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The application of *phronesis* to teaching and

quality management; a case study in further

education

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by

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Contents

Abstract

Over the last twenty years Further Education colleges in England have expanded their Higher Education provision significantly. Higher Education in Further Education is a major force accounting for approximately ten percent of Higher Education students (Parry 2005).

The thesis takes a concept from Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* and applies it to Higher Education in Further Education in England. The notion of phronesis adopted for this study differs from literal interpretations of Aristotle such as adopted by Kristyansson, (2005) but accords with adaptations of the concept by such as Eisner (2002), Birmingham (2003, 2004) and Hagar (2000). The interpretation adopted for the thesis is that *phronesis* is wise, practical knowledge which is deliberative, depends on judgement and is based on circumstances. It is about practicalities and the interaction between the universal and the particular. When applied to teaching it can be briefly summarised as an approach which bases the profession of teaching on practical knowledge and recognises the artistry of the teaching activity (Eisner, 2002).

The Argument of the thesis is that *phronesis* could provide a model for the teaching and quality management of Higher Education (HE) in Further Education (FE) at Hull College. The thesis demonstrates that in the face of pressures of commodification, performativity and vocationalisation in the national and global environment, students, staff and managers at the College hold beliefs more in tune with an approach based on *phronesis* rather than with that of The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) or The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). As a result *phronesis* could provide a more effective foundation for teaching and quality management.

After an analysis of the academic and official literature, the empirical research adopted a case study method based on semi structured interviews with students, teaching staff and managers. The empirical evidence reinforced the academic evidence that there is a managerial imperative in colleges which leads to teaching staff and managers facing a range of pressures. There are pressures on their beliefs and what they identified as their proper professional activity: teaching, reflecting, debating, updating their subject knowledge and engaging in scholarship. However, these pressures are moderated by the commitment of the teaching staff and managers to delivering a particular HE in FE experience, in partnership with their students, in accordance with the features of *phronesis.*

Empirical and theoretical evidence supports the conjecture that *phronesis* could provide a model for the teaching and quality management of HE in FE, at Hull College. The views of students, staff and managers were broadly in accord with the main features of *phronesis*, rather than those of performativity and commodification. Their views were also consistent with a vocational education situated in *phronesis,* rather than with a vocationalism which is part of the

managerialist, performative and commodificationist agendas. Although there are pressures from all of these agendas threatening the application of *phronesis*, there is evidence that it is *phronesis* which should underpin the teaching, management and indeed, the profession for teachers of HE in FE.

Recommendations focus on acknowledging the distinct role of HE in FE: its quality management; staff participation in reflection, scholarly activity and vocational updating; the recognition of students as partners in learning.

Chapter One

Introduction

This thesis argues that *phronesis* could provide a model for teaching and quality management of Higher Education (HE) in Further Education (FE) at Hull College. In the face of pressures of commodification, performativity and vocationalisation in the national and global environment, students, staff and managers hold beliefs more in tune with an approach based on *phronesis* than with that of The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) or The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). As a result *phronesis* could provide a more effective foundation for teaching and quality management.

Context

The author works at Hull College as HE Quality Manager, which is the only post in the college dedicated to quality issues for the HE in FE students. The post holder reports to the Registrar who in turn reports to the Vice Principal HE. The position requires reconciling the varied influences. There are the requirements of the organisation as primarily a Further Education institution, with its business dominated by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), and the requirements of Ofsted. Another major influence is the QAA. The Higher Education work of the college has to conform to the QAA Academic Infrastructure, including an audit system designed specifically for HE in FE, known as Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review (IQER) (QAA 2006). In addition, the HE programmes

need to meet the regulations and procedures of a variety of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), currently: The University of Lincoln, Leeds Metropolitan University, Teesside University (through the Cleveland Open Learning Network) and the University of Huddersfield, as well as EDEXCEL. Although Ofsted have no remit to inspect HE in FE, the dominance of the Ofsted model pervades all aspects of FE institutions, including HE in FE. The job role is to develop and manage the college's quality framework for all HE programmes, and to ensure that they also conform to the disparate requirements of these bodies.

Rationale

The motivation for this research resulted from working in this role and seeing how the approaches to quality do not seem to focus on the actuality of the teaching situation and what might be the beliefs of students , staff and managers as to what constituted good teaching. What were primarily unarticulated thoughts and feelings developed into the original research question: **What effects would the recognition of and focussing on, different models of quality have upon Higher Education programmes at Hull College?**

When looking at the respective models of quality it became apparent that there were no stated underlying philosophies informing the Ofsted and QAA approaches; a model which could rest upon such a position could be more capable of justification, or at the least more honest in recognising its assumptions. As a result of reading a range of academic literature from the effects of globalisation to issues of professionalism, the original research

question was refined over time. Central to this process was finding the work of Eliot Eisner (2002) which offered an underlying philosophical foundation and an approach best capturing the nature of teaching of HE in FE. An examination of Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics,* confirmed that *phronesis* could be a focus for the thesis. The interpretation adopted is that *phronesis* is wise, practical knowledge which is deliberative, depends on judgement and is based on circumstances. It is about practicalities and the interaction between the universal and the particular. When applied to teaching it can be briefly summarised as an approach which bases the profession of teaching on practical knowledge and recognises the artistry of the teaching activity (Eisner, 2002 p.382). Consequently the major research question developed to become:

Could *phronesis* provide a model for the teaching and quality management of Higher Education in Further Education (HE in FE) at Hull College?

Characteristics of *phronesis* subsequently identified through exploring the literature are: The importance of the context of the teaching situation and relationship between teacher and student; the relationship between the universal and the particular in the teaching of the subject; the value placed on reflection, deliberation and judgement in improving teaching, and whether or not teaching can be seen as an art.

The literature review in Chapter Two provides the theoretical basis for the research, whilst the literature review of Chapter Three provides the global, national and Further Education context. The purpose of Chapter Four is to

provide a summary and synthesis to establish the foundation for the empirical research of Chapter Six. The methodology of the thesis is provided in Chapter Five to establish the validity and reliability of the overall enterprise, which concludes in Chapter Seven where the arguments are drawn together. Chapter Eight looks forward in making recommendations and also provides an opportunity to reflect.

An underlying theme in this thesis is the extent to which managerialism has spread as a result of global forces, through national policies, into quality inspection regimes such as Ofsted, to colleges and ultimately to college management, teaching staff and students. Working from the opposite direction, through an investigation of the views of HE students, their teaching staff and managers at Hull College, coupled with an examination of current trends in the sector, the thesis explores the evidence for an approach to quality based on *phronesis*.

Organisational Context

The methodological approach for the thesis, explored in detail in Chapter Five, is to listen to the participants in context:

> All formal knowledge can do is to offer an account of the local context in-time, as well as give voice to the intimate experience possessed by actors themselves... Thus, in contextualist epistemology actors are given their voice in the researcher's narrative; they speak in their own words, and the researcher is merely the 'interpreter'.

> Tsoukas 1994, p.776

The thesis is an exploration of the specific context that is Hull College and the views of its students, teachers and managers.

Hull College was judged 'outstanding' in all aspects by Ofsted, (Ofsted, 2008a) and as such has a high degree of confidence in its policies, procedures and its place in the local and national scene. The College operates in the national environment as part of the FE sector; it is a member of various national bodies, notably The Association of Colleges (AoC, 2007), and the Mixed Economy Group (HERO, 2007). The college has expansion ambitions, having taken over Harrogate College and is seeking other opportunities. The merger with Harrogate has increased the number of full time equivalent, directly funded students studying for HE programmes to over 1400.

In response to global influences and Government agendas the college also has an international strategy, operating in partnership in a number of countries, notably China and the Middle East. In order to achieve excellence in a broader sense, the College has achieved 'Five Star, Recognised for Excellence' accreditation with the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM, 2003).

Given the organisational context above, the forces of globalisation, managerialism, commodification, performativity and vocationalisation identified in the literature in Chapter Three, could be expected to be strong within the college. An approach based on *phronesis* would seem to run counter to these forces and yet the evidence shows that even in such an environment its characteristics can not only be discerned but significantly underpin the beliefs of

students, teachers and managers about the fundamentals of the activity that is

teaching.

Chapter Two

Literature review

Academic Literature

The review of the academic literature forms the basis of this chapter of the thesis, providing a foundation to contrast with the official literature and its application to Further Education, which is covered in Chapter Three. Both of these different types of literature underpin the arguments developed to support the main questions of the thesis, which are to be tested through research in Chapter Six:

1. Could *phronesis* provide a model for the teaching and quality management of HE in Further Education at Hull College? How far do the views of managers, staff and students at Hull College accord with the main features of *phronesis*?

- The importance of the context of the teaching situation and relationship between teacher and student
- The relationship between the universal and the particular in the teaching of the subject.
- The value placed on reflection, deliberation and judgement in improving teaching
- Whether or not teaching can be seen as an art.

2. How far do the views of managers, staff and students at Hull College reflect the trends of performativity, commodification and increased vocationalisation in education?

3. How far are managers, staff and students at Hull College aware of conflicts between the demands of a teaching professional and a subject/vocational professional i.e. Is there any problem with dual professionalism? Are there conflicts between their values and their role?

One section of the academic literature under consideration is the literature on globalization. This sets the context for the national issues in education and allows the identification of literature marking the trend to increasing commodification of education and of performativity. From this literature common strands begin to emerge with the literature on *phronesis*, as an approach to education and on the nature of a profession for teaching.

Globalization literature

Origins of the study of globalization

A recent anthology of Globalization and education literature by Brown and Lauder (2006) starts with an extract from the classic text of *The Communist Manifesto*:

> The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country….it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood.

> (Marx and Engels in Brown and Lauder, 2006 p.74)

Marx and Engels' portrayal of 'global capitalism' has informed thinking on the subject since 1848. Tomlinson (2005) points out that the term entered public awareness in the 1990s, with a number of influential texts bringing the debate to maturity: Waters (1995) Ritzer (1993) Stiglitz (2002), which are considered below.

Waters (1995) chronicles the phenomenon of globalization believing it to be '…*the* concept of the 1990s, a key idea by which we understand the transition of human society into the third millennium' (Waters, 1995 p. 1). He charts the process over time, identifying its impact upon 'the economy, the polity and culture' (Waters, 1995 p.159). The growth of trans-national corporations, of international trade, global movements of labour and capital are the manifestation of globalisation's impact upon the world economy. The impact of these processes of globalization has had a significant effect upon the nature of the nation state, notably the change in the self-perception of the nation state and its weakening in the face of global corporations and movements of capital (Waters, 1995 p.100). Cultural changes such as the growth in religious fundamentalism and in consumerism lead him to what is the most significant feature of his work which is the identification that globalization is both a '… differentiating as well as a homogenizing process' (Waters, 1995 p. 136). It is this aspect of his work which is considered further in the analysis below.

Ritzer's contribution to the debate on globalization is to identify the trend towards the simplification of human activity into standard and easily replicated forms, in the manner of a fast food outlet. His analysis highlights the process of

increasing commodification of all aspects of life, including that of education, as will be seen below. The features of 'McDonaldization' that he identifies are: efficiency, calculability, predictability and control through non human technology (Ritzer, 2006 p.14). These are features which will be shown in Chapter Three to be readily applicable to some approaches in the managing of quality in Further Education. Ritzer sees his ideas as extending the work of Max Weber into the present day, with McDonaldization being the equivalent for the modern world of Weber's bureaucracy (Ritzer, 2006 p.27). Ritzer has developed his ideas on McDonaldization by comparing them to post-modernism. He sees McDonaldization as a process of rationalism and questions whether there might be process of de-McDonaldization underway as a result of the forces of post-modernism, which he equates with non-rationality and irrationality (Ritzer 2006 p.370). However, his conclusion is that he expects McDonaldization to triumph over postmodernism:

> …McDonaldized systems will prevail long after we have moved beyond postmodern society and scholars have relegated postmodernism to the status of a concept of little more than historical interest
>
> (Ritzer, 2006 p. 371)

Ritzer both overstates his position in equating McDonaldization with rationalism, as opposed to post modernism, and understates the position of post-modernism as simply an appeal to the non-rational or irrational. However, in spite of these later developments of his position the force of Ritzer's main thesis remains, which is to recognise the impetus and extent of the process he describes on a global scale, the pursuit of efficiency, calculability, predictability and control. The overall impact of these writers is to articulate and characterise the forces

affecting nation states, multi-national corporations and indeed organisations and individuals in the 20th and early 21st centuries.

Features of Globalization

One approach to the study of globalization is to identify different types of globalization, whereas another approach is to see a broader sway of forces pulling in different directions.

A range of types of globalization can be identified such as the economic, educational, political, cultural, environmental, demographic, American, technological, linguistic, and the globalization of energy resources. The study of the types can be used to illustrate the tensions within the educational environment in the UK. For example, Bottery (2006) identifies seven of these types in order to illustrate '…the tensions and paradoxes they create, as well as the changes to professional values they induce' (Bottery, 2006 p.5). He uses this to show that educational leadership needs to locate itself within the context of a globalized world.

Whilst the identification of different types can provide a context for detailed study, another approach is to emphasise the interconnectedness of the globalization process as a whole. This is what Clarke and Newman (1997) propose in common with Waters (1995). They suggest that this broader identification of forces avoids compartmentalisation of the analysis (Clarke and Newman, 1997 p. xi). Waters uses a classification scheme of the economic, the

political and the cultural aspects of globalization. However, his 'Globalization Proposal' is that economic processes, relations between nation states, the interrelationship of all aspects of life can be seen as an acceleration of the process of the 'unification of human society' (Waters, 1995 pp. 62-4). This unification extends also to the consciousness of individuals and the negation of the traditional distinction between public and private. However, forces acting in the opposite direction, and thus illustrating the inherent contradictions of globalization, are the forces of parochialism and fragmentation but also of emancipation (Waters, 1995 pp. 163).

Waters' view in 1995 was that if the unifying forces of globalization continue unabated, ultimately, a fully globalized world will have a single society and culture (Waters, 1995 p.3). He saw the process extending to how individuals thought and identified themselves. Waters explores 'relativization' and suggests that 'The inhabitants of the planet self-consciously orient themselves to the world as a whole…' (Waters, 1995 p.63). Bottery identified in 2000 that there are forces '…which transcend the nation state, and that issues beyond the location of the nation state need to be incorporated into individual and institutional consciousness' (Bottery, 2000 p.4). In 2006 he pointed to forces of globalization which 'mould consciousness' in a way which educational leaders should not 'tacitly condone' (Bottery, 2006 p.21) citing Fergusson (1994) and Lukes (1986) to show how 'acculturation' takes place to slowly and imperceptibly change values and attitudes (Bottery, 2006 p.16).

Waters seeks to provide a coherent account of globalization in order to allow sociology to 'alert humanity' to a range of favourable possibilities such as '…the

revival of previously oppressed nationalisms, genuine religious freedom…,the

exposure of the great structures of economic and political domination to the

winds of change…' (Waters, 1995 p.163). Where Waters seeks to inform,

Stiglitz seeks to warn. Stiglitz is critical of globalization which he accuses of

destroying democracy and social cohesion, leading to increased inequalities.

He is a critic of supra-national institutions such as the World Trade Organisation

and International Monetary Fund (Stiglitz, 2005 pp.9-11) and takes a strong

moral stance: 'Globalization … should extend not only to economics, but to

views on social justice and solidarity' (Stiglitz, 2003 p.2). Globalization,

according to Stiglitz, is not inevitable but an opportunity to make choices in

order to ensure that it is a beneficial process. 'The forward march of

globalization is by no means inevitable' (Stiglitz, 2003 p.1) 'There are then, hard

choices on how to respond… Ethics again can help us to decide whose

interests are put first' (Stiglitz, 2003 p.7).

It is the urge to warn which unifies many authors who analyse globalization.

Bottery analyses the forces operating at a global level which have an impact on

education policies and concludes that the forces of globalization:

> …are not descriptive but prescriptive, reflecting particular interests and
> particular accumulations of power. Through their discourses they mould
> consciousness away from notions of public sectors and public goods,
> and away from the striving for a fairer and more just world, towards
> values and ways of living which are narrower, meaner and spiritually
> more impoverished.
>
> (Bottery, 2006 p.21)

Aspects of globalization, which are pertinent to this thesis, and move in the

direction described by Bottery are the commodification of education, the

concept of performativity and the universal application of the business paradigm.

Water's model will be applied later in this thesis, identifying the forces of unification and fragmentation, which are reflected in official literature, in speeches by politicians and by pundits.

Commodification and Performativity

Ritzer (1993) used the term 'McDonaldization' to describe the global process of the standardisation of all aspects of life, at a low level of standard performance and applied it to Higher Education in his article in 2002. Part of the process of McDonaldization is the process of commodification where knowledge becomes a commodity to be bought and sold.

> The problem is not McDonaldization *per se*, but *excessive McDonaldization*, (Ritzer and Ovadia, 2000) and the *inappropriate extension of McDonaldization* to domains that ought not to be McDonaldized to any great extent… Clearly, everyday educational activity is one of those areas (another is the doctor-patient relationship) that have been overly and inappropriately McDonaldized.
>
> (Ritzer, 2002 p.31)

Academic sources identify the existence of education as a product in the world economy; '… education becomes a product to be traded internationally' (Naidoo and Jamieson, 2006 p.878). The allied process of vocationalisation is one which "turns education into a commodity with economic value" (Grubb and Lazerson, 2006 p.300). Ferguson (1994) explains the nature of this economic value in terms of the differences between the private and public sectors:

> ...the private, profit-seeking sector is exclusively concerned with the extrinsic value of its products: that is with the value others attribute to

them and therefore the price they are prepared to pay for them. Their intrinsic worth is of no material concern to either producer or manager.

(Ferguson, 1994 p.108)

The process of commodification of education is one in which the intrinsic values of education are being substituted for extrinsic measures of value. Education can have economic benefits, perhaps giving value to the recipient to improve their employment status, or a value to the providers to make money from the process, which might in turn allow them to improve facilities or staffing to benefit students. Education can also have a value for the state to gain a more skilled workforce as a result of the education it has received. What is at issue is the goal displacement which arises from seeing education only as a commodity, as a metal, grain or pork belly, the value of which are determined when they are traded.

Official literature confirms this process in the policies of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and in the speeches of politicians, who are both clear about their priorities for education as a product to be traded, as will be seen in Chapter Three.

The counter view to the increasing commodification of education is well stated by Green:

> Education must remain in the public arena where tolerance, mutual respect and understanding and the ability to cooperate are cultivated….it must also strive to promote civic identity and civic competence and to make possible a democratic and cohesive society. Education cannot ignore the realities of the global market. But nor can it surrender to global commodification.
>
> (Green, 1997 p.197)

A particularly important process identified in the globalization literature is what Waters describes as 'the ecumenism of the business paradigm' (Waters, 1995 p. 80). Bottery argues that organisations also adopt similar forms, as there is an 'increasing isomorphism between the non-profit and commercial sectors', (Bottery, 1994 p.341). Clarke and Newman describe it as 'organisational isomorphism' (Clarke and Newman, 1997 p.48 and p.146).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) analyse 'Institutional Isomorphism', suggesting that organisations become increasingly the same in structures and practices. This results from the combined forces of coercive pressure from the state, normative pressure from powerful professions and what they describe as 'mimetic' pressure; the need to copy success from other organisations (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983 p.152). As will be seen in subsequent literature, in the case of Further Education in England, coercive and mimetic pressures can be identified but without the normative pressure from the profession.

In an article about performativity, Peters (2004) cites McKenzie (2001) in showing how the concept of performance in the business world is now being applied to all aspects of human behaviour: '…traditional philosophical distinctions are becoming less influential and performance 'effectiveness' and 'efficiency' are growing in power as the new conventions 'defining the basis for the measurement of what is right, true and good.' (Peters, 2004 p.23).

The use of data as a means of controlling public sector and in particular, educational organisations, in the same way as for private sector organisations, is identified by Bottery. Changes to organisations, manufacture and the

workforce in the twentieth century can be described as 'Fordist', after Henry Ford's production line process. Over the century manufacturing has been influenced by Japanese practices; 'Toyotism' replacing 'Fordism' (Dohse, Jurgens and Malsch 1985, p.115). 'Post-Fordist' organisations have now resulted from more flexible production using new technology and 'Just in Time' delivery. Bottery identifies three stages of Post-Fordist development in education (Bottery, 2000 pp.151-4) the first of which allows for the external inspection regime to be devolved to the educational establishments themselves. In the case of Further Education colleges, the inspection regime of OFSTED and the requirements of the LSC have changed to give more emphasis to colleges' self-evaluations to measure, compare and judge (Ofsted, 2008b p.4). As the process develops the final stage of Post–Fordism, suggested by Bottery, can be identified. In this stage 'inspection, surveillance and control' are carried out by the teachers who can only think in these terms: 'Deviance is not only unacceptable – it cannot even be thought' (Bottery, 2000 p.54).

The concept of 'performativity' is raised in the globalization literature and linked to the ubiquity of the business paradigm. Ritzer (1993) identifies the global trend to the easily measurable, standardised product when examining globalization and McDonaldization, a trend which can be identified in the output models of quality to be considered later in this thesis. 'Increasingly it is "performativity" … that legitimates education and learning' (Ritzer, 2002 p.48).

Performativity is a term taken from Lyotard (1984) whose description of post-modernism in terms of language results in a view of knowledge as a commodity: 'Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be

consumed in order to be valorized in a new production: in both cases the goal is exchange' (Lyotard, 1984 p.4). Large scale 'narratives' which explain the world are no longer applicable in a post modern world of micro-narratives, a process which '…atomises' the world '…the old poles of attraction represented by nation states, parties, professions, institutions and historical traditions are losing their attraction.' (Lyotard, 1984 p.14) This analysis is compatible with the fragmentation forces of globalization as described by Waters, who cites Lyotard favourably pointing out that 'The absolute globalization of culture would involve the creation of a common but hyper-differentiated field of value, taste and style opportunities, accessible to each individual without constraint for purposes either of self expression or consumption.' (Waters, 1995 p.126). A post-modern, globalized world of production and consumption, of commonalities and difference is portrayed. In this world knowledge is a commodity and only has value in so far as it is useful or saleable, a process of the 'mercantilization of knowledge' (Lyotard, 1994 p.51).

Lyotard is concerned with the legitimation of knowledge (p.31) and with its transmission (p.47), both of which he sees as subject to the performativity criterion. Knowledge and its transmission only have meaning in so far as they are useful. However, this view starts from a view of knowledge as a product to be transmitted and education being the process of transmission. It might indeed be the approach to knowledge and education which dominates in the global market for education, or in the minds of UK politicians and Ofsted inspectors, but it is not necessarily the only approach. It will be an argument of this thesis that education is much more than a commodity and than the process involved is not one of transmission from one vessel to another, from the expert teacher to

the ignorant pupil, both of whom are only concerned with the utility of the transaction. It will be argued that education is a process of interaction between teacher and student in a particular subject and context, which may have broad educational and social motives.

The pursuit of performativity can be seen as a feature of the business paradigm. Elliott equates it with the pursuit of 'value for money' and the identification of quality in education with cost effectiveness (Elliott, 2001 p193). It is Geoffrey Elliott however, who argues most forcefully against the post-1992 reforms of Further Education in his 1996 article:

> The political context of further education is indeed one of hegemonic influence and control, where debate is constrained within a technocratic market discourse, to the point where many lecturers are experiencing the fundamental contradiction of educational practice:

<div align="center">(Elliott, 1996 p.21).</div>

The contradiction he is referring to is that identified by Whitehead: "...the experience of holding educational values, and the experience of their negation" (Whitehead, 1989 p.92). Gleeson and Shain show how some managers, in the Further Education context have coped with a similar contradiction. They found that middle managers would typically moderate the forces of managerialism by 'strategic compliance'. They would conform to the managerial norms of the organisation whilst also maintaining their beliefs and values, protecting their staff as best they could within the managerial culture (Gleeson and Shain, 1999 p.488). The contradiction identified by Elliot (1996) and Gleeson and Shain (1999) appears again in the literature on professionalism, and *phronesis*. In questioning managers and teaching staff for this thesis a possible finding might be to identify a similar contradiction or strategic compliance which would

highlight the tension between the forces of managerialism and an approach to quality and professionalism based on *phronesis*.

The issue of 'performativity' can also be seen in the work of Strathern (2000) and Tsoukas (1994) who see organisations as knowledge constructs. Strathern applies her anthropological approach from work in Papua New Guinea to audit in Higher Education and identifies a similar contradiction to that identified by Elliott and Gleeson and Shain. She observes that: 'Higher education professionals at once accede to the idea of accountability and regard performance indicators as highly constructed and artificial means of measuring real output.' (Strathern, 2000 p.310). She is identifying a process of public display, and on display is the appearance of Higher Education accountability and transparency but, she asks 'What does visibility conceal?'; it conceals the real facts about how the organisation operates (Strathern, 2000 p.314). She concludes from this that the important information about an organisation is invisible to audit and cannot be measured (Strathern, 2000 p.314).

This idea is one which can be applied to quality management in Further Education and the inspections of Ofsted and the reviews of the QAA. It prompts questions about measurements which are central to this thesis such as, whether any measurements applied actually measure what they are intended to measure, whether this is appropriate or even whether it can even be subject to measurement. Her analysis is based on Tsoukas' work in pointing out the paradoxes and contradictions of modern conceptions of knowledge and information. His view is that knowledge depends on context but that knowledge is often mistakenly identified with information: '…that is as consisting of

objectified, commodified, abstract, decontextualized representations.' (Tsoukas, 1996 p.827) His views accord with those expressed in this thesis, and in the approach to knowledge as practical knowledge, that is *phronesis.*

There are two particular points arising from the analysis in his 1996 article that are applicable to the thesis. Firstly, he suggests that generating information in huge quantities may paradoxically obscure and interfere with the use of that information, '…more information may lead to less understanding…' (Tsoukas, 1996 p.827). Secondly that managing problems through the application of this kind of information, and particularly the management of society and social problems, is likely to lead to the displacement of effort from managing the original problem to managing the solutions proposed to tackle it. To illustrate this point he considers an example of a local authority with a performance indicator based on the number of home helps per head of elderly population and concludes that '…managing *via* league tables leads to managing *the* league tables themselves!' (Tsoukas, 1996 p.838). The parallels to a Further Education system managed by league tables and performance indicators, based on the collection of information which is commodified and divorced from context, are evident here. and in the official literature examined in Chapter Three of this thesis.

Tsoukas points out that what is important in understanding how an organisation operates is an appreciation of '…practitioners exercising their judgement' (Tsoukas, 1996 p.22) which in turn provides a further link to *phronesis* and the work of Eisner (2002) and Hagar (2000) considered below.

Globalization and education

Most authors studying education policy not only describe or classify the process of globalization and its resultant facets, they also seek to criticise and to propose alternative approaches. The value of their work to this thesis is providing a critique but also in proposing alternatives, they voice views which can bolster the approach taken in the thesis. For example, as seen earlier, Bottery seeks '…a return to a vision of a richer, more humane and a more democratic view of the role of education, and of how this movement might contribute not only to national but also to global changes,' (Bottery, 2000 p.x) a view shared by this author in proposing an approach to education based on *phronesis*.

Tomlinson also points to the negative effects of globalisation and the attendant commodification, pointing out that it is democracy that is the casualty of the market as a dominant force in education: 'If schools and universities are predominantly about jobs, business, enterprise and competition, education for democracy comes a poor second' (Tomlinson, 2005 p.222).

To counteract such forces, Ainley's solution is to propose that instead of a vocational, certificated education, one based upon 'generalised knowledge and skill' is to be preferred (Ainley, 1999 p.26). This does not accord with the approach taken in this thesis because it separates knowledge from the context, however the consequences he sees as arising from his approach are laudable and are shared as an aspiration by this thesis. He wishes to see 'an alternative

learning paradigm (which) elevates human creativity and imagination developed through independent study…' (Ainley, 1999 p.26).

Avis could be seen to share a closer affinity to the views of this thesis in that he suggests focussing on student needs within an analysis of 'the social context within which education is placed' (Avis, 2007 p.180). However, his analysis is one which centres on the political development of education policy and the associated struggle and antagonism not an approach based on the nature of knowledge, as in this thesis.

From these critiques of globalisation and its attendant forces the notion of *phronesis* may be explored to identify if it could provide a foundation for quality education within Further Education in England.

Academic Literature: *Phronesis*

Aristotle discusses the concept of *phronesis* in the *Nichomachean Ethics,* but the different translations give a different sense to the word. Irwin's translation uses 'intelligence' in place of *phronesis* (Aristotle, 1985 p. 419) although in the glossary Irwin recognises the difficulty in accurately translating the word. He suggests that 'wisdom' might be an appropriate translation except that this is best used as translation for *sophia*, and that 'prudence' would also be appropriate, except that it is often seen as 'narrow minded caution' (Aristotle, 1985 p.412). Thompson translates it as prudence or practical wisdom, whilst recognising in the notes that it also mean 'practical common sense' (Aristotle, 1976 p.209). Ackrill prefers 'practical wisdom' (Aristotle, 1973 p.116). For the

purposes of this thesis *phronesis* will be used untranslated unless an author being discussed uses a particular translation. For this section to explain the features of *phronesis,* the translation by Irwin is to be preferred for its clarity, although the references to the sections of the original text will be used to aid referencing other translations.

'Intelligence' is concerned with action and deliberation. 'Nor is intelligence about universals only. It must also come to know particulars, since it is concerned with action and action is about particulars' (Aristotle 1141b 15, 1985 p.158). The value of *phronesis* as a concept for Further Education is just this; recognition of the fusion of universal knowledge with experience of the practical. The concern is for the practical only in so far as it is fused with the universal: 'For production has its end beyond it; but action does not since its end is doing well itself, [and in doing well is the concern of intelligence] (Aristotle 1140 b 5, 1985 p. 154). If this aspect of *phronesis* is applied to education today, it highlights the process of the increasing vocationalisation and commodification of education. An approach to education focussed on utility, is replaced by one based on a concern for the good arising from the educational interaction between the universal and the practical themselves. Furthermore, '…intelligence is virtue, not craft knowledge' (Aristotle 1140b 25, 1985 p.155) although to modern ears it sounds unrealistic to say that 'intelligence cannot be misused' (Aristotle 1140b 25, 1985 p.155). The beneficial aspects of *phronesis* are that 'Intelligence concerns both the individual and the community' (Aristotle 1141b 20, 1985 p.158).

One particular aspect of *phronesis* which is of importance for education is that it requires deliberation. *Phronesis* depends upon deliberation and is not easily acquired. The 'deliberation may be in error about either the universal or the particular' (1142a 20 1985 p.161). The role of the teacher is to synthesis the universal and the particular through deliberation with the student, a deliberation which would benefit both the individuals and the community without concern for the ends beyond the interaction which is the approach to education supported in this thesis.

One feature common to contemporary analyses of *phronesis* is that the authors do not wish to stay with a strict interpretation of Aristotle. As Squires notes, writers have returned to Aristotle's idea of *phronesis* filtered '… through the lens of later and different interpretations of 'practice'…' and that as a result 'Each throws a particular light on teaching, and the current discourse on practice may well be justified in these terms; but it is not, according to this analysis, Aristotelian' (Squires, 2003 p.6).

Kristyansson is particularly critical that subsequent articles on *phronesis* do not pay sufficient regard to what he regards as Aristotle's original formulation. On Dunne for example he says 'What is at fault, in my view, with this particularist interpretation of *phronesis* is that is sits loosely with, or even radically diverges from, essential elements of Aristotle's moral system.' (Kristyansson, 2005 p.466). He argues that teaching, if it is to be encapsulated by any approach, would be closer to *poiesis,* which is 'making, production, manufacturing' (Kristyansson, 2005 p.463). 'The fundamental goal of teaching is, after all, student learning which is a 'product beyond the activity' *of teaching...*

(Kristyansson 2005 p.471). The debate revolves around whether teaching is production which has an end beyond itself, or *phronesis*, which does not (Aristotle 1140 b 5, 1985 p. 154). In articulating such a view Kristyansson is allying himself with those who see education as a product to be traded. Commodification, vocationalisation and performativity draw strength from such a view. His confusion is to see that teaching does indeed have beneficial consequences both for individuals and the community (Aristotle 1141b 20 1985 p.159) but these arise from a synthesis of the universal and the particular through deliberation.

As has been seen above, the interpretation of the meaning of *phronesis* is not without difficulty however, as an analysis by Noel shows. She identifies a number of different interpretations of Aristotle's *phronesis*: '*Phronesis* is variously translated as moral discernment, practical wisdom, and prudence among other phrases…' (Noel, 1997 p.278). Her reference here to Aristotle's 'definition' of *phronesis* from *Nichomachean Ethics* at 1112b 11 however, is inaccurate, as this section is concerned to consider the nature of deliberation rather than any definition of *phronesis* (Aristotle, 1985 p.62 and 318). It is not only the definition of *phronesis* that proves to be problematic when reading Noel's work however, as a further difficulty arises from the classifications of different types of approach to *phronesis* that she offers in her 1999 work. In this paper she classifies a range of different types of approach: a rationality approach into which she places Green (1976) and Fenstermacher and Richardson (1993); a situational analysis and insight perception approach which she attributes to Dunne (1993) and Pendlebury (1990 and 1993) amongst others, and a 'moral character' approach attributed again to Dunne and also to

Thayer-Bacon (1993). As will be seen below however, this classification is not particularly helpful or accurate.

Green (1976) is seen by Squires (2003) as particularly influential in inspiring the debate with his Presidential address to the Philosophy of Education Society in 1976. Green argues that to see the activity of teaching as technical competence is to see it as '…a purely technical skill.' …that 'Mastery of such technical competencies in instruction is important but it is not the point' (Green, 1976 p.257). Green is reiterating Aristotle's distinction between *phronesis* and *techne* between intelligence and craft (Aristotle 1140b,1985 p. 154) and so argues that teaching is much more than a competence. What arises from Green's argument, according to Fenstermacher and Richardson, is that teacher competencies could be '…grounded in a substantial body of educational theory' (Fenstermacher and Richardson, 1993 p.107). They use this analysis to support the notion of the reflective practitioner by showing how teachers can utilise research in their teaching. The teacher, in their account, is freed from a number of external controls. The teacher is freed from the '…external mandates and pressures that may involve premises that contradict their own' but also freed from being told that 'Research says….' (Fenstermacher and Richardson, 1993 p.112). They are using the fusion of the universal and the practical through deliberation which is at the heart of *phronesis* (Aristotle 1140 b5,1985 p.154).

The view of teaching expressed above, as *phronesis* based on reflection and experience, accords with that of this thesis and has relevance in tackling the issues recognised by Gleeson and Shain (1999 p.488) and raised by Elliott about '… the fundamental contradiction of educational practice' (Elliott, 1996

p.21). This is the conflict between the beliefs and values of teachers and the managerial situation in which they find themselves. It is a conflict which will be considered later in this thesis where it will be argued that it needs to be resolved through the application of *phronesis*. However this point also leads to a discussion of professionalism and managerialism, which will also be examined later in this thesis.

Noel classifies the approach of Green (1976) and Fenstermacher and Richardson (1993), as the rational approach. Having briefly examined these views above, the classification has little merit in that the authors are not considering rationality in relation to the irrational or non-rational but in terms of the universal and the practical, and in so far as Fenstermacher and Richardson are proponents of the teacher as reflective practitioner, they fall more clearly into her second category of 'insight perception'.

Noel's second interpretation of *phronesis* is the insight perception approach which she attributes to Dunne (1993) and Pendlebury (1990 and 1993). This approach shows the *phronimos* as one who can perceive the situation and make decisions based on a range of possibilities within that situation. Pendlebury's main concern however, is to avoid supporting practical reasoning *per se* in case this is simply to '… provide teachers with a fine set of the tools for rationalizing misconceived, inappropriate, or unjust practices.' (Pendlebury, 1993 p.150). In so far as this approach looks beyond the process of decision making by the *phronimos* in a particular situation to identify particular kinds of decision, it can be merged with the third of Noel's interpretations, the 'moral character approach'.

Noel classifies the work of Thayer-Bacon into the moral character approach citing her work from 1993 in relation to teaching as 'caring'. However Thayer – Bacon's 1999 work is an examination of educational testing and is an argument against the separation of the 'knower' and the 'known', '…that the effort to separate people's experiences from their ideas is based on a false assumption…' (Thayer-Bacon, 1999 p.342). Thayer-Bacon uses Aristotle to support testing: 'The students should do well in the tests if they have learned how to use logic to reason from the questions to the right answer' (Thayer-Bacon 1999 p.344). Thayer-Bacon's approach is the only one considered so far which could be said to fall into Noel's rationality classification because it relates to logic and reasoning yet this is not where she classifies it. However, the main purpose of Thayer Bacon's analysis is to criticise an approach to education based on a distinction between practical and theoretical knowledge which is attributed to Aristotle (Thayer-Bacon 1999 p.356). Thayer-Bacon's views do not accord with those of this thesis as they miss what is an essential element of *phronesis* which is that the practical and the theoretical are united in this form of knowledge 'Nor is intelligence about universals only. It must also come to know particulars, since it is concerned with action and action is about particulars' (Aristotle 1141b 15, 1985 p.158).

The limitations of Noel's classification are again exposed and continue to be exposed in her classification of Dunne. Although Noel links Dunne to the insight perception approach, she also cites him in relation to the moral character approach. His main concern however, is to suggest that to a modern eye, the moral character of the phronimos must seem an impossible creation. 'A person

not only without error or fault …may seem impossible in reality and unattractive in very conception.' (Dunne, 1999 p.56). The conclusion to his article however, is to commend *phronesis* in spite of those elements arising from a close reading of Aristotle which appear to make it inappropriate to the modern world and its understanding. Dunne is not particularly concerned with the moral aspects of *phronesis* as much as to take a practical approach. He is convinced '…that *phronesis* remains philosophically sustainable and that it has considerable light to shed on the contemporary practice of education' (Dunne, 1999 p. 49). The practical benefits of the application of *phronesis* to education are at the heart of this thesis.

It is the work of Birmingham which most clearly exemplifies the moral approach identified by Noel, but this work also highlights the central themes of *phronesis*. Birmingham introduces her 2003 article with a concise statement:

> …*phronesis* is shown to be moral and morally essential. It is bound to specific concrete situations; distinct from, yet affected by, propositional knowledge; expressed in moral actions; intertwined with other moral virtues; and dependent upon a moral community.
>
> (Birmingham, 2003 p. 188)

Birmingham thus places *phronesis* firmly within a moral setting, although in her 2004 article she broadens out the explication to identify the importance of context, theory and reflection; three aspects of *phronesis* crucial to the application of *phronesis* to education as supported in this thesis.

Firstly, the importance of context; which is to say that a particular teaching situation is a unique and highly complex interaction between individuals with different histories and roles, in a particular time, place, culture and subject. As

Birmingham explains: '*Phronesis* is situated in the particulars of a specific time and place and is concerned with specific events and persons' (Birmingham, 2004 p.315).

Secondly, the place of theory needs to be considered. Theory may be abstracted from practice and can in turn inform practice but must still be understood and applied in a particular context. '…*phronesis* is not the simple application of educational theory, for educational situations are much too complex, ambiguous and unpredictable to comply with algorithmic application of educational theory' (Birmingham, 2004 p.315). Carr and Kemmis (1986) take this aspect of *phronesis* further, using it to underpin their proposal for a profession of teaching based on 'Action Research'. In so far as this can be seen by its critics as '…anti-method and anti-theory' (Kristyansson, 2005 p.462) it does not accord with other approaches based on *phronesis*.

Thirdly, experience and reflection are required in order to apply theory to the context. As Birmingham says: 'Rather than defining a specific situation as a simple instance of an abstract principle, reflection begins with the concrete intricacies of the characters and histories of the persons involved.' (Birmingham, 2004 p.317). Eisner suggests that it is through the debate between teachers that *phronesis* proceeds, '… by creating a context where multiple interpretations and analyses are likely' (Eisner, 2002, p.382). No reference to reflection would be complete however, without citing the work of Schön (1983 and 1987) but this review will consider his work later in relation to professionalism.

Before moving on to consider the work of Eisner and others it is worth noting a particular facet of Birmingham's work, which is that she presents a personal account of how *phronesis* has changed her own teaching in three ways. Firstly, she is aware when teaching of the personal interactions and the community and culture in which she operates. Secondly, it leads her not to expect any certainty in the teaching interactions which can be institutionalised. Finally, she believes that *phronesis* provides a way of approaching '…society's moral questions' whilst also recognising that '*Phronesis* is not a moral panacea.' (Birmingham, 2004 p.322). This personal account helps to identify how the application of *phronesis* could help teachers tackle issues which face them in relation to their interaction with students, the institution and with any potential conflicts which arise in the interactions. It fits with a notion of professionalism based on *phronesis*, as supported in this thesis.

Eisner's (2002) view of *phronesis* provides a further set of dimensions to the concept which accord with and refine the concept of *phronesis* expressed in this thesis. Like other writers he considers context and knowledge in contrasting *episteme* and *phronesis*:

> *Episteme* refers to what Greek philosophers regarded as true and certain knowledge….*Phronesis*, on the other hand refers to wise practical reasoning. …Practical reasoning is deliberative, it takes into account local circumstances… it depends upon judgement, profits from wisdom, addresses particulars.... Practical reasoning is the stuff of practical life.

> (Eisner, 2002 p.375)

Irwin's translation of Aristotle describes an *episteme* as either '...any systematically organized, rationally justifiable and teachable body of doctrine or instructions.' or '...knowledge of scientific laws...' (Irwin, 1985 p.424). The scientific nature of *epistemai* in the plural can be contrasted with the more

practical and artistic variability of *phronesis*. What is particularly notable for the purposes of this thesis is that Eisner develops the notion of *phronesis* to suggest that teaching is not a matter of the transmission of a commodity that is knowledge, nor applied social science, as *epistemai.* Teaching is a matter of reflection and deliberation linked to educational research, but also of artistry: 'Artistry requires sensibility, imagination, technique and the ability to make judgements about the feel and significance of the particular' (Eisner, 2002 p.382).

It is through 'artistry' that the glimmering importance of a profession of teaching begins to emerge, and in accordance with the arguments of this thesis, a profession based on *phronesis.* Eisner sees artistry as an approach to the uniqueness of the situation, good teaching depending upon it (Eisner, 2002 p.382). However, he also sees it as linked to what inspires teachers, of teachers sharing ideas and working as professionals. It is through the debate between teachers that *phronesis* proceeds; '… teachers will be able to discuss with others their performance as teachers' (Eisner, 2002 p.383) and that a professional language with which to frame such discussions will develop. 'The professional isolation to which many teachers have become accustomed will need to change' (Eisner, 2002 p.384). The profession of teaching based on *phronesis* recognises uniqueness rather than uniformity, discussion and debate rather than prescription. Eisner's approach to education and his interpretation of *phronesis* accords with that of the current author, and provides the basis for some of the questions to be explored in future chapters.

One writer, who provides an account which differs significantly from others on *phronesis,* but which is particularly valuable for the purposes of this thesis, is Hagar (2000). The difference arises because he applies the concept to the workplace, normally the territory of the managerial theorists and quality gurus such as Peters and Waterman (1995). Because it relates to the workplace this account is particularly relevant to the application of *phronesis* in Further Education, where work-based learning and vocational education are important components of the FE curriculum.

Hagar likens '…workplace learning to the development of *phronesis* or practical wisdom' and agues that '… the notion of a developing capacity to make the right judgements in the workplace adequately captures the seamless, holistic character of this know how' (Hagar, 2000 p.282). Hagar concentrates on the role of judgements in his account, an approach which can also be applied to that of the subject based professional knowledge of a teacher, as will be seen later. Hagar takes *phronesis* into the heart of vocational education, which in itself is at the centre of Further Education. Other writers on *phronesis* are concerned with teaching in general and so application of the concept to vocational education in Further Education relies on arguing that teaching in this context is the same as for more theoretical subjects of study. The argument is from the theoretical to the practical. In starting with workplace learning, Hagar provides support for an approach to teaching based on *phronesis* directly applicable to FE and moving from the practical to the theoretical.

Hagar suggests that knowing how to do something is derived from the experience of those who know how to do it, but that it also requires some

knowledge beyond the activity, some kind of theoretical framework. Similarly he suggests that it is not something which is acquired from master to apprentice which cannot be taught (citing Oakeshott 1962). It is not therefore, tacit knowledge.

Schön (1983 p.62) offers an alternative approach with his 'reflection in action' and 'reflection on action' which has merits, Hagar suggests, but Schön assumes tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge '…far from helping us to understand know-how, merely serves to further obscure and obfuscate the important issues.' (Hagar, 2000 p.286). What Hagar is highlighting, is an aspect of Schön's work which detracts from the main, simple message of reflecting in action and on action as a way of improving teaching. In his 1987 work Schön proposes the creation of a 'Reflective Practicum' as the way forward to 'redesign professional education' (Schön, 1987, p304). Schön's account of artistry here is almost mystical and conservative in nature rather than being the liberating force that he envisaged in his 1983 work. 'Artistry is an exercise of intelligence, a kind of knowing … It is not inherently mysterious; it is rigorous in its own terms; …' (Schön, 1987, p.13). An area of study which is rigorous only in its own terms will be inward looking and self- fulfilling, likely to be unfalsifiable. It is acquired and cannot be taught, only 'coached', and it is akin to talent. Schön draws inspiration from 'deviant tradition(s) of education for practice' suggesting that: 'Often there is a powerful sense of mystery and magic in the atmosphere – the magic of great performers, the mystery of the talent that falls capriciously, like divine grace, now on one individual, now on another' (Schön, 1987,p. 17). In contrast, Hagar argues that the way to understand learning in a practical situation is though the application of judgement in specific contexts. It is the

appeal to tacit knowledge such as this, as opposed to reflection in and on the context and activity, which Hagar objects to. Indeed Schön's comments in the 1987 work detract from the openness and debate that his main body of work on reflection inspires.

The work of both Eisner and Schön, as reviewed above, suggest a particular approach to a profession for teaching, based on artistry, reflection and discussion between practitioners, yet there is much debate as to whether such a profession exists, or even could exist.

A Profession of teaching

It is in the literature about a profession for teaching that the arguments raised in relation to *phronesis* find common ground with those concerned about the effects of globalization on education and the work of Freidson (2001) which can be used to highlight the debate.

Freidson (2001) identifies ideal types, or a model of professionalism based on market forces and bureaucracy claiming to identify a 'Third Logic' distinct from these. In the 'Market' situation it is the consumers who make the decisions about who is a qualified member of a profession, whereas in 'Bureaucracy' it is the employers who do so (Freidson, 2001 p.12).

The profession in a market situation seeks to become a monopoly provider of the professional service. According to Freidson:

> … it limits the freedom of the consumer by preventing them from hiring anyone they want to do a particular kind of work, restricting their choice

> to qualified members of the occupation. It also restricts the freedom of workers to offer their services to consumers, for only those who are qualified may do so.
>
> (Freidson, 2001 p.199)

In a bureaucracy Freidson suggests that the managers are in control, and the ideology of bureaucracy is managerialism (Freidson, 2001 p.106). The extent of managerialism in Further Education will be explored later in this thesis.

Key features of the Freidson's Third Logic are the ability of a profession to control their own qualifications for membership and the existence of a specialist body of knowledge (Freidson, 2001 p.220).

The knowledge claim of the profession in bureaucracy is different to that of the market situation; it is 'elite generalism' (Freidson, 2001 p.116) as opposed to the 'populist generalism' of consumerism, which is the ideology of market control.

The claim of a profession to have a body of knowledge on which it can call to justify its position, as distinct from occupations and other professions, is one which is applicable to the debate about teaching being a profession.

Wilkinson suggests that claims for teaching to be an acknowledged profession are limited by a lack of agreement from all relevant parties as to the knowledge base of teaching; whether or not 'teaching rests on any body of theoretical knowledge' and finally, the inability to agree on 'what knowledge is necessary for successful and effective teaching'. (Wilkinson, 2005, p. 421).

The simple possession of an organised body of knowledge does not necessarily make a profession, but Wilkinson is arguing that the lack of such a body of knowledge is the central factor in preventing teaching being seen as a profession. Winch also takes the view that there is no 'applied theoretical pedagogical knowledge' (Winch, 2004 p.186). Such a body of knowledge could exist according to Wilkinson (2005, pp.422 and 428); however, what Winch and Wilkinson are looking for is knowledge divorced from the context, which gives it meaning. This is to return to the contrast between *episteme* and *phronesis*, seen above.

What they seek is pedagogy without context, almost a search for an 'essence' of teaching which, in their view, would provide the 'organised body of knowledge' necessary for a true profession of teaching. This is the search for what Schön describes as the 'high ground' of technical rationality which is seen as the only alternative to the 'swampy lowlands' of 'indeterminate practice' (Schön, 1987 p.3). Schön does not agree that this is a necessary distinction, proposing instead that the realm of the professional is in practical knowledge, based on reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. (Schön, 1983 p.62). Professionals develop their knowledge personally, through reflection-on-action after the event and in being creative whilst applying their knowledge during the activity, through reflection-in-action. He argues that:

> Through reflection (the practitioner) can surface and criticise the tacit understandings that have grown up around the repetitive experiences of a specialised practice, and can make new sense of the situations of uncertainty or uniqueness which he may allow himself to experience.

> (Schön, 1983 p. 61)

In this aspect of his approach, with the emphasis on context, and also on the societal aspect of that context, Schön is at one with the proponents of *phronesis*, observing that:

> Professionals are more appropriately seen, I think, as participants in a larger societal conversation; … through the process of public debate, we construct ideas powerful for action concerning the crises of our society, the problems to be solved, and the policies to be adopted. When we act from these ideas, we change social reality

(Schön, 1983 p.346-7)

The moral character of *phronesis* identified from the review of Dunne (1999) and Birmingham (2003) above can also be discerned in this quotation from Schön.

As seen by the arguments of Schön, the context is vital to the activity of teaching. It is the interaction between the teacher and the student, to identify the issues involved and to place these into the context of earlier learning. The student will need to be a participant in the process and not a passive recipient; he or she needs 'to articulate the problem, and thus contribute to its solution' (Bottery, 1996). As discussed above, Hagar (2000) points to the importance of context in practical judgement in the workplace, which can be similarly applied to the teaching situation. He argues that the specific combination of features of a situation at a specific time will be rare, if not unique, and the combination of these will change, particularly as human individuals are involved. He also points out that social factors, outside of the workplace interaction, will affect the individuals and their responses to the situation inside the workplace. '…cognitive, conative and emotive capacities of humans are all typically involved in workplace practical judgements' (Hagar, 2000 p. 290).

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Another parallel between teaching and the workplace situation that Hagar

describes is the lack of certainty and finality. 'Practical judgements are

defeasible…because further understanding or information might require a

change of judgement' (Hagar, 2000 p. 292). This uncertainty arising from the

context and the interaction of situational forces is the stuff of teaching. It is what

Schön and others expect teachers to reflect upon but it also extends to the

nature of expertise.

As Bottery (1996) points out, the teacher as professional cannot claim

> …unchallenged expertise which by any epistemological standards is
> unjustified. If professionals attempt to remain upon this pedestal, they
> may find they have denied themselves their best defence against an
> unthinking managerialism.
>
> An educator …cannot act as the disseminator of unchallengeable
> information, and this for two main reasons. The first is because in most
> situations which the professional encounters, the solution is not readily
> apparent, but must be constructed. The second and equally important
> reason in the re-definition of professional practice is that the professional
> cannot be certain, even now, what is fact and what is still opinion in their
> spheres of expertise.
>
> (Bottery, 1996 p.179)

A further issue for the teacher as professional is that the subject matter is

important in framing the context. Just as in the workplace situation described by

Hagar (2000) the context of an engineering factory, or a solicitor's office frames

the whole interaction, in teaching the subject matter adds a further dimension

and in this teaching can claim to be different. The subject itself provides a whole

further dimension of knowledge. In the workplace the subject, for example

engineering, provides a whole history of engineering knowledge and expertise

developed over centuries, but he purpose of the activity is to apply the

knowledge and make the product. In teaching the subject also draws from

centuries of knowledge but the focus is on the knowledge itself. The knowledge

imparted for one subject may draw upon a range of what may be accepted classifications of knowledge in other subjects, for example history or science. The point is that this is the teaching of that particular subject in that specific context and involving those unique individuals that is the purpose of the interaction. It is here that *phronesis* points us to the marriage of the theoretical knowledge of the subject applied in the context, to pass on that knowledge to new generations of students, who will interpret and develop that knowledge themselves and perhaps teach others.

To return to the notion of *phronesis* again, bringing together subject knowledge and how to teach it in a particular set of circumstances is crucial. As Squires notes '… in teaching there is no end to situational perception, which is always an iterative and reflexive process…' (Squires, 2003 p.6). It is not the application of rules which apply to all situations as 'Good teaching depends upon artistry and aesthetic considerations' (Eisner, 2002, p.382). The artistry and judgement of *phronesis* are described in a more prosaic way by Halverston and Gomez:

> *Phronesis*, however, is more of a capacity to act than a body of knowledge. *Phronesis* must take account of the particular, that is, it must be concerned with how knowledge and experience are brought to bear in particular situations.
>
> (Halverston and Gomez, 2001 p.3)

From the literature examined so far it can be affirmed that there are global forces acting upon education and the practice and professionalism of teachers, but that teaching, as an interaction of teacher, students, the subject matter and various features of the environment, is infinitely variable. *Phronesis* provides a model for professionalism which requires judgement; the judgment of the teacher and student involved in the interaction and the judgement of those seeking to assess the quality of the interaction.

Subsequent chapters of this thesis will place these arguments in the context of teaching in Further Education in England, and in particular in the teaching of Higher Education in Further Education at Hull College. These chapters will also examine official literature from government and organisations such as Ofsted, QAA and IfL to provide a contrast and a basis for the testing of ideas through research.

Chapter Three

Literature review

The Further Education Context

Chapter Two of this thesis provided a review of the pertinent academic literature on the impact of globalization on education and the attendant forces of commodification and performativity. It also explored the literature on *phronesis* and on the concept of a profession for teaching. This chapter will explore both academic and official literature which relates to the globalization of education and in particular, literature which places Further Education in England into this global context. In doing so, the chapter will also consider literature relating to a profession for teachers in Further Education and the development of Higher Education within Further Education.

Globalisation

In the previous chapter the work of Waters (1995) was used to highlight contrasting forces of fragmentation and unification; the identification that globalization is both a '… differentiating as well as a homogenizing process' (Waters, 1995 p.136). The application of this approach to Further Education in England shows these forces reflected in official literature and from speeches by politicians and pundits.

The current world credit crisis of 2008 - 9 illustrates the forces identified by Waters. It underlines the interdependence of economies as an indicator of the forces of unification, with common solutions being implemented by governments. Also, those same forces are pulling different economies apart, as well as threatening the internal stability of individual economies. The speech by Gordon Brown to the UN illustrates the UK government position on the issue:

> But because it is a global financial crisis and a global shortage of food and resources, this will not be resolved simply by individual nations acting in isolation, much as they can do themselves, it will be solved in the end by us acting together.
>
> (Brown, 2009)

Such sentiments from politicians have led to the attempts to create international agreements along the lines of those which were used to ensure stability in the global economy after the Second World War, a kind of 'Bretton Woods 2' agreement. It is an attempt to recognise that just as the forces of unification under globalization may have been responsible for the crisis, they are also crucial to any solution. In the words of Will Hutton, 'There needs to be a paradigm shift towards greater acceptance of global principles, rules and governance by both banks and governments.' (Hutton, 2008 p.36).

The instability in the global economic situation has led to shifts in the economic power of individual states, for example the decline of the Icelandic economy and political upheaval as a result of its banking collapse (BBC, 2009) and the difficulties faced by the 'Celtic tiger' (The Guardian, 2009a p.26) of the Republic of Ireland. If individual economies are to maintain their current status during this period, their governments must respond to the forces of globalization. The response of the UK government is to adopt reflationary economic policies (The Guardian, 2009b p.1) but also to continue to focus on education as a vital

instrument in ensuring this survival. In order to fulfil this role, education needs to

deliver individuals who can compete in a global economy. As Blunkett stated in

1988:

> Learning is the key to prosperity for each of us as individuals as well as
> for the nation as a whole. Investment in human capital will be the
> foundation of success in the knowledge-based global economy of the
> twenty-first century.
>
> (Blunkett, 1988)

It remains to be seen if the current economic crisis is 'transmogrified into an

educational one' in the way that Avis characterises the economic problems of

the 1980s (Avis, 2007 p.170, citing Finn and Frith 1981). What is clear,

however, is that the crisis of 2008 has reaffirmed the belief of the UK

government in the importance of education as a vital component in the country's

global standing, as seen in the speech by Gordon Brown to the Business

Leaders in October 2008:

> And that is what in the end makes me optimistic about the future that we
> have these great industries in Britain. We have pharmaceuticals, we
> have IT, we have financial and business services, we have education
> itself, which is one of our major exports and may one day become one of
> our biggest exports and we have a range of modern manufacturing
> products that are available to sell to the rest of the world so we are
> actually in the high value added area of the future. We have made the
> transition to these and these are the products that are going to be
> valuable in the global economy if we invest properly for the future.
>
> (Brown 2008)

Gordon Brown's speech reaffirms the government view of education as a

commodity to be traded, a view seen in the quotation from Blunkett above and

in influential reports on Further Education and its central place in this process.

The core purpose of Further Education colleges identified in the Foster Report, '*Realising the Potential*' (2005) was to ensure that the UK was competitive with other 'international economies' through its 'core focus on skills and employability' (Foster, 2005 p. 6). Vocational education delivered by Further Education Colleges was to provide the human capital required to achieve national economic objectives.

The literature cited above from the politicians and the organs of government identifies the role of education as an instrument of economic well-being and competitiveness.

Literature on commodification and performativity

The previous chapter noted the work of Ritzer (2000) on McDonaldization and other sources such as Naidoo and Jamieson (2006) who identified increasing commodification of education: '… education becomes a product to be traded internationally' (p.878).

Official literature confirms this process in the speeches of politicians who are clear about their priorities for education as a product to be traded. Charles Clarke set out in 2004 in the document '*Putting the World into World-Class Education*', that a goal of government policy was 'Maximising the contribution of our education and training sector and university research to overseas trade and inward investment' (DfES, 2004a p.3).

Organs of government whose purpose is to promote UK education abroad are also clear about the need for UK education to make a contribution alongside other sectors of the economy. The study for The British Council by Lenton in 2007 considers various ways of measuring the benefit to the UK balance of payments of education, identifying such value as either £8.6B or as much as £27B in 2003-4 (Lenton, 2007 p.4).

The view of education voiced in the UK media is also one which often considers education as something to be traded. A Guardian article by Lipsett discusses the 'credit crunch' of 2008 by suggesting that just as Higher Education in the UK might be expected to lose out as a market for overseas students, it might benefit in the UK market, as workers wish to retrain and up-skill in the face of redundancy (Lipsett, 2008).

Vocationalisation

It is the increasing vocationalisation of education that helps it to be traded successfully as a commodity which has economic value; it is here that Further Education in England finds its role in the marketplace. In 1959 the Crowther Report saw Further Education as a useful tool in the labour market in order to avoid the '...wastage of talent for those who had left school at 15…' without qualifications or training (Trowler, 2003 p.2).

It was the Education Act of 1944 which established the primary, secondary and tertiary structure of public education, from which the vocational role of Further Education has developed

The Foster Report of 2005 '*Realising the Potential*' was influential in clarifying the role of Further Education. Further Education has 'historic strengths' in providing vocational education; indeed the 'core purposes' of Further Education were to ensure that the UK was competitive with other 'international economies' through its 'core focus on skills and employability' (Foster, 2005 p. 6). Foster was joined by other reports related to Further Education, notably Tomlinson (2002), and Leitch (2006).

Bodies representing Further Education in England welcomed the reports. The Association of Colleges' (AoC) response to the Foster Report was that: 'It is a huge and welcome opportunity for colleges' (Brennan, 2004). The AoC views Further Education as having an important role: '… to protect all our people within the global workforce as well as all our companies within global markets.' (Brennan, 2004).

The most recent report relevant to Further Education was the Leitch Report of 2006; the purpose which is evidenced by its title, author and commissioning department. The report was commissioned by the Treasury, written by an former Chief Executive of Zurich Financial Services and its title is *'Prosperity for all in the global economy - world class skills'*. The report suggests ways of achieving 'world class skills' through a 'demand led system' to achieve 'economically valuable qualifications' (Leitch 2006, p.138).

Leitch advanced the process of commodification by proposing that the market should be the mechanism by which education is allocated; 'Adult Further

Education funding should be channelled through Learner Accounts by 2010.' (Leitch, 2006 p.140). The principles of the Leitch Report were framed in legislation with the Further Education and Training Act 2007 (DfES, 2007a). The process of vocationalisation was also strengthened as a result of the Leitch Report with the proposal that Sector Skills Councils, which are groups representing employers, should be able to validate qualifications that meet their needs.

The process of increasing the vocationalisation of education in the UK has been implemented through the funding mechanisms for Further and Higher Education in England. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the body which funds Further Education, only funds courses which are approved as part of the National Qualifications Framework regulated by what was formerly the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA, 2004) but is now the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency. This has led to a shift in funding away from adult recreational education towards National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at Level 2 (LSC, 2006 p.12).

Vocational Education and HE in FE

A similar process of vocationalisation in Higher Education has developed by encouraging the growth of 'HE in FE' and by encouraging Universities to enter partnerships with colleges and employers in order to advance government priorities. Universities wishing to increase their numbers have only been able to do so by bidding for 'Additional Student Numbers' (ASNs) from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).They must do so in

partnership with colleges (HEFCE, 2000 para.2) as part of 'Lifelong Learning

Network' (HEFCE, 2004) or, in response to Leitch, with employers (HEFCE,

2008 para.66).

Higher Education programmes have been delivered by Further Education

colleges in England for many years, both pre- and post-1992. The scope of this

activity is expressed by Parry:

> Further education colleges account for some one in nine students
> studying on courses leading to higher education and higher level
> qualifications in England. Given that only a small amount of this activity is
> at the postgraduate levels, a more relevant figure is that around one in
> eight students are studying at the undergraduate levels in further
> education settings.

(Parry, 2005)

Before 1992, HE in FE was limited in extent and scope, often only providing

technician level programmes for professional bodies, such as Accounting

Technicians or Legal Executives. Higher status vocational programmes, such

as Higher National Certificates and Diplomas were normally taught at Colleges

of Higher Education, or Polytechnics, which had grown since the Robbins

Report of 1963.

The post-1992 environment saw the franchising of programmes from the HE

sector to FE. Some Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), wished to improve

their research standing and saw benefits in allowing FE colleges to teach their

lower level HE students at a lower cost. University staff could therefore focus on

research and teaching on more prestigious programmes. The number of

teachers of 'HE in FE' were increased as a result of this process.

HE in FE is an important strand to the government furthering a vocational agenda beyond its traditional home in lower level qualifications and the creation of a Foundation Degree was fundamental to this.

These qualifications were designed to increase participation in Higher Education and to improve the qualifications of the workforce, to compete more effectively with highly skilled global competitors. There was also the opportunity to extend the role of employers to influence higher education programmes, in a way favoured later by Leitch (2006). As West observed:

> Thus the intention seems to be to harness the 'brand' of the degree to attract students, and to give access to honours degrees, while looking for a greater harmonization, on sector lines to assure employers and to give structure to the emerging format.

> (West, 2006)

It is not only encouragement that is given to employers but also participation in the curriculum, as employers must be involved in the setting, assessment and review of the qualifications. This is established by The Foundation Degree Benchmark (QAA, 2004) which determines the structure of the qualification and places work-based learning at its heart.

> Foundation Degree programmes are designed to enable learners to benefit from the interpretation of ideas and the experience of practice, within the wider context of employment and one in which knowledge, understanding and skills are clearly integrated.

> (QAA, 2004 para.41)

Guile believes that such benchmarking is an important part of the process of the commodification of Higher Education (Guile, 2006 p.364).

Although focussing on quality, the literature of the QAA determines the framework for the whole Higher Education system in the UK, whether HE in FE or the University sector. The main documents produced by the QAA which do this form the 'Academic Infrastructure'. The QAA consults the academic community to create subject benchmarks (QAA, 2007a) which set out what comprises curriculum content and the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications* (FHEQ) which describes the levels of the qualifications (QAA, 2008a). The Code of Practice sets out how HE programmes should be managed and is also a product of consultation. As the QAA explains:

> Each section of the *Code of practice* has been prepared in consultation with the higher education sector and with the participation of key stakeholder groups. As such it represents a consensus of the providers and users of UK higher education.
>
> (QAA, 2007b)

The QAA, as a body whose raison d'être is quality, has a performativity agenda articulated through its publications on review methods (QAA, 2008b) which will be explored below.

Performativity

Another process identified in the globalization literature is that of performativity, a process whereby '…traditional philosophical distinctions are becoming less influential and performance 'effectiveness' and 'efficiency' are growing in power as the new conventions 'defining the basis for the measurement of what is right, true and good' (Peters, 2004 p.23).

The 'Three Es' of Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness, which were introduced by the Thatcher government to ensure value for money in the public sector (Tomkins, 1987 p.49) remain as a powerful tool for measurement of the performance of Further Education colleges up to the present, forming part of the *'Framework for Excellence'* (LSC, 2007).

Performativity has underpinned the whole approach to quality management in the Further Education sector and continues to do so. After the incorporation of colleges in 1992, Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) inspectors took over from the Local Authorities and HMIs. These were superseded by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) and later by Ofsted alone.

Ofsted as currently constituted, came into being in April 2007 inspecting education for children, young people and adults, including training in work based settings and for public services, such as the armed forces and police (non-higher education training). Ofsted publications and methods are expressed in two key publications; *The Common Inspection Framework* (Ofsted, 2005) and *The Handbook for Inspecting Colleges* (Ofsted, 2008b). The former sets out the principles and conduct of inspections, the grading scale to be used and the key questions to be addressed in all inspections. These are:

KQ 1 How well do learners achieve?
KQ 2 How effective are teaching, training and learning?
KQ 3 How well do programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners?
KQ 4 How well are learners guided and supported?
KQ 5 How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

(Ofsted, 2005 pp.3-5)

The second publication contains the detail of the process and provides an update on its remit as a result of legislation in 2006 and 2007. (Ofsted, 2008b p.7). It is in this document that the procedures to be adopted are outlined, from the periods of notice given, to the number of inspectors, to the kind of inspection, 'light touch' for 'good colleges' (Ofsted 2008b p.10) or a full inspection for others.

Since 2006 Ofsted has adopted a less intrusive approach to the inspection of FE, during what it calls the 'second cycle' (Ofsted, 2008b p.139). These inspections focus on validating a College's self-assessments. The Government has endorsed this approach:

> …quality improvement rests increasingly with the FE sector,
> developing the capacity for self-assessment, self-improvement and self-
> regulation. Excellence is more likely to be achieved when the FE system
> 'owns' the factors and programmes available, and is confident that these
> reflect sector priorities.
>
> (DfES 2007b)

There are two main features of the Ofsted approach. Firstly, there are process-based numerical assessments of teaching performance in the classroom, and secondly, outcome-based measures of recruitment, achievement and success rates (Ofsted, 2005 p.3). Ofsted considers that it provides objective inspections (Ofsted, 2007), although the House of Commons Select Committee has reservations about its ability to achieve the consistency or objectivity (HC 165, 2007).

The objectivity of the process is repeatedly affirmed in the 2008 Handbook (Ofsted, 2008b pp.44, 45, 67, and 68). One significant change between the 2008 handbook and it 2006 predecessor is the inclusion of the *'Framework for*

Excellence' (FfE) (LSC, 2007) and an explanation of its link to the Ofsted inspection process. (Ofsted, 2008b p.67) The framework is a creation of the Learning and Skills Council……… The significant feature of its inclusion is that Ofsted explains that its own inspection framework (CIF) is often used by colleges as the basis of their quality improvement process, whereas the FfE is used as a 'quality **assessment** framework based on a set of, mainly, objective performance measures' (Ofsted, 2008b p.67).

The *Framework for Excellence* is used to measure and a classify FE colleges and as such, it is a tool in the process of performativity. It is a quantitative exercise which results in an overall score for a college according to the four point scale used by Ofsted; inadequate, satisfactory, good and outstanding. Underneath these four grades is a myriad of criteria and sub-measurements. Its objectives as outlined by the Department for Universities, Innovation and Skills (DIUS) are clear:

> *The Framework for Excellence* is a quantitative assessment of performance across all Further Education providers. It will provide an accurate, independent picture of the performance of the FE sector, validated and supported by published data. It will apply to all FE colleges and work based learning providers from September 2008 and will be operational across the whole FE sector from September 2010.
>
> (Dius, 2009)

Measures used fall under three main headings which are: Finance, Effectiveness and Responsiveness. Under these headings the Finance Criteria are those which would be common in the private sector such as operating surplus/deficit, current assets divided by current liabilities and borrowing as a percentage of reserves. Effectiveness measures are twofold, the quality of outcomes, by which they mean the quantity of outcomes as measured by the success rates (LSC, 2009a) and the quality of provision which is based on the

current Ofsted judgment 'This is because we consider that the *Framework* should be based on objective indicators and evidence.' Again, there is an assertion of the objectivity of the Ofsted process, this time from an institutional colleague, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC, 2009b).

The third dimension is the Responsiveness criteria which are measured by means of a learner survey and learner destinations. Students are classified into various priority groups and then their destinations are measured, for example whether students progress to the next level in education, move into employment or progress in the same employment and so on. These are measured and grades assigned, again on the four point scale,

    1 (Outstanding) 85% or greater
    2 (Good) 72.5% to less than 85%
    3 (Satisfactory) 60% to less than 72.5%
    4 (Inadequate) Less than 60%

(LSC, 2009c)

The sum total of all of these measurements are put together to determine the overall college grade, on the four point scale. The aggregation of such a range of measures to result in such a blunt judgment on the four point scale provides a useful example of performativity where the measure itself is taken as 'the measurement of what is right, true and good' (Peters, 2004 p.23).

The Quality Assurance Agency

In a similar way to which Ofsted pursues a performativity agenda for FE, so the QAA does to a lesser extent for HE. The use of the term 'audit' suggests that what is being undertaken is a checking process to ensure that the organisation under scrutiny is performing according to particular criteria; in this case performing in accordance with the 'Academic Infrastructure' (QAA, 2009). The

review methods of the QAA which apply to HEIs are Institutional Audit and the Collaborative Provision Audit. The latter deals with the HEI relationships with other providers and is often incorporated into an Institutional Audit. These methods are, as implied in the name of the agency, 'Quality Assurance' activities, with a strong emphasis on effectiveness (QAA, 2006 pp.1-2). However, the auditing of performance is not the only agenda of the QAA as quality improvement and enhancement is also recognised. Each institution is checked to see if it has 'effective means of enhancing the quality of their educational provision…' and whether procedures 'contribute…to the promotion and enhancement of quality in teaching, learning and assessment' (QAA 2006 p.2)

The method of review which is applied to HE in FE is called Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review (QAA, 2008c) and is the method most focused on quality improvement. The first phase of the process is for the QAA to involve the college to be reviewed in a 'Developmental Engagement' (DE) which is normally conducted by two QAA reviewers and two employees of the subject college. The outcome of the review is not published externally and it provides colleges with a set of recommendations for improvement. The second phase of the process is the 'Summative Review' (SR) which is conducted in a similar form to institutional review by QAA reviewers and is externally published. One of the objectives of the summative review is:

> … to engage colleges in a process of self-evaluation and peer review focused on reviewing, evaluating and improving the management of their higher education provision.

<div align="right">(QAA, 2008c p.22)</div>

The emphasis of the process is on allowing and encouraging colleges to make improvements between the DE and the SR without any public stigma being attached through external publication.

The result of the inspection process and the review process of QAA are worthy of comparison to illustrate the differences in their approach. The result of an Ofsted inspection of a college is a judgement made up of a series of other judgements on the Key Question areas. As with the case of teaching in the classroom these are allocated numbers which correspond to: 'Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 is good, grade 3 is satisfactory and grade 4 is inadequate.' (Ofsted, 2008b p.140). The interpretation of the grades, however is that only the first two are seen as acceptable by the institutions concerned and by Ofsted. Only colleges deemed 'good' or 'outstanding' receive a light touch inspection. The use of the word 'inadequate' in itself is indicative of the negatively judgemental approach of Ofsted. A further contentious issue is the Ofsted interpretation of 'satisfactory' which the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee point out:

> … statements suggesting that a satisfactory grading is in someway a failure are unhelpful. … Care needs to be taken that the discussion on the quality of provision is constructive rather than accusatory

> (HC 165, 2007 p.15)

The Committee use an article from the Times Educational Supplement to make the valid point that for Ofsted to equate 'satisfactory' with 'average' is to statistically ensure that they can always criticise many schools and colleges as being below average, '… since by definition all schools cannot be above average' (HC 165, 2007 p.12).

The QAA do not measure performance or allocate numbers and judgments in the way that Ofsted do. They audit against the academic infrastructure (QAA, 2008 p.7) of subject benchmarks (QAA, 2007a) the code of practice (QAA, 2007b) and the FHEQ (QAA, 2008a) Their Judgments in reviews are labelled 'confidence', 'limited confidence' or 'no confidence' (QAA, 2008c p.25). The QAA may be less concerned about performativity than Ofsted, but there is greater focus on vocationalism, as has been discussed earlier in this chapter in relation to Foundation Degrees.

The Broader Further Education Context

Although issues of commodification, vocationalism and performativity have been discussed above in connection to the official literature relating to Education Policy and Further Education in particular, there is another source of literature which also develops these issues. This literature is academic literature which addresses issues specific to Further Education and its development. This literature can also point the way for a consideration of a profession for FE teaching, the role of *phronesis* in the creation of this profession and in the teaching of HE in FE.

Authors studying Further Education in England typically provide a historical account of its development and classify its history into a number of periods. Trowler prefers to describe the period in terms of government reports, Acts of Parliament and changes in government (Trowler, 2003 p.47-77) although he does identify important trends such as 'new vocationalism' (Trowler, 2003 p.85). Tomlinson identifies the social democratic consensus before 1979 but then

divides her analysis into periods marked by developments in competition, change of government and dominant policies, such as diversity and lifelong learning (Tomlinson, 2005). Ainley (1999) and Avis (2007) in their respective decades focus on issues arising from increasing vocationalism, proposing new directions for education.

To focus solely on Further Education in England however, two periods of development may be identified: pre and post-1992. Lucas recognises that this coincides with the structural change of incorporation (Lucas, 1999 pp.43-67 and 2004 p.26). However, a more fruitful account is to identify the periods according to the dominant ideology of the time. Pre-1992 FE could be said to be dominated by the Social Democratic model and subsequently, by the Post-1992 Managerial model. The Social Democratic model is described by Bottery as being characterised by:

> …strong legislative frameworks, public suppliers of services and a commitment to advancing equality of opportunity and enhanced social mobility through government legislation and structures.

> (Bottery, 2000 p.30)

The Managerial model in contrast:

> …characterises … senior managers as primarily concerned with cost efficiencies and volume of throughput.

> (Lumby and Tomlinson, 2000 p.143)

Within these periods the position of an FE lecturer as a member of a profession can be examined in order to apply some of the literature covered in Chapter Two of this thesis.

Pre-1992.

Before 1992, FE colleges were amorphous bodies comprising of teaching staff representing the differing occupational areas, for which they provided training. Any professional identification held by these staff was to the occupational area they represented. Staff brought their respective cultures with them into the organisations, rather than the organization or sector imposing a corporate, or professional, culture on the employees. As Shain and Gleeson note:

> …lecturers in FE have historically been internally stratified according to divisions of skill, age, gender, ethnicity, expertise and class.
>
> (Shain and Gleeson, 1999 p.18)

Lucas goes further to point out the multiplicity of backgrounds and experience of FE lecturers at this time:

> As organizations, colleges were often rather loose conglomerations of departments with little overall cohesion. They reflected social divisions between graduate and non-graduates, industrially experienced and non-experienced craftsmen, white collar workers, managers, scientists, social scientists.
>
> (Lucas, 2004 p.21)

Although there was no focus, or shared experience, or culture from which to form a profession of teaching in FE, there was the unifying force of *The Silver Book*. This was a document setting out nationally determined terms and conditions of service. It provided staff in the sector with a feeling of recognition and status. Pay and conditions were more favourable in FE than for the schools sector, although not at the level of University staff. As a result, staff in FE could see their place in an educational hierarchy. For staff teaching within FE who

taught on HE level programmes, there were more favourable pay rates and hours than for the lower levels of FE teaching.

Staff teaching in FE before 1992 were able to pursue their teaching relatively unfettered by any measurement or inspection regime. Inspection of their work was through the local authorities and by Her Majesty's Schools Inspectorate (HMI). The Local Authority inspectors' role was to provide advice and guidance, based on knowledge of the institutions they were inspecting. HMI made visits but their reports were not published: 'They might praise or blame but their reports were advisory' (Hillier, 2006 p.82).

Post-1992

Under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, Further Education colleges became corporate bodies, with devolved budgets and new governance free from Local Authority control.

As these changes were made during a period of high unemployment; Ainley (1999) could describe the period and the vocational mission of FE as: 'Training without jobs' (Ainley, 1999 p.88).

Hillier sees the control of FE during this period as: 'open market policy with increasing accountability and interference …a political solution to economic and social problems caused by rising unemployment.' (Hillier, 2006 pp.25).

Into the next century, FE underwent changes in the methods of funding; the

Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) was created and then disbanded as a result of '*Success for All'* (DfES 2002). This was an attempt to provide coherence across the newly defined learning and skills sector (Lucas, 2004 pp.41). The 'marketisation' philosophy (Lucas, 2004 pp. 40-41) of the FEFC remained however and remains today, in funding through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

As the organisational and legislative environment of FE changed over time and the vocational mission continued, the culture of FE changed significantly. Managerialism became the dominant ideology with little recognition of the professional role of the FE staff.

The 'Silver Book' was discontinued in 1993 with the introduction of new contracts and locally negotiated terms and conditions. Teaching staff faced a worsening of their conditions of service and a decline in pay and status in comparison with the schools and university sectors. The situation was described by Taubman as:

> The story of staff relations is a narrative of almost unrelieved misery. It is an indication of how bad industrial relations became during the first phase of incorporation that for two years running in the mid 1990s further education had proportionately more days lost to strike action than any other sector of the British Economy.

<div align="center">(Taubman, 2000 p.82)</div>

Professionalism and *Phronesis*

The previous chapter examined literature on professionalism and *phronesis* which can now be applied to Further Education and the moves to create a profession for staff working in the sector.

FE Colleges are currently bidding for financial and regulatory self-control. Part of this process is to show government that staff in the sector can act according to appropriate professional standards. The Institute for Learning (IfL) has been created to establish professional standards for teacher training in the 'Learning and Skills Sector' (IfL, 2007a).

In 2007 the IfL declared itself to be independent of government and employers with an ambition to create an autonomous professional body for FE staff:

> Ultimately, we will be completely regulated by our members through an elected governing council. *Our independence will ensure we will be neither a trade union-dominated nor employer-dominated organisation, but will focus on the needs and interests of our members.*
>
> (IfL, 2007a)

The IfL were so keen to emphasise their independence that they italicized the above declaration. However this has now been revised in 2009 to be simply a statement that: 'IfL was created by teachers, and is led by members for members' (IfL, 2009a).

The original vision to create '…a body run by and for teaching professionals' in which 'Practitioners can therefore take control of how their professional needs

are met and provide evidence of their professionalism' (IfL, 2007a) has been
replaced by a more prosaic reality.

The roots of the IfL were in the creation of a set of standards for teacher training
in FE established by the Further Education National Training Organisation
(FENTO) in 1999. Significantly, since September 2007, in order to be employed
as a teacher in FE, teachers need to be registered with the IfL. Registration
confers a licence to practise, and a commitment to undertake continuous
professional development. (DfES, 2006, p.51)

In spite of its avowed independence in 2007, the IfL was clear from its inception
that it would act according to national priorities and government policies:

> There will be times when new policy initiatives and national conditions
> inform the global professional development direction of the sector.   In
> such circumstances the IfL reserves the right to introduce mandatory
> CPD activities within appropriate and achievable timescales.

> (IfL, 2007a, paragraph 5.2)

Indeed, the IfL is only a few steps away from the government itself, which is
evident in the following developments: The professional standards that it
imposes have been written by Standards Verification UK (SVUK), which is a
subsidiary of Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK). LLUK is a Sector Skills Council
(SSC) and as such is not employee-led, but employer-led. SSCs are now under
the guidance of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) which
was established in response to the Leitch Report and replaced the former
Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA). The UKCES is in the process of
requiring SSAs to re-licence in order to ensure that they meet the needs of
employers in the relevant sector (UKCES 2008). Such close linkages between

government priorities, the organs of government and the teaching standards provide little credence to claims of professional independence.

Dual Professionalism

The IfL supports the idea of a teacher in FE being a dual professional (IfL 2009b). This idea came from an early article by Betts, which was on the IfL website in 2006 but which has since been removed. The idea has also been taken up by Peel (2005) in relation to Higher Education, although the main purpose of her paper is to consider reflective practice in Continuing Professional Development (CPD), rather than in pursuing the implications of the notion.

A 'dual professional' is one who is qualified in their vocational or academic specialism, as well as being a teaching professional.

The distinction raised in the notion of dual professionalism, is that between subject knowledge and theoretical knowledge, discussed in the literature review in Chapter Two, in relation to Winch (2004) and Wilkinson (2005). The issue is also central to the literature in Chapter Two on *phronesis* and the nature of practical knowledge.

The IfL, as a source of official literature, provides a Code of Professional Practice by which teachers in FE should abide:

> The Code is a principle (or behaviour) based statement of best practice, which celebrates professional identity and autonomy. It is founded on the principle that teachers are expected to act in the best interests of learners and the public and recognises the expertise inherent in their teaching role.

The code lists: Integrity, Respect, Care, Practice, Disclosure and Responsibility.

However, when the detail is examined these labels are more concerned to

control behaviour than provide any ethical guidance; for example:

> Behaviour 2. RESPECT. Members shall at all times: 1. respect the rights
> of learners and colleagues in accordance with relevant legislation and
> organisation requirements.
>
> (IfL, 2007b)

Learners and colleagues are only to be respected in accordance with the

managerial concerns of the FE institution, and the priorities of government, as

framed in legislation.

Other 'Behaviours' are similarly subjugated to the needs of the organisation and

government; for example 'Responsibility' is 'Responsibility during Institute

Investigations' and the responsibility to follow IfL instructions 'The members

shall at all times act in accordance with the Institute's conditions of membership

which will be subject to change from time to time'. (IfL, 2007b).

The professionalism of the FE teacher can be judged by comparing: the

academic literature on professions and professionalism from Chapter Two, the

statements from the IfL on ethics and dual professionalism, and the literature on

phronesis. Chapter 4 of this thesis is an opportunity to make such a judgement.

It will be argued that the approach of the IfL is unlikely to create a viable

profession for FE. This argument has been made in an unpublished article by

Plowright and Barr (2010). Two issues are identified. The first relates to the IfL's

failure to implement a genuine code of professional ethics, rather than '…a

'code of professional practice' aimed at ensuring conformance of the workforce

to the needs of employers and government' (Plowright and Barr, 2010 p.3). The second issue is the IfL's insistence on the concept of 'dual professionalism' which fails to address the tensions at the heart of teaching in FE. 'These tensions arise from, on the one hand teachers' vocational experience and, on the other, the very different experience of being a professional teacher' (Plowright and Barr, 2010 p.3).

Learning, teaching and *phronesis*

The work of Lucas has been examined above but he also identifies four types of FE teacher which he argues '…reflect continuing academic and vocational divisions and traditions' (Lucas, 2004 p.151). These are:

- The Vocational Specialist. The FE teacher as craftsman, as trainer, imparting their vocational skills acquired from their experience in the workplace.
- The Competent Practitioner. A development from the vocational specialist to one who checked the competences of the trainees against nationally set standards of competence.
- The Subject Specialist. Typically a graduate, one who had started teaching on GCSEs and A levels but had moved to apply their knowledge to the broader FE curriculum.
- The Reflective Practitioner. The teacher applying knowledge in a practical setting for their students refined through constant reflection.

These models can be seen to dominate at particular periods in the development of FE; for example the Vocational Specialist model was predominant during the pre-1992 period, when the emphasis was on training apprentices. This

developed into the Competent Practitioner model, when the NVQ competences were central to post-1992 vocational FE. The Subject Specialist model has been present within parts of the FE curriculum over both periods, for example with GCSE and 'A' level teaching.

It is the model of the reflective practitioner which bears further scrutiny because of arguments about the need for a profession for teachers in FE, and the application of *phronesis*. This model could be one which described the kind of profession which the IFL (2007a) and SVUK (2007) wish to create, perhaps based on the work of Schön (1983). However, Lucas finds all of these models unsatisfactory because they create barriers, rather than the consensus that would be a feature of a profession for FE teachers. The vocational specialist is, he argues, '…entrenched within the traditions and cultures of their craft and industrial backgrounds' (Lucas, 2004 p.153). The competent and reflective practitioner models perpetuate '...the rather narrow focus upon subject or vocational knowledge…' (Lucas 2004, p.162, citing Robson, 1998). Equally the subject practitioner can '…become entrenched in attitudes and practices, which makes it difficult to create a consensus around a body of professional knowledge and identity shared with other practitioners'

Entrenchment, narrow focus and tradition are all barriers to the development of a profession for FE teachers, according to Lucas. This is particularly because the first two of his models are from the vocational part of FE and the latter two from the academic part (Lucas, 2004 p.151). He wishes to 'realign' FE (Lucas, 2004 p.171) and concludes with a plea for the creation of an FE teacher as a 'learning professional' (Lucas, 2004 p.175). His analysis of the issues facing FE and the creation of a profession for FE teachers goes thus far. It is a question

which forms part of this thesis, as to whether an approach based on *phronesis* can advance the case any further.

Chapter Four

Critique

The purpose of this chapter is to bring together the literature from Chapters Two and Three; to critique one with the other, in order to set the agenda for the research questions for forthcoming chapters. It will serve as a summary of the main theoretical points arising from the academic literature, such as McDonaldization, commodification and performativity. It will apply these to the approaches to teaching and quality management, characterised by Ofsted and QAA, as identified in Chapter Three. The argument will move to apply *phronesis* to the issues of professionalism and managerialism, pointing the way forward to the empirical research of Chapter Six.

Globalization and McDonaldization

Ritzer's identification of a number of characteristics of McDonaldization can be applied to provide a critique of the Ofsted approach to education and to some approaches to managing quality in Further Education.

The features of McDonaldization that he identifies are efficiency, calculability, predictability and control through non-human technology (Ritzer, 2006 p.14). Efficiency, according to Ritzer, is '…the optimum method for getting from one point to another' (Ritzer, 2006 p.15), which in the fast food world is getting from hungry to full. Appling this to the Further Education context is to find the quickest and simplest way of moving a student from unqualified to qualified. Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness are quality measures which have been

applied to the public sector since the days of the Thatcher government and these measures are still used to measure the journey to achieve qualifications in FE. As pointed out in Chapter Three citing Tomkins (1987) and Peters (2004) these 'value for money' measures are important tools for measuring the performance of FE Colleges, particularly through *The Framework for Excellence* (LSC, 2007). One particularly important measure used in this framework, and one which will be examined in more detail below, is that of the 'success rate' (LSC, 2009a), a measure of how many students start a course in relation to how many remain and achieve the intended qualification.

Ritzer's second feature of McDonaldization is 'Calculability', which is evidenced in the Further Education context through the constant emphasis on quantitative aspects of the education process, rather than on the qualitative. It is clearly identifiable in the Ofsted need to quantify all aspects of the process of education. The allocation of a simple numerical score to the observation of a class, in order to judge a whole range of features, is an example of this. Ofsted list the features to be assessed in a classroom observation as follows:

- setting of clear objectives which are made known to the learners
- enthusiastic and interesting teaching which provides an enjoyable experience for learners
- activities that are suitable for all learners, whatever their age, ability and cultural background, and which are suitably demanding
- awareness of different individuals' needs
- effective questioning of learners to check their understanding
- learners demonstrating their achievements through improved knowledge, understanding and skills
- skilful leadership of discussions to ensure that learners' contributions are encouraged and valued
- clear explanations, particularly of the links between theoretical knowledge and its practical applications
- accurate and up-to-date technical knowledge
- sensitivity to and promotion of equal opportunities issues

- clear writing on whiteboards and overhead projectors
- interesting and relevant use of technology to support learning
- good-quality handouts that are well produced, free from errors and which contain references where appropriate
- sufficient coverage of ground in the topic
- effective management of any transition between individual and group work
- a crisp end to the lesson, summarising what has been learned and avoiding 'tailing off'.

(Ofsted, 2008b, p84-5)

As a result of all of these factors the lesson is given a grade from 1 to 4, which equates to a judgement ranging from 'outstanding' to 'inadequate'. As can be seen from the above list of criteria, a great deal is included to identify what a good lesson comprises, from enjoyment and leadership of discussion to clear handouts. However, the interaction of all these elements of pedagogy is reduced to a simple score. Equally, the whole context of the session is contained in the criteria, from the age, ability and cultural background, to the topic and level and yet again, all are subsumed under a simple score. The value of such an activity has to be questioned as a Primary Head teacher does in evidence to the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee: 'The four point grading is crude . . .' (HC 165, 2007 para.143). Perhaps an Ofsted art critic would be content to award a grade to a work of art but this would not provide any useful information to inform anyone with an interest in any aspect of the art. Indeed, ten years before the Select Committee report, Gilroy and Wilcox questioned the validity of Ofsted judgements and concluded that there were '...inherent weaknesses [in] the foundations of [the Ofsted] methodology' (Gilroy and Wilcox, 1997 p.37).

To return to Ritzer's third feature of McDonaldization: predictability, which in the fast food world guarantees that the product will be the same over time and location. Some educationalists may support a McDonaldized approach on the grounds of equality of opportunity; the argument being that if students receive a standard product throughout the country, no student will gain an unfair advantage or be disadvantaged, as a result of circumstances of geography or income. However, it is an argument of this thesis, that the search for a standard and predictable product is unlikely to capture the unique interaction of teacher and student. It will also miss the essential elements of what constitutes good teaching. Assigning a grade to such an interaction as Ofsted does, is to miss these elements in favour of a simplistic judgement. Furthermore, the judgement is unlikely to be as consistent as a McDonaldized process would require. The House of Commons Education and Skills Committee identifies the variability of the Ofsted process:

> Amongst respondents from all phases, the perception that the quality of inspection teams was inconsistent and that schools were "lucky" or "unlucky" in the allocation of inspectors to their school has persisted, indicating that little progress has been made in improving quality assurance to ensure consistency of inspectors' approaches or behaviour during an inspection.
>
> (HC 165, 2007 para.145).

In comparison the QAA make no presumption of a standard approach but on the contrary establish agreed criteria, under the banner of the Academic Infrastructure, so that HEIs and FECs can judge how well they match, for example, the precepts of the Code of Practice (QAA 2007b). There are no simplistic judgements made with the spurious accuracy implied by a numerical score.

The difference in the approaches can be seen in an extract from the QAA Handbook for revised institutional audit where there is no claim to make judgements about standards and quality 'as such', with the implication that there are different ways of achieving these:

> An audit team's judgement is not about academic standards as such, but about the way that the institution ensures that its academic standards are secured by the work of its examiners, internal and external, judged against the reference points of the Academic Infrastructure. Nor is the team's judgement about the quality of learning opportunities as such, but rather about the way that the institution ensures that the learning opportunities available to students are of an appropriate quality, with reference to the guidance in the Academic Infrastructure.

(QAA, 2006 para. 17)

Reviews by the QAA are more likely to result in a variety of approaches to achieving high quality standards and opportunities than Ofsteds' more prescriptive methodology. The QAA approach is less calculable and less insistent on standardisation and so is less of a McDonaldized process.

Finally, Ritzer's McDonaldized organisation emphasises control and particularly control through non-human technology. In Further Education, control through non-human technology is conducted through Management Information Systems monitoring recruitment, retention and achievement data, as quality measures both internally and for Ofsted. In addition, the monitoring of performance in FE is now done electronically, at a distance, by the Learning and Skills Council as part of its tendering and commissioning process (LSC, 2009d). Such procedures not only emphasise the applicability of Ritzer's analysis to Further Education, but also highlight the process of commodification which is dealt with in detail below.

In short, the application of Ritzer's analysis to FE highlights a number of examples where the features of McDonaldization of efficiency, calculability, predictability and control through non-human technology, are well advanced.

Consciousness and acculturation

As noted in Chapter Two, Bottery pointed to forces of globalization which 'mould consciousness' in a way which educational leaders should not 'tacitly condone' (Bottery, 2006 p.21). He points to how 'acculturation' takes place to slowly and imperceptibly change values and attitudes (Bottery, 2006 p.16).

Bottery analyses the forces operating at a global level which have an impact on education policies and concludes that the forces of globalization:

> …are not descriptive but prescriptive, reflecting particular interests and particular accumulations of power. Through their discourses they mould consciousness away from notions of public sectors and public goods, and away from the striving for a fairer and more just world, towards values and ways of living which are narrower, meaner and spiritually more impoverished.

> (Bottery, 2006 p.21)

The issue of acculturation is one noted in Chapter Two in the work of Gleeson and Shain (1999) and Elliott (1996). Within FE Elliott notes that: '…debate is constrained within a technocratic market discourse, to the point where many lecturers are experiencing the fundamental contradiction of educational practice: "the experience of holding educational values, and the experience of their negation"' (Elliott, 1996 p.21). Gleeson and Shain show that FE lecturers cope with this contradiction by 'strategic compliance', which is to conform to the managerial norms of the organisation whilst also maintaining their beliefs and values (Gleeson and Shain, 1999 p.488). One purpose of questioning

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managers and teaching staff for this thesis is to identify if a similar contradiction or strategic compliance is evident, in order to judge the extent of managerialism and the possibility for professionalism, based on *phronesis.*

Commodification and Performativity

As has been identified in earlier chapters, the processes of commodification where: '… education becomes a product to be traded internationally' (Naidoo and Jamieson, 2006 p.878) and vocationalisation which "turns education into a commodity with economic value" (Grubb and Lazerson, 2006 p.300) are both evident. At issue is the view of education which sees it only as a commodity to be traded.

The official literature which was examined in Chapter Three confirms this process. The reports by Tomlinson (2002), Foster (2005) and Leitch (2006) and Prime Ministerial speeches all point to a commodified, performative future for Further Education.

Performativity

Strathern's point that important information about an organisation is invisible to audit and cannot be measured (Strathern, 2000 p.314) returns the debate to quality management in Further Education and the inspections of Ofsted.
The weakness of this approach is evident in the process of observing classroom teaching. A typical observation of teaching, whether by Ofsted or by internal observers, will last for less than an hour. The observation is likely to be

expected in some way, no matter how short the notice period and so the lesson is less likely to typical. In addition, the presence of the observer is inevitably intrusive, as the observer is not a regular participant in the class activity but an outsider. As such, the observation is unlikely to capture the relationship between the teacher and the student which is vital to the process and the success of the activity; a process which is dynamic, changing and developing over time. Such dynamics will evade measurement so that no allocation of a numerical grade allocated to an observation of classroom practice will be worthwhile.

Similarly Tsoukas' point that knowledge is often mistakenly identified with information: '…that is as consisting of objectified, commodified, abstract, decontextualized representations.' (Tsoukas, 1996 p.827) has applicability to the Ofsted need to quantify retention and achievement statistics. These are then used as a basis for decision making on the 'health' of a programme, to determine funding and even to judge a college.

Retention is defined by the proportion of students remaining on a programme from start to finish; achievement, by the proportion of students achieving the qualification that they set out to achieve. A further measure used by Ofsted and commonly within FE, which is to multiply these two sets of figures together and divide by two to obtain the 'Success Rate', which is subsequently viewed as a measure of the quality of a programme. The LSC stated this in its guidance in 2009:

> Success rates are numerical indicators of a provider's performance
> across its provision. They are a high profile measure that have been

used by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and inspectorate bodies for many years.

(LSC, 2009e para.9.1.1)

The quality of a programme is thereby objectified by the success rate being the prime measure used by external bodies and colleges themselves. The information provided from such measures results in the process of teaching in FE being objectified, commodified, decontextualised and abstract.

If a programme of work based learning offered by a college fails to meet the success rate figures targeted the programme can be switched to a different provider (LSC, 2009d). The decision is made at a distance, with no reference or relation to the activity being undertaken, simply the numbers identified. Such decisions show the educational 'product' as commodified and decontextualised. As an example, a programme in FE could be deemed to have excellent figures; it could recruit well; the students on it could stay to the end of the programme and achieve the qualification. However, the course might be recruiting well because there is little local choice, or because of the need to gain the qualification in order to maintain employment. This would also affect the retention and achievement of the students, who might be sent by their employer as a condition of continued employment. The students might dislike the programme; it might be poorly taught and although they achieve, they may not achieve their full potential. In addition, any differences between the programme and others; for example a programme which takes on students who are difficult to motivate or with social disadvantage, but which achieves highly for its given cohort will be masked by the reliance on the figures. Indeed, as Tsoukas

indicates '…more information may lead to less understanding…' (Tsoukas, 1996 p.827).

The performativity agenda in FE is shown at its starkest with the application of *The Framework for Excellence.* The framework is one of measure upon measure, all of which are claimed to be not only objective but also independent and accurate, which finally culminate in a judgement that a college is outstanding, good, satisfactory or inadequate. The tendency of Ofsted to identify 'satisfactory' as failing, is one which has been criticised by the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee (HC165, 2007 p.21). As one Headteacher and former inspector explained in evidence to the committee:

> This was my fourth Ofsted inspection and I have also done my training as an Ofsted inspector but I still feel that the process is very subjective, depends a lot on the team you get, the agenda they come with and then the ability of the head teacher to establish a good relationship with them and 'play a game' confidently.

> (HC165, 2007 para145)

The decontextualisation of the Ofsted and QAA processes is illustrated by their approach to the subject matter taught. Currently Ofsted only observe teaching at subject level in full inspections, as light touch inspections only verify the judgements made by the internal inspection team. Such in-house inspections might be undertaken by non-subject specialist management, by separate teams of subject specialists or non-subject specialists. The inherent failings of the observation process have been outlined earlier in this chapter. The validity of a short observation to provide a judgement of the quality of teaching has been questioned, as has the ability of such an observation to judge the quality of teaching for a particular subject. The House of Commons Education and Skills

Committee also voiced concern in relation to Ofsted's treatment of subject knowledge and skills, in 2007:

> We are concerned that, while thematic subject reports may identify general issues in subjects they will not provide a reliable picture of the standard of teaching in that subject. We are also concerned that the lack of subject focus in school inspections will lead some schools to neglect non-core subjects in order to improve their grading. We urge Ofsted to review the size of the sample used to produce subject reviews. We also urge Ofsted to ensure that some observation of non-core subjects is included in all inspections.

(HC165, 2007 p.21)

QAA and Subject knowledge and skills

The QAA, in not observing teaching, does not have the same difficulties with subject matter as Ofsted. It recognises the place of 'subject' by specifying the knowledge and skills for a range of subject areas in the subject benchmarks. Teams, which write the subject benchmark statements for the QAA, are drawn from a range of expert practitioners in a particular field. These benchmarks are a statement of the knowledge and skills required of a graduate in a particular subject area, and as such are based on shared academic expertise.

For a particular qualification, for example a Foundation Degree, the curriculum will have undergone a number of processes in order to ensure academic quality and standards. The subject matter can be seen to be safeguarded through these processes.

The curriculum will have been written by those who will teach the programme in consultation with employer and other representatives. The learning outcomes

for the programme will have been mapped against the subject benchmark statements. The programme specification will have been scrutinised by panels of academic peers, perhaps both internally to the organisation and externally. The panels will have been informed by external academic members with subject expertise. The panels will also check on the qualifications of the staff due to deliver the programme, so as to ensure that they have appropriate subject knowledge for teaching at an appropriate level. Once a programme has been agreed the External Examiner system, again in conformance with the QAA code of practice, should ensure the comparability of academic standards and student experience. Consequently it can be seen that there is a major emphasis throughout is on the academic judgement of the teaching staff who will deliver the programme. The QAA approach provides a more honest approach to subject matter, particularly in this recognition of the importance of academic judgement.

Phronesis

In Chapter Two, *phronesis* was examined and three aspects were identified to pursue in this thesis, arising from the analysis provided by Birmingham (Birmingham, 2004 p.315).

Firstly, the importance of context; which is to say that a particular teaching situation is a unique and highly complex interaction between individuals with different histories and roles, in a particular time, place, culture and subject. As Birmingham explains: '*Phronesis* is situated in the particulars of a specific time and place and is concerned with specific events and persons' (Birmingham,

2004 p.315). The Ofsted and QAA approaches to making judgements on the teaching process were examined in Chapter Three. They were seen to either hardly concern themselves with the interaction that is teaching, in the case of the QAA, or to reduce the complexities to a simplistic numerical score, in the case of Ofsted. This thesis intends to elicit the views of teachers, students and managers on HE in FE programmes at Hull College on this issue, by exploring their views on the importance of the context of the teaching situation and relationship between teacher and student.

The second feature of *phronesis* to be considered is the role of theory. Theory may be abstracted from practice and can in turn inform practice but must still be understood and applied in a particular context. '…*phronesis* is not the simple application of educational theory, for educational situations are much too complex, ambiguous and unpredictable to comply with algorithmic application of educational theory' (Birmingham, 2004 p.315).

Allied to this is the transition from the theoretical to the practical. In starting with workplace learning, Hagar provides support for an approach to teaching based on *phronesis* directly applicable to FE; moving from the practical to the theoretical. The research question applicable to this issue explores the relationship between the universal and the particular, in the teaching of the subject. The extent to which the vocational aspects of the programmes taken are seen to be practical, theoretical or a fusion of the two, will inform a judgement of the degree of vocationalisation within the organisation. It will also identify the extent to which there are conditions in which *phronesis* could flourish.

The third aspect of *phronesis* to be identified relates to the role which experience and reflection play, in order to apply theory to context. As Birmingham says: 'Rather than defining a specific situation as a simple instance of an abstract principle, reflection begins with the concrete intricacies of the characters and histories of the persons involved' (Birmingham, 2004 p.317). Eisner suggests that it is through the debate between teachers that *phronesis* proceeds, '… by creating a context where multiple interpretations and analyses are likely' (Eisner, 2002, p.382).

This links also with the view of teaching as 'artistry'. Eisner sees artistry as an approach to the uniqueness of the situation, good teaching depending upon it (Eisner, 2002 p.382). It is through the debate between teachers that *phronesis* proceeds; '… teachers will be able to discuss with others their performance as teachers' (Eisner, 2002 p.383).

This aspect is explored in the research for this thesis, through the questions posed on the value placed on reflection, deliberation and judgement in improving teaching. The view as to whether teaching can be seen as an art will also be explored.

The issues of refection and discussion, in so far as these are central to the profession of teaching in FE, lead the research questions to illustrate the extent of managerialism already entrenched within the organisation. This has relevance in tackling the contradictions in the role of the FE teacher, as recognised by Gleeson and Shain (1999 p.488) and Elliott (Elliott, 1996 p.21).

The relevant research questions relate to the extent that managers, staff and students at Hull College are aware of conflicts between the demands of a teaching professional and a subject/ vocational professional; whether they see any conflict between values and roles.

In the first of the aspects of *phronesis* identified by Birmingham above, the importance of context has been considered. However, there is an additional dimension to that of context, which is 'subject'. As seen in Chapter Two, the subject matter is important in framing the context. Hagar (2000) sees the context of an engineering factory framing the interaction, whereas in teaching it is the subject matter which adds this dimension. The nature, and indeed the art of teaching is the teaching of a particular subject, the marriage of the theoretical and the applied, a specific context involving the interaction of individuals.

Professionalism and Managerialism

The debate about the nature of professionalism and the opportunities for acknowledging a profession for teaching in FE form a final dimension to the research questions for this thesis. The issues of performativity, vocationalism, commodification of education, the approach to teaching based on *phronesis* and the current developments in the FE environment coincide in the debate about a profession for FE teachers. The questions which will investigate the issues are:

- How far do the views of managers, staff and students at Hull College reflect the trends of performativity, commodification and increased vocationalisation in education?
- How far are managers, staff and students at Hull College aware of conflicts between the demands of a teaching professional and a

subject/ vocational professional i.e. Is there any problem with dual professionalism? Are there conflicts between their values and their role?

As identified in Chapter Three, Lucas identifies four types of FE teacher; the Vocational Specialist, the Competent Practitioner, the Subject Specialist and the Reflective Practitioner. Each was seen to dominate at particular periods in the development of FE; the Vocational Specialist during the pre-1992 period, the Competent Practitioner in post-1992 vocational FE and the Subject Specialist over both periods. The model of the Reflective Practitioner was one identified in the previous chapter as particularly relevant to the debate around a profession for teachers in FE and the application of *phronesis*. Chapter Three charted the change in FE over in the pre-1992, post-1992 and present periods.

Although Lucas finds all of these models unsatisfactory because they create barriers, rather than the consensus that would be a feature of a profession for FE teachers, he provides a useful analysis of the issues facing the creation of a profession for FE teachers.

It is a question which forms part of this thesis, as to whether an approach based on *phronesis* can advance the case any further.

One issue is whether the approach of the IfL is likely to create a viable profession for FE, as it claims. Plowright and Barr argue in an unpublished article that this is unlikely. Two issues are identified. The first relates to the IfL's failure to implement a genuine code of professional ethics, rather than '…a 'code of professional practice' aimed at ensuring conformance of the workforce to the needs of employers and government' (Plowright and Barr, 2010 p.3). The

second issue is the IfL's insistence on the concept of 'dual professionalism'
which fails to address the tensions at the heart of teaching in FE. 'These
tensions arise from, on the one hand teachers' vocational experience and, on
the other, the very different experience of being a professional teacher'.
(Plowright and Barr, 2010 p.3).

Managerialism

What was identified in Chapter Two as 'the ecumenism of the business
paradigm' (Waters, 1995 p.80) and the 'increasing isomorphism between the
non-profit and commercial sectors' (Bottery, 1994 p.341) can be identified in
Further Education at the current time. Further Education institutions in England
and Wales have become more alike as a result of the coercive pressures
(DiMaggio and Powell, 1983 p.152) present in the Ofsted inspection regime and
The Framework for Excellence criteria discussed earlier. In addition, there has
been direction by government through various reports and statements; for
example, Foster 2005, Leitch 2006 and Blunkett 1988. The result of these
pressures has been the adoption of Post-Fordist approaches which
'…decentralize responsibility for implementation but keep a tight rein on policy
boundaries.'(Bottery, 2000 p.151).

The process of managerialism also imbues the culture of FE, a culture which
prioritises marketisation and blurs the boundary between the professional and
the manager. As Elliott noted in 1996:

> Increasingly, however, the rules of discourse within the college made
> it more and more difficult for lecturers to maintain continuity in
> prioritising pedagogy over the imperatives of the market. Appealing
> to a moral principle or an educational aim became increasingly futile,

since debates with senior managers could only be conducted in relation to the bottom line

<div align="center">(Elliott, 1996 p.20)</div>

The creation of a profession for FE which, like the structures and pronouncements of the IfL, appears increasingly managerial rather than professional, might be an inevitable result of the pressures arising from the globalization so far identified in this thesis.

As Exworthy and Halford (2002) note, professions are changing in the light of these pressures:

> …the status and power of professionals may come increasingly to depend upon their ability to cast their goals and objectives in appropriate terms [and that] managerial assets are becoming of increasing importance for career enhancement within the professions

<div align="center">(Exworthy and Halford, 2002 p.100-101).</div>

In conducting the research for this thesis it may be possible to make a judgement on how far the process of acculturation to a managerial agenda has progressed within an institution such as Hull College, or whether there are still opportunities, latent in the beliefs of managers, staff and students, for a different approach, one based on *phronesis*.

Chapter Five

Methodology

The original research ideas for this thesis were focussed around examining the different approaches adopted by Ofsted and the QAA towards quality and to determine which was the most appropriate for the HE in FE programmes at Hull College. These ideas were formulated into a primary research question 'What effect would the recognition of and focussing on, different models of quality have upon Higher Education programmes at Hull College?' Whilst reading for the literature review, the notion of *phronesis* emerged from the work of Eisner and others, as a philosophical foundation for teaching. After confirming the relevance of the concept from Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics, phronesis* emerged as an appropriate basis for HE in FE at Hull College. The research question was re-phrased to explore: 'Could *phronesis* provide a model for the teaching and quality management of HE in FE at Hull College? How far do the views of managers, staff and students at Hull College accord with the main features of *phronesis*?' The research was to be a case study of Hull College in order to explore the views and beliefs of the managers, staff and students in the context of HE in FE.

Theoretical approach

The approach taken in this research was qualitative rather than quantitative or mixed methods research. The qualitative approach, in contrast to the quantitative, rejects the model of the natural sciences, and positivism seeking to inductively generate theories (Bryman, 2001 p.20). The qualitative view is that the context of the research affects the questions posed by the researcher and

the nature of the findings to the extent that only the use of qualitative methods is valid, in order to allow the research to provide an understanding of a particular situation. In Pring's words:

> …we have to study the uniqueness of each situation to understand it , as each transaction is constituted by the perceptions and interpretations of the participants; and those perceptions and interpretations, because of their uniqueness, cannot be subjected to … general explanatory accounts.
>
> (Pring 2000, p.248)

The qualitative approach is based upon a particular view of the nature of reality, or ontology, with its own criteria for establishing how this reality can be known; its epistemology. Guba and Lincoln (1998) suggest that the qualitative approach rests on Critical Theory and Constructivism, as opposed to Positivism or Post-positivism (Guba and Lincoln, 1998, p.210). Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998, p.23) describe the constructivist position as one for which no single reality exists; it is perceived as being multiple and constructed by the participant in that reality (ontology). It is argued that the knower and the known are inseparable (epistemology), resulting in value bound inquiry (axiology) which is dependent upon time and context, where it is impossible to distinguish between cause and effect.

 It was appropriate to take an approach which emphasised context, uniqueness and values to investigate a research question which itself sought to establish an approach to teaching and quality based on those very criteria. To establish the possibility of an approach based on *phronesis* in HE in FE at Hull College was to explore the importance of teaching as a context bound activity in which the interaction between the particular students, teacher and subject matter determined the success of the enterprise. To tackle such a project from an

epistemological point of view contrary to the philosophical position under investigation would not have been possible. The research by its very nature was a qualitative undertaking in the form of a case study.

The approach is based on relativism rather than realism. The relativist would argue that reality cannot be known independently of our perceptions which are shaped by our presuppositions. As a result no theory can be said to be better, truer or more objective than any other; as Eisner writes:

> …knowledge is always constructed relative to a framework, to a form of representation, to a cultural code, and to a personal biography.

> (Eisner 1993, p.54)

Relativism is often used as a pejorative term, as it can be used to imply that any view is as valid as any other, no right or wrong, sense or nonsense. Eisner (1993) recognises the relativism of his position but rejects the view that this leads to subjectivism and the rejection of objectivity. Gorard and Taylor argue that relativism is '…inherently contradictory, being itself based upon a universal claim' (2004, p.162). However, making a claim for the results of research is common to all ontological positions. The difference is that the relativist claim is to the features of the context rather than to an external reality in the case of realism.

Generalisability

Generalising from one situation to another allows research to transcend the specific context in which it was obtained. Natural scientists would question the benefit of knowing only the unique (Lincoln and Guba 1997, p.27) and thereby criticise a qualitative approach. However, the distinction between a situation

being either unique on the one hand, or capable of generalisation and

applicability to other situations on the other, is not straightforward. In one sense

every situation is unique (Pring 2000, p.258), and yet situations have similar

features. It is more a matter of there being a continuum of complexity; a

question of the 'level of inference' (Phillips 1993, pp.62-3). Lincoln and Guba

discuss the issue of complexity and suggest that in order to overcome the

difficulties that result when a generalization does not take account of time and

context, the researcher must enlarge the amount of information provided.

Adding more and more detail will strengthen the validity of the research, but

only in an 'indeterminate, relative and time and context bound' way. (Lincoln

and Guba 1997, p.32).

The researcher will need to add so much more detail that Lincoln and Guba

(1997) suggest that it is more appropriate to 'give up' on generalizations. They

propose instead the "working hypotheses" which are;

> …tentative both for the situation in which they are first uncovered and for
> other situations; there are always differences in context from one
> situation to situation, and even the single situation differs over time…
> When we give proper weight to local conditions, any generalization is a
> working hypothesis, not a conclusion.

(Lincoln and Guba 1997 pp.39-40)

Results of research may be time bound and culturally specific to a degree, but

still be useful in understanding a similar situation at a different time and place.

As Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler (2005) point out in their study of

professionalism in Further Education, there can be 'justifiable reason' for

making a piece of research 'a case in point' (Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler,2005

p.446) in order to generalise more widely. If the results of research from one

context are applied to another, there is a need to know both contexts. If the

researcher gives a sufficiently detailed description, this can be used to establish if one situation is sufficiently similar to allow a generalization with another. For the current research into *phronesis* in HE in FE at Hull College, the generalisability of the findings to other situations will depend upon identifying similarities in other colleges, or contexts. To say that a study of one organisation cannot be applicable to another organisation or context is to commit what Pring describes as the 'uniqueness fallacy '… the false entailment from every event being unique in *some* respect to every event being unique in *every* respect' (Pring 2000, p.258). The outcomes of the current research will be specific to HE programmes at Hull College, but will also be relevant to similar programmes at other colleges.

Conducting the research

The thesis examines issues from a number of directions: reviewing the two kinds of literature; interviewing students, teaching staff and managers, as shown in the following diagram:

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                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
    ┌──────────┐    │ Context of Globalisation │    ┌──────────┐
    │ Academic │    │ and National Policies    │    │ Official │
    │ Literature│   └──────────────────────────┘    │ Literature│
    └──────────┘          ⬊      ⬇      ⬋            └──────────┘

                        ╱────────────────╲
                       │  HE in FE at     │
    ┌────────────┐     │  Hull College    │     ┌──────────┐
    │ Management │ ⟹  │                  │ ⟸  │ Students │
    └────────────┘     │                  │     └──────────┘
                        ╲───────⬇────────╱     ┌──────────┐
                                                │ Teachers │
                                                └──────────┘

              ┌──────────────────────────────┐
              │ Applicability of a Model of  │
              │ Quality based on phronesis   │
              └──────────────────────────────┘
```
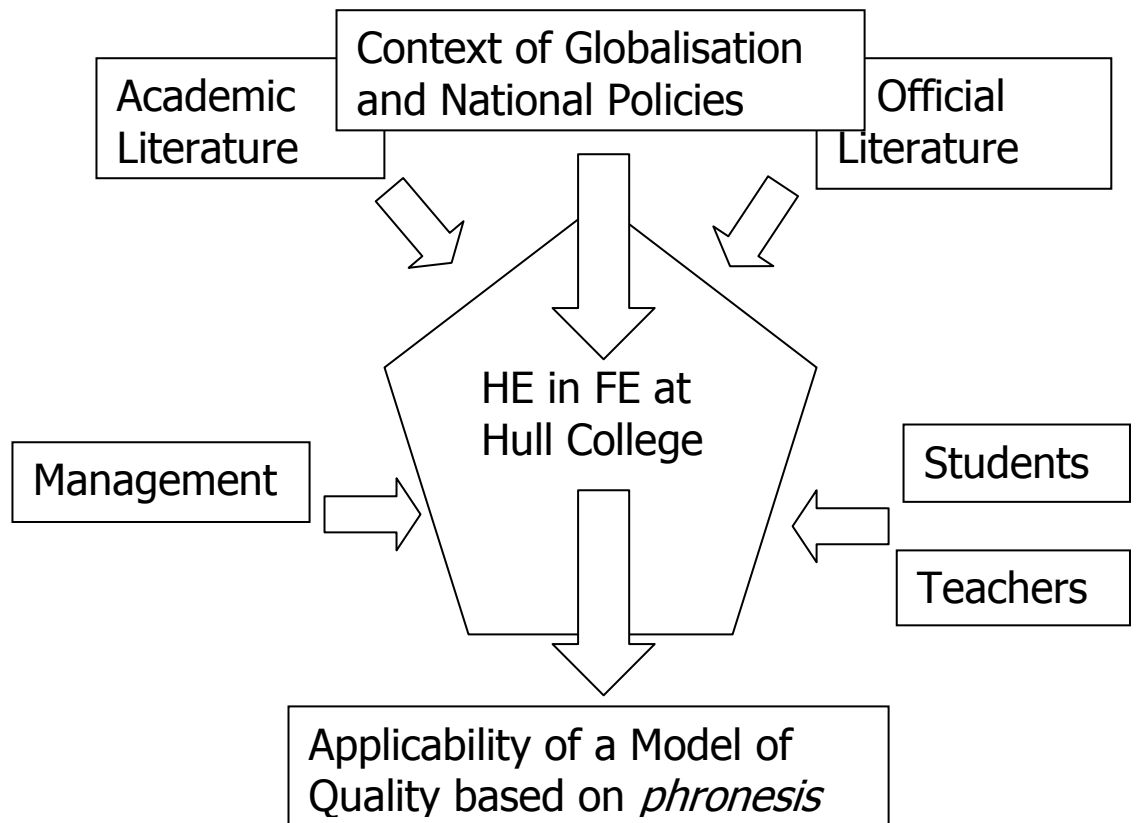
The epistemological foundations for this case study are as articulated by

Tsoukas:

> All formal knowledge can do is to offer an account of the local context in-time, as well as give voice to the intimate experience possessed by actors themselves... Thus, in contextualist epistemology actors are given their voice in the researcher's narrative; they speak in their own words, and the researcher is merely the 'interpreter'.
>
> (Tsoukas 1994, p.776).

The approach fits Yin's description of a case study, which:

- relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion and as another result
- benefits from the prior development of theoretical positions to guide data collection and analysis. Case study is chosen rather than experiment or survey.

(Yin 2003, p.14)

To apply Yin's statements to this research, the theoretical position needs to be developed to establish the meaning of *phronesis*. The context can then be explored from multiple sources in order to seek answers to the research questions. As he says the '…phenomenon and context are not always distinguishable' (Yin, 2003 p.13).

Observation as a means of data collection was not appropriate because there was no phenomenon to observe in a natural setting. Questionnaires could have been used to gather information from a larger number of respondents than with the interviews; however, questionnaires lend themselves to situations where the answers are more apparent than in this case. As Cohen, Manion and Morrison note; questionnaires '...catch articulated, espoused, enacted, visible aspects of organisational culture.' (2007 p.97) and that there is a degree of '…unsophistication and limited scope of the data and…. limited flexibility of the response' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007 p.317). They are therefore unsuitable for this research.

The use of focus groups was a possible approach for this research and one used by Hill, Lomas and MacGregor (2003) into student perception of quality. However, the influence of the views of a few may come to dominate the discussion of the focus group and this outweighed its benefits. (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007 p.288).

The benefits of an interview are that questions can be re-phrased and clarification can be sought. The respondents are likely to be more receptive to the intent of a question rather than to a written question. The interviewer can

observe how the person responds and can thus achieve greater insight into the nature of the response and the feelings of the respondent, thus adding to the validity of the results. Furthermore, respondents may be more willing to engage more fully with the questions asked and to provide more personal answers, whilst some respondents may be more willing to talk than fill in a questionnaire, which they may view as onerous.

Semi-structured interviews were used for the research to allow the respondent latitude to express feelings and to expand on ideas and to '…gather data on the more intangible aspects of … culture, e.g. values, assumptions, beliefs, wishes, problems' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007 p.97). There was a degree of structure to the interviews so that clear points of comparison from the responses of the different groups could be established. These points could then be linked to the theory and literature in order to provide triangulation.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen in order to elicit views and beliefs through the development of a conversation. The methods of data collection were interviews combined with some documentary analysis. Data collection was through semi-structured interviews which '…gather data on the more intangible aspects of the school's culture, e.g. values, assumptions, beliefs, wishes, problems' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007 p.97). A semi-structured approach was taken to provide a degree of reliability in asking questions addressing the same issues from the three chosen standpoints, student, teacher and manager, yet allowing for some variation and interaction to develop an interview conversation, which put the interviewees at ease and allowed them to share their thoughts. The questions chosen were either open ended or required an elaboration of a decision made by the interviewee; for example

whether the teachers saw teaching as an art or a science, or whether they saw themselves as professional teachers. A deliberate approach in the questioning was to start with a positive approach which asked for examples of good experiences and positive factors. The purpose of the interviews was to investigate evidence of *phronesis* or whether an approach based on *phronesis* underpinned the beliefs of the participants in the teaching relationship. Because it was a positive purpose it would not have been appropriate to ask about particular barriers encountered. If barriers were mentioned by the interviewees it could be inferred that these were genuine rather than prompted. The likelihood of bias was reduced by adopting such an approach rather than one which assumed that the barriers existed and asking for them to be enumerated. It would also be less likely that the interviews would move away from the negative to identify any characteristics identifiable as *phronesis.*

Another difficulty of the interview approach chosen is that that the responses are those that the interviewees think they ought to give rather than views that they hold. In this context it could be, for example, giving voice to the dominant ideology of managerialism, which pervades the further education environment, rather than personally about the nature of teaching and the subject being taught. Equally, it is possible that their views are indeed in accord with those of managerialism. Conducting the interviews in quiet, undisturbed locations, usually with informal seating arrangements in a friendly manner and with a guarantee of anonymity were vital features of the process to ensure that '…the participant can feel secure to talk freely' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007 p.361).

As the thesis was a case study based upon my own organisation it was important to tackle the ethical issues involved, for the research to be successful. Ethical procedures for the University of Hull's Institute for Learning and for Hull College through its Teaching, Learning and Research Committee were followed. The background framework for these is provided by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004).

Validity and reliability

As a result of the degree of subjectivity of qualitative research 'Validity then should be seen as a matter of degree rather than as an absolute state'. (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007 p.133). Research is valid when it measures what it is supposed to measure; reliability is achieved when consistent results are produced.

The fact that the sample of students chosen at Honours level are studying on Top-up degrees, rather than three year honours programmes diminishes the generalisability of the findings to all HE in FE students and programmes. However, when seeking to identify particular features of HE in FE in general, it is relevant to note the ubiquity of the Foundation Degree. Over 72% of FE colleges were involved in the provision of foundation degrees (Harvey, 2009 p.7) and almost 100,000 students were enrolled on the qualification in 2010 (Longhurst 2010, p.3)

As Schofield noted in 1993 (p107) external validity is about replicability and generalisation from the results, but '….studying a site chosen for its special

characteristics does not necessarily restrict the application of the study's findings to other very similar sites.' As Hull College is typical of a large FE college delivering HE this might give weight to the generalisability of the findings allowing the creation of 'fuzzy generalization' (Bassey, 1999) with applicability beyond the boundaries of the College. Additionally, there might be generalisability beyond further education as Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler point out:

> FE has much in common with attempts by governments worldwide to reform post-compulsory education and training within a global discourse of economic improvement, re-skilling and social inclusion. In this context English FE represents a 'prototype' of one of the most market tested sectors of public provision in which quasi-market interventions have radically altered democratic accountability in favour of government, business and corporate interests.

(Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler, 2005 p.446)

The Sample

In choosing the groups, the rationale was to select those who would give as good a representation of the views across the college as is consistent with the practicalities in the scale of the research. Interviews were conducted with 12 students, 8 staff and 4 managers. The sample of curriculum areas chosen represented the composition of HE in FE teaching at Hull College.

Out of 1600 HE in FE students at the College (approximate figures for 2008-9) the largest numbers are from Hull School of Art and Design (425) followed by the three curriculum groupings of Performing Arts (260) Business and Computing (250) and Engineering and Construction (150). Students, staff and managers were chosen from these curriculum areas rather than from Sport,

Leisure and Tourism, Health and Care and Childhood Studies which have lower numbers. Most Teacher Education students are also members of staff, with the remainder in other teaching establishments. Although approximately 250 in number, they were not chosen for the sample because it would be difficult to distinguish the separation of their roles. The sample of teachers and managers reflected the curriculum areas of the students chosen. Of approximately sixty staff who teach on Higher Education programmes at the College, only half of this number have substantial timetables of HE work. Others staff teach predominantly FE with less HE teaching or are part-time and teach only a few hours. The staff sample is therefore approximately 13% of the whole and 25% of those with substantive HE workloads. Managers were chosen at Head of School level with seven Heads having higher education in their schools. The sample size is therefore 57% but represents 100% of the curriculum areas selected.

The dominant model for HE in FE qualifications at Hull College is the Foundation Degree, followed by a one year Honours top-up. Students were chosen to represent the relevant subject areas and qualification model. However, they were not chosen according to any pre-determined pattern but by their willingness to participate. Possible difficulties created by this approach were that the interviewees were likely to be the most enthusiastic and willing students rather than being a cross section of opinion. However any errors in the findings resulting from such a sample would also be present in other forms of sampling such as questionnaires or focus groups, where only willing participants would attend or complete the surveys. An approach based on interviews does not face the same issues of validity and reliability faced by the

questionnaire method from 'The problem of non-response...' (Cohen Manion and Morrison, 2007 p.157). As noted earlier the questionnaire method was not appropriate for this research.

Age and gender were not judged to be factors likely to influence perceptions, as a range of responses was sought; however the sample contained an even match of six male and six female student respondents. Coincidently the employment status of the respondents was also a match at 6 full-time and 6 part-time students (although not a clear-cut distinction for HE in FE students as full-time students may be engaged in relevant part-time employment). All but one of the students was from the UK. Teaching staff interviewed were mainly female, (five to three) and the sample of managers was equal male and female. The size of the sample was determined by the need to cover the relevant curriculum areas so as to be representative. The appropriateness of the sample sizes for students and teaching staff became apparent as the interview process progressed as there was an increasing similarity in the responses given by the relevant group.

Originally Senior Managers were to have been chosen as they were influential in setting the internal policies of the organisation and were most likely to have internalised the ideology of managerialism. Subsequently however, it became apparent that the senior managers were unlikely to be able to provide sufficient triangulation with the interviews from teachers and students. They were simply too remote from the detailed issues and functioning of the teaching process. It was decided that managers at Head of School level were most likely to provide suitable triangulation. It was also possible to see if they were 'strategic

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compliers' in the sense that Gleeson and Shain identified of middle managers in 1999 (p. 482). The initial focus of the questioning of all three groups was grounded on their perceptions of teaching in HE in FE and it was from this base that subsequent questions explored the themes of the thesis as a whole.

An approach to quality based on *phronesis* would suggest that the root of quality lies in the interaction between staff and student. In order to test whether or not this is the case at Hull College, both students and staff were questioned. Managers were also interviewed to see if they recognised the importance of the staff/student interaction. To identify other elements of *phronesis,* the interviews explored whether or not students valued the subject knowledge and experience of the staff teaching them, and whether the main motivation of the teachers was sharing subject knowledge with students. The nature of vocational education was also an area for exploration with all participants in order to gauge how much this was directed at a McDonaldized provision of a standard marketable product or whether there was a broader motivation and a *phronetic* approach as identified by Hagar (2000). Further development of the issues required consideration of the nature of professionalism in HE in FE teaching and the extent of managerialism.

Conduct of the interviews

The detail of the questions asked can be seen in the appendix 1.
The questions were piloted through interviewing a member of staff and a student. As a result of the pilot, changes were made to some of the questions to

clarify their purpose. The questions were also piloted on colleagues for clarity of expression and coherence (Appendix 2).

The questions were sent to most interviewees prior to the session; however some expressed a desire to be interviewed without prior notice of the questions as they preferred a spontaneous response. These wishes were met with few observable differences in detail or quality of response. In the case of two interviewees, one manager and one teacher, the pre-notification of the questions had the effect of limiting some of the dialogue to what had been prepared. In the case of the teacher the discussion became more natural but in the case of the manager a degree of caution can be observed throughout the responses.

Ethical problems were avoided in conducting the research in ensuring anonymity to the interviewees (Appendix 3). Each interview was recorded and the recording allocated a number. An index of names and numbers was held separate to the copy of the recordings. Once responses had been transcribed they were e-mailed to the interviewees for checking and agreement. Of those responding, most agreed the transcript to be an accurate record of the interview, some regretting their lack of eloquence or grammatical expression but not requesting any changes. Only one interviewee, a student, chose to make changes to the grammar of the piece.

After the recorded interview with one manager had ended, the conversation continued and resulted in a number of interesting points being made. This was as Cohen et al. identified: '...it is often after the cassette recorder...has been

switched off that the 'gems' of the interview are revealed...' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007 p.362). In order to maintain appropriate ethical standards it was agreed with the manager that a record of the comments could be added to the transcript, which was subsequently agreed as accurate, subject to the inclusion of a clarifying statement to accompany any quotation made.

In order to preserve anonymity the names of the interviewees were changed. The Managers interviewed were particularly identifiable even if only a brief explanation had been given of their curriculum area. The research was ecologically valid; however this can present difficulties in the ethical foundations of the research in providing for respondents '…non traceability, anonymity and non identifiablity' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007 p. 139). The subject areas have been omitted from most of the quotations used for student, staff and managers, except where it was relevant to contrast responses and did not threaten anonymity. The gender of the managers could also be an identifier and so although there was a balance of male and female managers, the names allocated were not necessarily of the correct gender.

The interview data was analysed by the process of content analysis:

> Content analysis takes texts and analyses, reduces and interrogates them into summary form through the use of both pre-existing categories and emergent themes in order to generate or test a theory.

> (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007 p.476)

The transcribed interviews were not analysed by using a proprietary system for data manipulation, but instead a combination of a hand-written table and searching for key words using the find function on word 2007 produced manageable evidence to illustrate a coherent narrative. In general, the

interviewees' voice was quoted unchanged with grammatical errors intact. The meaning of the responses was sometimes clarified by omitting superfluous and repetitive text.

The literature review of Chapter Two provides the theoretical basis for the research; Chapter Three provides the HE in FE context and Chapter Four a synthesis to provide the foundation for the empirical research of Chapter Six. Conclusions and recommendations in Chapter Seven provide the finale.

Chapter Six

Results

Chapter four provided a critique of chapters 2 and 3 in order to set the agenda for the research questions. In the chapter a number of themes were noted: globalization and McDonaldization, consciousness and acculturation, commodification and performativity, subject knowledge and skills, *phronesis*, professionalism and managerialism. Subsequently the responses to the questions posed to managers, teaching staff and students in the research provided evidence to explore these themes within the context of HE in FE. The methodology of the empirical research was outlined in Chapter Five, but stated briefly it consisted of semi-structured interviews with 12 students, 8 staff and 4 managers. The detail of the questions asked can be seen in the appendix 1.

 The initial focus of the questioning of all three groups was grounded on their perceptions of teaching in HE in FE and it was from this base that subsequent questions explored the themes of the thesis as a whole. There was a high degree of consensus across the three groups questioned about the features of good teaching, initially addressing subject knowledge and skills and giving evidence for the elements of *phronesis*. Further points were raised in the responses which serve to either illustrate the nature of HE in FE, or to point to ways in which a high quality experience may be provided for students, which were recommendations arising from the research.

Subject Knowledge

In Chapter Two a number of points were developed; for example it was argued that subject matter frames the context of a teaching situation. A distinction was also made between knowledge as *episteme* and the practical knowledge of *phronesis*. In order to explore these and other issues the questions were designed to allow the respondents to reflect and identify features of teaching which they thought were important, so allowing their views to emerge. Direct questioning on context or *phronesis* would have been unlikely to generate useful or reliable responses.

The first question put to the interviewees required them to reflect upon a good lesson they had experienced or delivered and to identify what factors had contributed to its success. The responses to the question highlighted a number of common elements, which they saw as crucial: subject knowledge, flexibility and good organization. As noted by Hill,Lomas and MacGregor, in 2003, students valued their lecturers' subject knowledge, but also their good organisation: 'Students appreciated lecturers who knew their subject, were well organized and were interesting to listen to' (Hill, Lomas and MacGregor, 2003 p.16). The current research confirmed some of these points. The student interviewees commented:

> The staff have a really, really good understanding of the course and the literature that they (are) producing...
>
> (Student John)

> … I'm interested in programming and he was a really good programmer… you figure your teacher should have a lot of experience and a lot of knowledge and know how to go about certain problems.

Teaching staff also place significant emphasis upon the extent and currency of their knowledge:

> I think you need to stay on the ball with your subject knowledge for example I'm a member of the British Computer Society and I'm getting emails from them all the time keeping up to date.
>
> (Teacher Helen)

> ...the purpose of HE is to stay current – if you're within FE and you don't necessarily have to stay current... once you've spent that time creating the programme you can spend your spare time going back and refining that – the difficulty here is to stay current and reflect all at the same time …
>
> (Teacher Jane)

Managers also agree that subject knowledge is important but they see industrial/commercial experience and ability to communicate as equally important, a point to cover later in this chapter:

> We've seen it many times that some very well educated people who can't relay that information in a class room, they can't – especially I've seen this doctorate level, professor level they can't put the information over…
>
> (Manager Graham)

Academic staff and managers recognise the importance of keeping up to date with research and scholarly activity.

> ...but they have to have that subject knowledge and I can't see how anyone could come in and teach in our subject area – might in others – from just a detached view of the subject ... They would have to have engaged in research to be able to communicate, so that's the foremost thing.
>
> (Manager Michael)

John sees the impact of research on his teaching, although he believes himself to be fortunate that he can do so: 'I'm really lucky because my research, my studies feed into the courses I teach...' (Teacher John). The ability of staff to keep up to date with their subject and the need to maintain research and scholarship is dealt with in the later sections of this chapter.

Flexibility

In Chapter Two the importance of context was discussed, that a particular teaching situation is a unique and complex interaction. Two aspects of this point are closely related and link to discussions later in the chapter. Firstly there is uniqueness in recognising individual needs and relating the subject knowledge to the students; secondly, there is the uniqueness of the situation in terms of the context. The first aspect of conveying or sharing knowledge links to the discussion below on the art of teaching. The second, links to the following discussions of theory and practice and workplace relevance.

Staff and Managers agree with students that knowledge of subject alone is insufficient; a point well illustrated by the following quotation from a student:

> It's the way she teaches as well, she explains things and shows you how to do it rather than some teachers could just go "Do that" you haven't got a clue if they just say that so.

> (Student Steve)

As Gewirtz et al. point out students define '... 'good' tutors as being the ones who know their subject and can 'deliver' (Gewirtz et al., 2009 p.123). Managers echo the view, developing it to highlight issues of style and performance:

> You remember back to your own teachers and the ones that you really remember are the ones that have their own unique style and unique way of relating it to the group and those are the ones you remember.

> (Manager Mark)

> I think teaching is a performance ... it has to be a performance which engages people. I think if it is a small seminar or a tutorial you adopt a different approach and therefore it's a bit more of a listener, a bit more empathetic to the individual – in other words you pick strategies and ways of communicating that are appropriate to the situation.

> (Manager Michael)

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This last quotation shows the importance of the performance aspects of teaching, in order to convey the knowledge but it also illustrates the need for flexibility and responsiveness; a feature echoed by teaching staff:

> ...it's not until you are there in the situation and you're reading what's going on in the room that it really sort of takes shape, so although you may have planned a particular session you may decide to change it, you may feel the students need some activity, you need to change pace...
>
> (Teacher Helen)

Flexibility is important, but so too is good organisation; a feature which comes out strongly in the interviews with students:

> …high quality teaching for me would mean that the lessons were well structured, the staff were on time, the slides were up... before the session starts so that if you want to do some reading before hand you know what the session is going to be on…
>
> (Student Lynne)

> …all the lectures have been brilliant, fully thought out and very thorough, all the explanations was (sic) consistent.
>
> (Student John)

> ...the course is run so well, the teachers are brilliant you get on with everybody, they want the best out of you and it helps that we've got professional people teaching us.
>
> (Student Steve)

Good organisation is not a characteristic identified by staff or managers however, although they do speak of planning and structure. When staff and managers consider structure they speak about the paperwork that is associated with the college quality procedures such as producing a lesson plan and a scheme of work.

Teacher Stephen describes how he likes to use a particular structure for many of his lessons: 'For me the way that I like to structure my lessons is... '(Teacher Stephen) but he also believes that an imposed structure is bureaucratic and can be stifling:

> ... there is a structure you've got to go through and you've got have things like schemes of work and that sort of stuff I mean in me being an old fogey that's very constricting, inflexible in my mind but you've got to do that sort of thing.
>
> (Teacher Stephen)

One manager speaks of the importance of having lesson plans and schemes of work but recognises that they are just aids to planning and not set in stone. The emphasis is again on flexibility:

> I think you should be flexible and you shouldn't necessarily stick to a plan because that what you've agreed to do in that time – it depends what happens when you're in the room – 'cos things can crop up can't they?
>
> (Manager Caroline)

As Squires notes: '...in teaching there is no end to situational perception, which is always an iterative and reflexive process...' (Squires, 2003 p.6)

In order to explore one of the elements of *phronesis* identified by Eisner (2002), that there is an art to teaching, interviewees were asked whether they viewed it as an art of a science. Most agreed that it was a mixture. When asked whether teaching is an art or a science teaching staff and managers related the question to teacher training as well as to personality, flexibility and enthusiasm.

> I think some people are born to be teachers and some people should never be teachers and that's the art of it I think some people don't have the personality to be able to grab the attention of a student. I mean that's 50 per cent of it – to walk in a room and command their attention
>
> (Teacher Christine)

> I feel you need an enthusiasm and to be able to read what's going on and to be able to be creative and enthusiastic, but also you need this underpinning knowledge to know what you are actually doing and the theory behind.
>
> (Teacher Helen)

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The Art or Science of teaching

An approach to teaching based on *phronesis* would suggest sensitivity to the particular more akin to an art, than the application of laws in the manner of a science. In Eisner's words this is: '... the ability to make judgements about the feel and significance of the particular' (Eisner, 2002 p.382). In order to investigate the validity of this view, interviewees were asked their opinion on the matter without any prompting on the characteristics of art or science. If clarification was requested they would be asked to contrast an approach based on creativity with one based on the application of standard laws or solutions. Managers were in agreement about the importance of the art of teaching as well as the science of the processes. They identified two aspects of the art of teaching; firstly the personal qualities of the teacher in engaging in the art of teaching and secondly, the art which is needed to deal with students as individuals, rather than applying common solutions to situations.

> I think it's both – it's an art in the way that you actually start with a blank canvas and if you like you're then putting a picture to a canvas, but it's got to be backed up by the science... I mean, not everyone makes a teacher and they've got to have something special there to actually make a teacher.
>
> (Manager Graham)

> I think it's an art. I think however much you can teach some formulas or whatever, you're dealing with people at the end of the day and you can't put people in boxes and say this is how it's going always to be and so I think to be flexible, to use your initiative to be able to do that and be creative in the way you deliver different subjects to different people, that's differentiation, of course, and I think that is key and that is the art of being a good teacher, is being able to identify those issues and recognise them and work with them.
>
> (Manager Mark)

The above two quotations are from managers whose subject areas are significantly different, which adds some weight to the validity of the observations across diverse curriculum areas.

Students interviewed believe teaching to be a mixture of art and science but their focus was much more on the style and creative aspects of the teaching.

> I think it's probably a mixture of both , I think a lot of it is obviously the science that is the knowledge of their subject and the specific areas they have to cover , but the art is relating it to the paths, and the different situations going on – so yeah, a mixture of both.

> (Student Lynne)

Interestingly, in discussing the art of teaching, more than one student interviewed eloquently identified it as a kind of craft. They equate art with craft however, and are not making a distinction as Aristotle does, between *phronesis* and *techne* (Aristotle 1140b, 1985 p.154).

> ...yes there is an art, it is a craft, every teacher has a certain style where they push onto their students. They're forever learning as well, they could go into a class one week and they'll have to like try to predict the mood and get the right balance of practical and theory without the boredom getting in between, so yeah.
> (Student David)

> The success is determined by teaching abilities and skills, plus I think the most important is the contact with the audience and presentation skills they are integral elements of the complex craft of teaching.

> (Student Wendy)

Another student emphasized the creativity of the process: 'I think you've got to have some sort of creative side to this sort of teaching… '(Student Alan). Another believed that it was a balance of art and science but that it was the art which made it enjoyable and so allowed learning to be effective: 'If they hadn't got the Art bit then it wouldn't be as enjoyable to learn or it wouldn't embed as much in the students' brains.' (Student Lynne)

The above responses bring to mind the words of Elliot Eisner:

> The practice of science is itself an art pervaded by passion, dependent upon imagination, filled with uncertainty, and often motivated by the challenge and joy of the journey. It is not the application of sanitized routines that teachers were to use as a way to carry on in the classroom.

> (Eisner, 2002 p.376)

A feature which emerges from the discussions with teaching staff is the varied influence of the teacher training programme. Teacher training is where the theory applied to teaching and the activity itself comes together and so it could be expected that one would inform the other. Teachers who have recently undertaken a course of teacher training find aspects of it useful, particularly as it allows them to reflect on their experiences in the classroom in the light of theory.

> I have learnt this from the research that I've done for PGCE is that … I've been teaching for years and I think I know that I can give a good class practically, but I hadn't really thought about theories of learning or the different ways that people learn but the more I research into that the more I find that is really, really important.

> (Teacher Christine)

There are practical as well as reflexive benefits from the teacher training programme:

> I know I had a group last year that were a very, very difficult group and the only way I coped with them in the end was by following guidelines that I'd learnt through teacher training if you like on classroom discipline and that, I don't think it stopped them getting through the end of the year, but it certainly supported me as a teacher to be able to continue into that classroom and want to teach them
>
> (Teacher Jane)

The existence of standards for teacher training imposed on the FE sector through the compulsory membership of the Institute for Learning has been discussed already in Chapter 3. The tensions highlighted in that chapter between the teacher as reflective practitioner and the managerial imperatives of

the IfL and associated SVUK teacher training standards can be identified in the responses below.

> ...I think what it's done for me is help put like scientific tabs on to what I'd already been doing. In terms of has it made me a better teacher, I think certainly it made me initially a more hesitant teacher because I suddenly realised or, no, I thought that I had to meet all these targets, hit all these buttons and meet all the learning needs within every session and I had to follow this specific learning style and I found for me it took my own personality out of teaching, it dumbed down my flair if you like and it wasn't until I put that back into perspective and allowed myself to take the bit I wanted from it that it released me to go back to what I hopefully thought people felt I was good at
>
> <div align="right">(Teacher Jane)</div>

> I'm not that au fait with current PGCE, only from what staff tell me but I wonder sometimes whether there's an over formulaic approach happens and I think a lot of teaching has to be responsive to a particular situation in a particular time because with the best will in the world no matter what planning you do until you actually deliver the result to that group of students you never quite know how it's going to go down and therefore you have to be flexible enough to think on your feet.
>
> <div align="right">(Manager Michael)</div>

The influence of managerialism is seen coming through in these comments which highlight a target-driven teaching environment which can stifle creativity. The evidence here gives substance to the discussion in Chapter Two of whether teacher competencies need to move '...beyond compliance and the performative criteria that underpin it, to a reflexive and professional engagement with the underlying assumptions, grammars and standards that underpin their practices' (Lawy and Tedder, 2009 p.1). It also gives weight to the view that the existing SVUK imposed 'professional standards' for teacher education in FE are essentially managerial and inappropriate.

In summary thus far, a high quality teaching experience is dependent upon teachers having good subject knowledge and being well organized but also

being adept at applying skill, craft or artistry to the process of conveying the information and involving the students. However, managerial and bureaucratic pressures, which work against this approach, are emerging from the interview responses.

In order to develop a more thorough understanding of the process of providing a good teaching experience in the face of external pressures, it is crucial, as Eisner suggests, 'To understand what teachers do, one needs to understand where they receive their satisfactions, what gives them their highs in teaching' (Eisner, 2002 p.387). The interview questions explored this by asking if teachers love their subject and whether or not they pass it on, or share this love of subject with their students.

Love of subject

Subject knowledge and the ability to convey that knowledge may be dependent upon both teacher and student being closely engaged with the subject matter to the extent that they could be said to 'love' it. Most students interviewed believed that their teachers loved their subject and believed this was evidenced by their enthusiasm. Some of the responses were emphatic 'yes' and 'definitely' (Alan, Sue, David) and almost all of the respondents used the word 'enthusiasm'.

> She just loves the subject, she brings us books in from home, work from home for us to see, she – they're both really good at what they do
>
> (Student Alan)

> Again about the passion, about the passion and voice and enthusiasm to showing that they love working with the students and then you can say they actually love the job
>
> (Student Wendy)

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There was a more mixed response to the question of whether the love of

subject was shared by the student, although the majority answered in the

affirmative:

> ….so if I didn't love it I don't think I'd be here so really the love for doing what I'm doing outweighs the not having no money the not going on holiday, that sort of thing.
>
> (Student Alan)

Teaching staff and managers views on love of subject matched those of the

students:

'Definitely, yes definitely in our area I think it's key, it's absolutely key…'

(Manager Mark). A fuller account from Michael links love of subject to how it is

delivered irrespective of the personality of the teacher:

> I think personally that it is essential that staff love their subject matter and are engaged with it..., so that love of the subject is essential to keep the subject matter current and whether the staff member is a quiet person who puts it across quietly and authoritatively in that way or whether it's someone who is absolutely bursting at the seams – it's really evident to students who's interested in what they're doing and who's not – so it is essential.
>
> (Manager Michael)

Love of subject allows teaching staff to maintain enthusiasm throughout all

circumstances which was seen by one member of staff as the single most

important element in being a good teacher. Maintaining enthusiasm even

though they might not be feeling like it and being persistently enthusiastic in

order to keep the students enthusiastic is of paramount importance, as one

teacher explained:

> ...really the art of teaching is to be enthusiastic – to keep your enthusiasm all the time and if you're feeling no so hot that day, it's not to show that and it is to breeze in and sort of be enthusiastic and even when they're having a bad day and you have got a student who is totally,

totally not responding you have to keep going back and back, and back and that's a good art of teaching

(Teacher Joanne)

Teaching staff responded to the question on love of subject with some reservations. Some staff pointed out that it was unlikely that they or their students would be likely to 'love' all aspects of the curriculum. There were parts which needed to be taught but which they were likely to be less enthusiastic about:

> I say well this is part of life and there's always a bit you don't particularly like and this happens in your job as well, so you just have to get on with it and get that bit done and there'll be other areas you really like so I sort of think of it as a balance thing.
>
> (Teacher Helen)

> I think students, some students love to engage in it but don't want to understand why, therefore, they realise when they're studying at this level they've reached their ceiling and that they're probably in the wrong place to carry on practising their craft...
>
> (Teacher Jane)

There is recognition that it is sometimes a challenge to love a subject:

> You've got to,(love it) as I said the thing is xxxx is all about applied maths at this level, HE level, that's what it's all about, and the kids have got to be happy doing that because effectively if they're not happy with handling the analytical side of things, they'll never progress and they'd leave the course
>
> (Teacher Stephen)

Even loving a subject and having passion and enthusiasm for it can be difficult to convey consistently, as one teacher noted about having to deliver the final session of an evening class to students who had been at work all of the day:

> ...that graveyard shift at half past seven at night – if you go in then and think "oh heavens" then you going to have to wake them as well so you have to be passionate about something I think and, as I say, even if it's a dry subject you've got to think how you are going to inspire somebody so you've got to think of slightly different ways giving that knowledge across.
>
> (Teacher Susan)

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The need to sustain enthusiasm in the face of all circumstances is a skill

recognised by a manager:

> I always equate it to going into the class and putting on a performance
> and no matter how you're feeling or whatever you go in and you put on a
> performance like acting in a sense and you go in for that session you are
> a different person all singing and dancing that sort of thing that that's how
> it should be – so I think that side of it should come across, but I don't
> think everybody necessarily does that.

> (Manager Caroline)

Loving a subject is not necessarily an emotional activity but can also be an

intellectual one. This can be seen in the quotation above, but also in the

following explanation of how a student was unable to enjoy a particular aspect

of the curriculum until the lecturer gave her some reading and research to do,

as a result of which the student returned, full of enthusiasm.

> ...she did some research and I asked how it had gone and she said "Oh
> yeah I couldn't believe I found this and that and the other".

> (Teacher Christine)

Enthusiasm, passed on to a student is seen however, as the best way to

overcome potential student antipathy to a topic:

> It's about legitimacy and the area of work I'm into – it's considered not
> valid in the performance world because it's so far removed from the
> stage so it's about convincing those students that it actually is legitimate
> and it is valid and it has no more or less value than any other
> performance subject...if you're enthusiastic and if you're pushing that
> forward to the students, even if they don't like the subject they can
> develop a passion for it they can develop a passion for that debate, they
> can engage with the other side of the context.

> (Teacher John)

Relationship

The relationship with a teacher is important and this shows up in a number of

dimensions. One aspect of this is as Hill, Lomas and MacGregor (2003),

suggest to be 'easy to be with' or as students said in the current interviews, that

they wanted to '...feel comfortable' (Student Paul) and 'safe' in order to learn;

indeed they wanted a sense of belonging.

> At the end of the day the students are more confident, open minded and I
> think they feel more safely in the group when they have a good contact
> with (the) tutor.
> (Student Wendy)

> …you get to know a lot of friends, with your class you become like a
> family and you are relations…
> (Student Peter)

Teaching staff recognise this need to feel safe and comfortable:

> ...No 1 the students need to know they're in a safe environment for
> learning to take place I'm just thinking of Maslow here and the different
> layers and you know the fact that there are these various levels and
> there needs to be, everyone needs to feel part of the group including with
> the lecturer they're not feeling threatened or patronised or, and also to
> respect the tutor as well you know there's got to be mutual respect there.
>
> (Teacher Helen)

The evidence also gives support to other findings: ''Students appreciated

lecturers who were flexible in delivery of the subject and were sympathetic to

their individual need for success' (Hill and Lomas and Macgregor, 2003 p.16)

Teachers need to relate to all in the group but also to know the needs of the

individuals.

> It was the way he could relate to the students he could relate no matter
> what age group it was whatever your hobbies was or anything like that
> he could always find some relation to you and he was just a really good
> all round person.
> (Student Peter)

> They understand you and they know what you struggle with, what you
> need help with
> (Student Andrew)

they always remember what you're doing and xxxx seems to know what everybody's doing and our business tutor knows what everyone's doing because you can have tutorials whenever you want, you can see them if you need help so and if you say what you want to do they're really helpful

(Student Sue)

Teaching staff recognize the need to know their students' abilities and interests. They find out about the students' interests for a number of reasons; to show an interest in a student, to add meaningful examples to their teaching, to be able to assess their knowledge and abilities. They also do so to provide an individual approach and to share experiences and learning with the students:

…I know their strengths; I know their weaknesses so I know who to ask to get them going and that sort of thing so we're in a very, very healthy position from that viewpoint inasmuch as I can identify with students. I know what they're good at and what their weaknesses are.

(Teacher Stephen)

I get to know about their personal lives when I'm talking to them I get to know their likes and dislikes I chat to them about their music and I can chat to them bits of my life or funny stories or things like that and that makes into a good working relationship and that they know the boundaries, where the boundaries are....

(Teacher Joanne)

This individual approach is also recognized by managers:

…there's a lot of individual support takes place and stuff, whether that's in theory or practice – so I think times have changed quite a lot so I think that empathy between the staff member and the tutor is more enabled by that change in that move away from didactic teaching practice to something which is a bit more mutually supportive

(Manager Michael)

Indeed' trust' is a word that is used by one student, although not by staff or managers:

she trusts what you can do, she knows your ability and if she, if you can't get on with your teacher you might as well not be there because at the end of the day she's doing it for you, she's wanting you to succeed.

(Student Steve)

It is important for students to have a level of comfort and trust in order to be

able to contribute effectively in class:

> I think that importance of relationship was much easier to get through the whole process of learning if you think that the teacher's on your side – you can count on him.
>
> Teachers are responsible to create a supportive environment so then the student can feel they can ask or contribute the questions. It is important also to know that the students can speak and their opinions are essential for the teachers
>
> <div align="right">(Student Wendy)</div>
>
> I would say it's quite important actually obviously if you don't get on with your tutor or your teacher you're not going to be able to approach them and you're not going to respond well to them well, so I think it's a good thing to have a good relationship with them so you feel comfortable asking them for help
>
> <div align="right">(Student Paul)</div>

Helpful and supportive

In order for the students to learn and make progress they need not only

knowledgeable, well organised, enthusiastic staff who love their subject, but

also a great deal of help and support.

> I know that I could go to xxxx at any time of the day and she'd sort anything out or help me or put me in the right direction, you know she does bend over backwards for us chi … well she calls us her chickens and she looks after you. 'You are my chickens and you'll be looked after all the years you are here' – and it's true.
>
> <div align="right">(Student Alan)</div>
>
> Yeah, if you ever had a problem he would always make time for you, if he was in a class obviously if he was like teaching he'd say come back in x amount of time, but he'd always make time for you no matter when.
>
> <div align="right">(Student Peter)</div>
>
> ... you can always speak to her about anything because we are such a big group we've always got problems you can go and speak to her, there are always people around college but she's a really approachable person so you can talk to her about anything she understands everything so. And I think it's sometimes best because you need a more sympathetic, because if you've got lots of home problems, family problems she needs to know that.

This openness is seen by teachers as an 'open door policy', whereby students

can seek help at any time if they need to, as a supplement to the tutorial system

> ...you should be open and friendly and welcoming to students. That there is this open door policy that they should be able to come to you at any time and on the one respect I totally agree with that.

(Teacher Joanne)

> I do say to my students yes there are tutorial times on the timetable but if you're panicked about something come and find me and we'll find a time to sort it out.

(Teacher Christine)

> I think it's good that they can come to you for anything and they feel confident that you have that relationship with them that if something occurred in their private life they need to talk to then they can come and find you... I suppose if you can support them through anything and it's not just their academic life, they have confidence in you and that's really important

(Teacher Joanne)

Research into students on Foundation degree programmes concluded that

students '…need to feel that they are being taught by knowledgeable and caring

staff' (Hampton and Blythman, 2006 p.90). Although this is a conclusion which

most participants in education would find unsurprising, Hampton and

Blythman's comment serves to summarise the findings thus far.

Students may value personal and academic support during their studies, but

they are not expecting an easy life; they also appreciate being challenged and

stretched:

> … you never stop researching you're constantly researching, constantly in the library and that's going to help me in the long run.

(Student Steve)

> …he works in a way like he can get you thinking about stuff so make the lesson go a lot quicker ….challenging.

(Student Andrew)

...one of the tutors I've had in the past was really, got everybody in the class involved and kept you on your toes.

(Student Lynne)

Managers and teachers also recognise the need: to provide students with an academic challenge:

I think at HE level it is about engaging students to take things beyond the minimum and investigate things further – I think it is that passion that comes from the staff, that ability to inspire students and to challenge students as well

(Manager Mark)

...it's stretching their imagination, it's not sort of, I don't leave them in their comfort zone.

(Teacher Joanne)

This is an incremental process for the students as this same teacher is aware, moving slowly but persistently:

...eventually by direction and enthusiasm you often find that you can raise people's standards, the art of teaching is to raise people's aspirations and that you can do that softly, softly – no sledgehammer.

(Teacher Joanne)

Students are clear about what makes up a good lesson and teaching staff also believe that they can easily identify successful lessons. Teaching staff are uncertain that their managers would be able to know that they had good lessons and were successful teachers. Managers are certain however that they know how successful their staff are at teaching.

I mean we have the usual things with observations and peer observations and obviously I'm more interested in what the, how the actual lecturer perceives his lesson went and the things… We've all been into lessons and they've been bad lessons, ... but I look at the lecturer and how they've described the lesson, very enthusiastically sometimes and if it's gone well they are enthusiastic, if it hasn't gone well they not so enthusiastic, so lecturer's perceptions and body language and the way they are talking .

(Manager Graham)

...and without being official you get to know what's happening and I think it's the general discussions which are important with staff that you know what's happening in the classroom....Yes, absolutely I think it's the informal discussions with the staff which is critical really.

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Neither teaching staff nor managers were asked overtly about quality measures commonly used to gauge the quality of teaching; i.e. success rates and observation scores of teaching made by internal observation teams. The omission was deliberate in preventing the discourse being dominated by what the participants thought might be required or what they thought that they ought to say. Supplementary questions as part of the interview conversation sometimes used the term 'success' or 'measure' to see if the formal procedures would be discussed. Where staff or managers identified the measures, their approach was to almost dismiss them as having only marginal relevance, being just another factor to consider, but not one which told the 'real' story.

> There's the formal side, like the College peer review system, reading all the stuff from there gives me a good feel of that snapshot. Wouldn't always take a lot of cogniscence of one particular session but you know, over 2 or 3 years if there's a consistent picture builds up of a peer review assessment of staff performance in a classroom
> (Manager Michael)

> We all teach sometimes in very, very dry subjects and sometimes when the observer's viewing this they don't think the learners are getting out of it what they should do and that isn't the case, so yes we do look at the measures in place for that, we've got to do.
> (Manager Graham)

The evidence so far shows that students, teachers and managers are in agreement about the main factors leading to successful teaching. Teachers should be knowledgeable, flexible and well organised; they should be enthusiastic and perhaps even love of their subject. They should support their students academically and pastorally whilst also providing them with a degree of challenge. The practical or theoretical nature of the curriculum and the vocational context of its delivery were explored in further questioning.

Theory, practice and workplace context

In the discussion on the nature of *phronesis* in Chapter Two, the characteristic of the fusion of the practical and the universal was identified (Aristotle 1141b 15, 1985 p.158.) One aspect of this characteristic is the relation between theory and practice in the activity of teaching, both for the teacher to relate their methods to the theoretical models of teacher training but more importantly to relate the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject studied. A further dimension to this however, is that identified by Hagar (2000) who closely links workplace learning to *phronesis:* 'In this paper, I liken workplace learning to the development of *phronesis* or practical wisdom' (Hagar, 2000 p. 282). For HE in FE, and in particular Foundation Degrees, the vocational nature of the study and the centrality of the employment context is a defining feature.

> Foundation Degree programmes are designed to enable learners to benefit from the interpretation of ideas and the experience of practice, within the wider context of employment and one in which knowledge, understanding and skills are clearly integrated.

> (QAA, 2004 p.8)

Hagar (2000) suggests that knowing how to do something is derived from the experience of those who know how to do it, but that it also requires some knowledge beyond the activity, some kind of theoretical framework in order to pass on that knowledge to another person. (Hagar, 2000 p.286).

From the interviews conducted with students, there is a variety of responses in relation to the link between theory and practice. Students in some subjects areas, such as business, see less practical work on their programmes, whereas others such as in art and design or performing arts who see mainly practical work but with theoretical underpinning. The consensus however, is that there is

a balance between the amount of theory and practical work on their courses: 'I

think overall it's been a balance of the two…' (Student Lynne, Business), 'I'd

say 50/50 mix' (Student Peter, Computing) and ' I can see clearly the balance

between theory and the practice' (Student Wendy, Business)

> There's probably about ... some units are about 80% practical, 20% written work, The theory side is really important especially as it's what we're doing….
>
> > (Performing Arts student. Steve)
>
> I've got like the theory side and the practical … anyway so I get the best of both worlds…
> > (Computing student John)
>
> Oh, definitely a balance of the two, you know we have theory lectures and then we have the practical side of it.
>
> > (Art and Design student, Alan)

It is not just a case of teaching theory and doing practical activities, but a matter

of enabling students to see the links and apply theory to the practice.

> …during all of the practical sessions I will always try and link back to some sort of theory if not only that the students can make those links between what they do in the practical sessions and the written work that will come later
>
> > (Teacher Christine)

Engineering and Computing staff see the relationship between theory and

practice through the testing of theories and models:

> Effectively a lot of their practical stuff in a lot of ways, which is may be not a good thing to say, is basically proof that theory works.
>
> > (Teacher Helen)

> …basically I'm looking at modelling systems, analysing how systems behave and then changing them to behave the way we want them to, so they've got to be able to understand models and then they've got to be

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able to create the models in other words, where the models come from, they don't actually come on a piece of paper – there's the model – they've got to be able to extract that, so finding a model, testing a model, making sure the model fits and that's why we're looking at all that sophistico (sic) stuff.

(Teacher Stephen)

A teacher of Performing Arts explains how students use peer activities to

embed theory with practice:

…it's getting them to identify that physically what they are doing relates back to the theory you talked about and then at the end of it I would get them to show each other the practical work they'd been doing and then ask the other students to comment on whether or not they felt that each other's work was embedding the theory or not. That way the theory is embedded into the practice.

(Teacher Jane)

Managers see the integration of theory and practice through the design of the

curriculum and as a response to the nature of students in HE in FE, but also as

a necessary feature of the activity of teaching:

Absolutely should be embedded and integrated together and for the last 3 years, as you know we have worked rewriting and designing new programmes wherever possible we have brought the theorist side closer to the studio practice and vice versa …I think practical teachers teach theory as well, it's sort of inbuilt into the thing and probably not flagged that this is theory and this is practice, you just have to, you can't teach one without the other

(Manager Michael)

I think certainly in some subject areas and particularly ours, the theory is taught through most of the practice and I think certainly when you're teaching in an FE college the type of students we get you know that's the only way sometimes to get the theory in to do it in a practical way so they understand it the applications of it,

(Manager Mark)

There is strong evidence from the interviews of students, staff and managers

that the integration of theory and practice as suggested by *phronesis* is reality in

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the HE in FE programmes at Hull College. Evidence to support the vocational nature of this practical wisdom is equally strong as will now be shown.

Vocational context

Hill, Lomas and MacGregor noted: 'Students valued a curriculum that was related to their worlds but broadened their horizons' (Hill, Lomas and MacGregor, 2003 p.17) a view particularly relevant to the current study in relation to the vocational nature of HE in FE. The vocational context of the study is seen as important by all interviewees, a view confirmed in a review by QAA in 2007, which identified the vocational focus HE in FE programmes, as a significant strength (QAA, 2007c p.11).

Students value staff expertise and experience from the employment world and also identify the links between their theoretical studies and the workplace:

> The level of teaching that we have on the HE course is of a high standard – we have got ex professional performers like xxxx and xxxxx who have been there, done that and got the T shirt, therefore it's not just the level of teaching and the experience they've got to teach us, but it's also that inspiration that student's have with lecturers
>
> (Student David)

> … she's been in the industry, she's been in the West End she's had the experience, she trained at xxxx which is probably one of the highest dance schools you could go to, so by experience she is passing her experience on to us so we find it… Someone with experience helps you a lot because it's somebody there who knows what you're going through, know what you need, know what you're at, know what you need to get...
>
> (Student Steve)

> …what I'm getting taught here, I'm trying to reuse my skills in my working environment which is proving beneficial to my employer
>
> (Computing student, John)

Teaching staff and managers are in agreement with the students on the importance of the vocational relevance of the curriculum and teaching and the application of theory to practice.

> …part it is about linking the students' academic experience with something that they can find useful and not just academia for the sake of academia 'cos obviously my students, that's not what they want to do
>
> (Teacher Christine)

> ...we are 100% part time at this point and our students are all working in engineering so if I can put things into context that makes a big difference
>
> (Teacher Stephen)

> ...we'll relate it to the workplace and then we consolidate with some sort of activity where the students apply their knowledge to a situation and provide feedback as well.
>
> (Teacher Helen)

> ...trying to make the business and professional practice have a theoretical and academic respectability as well as being useful in terms of student perceptions of the world in which they'll work when they get out of here and again if we can't make that relevant to students we're failing in our ability to give students an opportunity to move into the workplace effectively.
>
> (Manager Michael)

In summary, there is a consensus on the importance of the vocational relevance of the curriculum and its delivery by teachers who are able to utilise their experience from the workplace and to allow students to link theory and practice. It is important to employ staff who have current practice and experience, but also to ensure that they can deliver in the classroom. As two managers explain:

> Every job description which goes out from this School has the requirement that the person is a practitioner in their own field and the interview process questions that and they present on it both to staff and students.
>
> (Manager Michael)

> When we interview them we take them through a process of actually having them deliver in front of learners through various different tests etc...I'm more interested in having someone who is, has the knowledge...So I want them to come with the nuts and bolts...

Most of the students interviewed stated some kind of employment reason for doing the course. They recognised that developing a range of relevant skills would improve their employability or promotion prospects.

> The reason is to get the proper business knowledge and experience I think I am doing it because I want to update my personal skills too, build more my self confidence …so it's about building my professional profile now so I want to achieve as much as possible. This is my aim.
>
> (Student Wendy)

It was common for students to describe their enjoyment of the subject and the nature of the work as prime motivators for following their course. Alan points to the potential future benefit of his studies as well as to personal fulfilment: 'I'm doing the course because it is personal fulfilment, and who knows where life takes you' (Student Alan).

Passion and enjoyment were words used again and notably this comment which illustrates the pleasure gained from her studies:

> Yes definitely, it's really crazy because it feels more of a hobby than an actual job, but that's great because you need to wake up in the morning and want to go to work
>
> (Student Sue)

The interviews illustrate more than a simple link between theory and practice or placing teaching in a vocational context. There is also a sense of teachers sharing their experience with their students in order to inspire and reassure, as well as to add context to theory:

> ...you can talk about real world and make things more interesting do fiddly little fun tasks and also bringing knowledge you wouldn't normally have if you'd just studied the subject
>
> (Teacher Helen)

...she is passing her experience on to us so we find it, we have to push ourselves 'cos she's had to push herself and she explains what she's been through so we know we have to push, worker a lot harder.

(Student Steve)

There is a personal side to the relationship, a passing on of life experiences, a sharing of wisdom to equip students for future eventualities:

They speak about past experiences, they tell us about stuff they've been in. Embarrassing moments they've had within the industry and that kind of, without us even knowing it telling us about stories they've done, ups and downs they been through that kind of … it eases us off it, it kind of takes that weight off our shoulders and lets us know that not everything does go right and that there is a chance for everybody to get out there and do it and if you do mess up just move along you're forever getting involved and developing

(Student David)

...but going into the real world, going into the working world it's always there. Xxxx teaches you that everything you do here you will be using for the next 20, 30 years – she wants you to learn everything not just the basics, everything

(Student Alan)

One manager comments upon the relationship between the workplace knowledge of the teacher and the students and identifies students' knowledge and experience from the workplace as a vital element in the teaching of the subject:

The subjects we teach obviously these guys are practitioners on a project and you're gleaning as much from them, or not as much from them, but you're gleaning information from them and if you don't have the right relationship with these learners you won't tease that out of them and that means the other members of the class don't get that knowledge that they've got specifically… At this level what we want them to do is bring what's happening in industry into the classroom.

(Manager Graham)

Another manager explains how even for full time students the learning goes beyond the classroom into the workplace.

> ...it's not just what happens in the classroom but what might happen at, say, work placements and the experience they get there and also visits and trips and things like that which can enhance the learning experience for the student and I think that's an important part of the process so it's not just what happens in the class room it's a much bigger experience for them

> (Manager Caroline)

The question now arises as to whether the interviewees perceive a sense of sharing and the existence of a learning community, or whether they see the role of the college as simply one to deliver a 'product'. At issue is the view of education which sees it only as a commodity to be traded, as part of a consumerist process of McDonaldization.

In Chapter Three, the views of government on the role of education have been examined from Blunkett (1998) through Leitch (2006) to Mandelson (BIS, 2009). It was argued in the chapter that what could be identified was a process of commodification, where knowledge becomes a commodity to be bought and sold. In the words of Ritzer (2002) this was a process of '...the inappropriate extension of McDonaldization to domains that ought not to be McDonaldized ...everyday educational activity is one of those areas (another is the doctor-patient relationship) that have been overly and inappropriately McDondaldised' (Ritzer, 2002 p.31).

From the interview evidence of the current study however, it would seem that in spite of the intentions of government, students value their experience of HE in FE programmes for reasons other than simply being consumers of the commodity traded in the workplace. There is more evidence to support the views of Eisner and McCulloch that what they value is being '… collaborators in

knowledge construction' (Eisner, 2002 p.381). Interview responses highlight student views of their own independence in the process of learning. The responses give some support to McCulloch's view that the relationship between the students and teachers is characterized by co-production rather than consumerism:

> In the higher education setting, co-production sees the student, lecturers and others who support the learning process as being engaged in a cooperative enterprise, which is focused on knowledge, its production, dissemination and application, and on the development of learners rather than merely skilled technicians.
>
> (McCulloch, 2009 p.181)

Two students explain that they are not consumers but participants in the educational process. They recognise that the college can only take them so far in the classes and that what they put into their studies is vitally important to their success.

> Yeah, I think a degree is a lot about individual learning – we're not spoon fed I don't expect to be spoon fed – we're given a basic brief of what we have to do and then it's down to us to go and get it, develop, get the knowledge, if we're good at what we do put it into practice once we're out there in the working world...
>
> (Student David)

> It's like anything its like if you're training someone to do a job you can only take them so far and it's the same with the college, I mean it's up to you while you're here to make contacts in the outside world, to produce work and show it. You can't have the college holding your hand, you know for ever. If you want to succeed in any job no matter what it is you do have to push yourself – you'll get more satisfaction if you are doing it yourself than waiting for the college to give you a list of things why don't you go here, why don't you go there? You know, do things off your own back.
>
> (Student Alan)

One student recognises the same need for independent study, but also considers the issue from a social viewpoint. He sees beyond the product to the relationships and lasting value of the educational experience:

> The College is supposed to give you the foundation knowledge in the subject chosen to then go away and research it even further, so you

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become more fluent in that subject…. More than a product I mean you get to know a lot of friends, with your class you become like a family and you are relations which if you going into a product and if you go into a shop and buy something then you're just purchasing something there's very little after sales where here it's more than that.

(Student Peter)

Some teaching staff however, take a more commodificationist approach than the students. Staff are aware that students need to be able to trade their qualification and skills in the workplace and that their job is to meet the needs of employers:

The Foundation Degrees ... I think they're very special because they allow kids to specialise and then go and do a job straight away... Much more attractive to the companies I think. Companies still don't know enough about them ...Consistency for engineering definitely...

(Teacher Stephen)

Yes absolutely, it's got to be a recognised product that they take away with them for the employer. I went to a talk not long ago where the employers are the customers, students the clients, so it's a partnership isn't it, so yes they need this commodity they can take with them that's recognised, that's got value.

(Teacher Helen)

The above comment illustrates how some teaching staff are influenced by the consumer viewpoint. She believes it essential to provide a recognised product, a commodity in the qualification and is supportive of the idea of employers as customers. And yet there is the recognition that it is not simply a customer/supplier relationship because there is a partnership involved in the learning process. It is possible to identify in these statements evidence of 'debate ...constrained within a technocratic market discourse,' (Elliot, 1996 p. 21). The teacher is happy to use the language of the marketplace without subscribing to its full implications.

Some teachers recognise that there are broader aims to the vocational curriculum and that it is not enough to focus only on the utility of the qualification in the marketplace or a narrow range of employment skills. To use Ferguson's distinction, they are not only concerned with the 'extrinsic value' of their education (Ferguson, 1994 p.108).

> I think we're engaged in other activities – we're giving them a standard product to start so that they've got qualifications and knowledge to get a job but we are often making them into a more rounded person, we're making those people whole and enquiring who are tolerant, I feel, of other people and that's really important and who'll have social skills that are not just associated with their actual course
>
> (Teacher Joanne)

> For me the most important reason to come onto these courses is to show a learning curve, to achieve certain amount of skills to be transferable, to go out into the real world and be able to have a good chance at all those jobs, particularly at the moment the culture we're in where it is so difficult for graduates to get jobs I think that is incredibly important.
>
> (Teacher John)

Phronesis is observable in these quotations as the teachers are making judgements about what is educationally desirable beyond the confines of the curriculum, as Biesta (2009) notes:

> Teachers' professional judgements are not only about what is most effective, but have to include judgements about what is *educationally* desirable. This means that teachers not only need *techne,* knowledge of how to make or produce things... they also need *phronesis*, the practical wisdom that allows them to make judgements about 'what is to be done', what is educationally desirable and worthwhile.
>
> (Biesta, 2009 p.187)

Managers take a similar view to teachers, seeing beyond the product, to the wider development of the student and the students' own motivation for achieving the qualification independently of the needs of the employer:

> I think again in our subject area it's not so important what the end product is, because they get a lot of transferable skills and I think it's proving that they can study at that level, but at the end of the day they do go into a diverse range of employments

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> I think sometimes they know there's a certain progression line that they've got to be involved with to go to the top in any industry, but I think more and more of them are actually doing it for themselves.
>
> (Manager Graham)

Creating a tolerant and enquiring student, who is 'more rounded' and with a range of transferable skills, may be part of the educational philosophy of the teaching staff, but for managers it is also a valid response to changes in the job market,

> I think the markets change so quickly nowadays that I'm not sure we can do that, I'm not sure a product exists because as fast as you are producing a product it's being changed to adapt to the market place, isn't it...
>
> (Manager Mark)

Significantly, this is a view shared by another manager who is emphatic that it is not the job of the college to provide a standard product:

> No! ... Having said that I think it's perfectly legitimate for a student to come in and study xxxx or whatever and see it as an education because we do know people change jobs 5, 6, 7, 8 times in their lives and they have to … an education is not just a product which is a guaranteed route to a job, which is a job for life - so that's all changed you know.
>
> (Manager Michael)

Managers take a more strategic view of the market than do staff, although teachers also recognise a changing market:

> ...it's more of a generic qualification which will take them through any job or any role, doesn't really matter where they are working… you know we have a lot of students coming from professions where they used to go on to very much subject specific qualifications, but they're not doing that any more.
>
> (Teacher Susan)

The paradox of the government's position is again exposed: tying education to the current needs of employers rather than ensuring that it provides the flexibility, breadth and invention which can arise from a broader interpretation of

education, even if that education is vocational as is HE in FE. This is a paradox

expressed in Mandelson's '*Higher Ambitions'* document which states that

students should exhibit '...intellectual curiosity and self-confidence' (BIS, 2009

p.12.) and yet 'There can be no room in the system for vocational programmes

that do not constantly evolve to meet changing business needs.' (BIS, 2009

p.13).

Profession

In conducting the research for this thesis one purpose was to make a judgment

on how far the process of acculturation to a managerial agenda has progressed

within an institution such as Hull College, or whether there are still opportunities,

latent in the beliefs of managers, staff and students, for a different approach

based on *phronesis.* As Exworthy and Halford (2002) note, professions are

changing in the light of managerial pressures:

> …the status and power of professionals may come increasingly to
> depend upon their ability to cast their goals and objectives in
> appropriate terms [and that] managerial assets are becoming of
> increasing importance for career enhancement within the professions
>
> (Exworthy and Halford, 2002 p.100-101).

The interviews provide little evidence to support the view that a managerial

discourse predominates for HE in FE at Hull College, although its influence and

constraining forces are clearly articulated by the respondents.

A number of facets to the debate about professionalism within FE have already

been identified in earlier chapters. One such facet is whether dual

professionalism, as proposed by the Institute for Learning, adequately describes

the reality for teachings in Further Education. Interview evidence based on the

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perception of professional identity is divided. No teaching staff saw themselves

as primarily vocational professionals who also taught. However these results

reflect the fact that the interviews were wholly with full- time teaching staff. If

part-time teachers had been included the results could be expected to be

different as they would be likely to identify with their main profession. Many

teachers believed that they had changed over the years, from feeling like

vocational professionals when they first started teaching, to later being teachers

in a vocational area. Asked whether she saw herself as a teacher of a subject or

a subject professional Susan replied:

> When I first came into it... I knew the subject and I was bringing in a
> profession the aspects, perhaps the more interesting aspects, the
> stories, etc which make the … and I still do that to a certain extent, but as
> I say I think the way we are going now we are having to become more
> generic and to be just a subject specialist now is difficult I think in a
> college.
>
> (Teacher Susan)

Susan's view is closer to those interviewed by Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler

(2005) who noted that FE teachers were:

> ... losing a sense of professional identity and status, as practitioners
> move from being accredited subject specialists with expertise such as
> 'economist', through higher order teaching –'a lecturer' -followed by what
> some see as a slow downgrading of their professional status as it
> changes to being 'a teacher' of lower status courses, towards a welfare
> or 'key skills' function.
>
> (Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler 2005 p.453)

As with many of the interviewees, Susan teaches both FE and HE in FE and her

view serves to illustrate the pressures on teachers of HE in FE and the danger

that they will come to feel like their FE colleagues. Overall, however, the

evidence from the current study of does not confirm the findings of Gleeson et

al. Most of those interviewed were positive about the importance of subject

expertise and saw no conflict between the professional identity and the teacher

as a professional. Indeed, the synthesis of the two was seen as a characteristic

strength of HE in FE teaching.

Joanne pointed out the benefits of maintaining a subject-professional identity in

order to show her students that she still has the relevant skills:

> I'm a professional teacher, but I'm also a professional in my own right outside of college and I don't do as much as I used to before because of being programme leader and everything, but I am a professional and I like to keep that up and that usually, yes, I think you've got to keep abreast of current times ... a lot of the students see that you can do things, that you not just here as a teacher, you have something else that you do, and you can do what you say you're doing – I've been a professional that way.
>
> (Teacher Joanne)

Maintaining the professional skills is also recognised as important by managers,

one of whom believes that the vocational experience of the teaching staff is a

defining feature of HE in FE:

> I would say the majority of the staff are professional in their vocational area and that's one of the advantages of the college, really one of the big selling features because a lot of the staff, the majority of the staff, have already worked in that profession and they have experiences they can pass on to the students. Practical examples of what's happened, what they've done which professional teachers wouldn't have. Although they would have an in-depth knowledge of the subject, they would be able to relate back to an example of what happened, and I think that's one of our advantages
>
> (Manager Caroline)

As noted above, many of those interviewed believe that that the two

professional identities complement each other and are strength of HE in FE:

> No I think they complement each other because, because you've got to be aware. Some people accuse teachers of being isolationists and they come into teaching and they don't realise what's happening in the outside world and you do get people like that – we often see people... [who] are not aware of what's happening in the world, where here if you are a professional you are aware of both sides of it, internal and external and one complements the other.
>
> (Teacher Joanne)

The subject-specialist expertise and associated status are still in evidence for teachers of HE in FE at Hull College, although there are signs that they are under threat. The discussion of professionalism prompted many of those interviewed to identify the difficulties of maintaining their professional practice and up to date knowledge through research.

> Yes, I think we are having to compromise because we are not - it goes back to the previous question this idea of subject specialist, we can no longer be to a certain extent, subject specialists. Part of that for me is the fact that we haven't got the time to do research we would like to do, the further reading that we're having to do, there are so many other things going on and so many teaching hours where you would like to spend more time boning up and making sure you actually were totally, totally up to date
>
> (Teacher Susan)

Of the staff and managers who believe there to be a conflict and the staff who believe there is no conflict between their vocational and their teaching professionalisms, there is a high degree of agreement that more time for research, or simply scholarly activity in keeping up to date would benefit their teaching and their students. A negative feature of teaching HE in FE is seen to be the lack of time for such activity. One manager makes the point forcefully:

> ...I think it's more peculiar to ...HE and FE, ... where there isn't that respect for the time that staff need to maintain a reasonable research academic professional practice profile and there isn't the infrastructure to support that, therefore you have to be a really determined and possibly selfish person in some respects to be able to maintain that practice.
> I do wish colleges would recognise the importance of that and everything not be about staff development but be about genuine personal development in terms of practice
>
> (Manager Michael)

HE in FE is subject to the pressures of needing to maintain a research or scholarly activity base in order to inform teaching, whilst at the same time existing with an FE structure, where as Hodkinson noted in 2005: '...without

fundamental changes to some of the current audit-driven cultures and practices

of the FE sector, research will remain marginal..'.' (Hodkinson, 2005 p.11)

One member of teaching staff articulated the pressures she felt from the college

environment:

> ... I don't have the time in order to continue to practise professionally and
> to put into practice the theories that I have been researching.
>
> (Teacher Jane)

And tellingly, from another member of staff:

> I no longer work as a professional just because logistically that wouldn't
> work I would love to but you don't have the time and I feel too old!
>
> (Teacher Joanne)

The above quotations can be interpreted as evidence for a unified

professionalism based on *phronesis*, but also as evidence of the factors working

against its achievement. The examples of *phronesis* identified show it to be

fragile, but commanding broad consensus.

Strategic Compliers

As identified in earlier chapters of the thesis, Gleeson and Shain found that

middle managers would typically moderate the forces of managerialism by

'strategic compliance'. They would conform to the managerial norms of the

organisation whilst also maintaining their beliefs and values, protecting their

staff as best they could within the managerial culture (Gleeson and Shain, 1999

p.488). It is difficult to confirm whether or not managers at Hull College can be

identified as strategic compliers. The evidence is not clear-cut as of the four

managers interviewed, two agreed that there were times when they had to

compromise but two managers did not recognise the same situation.

Two managers were emphatic that they saw no situations in which they needed to make compromises. 'No, I don't think so really.' (Manager Caroline), and from Graham: 'No. I think that's a straight forward, no'. Neither manager wished to elaborate further. These examples could be taken at face value, or they could be evidence to show that managerialism was so strong that it prohibited any thought of compromise or conflict with organisational purposes. The other two managers however, provided more evidence for strategic compliance:

> I think there are times when, if people are thinking people in a democratic organisation there are always times where you don't agree with policy or, generally at the end of the day all managers toe the party line and are as positive about things as they possibly can be and you have to be otherwise you'd soon demoralise the staff you are working with, but you're never going to 100% agree with every policy decision ... it can be incredibly frustrating to see things that could be improved but that the infrastructure doesn't allow those improvements to take place.
>
> (Manager Michael)

> ...you do have to learn to say the right thing, or say the thing the college wants you to say – it's a difficult one that one.
> ...go along to meetings and nod and say "yes, yes" and then go back to the staff and say well what they want us to do is this, but we are not doing it, we're going to do this.
>
> (Manager Mark)

It must be pointed out here however, that this manager made the above comments after the recording of the interview had finished, but agreed for the comment to be included as part of the transcript. A condition of including the extract was that the text would show that he was not being obstructive but was achieving the same ends, 'but by better means'. Evidence indeed, of strategic compliance.

Reflection and debate

In earlier chapters the issue of a profession for Further Education was discussed and the views of Eisner cited in support of professional debate and reflection between teachers. This reflection and debate is evidenced in the interviews conducted, as one indicator of the existence of an approach based on *phronesis* in HE in FE at Hull College. According to Eisner it is through the debate between teachers that *phronesis* proceeds; '… teachers will be able to discuss with others their performance as teachers' (Eisner, 2002 p.383) and that a professional language with which to frame such discussions will develop. 'The professional isolation to which many teachers have become accustomed will need to change.' (Eisner, 2002 p.384)

From the interviews with staff it would seem that sharing with colleagues in an informal way is a common and useful activity:

> I do reflect with other staff, yeah, on what works, what doesn't work and that's really useful to get different opinions because I think sometimes you may have thought something and then another staff member contradicts that and that can make you think oh actually I hadn't thought about that.
>
> (Teacher Christine)

> So yes, sometimes you say to staff "oh that went really well", informal chatting, I would say, yes.
>
> (Teacher Helen)

> ...when it does involve other staff it's never formal and I know we set up these things of good practice where we talk about them but invariably you've forgotten what's happened, or you've got something else on your mind and I think keeping it informal or keeping it to corridor meetings or keeping it to lunch time meetings is actually a really good thing to do because you reflect, you share the good reflections a lot of the time and

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actually that is a nice part of the day rather than sitting down and making a formality of it and losing the emotions.

(Teacher John)

Emotion and spontaneity are important in maximising the shared reflection, although not all teachers wish to share reflection. One respondent said that she reflected but that this was part of her autonomy as a teacher to deliver the programme as she wished. This was an autonomy that was identified as an important part of the activity of being professional:

> . ...we do have autonomy I know what I have to deliver, no one says to me this is how you deliver it I have certain standards to meet, certain learning outcomes, students want to pass the module, so the way in which I do it is up to me. I think we can reflect on it and I think we do and in our profession and as professionals that's something we do we know when something hasn't worked.

(Teacher Susan)

It is perhaps significant that the former employment of this teacher was in one of the more established professions where such autonomy would be the norm. Some teachers reflect with their students to establish an interaction which advances the process of learning:

> I'm reflecting as I'm doing it and obviously what I will do if I haven't spotted that in the week it goes and it's all feedback from me – student feedback is how I base what's happening and again, in an assignment if I see they're all doing a certain aspect of it wrong I'm not attempting it, again I'll go back and look at that again so it's very much an interactive thing and an ongoing thing from my viewpoint

(Teacher Stephen)

However, many teachers interviewed suggested that they would like more time to reflect, with peers and with students in order to improve their teaching and student learning. The barriers to this are perceived as the need to follow bureaucratic procedures both in making changes to programmes and to everyday activities:

Time allowing – this is the difficult thing I find that, in HE especially, you're running from lecture to lecture you get back to your computer, you've got to answer 10 emails so you might be thinking in your mind as you're running from one thing I'm not quite sure that worked very well but do you have a few hours to really think about why that didn't work well and what you would like to change about it? – No.

...our hands are tied in terms of changing on a degree programme at least that it has to go through the boards, etc so it might take a year before you are able to make the change you know that you need to make on reflection.

(Teacher Christine)

We've got an ever increasing amount of bureaucracy to get through and a lot of red tape to get through and I think that's becoming more important we are expected to reflect in our own time in that respect I don't think we get a lot of time to do that,...

(Teacher John)

This teacher makes the point fundamental to the debate, that teachers recognise what they should do but have insufficient opportunity to do it. They recognise the need for an approach based on *phronesis* which they can sometimes deliver, but that there are forces within an HE in FE environment which restrict its wide applicability:

I'm sure that's not what anyone wants, but it comes down to micro-culture .It comes down to the fact that we've got x amount of time and x amount of money to deliver stuff and you have to pass that knowledge on despite what you've been taught. We want you to engage in that autonomous, two-way process. What you learn from the students, the students learn from you and you allow them to explore. But actually what we want you to do is to do it in a certain amount of time so you have to give them x amount of knowledge... which I don't think is necessarily productive particularly at HE level... I think that's the problem with HE and FE – it's an HE model you are trying to get in an FE model and I don't think they always necessarily fit.

(Teacher John)

The managerial imperative is often dominant in the teaching situation, resulting in a lack of time to explore the curriculum, too much time taken up in bureaucracy and too many teaching hours. All of which results in insufficient scholarship and research, a lack of workplace currency and an overall constraint on reflection, sharing and improvement:

In the following chapter the empirical evidence from the current chapter will be combined with the academic and official literature to form a conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions

This thesis has been concerned with the teaching on Higher Education programmes in Further Education, and in particular at Hull College. It has specifically sought to establish whether a particular view of the nature of knowledge and the activity of teaching could provide a foundation for improving quality. The position chosen was that of Aristotle's *phronesis* and its subsequent development by a range of educational theorists, notably Eisner, Birmingham and Hagar. As a result the major research question was: **Could *phronesis* provide a model for the teaching and quality management of Higher Education in Further Education (HE in FE) at Hull College?**

The subsidiary questions were designed to test various features of *phronesis* as well as seeking to identify the factors which might prevent its application. These questions were initially focussed on three groups of people as participants in teaching HE in FE at Hull College: **1. How far do the views of managers, staff and students at Hull College accord with the main features of *phronesis*?** The specific focus was then upon each of the main features of *phronesis* as identified by the literature review, which were:

- The importance of the context of the teaching situation and relationship between teacher and student

- The relationship between the universal and the particular in the teaching of the subject

- The value placed on reflection, deliberation and judgement in improving teaching

- Whether or not teaching can be seen as an art.

In earlier chapters of the thesis a number of trends are identified as significant, not only for HE in FE, but across the wider education community. These trends would be likely to threaten the application of *phronesis* and so the second subsidiary question sought to investigate the extent of their influence within HE in FE at Hull College.

The second question was: **How far do the views of managers, staff and students at Hull College reflect the trends of performativity, commodification and increased vocationalisation in education?**
As part of the investigation into teaching in further education and into the characteristics of *phronesis,* a number of potential conflicts were identified. Notable amongst these conflicts was that between differing views of professional activity and identification. The third subsidiary question therefore sought to investigate any conflict to see if *phronesis* could be used in its resolution.

Finally, the third question was: **How far are managers, staff and students at Hull College aware of conflicts between the demands of a teaching professional and a subject/ vocational professional?** Specifically: Was there any problem with dual professionalism? Were there conflicts for staff and managers between their values and roles?

The questions asked of students, staff and managers followed the research questions and were designed, as outlined in Chapter Five, to develop a conversation with interviewees. The following summation of the academic and empirical evidence provides strong support for answering the main research question in the affirmative, whilst recognising the pressures which work in opposition.

How far do the views of managers, staff and students at Hull College accord with the main features of *phronesis*?

Context and relationship

In Chapter Two context was identified as being one of those features which made a particular teaching situation a unique and highly complex interaction between individuals; individuals with different histories and roles, in a particular time, place, culture and subject. The context frames the activity of teaching as a sharing of knowledge. Knowledge, according to Tsoukas, is dependent upon context to distinguish it from information (Tsoukas, 1996) and is a view of knowledge consistent with *phronesis*. The empirical evidence reinforces the importance of context to the teaching situation. Students, staff and managers interviewed described the complexities of the context in terms of subject, employment and relationship.

Good subject knowledge was seen as important, by each group of interviewees, supporting the findings of Hill, Lomas and MacGregor that students appreciated lecturers who '...knew their subject' (Hill, Lomas and MacGregor, 2003 p.16).

Additionally, the interviewees placed considerable emphasis on keeping subject knowledge up-to-date. An important element of subject knowledge and the currency of that knowledge was related to the employment context. As will be seen in the section 1.2 below, students appreciated it when the subject matter of a class was applied to a recent workplace example. The teachers also valued the ability to maintain up-to-date knowledge of the workplace in order to provide such examples.

The most significant element of the context of the teaching situation however, is the relationship and interaction between the personalities of the teachers and students; the interaction which ensures the uniqueness of each situation. The relationship between student and teacher was seen as being of fundamental importance to all interviewees. The interview evidence confirms Hill, Lomas and McGregor's (2003) findings that students like teachers who are well-organized, interesting to listen to, flexible and responsive to their needs. Additionally, the evidence shows that students like a teacher who is easy to be with, whom they can trust and feel safe with. They like a teaching situation in which they feel comfortable and feel a sense of belonging.

Student and staff interviewees believed that the personal side to the relationship was an important factor in sharing knowledge. In sharing their life and employment experiences with their students teachers were able to motivate students, as well as provide useful illustrative examples.

Students appreciated staff who were helpful and easily available through an open-door access policy; staff who had a genuine interest in student well-being

and progress, and who were able to tailor their teaching to the differing needs of each student. As Hampton and Blythman (2006) note, students like staff who were caring as well as knowledgeable. However, the supportive and caring relationship did not preclude providing an academic challenge to the students, as the interview evidence showed that students appreciated a challenge.

These findings in themselves may appear to be unremarkable, but they are evidence that students valued an approach to teaching, which closely resembles *phronesis*. As Birmingham argued, the teacher should be aware of the personal interactions, the community and the culture in which she operates and not to expect any certainty in the teaching interactions. It is important to recognise: '...the concrete intricacies of the characters and histories of the persons involved' (Birmingham, 2004 p.317). As Avis suggested, teachers should focus on the social context of the educational situation and focus on student needs within that context (Avis 2007 p.180).

The relationship between the universal and the particular in the teaching of the subject.

In Chapter Two, an aspect of *phronesis* which was applied to HE in FE was the fusion of universal knowledge with experience of the practical; the relationship between theory and practice. In the context of HE in FE, the links between theory and practice are found in the vocational curriculum, which constantly seeks to apply and abstract theory to and from practical situations, as part of the process of teaching a subject. Students, staff and managers recognised the importance of applying theory to practice. Students believed there to be a

suitable balance between theory and practice, even if they were studying subjects which were more theoretical than practical, or vice versa. They recognised, as did their teachers, that it is the application of theory which was important, either through the testing of theories or models, or as a means of understanding one through the application of the other. Managers saw the integration of theory and practice as an essential element of the teaching of the subject and design of the curriculum.

The relationship between theory and practice was also seen in the theories of teacher education and the activity of teaching itself. Teachers reflected on their activity in order to recognise and apply various theories in order to improve their practice. The findings show that some teaching staff valued the teacher education programmes, mainly for the opportunity to reflect, but also to consider and apply theory. There is also evidence from the interviews, however, that both staff and managers believed that the teacher education programmes were over-formulaic and encouraged a performative and managerial agenda. This evidence reinforced the arguments in Chapter Three, that the imposition by the IfL of a set of teacher training outcomes was conforming to government and managerial agendas, rather than being a genuine attempt to create professional standards for teaching.

Reflection deliberation and judgement

Features of *phronesis,* as outlined earlier by Eisner (2002) are that teaching involves reflection, deliberation and judgement. He suggests that it is through the debate between teachers that *phronesis* proceeds, '… by creating a context

where multiple interpretations and analyses are likely.' (Eisner, 2002, p.382) Interview evidence provided support for this view, as some teaching staff valued the chance to reflect with colleagues about their teaching and also to reflect alone. As Schön points out it is through reflection that teachers can '... make new sense of the situations of uncertainty or uniqueness...' (Schön, 1983 p. 61). The interview evidence showed teaching staff discussing the benefits of reflection in relation to improving their teaching and better understanding specific classroom experiences.

Reflection not only allowed teachers to improve their responses to differing situations, it also allowed them to better apply theory to practice, a point made by both Birmingham (2004 p.317) and Hagar (2000 p.286). Interview evidence confirms this as teachers discussed the benefits of reflection in association with keeping up-to-date with their subject, or practice, or applying theories of teaching into their classroom activity. They would appreciate more time to reflect, but identified that managerial pressures and bureaucracy limited their ability to do so. One teacher notably identified the pressures arising from the Further Education culture of being expected to deliver a particular quantity of knowledge in a particular time. Interviewee John concisely expressed here the impact of commodification and performativity and the pervading managerial culture, which is considered further below in answer to question three. The issue of reflection and deliberation is also considered again, later in this chapter, in relation to professionalism.

Can teaching be seen as an art?

The question of whether teaching was an art or a science stemmed partly from Eisner, who identified artistry in teaching as a feature of *phronesis*, but also from the arguments in Chapter Two, on the contrast between *episteme* and *phronesis*. The contrast was on the one hand between a view of knowledge as scientific, generating laws which could be applied irrespective of circumstances, and on the other hand practical knowledge, which was more akin to an art, in being variable and context specific. When applied to teaching, this was the distinction between applying standard solutions to whatever was the classroom context, or an approach which recognised specificity and responded to it to further the process of learning. The distinction lay behind the approach to teaching based on *phronesis* as art, rather than one based on laws and measurement, which was a characteristic of a performative approach. In short, it was a contrast between Ofsted output measurement with its numerical scoring and an approach based on *phronesis*.

In making judgements about how successful their staff were at teaching, the managers interviewed did not rely on simple measures, such as a grade given to teaching observation or retention and achievement statistics. They were certain that they knew how well their staff were teaching by adopting a range of approaches, many of which were informal. They regarded the formal measures as just other pieces of information to be considered, to confirm their own judgements. This approach was in contrast with that taken by Ofsted. It was argued in Chapter Four that the Ofsted approach to quality, through measuring

outputs and by measuring teaching against a four point scale, was unlikely to capture the essential characteristics of the teaching relationship or context. In addition, the House of Commons Select Committee (HC 165, 2007) expressed reservations about whether the Ofsted approach could hope to achieve the consistency or objectivity that it claimed. The Ofsted approach did not gain support in the empirical research from the group most likely to support it: the managers.

However, unlike Further Education, HE in FE teaching is not subject to Ofsted measures of quality, but to those of QAA. In earlier chapters it was argued that although there was less of a contrast between the QAA approach and one of *phronesis* there were still performative and managerial agendas identifiable in their processes. It was argued that strengths of the QAA approach were the values that were placed on academic judgement and the recognition that different approaches can be taken to achieve what had been established as quality criteria. As a result it was argued that the QAA approach was closer to one based on *phronesis.*

Part of the art of teaching is the creation and maintenance of the relationship with the students. Fundamental elements in the relationship, recognised by students, teachers and managers were enthusiasm and commitment. The personal qualities of the teacher in engaging in the activity of teaching are elements of the art, as is the ability to deal with students and viewing situations as being unique, rather than simply applying universal solutions to situations. Students appreciated teachers who were supportive, who were flexible and sensitive to their needs and who were well-organised.

A further element of both the art of teaching and of the relationship between the universal and the particular was the love of subject. Although there was a level of realism from the interviewees that not all parts of all subjects could be enjoyed or loved, there was recognition that successful teachers showed their love of subject and transmitted this to their students. However, sometimes students came to the love of a subject individually through sheer hard work and challenge, instead of assimilating it from their teachers.

The evidence from the interviews confirmed the arguments from earlier chapters that the managerial and performative approach, which seeks commonality in teaching situations in order to reduce the judgement of a lesson to a numerical value, was not an appropriate indicator of good teaching. A more appropriate approach was one which recognised the diversity created by different contexts of interactions of students and teachers in specific times and subjects; one which sought not to reduce but to elaborate the features of the teaching situation, in order to understand it better and to make improvements through the process of reflection and deliberation. This was an approach which accorded more closely to the beliefs of the participants, their interpretation of what makes a good teaching situation and how improvements could be made.

How far do the views of managers, staff and students at Hull College reflect the trends of performativity, commodification and increased vocationalisation in education?

The distinction between *episteme* and *phronesis* considered above, when linked to Tsoukas description of information as '…consisting of objectified,

commodified, abstract, decontextualized representations.' (Tsoukas, 1996 p.827) illustrated the differences between an approach based on *phronesis* and one which was performative and commodificationist. In Chapter Four the view that many aspects of the teaching situation were capable of being measured, and indeed should be measured, was considered and attributed to Ofsted. Ritzer's identification of the characteristics of McDonaldization: efficiency, calculability, predictability and control through non-human technology (Ritzer, 2006) were also identified as features well-advanced in Further Education in England.

It has been argued in earlier chapters that Lyotard's (1984) description of performativity, in which knowledge has meaning only if it is useful, could be identified in speeches of UK politicians and reports and, indeed, in the approach of Ofsted. The official literature examined in Chapter Three, notably the reports by Tomlinson (2004), Foster, (2005) and Leitch (2006) speeches by politicians and the *Higher Ambitions* document (BIS 2009) all identified strong pressures for a commodified and performative Further and Higher Education. As Peters observed: '…performance 'effectiveness' and 'efficiency' were growing in power as the new conventions 'defining the basis for the measurement of what is right, true and good' (Peters, 2004 p.23).

In his study on educational leaders in a globalising world, Bottery identified forces of globalization which 'mould consciousness' in a way which educational leaders should not 'tacitly condone' (Bottery, 2006 p.21). He pointed to how 'acculturation' took place imperceptibly to change values and attitudes (Bottery, 2006 p.16). As a result of a similar process it could be anticipated that members

of a further education organisation would be accultured by the pressures of a performative and commodificationist agenda. Gleeson and Shain (1999) and Elliott (1996) identified these pressures and their effects in their studies of Further Education. However, the interviews conducted for the thesis did not identify strong performative, or commodificationist beliefs. As noted above, the managers did not follow a performative agenda, believing that information provided by a graded teaching observation was insufficient in itself to make a judgement about staff performance. They preferred to rely instead on their own more informal approaches of talking to students and staff and making their own judgments, based on a longer term view. Additionally, managers did not view students' acquisition of qualifications as simply commodities which could be traded in the marketplace but rather as learning opportunities to gain a range of skills and knowledge, which would equip them for a variety of future situations.

Furthermore, the interview evidence showed that students did not see themselves as consumers of an educational commodity which could be traded in the workplace. The responses of the student interviewees gave support instead to views of Eisner (2002) and McCullogh (2009) who viewed students as collaborators, or co-producers in the educational process. There was some evidence, however, of the acculturation of teaching staff into the commodificationist ways of thinking. Some of the staff interviewees used the vocabulary of the market place, an example of what could be described as 'technocratic discourse' (Elliott, 1996 p.21) without necessarily subscribing to the implications of that vocabulary. An example of this was when they spoke of students as 'customers' but then described the relationship in terms of a partnership with broader educational aims to create a more rounded and enquiring student.

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As shown earlier in Chapter Six, the managers interviewed had a view of the market as constantly changing, believing that education should not simply meet the need of the current market, but should equip students with skills and attitudes to prepare them for a range of future possibilities. Managers, staff and students therefore took a significantly different approach to that of the government, as expressed in the Leitch Report which suggested '...putting employers more in control, so that qualifications better reflect economically valuable skills' (Leitch, 2006 p.82) or in the *Higher Ambitions* document from the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), which insisted that Universities should clearly demonstrate '... what they are doing to prepare their students for the labour market' (BIS, 2009 p.51).

Vocationalism

Chapter Three chronicled developments in Further Education and noted the trend towards vocationalism, as identified by such writers as Trowler (2003), Tomlinson (2005), Ainley (1999) and Avis (2007). The role of higher education programmes within a further education environment was also noted as being primarily concerned with vocational education. However, the focus for HE in FE with its interaction between theory and practice could be seen to be vocational without the pejorative implication of being vocationalist. What was seen as possible was a different view of vocational education closer to that of Hagar (2000), who saw possibilities for *phronesis* in work-related education, with the linkage of theory and practice. It is the realm of HE in FE to pursue *phronesis* rather than *episteme,* the development of practical knowledge and judgement

rather than the acquisition of a body of knowledge as such. A commodificationist approach views knowledge as a commodity, or a body of knowledge, which is transferred from teacher to student. The interview evidence did not support this view but rather that of Hagar. Interviewees identified the vocational relevance of the teaching, with the workplace experience of the staff deployed to link theory and practice as defining features of their HE in FE experience.

It can be concluded that there was little evidence that the views and experiences of students, teachers and managers in HE in FE at Hull College reflected the trends of performativity and commodification, but it was notable that pressures to discuss education in these terms could be identified. The trend towards increased vocationalisation in education was clearly shown in HE in FE at Hull College, but it was a vocationalism which fed from an approach more aligned with *phronesis*, than with the approach identified in government publications and theoretical analysis of the trend.

How far are managers, staff and students at Hull College aware of conflicts between the demands of a teaching professional and a subject/ vocational professional ?(i.e. Is there any problem with dual professionalism? Are there conflicts between their values and their role?)

The growth of managerialism within Further Education was noted in earlier chapters. Evidence for this was seen in the application of private sector business techniques and approaches together with the pressures from government reports, statements and inspection regimes. The forces of managerialism affect the way that any discussion of educational issues is

viewed, as has been noted earlier with reference to Elliott who stated that debate is '...constrained within a technocratic market discourse...' (Elliot, 1996 p. 21). It was argued in earlier chapters that the forces of managerialism could be expected to be at odds with those of professionalism. However, the nature of the profession appropriate to HE in FE was at issue. The debate about professionalism again highlighted two strands of an approach to teaching based on *phronesis;* that was the nature of the activity of teaching and the subject being taught. The nature of the approach to the pedagogy appropriate to HE in FE has been considered above, as has the importance of the subject being taught. The debate about professionalism in FE hinges around the notion of dual professionalism.

The issue of a profession for further education is dominated by the ideas of the Institute for Learning (IfL) to which FE staff must belong. It is responsible through SVUK for the mechanistic and formulaic teacher training which has been discussed earlier. The Ifl's notion of a professional teacher in FE is one who embraces a dual professionalism, of the vocational world from which they came and also that of the teaching profession. As was discussed earlier, this was a false duality (Plowright and Barr, 2010) as it was the unification of the pedagogy and the vocational context which could lead to the application of *phronesis* and in turn to a professionalism for HE in FE. Dual professionalism does not consider the nature of professional knowledge, which as Gleeson, Davies and Wheeler argue: '… is not fixed, but situated in unstable conditions in a variety of localized circumstances' (Gleeson, Davies and Wheeler, 2009 p.126). Theoretical and empirical evidence pointed to a professionalism for HE in FE being located in the realm of *phronesis.*

Interview evidence provided some support for the presence of unified professionalism in HE in FE at Hull College. Many teachers interviewed described how they had felt like vocational professionals when they first started teaching, but how later they saw themselves as teachers in a vocational area. This was not part of a process described by Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler (2005) as a 'slow downgrading' of professional status as a teacher. It was the maturing and realisation by those teachers interviewed, and recognised also by their managers, that the synthesis of the vocational and pedagogical professionalisms was an important strength to teaching HE in FE.

It is significant however, that the empirical evidence showed that there were pressures threatening the integrated professionalism in HE in FE at Hull College. Many interviewees identified difficulties in maintaining their professional practice and knowledge through research, which they believed to be essential in order to teach effectively. The lack of time to engage in updating was identified by many interviewees, managers and staff, as the main barrier to the effectiveness of teaching.

A further feature of a professional approach to teaching is the ability and opportunity to reflect upon the activity. Chapter Two considered the limitations of Schön's (1987) approach in the light of Hagar's (2000) criticisms, but the broader idea of reflective practice is still central to the profession of teaching. Eisner's (2002) account of professional debate and reflection was preferred in Chapter Four as being part of an approach based on *phronesis.* The interview evidence clearly identified the value placed on reflection by both teaching staff

and managers. Reflection was sometimes viewed as a solitary activity, reinforcing the autonomy that teachers value; sometimes it was reflective debate with colleagues and sometimes, though rarely, with students. Interviewees were unanimous in identifying the positive value of reflection to improving teaching. However, the lack of time and the demands of bureaucracy were identified as threats to reflective activity. Both teachers and managers recognised the potential conflict between what they believe to be important and how they have to deliver teaching on a day-to-day basis.

The interviews conducted sought to identify any conflict between the values and roles of teachers and managers, as anticipated by the findings of Gleeson and Shain, who identified 'strategic compliance' (Gleeson and Shain, 1999 p.488) and Elliott who identified a 'fundamental contradiction' (Elliott, 1996 p.21). The evidence showed a degree of compromise between what teaching staff believed they should do and what they needed to do, given the practicalities of their situation, but that this was not seen as a fundamental contradiction. Managers however, exhibited signs of strategic compliance. Some managers discussed examples of such compliance but some were reluctant to do so, being unwilling to elaborate on why they were certain that they never made such compromises.

The empirical evidence reinforced the academic evidence that there is a managerial imperative in colleges which led to teaching staff and managers facing a range of pressures. There were pressures on their beliefs and what they identified as their proper professional activity of teaching, reflecting, debating, updating their subject knowledge and engaging in scholarship. The

pressures were moderated however, by the commitment of the teaching staff and managers to delivering a particular HE in FE experience, in partnership with their students, in accordance with the features of *phronesis.*

Empirical and theoretical evidence provided support for the conjecture that *phronesis* could provide a model for teaching and quality management of HE in FE, at Hull College. The views of students, staff and managers were broadly in accord with the main features of *phronesis*, rather than those of performativity and commodification. Their views also accorded with a view of vocational education which was situated in *phronesis,* rather than one which supported vocatinalism as part of the managerialist, performative and commodificationist agendas. Although there were pressures from all of these agendas which threaten the application of an approach based on *phronesis*, there was evidence that it is *phronesis* which should underpin the teaching, management and indeed any profession for HE in FE.

Chapter Eight

Recommendations

The previous chapter concluded that empirical and theoretical evidence provided support for the conjecture that *phronesis* could provide a model for teaching and quality management of HE in FE, at Hull College.

The practical implications of this conclusion are that the emphasis in ensuring quality provision for HE in FE needs to shift from the inspection and measurement of teaching. It needs to move from a system which allocates numerical values to the activity and focuses on the outputs, to one which recognises the interactions involved. Teaching can be observed as a means of supporting improvements, but it should be a collegiate practice of sharing, which benefits the observer as much as the observed and results not in a numerical score but a reflective discussion.

What is required is a move away from the prevailing view of education as a commodity to be traded, viewing knowledge as a product to be dispensed by teachers and passively received by students, to one which recognises and values the interactions involved. Improvements to quality will not flow from observing teaching, classifying it, or by examining the percentage outputs, but by investing in what makes good teaching. This will involve investment in time for staff research and updating, and time for reflection. Staff need to be able to apply the results of their research and the updating of their skills and knowledge

to the teaching interaction. They need to be able to apply the theoretical and the practical aspects of their curriculum so that one enhances the other. This is not the development of dual professionalism, in which knowledge and pedagogical abilities are independent, but a unified professionalism. Improvement needs to flow from encouraging reflection and debate amongst students, teachers and managers, and allowing time for such reflection to identify and share good practice. It will involve investment in organisational structures and procedures to ensure that students and staff are partners in learning. Most of all it will involve encouraging a cultural and attitudinal change for the college, but a change built upon the beliefs and values identified in the comments of the interviewees for this thesis.

Practical recommendations

- **That Hull College implement reforms to recognise the distinct role for HE in FE:** To recognise that there is a distinct role apart from the further education agenda which currently dominates, as outlined in Chapter Three.

- **That Hull College implement quality management procedures based on recognition of the interactions of staff, students and the curriculum and puts in place peer-based qualitative reflections, rather than numerical scoring**: To apply the principles of *phronesis* as opposed to the Ofsted type numerical scoring, in particular through shared reflections as outlined earlier in the thesis.

- **That time is allocated for reflection and discussion through formal and informal means:** Recognising, that reflection is an important component of effective teaching and a feature of *phronesis,* which otherwise dwindles with the time pressures of an over-loaded teaching timetable.

- **That opportunities are created to allow students to become partners in learning**: To enable the two-way transmission of ideas which is essential to the application of *phronesis,* rather than a one-way imparting of knowledge.

- **There should be research, scholarly activity and staff vocational updating opportunities for all HE in FE staff:** In order to maintain and enhance the strength and currency of vocational knowledge and the marriage of theory and practice in HE in FE teaching

Reasons for optimism

A reason for optimism that the recommendations could be implemented is that within Hull College, steps are under way to separate the teaching and management of HE in FE from the rest of the college activity. This is part of a process which it is hoped will lead to the college successfully applying for Foundation Degree awarding powers (DfES, 2007c). One step in this process will be to reform the present committee structure and to replace it with one which will provide a deliberative voice for the academic staff teaching on HE programmes.

As part of these reforms, the existing Teaching, Learning and Research Committee will be split into two parts. Currently research and scholarly activity are given support through the disbursement of HEFCE funds to support research; the emphasis being primarily upon upgrading the qualifications of teaching staff. The future emphasis for a new Research and Scholarly Activity committee is not only to support such upgrading but also to encourage a range of research activity and vocational updating. The Teaching and Learning function will also be strengthened by a committee set up specifically for this purpose. Amongst other functions, it will generate a Higher Education teaching and learning strategy, which will recognise the specific characteristics of each curriculum area.

Furthermore, the changes are intended to engender a specific recognition of the role and characteristics of HE in FE. Currently, the author is involved in pursuing and implementing some of the changes which are being introduced by senior college management.

Reasons for pessimism

However, there is reason for pessimism, in that the application of *phronesis* would require a cultural change within an organisation where there is strong acculturation into values and norms which are opposed to it. At Hull College, as in most Further Education Colleges, the dominant principles and practices are based on Further Education norms. Arguments advanced in Chapter Three show the predominance of managerial attitudes and practice within FE. The driving force behind such attitudes and practices is not only the convergence of

business practices but primarily the all pervasive influence of Ofsted inspection procedures. As shown earlier, there are powerful forces of commodification and performativity. However, the changes noted above indicate that there is an appetite for such cultural change from senior management and from staff teaching HE in FE.

A further concern, indeed the most likely result from the changes being introduced, is that the University model is mimicked, rather than there being an effort to seek a model based on the uniqueness of HE in FE. Although there is no evidence to support the following assumptions, which could be the subject for further research, it is possible that following a University model could lead to a separation from the vocational basis of the curriculum and the skills of the staff. If the emphasis becomes more academic, it might diminish the benefits of vocational relevance and the application of theory and practice which are recognised by the students in the interviews as being of great value. In addition, it is likely that the nature of research undertaken would become more academic rather than being an application of theory to practice, or the updating of skills and knowledge.

What is likely to happen?

'Cultural change is intimately bound up with the process of organisational change...but so often it develops to reinforce existing ways of doing things and hence resists change' (Naylor, 1999 p.119). The college and its members will still be influenced by external pressures from agencies such as QAA, the Higher Education Funding Council and government departments. A reason for pessimism arising from the external environment of the College is the change of

government in 2010. With an agenda for public spending cuts, there is likely to be significantly less public money for Further and Higher Education. The consequences of such cuts are likely to be increased pressure on staff teaching loads and the supportive infrastructure, making the investments in staff time and research required to achieve *phronesis* unlikely. The forces of managerialism, commodification and performativity will still be predominant in the local, national and international environment in which the college operates. Cultural change will occur, but as with all cultural change, it is likely to be slow and inconsistently developed. What can be hoped for is that the views expressed by those interviewed for this thesis are able to come to the fore to develop the principles of *phronesis* in HE in FE at Hull College.

Limitations of the thesis

Part of the method of the thesis was to explore the feelings and beliefs of members of the HE in FE community at Hull College. These interviewees were responding to the pressures and opportunities presented to them in their day-to-day interactions, at the college. As such they reflect features of that organisation. As considered in Chapter Five, the generalisability of the findings will only be valid in so far as Hull College is typical of other large, general Further Education Colleges with Higher Education provision. It is possible that the pressures towards managerialism, commodification, performativity and vocationalisation have been stronger in other Colleges and that the tensions between the HE and FE parts of the organisation will have been resolved differently. The generalisability will, as noted, be but a fuzzy one (Bassey, 1999).

Future research

The uniqueness of HE in FE provides a rich seam for future research, covering as it does the nature of Foundation Degrees and vocational education within an HE context. Action research could also be undertaken, as the changes noted above are implemented, in order to chronicle and gauge their success. A further study may be possible to identify the possibility of applying *phronesis* to other colleges and seeking to further define the nature of HE in FE. The research has already led to an article, as yet unpublished, on professionalism in FE, and research published by the Yorkshire East and Humber Lifelong Learning Network on student perceptions of quality on HE in FE programmes.

Reflection on the thesis

Looking back on the process of creating the thesis, the author has been both optimistic and pessimistic about the future applicability of *phronesis* to HE in FE at Hull College. However, what has grown throughout the process, is the confidence of the author when addressing problems and advising members of staff in the day-to-day work role. The thesis has provided an opportunity both to reflect on issues and to explore a range of ideas and documents, which has given weight to what was previously only vague thoughts and feelings. The author's practice has been changed as a result of the thesis because whereas previously he was concerned that he ought to follow dominant approaches to quality within the institution, he is now pursuing an approach more closely linked to the principles espoused in the thesis.

It also provided confidence to undertake research on other projects and to have increased the author's confidence in his ability to communicate ideas in written form. Colleagues who asked whether they should consider undertaking doctoral study on the same programme have been given an answer in the affirmative, but with the rider that they should not lightly embark on the journey without being determined to see it through. In looking back, to ask the question would the author embark on the task again, knowing what he knows now, the answer would be 'yes'.

Appendix 1. Final versions of questions to students, staff and managers.

Final questions for students

These questions relate to your experience on HE courses at Hull College

Can you tell me about occasions when you have had a high quality teaching experience? What are the key features that made it so good?

How important is your relationship with the teacher, in providing you with a good experience and helping you to learn?

Are there other factors that we have not yet mentioned that help to give you a high quality experience and help you to learn?

Would you say that your experience of teaching on HE courses at Hull College has been mainly theoretical, mainly practical or a balance of the two?

Is this the right emphasis? How do your teachers relate the practical and the theoretical?

Do you think your teachers love their subject?
If so do they pass this on to you? How do they do this?
How much would you say that you loved the subject that you are studying?

Do you think teaching is an art or a science? (Please use your own assumptions about art or science, although I can elaborate if definitions are needed). In what ways?

Could you list a few reasons why you are doing the course? What is the main one?

To what extent do you think it is the job of the college to provide students with a consistent product, for example a course, which they can trade in the employment market?

Do you think your teachers are teachers first and dancers/engineers etc second or vice versa? Have you seen any examples or, do you think that there are any, conflicts between the role of teacher and of subject professional?

Is there anything that we have not discussed that you think may be important?

Final questions for staff

These questions relate to you teaching on HE programmes at Hull College.

Can you tell me of occasions when you have had a really good class or a class went really well? What factors do you think made them a success?

How would your manager, or the college, know that your lessons had been a success?

In what way is your relationship with your students important to make teaching a success and to help them learn?

How much of your teaching is practical and how much theoretical? How do the practical and theoretical relate to each other in your teaching?

If you think about what is important to you and to your students, how much does love of the subject matter serve to motivate you and allow you to provide good lessons.
Is it important to convey love of subject to your students? How do you do this?

From what we have discussed how much or in what ways do you think teaching is an art or a science? (Please use your own assumptions about art or science, although I can elaborate if definitions are needed)

Why do you think students do the course? Could you list a few reasons?
Which do you think is the most important reason?

To what extent do you think it is the job of the college to provide students with a consistent product, for example a course, which they can trade in the employment market?

Do you see yourself as a professional teacher of x subject or as a professional x who now teaches it?

To what extent do you have to compromise either of these professionalisms?

To what extent are you able to reflect on what happened in the classroom and make changes as a result?

Is this a personal reflective process or does it sometimes involve discussions with other staff?

How much do you try to involve students in the reflection on the lesson?

Is there anything that we have not discussed that you think may be important?

Final questions for managers

How would you judge whether one of your staff had had a particularly good class or a class had gone really well? What criteria do you use for such a judgment?

How important do you think the relationship is between the teaching staff and their students? What do you believe is the optimal relationship for successful learning?

Would you say that the teaching by your staff is mainly practical or mainly theoretical? How should the practical and theoretical relate to each other in their teaching?

To what extent do you think that love of the subject matter serves to motivate your staff and allow them to provide a good teaching and learning experience?

In your experience how do your staff manage to convey their love of subject to their students? Why is it important that they do this?

From what we have discussed, how much or in what ways do you think teaching is an art or a science? (Please use your own assumptions about art and science although I can elaborate if definitions are needed)

As a manager how do you know that your staff are successful teachers?

Why do you think students do the course? Could you list a few reasons? Which do you think is the most important reason?

To what extent do you think it is the job of the college to provide students with a consistent product, for example a course, which they can trade in the employment market?

Do you see your staff as professional teachers of x subject or as professional xs who now teach it?

To what extent do they have to compromise either of these professionalisms?

Have there been occasions that you could outline, when you might have had to make similar compromises yourself? (Between your values and the needs of the College for example)

To what extent are your staff able to reflect on what happened in the classroom and make changes as a result?

Do they reflect with colleagues or others? How much do you think they involve students in the reflection on the lesson?

Is there anything that we have not discussed that you think may be important?

Appendix 2. Changes made after piloting questions.

Changes as a result of the pilot. Students

All questions relate to HE in FE courses at Hull College

Main question	Questions to be posed Students	Pilot	What am I trying to find out? Why am I asking this?
1. Could *phronesis* provide a model for the teaching and quality management of HE in Further Education at Hull College? How far do the views of managers, staff and **students** at Hull College accord with the main features of *phronesis*?	What do you think gives you a high quality teaching and learning experience? (Could you list a few things?)	Keep	To identify any mismatch between procedures and what the students really value. To see if they mention the points I want to develop below. To see if it throws up any things I have not thought of.
The importance of the context of the teaching situation and relationship between teacher and student	How important is your relationship with the teacher? How important are the other factors such as your fellow students? The classroom or facilities?	How important is your relationship with the teacher? Are there other factors that we have notyet mentioned that help to give you a good experience?	How important is the context and relationships. What is the balance between the features of the context To see if they think it is important or whether they do not care as long as they get input and succeed
The relationship between the universal and the particular in the teaching of the subject.	Is the love of subject important to you (and to your teachers?) Is your teaching all at a practical level or do you get to consider broader	Would you say that your teaching was mainly theoretical, mainly practical or a balance of the two? Is this the right emphasis? Are you able to relate the practical and the theoretical? How much would	Is the subject very important? Is there a balance Because of the fit with *phronesis*. May throw up issues about not enough subject teaching as opposed to general material

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	theories? Are you able to relate the two? (the practical and the theoretical)	you say you loved the subject that you are studying? Do you think your teachers love their subject? (and pass this on to you?)	
The value placed on reflection, deliberation and judgement in improving teaching	From what you can see do teachers reflect on what happened in the classroom and make changes as a result? How much to do they involve you in the reflection and deliberation?		Whether there is any evidence that the students can perceive their teachers as reflective practitioners and whether they are involved in this process
Do they recognise teaching as an art?	Do you think teaching is an art or a science? (Is it capable of being approached by set procedures or is it a constantly variable situation?)	Do you think teaching is an art or a science? In what ways?	If students think it is art or science To match fit with *phronesis* (Eisner)
2. How far do the views of managers, staff and **students** at Hull College reflect the trends of performativity, commodification and increased vocationalisation in education?	Why are you doing the course? Could you list a few reasons? How important is it that as many students as possible pass the course? Is it important the course will lead to a job? Should the course be all about job-related skills?	Could you list a few reasons why you are doing the course? How far do you think the course should be about job-related skills?	To see if students exhibit any signs that they are motivated by a performative, commodified or vocational agenda To gauge extent of forces which might work against *phronesis* approach Might be possible to see if students prefer one of the three to see if dominant.

3. How far are managers, staff and **students** at Hull College aware of conflicts between the demands of a teaching professional and a subject/ vocational professional i.e. Is there any problem with dual professionalism? Are there conflicts between their values and their role?	Are there any times when you think that your teachers have to compromise what they would do in their professional (work) situation as opposed to what they have to do as teachers? Which should come first? Are they professional teachers or professional (insert subject role, dancers, economists etc)	Do you think your teachers are teachers first and dancers/engineers etc second or vice versa? Do you think there are any conflicts between the role of teacher and of subject professional?	To see if students perceive any differences between the vocational Do students have any perception of dual professionalism?

Changes as a result of the pilot. Staff

Questions to be posed to **Staff**

1. Could *phronesis* provide a model for the teaching and quality management of HE in Further Education at Hull College? How far do the views of managers, **staff** and students at Hull College accord with the main features of *phronesis*?			
Fist time	After pilot	Reason for change	What am I trying to find out? Why am I asking this?
What do you think makes a high quality teaching and learning experience? (Could you list a few things?)	Could you think of times when you have had a really good class or a class went really well? What factors do you think made them a success?	This was changed after pilot because it was not focusing on their experience	What is it that makes teaching good? What are the key factors? Are they interpersonal?
The importance of the context of the teaching situation and relationship between teacher and student			

How important is your relationship with the student? How important are the other factors such as the make up of the group? The classroom or facilities?	Why is your relationship with your students important? Could you describe this relationship?	Changed because it was a distraction to discuss resources when this was not important. I was hoping to show that factors such as resources were not important but it was the relationship that was important however the discussion focused on resources as the main point of the question. I thought I would focus on relationships and see if the other factors were mentioned.	Are the key features context specific? Are they a result of teacher student interactions or other factors?
The relationship between the universal and the particular in the teaching of the subject.			
Are there any other factors, which influence you relationship with the class? Is the love of subject important to you (and to your students?) Is your teaching all at a practical level or do you get to consider broader theories? Are you able to relate the	How much of your teaching is practical and how much theoretical? How do the practical and theoretical relate to each other in your teaching? If you think about what is important to you and to your students, how much does love of the subject matter serve to motivate you and allow you to provide good lessons. Do you think you manage to convey love of subject to	Love of subject question proved to be a yes/no answer. And came before the theoretical practical question. The old practical/theory question was an 'of course' answer and I needed something more open.	Do they believe that teaching is about transferring practical skills? Is there interplay between theory and practice in the process? This should be particularly important in Foundation degrees. Love of subject question relates to the notion of a phronimos passing on wisdom

two? (the practical and the theoretical)	your students? How do you do this?		
The value placed on reflection, deliberation and judgement in improving teaching			
Are you able to reflect on what happened in the classroom and make changes as a result? How much do you try to involve students in the reflection and deliberation?		After pilot I saw the need to move this in the order	
Do they recognise teaching as an art?			
Do you think teaching is an art or a science? (Is it capable of being approached by set procedures or is it a constantly variable situation?)	From what we have discussed how much or in what ways do you think teaching is an art or a science? A question now very much like our first question. How do you know you have had a good class session or series of sessions? Would your manager or the college know that they have been a success? (If the answer is measurements ask a supplementary about is anything that does not get measured?)	Needed to delete the prompt and let them suggest. A more open question to generate a variety of responses. I need to get more out of this question. And relate it to the measurement question following. I did not want to use the word success in case it triggered an unthinking reference to success rates. If they were mentioned that would show that they were seen	How much support is there for the view that is an art? Returning to a question similar to the first to check views in the light of the preceding. Is the answer essentially the same? Also if issues of measurement are raised this can now be pursued whereas this would have taken the questioning off track had it been a supplementary for question one.

		as important unprompted.	

2. How far do the views of managers, **staff** and students at Hull College reflect the trends of performativity, commodification and increased vocationalisation in education?			
Why do you think students do the course? Could you list a few reasons? How important is it that as many students as possible pass the course? Is it important the course will lead to a job? Should the course be all about job-related	Keep question Which do you think is the most important reason?	The supplementary questions over-emphasised the issue of jobs and job related skills Answers to these questions could best be derived from the other responses rather than a direct question or questions therefore Delete the supplementary questions for an open one.	It will be interesting to compare their views with those of the students to see how far employment benefits are emphasised. The main question on performativity, commodification and vocationalism will be derived from many answers rather than just this one.

3. How far are managers, **staff** and students at Hull College aware of conflicts between the demands of a teaching professional and a subject/ vocational professional i.e. Is there any problem with dual professionalism? Are there conflicts between their values and their role?			
Are there any times when you have to compromise what you would do in your professional (work) situation as opposed to what you have to do as a teacher? Which should come first? Are you a professional teacher or a professional (insert subject role, dancers, economists etc) If dual professionalism is raised ask if it is a	Do you see yourself as a professional teacher of x subject or as a professional x who now teaches it? To what extent do you have to compromise either of these professionalisms?	This did not work. I was thinking of a conversation with performing arts lecturers In my PGCE teaching. It did not have resonance in other contexts and so I thought I needed to re-phrase it. Perhaps to ask the dual professionalism question more overtly	Dual professionalism? Conflicts or not

coherent concept?			
Changed order: The value placed on reflection, deliberation and judgement in improving teaching			
Are you able to reflect on what happened in the classroom and make changes as a result? How much do you try to involve students in the reflection and deliberation?	Are you able to reflect on what happened in the classroom and make changes as a result? Do you reflect with colleagues or others? How much do you try to involve students in that reflection on the lesson?	New position in order Changed the wording slightly on the supplementary to clarify that it was not a question about developing the reflective skills of the students but of getting them to reflect together on the process. Added the supplementary about colleagues to relate to a point of Eisner's.	Are they reflective professionals?

Appendix 3. Ethical procedures.

Letter and consent form for students

<div align="right">

Quality Improvement
Hull College
Queens Gardens
Hull
HU1 3DG

</div>

Dear   ,

<u>Research project on perceptions of quality in HE in FE</u>

I would like to invite you to participate in the above project. I would like to talk to you about your views on a number of topics relating to your study at the college. It will take less than hour of your time and involve answering a few questions.

The project hopes to investigate whether quality procedures for HE in FE at the college could be focussed more closely on the student experience and to examine any forces which would work against this.

You can see from the attached consent form that I will protect your anonymity and you will be able to withdraw at any time without your information being used.

All records will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet or password protected files on a computer. You will be able to check the transcription made of the meeting in order to correct it for accuracy and clarity.

If you need to contact me I am available in Room 422, HE Quality Office, Hull College, Queens Gardens, Hull HU1 3 DG. Tel:381937 E-mail: gbarr@hull-college.ac.uk.

The supervisor for the project is Professor M Bottery, Centre for Educational Studies, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX.

Should you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, please contact the Secretary, Institute for Learning Ethics Committee, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX.
Email: <u>J.Lison@hull.ac.uk</u> tel. 01482-465988.

Yours sincerely,

Glenn Barr

CONSENT FORM

I,

Hereby agree to participate in this study to be undertaken
by Glenn Barr and I understand that the purpose of the research is to
investigate student and staff perceptions of quality for HE in FE at Hull College.

I understand that

1. A recording will be made of the interviews which will be transcribed. Both recording and transcription will be coded and my name and address kept separately from it.
2. Any information that I provide will not be made public in any form that could reveal my identity to an outside party ie. that I will remain fully anonymous.
3. Aggregated results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.
4. Individual results **will not** be released to any person except at my request and on my authorisation.
5. That I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from me will not be used.

Signature:

Date:

The contact details of the researcher are: Glenn Barr, HE Quality Co-ordinator, Quality Improvement, Hull College, HU18 1BF. Tel:………
E-mail: gbarr@hull-college.ac.uk

The supervisor for the project is Professor M Bottery, Centre for Educational Studies, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX.

The contact details of the secretary to the IfL Ethics Committee are Mrs J Lison, Centre for Educational Studies, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX.

Email: J.Lison@hull.ac.uk tel. 01482-465988.

Letter and consent form for staff and managers.

Quality Improvement
Hull College
Queens Gardens
Hull
HU1 3DG

Dear   ,

<u>Research project on perceptions of quality in HE in FE</u>

I would like to invite you to participate in the above project. I would like to talk to you about your views on a number of topics relating to your teaching at the college. It will take less than hour of your time and involve answering a few questions.

The project hopes to investigate whether quality procedures for HE in FE at the college could be focussed more closely on the student experience and to examine any forces which would work against this.

You can see from the attached consent form that I will protect your anonymity and you will be able to withdraw at any time without your information being used.

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1. A recording will be made of the interviews which will be transcribed. Both recording and transcription will be coded and my name and address kept separately from it.
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3. Aggregated results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.
4. Individual results **will not** be released to any person except at my request and on my authorisation.
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