for a rational-technical managerialism, and valuable for them in establishing alternative criteria for quality based more squarely upon pedagogic considerations.

Advantages of a reflective practitioner model of lecturing

A significant advantage to FE lecturers of the notion of the reflective practitioner is that it provides a conceptual framework within which the complexities, tensions and contradictions of their work can be explored, and at the same time it provides a reference point against which the intrinsic value of their practice can be judged. Carr (1992: 251) argues that only the reflective teacher can adequately engage with the

moral and evaluative roots and the complexity of educational discourse. To reconstruct the lecturer as a reflective practitioner draws attention to the relationship of the lecturer with the range of types and levels of activity which constitute his or her own practice, and to the barriers to the implementation of policy-driven change. The potential for lecturers to inform and influence policy, and the process by which lecturers make considered responses to political, cultural and technological change, and devise considered strategies to contain or exploit both intended and unintended consequences, are also key issues which are given prominence within a reflective practice model of lecturing.

One major gain of such a perspective is that it achieves a defensible conception of educational theory, which resonates with Pring's (1978) definition of theory as "critical and systematic reflection on practice", and meets his earlier criticism of educational theory, that it is "generally divorced from educational practice" (Pring 1976: 19). Another major gain of this approach is that it can link lecturing in FE with an important and influential body of literature, providing a theoretical and conceptual orientation which has the capacity to inform, improve and, perhaps most important at the present time, value lecturers' own reflective practice against the impositions of market-based policies at national and institutional level.

Further implications of the reflective practitioner model for theory are pointed up by Griffiths and Tann (1991):

> *... reflective teaching requires that public theories are translated into personal ones and vice versa, unless teachers are going to allow themselves to be turned into low-level operatives, content with carrying out their tasks more and more efficiently, while remaining blind to larger issues of the underlying purposes and results of schooling.*
>
> (1991: 100)

Reflective practice entails that the lecturer carries out his or her work towards ethical

ends, which may characteristically be expressed by them altruistically. The work, no matter how varied, how menial in parts, is underpinned by a notion of educational worth.

Schratz (1993a, 1993b) has reported gains in the development of a culture of self-evaluation and personnel development across disciplines through an action research programme promoting a model of reflection-in-action within a higher education institution. Elliott (1989), Adler (1993) and Merryfield (1993) have similarly highlighted the advantages of focusing on reflection as a critical component in teacher education.

Singh (1994) argues that the reflective practice model has presaged a broadening consensus as to the desirability of developing, in school pupils, critical thinking skills, this approach being underpinned, he suggests, by the settlement of notions of cultural pluralism within a framework of universal moral principles.

In addition to the benefits at the level of practice, there are significant gains at the level of theory to a reflective practitioner model. Constructing reflective practice as an epistemology, rather than a methodology, *frees it from* the theoretical straitjacket of any single research tradition and opens up the possibility of exploring practice from a variety of perspectives. Reflective practice has been closely associated in the literature with the action research tradition, but such an association may not have been helpful. Action research has been soundly criticised for conceptual naiveté, inadequate theory formulation, and a demonstrable failure to realise its potential to bring about significant change (see eg Adelman 1989: 177 8).

Skilbeck (1983), on the other hand, has noted the benefits for "teachers in school, educational advisers and academics who are carrying forward a general style of

reflective inquiry of which Stenhouse is the principal luminary" (1983: 18). In their study of teacher-researchers on a university course, Vulliamy and Webb (1992) found "that the in-depth reflection on practice, promoted on the course by case study and action research, often made a major contribution to participants' professional development and led to changes in policy and practice for which they were responsible" (1992: 43).

It is of critical importance to a teacher education agenda for the incorporated FE sector that the inter-relationship, noted in this study, between lecturer pedagogy, education policy and managerialist HRM strategies, is fully explored in order to question what Gore (1993) calls the "regime of pedagogy", which assumes that such issues are unproblematic (1993: 144). It is here argued that only by exhorting trainee lecturers critically to examine their practice - to engage in reflective practice as a political act directed towards change and improvement - that the damaging effects of policy and managerialist practice, noted in this study at the level of practical action within the FE sector, might be ameliorated.

The tension between the two central themes in this study - the market in education and lecturers' reflective practice - has pointed up an important policy issue. Attempts by college managers to impose a particular type of business ethic within the college appear to have been resisted by lecturers in this case study. The data show that the lecturers were not resistant to business methods and practices per se; on the contrary, on issues such as appraisal, the use of external performance indicators, and in relation to the autonomy brought about by incorporation, lecturers could, in many cases, see clear advantages of such initiatives. It is clear, however, that lecturers actively evaluated new developments and changes on their merits. New initiatives were seldom pre-judged, but were addressed in relation to their perceived benefits for the students. Where, for example, external performance indicators were

perceived to assist lecturers in developing and improving their practice, or encouraged them to reflect upon and review the effectiveness of their teaching, they were welcomed. Lecturers had clear and shared priorities which were seldom far from the surface. These priorities acted as a benchmark, against which both education policy and the practices and procedures of senior managers were measured. Crucially, even where lecturers were sympathetic to the difficulties faced by senior managers dealing with incorporation, or where they could see advantages with formalised procedures, they remained very resistant to such procedures. It appears that it was the manner and style of implementation, rather than the initiatives themselves, that provoked the hostility and antagonism which characterised relations between lecturers and managers. If the suggestion that these lecturers were a critical factor in the transmission of policy at the level of teaching and learning is more generally true, this holds some significance for those who wish to explore the conditions under which policy for the sector may be successfully implemented.

Future study may need to assess how far policy makers may underestimate the extent to which their policies provoke resistance, especially if they fail to understand the degree to which lecturers' resistance is circumscribed by their cultural and ideological assumptions and dispositions. Managers, too, may underplay these factors, and may fail accurately to 'read' the real potential, illustrated within this study, for changing practice and procedures in their colleges. It is of major importance to recognise that policymakers and managers alike may reap practical benefits by questioning the logic of their assumptions with regard to lecturers' practice.

If, as this study suggests, lecturers are, potentially and in practice, open to the benefits of innovation, it is in managers' interest actively to explore the extent to which, and under what conditions, lecturers are prepared to review and amend their

practice. By the same token, it seems likely to be counter-productive if managers set up mechanistic and system-serving procedures which lecturers regard as against their own and their students' best interests. Time and again lecturers reported that the managers in this college failed to communicate their intentions or signal their policies to staff. The effect of this was that dialogue seldom occurred, and, as a consequence, for the most part lecturers felt alienated and disempowered.

Short term resolution of the cultural tensions highlighted in this study may well be difficult. It is suggested that the FE college was a 'site of struggle' in which competing ideologies were fought out for dominance. In practice, it seems that both co-existed, giving rise to an on-going state of mutual hostility, characterised by miscommunication, noncompliance, misunderstanding of practice and lack of support. The tensions and dilemmas which are reflected in the data confirm the analysis of Ball and Bowe (1991), which suggests that a management strategy of market-led planning in educational institutions will generate value changes which become polarised into two cross-cutting oppositions:

> *One is concerned with institutional goals and priorities, placing 'educating' students above and against marketing, while the other is related to organisational control and managing, which are considerations that are set above and against consulting.*
>
> (1991: 27)

Their model, highlighting conflicting forces within education, was confirmed by the evidence of the lecturers' accounts. An adapted model for FE is therefore proposed (Figure 3) upon which future research might build. It is beyond the scope of this study to propose comprehensive national or organisational policy solutions to tensions that may well be played out in FE colleges and other educational institutions. It is a matter for further investigation as to the extent to which the tensions and themes identified in this study are typical or indicative of situations

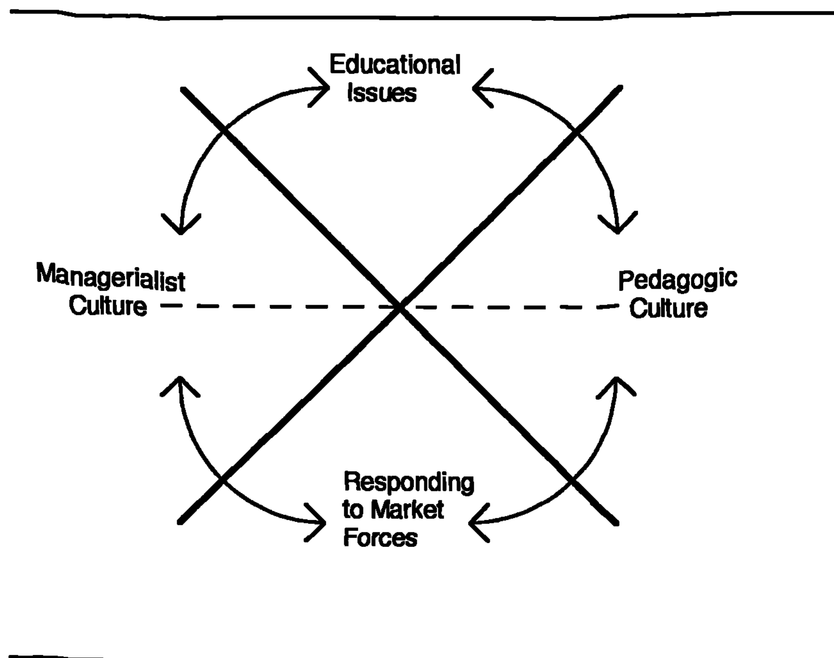

Figure 3 Tensions and dilemmas in the incorporated FE sector (with an acknowledgement to Ball and Bowe 1991: 27)

elsewhere. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the phenomenon of a clash of culture between college managers and lecturers is not new, but also that the consequences have been more direct, and more readily apparent, following incorporation. This is a view which is supported both by the myriad internal college disputes, and extensive nationwide union action, following the imposition of new contracts and conditions of service for FE lecturing staff.

Implications of the study for college managers

As argued elsewhere (Elliott and Hall 1994: 3-4) and as shown in this study, the FE sector is being forced by external pressure from a service to a business orientation,

which is having an impact upon management strategies and styles. Incorporation can be seen both as a consequence and a development of this trend, and it has been suggested that significant responses by college managers to the newly incorporated status of their colleges have been the introduction of HRM strategies, and formal quality assurance systems, which help them meet the system demands of incorporation, and at the same time undermine and help to bring about the marginalisation of a pedagogic orientation at both strategic and operational levels.

The evidence of the mismatch, from the point of view of the lecturers in this study, between their pedagogic culture and the managerialist culture of the senior college managers is important. FE colleges have been urged to adopt a more businesslike approach to the conduct of their operations. Management literature (eg Peters and Waterman 1982) in use in recent years at the Staff College in the management development of college managers, proposes the development and achievement of organisational excellence through a focus upon 'customer service'. The NVQs in customer service are being introduced for lecturing staff in some English FE colleges, including the case study college. However the evidence of this study points to a significant barrier to the implementation of such business derived strategies. Without adapting such initiatives so that they support or correspond with the lecturers' pedagogic orientation, and without effective communication of the purpose and benefits of such initiatives, they seem doomed to failure (McBean 1994). It seems more than possible that lecturers' adaptations made in relation to the new initiatives, student-centred approaches, and orientation towards improving the learning experience for their students, have been confused by senior college managers for 'customer service'. This slippage appears to have occurred in a pre-incorporation study by Frain (1993) of the Liverpool FE college where he was principal, where it is stated:

It is easy to discern the quality, reliability and loyalty in client relationships . . .

replicated in the attitudes of staff to so many of the College's students and client organizations. Management had felt that one of its primary tasks was to further foster the client-led attitude already internalized by many staff.

(Frain 1993: 183)

If the senior managers in the case study college were making this kind of assumption, then the need for them to recognise the existence of competing cultures becomes apparent and urgent.

It is doubtful, however, whether a simple change of strategy would be sufficient to persuade lecturing staff to embrace managerialist policies, particularly those which centre around HRM and quality assurance procedures, which determine and potentially limit the lecturers' ability to carry out their pedagogical role in relation to their students. The depth and extent of difference between the two cultures evidenced in this study, suggests that it is only by significantly modifying such managerialist approaches that college managers can turn resistance into co-operation and collaboration.

The extent to which most lecturers in the study had a sophisticated appreciation of the system demands of incorporation, appreciated the difficulty and responsibility of the management role, and supported initiatives such as appraisal, exposes as a myth the view, promulgated by the CEF, that lecturers are backward-looking and resistant to change. Whilst lecturers were not powerless to act within the college, they were, as a matter of policy, disempowered in relation to the key decision-making processes. Staff consultation was rare, and when it did occur, bore the hallmark of tokenism. The consistent view of the lecturing staff was that the SMT were out of touch; indeed it has been seen that a recurring theme within the data has to do with the perceived distance between the activities and concerns of college managers and those of lecturers who are primarily concerned with teaching students.

One way forward would be for colleges to eschew managerialist strategies in favour of a strategy of empowerment of their lecturing staff. Central to this notion is a view of staff which is diametrically opposed to the HRM model identified as operational in the college which is the focus of this study. Empowerment involves a management commitment to the provision of staff development opportunities for lecturers in the processes and systems which would enable them to carry out both lower and higher level decision-making within the institution. Lecturers, thus equipped, could be given control over the resourcing and staffing requirements of their areas, albeit within an allotted budget. Other areas, such as marketing, recruitment, student services, can be organised centrally or devolved as a matter of college policy. It is the resourcing decision, and the key issues to do with the selection and control of the curriculum, which need to be prioritised for devolution to individual lecturers and to the smallest unit of operational activity within the college structure, the course team. The view that lecturers, as those closest to the area of curriculum operations, are in the best position to take decisions affecting that area, is consistent with some influential management thinking (eg Peters 1989) that 'de-layering' is an effective way of increasing organisational efficiency and effectiveness.

One form of empowerment which might have potential for bridging cultural differences between college managers and lecturers would be the use of quality assurance systems which are grounded in the everyday practice of lecturers. The present study suggests that review and evaluation models being developed prior to incorporation (Miller and Innis 1990) hold most potential for satisfying criteria which lecturers hold as important: straightforward, related to lecturing and teaching, consistent with existing practice in curriculum review and evaluation, legitimated at the point of delivery, ie involving student representation.

An important principle of empowerment, and a reason why it is resisted by

managers, is that it involves both letting go of power from the centre, and at the same time continuing to take overall responsibility for the actions of junior staff (Gretton 1995: 22). Managers baulk at the prospect of 'losing control' in this way. In fact, the reverse becomes possible, since a situation where accountability is bottom-up, and information flows from the top down is changed to one where a two-way direction of accountability and information occurs. Managers are accountable for putting in place appropriate staff development programmes to enable staff to develop the necessary management skills, whilst staff are responsible for making sure that managers are kept fully briefed as to the outcomes of decisions taken on the ground within the lecturer's remit which require addressing at a higher or wider level within the organisation.

Central to this model, however, is agreement upon, or at least a mutual recognition of what might count as, legitimate lecturing work. The ongoing introduction of formal appraisal systems for lecturers in FE colleges has not led to any systematic attempt to categorise and describe what lecturers do. Clearly appraisal is going to be problematic in circumstances where there is ambiguity, disagreement or ignorance about what does and should constitute legitimate, effective and purposeful activity for lecturers. As Day and Pennington (1993) have pointed out, in the context of teacher staff development, efficiency and effectiveness demand that "it is vital that key commitments, qualities, knowledge, skills and tasks of teachers are identified" (1993: 251).

There are, therefore, pressing and highly pertinent operational and strategic advantages for college managers to identifying and understanding what lecturers do. Whilst colleges may vary in their commitment to the personal development of their lecturing staff, if there is an implementation gap between what managers expect lecturers to do, what lecturers feel they should do, and what they do do, it would be

as well for both parties to be aware of it.

Managers could, it is argued, effectively discharge their responsibility to manage change by adopting a reflective practice perspective, which has the potential to turn managers away from managerialist approaches, towards "a clearer theory of reflective management" (Lomas 1993: 76). Duignan (1989: 78) similarly stresses the benefits of reflective practice for educational managers and other practitioners who wish to engage in successful management of change. There are also benefits of the model for learning support for school managers (Wallace 1991: 35), especially in facilitating the making of connections between theory and practice.

In the conclusion to a case study of a Liverpool college cited earlier, Frain (1993) foresees that colleges which will flourish under incorporation will be those which take decisive action:

> *The organizations that survive and prosper in the face of increasing pressure to innovate will possess nimble leadership and will establish an organization-wide creative and innovative culture.*
>
> (1993: 191)

To the extent that this prescription for success ignores the need for college managers to recognise *existing* lecturer cultures which are oppositional to those carried by managers, it will fail.

As this study has shown, there is, within the lecturing force, a degree of commonality with managers on a range of issues, such as the need for effective external and internal evaluation of practice, fundamental to the successful management of change. What the study has not tested is the extent to which college managers would be prepared to forego managerialist approaches in order to accommodate lecturers' priorities as a vehicle for further change and reform. It is

unlikely, given the competing priorities of managerialist and pedagogic cultures, that significant progress will be made without considerable accommodations on both sides. The evidence of this study is that the lecturers, whilst having a deep-seated commitment to pedagogic values, have endorsed a number of new initiatives where they have identified benefits for themselves or their students. What appears, therefore, to be missing is a response from the managers which is communicated effectively to all other staff.

The penetration and persistence of a pedagogic work culture, which is diametrically opposed to many elements of the managerialist culture which may be found within an FE college, must at least be recognised and then accommodated, within any strategy for the establishment of a new adaptive culture for the 21st century. Not only must college managers share their responsibility for changing the culture, as Frain notes (1993: 192), but they must also recognise the existence and legitimacy of existing cultures, which have supported and propelled the FE sector into the prominent and successful position which is fully recognised and celebrated in the text of the 1991 FE White Paper (DES 1991).

The potential of qualitative research methods for management studies

This final section explores some implications of the dissertation for the study of management and the development of college managers. In an earlier paper (Elliott and Crossley 1994), it was noted that external pressures following incorporation have made it more likely that college managers will seek out quantitative data in order to meet performance indicators and to satisfy funding criteria. It was argued that such a trend needs to be counter-balanced by a concern with the consequences of policy decisions in practice, at the level of educational action, and that methodologies

inspired by principles of qualitative research, "in particular case study and practitioner research - are ideally suited to such a task" (1994: 188). Given the climate of change in the FE sector, grounded theory approaches would appear to have much potential for managers and others wishing to follow Stenhouse (1978) in exploring the implications of policy at the level of action, thus engaging with the macro as well as the micro context. As discussed elsewhere:

> *The implication that educational policy at the national level determines a particular pattern or mode of decision-making throughout an institution should be resisted. To do so will involve managers, researchers, and others who wish to know, seeking out different understandings and differing practices within educational institutions.*
>
> (Elliott 1993:39)

The culture gap which is held to exist between managers and lecturers may, in part, be a consequence of the neglect of qualitative information on the part of college managers. For example, an understanding of the real and deeply-held orientation to a student-centred pedagogy, evidenced amongst all the lecturers in this study, might point college managers towards a more collegial mode of college organisation, within which such concerns might not only be expressed, but, more positively incorporated in the fabric of college organisational systems.

In the present context of rapid change which characterises the FE sector, it remains essential that policy and managerial decisions are accompanied by "effective monitoring and feedback" (Stenhouse 1978: 29), in order to assess the impact of short and medium term strategic planning. It is also vital that educational action, as the carrying out of the consequences of decisions in practice, is accompanied by "moment to moment judgement" (ibid), in order that the effects of new policy can be effectively evaluated to ensure the quality of educational experience.

In examining the potential contribution of qualitative research and evaluation for

management information, it is important to be clear about the implications of the rise, noted earlier, of the 'quality and accountability' movement in the post-compulsory sector. This movement is wedded to analyses which are based almost exclusively upon quantitative data. If managers, therefore, wish to question such analyses, it becomes necessary to present alternative data, grounded in the distinctive characteristics of each institution. The reason for this is that the data collected and analysed using quantitative methodologies are typically of such a simplistic nature that there is, in fact, little room for manoeuvre on interpretation of the data itself.

Quantitative research - which is broad brush, which focuses on macro issues, which is carried out by external research staff, which is designed to investigate the existence of evidence in relation to preset indicators, which does not concern itself with the singular characteristics of institutions, their environments, or their practices - tends to undervalue the practitioner as a resource, and in so doing, undervalues the importance of the pedagogic process itself. Hence the emphasis in current debates on 'quality' in education is upon measurable and observable outcomes of an education system which, many would argue, is in the process of being hijacked by accountants and business managers whose profit - loss, efficiency led ideology is occupying every corner of compulsory and post-compulsory education.

Against this background, it is here argued that for the education manager there is much to be gained from increased attention to qualitative research strategies, and in particular those that support and encourage practitioner research, and which focus upon the quality of the curriculum offered to students (Kershaw 1994). Managers, by virtue of their position in the organisational structure, will be in possession of a wealth of data in the form of reported information, both documentary and oral, as well as a vast store of data arising from everyday experience, knowledge and understanding. These data will be in many ways unique both to the individual and to

the institution. The research strategy which stands to maximise the use of such data is practitioner research, which is here used in the sense suggested by Webb, of a catch-all term to refer to "case-study research and evaluation and action research undertaken by teachers, advisers, lecturers and others who work within the education system" (Webb 1990: 1).

Such research can inform the learning and teaching process, and is required as a counter-balance to the quantitative data which are collected by external players (eg FEFCE, TECs, Governors) and which serve *their* needs (Elliott forthcoming). The point about the relative value of these two research models for practitioners is well put by Webb (1990):

> *...traditional research, pursued from the vantage point of specialists and couched in their terms, has been rejected by practising teachers as of little use in assisting them to analyse classroom situations and in devising solutions to practical problems.*
>
> (1990: 3)

On the other hand,

> *...research into the processes of teaching and learning and / or the factors which directly affect these processes ... employs methods of enquiry, ways of presenting findings and publication outlets that are eclectic, pragmatic and readily accessible to teachers.*
>
> (ibid.)

Perhaps an even more important benefit for managers accruing from the use of qualitative research methods is the potential they offer for fostering a closer interrelationship between theory and practice. There are strong antecedents for such a claim in the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967), in that inherent in their notion of 'grounded theory' is the idea that theory is generated from data gathered through participant research, rather than imposed externally upon the data by researchers who

are coming from - both literally and epistemologically - outside the educational institution.

Atkinson and Delamont (1985) have rightly pointed out that much case study research in education has failed to make illuminative use of case studies in other contexts outside of education. They advocate the development of comparative perspectives in order to generate formal concepts, ie "abstract, ideal-typical, notions which characterise features, problems and issues which may be common to a range of different concrete settings" (1985: 40). This approach is consistent with the call for a more adventurous and eclectic approach to policy studies made by Ball and Shilling (1994). The availability of the case record upon which the present study is based is intended to signal the importance of such comparative work. The aim of such work would be to move beyond what Hurst (1987) calls "the Western ethnocentrism and parochialism which so disfigures most writing about education . . . (in order to tap) . . . the quiddity, the uniqueness of particular cultures, contexts and personalities - which qualitative research is specifically configured to explore" (1987: 72).

It is precisely this model of practitioner research which is here being advocated for educational managers. It has been emphasised throughout this study that post-compulsory education is currently being dominated by a managerial business ethic, led by market forces, which is influencing how the sector is evaluated, and how it is internally managed. The privatisation of formerly public sector HE and FE institutions is the most visible manifestation of the market forces movement in education. There is thus an inescapable logic which invites comparative analysis between educational institutions and business institutions. Such an analysis will point up the extent of the hegemonic imposition of the one culture upon the other, and the implications for all concerned of such an imposition. The limitations of

transfer have been well documented in the context of international transfer (Crossley 1984), but remain less visible when operational between sectors within one state. A careful evaluation of the processes and outcomes of transfer will be necessary if educational managers are to understand the nature of the forces at work in the transfer of working practices between different work contexts, and by understanding, control or resist them. The resulting analysis will be all the stronger if it can be supported by comparative studies with other service and business institutions. The use of multiple comparison groups, as described by Glaser and Strauss (1966), to compare and contrast educational organisations with other organisations, has much potential for, and has been little used in, published educational research.

One invaluable area of research which such a methodology could explore has to do with policy effects. Finch has shown that qualitative research is undervalued in the formulation of public policy. However, the present study confirms Finch's view that qualitative research can illuminate whether policy initiatives lead to substantive or illusory change, what the unintended consequences are, and highlight the internal contradictions often present in policy formulation and implementation (Finch 1988: 188-190). One policy initiative which it is vital should be explored and evaluated by managers is the proposed imposition by college managers of the CEF changes in lecturers' conditions of service. The push towards greater efficiency in the FE sector during the 1980s has led to general acceptance by senior college managers of an orthodoxy which places high value upon minimum teacher-class contact, maximum occupancy of space, reduced remission in relation to support roles for full-time lecturers, and greater utilisation of short term contracts and of part-time lecturers. Management courses for FE managers are promoting this orthodoxy on a wide scale. This perspective is continually re-established by college's own performance indicators, which are strong on efficiency criteria, and has been reinforced by the

three-stage 'entry - on programme - exit' funding model in use by the FEFCE. Yet little account is taken of the experienced and unanticipated effects of these measures upon the processes of learning and teaching in colleges.

Lecturers widely regard such measures as contrary to their students' and their own best interests. They regard the single-minded pursuit of efficiency through performance indicators as incompatible with their own conceptions of quality, and the widespread result has been a general withdrawal of 'goodwill'. In some cases, this has led to wholesale abuse of internal policies and procedures, where lecturers play the system, and obstruct as far as is within their power any attempt to further thin resources. Comparative studies, and studies which make use of multiple comparison groups, which can find parallels in other public sector organisations (hospitals, local authorities, subsidised arts organisations) could demonstrate associations, processes and typifications, which together can form what Rock (1979: 50) calls "a grammar which is intended to provide working recipes for an understanding of the abstract properties of social life". There is thus a strong argument for a network whereby managers can access case records and findings made in other educational settings in order to evaluate the effects of the many innovations taking place in the post-compulsory sector. As Crossley and Vulliamy (1984) point out:

> ***Through their concern with the everyday practices of teachers and students, case study methods are well placed to identify important constraints on innovation, which may not be apparent to policy-makers who necessarily lack a detailed understanding of the local context in which innovations are being attempted.***
>
> (1984: 199)

There is a widely recognised need for managers in the post compulsory sector who can more effectively manage innovation, adaptation and change. Qualitative research methods can provide the educational manager with a highly effective management

tool that is highly sensitive to the perspectives of those directly involved in the teaching and learning process. Improving managers' understanding of practice will be vital in helping them to manage the process of change successfully, and to avoid what could become a real, but hidden, cycle of decline.

Postscript

Subsequent to the completion of the fieldwork carried out for this research, managers of the case study college decided that BS 5750 was no longer a standard which they wished to pursue, and the whole system was dropped. This decision was influenced by a number of factors. The TECs had softened their insistence that all colleges who wished to receive funding should achieve BS 5750 accreditation. Within the college there was a very high level of non-compliance, and only two manuals out of sixty or so were approved following internal audit. College managers became more interested in the Investors in People kitemark, which was considered to be more compatible with the HRM focus of the SMT.

A second important development since the study was completed, was the publication of draft revised TDLB standards (TDLB 1994). The original TDLB assessor and verifier awards described in this study were developed in 1991. They were widely condemned for their reductionist, technicistic approach and, critics argued, they brought about a marginalisation of individual student learning. The review was in no small part due to the strength of criticism levelled by lecturers against the original standards, and the new standards signalled a significant move towards a model of training and development which recognised a learning process underpinned by negotiation, learner autonomy and individual guidance and support.

There are, however, dark clouds looming. Consultation is, at the time of writing, underway on Employment Department proposals (strongly supported by College Employers) for a Lead Body for Further Education. The FEU and the Staff College have been commissioned to carry out a functional and occupational mapping exercise of FE occupations (teaching and support staff) with a view to specifying possible standards to be developed.[4] The functional map produced by such an exercise is unlikely to view teaching and lecturing as a co-intentional, transactional process, in which both student and teacher engage as equal participants.

It appears likely that the Employment Department has in mind the establishment of an Education Lead Body, that would specify common competence-based occupational standards for all educational practitioners, and that the FE sector has been chosen as a soft target for a pilot exercise, since a number of occupational roles carried out within the sector already fall within the NVQ framework. The development of NVQs in lecturing, tutoring, learning support and so on would establish, both symbolically and practically, the locus of control of education firmly within the Employment Department rather than the Department for Education. It would bring about a radical overhaul of the initial teacher training (ITT) and in-service training (INSET) curriculum, bringing both ITT and INSET within the NCVQ framework. The deskilling of teachers and lecturers, and the dominance of a rationalist curriculum, will have been confirmed and consolidated.

The implications of this development for policy and practice in schools, colleges and universities, suggest an agenda for educational policy studies and research, and highlight the urgency, for all educational practitioners, of addressing the issues raised by the present study.

[4] The project will be completed by the new Further Education Development Agency (FEDA), which is replacing, and, it is proposed, combining the functions of, the FEU and the Staff College.

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