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WORKPLACE LITERACIES AND AUDIT SOCIETY

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A range of ethnographic research in literacy studies has focused on workplace literacy practices, particularly increased textualisation and changing writing demands (Brandt, 2009; Farrell, 2006; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996). The volume and complexity of workplace paperwork have increased in many workplaces. Work intensity has also increased as paperwork is co-ordinated with other tasks. This has an impact on time and space available for other activities at work, such as caring and emotional work (Davies, 1994), ‘hands-on’ tasks (Lamvik, Naesje, Skarholt, & Torvatn, 2009) or workplace learning (Arthur & Tait, 2004). Increased centralisation of paperwork demands means that the sources and purposes of paperwork can become unclear (Ball, 2003). Professional identities and relationships are transformed when goals of accountability and performance management seem to change the nature and purpose of the work (Farrell, 2001; Iedema & Scheeres, 2003; Karlsson, 2005) .

Power (1997, 2000) argues that a set of interrelated social changes in the 1990s caused an ‘audit explosion’. These included New Public Management in the public sector, political demands for greater accountability in service providing organisations, and the extension of quality assurance practices from industry across the public and private sector. Such practices – regular monitoring against quantitative performance measures, fed back to management – have changed how organisations are regulated. Workers produce their own auditable measures of performance. External audits check these internal control systems are in place. Performance measures are designed not just in terms of how well they *measure* performance, but perhaps predominantly by how well they make performance *visible*, creating a ‘window’ on the organisation making monitoring and intervention possible. This shapes how ‘auditable performance’ is produced and interpreted.

For Power, these practices have unintended consequences. Auditable accounts of performance do not necessarily produce transparency, particularly when auditing becomes defensive. Auditees learn ‘creative compliance’; finding ways of performing well on

auditable measures, without changing performance. Relationships alter where audit demands are predicated on, and create, mistrust.

Such processes are very visible in educational workplaces. Education is governed by policy frameworks, inspection bodies, examining boards, funding agencies, and various other authorities, who all have different reporting demands. Studies in schools (Troman, 2000; Williams, Corbin, & McNamara, 2007) and in further education (Hamilton, 2009) have linked policy-mandated audit practices to increased levels of stress.

This chapter draws on examples from a study which explored the impact of such demands on people's workplace experiences and identities in two contrasting educational workplaces (Tusting, 2010a, 2012). The genesis of the work was in previous research carried out in adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes, shortly after the introduction of a new national strategy (Barton et al. 2007). Paperwork and management practices were not the focus of attention in that study. However, tutors' experiences of new curricula, performance measurements and associated paperwork emerged as a key factor shaping their experience (Tusting 2009).

The study reported on here was designed to explore tutors' experiences of paperwork in more depth, in two sites: a college, and an Early Years centre. These were both places where changes in national policy and inspection regimes had recently changed the nature of paperwork demands. My interest was in the experiences of front line staff around the literacy practices associated with 'paperwork': broadly, reading and writing tasks (paper-based or digitally-mediated) directly associated with people's work. I worked with 9 tutors at the college, mainly teaching in non-vocational areas, and 12 staff at the nursery. This chapter will focus on two staff from the college, describing the specifics of their situation. (The two

settings have been compared elsewhere, Tusting 2012. For more detail on the Early Years site see Tusting 2010a.)

I will first outline the importance of literacy studies within linguistic ethnography. I will discuss the textually mediated nature of the contemporary social world, and the need to address this within the linguistic ethnographic enterprise. I will then draw on examples from the study data to illustrate the impact of audit society in participants' working lives.

Literacy studies

'Literacy studies' approaches reading and writing as situated social practices (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič, 2000; Barton, 2007). Rather than focusing on literacy as an individualised cognitive skill, a practice perspective on literacy focuses on what people do with reading and writing. People engage in 'literacy events' (Heath 1983) -- events in which written texts play a part -- in characteristic ways in different domains of life. These patterned ways of engaging with texts can be called 'literacy practices'. While literacy practices cannot be directly observed, they can be inferred from observing literacy events over time and developing understandings of the routinised ways in which literacy is used in social domains. Literacy practices are shaped by, and shape, the histories, institutions and power relationships in which they are situated. This is one specific development of the approach to understanding social life known as practice theory (Gherardi 2009).

Literacy studies shares perspectives with linguistic ethnography more generally, as outlined in Rampton et al. (2004) and the introduction and chapter 1 of this collection: an

understanding of language in terms of practices specific to social groups and domains, rather than as universal systems; an appreciation of recurrent and relatively stable patterns in how people use language, learned and continued in interaction; drawing on established procedures and relatively technical vocabularies for isolating and identifying these structures.

Literacy studies also shares the orientation towards ‘close knowledge through first hand participation [which] allows the researcher to attend to aspects of lived experience’ (Rampton et al., 2004). By employing ethnographic methods (Tusting & Barton, 2005), participating in settings and observing literacy events over time, understandings have been developed of how literacy practices are situated within and shaped by context, domain, historical setting and person (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Martin-Jones & Jones, 2000). Studies of people’s everyday literacies (such as Barton & Hamilton, 1998) make visible ‘vernacular’ practices which make up most of people’s literacy lives and yet are undervalued and backgrounded in dominant discussions of literacy in terms of skills and levels.

Theoretical traditions are also shared with linguistic ethnography. Foundational works in literacy studies come from anthropology (Street 1984), and the key concept of the ‘literacy event’ (Heath, 1983) was adapted from the ethnography of communication. A recent collection edited by Barton and Papen (2010) orients explicitly to this anthropological tradition.

Textually mediated society

Addressing people’s practices around texts is important, because social institutions are co-ordinated in large part by what people do with material (paper and digital) texts. As Smith (2001) has demonstrated, texts and documents are ‘essential to the objectification of organizations and institutions and to how they exist’ (p. 160). Linguistic ethnography’s

interest in ‘interactional and institutional discourse’ (Rampton et al., 2004, p. 6) must therefore include a focus on the textual flows and practices by means of which this is constituted. This is evidenced in recent work exploring, for instance, the role of computerised patient record systems in shaping interaction between doctors and patients (Swinglehurst, 2012 and this collection); the practices by means of which a police officer tries to change how police and members of the public communicate, by rewording letters sent to complainants (Rock, 2012); and the ways decisions about insurance claims are shaped by the insurance professional’s practices using computerised forms (van Hout, 2012).

Literacy studies offers one way for linguistic ethnography to address the textual practices involved in mediating, co-ordinating, regulating and authorizing activities. This enables ethnographies to be extended beyond the scope of the events under observation, exploring how macro and institutional levels are instantiated and co-ordinated in local language practices.

Methods in literacy studies

There is variation in how far work in linguistic ethnography balances the ‘contradictory pulls of linguistics and ethnography’ (Rampton et al., 2004, p. 4). Some work orients more to the ethnographic pole and some more to the technical linguistic one. Literacy studies has for the most part been less directly influenced by the interactional sociolinguistic tradition than others areas of linguistic ethnography. While research into literacy practices *may* draw on audio- or video-recordings of interaction analysed in detail (Bloome 2005; Lefstein 2008; Maybin 2007), this is not necessarily the case. Technical linguistic tools can also come into play in the analysis of the texts with which people interact (Burgess, 2008), or in ‘text-oriented ethnography’, combining ethnographic data around the processes of text

production and interpretation with linguistic analysis of the texts produced (Lillis, 2009). Or fieldnotes, interview data and photographs can form the central dataset, rather than recordings of interaction. These data can still be analysed to address sociolinguistic questions about language and literacy practices on the basis of the literacy events observed and discussed (Papen, 2005; Juffermans, 2011; Blommaert, Collins, & Slembrouck, 2005; see Tusting 2013 for a more extended discussion). That is to say, literacy studies which does not draw on interactional sociolinguistics in analysing recorded interaction is still linguistic analysis from a different perspective, in exploring sociolinguistic questions around literacies and language use.

The contribution of linguistic ethnography

Linguistic ethnography has informed the understandings developed in the research described here in several ways. From a theoretical perspective, linguistic ethnography sensitised me to the role of local language and literacy practices in the instantiation of culture and structure. This supports interpretation of the data at different levels, drawing together local observations and accounts with people's histories and broader institutional positionings, and with theory and empirical work on wider social and historical trends such as audit society and transformations in adult education. An ethnographic stance also validates drawing on individuals' accounts of their experiences to illuminate social structural processes from an emic perspective.

Linguistic ethnography has also added sensitivity to participants' language use in representing their experience. The accounts below will draw out particularities of teachers' descriptions of their experience, including the metaphors drawn on to represent teaching process; the use of 'vague' referents for sources of paperwork; consistent use of directive

modality to frame descriptions of paperwork as obligations; constructions of risk and self-protection; and contrasting stances adopted on the location of responsibility for difficulties in completing paperwork.

Paperwork and pressure in educational workplaces

In the study reported here I worked in depth with 9 staff at a post-16 college and 12 staff at an early years centre, combining interviews with observations of their work, and recording more informal conversations with additional people as opportunities arose, in fieldnotes and where possible audio-recorded. I carried out general interviews discussing participants' working practices, and more focused interviews structured around a free-form log they kept to record the paperwork they encountered over the course of a week. All the interviews were semi-structured, guided by open interview schedules oriented towards opening up conversations about participants' experiences and engaging with and responding to their perspectives. I started with a general interview schedule which was the same for all interviewees. Subsequent discussions followed up on points from the first interviews, so schedules were specific to each participant.

Interviews were transcribed using a broad orthographic transcription. Minimal responses ('Mmm', 'Right' and so on) were included in the data used for analysis but have been edited out in extracts reproduced below as they are not relevant to the level of detail addressed here. Where data has been elided this is represented with [...]. Pauses I interpreted as communicatively significant are represented with , for a shorter pause and ... for a longer one.

I participated in and observed classes and worked with people in various ways to get an understanding of their practices – visiting some people’s homes to see their home offices, or being taken through examples of their filing systems. At the end of the data collection period, I generated a set of preliminary emergent ideas and themes and discussed these with participants.

This work generated a broad and varied dataset, bringing together data of several different kinds to enable analysis of the kinds of paperwork people were working with (document collection; interviews), how this was synchronised, organised and co-ordinated in their working lives (observation of teaching, offices, and filing systems; logs; interviews), and people’s accounts of their experiences and responses (interviews). The dataset was initially analysed using qualitative coding, with the support of the software ATLAS.ti. I approached the dataset with the goal of coding it exhaustively and comprehensively (Silverman 2001), to record and map an interpretation of the dataset overall, within which to situate a focus on particular extracts of data.

An initial broad list of codes was adopted, framed by the original research questions of the project, which addressed the nature of participants’ paperwork literacy practices, and the effects of these on their experiences, identities, relationships and social practices. I then read through each of the documents in the dataset several times, assigning codes to relevant extracts, adding and developing codes whenever necessary. As the numbers of codes used proliferated, I organised them by adding pre-modifiers to code names (Woolf, 2007) to group them, eventually into the following categories: paperwork and practices; education; evaluation; experiences; factors influencing responses; function; identity; nature; relationships; source; strategies.

Interpreting the research simply in terms of the numbers of data extracts coded under each code would be inappropriate. The data were collected in ways responsive to the particular setting and situation of each individual, so the amount of data collected from each participant differs. I used multiple coding of individual data extracts, so each extract could be coded with one or many codes. The data imported into ATLAS.ti was also only a part of the full dataset; additional handwritten fieldnotes, interviewees' paperwork logs, and examples of paperwork from the settings were kept separately, and returned to when developing analysis of specific points. I am also aware that my coded interpretation was informed by tacit lived understandings built up through being in the settings, which are not easy to quantify. The systematic coding process is a tool to support thinking about the data, providing ways of collecting data extracts together in new ways, and also making it easier to find extracts and returning to consider them in their discursive context. It does not provide a means of understanding the data on its own.

Nevertheless, coding across the digital part of the dataset in this way does provide a way into identifying commonalities and differences in interpretations of data from different individuals and different settings. It provides a means of checking my sense of the patterns which analysis constructed across the dataset as a whole, and whether individual data extracts identified as being of interest are like other extracts, or are unusual in some way.

The memoing function of ATLAS.ti was used to collect together quotations of relevance for specific topics and reflect on them in writing, and to make links between the coded dataset and the other kinds of data collected. For instance, quotations relating to aspects of a particular individual's role were linked to memos summarising that aspect. Figure 1 illustrates this, showing how a memo illustrating 'Megan's paperwork demands' is linked to quotations from the data. The screenshot also illustrates the coding process, with the

transcript of the interview ‘underneath’ the memo list window and the margin down the right hand side recording codes attached to particular segments.

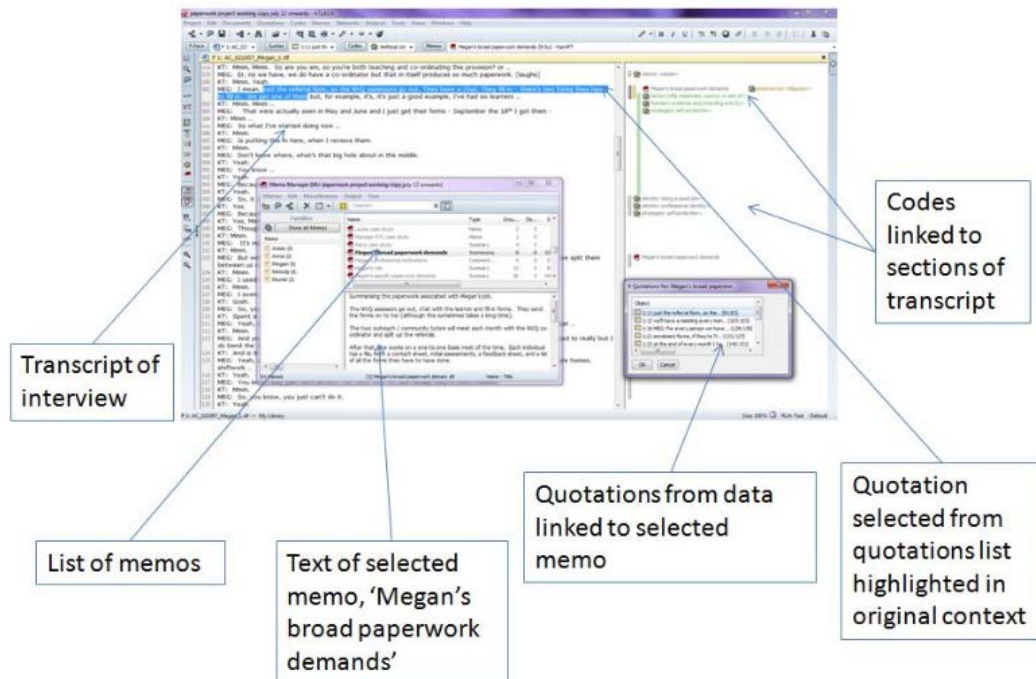


Figure 1: ATLAS.ti screenshot showing memo about Megan’s paperwork demands

In this chapter, I focus on two of the college participants, Aidan and Megan. (Both names are pseudonyms, and certain details have been left imprecise to avoid identifying participants.) I have chosen these individuals because of their work situations, commonalities and contrasts. Both worked in community education, full time or close to full time hours, and were operating with a degree of autonomy. However their contrasting histories, positionings and responsibilities mean that the broad themes emerging from the analysis play out rather differently for each of them.

I began by considering the patterns which emerged from the dataset as a whole, and then looked at the patterns of coding across the data from just these two people. I generated

lists of data extracts under codes of particular interest, whether because they were represented in data from both people, or because they were more characteristic of the data from one than from the other. These codes of particular interest formed the basis of the points made in the analysis below. Extracts from the data which illustrate these points well have been selected from these quotation lists.

I will begin with 'pen portrait' summaries of Megan and Aidan (Barton and Hamilton 1998) and their paperwork demands, drawing on the memos described above. I will then draw out themes – amount of paperwork; purpose; obligation; and identity -- which emerged from the study overall, and illustrate how they were oriented to by these two participants.

Aidan: role and responsibilities

Aidan had been working in his current role as a community development tutor for nearly three years. He was experienced in adult education and well qualified, with a degree and several post graduate qualifications. A lot of his work was designed to encourage people from socially excluded groups into education, providing the first step towards courses more focused on specific skills, employment or qualifications. He worked with a wide range of groups, including people with learning difficulties, mental health issues, histories of drug and alcohol addiction, and carers. He set up educational activities including classes in college, outdoor field trips and activities, and outreach workshops held beyond the college.

About half his time was spent liaising with outside agencies, such as drug rehabilitation centres and the health service, to understand the needs of the people he was working with and to design appropriate courses. Some of these courses he delivered himself, some of them he managed, with other tutors doing the face to face teaching. The other half of

his time was spent teaching.

Aidan's paperwork

A lot of Aidan's paperwork involved planning, because of his course design responsibilities. He had to put together a plan for each course he designed, including a rationale stating how the course contributed to the strategies of the institution and the region, tutor contracts, aims, objectives and learning outcomes, a scheme of work, lesson plans, risk assessments (his offsite courses required additional risk assessments), and details of student assessments. In order to fulfil RARPA (Recognizing and Recording Progress and Achievement) requirements introduced by the Learning and Skills Council to standardise measures of success in non-accredited courses, Aidan had to demonstrate outcomes of student learning through formative initial and final assessments, and have ways of tracking students' progress through the course and beyond.

Aidan's principal 'unit' of paperwork was therefore 'the course'. Other paperwork related to individual students. Each student had to sign an enrolment form and a learner contract form, in which the commitment between them and the college was made explicit. A profile of needs and goals was developed for each through the course, and each student had an individual learning plan, showing what they were learning each week. A group profile was also put together for each course. All of this was on standardised forms produced by the college.

Megan: role and responsibilities

Megan worked as a community and workplace outreach tutor, mainly in adult literacy

and numeracy. Her initial training was as a school teacher, and she had less experience in adult education than Aidan. She worked mainly with community partners including the Probation service, and with NVQ candidates in workplaces. She led workshop sessions and carried out initial assessments. She also ran short specialist courses at the college, and some staff development courses on embedding literacy and numeracy in other subject areas. But most of her work was on a one to one basis with students, in a range of locations: in libraries, workplaces, or a Probation hostel.

Megan's paperwork

Where Aidan's principal unit of paperwork was 'the course', Megan's was 'the student'. Her 'typical' file began with a referral form with the student's details, from an assessor or a referring agency. She would phone the student to set up a meeting and an initial literacy assessment. She filled in a feedback sheet with candidates' scores and an explanation, talked through with students at a second meeting. She then completed their individual learning plan, adding specific goals after a later, more detailed diagnostic assessment. Other pedagogic paperwork included a 'motivation sheet' in which learners reflected on how they would feel when they achieved a certificate, and a 'ground rules' health and safety sheet defining norms of behaviour. NVQ candidates had 'Train to Gain' forms, recording enrolment and tracking achievements. Some learners also had a dyslexia assessment.

There was also college administrative paperwork. Megan tracked all her contacts with students carefully, recording phone calls and contact sheets, with every appointment, date, time, learner's signature, and the date of the next appointment. This was particularly important for students on probation who had to attend sessions to avoid breaching their order. Each month, she drew on her attendance register and assessment records to feed back on

students' progress at the community team monthly meeting. She also occasionally ran courses. For these, she had a similar list of course file paperwork to complete as Aidan, as listed in the checklist below.

Skills for Life Course File	
Name of tutor(s)	
Course	
Documents	
Course Information Sheet	
Venue information and Risk Assessment	
Syllabus for OCNW E1,2,3/Level1,2 tests Location of Core Curriculum and OCNW Guidelines (as appropriate)	
IV/EV reports (as appropriate)	
Course rationale (including use of Volunteer Supporters rationale)	
Scheme of Work	
Lesson Plans	
Workshop Plans (if necessary)	
Materials/Handouts used in course	
Course Record sheet including class profile and end of term tutor evaluation	
Progress records for whole class (if appropriate)	
Student evaluations	
Individual learner records:	Initial Assessment plus any diagnostic assessments (evidence of and links with ILP)
	Updated student profiles (for continuing learners)
	Evidence of induction (especially for students who enrol after first 3 weeks)
	ILPs and Progress records (showing evidence of regular reviews)
	Learning Support referrals

Figure 2: College checklist summarising course paperwork required

Amount of paperwork

Most participants, across both sites, said they had difficulties with the amount of paperwork, reflecting Power's (2000) claim of an 'audit explosion'. Megan and Aidan both talked about excessive amounts of paperwork, but this was expressed in different ways. While Aidan could see the purpose of each individual piece, he felt that there was much more than necessary. He had concerns about the paperwork being time consuming, and the knock

on effects on other things he was doing: ‘you spend more time kind of recording and justifying what we do than actually kind of doing it’. He talked about the volume of paperwork as often disproportionate to the purposes it was trying to achieve: ‘if you just teach a 3 hour course, you could well just spend the whole 3 hours just filling in forms’. He also felt that the practicalities of completing some of this paperwork were not considered, given the outdoor settings of a lot of his work.

Megan described a constant increase in the volume of paperwork requirements, particularly providing evidence of what she had done. Every person she saw had to sign a piece of paper confirming she had seen them, ‘to keep a track on what I’m doing’; this was a new requirement, as was the requirement that every professional development course she attended was logged in a legal document which could be made available for inspection.

Clashing purposes

Particular problems arose across the college participants when paperwork was evaluated as clashing with the tutor’s teaching goals. Quality management processes at the college included mandated structures and associated forms to complete for schemes of work and lesson planning. Specific objectives had to be set for each session and for each student, and their achievement recorded – the process Power (1997) identifies of workers producing their own performance measures and regularly monitoring themselves against these, to produce auditable records, using a process which can be demonstrated to external auditors. Regular college ‘quality management’ observations ensured that these processes were in place for each tutor. Where production of these auditable records was not performed adequately, mentoring sessions were set up with managers to ensure compliance. We see here

the process Power (2000) describes: extension of quality assurance practices from industry across to the very different setting of adult education.

Lesson Plan

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Course Title: _____ Group: _____ Course Length: _____ Session Number: _____
 Day: _____ Time: _____ Date: _____ Venue: _____

Session aims:

Objectives - By the end of the session learners will be able to:

Safety/DDA Check
Issues

Timing	Objective	Tutor and Learner Activities*	Assessment	Resources*	Differentiation	Notes/Evaluation

*Please highlight activities/resources that provide diversity

Figure 3: college format for lesson planning

Aidan spent a lot of his time producing planning framed in this way, but questioned whether these formats were useful for his activities. A requirement to plan sessions in detail as a list of timed activities with objectives set in advance to be assessed at the end (Figure 3) did not fit with his characterisation of the importance of flexibility. He consistently used the metaphor of ‘flow’ to describe ‘good teaching’, evoking a fluid responsiveness to the demands of the situation. He felt paperwork could be actively detrimental to this: ‘if I had to sort of sit there referring to bits of paper all the time I’d just completely lose my flow’. This supports Power’s (1997, 2000) concern about differences between what the auditable records are measuring, and what matters in the job.

Megan also expressed concerns about mismatches between the official paperwork and her practices, mainly to do with learners' understandings of the forms, and 'because what we do in college doesn't quite fit what we do out there'. Her solution was to generate additional paperwork of her own, like a feedback sheet explaining the meaning of learners' scores on their initial assessments, reframing 'weaknesses' as 'areas needing support', or a simplified individual learning plan for learners on a pre-entry level course, which she then transferred onto the official plan herself. While this addressed one problem, it caused another in adding to her amount of paperwork – one of Power's (1997) unintended consequences.

Aidan and Megan described much of the paperwork as providing evidence about what they were doing, rather than fulfilling pedagogic purposes. Aidan said: 'you can have a nice course file full of these wonderful aims and objectives and things but does that bear any relation to what actually happens'. The evidence he had to provide was of various kinds, both of his activities and recording students' progress, individually and as a class. He minimised the impact of this requirement for himself and for students wherever possible. For instance, to record achievement he might 'just jot down a few things about what people have achieved' – reminiscent of Power's (2000) notion of 'creative compliance', in which ways are found to perform appropriately on the auditable measures while minimising their effect on performance.

Aidan had particular concerns about the impact of the paperwork on his relationship with students, supporting Power's (1997) claims about the effects of audit society on workplace relationships. For instance, he had to ask students direct questions on first meeting them about mental health, learning disabilities and any other concerns they had about their capacity to do the course, in order to complete their initial learner record forms. He found it difficult to ask these questions directly at this early point: 'I find if you sort of sit down it's kind of embarrassing the questions you have to ask'. The imperatives of the information

required by the system clashed with his purposes of building up a relationship with students where mutual trust evolved over time.

Other forms he said were too challenging for students to complete without a lot of support. His principal strategy for addressing this was to actively mediate between the paperwork and the students. For instance, he provided structured support to help students write down their desired outcomes by doing an activity in class where they chose outcomes from a list, or by chatting with them during outdoor activities and then filling the form in with them later. Notes from fieldnotes taken during an observation of a 'Discovering the Environment' class illustrate this point:

Aidan gave out another set of handouts with pictures, entitled: 'What I would like to learn more about this term'. The pictures included photography, wild animals, finding your way, weather, trees, and a question mark entitled 'Anything else you would like to learn about?' [...] Aidan asked the students to look at the pictures and tick in the box 'if that's something you're interested in learning about. The last one is for if there is anything else you are interested in.'

Picture worksheets gave students a way of generating their own individual learning plans, which were more accessible to them than the standard form provided by the college. Their success depends on Aidan knowing his students well enough to be able to prepare a sheet of likely options. This activity came immediately after a more open discussion of what people would like to study, giving them the space to generate their own ideas rather than being constrained by the sheet; but most of the topics students raised as possibilities were in fact represented by the pictures. Aidan took the information from students' picture forms and

transferred it onto their official learner progress record – another example of a self-generated paperwork task to address pedagogic goals.

Megan spoke more about the kinds of evidence needed to demonstrate she was doing the job. This included recording dates she received forms, all steps taken towards contacting learners (including unsuccessful calls), and taking learners' signatures each meeting. She explained this in terms of self-protection from implied threats: 'you have to cover your back'; 'if something happens I've got a fallback'; 'if somebody comes up and says well you've never contacted me [...] you've got your proof there'. This supports Power's (2000) claims that audit processes can generate mistrust and defensive practices. Again, we see unintended consequences: a feeling of constant surveillance, additional workload, and auditable measures which do not significantly improve performance.

Obligation – from where?

All participants in the study, including Aidan and Megan, described their experience of workplace paperwork using directive modality, as things that they 'have to' do. Aidan told me, 'you'd have to fill one of these in' ... 'you'd have to keep a log of that for each lesson' ... 'you have to fill in progress forms for learner support'. Megan explained 'we have to update the existing forms and we have to say who's achieved and who's withdrawn' ... 'there is a workshop planning sheet 'that I have to fill in'.

However, the source of this obligation was often unclear. Common across the college data was a vagueness about where paperwork demands were coming from and the purposes which they served. Tutors often spoke of paperwork requests as coming from an unspecified 'they' whose purposes were unknown and who were distant from the realities of teaching. This reflects Power's (1997) point that audit demands affect trust between managers and

staff, when the requirement to feed records back to management is clear, but the purposes and consequences for staff can be less so.

Aidan was fairly clear about the link between funding and paperwork and the kinds of evidence funding bodies required, because of his dual position as manager and tutor. He appreciated the need for much of the tracking information requested, ‘because if this isn’t filled in [the college] won’t get any money’. However, he was less clear when this did not relate to a course he organised directly, recommending that to understand demands linked to Learning and Skills Council funding (which funded most college activities at the time) I should talk to a manager higher up in the college. His description of a document required by the local council’s adult learning department shows a more typical detachment from the purposes of the system: ‘I think they have to have all this information to claim [...] I don’t really get involved in all that you know, I just fill it in and hand it on’.

Megan’s work was geared towards meeting (and recording) targets for the numbers of learners on courses and gaining qualifications. Most of her work was funded through the *Skills for Life* national literacy and numeracy strategy for which national targets had been set, broken down into regional targets to which every local provider had to contribute. She was not averse to working to targets, liking to have something to focus on, and understanding the relationship between meeting the targets and sustaining funding. However, targets were not always communicated clearly to her, and she said they could change without warning, ‘moving the goalposts’ and adding to her sense of uncertainty and threat.

Identity

Responses to paperwork were influenced by people’s professional identities, histories and situations. Many tutors described a feeling of their autonomy having been eroded over

time, as more and more of the paperwork had to be in particular, prescribed formats. They described this as a lack of trust in their professional capabilities. Aidan had a long history of working in adult education, relatively autonomously. He felt the mandated planning structure was too detailed, more appropriate for a new teacher than for someone with his extensive experience, supporting Power's (2000) point that audit systems are both predicated on and can create mistrust.

Megan did not interpret the paperwork as a challenge to her professional identity in the same way. Where Aidan critiqued the system, Megan interpreted her struggles to keep on top of it as personal failings. She described herself as 'really not good at paperwork', having 'awful habits', and having 'a haphazard way of doing things' – self-criticisms which were not supported by the files she showed me, which seemed to show a well organised personal system for keeping track of a very complex set of obligations. While difficulties in keeping on top of the paperwork arose for many participants, some people including Megan personalised and individualised these issues more than others, internalising the mistrust built into the audit system.

The instantiation of audit society in workplace literacy practices

So we see both Aidan and Megan described increased demands to provide an account of their work. They were both concerned with the requirement to produce auditable records – 'evidence' – which were fed back to management, for purposes which were not fully clear to them. They both, Aidan in particular, made distinctions between these auditable records and what 'really' counted in their teaching. Unintended consequences of these measures included finding ways to minimise the amounts, 'creative compliance' (Aidan); the production of additional self-generated paperwork which added to workload (Megan); damage to teacher-

student relationships (Aidan); overwhelm and self-criticism (Megan); and describing a distance between the realities of their teaching and requests from management (both).

These patterns are inflected by their specific situations. It made a difference that Aidan had management responsibilities as well as a teaching role, giving him a better understanding of the source and purpose of some of the paperwork he faced. Their professional histories shaped their responses too. Aidan drew on a clearly articulated values system from his long history of working in adult education to frame a critique of the paperwork as clashing with the purpose of the role: responding to students' needs as an autonomous professional. Megan had less experience in adult and community education, framing her concerns more in terms of ensuring that paperwork and teaching were all completed in the time she had available. When this became difficult, she tended to blame herself rather than the system.

Their experiences were also set within different national policy structures. Megan worked within a target driven framework, and was concerned with providing evidence that she had done everything she could to meet these targets. Aidan's work was not driven by externally set targets at this point, though he thought these might be introduced. The concerns he expressed were mainly around constraints on responding to the specific needs of the students he was working with.

Despite these differences, Aidan and Megan's experiences illustrate trends across the dataset more broadly. Across both sites, key issues were how possible it was to complete the paperwork; the extent to which paperwork fulfilled the purposes of the job or not; the expression of a sense of obligation to an unspecified and distant source of demands; and how far the nature of the paperwork fitted or clashed with people's descriptions of their own professional identities (Tusting 2010b). By engaging closely with people's experiences and

everyday literacy practices, this study provides concrete empirical evidence of the issues raised by Power (1997) in his analysis of audit society. Addressing this question from a linguistic ethnographic perspective has enabled more detailed focus on the meaning-making processes by means of which the audit society is instantiated and experienced in people's working lives.

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