Change in teacher professionalism in further education: a case study

A thesis submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education
at the
University of Sheffield

by

Gerard Fielding

August 2001

p 26-39
44-135

Abstract

Changes in teacher professionalism in further education: a case study

This study explores the effect of policy and funding changes in the further education (FE) sector on the nature of teacher professionalism and the general vocational curriculum. In the last decade there has been tremendous change in the FE sector. It has been argued that this has been the result of fundamental alterations in the organization and distribution of work. The consequence has been that much governmental attention has been paid to the post-school sector. The recent White Paper *Learning to Succeed* (DfEE, 1999b) has been one of a number of attempts to redress the perceived failure of the sector to provide a skilled workforce for the needs of industry. My thesis seeks to reflect upon the effects of policy and funding changes in one further education college. It concentrates on changes in general vocational education and training. It reflects on the impact of those changes upon teacher professionalism in further education.

The research took place in a college of further education using case study methods. The data for my findings are derived from participant observation techniques and semi-structured interviews with teaching staff. It utilized a qualitative critical ethnographic methodology with the aim of giving a voice to those most affected by the changes. Lecturers believe that significant changes to the sector were initiated by the Incorporation of colleges (April, 1993) and have accelerated since. The fieldwork took place in the academic year 1998-99.

The literature review part of my research found that, in order to advance the government's vision for a 'learning society', it opined that alterations in the general vocational curriculum were necessary. I believe that changes to the professional lives of college lecturers were required in order to implement that end. It is my conviction that the changes are instrumental. They are about preparing young people for the needs of industry alone. The lecturers in my study believe such changes have had a negative effect on their definitions of the concept of professionalism. Further to this, they feel that the new qualifications and the way they had to be taught, to the backdrop of, for example, cuts in class-contact hours, have had a detrimental effect on the education and training of students. These developments, they maintain, will militate against any evolution of a true 'learning society', if such a society would have the aim of producing a future citizenry (not just workers) in a 'reflective participatory democracy'.

Contents

	Page
List of Abbreviations	1
Chapter 1 Introduction	3
Justification	6
Methodology	9
Difficulties	12
Outline of thesis	16
Chapter 2 Reflecting on the Literature	18
Contextual Background	23
Change and teacher professionalism in FE	26
Differing definitions of the concept of professionalism	28
The application of market forces and the collective response to that application	39
Teacher collaboration and the reflective nature of teacher professionalism	54
Summary	60
Curricular change	61
Change and general vocational qualifications	63
Problems in the GNVQ philosophy	65
General education and vocationalism	72
General education: past and present	72
Key Skills and vocationalism	78
The 'educated person' and education 'for life'	

not just the workforce 84

Summary 87

Chapter 3 The Fieldwork: Methodology, methods and procedures 89

Introduction 89

Methodology 90

Methods, procedures and limitations 106

Summary 122

Chapter 4 Findings 124

Introduction 124

Change and its effects on teacher professionalism 126

Perceptions of the causes of change 126

'Thriving on Chaos' 127

Cost cutting and value for money 132

Flexibility 139

Perceptions of teacher professionalism 141

The changing face of teacher professionalism 146

Increased workloads 148

Extended bureaucracy 153

The colonization of teachers' time and space 155

Flexibility and the separation of conceptualization from its execution 158

Summary 159

Perceptions of change in the general

vocational curriculum 161

Change in general vocational courses 161

Change and the student 164

Progression 169

General education and vocationalism 172

Key Skills and general education 173

Should vocational education and training
include general education? 178

Lecturers' views on the 'outcomes' model 183

Lecturers' views on education for life
not just work 186

Summary 189

Review of findings 190

*Young people and the needs of
industry* 191

Teacher professionalism 193

The general vocational curriculum 197

Chapter 5 Conclusion 201

Contributions to knowledge and theory 202

Professional identities 202

The general vocational curriculum 204

Implications for FE 205

Teacher professionalism in FE 205

The general vocational curriculum 210

Final statement 213

Bibliography and References 215

Appendix A: Semi-structured Interview Questions 231

Appendix B: Schedule Of Staff Interviewees 232

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AOC	Association of Colleges
BECTA	British Educational Communications and Technology Agency
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CEF	College Employers' Forum
CBET	Competence-Based Education and Training
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CGLI	City and Guilds London Institute
CPVE	Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
EBS	Education Business Systems
Edexcel	Formerly BTEC and London Board
ERA	Education Reform Act
FE	Further Education
FEDA	Further Education Development Agency
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FEU	Further Education Unit
FHEA	Further and Higher Education Act
GCE	General Certificate in Education
GCSE	General Certificate in Secondary Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
HND	Higher National Diploma

IT	Information Technology
LEA	Local Education Authority
LEAF	Lecturers Advice and Action Fellowship
MGL	Main Grade Lecturer
MIS	Management Information Systems
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NATFHE	National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
NCVQ	National Council for Vocational Qualification
ND	National Diploma
NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
NWRAC	North West Regional Authority Council
PC	Performance Criteria
QCA	Qualifications Curriculum Authority
SMT	Senior Management Team
SPOC	Students' Perceptions of College
TEC	Training and Enterprise Council
TDLB	Training and Development Lead Body
TVEI	Technical and Vocational Education Initiative
UCAS	Universities and College Admissions
Ufi	University for Industry
YTS	Youth Training Scheme

Chapter One

Introduction

My thesis examines the impact of recent policy and funding changes in the further education sector. It is a qualitative, critical ethnographic case study. The research was executed in the FE (Further Education) college at which I have taught for the last seventeen years. A list of all the abbreviations used in this thesis can be found on Page 1. To protect the college's identity I have given it the pseudonym of Blakewater College. This introductory chapter is divided into four sections. The first (pp6-9) will attempt to justify my choice of topic. In the second (pp9-11) I briefly outline my methodology. The third (pp12-15) outlines some of the difficulties that altered the scope of my work. Finally, the chapter concludes (pp16-17) with an outline of the ensuing chapters.

My research data is derived from both my experiences as a participant observer over a number of years at Blakewater College, and in-depth semi-structured interviews with lecturing staff. The lecturing staff involved in my study are associated with some of the general vocational courses on which I teach. My contribution to these courses is either to provide the Common/Core/Key Skills element, or, more often recently, the Industrial Studies or Industry and Society elements. In the interests of clarity I usually refer, throughout the thesis, to the former as Key Skills. There is little difference between them with regard to the

skills taught. The skills are spelt out later in the thesis. The difference is largely either a historical one or else it depends on the awarding body. Thus, for example, BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council) assesses Common Skills, and CGLI (City and Guilds London Institute) assesses Core Skills. GNVQ (General National Vocational Qualifications) assessed Core Skills until recently, but now assesses Key Skills. Perhaps the main difference is the recent introduction of end tests for the Key Skills of Communication, Application of Number and IT.

The thesis, in the first place, explores the effects of changes on the professionalism of lecturing staff. Secondly, it examines modifications to the general vocational curriculum. It must be pointed out, at this stage, that when FE lecturers refer to 'vocational' courses they mean general vocational courses. When they are referring to vocational courses they use the term 'NVQ'. Consequently, when the term vocational is used in this thesis reference is being made to general vocational courses. Further to this, within these two major themes my work considers changes in the provision of 'general education' on vocational courses. Finally, I hope my thesis will throw some light on whether such alterations can be seen as purely instrumental to preparing young people for the world of work; or whether they can be seen as aiding the development of what Held (1987, pp254-264) has termed a future 'participatory democracy'. In such a democracy the citizen would be encouraged to participate 'actively in political and civil life' (p255). Clearly, as Held proceeds to indicate, a 'participatory society' of this kind would necessitate 'the formation of a

knowledgeable citizenry capable of taking a sustained interest in the governing process' (p262). Thus, following Gutmann (1987):

> It follows that...society...must educate all educable children to be capable of participating in collectively shaping their society (p39).

The time-scale I concentrate upon in my study is between seven and twelve years. This is because, in both my observations of lecturing staff and my interviews with them, a few (three from the eighteen interviewed) saw the crucial point at which the changes really commenced as being with the introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). It was this Act that transferred financial powers from the Local Education Authorities 'to the governing body of the institution' (DES, 1988, Section 139). Thus FE colleges were delegated control over their own budgets. Notwithstanding this, the majority of the lecturing staff involved in my case study firmly believed that the real changes only occurred following the Incorporation of the colleges in April 1993. This Incorporation occurred as a result of the Further and Higher Education Act (FHEA) of 1992. This Act equipped all colleges with the authority 'to provide further or higher education' without reference to the LEAs (Local Education Authority) (DES, 1992, Section 19). The same Act set up the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), and this body took over the funding role of the LEAs. The FEFC (1992) Circular (92/01) clearly emphasizes the separation of the LEAs from the colleges by asserting that following Incorporation they would be 'autonomous organizations' (paragraph 31). Nevertheless, this new funding body immediately set up a new funding methodology that contradicted their assertions regarding

the new autonomy of colleges. The main purpose of this new funding body was to 'reduce overall costs', 'penalize colleges for poor retention rates', and 'link some of the budget to the qualifications obtained' (Staff News, Dec., 1995). Consequently, the majority of the lecturers at Blakewater College see 1993 as the date from which moves to reduce costs in the FE sector began to bite.

Justification

My justification for my topic area is, in the first instance, because I believe it to be highly important. Arguably, 'lifelong learning' is at the heart of present government's policy-making. This commitment is often interpreted as meaning preparation of young people for the world of work. The centrality of post-16 education and training to Labour's New Deal is evidence of this (DfEE, 1998; Hodgson and Spours, 1999, p60). Moreover, as Carr (1993, p221) contends, and I would extend this to FE:

> the question of how schools should prepare their pupils for the world of work has been the subject of a continuous political debate.

This debate can be traced back to, at least, the middle of the last century. Thus, Chartists such as William Lovett argued that 'the ultimate aim of education is the happiness of the individual'. Education for Lovett was about producing 'intelligent, moral, and happy members of society' (Simon, 1974, pp258-259 citing Lovett). Clearly such an exposition of the aims of education is a far cry from the thinking that led up to the introduction of a national education system in

1870. The dominance of the 'world of work' as the prime aim of education in this period is demonstrated in the growing support for 'a public system of elementary education' by British employers. Such a 'system' would, in their words, prepare 'the wild "young ostriches"' for the world of work. It would also, they believed, help the British economy to compete with countries such as Germany (ibid. p359).

These debates echo down the years to recent debates concerning general education and vocationalism. Thus, for example, Turner (1996, p16) argues that:

> general education in the vocational area has always been something of a compromise, giving an educational gloss to vocationalism which is usually no more than training and - in today's economic climate - usually for unskilled jobs.

Further to this, he goes on to assert that Core Skills (now termed Key Skills), are seen by many as a vehicle for general education. However, he goes on to say that they are 'lamentable' and 'vapid' - so much so that they cannot be:

> subverted into discussions of philosophy or dialectics similar to those which the worker activists practised at the turn of the century (ibid.).

In contrast, writers like Waugh (1995a, p20) see Core Skills as a 'form of General Education core in vocational - and in particular in industrial courses in FE'. Clearly the debate over general education and vocationalism is as hotly debated and important as ever it was.

My second reason for seeing my topic as highly important is the effects that recent changes in education and training have had on the FE sector, and in particular on the professionalism of the teachers concerned. The 'outcomes-

based' model of learning has its foundations built upon competence-based education and training (CBET). Jessup (1991) asserts this will entail a 'cultural shift' (p98) that will necessitate 'changes in attitude by staff in colleges if the new model of learning is to be fully successful' (p105). However, this model is rejected by all the FE lecturers in my case study and by educational writers such as Hyland (1994). Thus, it has been argued that:

> CBET has nothing to offer. Not only does it patently fail to provide what is required in the areas of learning, knowledge, experience and values, there is every indication it thwarts and militates against the basic principles of experiential learning and the ongoing development of professional practice (Hyland, 1994, p99).

In addition there is much debate, not only about what a teacher should be doing, but also about the meaning of the term professional.

Thirdly, I see my topic as important because the attacks upon general education are extremely undemocratic. For one thing, at all stages the changes have been imposed from above. Moreover, they place main-grade lecturers (MGLs) and the communities they serve at the bottom of an undemocratic hierarchical structure. This, far from empowering the lecturer, leaves her powerless and isolated - witness, on the one hand, the new 'self assessment' plans which mean that lecturers are assessed by their managers (The Lecturer, 1995, July). On the other hand, as NATFHE (1992) argues, the changes militate against the development of education and training that is 'genuinely open and accessible to the whole community, and meets its needs' (p8). Moreover those needs should be:

> based on a philosophy which asserts that all over the age of compulsory education have continuing legitimate educational needs relating to work, leisure and self-development (ibid.).

The market-related changes of recent years that have geared education and training to the 'world of work' have led to the decline of many leisure and developmental courses that FE provided in the past (The Lecturer, 1998). Moreover, as I argue later in this thesis, they have curtailed any possibility of providing any real general education on general vocational courses.

Finally, I see my topic as developing my professional interests. In particular I see it as enhancing my work on the Ed.D and my MA in Educational and Social Research (Fielding, 1996) over the last eight years. Thus my thesis can be seen as a longitudinal study of the college in which I work. Consequently, where relevant, selected use is made of my 1996 interview data.

The questions I hope my study will address are:

1. how the changes have affected teacher professionalism
2. how changes in qualifications have affected the general vocational curriculum.

My belief is that the changes are purely instrumental. They are about preparing young people for the needs of industry alone.

Methodology

In common parlance research is often seen as following that of the natural science tradition. Thus, educational research methods are often portrayed as

straightforward, and predominantly involving the utilization of quantitative 'statistical techniques' and the deployment of an 'experimental and quasiexperimental design' methodology (De Landsheere, 1993, p14).

Within this natural science tradition 'objectivity' is paramount. It is as Eisner (1993) argues, 'one of the most cherished ideals' (p49). Yet, as Walford (1991) postulates, very often with the natural sciences 'scientific "facts" are not "discovered", but are the results of an extended process of social construction' (p1). Consequently, even in the field of natural science:

> research is frequently not carefully planned in advance and concluded according to set procedures, but often centres around compromises, short-cuts, hunches and serendipitous occurrences (ibid.).

A part of attempts to give educational research the stamp of approval of 'objectivity' is the idea that what is described is 'reality in its raw, unadulterated form' (Phillips, 1993, p58). For his part, Eisner (1993, p50) contends that the result of this is that writers often attempt to give their work 'objective' respectability by de-personalizing their 'language in order to create the illusion' that they had 'no hand in their work'. Thus, they refer to 'the author', 'this work' or, indeed, 'this thesis' (ibid.). Consequently, the first person pronoun is used throughout this thesis. Nevertheless, this is not to say that educational research should not strive for objectivity. It is my belief that all objectivity should be seen as problematic and, following Eisner (1993, p55), 'transactive'. In addition, all research, both qualitative and quantitative, should, as Phillips (1993) argues, 'be objective, in the sense that it has been opened up to criticism' (p70). Thus, I hope my thesis will be objective in this sense.

The research methods applied in this thesis are those of qualitative, reflexive, critical, ethnographic case study of the college in which I work. What is more, this case study attempts to, in the words of Jordan and Yeomans (1995), 'present' a 'bottom-up' approach that gives a voice to the 'practitioners' in my workplace. Thus, I hope to reveal an improved understanding of 'the situations in which the [changed] practices [of teaching and learning] are carried out' (ibid., p402, citing Kemmis). In brief, underpinning the methodology employed in the thesis is a firm belief, following Carr (1995), that all research 'involves a commitment to some educational philosophy' (p88). Moreover, for Carr there is a close link between educational philosophy and values, so much so that 'they are an indispensable requirement for the development of any genuinely educational science' (p98). Thus, I, and those whom Carspecken (1996) terms the 'criticalists':

> find contemporary society to be unfair, unequal and both subtly and overtly oppressive for many people. We do not like it, and we want to change it (p7).

Further to this, following Apple (1996) in his *Series Editor's Introduction* to Carspecken's work above, I believe this research approach necessitates a 'repositioning' of the researcher to 'the world from below' (p.ix). Thus 'the perspective of those who are not dominant' is the focus of this thesis. This is clearly, as Carspecken would argue, an 'overtly political' positioning that in my case study reflects upon the impact of policy and funding changes on FE lecturers, and the general vocational curriculum. My research methodological stance is discussed in much more detail in Chapter Three.

Difficulties

Originally I had hoped that my thesis would examine the effects of change on the interface between education and work. Consequently, I intended to solicit information from all those who I believed were affected. Thus, I planned, in the first place, to study the effects of the changes on college lecturers. Clearly this would be a huge task, and one which would be beyond the scope of this thesis. Consequently, I narrowed my focus to that of studying the effects of the changes upon lecturers of general vocational education and training, and more specifically the effects on three vocational areas in which I teach. In the second place, I wished to see in what ways the changes were affecting employers. Thus, I expected to examine the workplaces that are closely linked to the vocational courses that I had chosen to study. Finally, in the third place, I hoped to interview and to carry out a questionnaire upon the students on these same courses. Thus, my original idea was to study the staff, employers and students involved with:

1. BTEC ND and HND Telecommunications and their sponsors Nortel
2. BTEC ND and HND Textiles and one of the major sites where the students complete their work-placements
3. GNVQ 'Advanced' Science and one of the sites where the students complete their work-placements.

I thought that following such a study I would obtain an accurate picture of the effects of policy and funding changes in my case study college.

In January 1998 I anticipated few major problems in carrying out the above study. I had expected difficulties with, for instance, interpretation of the data, but I believed that the difficulties I foresaw were surmountable. Unfortunately, I was wrong. I had thought very early on that access into workplaces might present problems, but was initially cheered by an approach from one of the companies I wished to study. Nortel, a multinational company with close links to Blakewater College's Telecommunications courses, approached the course leader of the HND Telecommunications (GC), and suggested that the lecturers who taught on the course should go on work placements with the company during the summer period. They particularly pointed out that they believed that it was essential that the person who taught Industrial Studies (myself) should be involved. Nortel felt that I should have some experience of a modern Telecommunications company in order to make my teaching more relevant to today's world. The Telecommunications course leader informed me that he would organize this for me for the summer of 1998. I was optimistic that whilst at Nortel I would be able to carry out my proposed study.

My optimism was misplaced. By the summer term the Telecommunications course leader was clearly having problems organizing any of the work placements. Nevertheless, he assured me that Nortel were 'keen', and all would be organized for the summer. However, in July I received an e-mail from the course leader suggesting that it would perhaps be better if I arranged my own placement, and I was given a name and a telephone number

to contact. I rang the number expecting to come to agreement as to the time and length of the placement. However, the response was rather different. I was asked why I wanted to come into their company for a work placement. The original contact, who had initiated the moves to improve links between the company and the college, had 'moved on'; the new person was less keen. Two years later no work placements have been arranged, and the course team has given up considering the possibility of updating our knowledge of modern business techniques.

During the same period I had also tried first on my own, then through the college and finally with the help of the local TEC (Training and Enterprise Council) to obtain local work placements. Thus, attempts were made to arrange to go into a textile company, and a pharmaceutical company. This was all to no avail. The closest I came to obtaining a work placement was with a local textile company. However, this was in July 1999, and the local TEC who were trying to organize the placement finally informed me that the company had told them that because during July and August many of their staff were on annual leave they could not cater for an 'outsider' in their workplace. They used the same excuse in December 1999, and at this time I decided that it would perhaps be more useful to concentrate my energies on my research in the college. Incidentally, all this caused much amusement when I outlined to colleagues what had occurred. This was because we had constantly been told over the previous decade that we were inefficient, took far too long for our holidays, and that, as a result, we should model ourselves on industry. Meanwhile, here was industry showing itself

to be inefficient and unable to cope with its commitments due to its long holidays. One lecturer pointed out that industry would perhaps be more efficient if it were to model itself on education.

Unfortunately, the fact that I was no longer including industry in my study altered the direction of my thesis to a large extent. Thus, my original research design of employing a three-pronged approach to the changes in the interface between education and work utilizing the experience of lecturing staff, employers and students was no longer an option. Moreover, the thesis had by this stage become concentrated on the teacher professionals and the general vocational curriculum. This became the focus of the thesis. Consequently, it became apparent that the experiences of the students were now redundant, and their inclusion in the finished thesis would have seemed tokenistic. Thus, the thesis concentrates upon the effects of policy and funding changes on teacher professionalism and the general vocational curriculum.

A further constraint on the scope of this thesis is that the changes introduced by Curriculum 2000 are, although mentioned, not discussed in any great detail. Thus, the recent changes to Key Skills are not a central feature of the thesis. The reason for this is that, at the time of my research, these changes were still in the process of being developed. Moreover, although the college had been involved in piloting some of the new Key Skill tests, there was, during the period of my research, much confusion amongst lecturers as to exactly what the changes would mean.

Outline of thesis

In the next chapter I reflect upon and analyse the literature related to my thesis topic area. Thus, in the first place, I examine in some detail the literature on professionalism. Secondly, I study the effects of changes to the general vocational curriculum.

In Chapter Three I set out a detailed exposition of my methodology and the research methods employed. Thus, in this chapter I discuss my methodology and its underpinning values. Here I reveal any bias that could impact on the findings. In addition, I scrutinize the difficulties in carrying out qualitative research. Further to this, I discuss my main research methods. They were participant observation and semi-structured interview questions. Finally I reveal the limitations to be found in my study.

In Chapter Four I present and discuss my Findings. The chapter is divided into two major sections. In the first I reflect upon the effects of change upon the professionalism of the college lecturers in my case study. Here I briefly assess their perceptions of the external causes of what has been occurring in the sector. I proceed to discuss their understanding of the concept of teacher professionalism. Next I scrutinize aspects of the changing face of teacher professionalism. The aspects I explore are, for example, the de-professionalization arising from the changed expectations of college lecturers and their work. In the second section I deliberate over perceptions of change in the FE general vocational curriculum. Here I start by examining the views of

college lecturers on the effects of change in vocational courses. I move on to discuss their perceptions of the effects of the changes upon the debate surrounding general education and vocationalism. Throughout the Findings chapter I relate the discussion to the existing literature discussed in Chapter Two. Further to this, I reflect upon the methods set out in Chapter Three.

Finally, in my concluding chapter I analyse those Findings in order to assess the impact of the changes on lecturing staff and upon the general vocational curriculum. Here I discuss the contributions my work makes to knowledge and theory. In addition, I assess the implications of my study, and make recommendations regarding future policy and practice. However, as mentioned above, the following chapter reviews the literature that is extant in my subject area.

Chapter Two

Reflecting on the Literature

It is arguable that post-16 education and training is no longer the much ignored, and indeed, neglected 'Cinderella' of the education system that it has been so often portrayed as in the past (see Gleeson, 1989, p3). Consequently, there is now a burgeoning plethora of literature examining, analysing and reflecting upon the FE sector.

Any work that sets out to scrutinize the literature exploring change in the sector must, by definition, be partial. This is because:

> Not only is further education changing but change to further education is occurring at an ever increasing rate. For many people employed in further education the experience of change is unsettling (Reeves, 1995, p1).

Some have argued that this change in the sector has been cultural, and have argued for the need for 'changing employees as people' in order to overcome what they see as the 'slack practices of the past' (Gorringe, 1994, Chap. 1 passim). As a result, colleges should, following Peeke (1999, p8) 'embrace...unpredictability'. It has been argued that the impetus behind the perceived need for changing colleges, or, indeed, the changing of what Gorringe terms 'college culture' lies, in the main, outside of FE colleges. Thus, for instance, the apparent need for cultural change can be found in the political, social and economic contexts that the sector now finds itself facing (see for

example Ahier, Cosin and Hales, 1996, passim; Pring, 1995, passim). For Green (1997a) the seismic effects of 'globilization' are that:

> the role of the nation state is now changing, and with it the place of education (p1).

Clearly it would be impossible in a 50,000 word thesis to analyse, and reflect upon, all the literature that has been written on *all* the effects of *all* the changes that have occurred so rapidly in recent years within the sector. As a result, as pointed out in Chapter One, the thesis focuses upon the effects of the changes to the professionalism of college lecturers and curricular change to general vocational education and training.

It would also be a gross misrepresentation of the facts to imply that the phenomenon of change is purely a recent experience. Mansell (1991) in his analysis of the 'role' of the FE sector notes that the 'complexity' of the post-16 sector can be traced back to the nineteenth century. He goes on to point out that, as far as FE is concerned, those 'developments were crisis-led, uncoordinated and patchy' (p113). To many in the sector today the 'uncoordinated and patchy' response in the nineteenth century to, for example, the 'competitive deficiency exposed by the 1851 Great Exhibition' (ibid.) seems familiar when consideration is given to the response to political, social, and economic upheavals occurring today to the sector. Indeed, Mansell concludes by arguing that for the:

> 16-19 school leaving population...FE provision...remains as crisis-led as it was a century ago (ibid., pp121-122).

Consequently, as has already been indicated, the sector had long been seen, in Mansell's words, as an 'under-appreciated' and 'low status' Cinderella. In contrast her Higher Education 'sister' sector had expanded rapidly following the Robbins Report of 1963. The report proposed 'an expansion from the present 216,000 to 560,000 places by 1980-81' (in May and Greer, 1968, p54). For her part the schools sector sister saw much change in the same period. Thus, for example, there was the raising of the school leaving age in 1972 following the Crowther Report of 1959 (ibid., pp46-48), and the massive expansion of comprehensive education in the 1960s. Meanwhile, during the same period the FE sector appeared uncared-for and unchanging. Thus, FE is truly a 'sister' deserving the sobriquet 'Cinderella'.

Moreover, this is the perception of those who worked in the sector during the period in question. One of those interviewed, during my master's degree research of 1996, who commenced teaching in the sector (and indeed at my case-study college) in 1969, when asked about change in the sector, started by reminiscing on the start of his career:

> Life was much simpler in those days. Any changes that came along seemed to have little effect on that life. In fact, I can't really remember any. Oh, perhaps when we became a sixth form college in 1984, that changed things a bit. (EM)

The combination of local 'sixth-forms with FE colleges to form tertiary colleges that provided both academic and vocational courses' is just one example of change in the recent past (Green and Lucas, 1999a, p21). Another was the introduction of the Youth Opportunities Programme in the late 1970s, and later

the Youth Training Scheme of the early 1980s to cater for rising youth unemployment. However, this long-serving college lecturer maintained in 1996 that these initiatives had 'little effect' on the college lecturer's life. He certainly could not say this today, as this thesis attempts to demonstrate.

Arguably, central to the more successful attempts to introduce fundamental change to the lives of those involved in the sector has been the introduction of market relations. This has meant that much of the control over what occurs in the sector has been removed from college providers, and placed firmly in the hands of, for example, employers. Thus, Pring (1995, p35) postulates that:

> With regard to further education and vocational training, it has been the explicit aim of the government to place this much more in the hands of the consumer (the employer) 'who knows best' and thus to move it from the control of the provider (the college).

It is the purpose of this chapter to examine and reflect upon the effects of that fundamental government aim upon the professionalism of college lecturers and curricular changes to general vocational education and training. As a result, the structure of this literature review is as follows: in the first section (pp23-26) I briefly summarize the contextual background to the changes in the sector. The second (pp26-60) assesses the published research concerning the effects of policy and funding changes on lecturers such as those in my case study college. Many of the respondents here felt that the changes had made it more difficult for them to carry out their professional duties. Clearly, this section will critically examine some of the varying definitions of the concept of professionalism.

However, the focus of the discussion on professionalism has been mainly on the schools sector. As a result, as Elliott (1996a, p24)) has indicated, the debate has been 'predominantly school-based'. Consequently, this literature review will examine some of the key texts within that debate and relate it, where relevant, to the post-schools sector. This will be coupled with an analysis of the growing literature on FE teacher professionalism.

In the final section (pp61-87) I will analyse and reflect upon the literature that has been written on the effects of the changes to general vocational education and training. Here I will examine the literature on curriculum change, and in particular the new emphasis on 'outcomes' as the 'ultimate criteria' (Wolf, 1995, p91, citing Norcini and Shea) that is at the heart of GNVQs. It must be noted here that both GNVQs and NVQs are, as Ecclestone (2000, p556, Note 8) intimates, both 'outcome-based'. Consequently, relevant literature on NVQs is analysed in this thesis. Clearly, I will be concentrating on the effects of policy and funding changes on general vocational education and training in this section. This was a subject that inspired some of the longest responses to my interview questions which are analysed in Chapter Four. In this section I will reflect upon the debates around general education and vocationalism. Each of the two major sections, professionalism and curricular change, will conclude with a summary.

The Contextual Background

Writers such as Bailey (1989) have argued that the contextual background to the changes has been economic. In the press release to his White Paper *'Learning to Succeed'*, Education and Employment Secretary David Blunkett asserts that:

> It is clear that a highly skilled workforce is essential for prosperity. Employers and the nation need skilled and adaptable men and women to stay competitive in the modern economy (DfEE, 1999a, pp1-2, 8th July).

Moreover, as Avis et al (1997, p174) assert, organizations such as the CBI believe that 'vocational education' must 'serve the needs of employers and the national economy'. For her part, Jonathan (1983) has pointed out that today one of the 'major assumptions' around 'Society and the Good Life' is that:

> where there are choices to be made, the criteria for evaluation are economic (p4).

However, as she goes on to contend, 'social situations' are far too 'complex' for such clear evaluation. Consequently, for instance:

> Requests for cost-justifications of particular curriculum content require knowledge we do not possess and prescience we could never have as well as evaluative agreement nowhere in sight (p5).

Clearly, it follows that it is no easy task to forecast the future skill needs of industry.

Notwithstanding this, for Bailey (1989, passim), the 'economic utility model of education' is in ascendance. It was strongly supported by the then Conservative government, and is clearly supported by the present government

judging by Blunkett's press release discussed earlier. Moreover, it is as a result of the application of this model over recent years that education itself has become a commodity. Thus, competition became the byword of all the sectors of education. This competition is promoted by the 'paraphernalia of testing, exam results and league tables' (Gillard, 1997, p87). Whilst Gillard was analysing the impact of competition on the school system, I believe that his argument about the 'paraphernalia' that gives sustenance to competition holds true for the FE sector. Thus, FEFC Circulars, soon after this quango was set up, organized a timetable setting out when 'comparative tables' 'about examination successes and qualifications achieved by students' should be published (FEFC, 1993).

Clearly, the above argument assumes a 'consensus' around Bailey's (1989) 'economic utility model'. In addition, this purely instrumental view of education is presented by politicians such as Blunkett as uncontroversial and as accepted by everyone. Thus, in Bailey's (1989) words:

> Running through all the discussions of the economic utility model of education is an unspoken assumption of consensus (p221).

We are all assumed to be in support of the application of the market to education. Following Jonathan (1983):

> Like freedom, equality, fresh air and fun, these are things we are all in favour of...(p3).

In the same way, as Bailey (1989) indicates, we are all assumed to be in favour of competition, and:

> Education, in this model, becomes a commodity both for the individual person and for society as a whole, to be assessed like any other commodity in terms of its profitability or usefulness (p224).

This is so much so that, as one of the lecturers I interviewed during the research for this thesis remarked:

> I used to interview prospective students and try to assess whether they could cope with the course. Nowadays, they interview me and compare my course with that provided by the supermarket, I mean college, down the road (WQ).

Obviously, the pretended slip over the word 'supermarket' was said to emphasize to me the change that had occurred with regard to interviewing practices following the application of the market model to the sector.

Thus, it is questionable that a consensus exists around the economic utility model. Perhaps the wry humour demonstrated by the lecturer above emphasizes this. The results of such competition can be highly detrimental to both society and the individual. Consequently, as Bailey goes on to point out:

> Some people would favour a much more cooperative society and much more encouragement of cooperation in schools (1989, pp226-227).

Such 'cooperation' will be discussed in more detail later in this thesis. However, suffice it to mention at this moment that a recent FEFC Circular seems to advocate such 'cooperation' in the FE sector. The Circular notes that:

> there have been important statements in recent months about the need for increased collaboration and the avoidance of wasteful duplication in post-16 education and training (FEFC, 1998, p2).

Clearly, such a move would require some of the 'cooperation' advocated by such as Bailey. However, perhaps it takes time for such good news to filter down and influence enough college Principals to make a difference. It must be noted that in 1999 many Principals were still commenting that fears of 'competition from

schools and other colleges' were seen as one of 'the most significant risks to the achievement of their plans' (FEFC, 1999, p5).

The linkage between education and training and the economic needs of the nation has for over a decade been highly influential on the sector. Indeed Blunkett's assertion, cited at the beginning of this section, that 'a highly skilled workforce is essential for prosperity' echoes the Confederation of British Industry's (CBI) 1989 report on vocational education and training which advocated a 'quantum leap' in order '[t]o maintain and improve Britain's position in an increasingly competitive world' (in Jessup, 1991, Appendix B, p174). As a result the same body argued that 'nothing short of a skills revolution is required' (ibid.).

In the same document the CBI proceeds to contend that this 'skills revolution' requires:

> the creation of effective training markets in which the customers - individuals and their employers - exercise more influence over education and training provision (ibid).

Clearly this marketization of the FE sector was bound to have a major impact upon the working life of college lecturing staff. This is the subject of the following section.

Change and teacher professionalism in FE

Much has been written on teacher professionalism. As a result what follows must be a selective analysis of the concept. The analysis will be divided

into three parts. In the first (pp28-39) I will reflect upon some of the differing views of what is meant by the term professionalism. For, following Elliott (1996a, p27), there is much 'slippage' in the use of the term 'professional'. Nevertheless, I found in my research at Blakewater College that the lecturers interviewed saw the concept of professionalism as highly important. However, it is perhaps significant that there was little agreement on a single definition of the concept.

In the second part (pp39-53) I will examine how those who speak for the language of business have attempted to apply market forces to education, and in particular to the FE sector. As a result this section will examine the phenomenon of what Braverman (1974, passim) has termed 'the division of labour' and 'de-skilling'. Thus, in this part I will tentatively propose that at least one of the ideological groups defining professionalism is endeavouring, with respect to educational practice, to separate the conceptualising aspects of education from the more routinized aspects. It is arguable that this 'de-skilling' of the teaching profession is a major aspect of the proletarianization of teachers. The section will therefore analyse issues such as the social class of teachers, whether they have become involved in trade unionism, and the extent to which they have resisted the changes to the profession.

The final part of this section (pp54-60) will discuss what is perhaps the more positive alternative to the employers' market-oriented definitions of professionalism. This alternative would envisage a 'collaborative' approach linked to an emphasis on the reflective nature of the concept. For, in the latter case, following Carr (1989), teaching is:

> a reflective profession in which professional values, knowledge and practice are inextricably linked (p17).

Many of the responses to my interview questions clearly demonstrated that the changes, for instance the already mentioned 'marketization' of the sector, were militating against such a definition of professionalism.

Differing definitions of the concept of professionalism

Many writers have analysed the concept of professionalism. Yet in spite of all this inquiry one representative has argued that:

> 'professionalism' is a tired old concept which could well be left behind. What is needed is a fresh way of looking at teachers' work...through which educators can move 'beyond professionalism' (Grundy, 1989, p79).

Nevertheless, I would argue that there is still some mileage left in this 'tired old concept'. In the FE sector at least, professionalism is once more being used to bludgeon the teachers into accepting inferior pay and conditions (*The Lecturer*, 1999, July, p1). Consequently, teachers have responded with their own definition of professionalism, one more in keeping with education as a service not as a business. Thus, as Avis (1994, p63) points out:

> Teacher professionalism is once again on the agenda and it is being used as an effective weapon against Conservative education policy.

For Avis this would necessitate, for example, a 'reclaiming of professional altruism' and a return to a 'service ethos' (p65). For their part, Randle and Brady (1997, pp126-129) in their study of a 'large further education college' note that there are 'conflicting paradigms' at work in the FE sector. Thus, on the one hand,

with managerialism there is an emphasis on 'efficiency' and 'value for taxpayers' money' (p128). On the other hand, teacher professionalism emphasises a 'public service ethos' within which the 'prime concern is to provide "quality educational opportunities for students"' (p127). Recent governments, both Conservative and Labour, have striven to impose a version of professionalism that is market oriented. This version is analysed later in the chapter. Avis (1994) goes on to point out that recent changes in the school sector, namely testing, the National Curriculum and league tables, can be 'construed as an attack on teacher professionalism' (p63). In the case of FE there has been an 'attack on professionalism' following the impact of heightened:

> concerns with efficiency, effectiveness, customer responsiveness and in allied issues surrounding performance-related pay, appraisal and accountability (Avis, 1996, p110).

Clearly, both sides of the educational debate, that is those who would define professionalism in terms of 'service' and those who would wish it to respond to market requirements, see that definitions of professionalism are of paramount importance. Furthermore, a number of writers in the field of education argue that any analysis of teachers' work must take into account the concept of professionalism. One such writer argues that:

> In the search for new paradigms in educational studies, the meaning and present state of teacher professionalism will surely be a central theme (Kogan, 1989, p135).

It is also clear that professionalism holds different and often conflicting meanings for the diverse groups looking at teachers and their work. It can be seen that to truly understand teacher behaviour would require rigorous analysis of those

differing definitions. The literature on this subject is huge. Consequently, what ensues has to be highly selective in order to keep the thesis to the required length. What follows will concentrate on the literature that is relevant to the focus of this thesis.

In her work on *Professional Development in Schools,* Dean (1991) cites Hoyle as defining:

> a profession as having the following characteristics :
> 1. Practice is supported by theory.
> 2. There is a long period of training.
> 3. There is a code of ethics governing behaviour.
> 4. There is a high degree of autonomy.
> 5. There is responsibility for the admission of members (p38).

She also refers to professionalism as:

> the attitude towards professional practice among members of an occupation and the degree of skill they bring to it (p38).

Similarly, Carr and Kemmis (1986, p8) tease out the characteristics attributed to the professional, and come up with a list of desirable characteristics to define the true professional. For these writers, there are four major characteristics which differentiate the professions from other occupations. The first characteristic is that 'the methods and procedures' of its practitioners are underpinned by a 'body of theoretical knowledge'. The second feature is that its practitioners are deeply concerned with and committed to 'the well-being of their clients'. The third is that for an occupation to be truly professional the practitioners must be free from external pressure in their dealings with clients. Consequently a significant degree of autonomy is necessary. Finally, a true profession must have the right to control how it is 'administered', and how its

members are made accountable for their actions. As with the legal and medical professions, this would involve the right to select, discipline and make accountable its own members without any outside interference.

Flexner, in Ozga and Lawn (1981), in his attempt to ascertain whether social workers are true professionals, isolates six characteristics for distinguishing professions from other occupations. For Flexner, professions, in the first place, are distinguished by the fact that 'professional activity' is 'basically intellectual' and, consequently involves a high degree of 'social responsibility'. Secondly, the work of the professional suggests a long learning process and is not based on routine, mundane tasks. Thirdly, their work is not just about academic theory, as it also implies a high degree of practical activity. Consequently, in the fourth place, this practical activity entails a taught technique. This, for Flexner, necessitates 'professional education'. Fifthly, it involves vigorous internal organization, and, finally, the professionals' activity is governed by a high degree of altruism, in that they see themselves 'as working for some aspect of the general good' (pp12-13).

Clearly, the above examples of writings that attempt to set out the defining characteristics of the concept of professionalism can be seen as having much in common. Ozga and Lawn (1981, pp11-22) would see them as conforming to what they call '*the trait approach*' to the analysis of the professional. They go on to point out that these '*devotees*' of the trait approach are also very similar to each other in that the traditional professions, especially law and medicine, score 'highly' on such lists of defining characteristics. However, this could be because

this is where 'the devotees' of such methods start. Thus, they commence by examining the medical and legal professions, merely because in popular parlance they have long been assumed to be true professions. They assess what is characteristic of them, and then ascribe those characteristics to other occupations as typical of the true profession. Arguably, occupations, such as engineering and teaching, score less highly on these characteristics and, therefore, are seen as less professional. It must be asked if such methods of defining the concept of professionalism are valid, or whether Elliott (1996a, p25) is correct in arguing that they are 'a reflection of the value position adopted by members of leading professions...'. Arguably, such methods owe much to a structural-functionalist sociology that is demonstrably inappropriate. Perhaps if the teacher occupation, not the medical and legal, had been originally chosen for analysis of that which represented the truly professional, then a completely different list of characteristics would have evolved. These *'professional'* characteristics would then perhaps have been used to measure other occupations against to see if *they* were truly professional.

Since ERA (DES, 1988) the ideology of the New Right has been in control, and has set the agenda with *its* definition of professionalism. Woods and Jeffrey (1996) argue that this involves a new 'managerialist discourse' within which 'responsibility and accountability' are transformed into 'functions of state surveillance' (p38). In the FE context Gorringe (1993) argues for:

> the emergence of a new cadre of professional FE staff whose loyalty is to their college and its success (p5).

For her part Gee (1995, p8) contends that there is a need for 'a more flexible and cost-effective workforce' in FE. Gleeson and Shain (1999) in their case study of a post-Incorporated college, indicate that the core aims of the new 'managerial priorities' (p554) are concerned with:

> injecting greater market and managerial realism into an area of public sector education seen to be carrying excess fat... (p555).

Clearly the new 'managerialist discourse' extends to the post-16 sector. Arguably, the new Labour government does not appear to have had much impact on the hegemonic supremacy of New Right thinking. Consequently, an analysis that takes this fact into account needs to be developed. For, clearly, the definitions of professionalism set out above take little account of the point that:

> [t]here is a politics revolving around the constitution of knowledge, the construction of the learner and even of society (Avis, 1994, pp67-68).

Moreover, for Avis (ibid.) the 'social struggles' which envelop education are almost non-existent. Following Avis, teacher professionalism must take account of these 'social struggles', and the 'diverse interests that focus on education' (p70). There is no 'easy consensus over education' (ibid). Yet, as a result of change in education, imposed by governments imbued with the philosophy of the New Right ideologues, whose version of the concept of professionalism differs from any discussed so far, there is, for Avis, a politics here that must be taken into account.

Following on from this, as Hatcher (1994) has pointed out, the central feature that:

> differentiates different types of professionalism is how they relate to the state (p55).

Hatcher goes on to postulate 'a spectrum of ideologies of professionalism'. This spectrum ranges from an *'incorporated professionalism'* to a *'class-struggle professionalism'*, with the former relying on the state to advance professional interests and with the latter seeking 'to ally with working class forces against the state' (ibid.). This 'class-struggle professionalism' will be returned to later. To conclude Hatcher's typology, however, in between his above-mentioned versions of professionalism there is an *'accommodated professionalism'*, whereby the profession agrees with anything the state has to offer; and a *'dissident professionalism'*, whereby the profession tries to pursue 'a different agenda' without seeking alliances (p55-56).

Arguably, during the 1960s, when teachers' thinking was often in accordance with government policy (Chitty, 1989, Ch.1), a version of 'incorporated professionalism' was dominant. However this ended with the teacher disputes of 1984-86, and what we have now is a *new* version:

> based not on the notion of teacher autonomy but on a market driven technical-rationalist ideology (Hatcher, 1994, p55).

Hatcher sees some links between this *new* version of 'incorporated professionalism' and Mac an Ghaill's (1992) 'New Entrepreneurs'.

To summarize Mac an Ghaill's paper on *Teachers' Work*, teachers have tended to respond to 'the changing nature and structure of their work' through their 'occupational structures'. This teacher typology sees these cultures as identified in three main educational ideologies, namely the 'Professionals', the

'Old Collectivists' and the 'New Entrepreneurs'. The 'Professionals' were typically opposed to trade unions and were generally supportive of their employers' initiatives (pp179-180). It could be argued that this group comes close to Hatcher's 'accommodated professionalism', a group which tends to go along with whatever the State/employers have to offer. Mac an Ghaill's 'New Entrepreneurs', as has already been mentioned, comes close to Hatcher's 'incorporated professionalism'. Finally, the 'old Collectivists' comes closest to the 'class-struggle professionals' of Hatcher. It is difficult to pinpoint where Hatcher's 'dissident' professionals appear in Mac an Ghaill's version of professionalism. For their part, Shain and Gleeson (1999), in their analysis of the 'shifting work identities' of teachers in the FE sector, also pinpoint 'three conceptions of teacher professionalism' (p445). These are: 'rejection and resistance'; 'compliance'; and 'strategic compliance' (p453). The first group is 'extremely critical of the new reforms in FE' (p453). The second accepts the changes unquestioningly and values 'the freedom which business values bring' (p455). Finally the third, perhaps more pragmatic group, is critical of some of the changes, 'but accepting of others' (p456). Thus, the last group would be supportive of changes that demonstrate a clear educational 'commitment to students and their learning agendas' (p460).

I would argue that both the Mac an Ghaill and Hatcher versions of professionalism seem to be borne out in the FE sector. In addition, the Shain and Gleeson approach finds resonance with my own research at Blakewater College. In FE conditions of service have been attacked and 'new contracts'

imposed in order to introduce 'flexibility'. Consequently, in FE, teachers tend to fall into three categories. One group consists of a small minority who appear to accept whatever the AOC (Association of Colleges, formerly CEF, the College Employers' Forum) have to offer - the 'New Entrepreneurs'/'incorporated professionalism'/'compliance'. The second, a much larger group, who do not like what is happening to the education service, but want a quiet life, therefore reluctantly accept what the AOC offer- the 'Professionals'/'accommodated professionalism'/'strategic compliance'. Finally, an even larger group see the changes as detrimental to the education service. They, therefore, reject them - the 'Old Collectivist'/ 'class-struggle professionalism'/'rejection and resistance'.

However, this is not to say that these categories are hard and fast, for, as Mac an Ghaill points out, 'social reality is more complex' (p179). Clearly this is a loose classification system which does not imply that, with changing objective circumstances, teachers may not change from one position to another. Moreover, in times of rapid change, and in particular change that will completely alter the lives of teachers and the future of the service, they could shift rapidly and in large numbers.

It would seem that teachers have always responded to what Grace (1978, pp51-64) has called 'change and continuity'. It is not a new phenomenon, for at different periods teachers have probably fallen into the ideological categories set out by Mac an Ghaill and Hatcher, and, depending on the form that change has taken, one or other of the versions of professionalism has dominated their response. Thus, at times teachers have been a part of the State's imposition of

change. This change is usually dressed up in the clothes of its version of professionalism; that is swathed in the ideas of 'respectability', 'dedication', 'duty', and, more importantly, non-political 'impartiality'. However, at other times, the response has been one that encouraged a growing class consciousness resulting in strikes and other typical working class behaviour (see for example Lawn and Ozga, 1981, pp50-52). In FE the sector has been 'turned...into an industrial relations battlefield' (Shain and Gleeson, 1999, p445). Thus, for example, on the one hand, the post-war period saw great changes in education, changes characterized by a professionalism which implied responsibility and autonomy. As a result, Lawn has argued that:

> The post-war idea of professionalism was significantly different from that of the pre-war years: it was used by the local and national government to imply responsibility and autonomy (1989, p153).

In contrast, on the other hand, the periods 1917-21 and 1984-86 saw teachers responding with strikes and other strategies of resistance (Ozga and Lawn, 1981, p99; Hatcher, 1994, p55).

I would argue that the experiences of, and responses to, change, of teachers in the school and FE sectors can be seen as part of the growth of managerialism in the public sector. Thus, both sectors are experiencing the impact of 'features of managerialism' such as, for example, the role of management as a 'separate and distinct organisational function' whose paramount objective is for the 'right to manage' (Avis, 1996, p110, citing Pollitt). Nevertheless, whilst there are similarities between the work of the school and

FE sectors, there are many clear differences. The following is an outline of some of the major differences.

First, it has been noted that 'the core business' of FE is 'vocational education of one sort or another' (Ainley and Bailey, 1997, p8). In spite of the introduction of GNVQ courses into the compulsory sector this is clearly not the case with schools. A second difference discussed by the same authors is the fact that colleges are 'pulled all ways' following their closer relationship to the to the world of work, and the fact that:

> it is unclear who exactly are the clients of FE are - whether individual students, their parents, employers, or their local communities (p11).

Third, 'private enterprise and market forces in FE is not a new phenomenon' (Ainley and Bailey, 1997, p11, quoting Gleeson). This is because, 'in clear contrast' to the schools sector, colleges have always had to seek out students in order to run their courses (ibid). Consequently, fourth, '[n]o other sector of education' enrols 'such a wide range of students' (p10), be they adult, part-time, full-time, etc. Fifth, as Bloomer and Hodkinson (1999, p93) indicate, the 'learning careers' of FE students are highly complex. Thus, for instance, they point out that in post-16 education 'dispositions to knowledge and learning' are 'influenced by all aspects of young peoples' lives'. Moreover, those dispositions are 'evolving', and closely related to 'choices about educational pathways' and future 'career...aspirations and decisions' (p6). Finally, Robson (1998) notes that the 'diversity of entry routes into FE teaching', and the fact that, unlike the schools sector, FE lecturers are not required to be graduates, weakens the 'profession's

standing' (p588). Elliott (1996a, 30) notes that a 'key limitation' to professional status for teachers in FE is the absence of a 'consensus and common orientation'.

Notwithstanding these differences, FE lecturers, like school teachers, have suffered attacks on their working lives over the last decade. Central to the attacks has been the application of market forces to the sector. As a result, the decade has also seen the rise of a collective resistance to those attacks on the FE sector (The Lecturer, 2001, p1). Both phenomena will be discussed in the next section.

The application of market forces and the collective response to that application

At the heart of the changes occurring in FE is the language of business, a language in which 'flexibility' is the keyword. This 'flexibility', as it manifests itself in the newly Incorporated business-oriented world of the FE college, would, as the Negotiating Secretary for the lecturers' trade union indicates, give management 'almost total control over the working lives of employees' with the introduction of the so-called 'new professional contracts' (Berryman, 1994). This attack, launched by the employers, has completely changed the lives of teachers in this sector. The employers' success, in the face of massive resistance, owes itself to a populist discourse of market relations. This discourse, it may be argued, 'retains power by suppressing moral and political argument' (Woods and Jeffrey, 1996, p38). Furthermore, the changes in this popular discourse have the

appearance of being self-evident and, more importantly, demonstrably necessary. They are necessary, so the populist argument goes, because education must respond to the needs of its 'customers'. Furthermore, as Lumby's (1999) research demonstrates, if a lecturer does not go along with this 'dominant view' and support 'the direction of the institution' then the Principal should make it clear that 'they are not moving anywhere in their own career' (p80). Thus, for Lumby's college Principal you either succumb to such coercion, or your job is on the line.

However, in the case of FE, if the new contracts are closely scrutinized, quite a different 'self evident' necessity for their introduction can be observed. In Section 14 of the CEF (now the AOC) 'Professional Academic Contract', under the heading of 'Confidentiality', it is stated that:

> You shall not either during your employment (except in the proper performance of your duties), nor at any time after its termination, use for your own purposes (or for any purposes other than those of the Corporation) or divulge to any person, corporation, company or other organisation whatsoever any confidential information belonging to the Corporation or to any Subsidiary or relating to its or their affairs or dealings which may come to your knowledge during your employment (Blakewater College, 1992).

This confidentiality clause is, in effect, a 'gagging' clause. Thus, for example, any teacher giving advice beneficial to a student's future, or 'blowing the whistle' on sub-standard courses, could quite possibly be breaking their contract of employment and be liable for dismissal. What is being demanded is unqualified loyalty to the college management itself. Yet the rhetoric underpinning the changes to the sector is one of democratic empowerment. Arguably, the above

clause does not empower students and so does not cater for the needs of the college's 'customers'. Indeed, more importantly, it does not respond to the needs of education as a service.

Further to this, as far as schools are concerned, I believe that initiatives such as Local Management of Schools and League Tables have all been part of 'the attempt to swing the whole system to determination by market forces' (Simon, 1992, p8). I would argue that Incorporation did the same for FE. Consequently, the ideologically loaded language of business, language such as 'accountability', 'cost effectiveness' and 'flexibility', now dominates all sectors of education (see for example Randle and Brady, 1997; Avis, 1996; and Avis 1999). The alternative ideological language of egalitarianism which looks to:

> a more progressive and relevant curriculum and pedagogy which in meeting 'the needs of the child' and in creating conditions for self-expression... (Grace, 1978, p55)

is eschewed.

Arguably, however, this struggle over values is still going on, even though, at the moment, the dominant ideology of the language of business appears to hold hegemonic control. Consequently, it is not true to say that this language cannot be changed, or indeed, reconstructed. Current situations are not 'natural', 'proper', or, indeed, 'eternal', just as they were not in the Victorian period when it was felt that the pupils of the inner-city schools needed civilizing, and the language used was the business language of 'payment by results'. Thus, according to Grace (1978):

> *Conservative* theorists argue that inner-city schools reveal anarchism inherent in modern tendencies which undermine the imperatives of organized social life: externality of order, specificity of roles and hierarchy of power and evaluation (p54).

In the case of FE the sector is perceived as not responding to 'customer needs'. Their antidote to this is to reintroduce 'good teaching', and 'a reassertion of the absolutes of "standards"' (ibid.). Marketization can be seen as the tool to this end. Thus, it has been argued:

> education is a business like any other and that 'markets and private sector management techniques can help provide answers to the perceived problems and deficiencies of the public sector, and their imposition on schools will result in improvements in standards of provision' (Hyland, 1994, citing Keep, p139).

In the case of FE there has been much resistance to this marketization project - witness the ongoing struggle which has occurred since the colleges were Incorporated in April 1993 (see for example The Lecturer, 2000, p4). The struggle over the language used to define educational aims and professionalism is clearly a recurring theme throughout the history of education. During the 1950s and 1960s, it was the language of 'egalitarianism' and 'liberation' that held hegemonic sway over education. Arguably, this was because capitalism, during the immediate post-war period, was characterized by an economic growth that, at the time, also appeared 'natural", 'proper' and 'eternal'. It is here, according to Simon (1992, p197), that there 'lies the hope for the future', for the events of recent years can still be 'reversed', or as is more likely, changed, away from the market-relations dominated educational world of today to an educational world in which 'positive policies' would 'provide good quality

education for the whole community'. Thus, Simon's (1992) final chapter to *'What Future For Education?'* offers some 'hope for the future' by arguing that whatever the outcome of (what was then) the next election of 1992:

> the new government faces a situation characterized by confrontation, demoralisation, conflict on a level perhaps never experienced before in this country (p197).

The outcome of that election was of course the continuance of Conservative rule, and as far as FE was concerned much 'confrontation, demoralisation, conflict' over the 'new contracts' discussed earlier. This has not changed under the new Labour Government, for there are still 'workload problems' and 'low morale' in the sector (*The Lecturer*, 2000, February, p1).

The changes in education have been the result of the increasing demands of capital, demands that, for Esland (1996, p12), have encouraged the 'global reorganization of economic activity'. The effects of these demands on both industrial workers and white collar workers have been well documented by Braverman (1974). Central to Braverman's thesis is that:

> the unity of conception and execution may be dissolved...the idea as conceived by *one* may be executed by *another* (p51).

This process occurred first with industrial workers, then with white collar workers and, as Braverman points out, the application of Frederick W. Taylor's 'scientific management' resulted in 'the increasing similarity of work in factory and office' (p354). Yet, as Braverman notes, early in the 19th century clerical workers 'more properly appear as ancestors of modern industrial management' and not the low-skilled, low-paid highly unionized workers of today (p293).

This process of de-skilling seems to be occurring with teachers today. Thus, the recent changes in education seem to go some way along the road of depriving teachers of the capacity to both initiate and execute work. Yet, as Hatcher (1994) notes:

> the ERA is creating a new layer of entrepreneurial teachers for whom it means acquiring new skills of budgeting, marketing, monitoring and managing (p49).

In the case of the FE sector, with the new contracts, Senior Lecturers are being asked to take on this more administrative managerial role, a role that includes a strong supervisory element and less classroom teaching. This is noted by two of the respondents discussed in Chapter Four who were once Senior Lecturers, but who now are middle managers. Nevertheless, for the Main Grade Lecturers, the vast majority of lecturers in this sector, there appears to be what Hatcher (1994, p36) has called 'an intensification of the work process through increased workload' along with closer regulation 'through closer supervision and tighter structuring'. It is noteworthy that it is easier to obtain funding for higher degrees in educational management than for educational theory, and promotion means removal from the teaching task to engage in management. Randle and Brady (1997, p131) also note the increasing reliance on 'pre-packaged materials' which has meant a 'decline of professional control'. The move towards 'Resource Based Learning', mentioned by another of my interviewees (RN), is perhaps a move along this path. The New Right would argue that these changes are necessary to make teachers more accountable and professionally competent. This, they assert, is because the liberal egalitarian ideology of the 1960s has

caused standards to fall. A cynic would perhaps argue that in order to fund a massive rise in the numbers achieving a degree-level education to compete with the rest of the world, costs must be cut, and de-skilling is one method of achieving this. As a result of these changes in education, teachers, just like white collar workers in the past, can be said to have been de-skilled, and more and more are facing the proletarianization of their occupation.

Proletarianization is the process by which the skill is removed from work. The worker is excluded from the 'conceptual functions of work', worker autonomy is eroded, employer/employee relationships deteriorate, management control is enhanced and 'craft skills and the craft ethic decline'. Yet teachers' autonomy, when compared to their 'American and European colleagues', has been 'strong in the consciousness of many teachers' in Britain (Grace, 1978, p97). However the writings of Young (quoted in Grace, 1978), cast some doubt on this, for teacher autonomy:

> is in practice extremely limited by the control of sixth form (and, therefore, lower form) curricula by the universities, both through their entrance requirements and their domination of...the school examination boards... (p211).

Likewise, as Randle and Brady (1996) in the FE context contend, the move to 'flexi-learning' has been condemned as:

> one of the most serious threats to autonomy...in the FE sector...because it degrades the expertise underpinning the degree of autonomy within the labour process (Randle and Brady, 1997, p132).

For these writers this is seen as part of the process of the proletarianization of FE lecturers. This process has been taken further by the introduction of

specialists to plan the curriculum and, thus, divorce the 'conception from execution' of 'the labour process' (Ozga and Lawn, 1988, pp324-325). Performance-related pay, measured by teacher appraisal, could eventually mean individual contracts of employment and individual negotiation of remuneration; both were long-term ideals of successive Conservative governments in the 1980s and 1990s. Appraisal, according to Hatcher (1994, p50) is a management tool adopted from the private sector to monitor lecturer 'performance'. The present Labour government does not seem to have altered the process. These changes are designed to marginalize any collective trade union response and to aid the 'installation of a new regime of regulation analogous to the technical-rationalist production process in industry' (Hatcher, 1994, p47). Further to this, the ongoing erosion of teachers' pay packets has served to make teachers 'aware of their similarities with other wage earners' (p138). The result of these changes has been to remove all notion of a proper career structure, 'guaranteed employment' and 'job security'. Thus:

> all these characteristics of teaching, which marked it off from conventional wage labour in the 1960s, have been eroded in the 1980s (Ozga and Lawn, 1981, p139).

However, as Hatcher (1994, p48) has pointed out, in some ways argument about de-skilling as a means of asserting the class position of teachers is a rather sterile debate which can only lead to an 'impasse'. This is because, as Ozga and Lawn (1981) in their discussion of the work of Ginsberg, Meyenn and Miller point out:

> teachers are not capitalists but wage earners because they sell their labour power and neither own nor control the means of production (p44).

Thus, teachers, it has been argued, are part of the working class, by virtue of the fact that they sell their labour; thus fulfilling Marx's prediction that:

> Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat (Marx/Engels, 1968, p36).

Ozga and Lawn (1981), following Braverman's (1974) work on white collar workers, have applied his methodology to the nature of the class position of teachers. Their findings seem to show that:

> there remain conflicts and contradictions within this group of workers, which includes teachers, but these conflicts are not in themselves sufficient to constitute objective antagonistic class relations and separate these workers, as a class, from the working class (pp61-62).

Moreover, whilst, as Ozga and Lawn point out, their conclusions are still 'tentative', it is worth mentioning that writers in the 1970s also had problems in demonstrating that white collar workers such as clerks and shop workers were working class. Yet these workers have 'lost all former superiorities over workers in industry' and have pay scales which are often way below those of industrial workers (Braverman, 1974, p355). This work of Braverman has been followed up by other sociologists. Thus, for example, Crompton and Jones (discussed in Haralombos and Holborn, 1995, pp67-68) in their 'defence of the proletarianisation thesis' point out that 'clerks can be considered proletarian'. Thus, few would argue that the poorly paid, highly unionized local government clerical workers were middle class.

In the case of FE, Randle and Brady (1997) argue that the 'marketisation' of the sector, and consequent 'limitations of traditional forms of professional control over the sector', have resulted in the 'proletarianisation' and 'deprofessionalisation' of the sector (p137). Consequently, for these writers, this has been a result of, for example , 'IT-driven flexible learning' supplanting 'teacher contact time', and the 'prescriptive nature' of GNVQ courses (p134). They proceed to discuss the concepts of 'ideological proletarianisation', and of 'technical proletarianisation'. With the former they contend that there has been:

> ...the appropriation of control by management over the goals and social purposes to which work is put (p135, quoting Derber).

Arguably the introduction of 'IT-driven flexible learning' is an example of this phenomenon. In the case of the latter there is the 'loss of professional control over the labour process itself'. They assert that this has not yet occurred in the sector. However, I would tentatively put forward the argument that the introduction of the overly-prescriptive GNVQ does amount to some 'loss of professional control'.

Notwithstanding all this, there are those who would reject this 'proletarianization thesis'. Thus, for example, Piore (cited by Haralambos and Holburn, 1995, pp214-215) has argued that as a result of 'flexible specialization' 'the skills needed by the workforce' have increased. Thus, the advocates of the 'flexible specialization' thesis have argued that such workers:

> Because of their long training and the importance of their skills to their companies...enjoy more job security, and management makes greater attempts to enlist their cooperation (p215).

For his part Avis (1999) has argued, with reference to the FE sector, that efforts to explain the changes occurring in the working lives of college lecturers 'in terms of proletarianisation...are limited' (p245). Such arguments, he proceeds to insist, 'approximate' but 'fail to grasp' the full nuances of what is occurring - namely the 'on-going transformation of what it is to be a college lecturer' (p260). In Chapter Four I will attempt to ascertain which of these two versions of workplace reality holds true for the lecturers in my case study college.

Nevertheless, there is an assumption, in common usage, of a linkage between professionalism and the middle class. Indeed, writers such as Tropp (cited by Grace, 1978, pp13-18) have portrayed a gradual transition of teachers from their working class social origins of the 19th century, through a process of 'professionalism and respectability' towards a middle classness that would eschew 'the bias and envy of a narrow upbringing' (p17). Meanwhile, from the opposite political perspective, neo-marxists such as Althusser and Poulantzas saw teachers as middle class supporters of the state. For these writers, teachers' work is located in the social reproduction of the ideological values of the ruling class. Thus:

> teachers are generally viewed as State functionaries with the main responsibility for ideological control and social and cultural reproduction of capitalism (Lawn and Ozga, 1981, pp48-49).

Yet both these perspectives appear to view class as an extremely 'static entity' wherein the:

> boundaries of class are immutably fixed, and the notion of change and struggle within and between classes assigned a secondary importance (Lawn and Ozga, 1981, pp48-49).

In contrast, some writers have argued that class can best be understood as a 'relationship over time'. Thus, as Thompson (cited in Ozga and Lawn, 1981, p50) argues:

> class is not, as some sociologists would have it a static category ....Class, in the Marxist tradition is (or ought to be) *a historical category*, describing *people in relationship over time*, and the ways in which they become conscious of their relationships, separate, unite, enter into struggle, form institutions and transmit values in class ways.
>
> Hence class is an 'economic' and it is also a 'cultural' formation: it is impossible to give any theoretical priority to one aspect over the other...what changes, as the mode of production and productive relations change, is the *experience* of living men and women. And this experience is sorted out in class ways, in social life and in consciousness, in the assent, resistance and the choices of men and women.

This is hardly the economic determinism as so often portrayed by writers such as Giddens (1981, p4, p104) who argued that, at least for 'non-capitalist societies' a:

> co-ordination of authoritative resources (roughly speaking, those which facilitate political-ideological domination) forms the determining factor of societal integration and change.

In contrast, for Giddens, 'Marx gave primacy to allocative resources in his materialist theory of history'. Yet, clearly, the 'base' and 'superstructure' are, following Thompson's interpretation, of equal importance and, thus, people and their lived experiences are involved in 'making history' in the Marxist sense. It has been argued that as a result of peoples' lived 'experiences', those teachers who see themselves as middle class can be said to be experiencing a 'false consciousness' with regard to their social situation. However, perhaps less rancour concerning such an interpretation would result if it was conceded that theirs could perhaps be a 'true' 'diagnosis of the imperatives of their situation'.

What needs to be asked is '*what socio-economic and political processes have produced such imperatives in the first place?*' (Grace, 1978, pp168-169). Nevertheless, following Thompson's definition of class set out above, teachers are clearly working class. Moreover, it may be that teachers are more and more coming to see the collective response of trade unionism as the answer to defending their working conditions and the education service - witness in FE the long-running struggle over the imposition of new contracts.

Yet, to read the literature, teacher trade union history and, more importantly, trade union militancy are relegated to the footnotes of history (Ozga and Lawn, 1988, p324). Yet, as Hatcher (1994, p58) points out, referring to the SATs boycott of 1992, 'trade unionism, including teacher trade unionism, far from being dead, is a force....which can effectively resist' both Conservative and Labour education policy. In the context of FE, lecturers have also resisted both Conservative and Labour education policy. Thus Robson (1998) notes that the:

> dispute between NATFHE and the new employers now ranks as one of the most bitter and prolonged in education anywhere (p598).

In July 2001 the dispute described by Robson has not ended.

Clearly teachers, like all other workers, are prone to respond in similar ways to their objective experiences. The 1950s and 1960s, a period of economic boom, saw workers less likely to confront the State, and teachers were no exception (see Pelling, 1976, Ch12). Indeed the period 1946-1967 saw fewer days lost as a result of strikes than 1910-1920 or after 1968 (Smith, et al., 1990). The period 1910-20, mentioned above, was a time when large numbers of

workers went on strike and the strikers included those, who, like teachers, were not noted for their militancy, such as soldiers and the police (see Rosenberg, 1987). The 1980s and 1990s have once more seen teachers use collective action to defend education as a service to all the community, with the strikes of 1984-86, and the boycott of the SATs of 1992.

For its part, the FE sector has seen industrial action to resist the 'new contracts'. Arguably, professionalism and trade unionism, when used by FE teachers, have been in support of the quality of education and teachers' ability to deliver a quality service. They have not just been concerned with pay and conditions of service. Furthermore, for Elliott (1996b) 'senior managers who...embrace a managerialist culture' are being opposed by lecturers. As a result 'an alternative and competing democratic ideology' has been a part of the resistance in FE. This is because the FE employers wish, for example, to place no upper limit on annual and weekly teaching hours. Neither do they provide safeguards on the distribution of an individual's teaching hours over the week. This is even though colleges are normally open for teaching from 9am to 9.30pm. The cutting of contact hours in FE is noted in the research of Dee (1999, p166). For his part, Lucas (1999) notes that:

> A common criticism of the FEFC's funding methodology is that it has reduced colleges to...cost cutting measures...Colleges report cuts in teaching hours of as much as seven hours on... GNVQs (p57).

This situation has not been redressed by the present Labour government. Thus, according to Crace (2001) the schools sector is still funded to the disadvantage of FE. The result is 'a £1000 funding chasm' per student 'that can't be justified

between the two sectors' (p51). This means that the 'cuts' described by Lucas above are necessary. Consequently, for instance, lecturers are, on the one hand, expected to maintain course quality of provision in less time. On the other hand, they are expected to make up for the resulting shortfall in their teaching hours by teaching on more courses. Clearly, overworked teachers means that students will receive a poor quality education. Consequently, teachers in FE are using trade union strategies such as strike action to defend both students' education and teacher professionalism. FE lecturers are more and more coming to see, as Hatcher (1994) argues, that management strategies, backed up by legislation, are aimed at neutering teacher unions to 'decentralize collective bargaining' (p50) by a process of 'marginalization' (ibid., p49). The long-running industrial dispute over the implementation of the changes introduced since the colleges were Incorporated in 1993 is evidence of this (see for example Shain and Gleeson, 1999, p445). The possibility of new individual FE contracts will give employers the power to introduce any further cost cutting strategies they see fit, strategies which could further undermine the professionalism of teachers and their ability to ensure that the prime aim of education is the liberation and empowerment of students. A response to the undermining of this version of teacher professionalism could perhaps be a move towards a more collaborative approach to professionalism. Such an approach, moreover, would seek to link these moves closely to the ideal of teaching as a reflective profession. This is discussed next.

Teacher collaboration and the reflective nature of teacher professionalism

Recently there has been a relative newcomer to the struggle over the language of professionalism. Thus, Smyth (1991, p523) has noted a 'new orthodoxy so far as the educational policy makers are concerned'. Central to that 'new orthodoxy' has been the 'increased interest' in the 'phenomenon of collegiality'. On the surface collegiality has connotations of collaborative endeavour, with teachers actively participating as equals in the development and improvement of their practice. Yet, Smyth has asked:

> Is collegiality being used in the same kind of manipulative way that terms like 'improvement', 'excellence', 'development' and 'professionalism' have been used in the past? (p324).

The same writer proceeds:

> to propose that the widespread rekindled interest in collegiality is neither deliberate nor accidental, but that it is a part of a broader strategy (deliberate or otherwise), to harness teachers more effectively to the work of economic reconstruction (p324).

I find this statement of Smyth's highly perceptive and agree with his proposal that collegiality has been used to the government's own ends, 'not those of teachers and students' (p325). Moreover, 'the cumulative effect...is to greatly increase central government control over the teaching force' (Smyth, p329, citing Ozga). One of the effects of this centrally-inspired collegiality *from above* has been a form of 'indirect control'. This has meant that there has been a:

> gradual 'rejection of direct prescriptive controls' and in its place a process that is much more reliant on engineering broad forms of consensus (Smyth, p337, discussing the work of Lawn and Ozga).

In addition I would argue that many of the procedures that have resulted from the implementation of collegiality can also be seen as part of that 'indirect control' *from above*. This can also be seen at the institutional level. In my FE college, meeting times have been introduced. The minutes of all meetings must be sent to the Dean of Faculty and the Principal. In some ways much of this collegiality comes close to what Hargreaves (1994) terms the 'colonization' of 'teachers' time' (p109). This collegiality *from above* has resulted in a shift of emphasis from one that is 'indirect' and covert to overt direct control over teachers' lives.

Nevertheless, what Hargreaves (in Smyth, p338) has termed 'contrived collegiality' does have within it possibilities for teachers. Thus, for example, they could contest the way it is imposed *from above*. There is also the possibility for it to be used in a more positive way than that envisaged by the educational managers. Teachers may, in the words of Smyth (1991):

> Come up with versions of collegiality that effectively undermine the intentions of policy makers (p334).

As Elliott (1989) has argued, if 'the opportunity is not grasped', collegiality will continue to be used as a tool against teachers. As a result 'the spaces provided may be filled with managerialism', and business-oriented 'forms of professionalism' (p218). Thus, following Elliott (1996a), 'collaboration' is the antidote to 'competition' (p126).

A number of writers have extended the managerialist discourse from the school sector to FE (see for example Randle and Brady, 1997; Gleeson and

Shain, 1999; Elliott, 1996a; Elliott, 1996b). Randle and Brady (1997) indicate that the move to achieve what they term as the '"three Es" of economy, efficiency and effectiveness' (p125) has entailed the seizing of:

> control over the conception and design of academic work...by management, from practitioners responsible for its delivery in the classroom, and placed in the hands of specialist managers...(p126).

Thus, for Gleeson and Shain (1999), there has been the 'reassertion of the "management's right to manage"' (p548). This followed the 1992 FHEA which removed FE from 'LEA control', centralized funding, introduced 'a competitive bidding system and the transference of governance to non-elected governors' drawn mainly from industry (ibid.). This meant the '"conversion" of professionals into managers' who 'subjected' the teacher professionals to 'externally imposed surveillance, governance and funding control' (pp547-548). The consequence of this, for Elliott (1996a), has been 'cascading paperwork', 'multiple registers', numerous 'requests for information', and the constant exhortation by 'college managers to meet deadlines imposed by the FEFC and others' (p92). Elliott (ibid.) goes on to indicate that his study of a large FE college demonstrates that college lecturers are resisting the above impositions as lacking in 'relevance'. They are seen as detracting from the needs of their students.

In another forum Elliott (1996b) contends that, whilst lecturers are hostile to a 'top-down style of management', they are 'strongly' for one 'grounded in pedagogical culture' (pp15-16). Thus, he argues that lecturers do not believe that 'management is unnecessary', rather that they reject 'managerialist' forms of management. In the words of one of the lecturers in his study:

> progress has to be linked to what is best for the student, not what is best for the business (p15).

Consequently, I would argue that those 'spaces', described by Elliott (1989, p218), that provide the possibility of alternative definitions of both collegiality *and* professionalism are a result of the fact that the policy makers do not speak with one voice. In the words of Smyth (1991):

> What we have in the 'education reform movement' is an inchoate babble of conflicting, competing and confounding voices...(p335).

I would argue that what is required is a collegiality *from below*. To be truly effective, however, teachers must struggle to link this collaborative approach *from below* to Schön's (1987) reflective practitioner.

To scrutinize Schön's concept of the reflective practitioner I would like to return to Grundy's (1989, p79) seemingly dismissive statement describing professionalism as a 'tired old concept' best 'left behind'. It is perhaps her 'fresh way' of looking at teachers' work, and her proposition that an 'educational practice informed by a disposition of "practique", rather than professionalism' that is a way forward for teachers. This, following Schön (discussed by Avis 1994, p66), can be seen as the manifestation of 'the "new" professionalism'. This 'new' professionalism, which involves teachers reflecting on their practice, is seen as transcending the perhaps more 'traditional teacher professionalism' of some of the 'trait theorists' cited earlier. Nevertheless, for Avis (1994), 'in many respects the reflective practitioner is located in the same paradigm' (p66). For his part, Elliott (quoted in Avis 1994) seeks to set the reflective practitioner 'model' of professionalism in opposition to what he sees as 'the sterile

professionalism of the infallible expert' (p66). However these 'models', like many model theories, perhaps fall down in their apparently simplistic methodology of, in this case, setting up the traditional model of professionalism as a kind of 'patsy' to be shown as inferior to a flawless 'reflective' practitioner model.

Notwithstanding this, the 'reflective' approach does offer a way out of the 'swampy lowland' wherein are found 'the problems of greatest concern' (Schön, 1987, p3). For, following Schön, conditions in the 'real-world' are highly 'problematic' (p4). They involve the practitioner in 'uncertainty, uniqueness and value-conflict' (p6). Consequently, 'inherent in the practice of the professionals' (in our case the teacher) 'is a core of artistry' (p13). Central to this 'artistry' is the development of a 'reflective practique' (Grundy, 1989, p90) that would enable teachers to respond to the complex nature of their work. Thus, they would gain what Schön has termed the 'high, hard ground overlooking the swamp' (p3).

However to reach the 'high, hard ground' the experienced, skilled teacher must develop a 'tacit knowledge' that would enable her almost intuitively to *know* what is right in her practice. This, for Schön, involves a 'knowing-in-action' which, when reflected upon, becomes converted 'to knowledge-in-action' (p26). However in the real world this reflection must take place in the thick of practice. This Schön termed a 'reflection-in-action' which involves, for example 'on the spot experiment' (p28). A proficient teacher would be able to adapt her 'wide-ranging repertoire of images of contexts and actions' in such a way as to enhance the learning situation (p29). Thus, she would respond to the 'tacit knowledge' often found in situations that involve responding to 'split-second

variations' in the real world situation of the classroom. This would clearly involve 'critical self-reflection' (Grundy, 1989, p92). Thus, the competent reflective practitioner would indeed have developed a '*professional artistry*' (Schön, 1987, p22).

With reference to lecturers in further education, Elliott (1996a, p108) argues for the 'reflective practitioner model of teaching' as providing:

> a conceptual framework within which the complexities, tensions and contradictions of their work can be explored.

In addition, he points out that a major gain of this model is that it links 'educational theory' to 'educational practice' (p109). For Elliott this 'reflective practitioner model' would be 'grounded in a critical pedagogy'(p35). However, such a 'pedagogical culture' would be anathema for the 'managerialist culture' now prevalent in the FE sector. The conflict that follows from the clash of these two cultures was noted in Elliott's study of lecturers in a large FE college (p112). Notwithstanding this, Elliott (1996b, p13) points out that the lecturers in his study comprehend the 'need for efficient and effective management' in the interests of their students. Moreover, the lecturers in his investigation were cognizant of the fact that their managers were responding to 'government policy for the FE sector' (p101). However, There worries were about how their managers had 'chosen to interpret' policy. Clearly, there were worries that their managers' 'focus' was changing:

> from the development of students' potential to a preoccupation with balancing budgets (Elliott, 1996b, p13).

I believe that the data from Blakewater College (analysed in Chapter Four) reveals similar conflictual tensions resulting from the interpretation of government policy.

I would argue for a '*critical reflection and self-reflection*...tested, justified and sustained through debate in the public sphere' (Kemmis, 1995, p15). As Grundy contends:

> Critical self-reflection is not, however, a solitary practice. It is carried out in critical communities (p93).

Thus, in the interests of improving the effectiveness of their practice teachers must develop a form of collegiality that is located within the practitioner community, not outside it. Unfortunately, the market model now obtaining in FE precludes such a positive form of professionalism.

Summary

In this section (pp26-60) I have reflected on change in teacher professionalism in the FE sector. In the first place I examined some of the differing definitions of the concept. Writers such as Kemmis and Carr (1986), and Dean (1991) see professionalism in terms of the key characteristics they attribute to the professional. In contrast writers such as Hatcher (1994) and Mac an Ghaill (1992) define the concept of professionalism in terms of how their members relate to the state. In addition, it was here that I also examined the work of, for example, Gleeson and Shain (1999), and assessed the impact of

their concept of a new 'managerialist discourse' upon the FE sector. In the second place I analysed the application of market forces to the sector and the collective response to that application. Here I assessed the impact of the introduction of new working conditions on the sector and the ongoing response to their introduction on the part of FE lecturers (see for example Randle and Brady, 1997). Finally I investigated the concept of teacher collaboration and the reflective nature of teacher professionalism. This entailed a discussion of collegiality in terms of what Smyth (1991) has asserted to be the coercing of teachers 'to produce the kinds of educated labour required for economic recovery' (p323). Schön's concept of the reflective practitioner was also discussed here, and found to be under threat from the introduction of the market model to the sector. Elliott's (1996a) concept of 'critical pedagogy' was also reflected upon here. In Chapters Four and Five I relate these aspects of teacher professionalism to the responses of the lecturers in my case study. In the following section I scrutinize the effects of the changes on the general vocational education and training curriculum.

Curricular change

In this part (pp61-87) of the chapter I examine change and the general vocational curriculum. The section is divided into two major elements. In the first (pp63-71), I begin by scrutinizing changing qualifications. Here I analyse the problems associated with philosophy underpinning the GNVQ project. As a

result the introduction of GNVQs will be discussed. I will also refer to BTEC Nationals because much of my teaching, and much of the research that is presented in Chapter Four is in this area. Therefore, whilst some reference will be made to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and to the so-called 'academic' route of A Levels, these qualifications will not be a major focus of discussion in this thesis.

It must be noted here that for writers such as Yeomans (1998, p128), although there are differences, programmes of study known 'collectively' as being a part of the new vocationalist initiative 'contain sufficient common elements to justify the use of an umbrella term'. For Sharp (1998, p297) the major difference between NVQ and GNVQ is that the former is perceived as 'narrow' and 'concerned with isolated tasks' and the latter as 'broad-based'. Further to this, Yeomans (1998, p138) notes that NVQs were 'were designed to be implemented in workplaces by assessors', and 'GNVQs in schools and colleges by teachers'. Perhaps the major similarity between the two vocational routes is that they are both 'assessment-led' (p134). Moreover Yeomans goes on to note that both owe much to the 'theory and practice of competence-based education' as developed by Gilbert Jessup (p137).

It is noteworthy that a number of writers contend that there have been different stages in the development of GNVQ. Thus, for example, Sharp (1998) argues that what he terms the '"Mark I" GNVQ model' was perceived as 'difficult to follow', involved too much 'detailed recording, paperwork and form filling', and was lacking in rigour (p308). As a result, according to Sharp, of reform in the

mid-1990s, a 'Mark II' model was introduced with the aim of re-dressing these shortcomings. However, Sharp maintains that this second form of GNVQ was found wanting, and work began on a 'Mark III' GNVQ. Work was still in progress on this model at the time of Sharp's study (p309). Arguably, the changes to GNVQ initiated by Curriculum 2000 can be seen as Sharp's Mark III. This thesis does not examine this model. Nevertheless, to return to the Mark II, Spours (1997, p65) postulates that there was a 'significant departure from the NVQ' following the changes in the mid-1990s. Notwithstanding this, Yeomans (1998, p138) indicates that in spite of this 'drift of GNVQ...they remain assessment-led', like NVQ, as opposed to 'curriculum-led'. The perceptions of the lecturers in this thesis, discussed in Chapter Four, give little support to the contention that GNVQs have changed significantly in the period studied.

In the second element (pp72-87), I proceed by discussing the inclusion of general education in vocational courses. Here I assess the contribution of Key Skills to such courses. I conclude by reflecting upon the concept of what writers such as Pring (1995) have termed the 'educated person'.

Change and general vocational qualifications

Pring (1995) notes that the 'academic' route post-16 has changed little. All attempts to tinker with A Levels and make them less 'narrow and specialised' have, so far, failed. This, for Pring is because:

> The A Level system was felt to be too sacred to meddle with...[and] Reference to economic relevance has not loomed large in the reform of this part of the system (pp48-50).

At the heart of this inability to tackle the inadequacies of A Levels with their 'massive failure rate' is the belief that any change will result in a decline in 'standards' (ibid.). Consequently even the recent major attempts to reform the post-16 curriculum, following the Dearing Report (see BTEC, 1996) had little impact on A Level syllabi at the time of my research. Edwards (1997) argues that:

> It is not surprising, therefore, that the Dearing review of post-16 qualifications was shackled from the start by a requirement first and foremost that the rigour of A Levels is maintained (p9).

Notwithstanding this, the changes introduced by the Curriculum 2000 initiatives (not the subject of this thesis) have had a significant impact on A Levels.

However, post-16 general vocational education and training has changed significantly over recent years. It is the changes here that are the subject of this section of the thesis. For many years the worries that have encompassed general vocational education have focussed on attempts to introduce change that would improve the post-16 education and training of the majority of young people. Thus, the impetus of the attempts to change post-16 education and training was to enhance its status, which was seen as low, and introduce a 'framework of national standards' (Knight et al, 1998, p54). This was the project of those who have been termed, by writers such as Gleeson, the 'new vocationalists' (1989, passim). As a result GNVQs were introduced. It is these

qualifications that this thesis will concentrate upon, because I would contend that there are many problems with the philosophy that underpins them.

Problems with the GNVQ philosophy

In the first place these qualifications are seen by many college lecturers as full of contradictions. Knight et al (1998) point out that whilst GNVQs offer a 'framework' that gives both students and teachers the 'promise of a good deal of autonomy' they are also seen as 'prescriptive and constraining' (p55). Bloomer's (1998) research also highlights the 'tight prescription' of GNVQ's assessment requirements. Many of the lecturers that I interviewed for this thesis noted this weakness as a major problem with GNVQ. This will be highlighted in Chapter Four.

Secondly, whilst, as Marshall (1991) points out 'There can be little disagreement that there was need to change vocational education and training' (p58), it has been argued that change following the new vocationalist line is change in the wrong direction. Thus, Marshall acknowledges, in the conclusion to his in-depth analysis of the NVQ model, that it:

> is based upon blinkered and unsophisticated social theories and consequently also reflects these traits (p62).

Marshall indicates that 'the NVQ procedure', following the somewhat dated functional analysis of Durkeim, attempts:

> the theoretical breaking down of the social organism into the contributing functions and sub-functions (p59).

Thus, for Jessup (1991), whose work on the 'outcomes' model of education and training underpins both NVQs and GNVQs, this:

> concentration on function shifts the focus of competence from tasks and procedures to the purpose and *outcome* of work activity (p27, my emphasis).

For their part Bates et al (1998) note that:

> the GNVQ was developed out of the competence-based principles of NVQs (p117).

Here 'Outcomes were specified, rather than syllabus content...' (ibid.).

Thus, moving on to GNVQs, it can be seen that, following Jessup (1993), these qualifications:

> have been designed to incorporate the essential features of NVQs and they may be seen as an extension of the NVQ model into the education system (p134).

Jessup, in the same article, goes on to argue that GNVQ students will be assessed as to their competence in a prescribed task by whether they achieve predicted outcomes verifiable in their 'portfolio of evidence' (p138). In Jessup's words:

> The student outcomes in GNVQs are set out in a 'statement of achievement', similar in form to the NVQ 'statement of competence'. All GNVQs will be made up of a number of units which can be assessed and awarded as separate credits towards attainment of qualification (1993, p134).

Thus, as Marshall (1991) indicates, for the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ):

> Training is carried out to achieve aims which were constructed by the training agents, that is the NCVQ (p61).

As a result, it can be seen that the NCVQ define the intentions of training, they state the predicted 'outcomes' and all 'units and elements of competence' are based on the pre-defined outcomes (ibid). Clearly there is no allowance for the trainee to suggest an alternative strategy; if they did then they would be judged as failing. Yet there could be an outcome which requires *alternative* strategies to be assessed.

Thirdly, Marshall also argues that much of the theory behind NCVQ derives from, again, rather old-fashioned behavioural psychology. Consequently, according to Marshall:

> the behaviour of the Trainee is observed by an assessor and the behavioural outcome of the training scheme is observed and commented on (1991, p61).

From this it can be seen that with this scheme assessment is simple. The trainee is either successful in meeting the 'performance criteria', or is not, and therefore fails. In the language of NCVQ the trainee is 'referred'. A referred trainee can be re-assessed until such time as competence *is* achieved. In Marshall's words 'failure is not an option' (p61). Moreover, there is no alternative but to 'perform' to the NCVQ's overly prescriptive outcomes, because

> the major difficulty with classical behavioural psychology is that it has no place for individuality and for individual cognitive activities...There is no place...for innovation (pp61-62).

This diminishing of the learner to an 'automaton' (p62) is an element of GNVQs that a number of my interviewees criticized.

In addition, it could be argued that all this emphasis on 'competence' and 'outcomes' is a consequence of too close a linkage between education and the

world of work. Arguably, the justification for such a model of education and training is that its prime aim is to produce future workers who are deemed 'competent' and ready for the workplace. Yet, as we are so often authoritatively informed, new technology is so rapidly changing the workplace that it is unlikely that the trainees who are to be the future workers in such workplaces will be 'competent' in the correct skills. It is arguable that even traditional low-tech sectors such as health and social care, particularly at the higher levels, are becoming more and more 'highly complex and specialised' (Hall cited by Jones, 1995, p87). Such complexity would require the 'professional artistry' discussed by Jones (1995, pp 86-96), and, thus, preclude a 'competence-based' approach.

A fourth problem with the GNVQ model has been highlighted by Ashworth and Saxton (1990). They argue that 'Competence' as 'the widely recommended practice of defining learning and assessment' (p3) is flawed, or, has at least as they conclude, 'been stretched too far' (p23). Yet, they go on to point out that there is much 'current interest in competence-based learning' (p3). Jessup (1991), in setting out the 'NVQ framework', states that:

> a unit of competence consists of a coherent group of elements of competence and associated performance criteria which form a discrete activity or sub-area of competence which has meaning and independence in the area of employment to which the NVQ relates (p16).

Thus, it is the 'performance criteria' which provide the 'standards of competence' that are to be assessed. However, as Ashworth and Saxton indicate, the 'competences are of unclear logical status' because a:

> competence can be an action, behaviour, outcome, piece of knowledge, or an understanding (p9).

Clearly, for writers such as Ashworth and Saxton, the language of competence is riddled with confusion. The data discussed in Chapter Four seem to indicate that, at least at the level of practice, there is much turmoil. This is perhaps due to the haste associated with the introduction of new vocationalism, and of educational policy in general, policy which often seems to change overnight. Many of the lecturers interviewed for this thesis raised this point, which is also be discussed further in Chapter Four.

Perhaps one of the major problems with the concept of competence is that it attempts to '"atomise" learning and assessment' (p11). Utilizing the analogy of a cyclist the above writers conclude that 'the additive view of skill' is inappropriate (p12). Thus, the skill of cycling cannot be broken down into 'individual elements of competence' because:

> a cyclist never learns separately to incline the body, to turn the wheel, to press the pedals, and to judge the fall of the bike from the vertical: all this happens as a coordinated whole (p12).

Clearly, as Knight et al (1998) maintain, being truly competent in a situation involves understandings far more complex than the GNVQ (or NVQ) competence model. The complexity of the differing contexts of the situation involved can, when broken down into the small separate units envisaged by the competence-based approach, actually result in 'constricted independence', not 'autonomy'. Thus, what is required is a competence that would involve the student in developing:

> some meta-skill or understanding that allows competences to be selected according to the dictates of the situation (p56).

It is also worth noting that prior to the introduction of either GNVQ or NVQ the 'concept of skill' was, arguably, seen as far more complex than writers such as Jessup would believe. Thus, the Further Education Unit (FEU, 1982, p1) associates skill with 'perception, decision making, knowledge, judgements and understanding'.

Following from this, it is clear that much of the new vocationalist ideology is based on 'individualism and lack of awareness of social context' (Ashworth and Saxton, 1990, p13). Thus the social context in today's workplace seems to be that of workers working as members of a team. Consequently the overly 'individualistic' aspects of the competence-based model militate against the cooperative contexts in which many people find themselves working.

Finally, as Wellington (1987) indicates, the new vocationalist emphasis on transferable skills raises the 'twin criticisms of trivialization and vulnerability' (p28). Employers are, in fact, more likely to see 'their requirements' in terms of 'attitudes and dispositions' (Wellington, p32). As to the charge of 'vulnerability', Wellington, with respect to the 'transferable skill' and 'decision making', goes on to ask if:

> the art of Cordon Bleu cookery is transferable to another domain, e.g. car repair or maintenance? (p29).

According to Wellington, therefore, such skills are rarely transferable and, as a result, I would contend that they should not be the aim of education or training. Further to this, Wellington also dispels the myth that Britain, by introducing such

methods, is learning 'Lessons from the East' (pp36-38) by pointing out that, whilst such methods may have been used in Japan in the 1960s:

> skills-based vocational training...has now been superseded by a totally different educational drive (p36).

It seems strange that the new vocationalists wish to base Britain's educational policy on the outdated methods of her competitors. Thus, as Wellington proceeds to argue, 'the world's most successful nation...encourage[s] its youth to follow a general education rather than vocational training' (ibid., p37). He comes to this conclusion following his assessment of the 1981 publication '*Japanese Industrial Relations, Series 7*' which argued that there should be more emphasis on 'academic achievement and adaptability' rather than 'pre-employment training' (cited by Wellington, p38). Clearly, therefore, if education and training cannot truly predict, and prepare young people for, the future needs of employers, then models such as Jessup's 'outcomes' approach are, perhaps, non-starters. Further to this, I would contend that in the years since the introduction of GNVQ both its complexity, and also doubts about the philosophy underpinning the qualifications, have caused anxiety for lecturers and students alike. These anxieties often bubbled to the surface during the research which is the subject of Chapter Four. Nevertheless, writers such as Wolf (1995, p37) believe that the new qualifications, with their clearly stated 'formal, centralised and regulated assessment' are in the interests of FE teachers.

General education and vocationalism

In this section I discuss, in the first place (pp72-78), the inclusion of general education in vocational courses both in the past and currently. In the second place (pp78-83), I examine the debate concerning Key Skills and vocationalism. Finally (pp84-87), I assess the controversy connected with the 'educated person' and education 'for life' not just the workforce.

General education: past and present

A part of the 'marketization' of the FE sector has been the move towards Jessup's (1991) 'outcomes' approach for assessing vocational learning, and the decline of 'general education' in the curriculum of vocational education and training. In brief Jessup's argument asserts that there is a 'need for a fundamental re-orientation in vocational education' (p10). This is necessary, he further argues, because of the enormous changes occurring in the workplace. These would necessitate 'a workforce which was both more highly skilled and more flexible'. This would require, for Jessup, a 'shift from an input-led system to an output-led system...' (p11) of vocational learning. Within this 'system' the learner collects 'evidence' to prove she has achieved the pre-specified 'outcomes', and it is this 'evidence' that is assessed (pp46-59).

Yet, in the recent past a general education input was seen as essential to anyone entering the world of work. Indeed, the authors of *'A basis for choice'*

contend that this has been a consensual view 'which was apparent from an examination of numerous educational reports' going back to the late 1950s (FEU, 1982, p16). The following gives a flavour of what the *'A basis for choice'* authors saw as that which a general education 'common core' should 'develop' in the students:

> their awareness of various technological, environmental, political, economic and aesthetic factors which affect their lives (p17).

Furthermore, this 'common core' should take up 60% of the total time allowed for the course of study (p19). Bates et al (1998, p112) contend that some 'aspects' of 'progressive ideology' were 'taken up' by the 'new vocationalists' in the 1980s. Thus, for example, as the North West Regional Authority Council (NWRAC) scheme for 'General and Communication Studies' proposed in 1983, post-16 vocational courses in the 1980s encouraged the development of:

> students' ability to absorb, interpret and transmit information...and to contribute to their general education and personal development (NWRAC, 1983, p2).

Moreover, even within the region, local colleges were encouraged to devise their own schemes within the council's guidelines, and following the aims laid out in *'A basis for choice'* which argued for the 'opportunity for local initiative' in 'future schemes' (FEU, 1982, p2). Thus, at Blakewater College, a syllabus validated by NWRAC was put in place, which included for example a 'critical assessment of the way people are affected by the mass media', and 'an appreciation of the role of the responsible person in the complex society of today' (Blakewater College, 1983).

A number of writers argue that 'it is possible to identify three overlapping phases of development' since the beginnings of new vocationalism (Bates et al, 1998, p114). In the first there was a 'strong emphasis on choice, negotiation and self-actualization' (ibid). TVEI (Technical and Vocational Education Initiative) and CPVE (Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education) can be seen as examples of this early stage of new vocationalism. Thus, for instance Yeomans (1998, p143) indicates that TVEI:

> invoked soft, liberal ideals of ownership, participation and partnership...

Nevertheless, such 'loose regulation of curriculum content' (Bates et al, 1998, p114) was constrained by being:

> yoked together rather uncomfortably with the application of performance indicators, the imposition of contractual obligations and an emphasis on accountability (Yeomans, 1998, p143).

Following Bates et al (1998, pp114-115), the 'second phase' of new vocationalism saw the increase in the 'control of employers and state over education'. Here the 'newly introduced NVQs' in the late 1980s inaugurated the 'detailed specification of the expected outcomes of learning'. The changes initiated by this phase of new vocationalism were to the backdrop of the 'wholesale marketisation of education and training'.

The 'third phase' of new vocationalism, according to Bates et al (1998, p115) was characterized by what they term *'controlled vocationalism'*. Here vocationalism 'revolved around' preparing young people for their future work roles, and ensuring the correct 'attitudes for employment'. Within this 'phase', the ideology of progressivism was very much the junior partner in the

vocationalism/progressivism relationship. Nevertheless, Ecclestone (2000) contends that her interviews with policy-makers:

> reveal aspirations heavily permeated by liberal humanism and vocational progressivism (p543).

As she makes clear, there was a 'desire to make teachers more "student-centred"' (ibid.).

Any examination of the content of vocational courses today would have great difficulty in finding such aims as those described in NWRAC (1983, p2), or the ideology of progressivism as outlined by Yeomans (1998, p143). However, the majority of those interviewed for the present study felt that both should play a major role in general vocational education and training. Thus, the central aims of new vocationalism should be both to develop critical and analytical skills, and be student centred. Their views will be discussed further in Chapter Four. In more general terms, it could be asked: what is meant by critical and analytical skills? Moreover, it could also be asked: how are such skills to be taught?

In answer to the first question, it has been argued that critical and analytical skills are the ability to examine in detail some subject or statement, and, following this in-depth reflection, come to some meaningful judgements. These judgements may differ greatly from our initial appreciations of the subject or statement reflected upon, or they may not. Thus, critical and analytical skills require the examination of all possible alternatives. It has already been pointed out that one of the 'aims' of the NWRAC (1983) document discussed above was to 'develop students' ability to absorb, interpret and transmit information' (p2).

Further to this, in the introduction to the same document the authors contend that 'general education should encourage "flexibility of the mind"' (p1). Moreover, according to McPeck (1981, p6):

> the most notable characteristic of critical thought is that it involves a certain scepticism, or suspension of assent...

Yet the marketized FE of today would clearly eschew any such aims that would include inter-college collaboration as represented in NWRAC (see Yeomans, 1998, p140).

Central to critical thought is a capacity for a 'reflective scepticism' (McPeck, 1981, p13). The development of such a capacity in students is no easy matter. How do we manage the difficult task of, in Dewey's (1960, p78) words 'cultivating the attitude of reflective thinking' in our students? Yet, if Dewey is correct the task should be less onerous than we would think, because:

> tendencies toward a reflective...activity are native to the mind...There is an innate disposition to draw inferences, and an inherent desire to experiment and test (p83).

So, clearly the propensity is there. It just needs development. Arguably the best method of developing that 'innate' propensity is, following Carr and Kemmis (1986, passim) is through a 'commitment to the wellbeing' of the students, parents, employers, and 'society at large' (p222). Teaching, within such a commitment would require the teacher not to be a 'transmitter' of facts, but to be a facilitator who would 'promote critical self-reflection in society at large' (p222). Perhaps Carr and Kemmis' argument should be extended from the schools sector to FE.

To some extent early forms of new vocationalsm did promote the possibility of critically assessing both society in general, and the workplace in particular, as witness, for example, the 'Industrial, Social, and Environmental Studies of the CPVE Core Competences' which included the investigation of the 'roles and methods of operation used by trade unions and professional associations' (BTEC, 1985, pp6-7). However, if the methods and practices of, for instance, GNVQ, with their focus on 'outcomes', are too closely followed this 'critical self-reflection' would never be developed. Bates et al (1998, p115) argue that, whilst any 'critique' of, for instance, the 'economic arrangements of society' held some legitimacy in the classrooms of the 1970s, by the 'early 1990s such a position was untenable'. For her part, Dee (1999) notes that the concentration on 'outcomes' has led to a:

> tendency for some teachers to use the outcomes as a syllabus, teaching to the assessment criteria and using a limited range of teaching methods (p154).

It could be argued that such methods and practices must be contested and undermined.

Notwithstanding this, the above representation of the progressive ideology underpinning general vocational courses both past and present does little justice to its complexity. For as Bates et al (1998, pp113-114) contend 'both progressivism and vocationalism were likely to be changed' once they began to impact upon each other. This applies to the older versions of new vocationalism such as TVEI and CPVE as well as the more modern (GNVQ). Consequently, writers such as Yeomans (1998, p132) caution the observer against what he

terms 'golden ageism' and the emplacement of 'some sort of ideal paradigm' of an older progressive vocationalism. Nevertheless, it is clear that the marketization of the general vocational curricula that occurred at the same time as the introduction of GNVQs has attenuated 'key elements in progressivism' (ibid.). Thus, 'elements' such as 'students taking responsibility for their own learning' have been compromised by market ideals such as 'efficiency' (p131).

A further problem with GNVQ, noted by Ecclestone (2000, p546) was the fact that:

> the assessment regime was overhauled twice, with many accompanying attempts to improve guidance and explication of specifications and expected standards for students' work.

Moreover, this was carried out at 'great speed' between its introduction in 1992 and the changes of Curriculum 2000. However, as Bates et al (1998, p123) assert 'the ghost of progressivism' is still there with GNVQ. Consequently, they argue that 'progressivism may well survive longer than GNVQ itself'. This 'hope' can be seen in some of the lecturers' responses in Chapter Four (see for example RN's responses).

Key Skills and vocationalism

The concept of Core Skills, which have been recently re-named Key Skills, has a long history. During the 1980s and 1990s BTEC, for instance, used the term Common Skills. In the case of Core Skills, in YTS courses, these were defined as:

> those abilities commonly found in a wide range of occupations, in a variety of workplace settings, and in many different levels (FEU, 1985, pp29-30).

In the past the representatives of different groups (for example BTEC, 1986, 1992; NCVQ, 1996; and FEU, 1985) have participated in debating the nature of Core Skills and have proposed a variety of skills which they perceive as Core Skills. For their part, the NCVQ specified the following six Core Skill units: Communication, Information Technology, Application of Number, Working and Relating with Others, Improving Own Learning and Performance, and Problem Solving. However only the first five are 'accredited' (NCVQ, 1996, p9), and only the first three assessed. The students are assessed on the pre-stated outcomes for each Core Skill. Further to this, the Core Skills should be 'contextualised within vocational settings' (p5). In contrast BTEC Nationals specify seven Common Skills. They are Managing and Developing Self, Working With and Relating to Others, Communicating, Managing Tasks and Solving Problems, Applying Numeracy, Applying Technology, Applying Design and Creativity. With BTEC Nationals all the Common Skills were assessed. However, even here there has been pressure to develop 'an outcome based framework for common skills' (BTEC, 1992, p2). This is clearly a much different approach to that of the mid-1980s. This, earlier, approach to vocational learning was 'process' based (BTEC, 1986). This meant that the student was assessed not only on the end result but also on how she went about achieving that end. This element of education and training is emphasized much less with GNVQ courses. Nevertheless, what is shared by both NCVQ Core Skills and BTEC Common

Skills is the belief that they are 'transferable skills' (ibid.), and that what the student learns 'in one setting' can be transferred to 'a variety of other settings' (NCVQ, 1996, p21).

There would be few arguments against the view that word-processing skills can be seen as transferable. However it is less easy to argue that the same holds for the skills of communication. Thus, following Bridges (1993):

> negotiating skills might be heavily context dependent (p50).

For their part Hyland and Johnson (1998) have argued that:

> the pursuit of general transferable core/key skills is a wasteful chimera-hunt and should now be abandoned (p163).

They believe this on the grounds that such skills are often 'highly domain-dependent and not generalisable' (p169). Thus, I would add that the *level* of some of the skills expected of one group of workers would not necessarily be *expected* to transfer to another. Consequently, we would not count on the same level of mathematics on the part of both an electronics student and one studying textiles. It is also doubtful that the students would perceive the transferablity of what they were doing. Following Unwin and Wellington (1997) it is also arguable:

> students do not conceptualize or recognise the curriculum in the same way as teachers (p13).

There has been a growing debate recently, in the *'General Educator'* for instance, concerning the belief of some of its correspondents that there is a clear link between education and training provided by Core Skills (now Key Skills) and general education (see also Jessup, 1991, p85). However, according to Waugh

(1996, p10) the change from the name Core to Key Skills suggests great changes in their delivery. Thus, for example, Waugh contends that the change from Core to Key Skills entails a move from an 'activity' that is 'the centre of everything' to an 'activity' that is 'merely a prelude' to 'delivery' (p10). Notwithstanding this, Core/Key Skills are seen by many General Education lecturers as the vehicle for providing an educational content to vocational training. Thus the learner will be:

> introduced to concepts and ideas which go much further than the rather narrow vocational area that they have entered... (Turner, 1996, p16).

In other words it has been hoped that this element of a vocational course will encourage critical thinking, independent learning and personal development. However, Turner points out that:

> general education within the vocational area has always been an educational gloss to vocationalism... (p16).

He goes on to doubt the value of Core/Key Skills as a means of providing general education in vocational courses (ibid.). Green (1997b) has similar doubts, and argues that 'Core Skills' are a 'poor substitute' for:

> the kind of continuing general education that is taught on vocational courses in many continental countries (p89).

Here attempts are made:

> to impart a foundation of scientific and humanistic culture adequate to the demands of an active citizenship...(p100).

For her part Taylor (1994, p10) has argued that in the climate of 'budgetary constraints' on FE in general, and the teaching of vocational areas in particular, general education in whichever of its guises is given a 'low priority'.

This is borne out by my own experiences; thus, when certain areas of my college got into financial difficulty, vocational lecturers began to subsume Core Skills within their vocational units. This was the chosen alternative to allocating teaching hours to specialist lecturers. This '[v]Variability...in the pattern of core skills delivery' has been noted in FEDA (1997, p31). Finally, I would argue that these same 'budgetary constraints' mean that Labour's New Deal, which ensures 'training day release...for 18-24 year olds' (Bender, 1997, p14) has not raised the 'priority' of general education. A commonly-heard maxim from the present Labour government is that institutions (such as FE colleges) cannot have 'something for nothing'. The extra funding seems to be about getting people into work and is certainly not about introducing general education onto vocational courses. Thus, as Green and Lucas (1999a) point out, funding for FE under both Conservative and New Labour governments has emphasized 'efficiency savings' and the goal of driving 'down unit costs' (p2). Consequently:

> Educational values and concerns with the quality of learning have been marginalised by funding and financial considerations (ibid.).

These 'financial considerations' were noted by the majority of the lecturers observed in my research. Yet, it is commonly believed that, as Hyland and Johnson (1998) intimate:

> the general studies movement was transformed into a common skills or core knowledge programme (p163).

My research, discussed in Chapter Four does not support this belief.

Further to this, during April 1999 BTEC carried out, at number of FE colleges, 'trials' on behalf of DfEE to ascertain a 'tested' methodology for

externally assessing Key Skills. For example, for the Key Skill in Communication selected groups of students were given two externally assessed 'tests'. One of the tests was a computer marked multi-choice assessment of the students' understanding of an advertisement, and the other involved the students in carrying out tasks such as writing a letter (Edexcel Foundation, 1999). The multi-choice method won in the end, perhaps because it is cheaper to administer. The Key Skills co-ordinator at Blakewater College informed me that once the final version of these tests is introduced it will be up to the students whether they complete the tests or not. However, colleges are given financial incentives to get students to take part in Key Skills development. Clearly, if, as already discussed, Green and Lucas (1999a) are correct this could result in a 'marginalising' of '[e]ducational values' and 'the quality of learning' (p2). This does not bode well for using Key Skills as a vehicle for General Education. At the same time projects have been developed with the aim of introducing computer programmes which can deliver and assess Key Skills. Thus:

> candidates work through the material and communicate via e-mail to a tutor, who guides them to completion of the qualification (BECTA, 1999a, Daventry Tertiary College).

What is more this system can operate through a 'Call Centre' linking:

> a learning network with ICT links between a training support centre and 'Ufi' access points in workplaces and community locations (BECTA, 1999b, Dundee College).

Such a scenario completely precludes the utilization of Key Skills as a cover for introducing General Education into vocational areas. This is discussed further below.

The 'educated person' and education 'for life' not just the workplace

Education and training within the new vocationalist discourse, with its emphasis on 'outcomes', may, in spite of its claims to a 'technical efficiency', paradoxically result in grave inefficiencies. The result would be a training for skills that will soon become obsolete. Thus, following Dewey (1966) vocational education and training in this scenario would:

> become an instrument of perpetuating unchanged the existing order of society, instead of operating as a means of its transformation (p316).

In contrast an education and training may be advocated that would prepare people for their future lives and not just for their working lives. Such an education and training would broaden the outlook of its recipients. It would, perhaps, following Dewey (1966):

> include instruction in the historical background of present conditions: training in science to give intelligence and initiative in dealing with materials and agencies of production: study of economics, civics, and politics, to bring the future workers in touch with the problems of the day and the various methods proposed for their improvement. Above all, it would train power of adaption to changing conditions so that future workers would not become blindly subject to the fate imposed on them (p318-319).

This view of the aims of education and training is close to the syllabus, discussed earlier, followed by BTEC National students at Blakewater College before the changes in the 1990s.

This is not to say that such an education and training need eschew the needs of the workplace. For, if we desire our students to develop what Pring (1995) terms the 'mental powers' in order 'to act and to behave as an educated

person in our society' (p109), then it should also include the preparation for their lives at work. Accordingly, it could be argued that we all need to develop the capacities for what Pring (1995, p146) has called 'knowing how' and 'knowing that'; that is the practical and the liberal. For his part Hodkinson (1991) points out that the 'vocationalists' are solely concerned that students learn 'how to do things'. In contrast the 'academics' argue for the predominant ability of students 'to think critically' (p75). Hodkinson proceeds, to indicate that elements of both approaches would 'benefit' students (p86). However, how is this combination of 'approaches' or knowledges to be achieved? For Pring (1995) this would necessitate the development of a 'community of educated persons' (p193).

According to Carr, true democracy, that is direct, participatory democracy, can only thrive in a society in which everyone takes part, on an equal footing with each other, in the decision-making process. It can be seen, therefore, that democracy, within this perspective, is one in which the 'values of self-fulfilment, self-determination and equality' are the prime aims of education (Carr, 1991a, p378). Such an education could only take place in an atmosphere of democratic freedom. Moreover, this atmosphere of democracy starts with the teacher's own practice. This practice would clearly involve styles within which students would, for instance, develop 'the ability to analyse, criticise, apply, change, challenge and so on', emphasise the maturation in them of a 'broad critical reflection and understanding', and involve them in making decisions 'responsibly and judiciously' (Harrison and Knights,1993, p18; Wringe 1984, p17; McLaughlin, 1992, p238). Finally, this would entail the teacher acting as 'a

facilitator or enabler of learning' (Harrison and Knights, 1993, p19). Collaboration is clearly the watchword of such ideals.

Nevertheless, as Carr (1991a) contends:

> the meaning of citizenship is always the subject of contestation *and* that it is through this process of contestation that the relationship between the citizen and the state is continuously being re-defined (p384, original italics).

Consequently, he proceeds, this contestation prepares:

> future citizens to participate positively in that evolving historical debate through which the status of citizenship has been, and is being extended and transformed (p384).

As a result Carr (1991b) has argued for the ideal of creating democracy through the active citizen, that is a citizen who is fully involved in her democracy.

Nevertheless, a number of writers add a note of caution when considering empowering curricula such as that envisaged above. Thus, the research of writers such as Bates (1998, pp201-202) indicates that students *may* utilize their 'classroom power' and resist the implementation of such a curriculum for whatever reason. For his part, Hodkinson (1998, p164) points out that 'choice of GNVQ', as opposed to some other course, is not necessarily a 'means of empowering young people'. Their choice of course must be seen as being strongly influenced by:

> personal dispositions, which...are part of their life histories and located in the social, economic and cultural context in which they, their families and friends live (p159).

Thus, what happens on their GNVQ course, for instance, can only be fully understood when what Hodkinson terms the '*field*' is considered. Consequently,

following Hodkinson, what a student does is often 'determined through interactions with others'. Choice of course (GNVQ for example) may be a result of the power relations within the students 'interactions' (p160). In other words the choice of taking up a GNVQ course may be a conscious decision on the part of the student, but ultimately 'the course provider decides whether or not to admit them' to the course in question (p161). It is perhaps the 'course provider' who is empowered *not* the student.

Summary

In the second part of this chapter (pp61-87) I have examined the curricular changes that have occurred in the post-16 sector in the 1990s. Whilst I have concentrated on the introduction of GNVQ, I have also examined what I see as similar changes that have occurred with the older BTEC National diplomas. This section of the chapter went on to explore what I see as grave problems with the underpinning philosophy of the GNVQ model.

The following section examined Key Skills and argued that changes in the way they are delivered make the inclusion of general education in vocational courses problematic. Finally the chapter ended by scrutinizing the literature on, and arguing strongly *for* the inclusion of, *general* education in all general vocational courses.

Curricular change has been a highly important element in this chapter because I see the alterations to general vocational education and training as

central to the perceived need, of both government and employers, to, in Jessup's (1991) words, 'make more effective use of...human resource'. Moreover, the changes to the general vocational curriculum would ensure Britain would 'remain economically competitive' (p6). In Chapters Four and Five I reflect on the impact of the changes that have occurred in the general vocational curriculum during the 1990s. In the following chapter I present my methods of assessing the influences of both curricular change to general vocational qualifications, and also alterations to the professionalism of FE teachers. In addition I discuss the ideological underpinnings of those methods, and also the limitations to my study.

Chapter Three

The fieldwork: methodology, and methods, procedures and limitations

Introduction

In this chapter my task is to justify my fieldwork methodology, discuss the sources from which I have obtained my data, and describe the procedures used to collect the data. With this in mind the chapter is divided into two parts. In the first (pp90-105), I have reflected upon my underpinning philosophy. Here I have endeavoured to clarify my choice of methodology. In addition, I have attempted to disclose to the reader any bias that may, or may not, impinge upon my 'Findings' set out in Chapter Four. The second part of the chapter (pp106-122) assesses the sources, methods and procedures I have used. Here I discuss the limitations that encroach upon the data. In addition, I describe how the research was conducted. The data was collected as part of a longitudinal study. The study commenced with my MA research into the effects of the introduction of new working conditions into the sector (see Fielding, 1996; Fielding, 1998). The study ends *before* the implementation of Curriculum 2000. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Methodology

The data evolved from a case study of the college in which I teach. That case study was of certain areas of my own workplace. For Yin, whose work was examined during an earlier part of the EdD programme I have been following:

> A case study is an empirical enquiry that:
> - investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context: where
> - the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which
> - multiple sources of evidence are used (cited by Golby, 1993, p5).

What follows is a discussion of the methodology that underpins the methods utilized in my case study.

At the heart of much of the debate about educational research lies the dichotomy between the quantitative and the qualitative approaches. It is perhaps not accidental that the quantitative approach was so influential, and was so dominant from the very beginnings of educational research. It was 'inspired by the explosion of the natural sciences in the nineteenth century' (De Landsheere, 1993, p3). Moreover, a part of that inspiration was the carrying over of scientific methods such as that of the experiment in the social arena of educational research. Thus, Binet argued that:

> Education must rely on observation and experimentation. By experience, we do not mean the vague impressions collected by persons who have seen many things. An experimental study includes all methodically collected documents with enough detail and precise information to enable the reader to replicate the study, to verify it and to draw conclusions that the first author had not identified (cited by De Landsheere, 1993, p5).

Such methods are seen by those that utilize them as objective. This in their view gives to their research the 'stamp of approval' (Phillips, 1993, p71) they so desire. Many writers have argued that 'qualitative inquiry can only be objective in so far as it approximates to quantitative inquiry' (ibid., p70). However, as Phillips continues, both qualitative and quantitative work can be seen as objective when their findings have been:

> opened up to criticism, and the reasons and evidence they offered in both cases have withstood serious scrutiny. The works will have faced potential refutation, and, insofar as they have survived, they will be regarded as worthy of further investigation (pp70-71).

Yet, work that is seen as objective is seen also as scientific, that is scientific in the sense that physics or chemistry is seen as a science. The problem here is that the social scientist is dealing with humans and their activities. In Kelly's (1989, p5) words:

> Education is one such activity, and this does not lend itself to study of a narrowly scientific kind. It is...a complex and ultimately impenetrable process (quoting Holt).

Thus, dealing with people is far different from dealing with chemical substances.

Nevertheless, the natural science tradition has prevailed in educational research. Consequently, as Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) note, within this model 'quantitatively measured variables are manipulated in order to identify relationships among them. This logic is taken to be the defining feature of science' (p4). Nonetheless, I would contend that natural science research methods, when applied to the social world, rarely provide clear cut answers. Consequently, following Elliott (1996a, p53), I would argue that 'it is

inappropriate to quantify responses...and encourage potentially unhelpful statistical interpretations'. However, in Chapter Four, where appropriate, I have given an indication of the numbers responding to my questions.

Further to this, I would argue that those social and educational researchers that hold to the natural science quantitative approach misunderstand the scientific method. Natural scientists themselves do not see their work as providing clear-cut answers. In the world of natural science the scientist starts with a hypothesis, and she then tests that hypothesis. The data produced from the tests will either suggest the validity of the hypothesis, or not. If valid, and other scientists on re-testing the hypothesis also suggest it is valid, then the hypothesis becomes theory. It is then accepted by the scientific community for as long as no new information is uncovered that the scientific community agrees disproves it. Clearly, in the world of natural science, theories are placed under continuous, rigorous scrutiny.

An example of the results of the rigorous testing of theory is seen in the 'phlogiston' theory. In the eighteenth century, before the discovery of oxygen disproved it, the false theory of 'phlogiston' held back the growth of chemistry. 'Phlogiston' theory was used to explain combustion. According to this theory when a substance burned it was because it contained a material called 'phlogiston'. When the burning substance was placed in an air-tight container it was believed that the fire was extinguished because the air in the container became saturated with 'phlogiston'. *This* theory had been rigorously tested until its validity seemed most probable. Yet the discovery of oxygen meant that the

scientific community came to see the 'phlogiston' theory as false. I believe this one example from the world of natural science demonstrates that the quantitative, objective methods copied by some educational researchers will not necessarily produce the clear cut answer that they would hope. Consequently, I would also argue that, particularly when applied to human activities, the findings of quantitative research are less than objective.

In addition, following Carr (1995), the idea that educational research can only be modelled on the natural sciences also suffers from:

> the widespread belief that educational research can only be scientific if it is value-free (p95).

Yet, as Carr goes on to argue, values are an 'inescapable category in educational research' (p98). Moreover, as I would contend, a person's research position incorporates a clear belief in a set of values. Thus, in Carr's words:

> the choice of a research stance is never just the reflection of an intellectual preference, it embodies an educational commitment as well (p93).

At every stage of my research it was my 'responsibility for critically examining and justifying the educational values' that underpinned its methodology (p98). I firmly believe that no researcher can escape a commitment to a set of values. Yet many of those who hold to the quantitative approach believe, wrongly in my view, their research to be value-free. They claim to be neutral. Yet, when applied to areas outside the physical world, this neutrality claim is inadequate. Thus, as Feinberg (1983) maintains:

> In a practical setting the institutional framework already places the researcher in the service of some set of assumed ends. Even if the only charge is to gather statistical information about some aspect of the

> educational enterprise, say the relative achievement of black and white students, the researcher has accepted both some received idea about what constitutes important categories for grouping learners and a stipulated measure of what is to constitute achievement. This initial starting point must reflect some received definition, and this is often that of the formal or informal policymaking network (1983, pp19-20).

The research methodology applied in my study is qualitative in nature. However, this approach, which became dominant in the 1980s, is as Atkinson et al (1993) maintain, not a single, 'distinct' monolithic tradition. It consists, they suggest, of seven 'different types of approach' each supported by 'particular groups of researchers' (p25). Nevertheless there is 'much cross-fertilization and internal innovation' (p25) between the 'types'. Following Hammersley (1993, p212) I would argue that qualitative methodologies are 'more attuned to the distinctive character of human social life' than a solely quantitative approach with its roots in the natural sciences. For this reason the qualitative approach was chosen as well suited to the planned case study.

In recent years ethnography has become popular in social and educational research. In part this can be seen as a reaction against the quantitative approach with its propensity to overlook 'the creative role of individual cognition and group interaction' (Hammersley, 1992, p12). Any understanding of group interactions must come from observing that 'interaction' in its particular 'everyday contexts, rather than under conditions created by researchers' (Hammersley, 1998, p2). I would contend that the methods of the quantitative approach interfere with those contexts and reduce the chances of

natural 'interactions'. In a social setting they are contrived. In contrast the ethnographic researcher is involved with:

> participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions- in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p1).

By undertaking an ethnographic study within my workplace I hoped to describe the 'activities' and 'viewpoints' of all the actors involved. However, following Deem and Brehony (1994, pp162-163), I will not just 'report those views but also interpret and analyse them'. In other words, I will draw conclusions from my work.

Further to this, I executed a particular kind of ethnographic study, namely a reflexive, critical ethnographic study of the kind already outlined in Chapter One. Reflexivity is, as Troyna (1994) points out:

> a diffuse concept which is used by academics in a bewildering number of ways. In some contexts, it seems to denote an allegiance to particular epistemological stances; in others, to methodological practices. Different again are those contexts where the two meanings are conflated - or confused (p5).

To escape this confusion required my closely re-reading the work of Carr and Kemmis (1986). Up to this re-reading I had, for my part, 'confused' and 'conflated' the meanings of the two words reflexive and reflective. Thus, I now see that the meaning of the word 'reflect' or 'reflection' is to meditate upon or think carefully about, in this case, our research. In contrast, 'reflexivity' is far more active in its meaning. It implies something much more than thinking carefully about our research. It is something more interactive. Thus, it is a

process that raises the possibility of change for *all* the participants involved, in our case the researcher *and* the researched. Accordingly, following Carr and Kemmis (1986), the critical researcher is one who aims to be:

> *reflexive* (changing as the knowledge of the participants changes; as both products and producers of historical and social states of affairs and interactions) (p26)

As a result my research focuses 'on the participants' perspectives' in the hope of enlightening all 'participants about the nature and consequences of different practices' (p26).

Arguably, educational research following this perspective would require research methods that are both emancipatory and 'critical'. Thus, for Mac an Ghail (1991) the reflexive nature of his 'study of racism in schools...in Kilburn' led to a 'change' in his 'perspective' (p103). Following his research he identifies 'racism rather than the students themselves as the main problem' (p104). I hoped that the work for my thesis would have the same effect, in that both myself and those I research would develop changed perspectives of our social and educational situation. I believe that for research to be 'critical' this is an important aspect of the reflexive approach. These 'changed perspectives' are discussed further in Chapters Four and Five.

As to critical ethnography, this research methodology involves far more than an unexamined description of, in my case, the effects of policy and funding changes on teacher professionalism and the general vocational curriculum. It is an ethnography that perceives 'society' as, following Apple (1996, pix), being 'riven by social antagonisms'. Moreover, whilst being aware that there is much of

what Kemmis (1990) terms 'contestation' within the power structures of those 'social antagonisms' discussed by Apple (ibid.), it is an approach that would seek to redress the balance by supporting and giving a voice to those who are less privileged in those 'social antagonisms'. They would, in Kemmis' (op. cit.) words, 'evade oppose and resist' the power of 'hegemonic groups' (p40), the 'less privileged' in our case being the college lecturers.

Nonetheless, as has been stated already, 'values cannot be expunged from educational research' (Carr, 1995, p88). It is difficult, therefore, 'to neutralize ourselves from our work' (Eisner, 1993, p50). Facts do not speak for themselves. Consequently, the interpretation of the 'activities' and 'viewpoints' of those involved in my ethnographic case study *must* be influenced by my own educational philosophy.

Clearly, I must make my educational philosophy transparent. I must strive to make this clarity on-going. In other words I must be 'up-front'. I see Carr's (1995, p50) concept of 'critical self-reflection' as helpful in this matter. Notwithstanding this, it has been argued that the revelation that a writer is 'biased' in a certain area, for example she is in favour of egalitarian educational practices, is just a poor alternative to the arduous responsibility of 'striving for objectivity' (Mann, 1985, pp2-3). In answer to this charge I would argue, in the first place, that following Carr and Kemmis (1986, p43):

> Social life is reflexive; that is, it has the capacity to change as our knowledge and thinking changes, thus creating new forms of social life which can, in their turn, be reconstructed.

Moreover, as a result of this 'reflexivity':

> the 'truths' they tell must be seen as located in particular historical circumstances and social contexts (ibid.)

Clearly the ethnographer must be prepared to change as a result of critically reflecting on her research. As mentioned above, this must all be 'up-front'. In the second place, because the 'critical reflection' is (or should be) carried out in the 'public domain', it will be 'tested, justified and sustained through debate in the public sphere' (Kemmis, 1995, p15).

What is my educational philosophy? In brief, it is one that completely rejects what Simon (1992) has termed 'consumer-led systems in education'. Such 'systems' have led 'to the reintroduction of selective processes, however covert...' (p106). Consequently, there has been 'competition between schools' and this 'will benefit some and bankrupt others' (p107). Thus, what I am for is the end of what has become 'the doctrinaire reliance on market forces' in education, and the introduction of a:

> joint co-operative effort by all concerned to build an environment directed to realising the full potentialities of all our citizens, whatever their age, gender, race or social class (Simon, 1992, p198).

In the case of FE the 'marketization' of education and training has exacerbated what Feinberg (1983, pp228-229) describes as the 'two paradigms of education', one that tends to 'differentiate' and one that tends to 'unify'. Within the former the concern is 'with the transmission of technologically exploitable knowledge', With the latter the concern is:

> with those forms of instruction primarily intended to further social participation as a member of the public through the development of

> interpretative understanding and normative skills. This form of instruction is often called general education.

I believe that a major part of the change in the FE sector has seen the decline of Feinberg's second paradigm of education. I believe this is not good. Nevertheless, I wish to chronicle and draw conclusions from the effects of that change.

In order to enhance my critique of the changes occurring in my area of study I kept an on-going self-reflective diary of my research. I have made a great deal of use of this diary, in particular, in my Findings chapter. I believe this to be useful in revealing my educational philosophy, and the reflexive nature of my thoughts. In effect I have written an autobiographical account of my thought processes throughout the research, and I have utilised this to enhance my analysis of the research data. As a result, I hope my account will be an aid to elucidating a process described by Fischer (1986, p198) who believes that:

> language itself contains sedimented layers of emotionally resonant metaphors, knowledge and associations, which when paid attention to can be experienced as discoveries and revelations.

Thus, I hoped to discover 'what is pointed to, what is repressed, implicit, or mediated' (ibid.).

There are, however, grave problems here. For one thing, as Troyna (1994) maintains, the major weakness is that such methods may produce only 'selective reconstructions' (p7). My findings could arguably be just *my* interpretation of what had gone on. Nevertheless, I hope my diary will allow 'the reader to bring to the text many of the nuances, tacit understandings and implicit

perspectives' (Fischer, 1986, p200) that other approaches seem to eschew. As to Troyna's charge of 'selective reconstructions', whilst I believe it does have purchase and care must be taken, the fact that the results of all research should be debated and tested in Kemmis's 'public arena' discussed earlier (1995, p15) gives such work some authority. Moreover, following Carr and Kemmis (1986), I see educational research such as that which I have conducted as being a 'collaborative' process in which all the participants were involved in a process of 'democratic decision-making' (p199).

Consequently, before any analysis took place, the raw data obtained from the participants in my semi-structured interviews (a method discussed later in this chapter) was returned to them in the form of written transcripts, in order that they might be given the opportunity to make comments, reflect upon and ultimately change if they wished, what they had said. Further to this the data obtained as a result of ethnographic techniques was checked. As a result, what Carspecken (1996) has described as 'compiling a record through the collection of monological data' was followed up by what he terms 'dialogical data generation' (pp41-42). Thus, in my study of 'the social action' (p40) taking place at Blakewater College a 'primary record' was first constructed as a result of in-depth on-going observation of the 'interactions' taking place. This involved the use of concentrated note taking, audio taping, and the up-dating of what Carspecken (pp41-42) calls 'a journal kept on observations and conversations' at the 'locale of the site' - my research diary. This 'primary record' was followed up by 'conversing' with 'the subjects' of my study. Consequently, I was able to

check the data. I was also able, following Carspecken, to generate 'data *with* people' rather than record 'information *about* them' (p42, my italics). Clearly those researchers who adhere to the natural science approach in their research would see this involvement as not following 'the rational procedures of science' (ibid., p67). This is because the educational values that sustain their work reflect a 'theory of human nature' (Carr, 1995, p93) that is hostile to mine. My work would be seen as non-scientific, not value-free, subjective and, therefore, compromised.

Habermas (discussed in Carr, 1995, pp93-95) has argued that 'there are three possible ways of conceptualizing social scientific research'. In brief these are, first, the 'natural scientific approach' that incorporates the educational values of preparing people 'for their future lives'. At the moment in FE in particular, this seems to be about preparing the young for their work roles. The second is the 'historical-hermeneutic' approach that aims to develop the individual in a 'meritocratic' society. Finally there is the 'critical' approach that seeks to empower and emancipate people, and is concerned with 'eliminating the social and political constraints which distort rational understanding'. Apart from a brief flirtation with the second in the late 1960s and early 1970s (see Young, 1971, Keddie, 1971), the first of Habermas's approaches has dominated social and educational thinking since the last century. Halpin (1994) notes that the qualitative approach, whilst influencing the thinking of some educational researchers and their 'intellectual communities':

> fails to penetrate the minds of policy makers who are seeking answers to more prosaic...questions (p199).

I would add to this that the prevailing view of the educated lay-person is that research, if it is *real* research, is about the replication of the methods of the natural sciences. Thus research is seen as characterized by quantitative survey methods, experimental design and the ubiquitous ten page questionnaire issued to large numbers of respondents, who often do not have the time or the inclination to reply. I am reminded here of my interview with the Principal of my college whilst asking her permission to carry out research. No matter what I said about, for instance, participant observation, she thought I was going to carry out some large-scale questionnaire on her staff. Clearly, such methods as participant observation are not seen as scientific, at least not in the populist (or my Principal's) version of the term. This mistaken view of what real 'scientific' research is presumed to entail was also met later when colleagues asked what methods I would use for my research. However, I see this as quite understandable when at every turn in education practitioners are asked for more and more numerical data. For example, in the run-up to the FEFC Inspection in March 1999 the college was asked for preliminary information. According to the Dean of my Faculty the response to the information provided by the college from the FEFC was that 'there are too many words and not enough numbers'. Subject leaders were then asked to provide more information of a statistical nature for their subject. Words are anathema. Only numbers count in today's FE.

However to return to Habermas's 'three possible ways of conceptualizing social scientific research'. It is the third, that is the 'critical' approach, that I have utilized in my research. This is because this approach comes closest to my own educational philosophy. Thus, in summary, I am for the introduction of an education system that that will give the learners the possibility of becoming truly emancipated future citizens in a participatory democracy. Such an education system would in the words of Habermas:

> liberate individuals from the causal efficacy of those social processes that distort communication and understanding and so allow them to engage in the critical reconstruction of suppressed possibilities and desires for emancipation (paraphrased by Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p137).

Moreover, 'critical' educational values with their 'notion of ideology-critique' aim:

> to provide a way of distinguishing ideas which are distorted by ideology from those which are not and to show how such ideological distortions can be overcome (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, pp193-194).

These are educational values that I am for.

However 'critical' ethnography has been questioned by some writers. For example Hammersley (1992, p120) has argued that:

> critical ethnography is not a viable or desirable alternative to conventional ethnography.

Following Hammersley 'critical' ethnography demands a 'leap in faith' and is not as 'subtle' as 'conventional ethnography' (p119). However, as Jordan and Yeomans (1995) argue, ethnography can be divided up into three distinct 'dominant currents - the conventional, postmodern and critical' (p403). They proceed to argue that the 'conventional' view, followed by such as Hammersley, whilst striving 'to move beyond positivism', is highly impressed with the

objectivity of natural science. Moreover it is above all immensely interested that its research should be 'non-reactive'. In the words of Jordans and Yeomans:

> Conventional research...situates itself as a disinterested scientific activity, committed to modes of inquiry that are constructed by experts (pp403-404).

When such concerns as this are considered it is perhaps understandable that 'conventional' researchers like Hammersley portray the methods of 'critical' ethnography as 'not a viable or desirable' approach (1992, p120). Consequently, the fact that the 'critical' ethnographer would wish to involve herself with those she studies in the interests of emancipatory change would be anathema to the 'conventional' ethnographer. I believe the latter approach suffers from the limitations ascribed to the 'natural science' approach described above.

As to the postmodern ethnographer I believe this 'current', similar to the 'conventional' also has its limitations. Yet Clifford (1986a) suggests that:

> There is no longer any place of overarching view (mountaintop) from which to map the ways of human life (p22).

Further to this, Clifford suggests:

> what counts as 'realist' is now a matter of theoretical debate and practical experimentation...we can no longer know the whole truth (p25).

This is because there is, for Clifford, no 'final position' (p18). So far so good; there is not much I could dispute within that. However, elsewhere Clifford (1986b) talks of the unlimited readings of a text, and of 'multiple interpretations' (p120). Here I worry about the suggestion that there can be no 'limit' to the 'meanings' applied to 'the readings of a text' (ibid.). For, following and paraphrasing Evans's (1988) thesis, I would point out that any number of artists

may paint the same mountain and produce a different picture dependent on, for example, different light conditions, different seasons, etc., but at the end of the day they will paint the mountain. However, when one of their number paints a fried egg, claiming it to be a mountain, we know there is something amiss. Clearly, as Evans indicates not 'all views' are 'equally valued' (ibid., p224).

Nevertheless, there are also problems with 'critical' ethnography. For example it has been argued that whilst some 'critical' ethnography claims to be a 'bottom-up' view of social relations, 'its practitioners nonetheless come from the ivory towers of academia' (Jordan and Yeomans, 1995, p400). Perhaps as an antidote to this, following Stenhouse, forms of ethnography that exploit the concept of the 'teacher-as-researcher' (in Hammersley, 1992, pp135-136) could, in effect, 'strengthen the practice of critical ethnography' (Jordon and Yeomans, 1995, p402). Moreover, such methods that utilize the practitioner herself could be influential in empowering those researched. As a result the specialist skills of the 'teacher-as-researcher' within ethnography would:

> not be privileged but set alongside whatever skills, experiences and knowledge other participants bring to the...encounter (p402).

However, there were problems even here which I noted in my research diary. They will be discussed in Chapter Four.

Methods, procedures and limitations

Clearly some of the methods I utilized in my research have been mentioned already in the methodology section above. Thus, the methods utilized by Carspecken's (1996, p3) 'criticalists' have already been discussed. Burgess (1984) has noted that a number of researchers have 'integrated' both quantitative and qualitative methods in order that they may 'complement' each other (p3). Perhaps this 'integration' of methods would be utilized most often by the 'conventional' ethnographer. I aim to use qualitative methods such as participant observation and semi-structured interviews. My first task in implementing my methods was that of gaining access.

A number of researchers in their write-ups of their work discuss the 'considerable difficulty' they experienced in 'gaining access' to their research sites (Measor and Woods, 1991, pp64-67; Reynolds, 1991, pp195-199). In addition, Measor and Woods talk about the problems they experienced even once they had gained access. They noted a head teacher who objected to the use of the word 'kids' when speaking of pupils. As a result 'from that point on he closed up, and was unwilling to be interviewed or to discuss school matters' (p64). On the surface it would be expected that, as I was going to use my own workplace as a case study, I would not experience any difficulties with access. As far as my workplace was concerned this was the case. However, I do believe that, on occasion, some of the responses may have been influenced by the fact that my Division was in the past responsible for delivering General Education

throughout the college. I shall discuss this further in Chapter Four. My difficulties in gaining access to relevant workplaces are discussed later in this chapter.

I believe that ethical issues are central to any research project. Consequently, I started by writing to the Principal for her permission to carry out my research in the college. In the interview that followed I was asked for full information on what I would be doing. I did not envisage any problems here. After all one of the main thrusts of the research, in this early period of my study, was to find out what the employers linked with the college anticipate in terms of their future recruits. In addition, I felt sure the Principal would like to see the closer contact that must follow from a lecturer carrying out research, and who asks employers what they expect from the College. In the end the employers did not feature in my study. The reasons for this are discussed in Chapter One (pp12-15).

After gaining access my next task was to choose the individual respondents from each area of my case study for interview. I then e-mailed them outlining what I was doing, what I wanted from them, and what questions I would be asking. I wanted to make sure they knew exactly what was going on, and to give them time to prepare measured responses. Finally, after the interviews, which I taped, I let them see their responses in writing. This was so they could reflect upon, and change, what they had said, if they wished to do so. I taped their responses in the interests of noting *exactly* what they told me. I was well aware of the problems associated with tape recording. During one interview the tape ran out unnoticed for the last twenty minutes of the interview. Remembering

exactly what was said proved extremely difficult. Moreover on numerous occasions I sat with the recorder up to my ear listening and re-listening to a response only to decide, for example, that the respondent was clearing her throat. She was not making some earth-shattering contribution. In addition, I had to face the problems of selection in my write-up. In the end the relevance of their answers to my research aims influenced what was finally included in the thesis. The actual method of analysis was to colour-code their replies, using a highlighter pen, according to their relevance to my thesis aims. Clearly, another researcher may have made different selections that may have resulted in different conclusions.

There were also, following Wellington (1996, pp22-23), sampling issues to consider. As Ball (1993) indicates, in research of this kind 'sampling is inevitable and necessary' (p37). In my study, the aims of which have been discussed already in Chapter One, I wished to use my contacts in the vocational areas of my own college. Clearly, therefore, my sample, because it is from one of over four hundred FE colleges, falls within Burgess's (1984) '*Non-probability Sampling*' category. Moreover, because I chose areas of my college in which I teach my sample can also be seen as falling within Burgess's '*Judgement and Opportunistic Sampling*' category (pp54-55).

My respondents were chosen because I knew them and they taught within the areas I wished to study. I chose three lecturers from each of the three vocational areas of the college into which I have a teaching input. These were the lecturers whose teaching time was mostly committed to the courses I wished

to study. Other lecturers were only involved in these courses for a tiny proportion of their teaching time. In addition I chose three lecturers from the Division that inputs Key Skills/Industrial Studies into vocational courses. These were the lecturers whose timetables mostly involved them in this kind of work. The only other lecturer with similar commitments is myself. Besides these I chose the Key Skills Co-ordinator and four lecturers chosen from each of the teaching areas. The last four were chosen on the basis of whether I knew them, or, in one case because that person was recommended by the course leader. Over the years he had taught throughout the college. I suppose this is similar to Burgess's (1984) "*Snowball Sampling*" technique (p55). Further details of my lecturer respondents can be found in Appendix B. Here I have set out such information as their gender, length of teaching experience, work area, date of interview and college position. Three were middle managers. However, they were chosen because of their work role. Two were Divisional Heads, and the third was the college Key Skills Co-ordinator. In addition, I have included the industrial experience of all the lecturers involved in my study. Industrial experience is a vital part of a vocational lecturer's training. The initials used are fictitious. I promised anonymity before each was interviewed. The interviewer's initials GF, used in Chapter Four, are mine.

My semi-structured interview questions can be found in Appendix A. The questions can be seen as prompts to discussion around my thesis topic. In brief, the first set of questions were designed to stimulate discussion around changes in qualifications, namely GNVQ and the introduction of the 'outcomes' approach

to vocational education and training. The second set of questions aimed to explore the lecturer's perceptions of the concept of professionalism. I was interested to know how the changes were affecting their definitions of professionalism and their ability to *be* professional. My final set of questions intended to explore perceptions of the general education/vocationalism debate. This entailed discussion around the area of Key Skills and whether vocational education and training should concentrate on preparation for jobs or should be much broader and cover education for life as well as work. However, because of the changes to my research design discussed in Chapter One (pp12-15) the second set of questions on professionalism are analysed first, and the first and third sets appear under the heading of curricular changes. I piloted this questionnaire with three of the lecturers in December 1998. The rest of the interviews took place in the Spring term of 1999 with one taking place in June 1999. This one was late as a result of the FEFC inspection that took place the week before Easter.

I believe the responses of my sample were much influenced by 'the organization of places, persons, and times' (Ball, 1993, pp38-41). I have already discussed the 'persons', and how and why they were chosen. However, I will recapitulate. This is in order to highlight further details on my choice of interviewees. In total, eighteen teaching staff were my interview subjects. These eighteen were chosen from the four hundred lecturers in my college. For each of the three vocational courses I examined, I interviewed the three main lecturers responsible for each of the courses plus one of the peripheral lecturers teaching

on them. In addition I interviewed three lecturers whose prime teaching role is to deliver Key Skills and/or Industrial Studies to vocational courses. I also chose one other lecturer who ten years ago worked in the same area, but who now has been co-opted into the Special Needs Division. This role gives him, I believe, a special insight into the vocational courses on which some of his charges are students. I also interviewed the person who until October 1999 was the college co-ordinator for Key Skills - a post that is now redundant. I will leave it to her responses later in Chapter Four to explain the reasons for a situation that both she and myself see as a bizarre anomaly. Finally, I interviewed one lecturer from the Faculty of Business and Management, who delivers Key Skills to vocational courses in that faculty. He was added to my list of interviewees rather late in my research, after I had begun to reflect upon my research towards the end of the 1998-1999 academic year. I had started to wonder what the experiences of change were, as witnessed by a lecturer, in the one Faculty for which my Division no longer provides the delivery of either general education or Key Skills.

There were six females and twelve males interviewed. There is some imbalance here because three of the women interviewed were from one vocational area, namely Textiles. Textiles is a course which is predominantly taught by female staff. It is a course onto which it is difficult to recruit male students. Yet, perhaps incongruously, many leading fashion designers are male. I have been led to believe the gender imbalance is probably one of the reasons why both the male craft technology lecturer (WQ, one the peripheral lecturers mentioned above) and myself were originally asked to input onto this course. I

believe we were there as role models to the, hoped for, future prospective *male* students.

Clearly, when the figure of eighteen interviewees is juxtaposed with the total number of lecturers (400) in my case study college, there are problems of what Ball (1993, p40) refers to as 'an over reliance on data' from a limited number of 'people, places, or times'. However, he proceeds to contend that the 'tool of reflexivity' requires 'the researcher to face up to the partiality of data coverage'. Notwithstanding this, my data is made less partial, in the first place, by the fact that my research methods included participant observation. Moreover, in the second place, I interviewed the majority of the lecturers teaching on each of the courses I studied. Thus, for example I interviewed all the lecturers teaching on the ND and HND Telecommunications courses and four from the six teaching on the ND and HND Textiles and Fashion courses.

Further to this, the structure of the college and the way that structure operates in practice adds further complications to my research that require exposing. Following the FHEA (DES, 1992), instruments for the marketization of education were introduced. However, Robson (1998, p597) notes that the 'shift towards marketisation' had been a 'feature' of college 'culture since the mid 1980s'. Nevertheless, she adds that the FHEA served the purpose of consolidating and underlining the changes. Thus, for Hyland ((1994) colleges were constrained to:

> operate *like* businesses by learning their efficiency procedures and management systems (p139).

At college level this means that institutions such as Blakewater College operate under a form of internal market. This is what Le Grand and Bartlett (cited by Hodkinson and Issitt, 1995, p3) refer to as a 'quasi-market'. A feature of this quasi-market is, for Hatcher (1994) 'the creation of competing provider units'. The result is that the 'units' - in the case of Blakewater College the five Faculties, each with six or seven Divisions - compete for the limited funding coming from the FEFC. This funding for colleges comes in three stages - at "'Entry', 'On-programme' and 'Achievement'" (Lucas, 1999, p46). NATFHE (1995) noted that 'FEFC funding per student' had been 'cut' from £2603 in 1994/5 to a projected £2531 in 1998/9, whilst student numbers were expected to grow by 20% over the same period. The resulting scramble for funding affected a number of the interviewees' responses discussed in the next chapter.

Following Ball (1993, p38), I expected that the interview 'settings' could 'affect and influence' my respondents' 'social action'. Consequently, the interviews took place where my respondents wanted them to take place. This was often their own work area. I wanted them to feel 'at home', and 'on their own turf'. I wanted their 'private selves' to come to the 'fore' (Ball ibid., citing Woods). For its part I believe the 'time' of each interview often greatly influenced the answers given by my respondents. Thus, for example, all my interviews took place against the backdrop of college life. This life, at the time of my interviews, was excessively influenced by the fact that the FEFC was inspecting the college. Consequently, I believe responses could have been affected by the stresses and pressures of preparing for, and experiencing, inspection. Moreover, incidents

such as this must also have influenced the social interactions taking place that I observed during my ethnographic research.

My style of interviewing was that of semi-structured interviews. This was in the interests of flexibility, and of improving the possibility of uncovering the serendipitous. Moreover, I wanted the respondents to feel free to raise whatever they wished. Thus in the words of Bell (1993), there will be:

> Freedom to allow the respondent to talk about what is of central significance to him or her rather than the interviewer... (p94).

Nevertheless, I wished to ensure that each respondent kept to the general point. This was the reason that I decided on a structure for my interviews, as opposed to the unpredictability of the completely unstructured interview. Right from the first interview there were issues here. In spite of the structure a number of my interviewees, from time to time, strayed from the point. However, I allowed for this in the hope of hearing the unexpected. Thus, the first interviewee insisted on returning to the subject of teacher education. He is the course leader for teacher education at the college. Nevertheless, whilst digressing from the topic we were discussing onto his pet subject, he revealed his true feelings regarding the 'ticking off' of competencies:

> All the recording seems to have taken over from actually teaching them. I mean, all that ticking of boxes - it's a pity we can't spend the same time actually teaching them something worthwhile (EM).

This disclosure was quite unforseen, and, perhaps, would not have been revealed if I had intervened in order to keep him more closely to the point.

With reference to participant observation, it was in some ways comparatively easy to observe whilst participating in the daily life of my college. Thus, the source of my data was much wider than those chosen for interview. Consequently, I hope I have truly represented, what Biot (1993) terms, 'The autonomous, authentic...voices' (p63), and that 'my researcher's voice' is not too 'dominant' (p79). I believe I have not had to face the difficulties of the 'outsider' who, as Ball (1984) contends, must become:

> embedded in the perspectives of those who inhabit the socio-cultural world that is to be described and analysed (p72).

It has already been pointed out above, following Carr and Kemmis (1986) that 'value-free', 'objective' social science is an 'illusion' (p192). However, this does not mean that the problem of bias does not need to be addressed. Indeed some researchers would argue that a study such as the one I envisage *must* be biased. They would argue that 'given my experience and closeness' to my case study it would be impossible for me to 'obtain the necessary distance and ...objectivity' (Lacey, 1993, p116). However, Lacey goes on to point out that it is not necessary for the 'outsider' to be 'totally outside the culture' (ibid.). Further to this, following Gitlin et al (1993), I would wish to question 'whose interests are served by the bias' (p200). Do they serve the interests of those involved in the educational process, or do they serve the interests of those who wish to make that process cost-effective as opposed to educationally effective? The result of the former, as will be discussed in Chapter Four, is that there are qualitative

worries about the 'impact of cuts in course hours' (Lucas, 1999, p54). I would also like to question whether 'spectator-like research is possible' anyway (p203).

Notwithstanding this, Burgess (1984) stresses the necessity for:

> multiple strategies of field research...to overcome the problems that stem from relying on a single theory, single method, single set of data, and single investigation (p144).

Consequently, data triangulation was utilized in my research in order to give the reader multiple readings of the research setting. This is the reason why, for instance, I chose to examine three areas of my college. As a result, the data from one area will be compared and contrasted with another in order to give balance to my research. This method is described fully in the Open University Study Guide E811. Thus there will be:

> cross checking the existence of certain phenomena...by...comparing and contrasting one account with another in order to produce as full and balanced a study as possible (cited in Bell, 1993, p64).

I believe these methods are expeditious in assessing the validity and relevance claims of my proposed research. There is space to discuss them only very briefly here.

To take the criterion of validity first, following Hammersley (1998) I take the term validity to mean:

> the extent to which an account accurately represents the phenomena to which it refers (p62).

One way of testing the validity claims of a piece of research is to see whether the results can be replicated. With this method fellow researchers attempt to replicate the work of others, and:

> if the results are not reproduced, then the original researcher's claims are rejected as spurious (ibid.)

However, as Hammersley proceeds to point out there is the problem that 'people's behaviour cannot be controlled'. Further to this there is the 'problem of reactivity', whereby people react to the manipulation of others. I would add to this that the context would be different the second time. This reminds me of Evans' mountain metaphor discussed above. Clearly, therefore, replication has its limits when applied outside the world of natural science. Nevertheless, whilst conceding that validity in qualitative research is a 'slippery customer', I believe that:

> Validity can be crudely defined as the extent to which the data we collect relates to and can answer the research questions asked (Deem and Brehony, 1994, p163).

Even so, as these writers concede, validity claims, whilst being our aim, can never be 'fully achieved' (p165). Notwithstanding this, I believe my 'reflexive' methods, methods that include autobiography, enable me to give readers as full an account as possible of the research in order for them to judge its validity. More than this, to an extent, the validity of the research is given some transparency by the fact that it is open to critical scrutiny. Thus, along with writers such as Stenhouse:

> I see academia as a social system for the collaborative production of knowledge through research. Research is systematic enquiry made public. It is made public for criticism...(quoted by Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p188).

Hammersley has argued that whilst research must be seen as 'true', it must also be seen to have 'relevance to human concern' (1992, p85). I believe,

therefore, that I must demonstrate that my research is indeed 'relevant'. However, as to concerns for 'generalization' to the whole sector, this is a tall order. This is particularly so when I believe my work shows that even within one college there are different experiences. Thus, for example, Core/Key Skills at Blakewater College are fully integrated into some courses, whereas in others they are taught as separate discrete units. Nevertheless, as a reader of the journal *General Educator*, I have the impression that that this is typical of most colleges. I also believe the generalisability of my work lies in my methodology and methods. Thus, the reader will, for one thing, be able to check my findings, by for instance, checking whether the analysis of the interviews matches the discussion of the participant observation. For another, the reader is, I believe, because of the reflexive nature of the research, presented with as full an account of how the research was carried out as possible. Notwithstanding this, it is important to show where my research might, through similar studies, be seen to resonate with similar situations in other colleges. I will leave that discussion to my conclusions in Chapter Five.

The relevance of a piece of research can also, following Hammersley (1992, p91-92) be judged by what he terms 'theoretical inference'. Thus its relevance can be assessed by the theoretical insights it produces. I believe one clear example of this, from my research, is the fact that people's views of the changes that have occurred in FE vary according to a person's position in the College. Thus the senior managers tend to see the changes in a more positive

light than the main grade lecturers. I believe this has occurred across the sector. This could be seen as a 'theoretical inference'.

I saw the design of my research as an ongoing and developing process. It was not something that could be set down beforehand. This is because of the nature of ethnographic research. In brief, it is a project that will constantly go through the process of re-planning following reflection. Further to this, the researched will influence the researcher. I, therefore, saw my research plan as 'cyclical' (Wellington, 1996, p11, fig. 1).

In my case the above, already complex 'features' of a case study were complicated by the fact that I had set out to examine how each element that made up my case study related to its own particular outside phenomenon. Thus, I had hoped to relate the experiences of, for example, the telecommunications lecturers to the experiences of their students and their students' future employers. Stenhouse (1984) has noted some of the problems with what he terms 'multi-site' case studies (p226). In the case just mentioned, I had hoped to examine an HND Telecommunications course within my workplace and its relationship with its sponsor, a well-known multinational telecommunications company. I expected there to be the similar 'blurred boundaries' that Deem and Brehany (1994) found in their 'multi site case study of school governing bodies' (p159). For his part, Fischer (1986) refers to the concept of 'bifocality', that is where 'two or more cultures are juxtaposed' (p199). Thus, I had hoped my data, following the 'juxtaposition' of those involved - students, lecturers, employers and myself - would 'foster multiple axes of comparison' (ibid.). The results would

have been useful aids to my thesis. However, for the reasons already described in Chapter One (pp12-15) this was not to be. Neither the students' nor the employers' experiences are represented in this thesis. As a result I had to, in Wellington's (1996, p10) words, 're-plan/re-focus' the research onto the experiences of the college lecturers.

Notwithstanding this, to some extent both Fischer's 'bifocality', and also, perhaps to a lesser extent, Deem and Brehany's 'blurred boundaries' are to be found in the final thesis. Thus, for instance, the lecturers in the Division of Art and Design would see the practices of, for example, course administration within the Division of Electronics as different, if not 'exotic'. Nevertheless, their 'cultures...are more like families of resemblances' (Fischer, 1986, p199). There are clear similarities, but they are not the same.

Further to the above, following Stake (1998, p86), the aims of this case study have been to 'optimize understanding of the case rather than generalization beyond'. What I have presented is clearly a 'snapshot' of the effects of change to the concept of professionalism and to the general vocational curricula in one FE college. My 'snapshot' is of what Golby (1993) terms a 'particularity' (p7). Thus, in this view what is now required is the 'matter of connecting the case with others of its kind' in order to enhance clarity of 'collective understanding' (p10) of the phenomenon reflected upon. In my case, this is change and its impact on the professionalism of lecturing staff and the general vocational curriculum. Thus, a way of 'connecting' my case study 'with

others of its kind' could be by a series of other studies examining the same problem of change.

However there are clear limitations here because, to return to Yin (discussed above), a case study examines 'a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context' (cited by Golby, 1993, p5). Perceptions of that 'real life context' will more than likely differ greatly. As a result it is quite reasonable to suppose that, when studying change in FE, the effects on professionalism and the general vocational curricula will not necessarily be major issues for other researchers. Arguably they are central issues for myself because of the life experiences outlined earlier. Further to this, because research is, as already argued, cyclical (Wellington, 1996), and requires adapting throughout the process of the research it would be unlikely that the same themes raised in the present research would arise for another researcher. Thus, for example, attempts at triangulation by endeavouring to solicit the views of employers and students came to no avail in my case, and, as a result, I had to, following Wellington above, adapt my research to the altered circumstances. Moreover, in the end I had to rely on triangulation internal to my case study. Consequently, I researched the views of lecturers from different areas of my college. Another researcher in a different case study college might not face the same problems. Their problems might be, perhaps, in researching in a college facing staff redundancies resulting from financial irregularities. This, I believe would cause far more problems than I faced in my research, because it is likely that the

college managers, in such a case study, would not allow research similar to mine to take place.

Further limitations to my study may arise from my use of ethnographic techniques. Sikes (2000), for example, proposes that there is 'anecdotal evidence' that some 'informants' may attempt to 'deliberately deceive' the researcher (p257). Whilst I do not believe any of my 'informants' lied to avoid prosecution as in the case of one of Sikes' researchers, it is possible that some of the lecturers were economical with the truth. However, surely this is possible with all qualitative research? Perhaps, as Sikes contends, all research should be tentative, and be ready for updating or, indeed, correcting. But, is this not also the case with the research of natural science, as has already been indicated in this thesis? Arguably, all research requires constant checking and rechecking. This can be best achieved, following Stenhouse, when that:

> Research is systematic enquiry made public. It is made public for criticism... (quoted by Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p188).

I believe that the same holds true in the case of education, and, in our case, further education.

Summary

This chapter commenced by assessing my methodology. It began by discussing the problems inherent in qualitative, ethnographic, case studies. Notwithstanding this, it would not do to exaggerate these problems. I have not

had the problems experienced by many ethnographers who have to contend with 'multi-locale ethnographies'. Thus, as Marcus (1986) indicates, some ethnographers have :

> to juggle over a dozen locales and actors' perspectives, simultaneously and blindly influencing one another (pp171-172).

Thankfully, complex as my research appears to me, it has not presented difficulties such as these. Nevertheless, my efforts to 'sustain a narrative sequence of events' (p172) even within my less-complex ethnographic study has not been easy. I hope I have been successful. In addition I have attempted to make clear any bias on my part by revealing my educational values. I believe this is important in order that the reader may better assess the results of my research. To recap in brief, following Gutmann (1987), I am *for* an education that will encourage:

> *all*... [to] be educated adequately to participate as citizens in shaping the future structure of their society (p46).

Later in the chapter I proceeded to outline my views regarding 'critical ethnography'. My methodology has endeavoured to utilize this stance. The chapter went on to discuss my methods and procedures. In brief, they were participant observation and semi-structured interview techniques. This section also summarized some of the limitations to the thesis. In the following chapter I have presented my reflections raised by my data.

Chapter Four

The Findings

Introduction

In this chapter I will present and analyse my research data. In addition I will draw my major conclusions from that data. Reference will also be made to both the literature, and my methodology, discussed earlier in this thesis. Thus, I will reflect on my data in order to draw logical inferences. Further to this, I will examine the data within the context of the literature discussed in Chapter Two, and the methodology and methods in Chapter Three. In this chapter my findings are recorded and reflected upon in two principal sections. In the first (pp126-159) change and teacher professionalism will be analysed. Here I discuss the changing face of teacher professionalism, and its causes and effects, as perceived by college teaching staff. In the second section (pp161-188) changes in curricula for general vocational courses will be assessed. Here perceptions of change in general vocational courses, and the 'general education'/vocationalism debate are reflected upon. Thus, following these reflective discussions, I answer my research questions as set down in Chapter One (p9). As a result, I examine the perceived reasons for the changes that have occurred and are still occurring in the FE sector. I explore the effects of the 'outcomes' approach on the delivery

of general education in general vocational courses. In addition, the effects on teacher professionalism are scrutinized. Finally, the impact of the changes on future workers, and, indeed, citizens is investigated. The chapter terminates with a section (pp190-200) entitled 'review of findings'. Here I attempt to draw together the salient points from my two major sections set out above.

The data for my findings are gleaned, as has already been pointed out, both from my observations as a college lecturer throughout the period discussed, and also from semi-structured interviews with staff relevant to the courses that I have analysed in some depth. These interviews took place throughout the academic year 1998-1999. I saw my interview questions as 'prompts' to stimulate discussion around the areas of 'change in qualifications', 'effects on professionalism', and 'general education and vocationalism'. Further to this, at some stage in each of the interviews I asked for the views of staff on the reasons underpinning what was going on. I also asked for their definition of the concept of professionalism. I did this because, as already indicated, after my 'pilot', in the interests of a quick response, I e-mailed these two questions to the lecturers concerned. The responses were not very quick in coming back, and when they did, after a number of reminders, in at least one case the respondent had clearly researched his answer. I wondered afterwards if the response coincided with his true beliefs, or whether the reply was intended to impress me with his learning. He had just completed a Master's degree in Educational Technology. On reflecting on this I decided that for the rest of my interviews I did not want replies drawn from some text book on the subject. I wanted the deeply-

held convictions of interviewees. I noted later in my research diary that, particularly with the question on professionalism, my respondents had to pause for much thought before they replied. I wondered what the responses to my other questions would have been if they had not seen them in advance.

Change and its effects on teacher professionalism

Perceptions of the causes of change

The causes of the changes occurring at Blakewater College are, in the view of the teaching staff, manifold. However it seems to me that their perceptions relate directly to the perceived impact of change on their working lives. Moreover, the lecturers in my case study believe that whilst change has always been part and parcel of their teaching lives, significant change, change that for them has affected their work tremendously, is quite a recent phenomenon. Five of those interviewed talked about the last ten years but the others identified a marked acceleration 'since Incorporation' (discussed already in Chapters One and Two). One of the effects of the Incorporation of colleges was to give college Principals and their SMTs (senior management teams) much greater power than they had held before. With ERA (DES, 1988) they were given much greater financial control. However, many college lecturers believe that real control did not come to college Principals until the FHEA (DES, 1992) incorporated FE colleges. This allowed Principals to introduce new conditions of

service. In effect this meant that SMTs could drive down costs by increasing class contact hours and cutting lecturer salaries. Further to this, all but two of those I interviewed saw the root cause of change as being the need to be efficient, 'like industry'. Thus, in response to the question:

> GF: Why have colleges had to experience so much change over the last few years?
>
> GC: I suppose the powers that be think we're inefficient, and that we should be more like industry.

This response illustrates the belief of college lecturers that as Hyland (1994) argues, colleges must now 'operate *like* businesses'. Notwithstanding this, their responses can be divided under the headings: 'cost-cutting' and 'value for money', 'flexibility', and the belief that change is good for the soul, or in our case, the institution. The latter will be discussed first under the heading 'thriving on chaos'.

'Thriving on Chaos'

For many the key to a business' success is change. Thus, the ability to change in response to a rapidly changing world is seen as axiomatic of success (Peters, 1987). Thus Peters asserts that:

> excellent firms of tomorrow will cherish impermanence and thrive on chaos (p4).

However for such thinkers it is not just the institution that must experience change, the individual must also. Thus, as Gleeson and Shain (1999) argue,

writers such as Seward believe that central to the change that is occurring within FE is the need for:

> making individuals and institutions more flexible in response to changing disciplinary conditions of the market and globalisation (p546).

The continuous change that FE, particularly in recent years, has suffered was noted with some bitterness by six of my respondents, and by more than half of the lecturers with whom I came in contact as a participant observer.

> EM: There's always been change in FE. I've been here for almost thirty years, and change has always been part and parcel of the job. But now we're having to change continually, for whatever reason. We're changing continually - roll on retirement!

I noted in my research diary immediately afterwards with some amusement that I remembered discussing with EM the effects of Incorporation in 1993. He seemed convinced at this time that it would have little impact. I remember his comment of this period which was to the effect that 'they' had been attempting to change FE ever since he started, all to no avail. He went on to add that the present (1993) attempts would make little difference to our work in FE. I did not remind him of this during our interview of December 1998.

Another lecturer, whilst acknowledging the fact that much of the change was due to the introduction of a business ethos of efficiency, also wondered if a part of the cause of change was societal.

> GC: Yes, I know it's about being efficient and business-like, but (long pause) it's more of a society problem.
>
> GF: How do you mean?
>
> GC: Well, we're more relaxed as a society in terms of authority. You've no control over this. We couldn't apply that here if the rest of society (pause)

> well, if you can question a chief constable, or whatever. I'm not saying this is wrong but it does make it more difficult for one's assessment to be accepted.

I believe there were a number of undercurrents to this statement. It was made to the backdrop of Sir Paul Condon, the Chief Constable of the London Metropolitan Police, being pilloried in the mass media over the Stephen Lawrence affair. This was clearly at the back of this lecturer's mind at this time. Later he spoke of the constant questioning by students of their grades. Thus, he often found himself having to defend, for example, the fact that he had given a Pass for a piece of work when the student thought it deserved a Merit. This constant questioning of staff, whilst it could be seen as a good change in that the process of assessment is far more open to democratic discussion than it ever was in the past, is also likely to be seen by some as part of society in general questioning those perceived in the past as having some authority. Another lecturer early on in my research (not interviewed) referred in the staff room to this relatively-new state of affairs as being a part of the 'blame culture'. He was referring, at the time, to the new SPOC (Students' Perceptions of College) forms that lecturers, in the last three or four years, have been expected to give out to all their students. In the 1999-2000 forms students were asked, for example, to comment on their lecturers and their abilities to teach them and assess their work. This device allows a student, who has not made any effort with their work, to claim that this is not their fault, but that of someone else. In such a situation the teacher is put on the spot, and is the handiest scapegoat for the student's

own failures. Clearly this is a poor example of the opening-up of an institution to democratic scrutiny.

Nevertheless all of the lecturers I interviewed saw the root cause of change in FE as being that the sector was perceived as inefficient and lacking in business acumen. As a participant observer I noted this judgement of the reason for change throughout the college. Indeed, there was some support for the view that the world of work had changed. Consequently, education and training had to change also to match that new world. The modern day motor vehicle workshop was used by one respondent to emphasize this point. Thus, in response to my questions regarding the causes of change in education and training LT asserted:

> LT:...the motor vehicle trade is changing so fast. All the components are (pause) the electronics are now sort of microchips. If you go to a garage now you don't see a lot of mechanics in dirty overalls around. You see technicians in clean white overalls with complicated machinery.

However, in the main, the view that we were inefficient and needed business acumen to make us efficient was seen as coming from outside of the college. I noted this in my research diary early on in my interviews and the same comment was repeated at the end of many of the later interviews. Thus, I reflected that:

> She (JH) keeps referring to 'they' when talking about change and the causes of change in FE. Who does she mean by 'they'? I know she doesn't mean the Blakewater College managers. She, along with the majority of lecturers, constantly refers to them as the 'SMT' (Senior Management Team) (11th December 1998).

Another lecturer later on in my research (26th April 1999), in response to my probes, was more specific in pinpointing who he felt was ultimately behind the

changes. I believe he was referring to bodies such as the CBI whose calls for a 'quantum leap' in Britain's economic position were outlined in Chapter Two (see also Jessup, 1991, p174).

> GF: You have said that 'they' want us to change a number of times now. Well, who do you mean by they? Who do *you* think are responsible for the changes?
>
> DN: I thought that was obvious. It's the government and their big business corporation advisors.

I tried to get him to enlarge on this.

> GF: What do you mean by 'big business corporations'?
>
> DN: Well, when you look at the new 'specs' (specifications). They're put together centrally. They take no account of local needs, local business needs. That's where our students are going, not into these big corporations.

General vocational courses are broken up into units of study. These units are referred to as 'specifications'. These specifications are similar to the syllabi of GCE (General Certificate in Education) courses of study. With Curriculum 2000, GCE syllabi became 'specifications'. Perhaps this will help bridge the 'academic/vocational gap' discussed by Pring (1995).

Eight of my respondents commented on the speed and amount of change occurring in the sector. These changes were pushed for by the Staff College in order to rapidly rid colleges of the 'slack practices of the past' (see Gorringe, 1994, discussed in Chapter Two). However, few of the lecturers I spoke to see the sector as thriving on all this rapid change. In fact there was only one, and he joined the profession recently. His response is discussed later (see BI, p178).

Notwithstanding this, the point that few lecturers in my case study perceived the changes as beneficial is demonstrated by the comments below.

> AI: The changes seem to be never ending. A change in Secretary for Education means a rash of completely new changes. It's like they all want to put their mark on education. In a lot of ways the New Labour government has made it all worse. It's like they want to demonstrate they're completely different from the Tories. But they're not.

> WQ: I was surprised at how little different the Blair government is from the Tories. I didn't think they'd be pushing this business ethos down our throats. But it's still all change, just with their particular slant on it. And none of it works anyway. None of...

At this point I interjected. I wanted to pin him down on exactly what he meant by this.

> GF: You say that it doesn't work. Could you enlarge on this?

> WQ: The way I see it is that we're among the last of a line of privatizations. They did it with the Health Service, with the Trusts. It was all about making them more efficient, like industry. Over the years they've constantly had to make further changes to try to put things right. Things caused by the introduction of business ethics in the first place. They did the same with us with Incorporation.

'Cost cutting' and 'value for money'

It is clear that in the view of almost all of my respondents, and the majority of those I observed in my case study, one of the major shocks to their working lives has been what for them appears to be the constant cost-cutting occurring in the sector. In Blakewater College the shocks began in the lead-up to Incorporation when all new lecturer vacancies were appointed on new banded grades. Thus, Main Grade Lecturers (MGL) from April 1991 were appointed on

Band B grade. This, in effect, meant approximately a £4,000 reduction in what a new lecturer could be paid. In addition they were appointed on new contracts with, for instance, no stipulation on the upper limits of class contact time that a lecturer should teach. 'Management Guidelines' set down each year the contractual upper limits to such terms and conditions as class contact time. However, until Incorporation all lecturers on both 'new' and 'old' contracts were only expected, for example, to teach 21 or 22 hours of class contact per week. Immediately after Incorporation the SMT began to pressurise all lecturers to move onto the new contracts. The rhetoric behind this was that the government was coercing them to reduce costs. Indeed FEFC Circular 94/09 (1994, p2) did reveal government threats to 'holdback' funding from colleges who failed to introduce 'flexible contracts of employment for newly-employed staff'. What followed was the long struggle between the lecturing staff and senior management over the 'new' contracts. The progress of this struggle is discussed and analysed in great detail in Fielding (1996, passim). It is still going on - witness the court case taken out by LEAF, a new union that broke-away from NATFHE over the contract issue, (see Lecturers Employment Advice and Action Fellowship, 1999) and the recent national strike in the sector (May 22nd 2001) against the national employers. However, these contractual changes have not just affected MGLs. Middle managers have also suffered as a result of the changes. Thus, for example, one lecturer pointed out the precarious state of her life since Incorporation.

> AI: The SMT behave differently towards me according to time of day, week of the year, or year. So depending on how tight the cuts are I've been under threat, or not...So my job has been precarious every August, and not until I've got a new contract have I known whether I've been kept on or not.
>
> GF: So you don't know at the end of each academic year what you'll be doing the next year.
>
> AI: That's right, I was on two-year temporary contracts from 1992 up to 1996, and since then I've been on one-year ones. Last year Sharon Eastern [pseudonym for the Principal] said when I filled the forms in that I would need to agree to go back to being a Main Grade Lecturer on the 1st August this year (1999).
>
> GF: How did you feel about that?
>
> AI: Well, I thought sod it! I'll only do what is absolutely necessary. I'll only do things for my benefit now. So what I do now is not for the college's benefit. It's for my own personal (pause) whatever it is.

She (AI) is clearly a bitter woman. I noted in my research diary afterwards that her responses were completely different from when I interviewed her for my MA in April 1996. In an article based on this research I have argued that 'change', resulting from the 'new' contracts in FE colleges, seemed to be viewed differently by the various grades of lecturers within colleges.

> Thus...senior managers tended to see the changes in a...[more] positive light than other grades within the college...the middle managers...could see both good and bad results. The main grade lecturers...could see little that could be described as positive in the changes (Fielding, 1998, p35).

However, if AI is typical of middle managers this could be changing. Some of the other middle managers I interviewed, and noted in my role as a participant observer, were also less positive about change in FE than they had been in my 1996 research.

I wonder if some of this modification in the attitude to the changes on the part of middle managers is a result of a worsening of their terms and conditions in the intervening years. In my 1996 research a number had pointed out that in some ways their work had improved. Their class contact time had been dramatically reduced to enable them to take on a more managerial role. However, since then many middle managers have been forced to take on more. The reasons given by senior management have never been put in writing, but when pressed by NATFHE they have always argued that all the changes are in the interests of 'efficiency and cutting costs'. Thus, reducing costs is central to the recent changes in the sector (see Gillard, 1997, and FEFC, 1993, discussed in Chapter Two).

Cutting costs has resulted in AI losing her job. The college Principal was, in my view, rather disingenuous when she offered to revert AI back to being a MGL. It is not that easy. In FE once teaching hours are given up by an individual, for whatever reason, they never come back of their own accord. You are expected to go out and create more teaching hours. This is not that easy, even when the number of hours is only two or three; but a middle manager could be required to pick up between twelve and fifteen additional hours to satisfy the requirements of a main grade contract. Clearly this is an impossible task and I believe the SMT know this. AI took early retirement in October 1999.

Whilst the changes for other middle managers may not have been as dramatic as this (although being forced out of their posts is a possibility for them all), many have had dramatic increases in their workload. This 'intensification' of

work processes was elaborated on by some of the authors discussed in Chapter Two (for example Hatcher, 1994, p36 and Randle and Brady, 1997, pp136-137). Below are just three examples from my research. First, the Head of Electronic and Electrical Engineering who when asked:

> GF: What are the key differences between your work today and what it was before?

replied:

> PT: For one thing I'm doing a hell of a lot more work. In effect I'm head of what were traditionally two divisions - Electronics and Electrical Engineering. This means a lot more paperwork for one thing, more lecturers' timetables to check, oh, and more sitting in on lecturers' classes to assess their teaching abilities. That causes a lot of extra work and is a lot more stressful than you'd think.

My second example of increased workload is taken from my own Faculty and Division. Three years ago the Head of Combined Studies retired. Instead of promoting or bringing someone in from outside, my own Divisional Head (Cross College Service Work) found himself the Head of his own Division plus Combined Studies. Consequently he is now expected to do two people's jobs. More recently the Head of Social Science has retired. A temporary Head has been appointed, but there is a strong rumour that in the next academic year this division will be divided up between the Division of Mathematics and my own Division. My Divisional Head when asked:

> GF: What are the key differences between your work today and what it was before the recent changes?

spoke at length on this subject, and the increase in his workload seemed to be highly significant to him.

EM: I've a much increased workload now. As you know the Division's much larger than it ever was, and now we've all heard the rumours with Social Science - another cross to bear, I suppose. It's things like Appraisal as well but we've already discussed that.

My interview with EM took place immediately after my Appraisal, and one activity seemed to feed off the other. There were times during this Appraisal when he was clearly discussing my questions. This was not taped. Consequently, immediately after the interview I spent some time reflecting on what he had said during this unrecorded time and made copious notes in my research diary. Appraisal had been introduced into the college soon after Incorporation. It was introduced against the backdrop of what I and many MGLs saw as the rhetoric of staff development. The reality seems rather different. In Chapter Two I pointed out that writers such as Avis (1996, p110) perceive appraisal as a means of controlling, and de-skilling, college lecturers. However, many Divisional Heads did not see its introduction as insincere. I remember EM in the early days of Appraisal talking of it in a positive light. He saw it as developing teachers as professionals. In some ways I believe he saw Appraisal in terms of Schön's (1987) assertion that educators require help 'to renew themselves so as to avoid 'burnout'', and that this is necessary on a 'continuing basis' (p15). Thus Divisional Heads can be seen as perceiving themselves in the role of 'senior practitioners' (p16). Nevertheless EM could see that Appraisal would have to be non-threatening or the result would be failure. Thus, in my 1996 interview he had argued with reference to Appraisal:

EM: Yes, I see it [Appraisal] as positive. We should have time to reflect and discuss our practice, but I see it as being something on equal terms. We learn from each other and as a result, hopefully, improve our practice.

He went on to discuss the idea being put forward, rather tentatively at this time, by management of Divisional Heads observing a lecturer's classes on a regular basis in order to assess their abilities. They were proposing that this activity should be a central part of Appraisal. EM insisted at that time that:

EM: If Appraisal is to be about my going into classrooms and sitting with a clipboard taking notes, it will be just too threatening. It won't work. I can't see it improving things.

I think he could see the problem that Schön (1987) raises, with regard to what he calls the 'Reflective Practicum in Counselling Skills' when he points out that when people feel:

vulnerable to threat, they would produce 'automatic intercepts.' Negative feelings like anger, resentment, fear, or impatience...(pp264-265).

These feelings would often be directed at the person doing the threatening, in our case the Divisional Head doing classroom observations.

However three years later, at the time of my present research, all Appraisals at Blakewater College include a mandatory annual classroom observation of all lecturers by their Divisional Head. In my recent interview with EM his comments with respect to Appraisal were different from the rather more relaxed responses set out above.

EM: Yes, Appraisal is a lot more stressful today, what with all the possibilities of confrontations resulting from the classroom observations, and I'm not sure of the value of it. And you lot resent it. I can see why, because who am I to set myself up as some kind of perfect teacher.

All this was said with some bitterness. The Appraisal interview with myself had not been particularly amicable. We disagreed, for example, on the teaching methods utilized during my classroom observation. I heard other lecturers express anger over the issue of Appraisal throughout my period of research, and the responses of MGLs regarding issues such as Appraisal is discussed in more detail below.

My third and final example of increased workload for middle managers in the name of 'cost cutting' and obtaining 'value for money' demonstrates, for me, how unfeeling senior managers at Blakewater College have become in the period since Incorporation. The work of AI, discussed above, has been loaded onto another middle manager, who is now not only expected to do her own work, but also that of another person.

Flexibility

I must start this section by pointing out that the concept of 'flexibility' is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. For the moment I wish only to discuss it with reference to lecturers' perceptions of the causes of workplace changes in general. Over half of my respondents saw the new 'flexibility' in extremely negative terms when applied to themselves. The response of DT is typical.

> GF: What do you see as the reason why we have been told we must change?

DT: It's all about cost-cutting.

GF: How have they done this?

DT: I suppose it's de-professionalization, with more instructor-based training and more work for us in increased contact time. I think GNVQ was devised to make that happen. There'll also be moves to reduced salaries, reduced professional status and a growth of bureaucracy.

Since Incorporation a number of new lecturers in his Faculty (Technology) have been appointed on Band A pay scales, i.e. £12,915-£15,366. In the past the salaries of such lecturers would have had the possibility of rising to £23,406 (these figures are for the academic year 1998-1999). Further to this I can see lecturers' responses such as that of another lecturer I interviewed (DM) closely following the position of Phillimore's (1996) 'pessimists' regarding 'flexibility', who see it:

> as having disproportionate benefits for capital, by dividing labour and intensifying the labour process...(p129).

Clearly, 'flexibility' in the name of business efficiency is not seen as a positive goal by many college lecturers. 'De-professionalization' and the 'growth of bureaucracy', mentioned by DM, is discussed further later in this chapter.

From the above it can be seen that, in the view of a number of lecturers at Blakewater College, at the heart of all the changes occurring is the perceived necessity of introducing 'hard-headed' business practices. These business practices seem to involve the idea that change in itself is good. In this view businesses and other organizations 'thrive' on the 'chaos' of rapid change. All of this change is in the name of cutting costs, introducing the idea of 'value for money' and 'flexibility'. Moreover, as far as the middle managers and MGLs at

Blakewater College are concerned this view is held by those who control the sector: the government, and, as it seems to the MGLs, college senior managers.

Perceptions of teacher professionalism

My investigation into the opinions of college lecturers at Blakewater College with reference to changing perceptions of teacher professionalism portrays a number of commonly held viewpoints. Many of these perspectives can be found in the literature on the subject. Thus, for example, some lecturers referred to the characteristics or 'traits' of the teacher professional (as outlined by Ozga and Lawn, 1981, pp11-12) whereas others saw a high degree of theoretical knowledge as being the cornerstone of the true professional (as discussed by Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p8). Still others mentioned their belief that:

> Professionals are expected to have an altruistic regard for their individual clients (Kogan, 1989, p136).

I wondered afterwards if some of the responses of those I questioned were recalled from their memories of their post-graduate teacher training courses. However, I had hoped that their recollections would reveal the definition that they believed in the most. I have already stated that after carrying out my pilot questionnaire I decided to spring the question of how my respondents would define professionalism to avoid artificially prepared responses.

What is clear is that *all* my respondents, whether they had a preview of the question or not, found this interrogation of their definitions of the concept of professionalism extremely difficult. Twelve went so far as to ask if they could answer it later. A number of what I see as the most significant responses are set out below. The first is from my pilot study and, it seems to me, was much reflected upon. The response was sent by e-mail, and was the longest.

> GF: How would you define professionalism?
>
> EM: It is to do with being a practitioner in an area of expertise - arguable what the defining criteria might be for the area - would a plumber be deemed a professional? Probably there are learned connotations so the area of professional practice has an associated area of higher level study. Is graduate enough?
>
> An aspect of this is self-determination and at the individual level a 'professional' expects to have control over conditions of work; at a higher level the most acknowledged 'professions' have a lot of control over training and entry into their number.
>
> The idea of 'doing a professional job' derives from all this; i.e. 'I'm so good, society should trust me with this important job'.

It is clear from reading the text of his first paragraph above, that for this respondent at least occupations such as his example of the plumber cannot be seen as true professions. A profession, for EM, can only be associated with the 'higher level study' required of 'graduate' education.

In contrast to this rather prescriptive reply the following two interviewees saw being a professional in terms of:

> DT: ...accepting the responsibility of doing a job to the best of one's ability.
>
> JH: 'Professionalism' is behaving in an appropriate way at all times. Teaching to the best of my ability; getting the paperwork completed by the

> deadlines (if possible); being punctual; listening; counselling. 'Leading by example', sounds a bit pompous but it's what I mean.

I would argue that these definitions are so broad that they could cover most occupations. Moreover, perhaps leaving to one side 'counselling' and 'leading by example', these definitions of professionalism certainly apply to the case of EM's 'plumber'.

For his part PT comes close to the 'altruistic' ideal as depicted by Kogan (1989) above when he asserts that:

> PT: ...you're not worried about just pay, just conditions, just holidays, but you're really worried about delivering a product, which in a teaching situation means giving a student the best start in life that you can.

PT's use of the industrial metaphor of 'delivering a product' is discussed at the end of this section. Another of my interviewees seemed to be arguing in the same vein when he stated that for him professionalism:

> GC: ...has connotations of service.

LT added that for him professionalism means someone:

> ...who takes an interest in the people who they are working with.

RN presents a similar belief, although with a slightly different slant, when she contends that:

> RN: It's about achieving one's aims, so that you have particular aims in education which are centred around the learning of the students. A professional approach is one which enables the students to maximize their potential which may be defined by the correlated grades that they come in with. So enabling students to either achieve their correlated grades or, if possible, to exceed those expectations. I would see enabling that to occur as a professional approach.

This response will perhaps require some explanation. At many FE colleges students are given point scores based on their GCSE grades. These grades are correlated to their expected Advanced course grade. Thus, for example, students with high point scores at GCSE would be expected to get Grade As at A level. In contrast those with low point scores would be expected to achieve significantly lower A level grades. What is clear with RN's response is that she sees professionalism in terms of its effects on others. I would contend that such beliefs have clear implications when the 'outcomes' approach to teaching and learning is assessed. This is discussed further below.

For her part VS saw professionalism in terms of the occupation's 'characteristics'. She in fact introduced the word. The interview proceeded as follows:

> GF: Could I start by asking you to define 'professionalism'?
>
> VS: (long pause and sigh)...A professional is (long pause) is someone who has been highly trained for the job that they do, that approaches everything that they do within that job to the best of their ability...Are you thinking in terms of characteristics?
>
> GF: Do you think it has something to do with the characteristics of the job?
>
> VS: Yes, because I think that there are people in professions who are not professional, and I think that happens in every profession.
>
> GF: So, what are those characteristics then?
>
> VS: Oh (sigh), integrity, I think is vital. (long pause) Although, again there are people in proven professions and integrity is way down on the list.

She went on to catalogue such characteristics as 'reliability', 'timekeeping' and 'being prepared' as vital components of what she would term being professional.

However, I noted in my research diary afterwards the fact that she had mentioned 'integrity' first. It struck me that she saw honesty as an essential characteristic of the teaching profession. What struck me the most was her belief that for some professions 'integrity is way down on the list'. Did she mean professions like that of the accountant or solicitor? For it could be argued that certain professions are about making profits and are not about doing the best for their clients, or in RN's argument, encouraging 'students (clients) to maximize their potential'. Issitt (1995) has distinguished from what she calls the 'person-centred' professionals who are:

> engaged upon work that is deemed necessary for the reproduction and maintenance of an educated, healthy and nurtured workforce (p70)

from profit-making organizations. I would argue that the new 'managerialist discourse' of, for example, Woods and Jeffrey (1996, passim) and Gleeson and Shain, (1999, passim), discussed in Chapter Two, has seriously compromised the 'person-centred' professional of Issitt and many of my respondents.

At some stage during the majority of the interviews, and in my role as a participant observer, I noted that lecturers used metaphors reminiscent of manufacturing and factory discipline. This seems to me to be quite ironic. However, this somewhat perverse use of industrial language is not surprising, because, as pointed out in Chapter Two, the sector has, for at least a decade, been compelled to introduce the techniques of private sector management (see for example Hatcher, 1994; Hyland, 1994). Clearly 'good management resides only in the private sector' in today's FE (Shain and Gleeson, 1999, p448).

Further to this, students are often ironically referred to in teaching staff-rooms as 'clients' or 'customers'. Moreover, the language of staff Appraisal, the use of the term 'designated line manager', for example, and 'performance objectives and targets' (Blakewater College, 1993) are ridiculed. Such ribaldry indicates the ambivalent attitude to the introduction of private sector management techniques. Notwithstanding this, on further reflection, I must point out that the use of industrial metaphors may be a consequence of the fact that the majority of vocational lecturers worked in industry for a number of years before they came into teaching (see Appendix B). Nevertheless, it is this introduction of business techniques into the sector that is affecting how college lecturers endeavour to *be* professional.

The changing face of teacher professionalism

There was a high degree of consistency in the replies of all my teacher interviewees to the question of whether the changes experienced had improved their abilities to be the true professionals that they had already so carefully delineated. Without exception they firmly believed that the changes had made it much more difficult to carry out their work in a professional manner. From my research it is clear that the new 'professional managerialism' model of teaching, that, for example, Woods and Jeffrey (1996, passim) and Gleeson and Shain (1999, passim) have analysed, is not seen as good practice as far as many FE college lecturers are concerned. The majority, both those I interviewed and

those I observed during my period of study, firmly believed that it makes teaching and learning far more difficult. Thus, one of the lecturers I interviewed asserted:

> WQ: It's all about planning and record keeping. It's just about paperwork now - interminable paperwork! What they learn seems to be secondary.

For his part PT, a middle manager, pointed out that teaching and learning had become transformed into an excessive concentration upon administrative techniques. He opined that:

> PT: The administrative burden on teaching staff is tremendous now. We all spend far too much time on generating and checking paperwork...All this is detrimental to teaching and learning.

The above statements resonate with the findings of Woods and Jeffrey (1996, p39) who have argued that the work of schoolteachers has greatly changed. This has led to the transformation of their role from 'the relatively autonomous creative teacher' to a:

> new role [which] requires a considerable amount of administration relating to plans, assessment and record keeping.

I would contend that Woods and Jeffrey's argument that the workload of the teachers in the compulsory schooling sector has experienced a high degree of 'intensification' can be extended to the college lecturers in the post-compulsory sector. Thus, for them also:

> Intensification has increased workloads, expanded bureaucracy, colonized teachers' time and space, reduced flexibility and separated the conceptualization of policy (made by others) from its execution (by teachers) (1996, p38).

As a result, the structure of the rest of this section on 'the changing face of teacher professionalism' will be in four parts: 'increased workloads' (pp148-153); 'extended bureaucracy' (pp153-155); 'the colonization of teachers' time and space' (pp155-158); and 'flexibility' and 'the separation of conceptualization from its execution' (pp158-159).

Increased workloads

I have already pointed out that all my respondents thought that the changes they had experienced had profoundly affected their work and their ability to act in a professional manner. Some were more vehement than others about this. I will start by examining the responses of those who were less impassioned.

JM had already defined 'professionalism' as:

> JM: Someone who has a high degree of finish to their work. Someone who's (long pause) I'm not sure of the phrase I'm looking for (pause) aesthetically able to decide good and bad.

I was unsure what exactly she meant here, and so I probed further.

> GF: Could I just ask what you mean by 'having a high degree of finish to their work'?
>
> JM: I suppose I mean they are good at the job, and to a high level, as opposed to an amateur who's perhaps making money from selling pieces of work.

JM teaches 'Textiles and Fashion' in the Faculty of Creative Arts. I noted two things about her replies. First, that as a professional in this area she sees her

work in terms of a discriminatory sensitivity to the artistic and unique. Second, she differentiates the professional from the amateur in terms of the latter's predominant interest in profit-making. I proceeded to ask her if this discriminatory sensitivity had been affected by recent workplace change.

GF: Could you comment, in general, on what effect the changes have had on you as a professional?

JM: I haven't let them affect my ability to be professional. I've tried not to have a stamp put on me as an individual. But I think it has in a way, because there's so much more paperwork that you seem to have a lot less time, and you're very conscious of having fulfilled each little part that you're supposed to fill. The job is a lot more stressful now. In the past I did all these things, but they were done more naturally because you had more time to do them properly. Yes, I think as a professional it's given me a lot more stress.

GF: Have the changes improved things?

JM: Overall, I think they have probably improved.

GF: In what way?

JM: In that everyone is now having to work to the same criteria. I can certainly think back to when I was training years ago when members of staff who taught me, and at that time I knew no better, but looking back what they taught was rubbish. Had they to answer to someone or some body like BTEC, they wouldn't be able to do what they did.

GF: Have the changes worsened things?

JM: Well, yes. Some things aren't as good, and in an art based course it's the ability to be innovative...There isn't the time or space. Whereas a few years ago there seemed to be a happy medium where courses were structured and yet we didn't seem to have quite as many constraints.

GF: Could you be more precise about this time a few years ago when things were OK? When was this, and when did it change?

JM: Well, prior to GNVQ that's for certain. So I suppose about ten years ago.

I went on to ask her what were the key differences between her workload today and what it was before.

> JM: The paperwork, the amount of paperwork is incredible. Teachers spend an awful lot of time doing paperwork when they could be doing something much more constructive.
>
> GF: What do you see as the worst thing about all this paperwork?
>
> JM: It's too much and it's just repetitive paperwork. It's recording material in one way for one purpose in one file, and then recording it again for another purpose in another file, and then again for yet another.

I have chosen to quote JM at length because her replies were less scathing about the effects of the changes than many of the other respondents. This is because I want to make it clear that a number of lecturers see some positive effects from the changes that have occurred in the sector. However, it is apparent that there is much ambiguity in her replies. I must first point out that JN until two years ago was a part-time lecturer. She is now on a fractional post. This means that she is paid pro rata for 50% of a full time MGL's workload. Now it is some time since I started my teaching career. However, at the beginning I spent a number of years on a part-time contract. I remember asserting during this period that the teachers' workload was light when compared to some of the other jobs in which I had been employed in the past. Within twelve months of becoming full-time I changed my mind. Teaching full-time was not as easy as I had thought, and this was a period long before the changes discussed in this thesis. The point I am making here is that there is a clear augmentation in workload between teaching part-time and full-time.

I also noted that JM saw it as a positive change to be accountable to 'someone or some body'. However, when pressed it can be seen that when she was talking about a time when, to her as a student, teachers appeared to be unaccountable she was referring to events over twenty years ago. This is long before my period of study.

Carr (1989) has pointed out that, terms like 'accountability':

> are part of the rhetoric now being employed to define 'the problem' of teaching quality...(p1).

For his part Ball (1994, p64) talks of the teaching profession as being under 'surveillance'. One of my respondents, a middle manager, when asked if the changes improved his work, raised this issue of change being seen as necessary to police the teaching profession.

> PT: As a professional, no. The way the workload and the courses have changed, the checks, and double checks, and triple checks; and what with all the work having someone verifying it, and then someone verifying the verifier, and then someone verifying him. It's all very paper-intensive. My feeling is that the teacher is someone who is not to be trusted, and that's a problem. We're policed too much, and that interferes with our professionality. People think 'why bother?'
>
> GF: Is this new?
>
> PT: In the past, when we were considered as professional, people whose word meant something, and when we said a piece of work was worth a Pass, a Merit, or a Distinction then that was accepted. It isn't now. Now it has to be internally verified, double marked, externally verified.

Clearly, for this lecturer at least, the new emphasis on a managerialist accountability has not had a positive effect on a college lecturer's work. Nevertheless, I do not think this means that most college lecturers would argue

that accountability was all bad. What is objected to is a certain kind of accountability. Kogan (1989) has pointed out that:

> Accountability assumes the requirement to answer to some broader community (p136).

It would be difficult to object to such a democratic aim. However, when the professionalism envisaged is deliberately skewed in what I see as the perverse direction that Avis (1994) terms 'managerialism and marketisation', then the 'service ethos' (p65) of a true teacher professionalism is lost. One of my interviewees, when the term accountability was raised in our discussion of the concept of professionalism, was quite adamant that it should be an important factor in teaching and learning. However, the problems with it were caused by its bias towards management control systems. Thus, he believed that as far as professionalism was concerned:

> PU: I suppose a big part of it is to do with being accountable for what we're doing.
>
> GF: What do you mean by 'being accountable'?
>
> PU: Well it's a strange thing. I think we've always been accountable for what we do, whether it be to the students in terms of good passes or my teaching colleagues. We've always made ourselves available at parents' evening, and openly discussed our work with students' parents.
>
> GF: Is this any different now?
>
> PU: It's stressed so much now. You'd think it was all something new. It is in a way, I suppose.
>
> GF: In what way is it different now?
>
> PU: Well (long pause) It's so over the top. Isn't it? It's all too much and creating so much work that it makes being professional difficult. (laugh) Impossible, in a way.

GF: How have things become impossible?

PU: It's all the extra work involved in checking and double checking everything. Then we have the added stress of people coming in and looking to find fault with everything we do. It's the constant auditing of our work to check if we are doing it right, and coupled with that we've got constantly changing curricula.

This criticism of all the extra work on top of a job that has always been difficult was raised at some stage by all of my respondents. The general feeling is that accountability should be good for a true profession, but that what management and the government expect is far too extreme and biased towards teacher control. One of Woods and Jeffrey's (1996) Primary teacher interviewees refers to the pressures raised as 'heavy-duty professionalism'. Their interviewee saw it as 'heavy' for the following reasons:

it was introduced along with all the National Curriculum changes, it involved 'sinister surveillance', and the constant 'checking' and 'appraisal of your and others' work' (p48).

My sample of college lecturers in the FE sector would concur with such views. However, instead of the problems associated with the National Curriculum, discussed by Woods and Jeffrey, vocational lecturers have their own curricular changes to contend with. These are discussed later in this chapter.

Extended bureaucracy

In order to expedite and keep surveillance over the changes in FE a much larger college bureaucracy has been required. As a result the number of FE college administrators has grown considerably. Blakewater College is no

exception. Yet whilst this group has expanded, the number of full-time college lecturers has fallen dramatically since the Incorporation date of April 1993. A report at the NATFHE National Conference in July 1999 states that the FE sector had lost 22,000 lecturers since Incorporation through redundancy alone. Yet by May 1995 the number of full time equivalent students had risen by 24.7%, whilst cash per student had fallen by 5.5% (NATFHE, 1999). Clearly, as the same article states, as far as college lecturers are concerned what is required is 'more for less'. This bleak picture of decline for one group of FE workers, and a growth in the number employed in order to oversee and check on that declining group, inspired two kinds of responses from my interviewees. The first seems to be arguing that FE was more cost effective when it was controlled by LEAs:

> PU: There has been a great increase in bureaucracy, to the detriment of teaching staff and also of students. Yet I'm sure it was more efficient when we were under the LEA.

The second kind of response also argued that the college bureaucracy had grown tremendously since Incorporation, and was specific that the responsibility for this arose outside of the college.

> WQ: ...there are far more administrative staff. The college is far more top heavy than pre-Incorporation. This is entirely due to the government's system of funding.
>
> GF: In what way do you feel it's all down to the government?
>
> WQ: It's part of their drive for efficiency and opening up the colleges to a market ethos. But it's not efficient at all. It's similar to what happened in the health service, that is the overburdening of the system with information requirements. This, quite frankly, has a degenerating effect on what we're doing.

I feel that the first of the above responses puts the finger on a point felt by many in FE. The point is that a college lecturer's life and indeed the efficiency of the sector was better when colleges were overseen by their local authorities. *The Lecturer* (1995) has long argued that the accountability of colleges would be better served if they returned to 'the clear lines of responsibility...to the democratic process'.

As I have said, the second kind of response lays the blame for this occurring at the door of the government. All records from class registers to student/teacher ratio are logged and closely monitored by administrative staff using expensive computer software such as MIS (Management Information Systems) and its more powerful and probably more expensive descendent EBS (Education Business Systems). All this, as one of my respondents pointed out, has been:

EM: ...at massive expense, yet it can give so little really useful information.

The colonization of teachers' time and space

Many of my interviewees raised the issue of how their 'time and space' had been taken over to the detriment of their ability to promote learning among their students. During my Appraisal interview, which took place immediately before my interview with my Divisional Head, this issue, highly important but little recognized by senior managers, was raised. What follows was not taped. The

serendipitous often occurs when we least expect. I wrote the following down in my research diary immediately afterwards.

> During the Appraisal interview we discussed the fact that during his 'observation' of one of my classes the week before I did not seem to know the names of all my students. This, we believed, was a direct result of the changes that had occurred over recent years. Thus, for example, class contact time per group had been reduced by about 50%, and classes had grown larger. I now have fourteen one hour classes all with different students. The rest of my contact time is made up of one and a half hour classes. The total number of students I now teach is three hundred and twenty, the majority of whom I see only once per week. In the past I saw probably half that number of students, and most of my classes were two or three hours in length (Research diary notes, 3rd December 1998).

All the lecturers interviewed raised the perennial issue of the massive increase in paperwork. They believed this extra work encroached on their time to prepare classes, assess work, and reflect on their practice with their colleagues. Below are just two examples of the anxieties the encroachment into professional time has caused.

> JH: There's no time to talk. We used to discuss what we were doing with our classes in the staff room. Now messages are passed on from colleagues in the corridor. I used to pride myself on meeting deadlines. Now they fly by. Deadlines come and deadlines go and sometimes my reports are not done. There's no time for research, background reading, keeping up with one's subject or anything.

Clearly external pressures were creeping in during our interview. The Dean of Faculty had just made his third exhortation on e-mail for people to complete their students' reports in time for Christmas post.

My second example again was typical of the responses.

> DT: We're expected to do far too much. The one thing that baffles me actually is this business about D32 and D33, which as you know has been foisted on us. I didn't understand what was expected and in the end I just jumped through the hoops, and did as I was told. I produced loads of paper

> with signatures from God knows who verifying what I'd done. Whatever that was. Eventually after a lot of sleepless nights I got my D32 and D33 qualifications. Big deal.

I have encountered throughout the college this cynicism regarding TDLB (Training and Development Lead Body) D32 and D33 qualifications. These TDLB units qualify the teacher to assess the work of GNVQ students. It did not matter, to either college or to NCVQ, that a lecturer already had a teaching certificate; she could not teach on a GNVQ course unless she had passed the D32 and D33. In fact teachers who would never have to teach GNVQ were forced to pass them. What seemed to irritate lecturers the most was that they were expected to complete the awards in their own time, and the college received funding for every lecturer who passed them. Elliott (1996a, p77-78) notes that one of the lecturers in his case study described these awards in disparaging terms. They were 'so sort of crabby'. Further to this they were perceived as 'low level', and were seen as 'evidence of the de-skilling of FE lecturers'. A few years later we were all expected to take the RSA CLAIT computing certificate in the same circumstances. When I checked my name on the computer network I found that it was there twice, once as a lecturer and once as a CLAIT student presumably drawing FEFC funding.

In his discussion of the 'seriousness' with which teachers (in my case college lecturers) regard their time, Hargreaves (1994, p114) notes that teachers and their managers often misunderstand each other regarding teachers' time. This is because of the growing 'distance...between their two life-worlds'. Thus, following Hargreaves I would argue that senior managers, as a result of their

need to control and 'colonize' teachers' time, are actively engaged in a project to 'foster' change along the 'technical-rational' lines of the market (p96, p109, p113). However, their hegemonic control is beginning to be questioned - witness the above responses.

Flexibility and the separation of conceptualization from its execution

College lecturers in the period since Incorporation have been exhorted to be more 'flexible'. A part of that drive for 'flexibility' has been the separation of conceptualization from execution. I have decided to examine this area of 'flexibility' because most of my respondents linked the two issues. Following Hatcher (1994, p46) and Randle and Brady (1997, passim), for example, I would argue that the FE sector is in the process of suffering the 'reconstruction of the work process'. This has involved the intensification of workload, 'closer supervision' (both already discussed above), and 'tighter structuring'. The latter I loosely interpret as flexibility. A part of this move to a more flexible workforce, in the case of college lecturers, is the separation of the conception of labour from its implementation. Twelve of my interviewees linked the two in their responses. I have chosen one as illustrative of the changes. When asked about the key differences between her work today and what it was ten years ago RN pointed out that:

> RN: ...there's a tendency to re-use old sometimes dated work materials you've produced years ago. But I also use photocopiable materials bought by the Division to help with work materials.

GF: Would you have used such materials if they'd been available in the past?

RN: (Umm) hard to say. I suppose I may have used some, but I think I would have adapted them to suit my students. But anyway I enjoyed producing my own, because I knew they'd work. I suppose I know my students.

Clearly, for this lecturer the separation of conception from execution is seen as a loss. However, although it may have been a loss to her, the increased flexibilty such changes have encouraged are not seen as a loss by senior management, even though, for some 'pessimists' they are seen as helping to turn FE colleges into 'sweatshops'. Thus, following Phillimore's (1996) 'pessimists', flexibility can be seen as:

> having disproportionate benefits for capital, by dividing labour and intensifying the labour process...the control of the whole work process...is more effectively centralized in the hands of management...(p129, p135)

The decline in the number of full time lecturers and the growth in the number of administrators in FE is symptomatic of these changes. The changes can also be seen as de-skilling and proletarianizing college lecturers (see Randle and Brady, 1997, passim).

Summary

In this section I have reflected upon the responses of my interviewees with reference to their perceptions of the effects of change upon their professional practice. I started by analysing what lecturers saw as the causes of all the changes. In brief, all of those interviewed, and the majority of those

observed, during my study saw the changes in terms of external forces striving to make the sector more businesslike. They understood this to mean that the sector was expected to be more flexible, provide value for money and be more cost-effective. They believed that change in itself was seen as good in the eyes of those in government (Conservative and Labour) and those in college senior management positions. I moved on to examine how the lecturers themselves defined the concept of professionalism. In brief, they saw themselves as being professionals in 'person-centred' terms as opposed to the managerialist discourse of professionalism being thrust upon them. Finally, I reflected on the lecturers' responses to the question of whether the changes were having a positive or negative effect. All but one (BI) perceived the effects as negative. The charge of 'lack of trust' in the teacher professional was raised by over half of the lecturers interviewed, and by the majority of those observed in my study.

The presentation of these responses to changes in the professional lives of the FE teachers in my case study does not imply that the responses recorded are comprehensive, or in any way permanent. They are a selection and will no doubt change in response to further modifications in their working lives - witness the changed responses of the middle managers above. A key factor in the changing views of FE lecturers is alterations to the courses on which they teach, in this case, to the general vocational curriculum. It is to this issue that I now turn.

Perceptions of change in the general vocational curriculum

In this section of the thesis I examine my research findings concerning some of the changes occurring in general vocational courses. The section is divided into two major parts. In the first (pp161-171) I examine change in general vocational qualifications, reflecting on perceptions of change, in particular since the introduction of GNVQ. However, as many general vocational courses at Blakewater College take the form of BTEC Nationals and HNDs (Higher National Diploma), changes in these courses are also considered. The analysis then proceeds to look at whether the changes have, or have not, better prepared students for both the 'world of work' and Higher Education. In the second part of this section (pp172-188) I study perceptions of the 'general education/vocationalism' debate. The impact of Key Skills is discussed here. The section concludes by examining whether or not general vocational education should be about preparing young people for their lives both inside and outside the workplace. In both sections my interviews with college lecturers and activity as a participant observer are utilized to assess change in general vocational qualifications.

Change in general vocational courses

My initial research intention was to examine lecturers' perceptions of the changing curriculum in general terms. A number of my respondents had been

members of the profession since the early 1970s. Two of these lecturers had taught at Blakewater College throughout that period. I found their comments to be highly instructive. I will start by reflecting on their observations.

> GF: Could you comment on the changes in qualifications over the last ten years?
>
> EM: There seems to have been, and still is, much uncertainty with GNVQs. But I vaguely remember the introduction of BTEC [i.e. BTEC Nationals], and there was a lot of uncertainty there, but I don't think there was as much prolonged uncertainty. I know in our area we wrote the units here at the college, and they were submitted for BTEC approval. That was really empowering the teacher, but GNVQ was just central imposition...

I have already noted in Chapter Two how the BTEC National courses were updated and modified over the years at a local level by MGLs working collaboratively (Blakewater College, 1983). EM is correct in his view that this kind of collaboration has been lost with the curricular changes. Clearly this change must impact on the issue of lecturer professionalism as discussed above.

A second point to be noted, from the above quotation, is that perhaps a large portion of the 'uncertainty' this respondent sees, in the introduction of GNVQs and the changes to BTEC Nationals during the same period, arises from the fact that those delivering the prescribed specifications have had little, if any, involvement in their production. Thus, referring back to the issue of the 'separation of conceptualization from execution' the changes have had a de-professionalizing effect on college lecturers. This is an effect of curricular change that many lecturers regret.

My second long-serving lecturer said in reply to the same question:

> GC: I think back to when BTEC Nationals were introduced in 1975. I think that was a big change as well - from mainly exam oriented to assignments. But the recent changes have caused much more work for us, and the students. Now they have assignments, exams, and end tests. This has fundamentally affected the way courses are delivered.
>
> GF: In what way?
>
> GC: Tremendously (long pause) Well, for example, because we're constantly assessing we have to be much tighter, perhaps too tight, in the teaching content.
>
> GF: What do you mean by 'too tight'?
>
> GC: You can only fit so much in, so a lot of the essential work we did before is not done, or covered less thoroughly than in the past.

This belief that GNVQs and the way they have to be taught means that students gain their qualifications at the expense of in-depth knowledge of their subject area is widely held by college lecturers. Clearly this curricular change must also have intensified lecturers' workloads enormously. This means that lecturers are constantly marking students' work, whereas in the past they would have only marked 'end tests', as the final exams were externally marked.

The adverse effects on lecturers of changes in the curriculum was noted by sixteen of the interviewees. DM's reply to the question was typical. He argued that the changes could be characterized by:

> DM: The move, with the introduction of GNVQs, towards more skills-based type qualifications, and away from theory-based qualifications. Yes, they need those skills, but without the back-up knowledge I doubt the value of the qualifications at the end of the day.

Nevertheless, although most viewed the effects of the changes in a negative light, one or two could see some positive effects.

RN: A much-increased workload, far too much paperwork and internal assessment, but I think the student-centredness of much that we do now has been good.

GF: In what ways have the changes increased 'student-centredness'?

RN: There's far more emphasis on individual learning and acquisition of skills, so 'information-seeking' is something that can be left more in the hands of the student than in the hands of the lecturer. But all this is made harder for the teacher in that our students need to be monitored. They haven't yet developed the skills in research and information handling that a student-centred course requires. And it's the weaker students who are expected to do what my best A level science students would find difficult.

It was noted in Chapter Two that Ecclestone (2000, p543) believes that policy-makers wished to make teaching more 'student-centred'. However, it is clear that, whilst RN saw the moves towards a student-centred approach as a positive effect of the move to GNVQ-type qualifications, her approval is tempered with strong reservations. The rest of this section is divided into two parts. In the first (pp164-169) I reflect on the changes in qualifications upon general vocational students. In the second (pp169-171) I examine student progression to both HE and the world of work.

Change and the student

The extent to which change in general vocational curricula has affected the way students are taught, and the effects this has had on students, raised a number of issues with my interviewees. One, perhaps highly controversial, effect of changed funding mechanisms was raised by one person. LT works in Special Services. He sits in on GNVQ and NVQ classes giving support to Special Needs

students with 'learning difficulties' who are integrated into general vocational courses. This gives him a particular insight into these courses. I asked him:

> GF: Have the changes affected the way that your students are taught?
>
> LT: With the funding situation they have to get through the examination at the end and complete the coursework. What I find is that everyone panics about the students getting through to get the funding, and quite rightly that's what we want. We want them to achieve. But the way they're taught, and this is the theory side of it, they're given handouts that already have the answers filled in and then they are to copy it all out in their books in their own writing. So the answers asked by the exercise are already given to them, and there's no attempt to try to get them to work out the answers either themselves or collectively through discussion. So there's no demand to get them to think for themselves. It's all to show the examiners (external) that they can all do it. They've all got the answers copied out in their own writing. It is difficult because it's hard enough to get them to sit quietly and many of them have basic literacy problems.
>
> GF: What effects have the changes had upon your students?
>
> LT: The fact that they are being examined in this way means that after a while, because of the method of teaching they just feel 'What's the use? What's the worth?' If every session is getting them to copy to get this book filled up, then it becomes monotonous, boring and repetitive. They become very blasé about it. They say they'll take it home to fill it in, and often that's the last you see of the book. Another thing is that what they are copying down they don't understand. They don't know what the words mean. All they want to do really is the practical work in the workshop. The theory side of it has (pause) just degenerated into a copying exercise.

This is a bleak view of the results of the way funding in FE is so closely linked to 'outcomes'. It is also a damning indictment of today's general vocational education and training. The class discussed is in one of the less-technical general vocational areas.

Other lecturers also saw the effects of curriculum change in a negative light. Thus, AN asserted that the new qualifications were 'mind-numbingly

prescriptive specifications and box-ticking assessment methods'. She went on to add that:

> AN: In the past you could be imaginative and bring all sorts of ideas into your classes. You could build on their interests and ideas. All that's gone with the new qualifications.

Meanwhile another Art and Design lecturer saw the changes having dire effects on students' futures. She saw the problem in terms of the teaching time allowed for the new qualifications.

> VS: Again, I'd say because of the reduction in contact time each individual student hasn't had quite the same amount of input they had ten years ago. The students are taught... although we try to keep that individuality which is really important, and a lot is done one to one, there are many more instances now where they're dealt with as a block. So they're seen as a chunk of students rather than on a more individual basis. So we've had to cut back on what we can deliver. That, I think is happening right across the board. That's largely due to contact hours - the time we have for the students.

These responses clearly indicate that sometimes it is not just the new qualifications in themselves that are seen as having detrimental effects on general vocational education and training.

The question of the massive increase in paperwork, and its attendant repercussions upon students as a result of the new qualifications, was raised by all the interviewees. One of the other Art and Design lecturers brought up this issue in answer to my question asking about the effects of the changes on the way students are taught.

> AN: Well yes, I do think it has had an effect because so much time is spent checking and cross-referencing work. I remember students, at first, all taking their portfolios home with them, and then they wouldn't bring them back the next week when you wanted to check that everything was there. So we have to accommodate more files and more paperwork, and more

duplication of everything because of that. Because of the emphasis on the referencing then obviously more time is devoted to that with the students than actually moving on perhaps to another project or getting them to do something in a different direction.

Here again the considerable 'duplication' in lecturers' work was emphasised as a major problem. However, this interviewee did see some positive outcomes from the new qualifications; she went on to say:

AN: A positive thing has been the Action Planning that the GNVQ involves where they have to review their own project and make ideas about how *they* can put it right. And not think how they can be taught differently. It's not criticism. It's very much how they could do it better. I think that's a very positive side to it [italics used to show her emphasis on this word].

GF: What effects have the changes had on your students?

AN: When I say about changes I would just like to talk about the fact that we're probably having at least four hours a week less course time than we had and we're still expected to do the same content. So the content hasn't changed but the amount of time that we have to do it in has. So that has a big impact on the students. But, in fact, I think it's had more of an impact on staff than it has on students, because they have to find ways around and accommodate them more, let them come into classes when other groups are working, so that they can get things done, and to have workshop space available. They don't have the specialist equipment at home, so we have to give them access to that equipment. So I think that really staff have tried to accommodate to the lack of course hours in re-jigging the timetables and having more cross-fertilization of groups.

Notwithstanding this beneficial effect of the new qualifications she goes on to point out the concomitant problems of cuts in face-to-face teaching time. Significant cuts in time were noted by many of my interviewees.

GC: When I started students were in the classroom for twenty plus hours. What are we down to now? About fifteen, if we're lucky. This is bound to have an effect on the technical know-how of future technicians. I shudder to think about the future, at times.

It is the accompanying changes, such as cuts in class contact hours and significant increases in paperwork, which are often the ones that make transformation, such as curricular innovation, impossible to deal with. Nevertheless, GC proceeds to indicate how lecturers, even in adverse times, attempt to make the best of a bad situation.

> GC: If I say to them for maths here's half a dozen examples to do for practice, that's zero priority. When you do that, you end up with low marks in the tests and that has a demoralizing effect...So the assignment culture has been built up.
>
> GF: What do you mean by 'assignment culture'?
>
> GC: The only way you can get them to do things in the time we have with them is to say this is an assignment, otherwise, if it doesn't count, they don't do it.
>
> GF: What effect does this have on you as a lecturer?
>
> GC: It makes things much harder. You are constantly assessing, and once you assess them there is all the extra paperwork and verification to contend with.

This is, clearly, how massive workloads are constructed.

A final point on the effects of changes in the curriculum on students was made by one lecturer who remembered a period when 'outcomes' alone were not the sole criteria for assessment. DM, when asked about the changes to the way his students are taught argued:

> DM: We used to assess a lot more than just 'outcomes'. Fifty per cent of the mark pre-GNVQ used to be for the 'process' part of the assignment.
>
> GF: Could you explain what you mean by 'process'?
>
> DM: We used to assess the students on how they went about their assignments. We used to discuss their assignment projects individually, and look at how they got their information. Where it was from? Was there

any bias in it for instance? Now you give them a piece of work and a deadline date, and the first you see or hear of it is when it's handed in. It might not be their work - dropped down from the net, or they might not really understand it. We're not really teaching them. We tell them what we want them to do, and they go away, who-knows-where and do it. There's no real checks.

Progression

My next set of questions examining general vocational changes in curricula scrutinized the effects of the changes on student progression to both the world of work and HE. As already mentioned, a number of courses at Blakewater College have remained as BTEC Nationals, albeit Nationals that have also changed, as described in Chapter Two. Thus, they have not as yet been transformed into GNVQs. The reasons why some courses have not changed into GNVQ became clear when I questioned Art and Design lecturers about progression in their area.

GF: Do the changes better prepare your students for the world of work?

AN: Well, with GNVQ Intermediate students I do not think so. I don't think that there is much vocational emphasis on that course, because it's a very general course where they are doing very general skills, and therefore although they are learning about [long pause]. They do have 'Professional Practice' in there, it's 'Professional Practice' very generally. And if you are going to work in textiles, or fashion design, it's nothing like product design. So I don't think that it's that specific. I think it would be very difficult to leave and get a job as a designer at that level. I mean that's perhaps a much lower level than they would be a designer at anyway. It's felt that it's more appropriate when they're a little more specialized on National Diplomas, so that's when it's done. I think the lack of course hours has affected our preparation for students' working, because we don't have the same time to get out and get people to come in, and set projects for them. You've got to be very confident that they're going to do good work for somebody.

AN, whilst pointing out the difficulty for an Intermediate level student (i.e. level 2 which is broadly equivalent to GCSE) of obtaining work in the art and design industry because there are no jobs for those leaving college at this level, raises the problem of GNVQ being too general for the workplace. This problem was also noted by the lecturers interviewed in the Faculty of Technology. With reference to GNVQs one stated that:

> PT: They weren't specialist enough for us. As you know.
>
> GF: Is that why a few years ago the Advanced reverted back to BTEC National?
>
> PT: Yes, we were forced into a GNVQ Advanced Electrical Engineering, but we didn't like the way it was running. It wasn't the specialism we wanted, and therefore after one year with it we ran it parallel with a National Diploma in Telecommunications. It was apparent that the GNVQ Advanced Electrical Engineering was at too low a level, and wouldn't support going on to HND. It wouldn't support them enough going into HE, and it wouldn't give them enough specialisms, we believe, to go on into the electronics industry. Nobody wants general engineering round here. We felt it was the wrong course. We didn't run a second cohort of students with GNVQ at the Advanced level running parallel to the BTEC. We let it run out after its two years. About half a dozen of these GNVQ students went on to the HND, as did about nine of those who did the parallel National Diploma.

The survival of 'older qualifications' such as BTEC National is noted in FEDA (1997, p8). The belief that GNVQ Advanced was a lower level, or inferior, qualification than the BTEC National was, with the exception of GNVQ Science, held across all the general vocational areas I studied at Blakewater College. With the Division of Science the more academically-able, with good GCSE passes, take GCE science A Levels, whilst the remainder undertake GNVQ in Science. The accuracy of utilizing GCSE results for Advanced level progression is noted in FEDA (ibid.). I noted at the time (1994) that, when GNVQ was run

alongside BTEC National in the above lecturer's area of Electronics, those who did GNVQ were perceived by the lecturing staff as less vocationally able than those who did the BTEC National. There is evidence to show that other FE colleges have also returned to BTEC Nationals (see Spours 1997, p66).

Now it could be that the lecturers running this course allocated to the GNVQ only those students who had poor GCSE results. Cockett and Callaghan (1996), in their study of post-14 awards, have referred to the 'grade C cliff'. Many of the GNVQ students on the courses I studied are at the bottom of that 'cliff'. Cockett and Callaghan proceed to contend that many students commence:

> their post-16 education and training with a strong sense, not of building on their school achievements, but of having to start again...(p59).

A further de-motivator for them, in my view, is that the GNVQ students see themselves as divided from, and at a lower level than, both their A level and BTEC National peers. SL, when asked about the de-motivation of GNVQ Science students, pointed out that:

> SL: When they come here for interview, they come hoping to do A level. My job is then to persuade them that GNVQ is the better option for them. *That* is very difficult. I don't remember that it was as much a problem advising students to go onto the BTEC National when we did them [italics to show his emphasis of this word].

Perhaps the 'academic/vocational divide' is now not merely between A levels and vocational qualifications per se, but is compounded by a further division between the older, more 'accepted', vocational qualifications and the GNVQ.

General education and vocationalism

In this section I examine some of the issues around what are now termed Key Skills. I demonstrate, for instance, that for many lecturers they are perceived in terms of basic skills in English and numeracy as well as IT skills such as word-processing, spreadsheets and databases. Consequently, they are *not* seen as a modern form of general education for general vocational students, as has been argued by a number of writers in the journal General Educator, as already discussed in Chapter Two (see for example Turner, 1996; Waugh, 1995a; Waugh, 1995b; see also Green, 1997b). In addition, I argue that the majority of the lecturers observed, and all but one of those interviewed, in my case study firmly believe that general vocational education should include, for instance, 'elements of general education such as critical and analytical thinking' (see Appendix A). The one exception from those I interviewed was the lecturer (BI) new to the profession. His responses are discussed in some detail below (p178). Notwithstanding this, I contend that most of the lecturers in my case study (observed and interviewed) see general vocational education and training comprising much more than preparing their students for the world of work. They see their work as, in the words of one lecturer (DT), helping to produce future 'good citizens'.

I also saw in some of the teams of lecturers I studied, perhaps in rudimentary form, the beginnings of collaborative, critical communities of 'equal voices' (see Flores and Granger, 1995, pp166-178). These lecturers were

critical of, for example, elements of the 'outcomes' approach discussed in Chapter Two, yet were willing to make use of the space created by the changes that have been the subject of this thesis, in order to promote the development of future reflective participatory citizens. Nevertheless, the same lecturers saw major problems ahead for such a project. The massive cuts in class contact time over the last decade is one clear example put forward by my interviewees. What follows is divided into four sections. In the first (pp173-178) I discuss 'Key Skills and general education'. In the second (pp178-182) I reflect upon the debate concerning 'Should vocational education and training include general education?'. The third (pp183-186) explores 'Lecturers' views on the "outcomes" model'. Finally (pp186-188), I ponder over 'Lecturers' views on education for life and not just work'. The section concludes with a brief summary (p189).

Key Skills and general education

The assessment of Core Skills, the fore-runner of Key Skills, has been referred to, by writers such as Halsall (1996) as a policy that:

> clearly stems from government and industry concern as to the suitability of curricula and qualifications for employment and the economy (p73).

Thus they are clearly linked to the general vocational context within which it is believed the student will find herself in her future life. In their present form they are not going to enable the student to, as Bridges (1993, p44) would argue, 'act in and upon a social world'. This is because in their present form they are

inextricably linked to the world of work. Thus, for instance, a BTEC (1995) document emphasizes the 'importance of contextualising the core skill units' and asserts that:

> Programmes should encourage learners to see how Application of Number, Communication and Information Technology can be used to tackle real problems and issues in vocational settings (p3, Levels 1-3).

Moreover, many in FE would contend that even attempts to introduce a broader education into general vocational courses are stymied by the new market discourse. Thus, EM vehemently asserted that:

> EM: Vocational courses should be more than just a training for the job.

He continued even more fiercely:

> EM: Service work, I'm sick of it. (long pause) This constant whittling away at our service hours. It's got nothing to do with what's best for the student. It's not on educational grounds. We're just a cost to other Faculties...

In my research diary I noted that this outburst was probably a reaction to recent cuts in the Division's service work. Traditionally the Division's work comprised mainly the teaching of the general education units on vocational courses in other areas of the college. This is termed as the Division's 'service work'. In the last ten years that work has been greatly reduced. Further to this, in the view of the whole Division this work has become less 'general', and more concentrated on 'problems and issues in vocational settings' (BTEC, 1995). The Division's service work now consists of units such as Core/Common Skills (mainly communication), Industrial Studies, Industry and Society, and GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) Communication Studies. The latter is seen as a justification for our service work. This is because we can demonstrate that

the students can achieve a recognized qualification from our input into the course.

The previous week the newly-appointed head of Health and Social Care had cut the hours of service work. We had been providing the Key Skills element for 1.5 hours per week over 38 weeks. It was now to be cut to 1 hour per week over 28 weeks. This means that, apart from depriving students of the full benefit of an important element of their course, a member of staff will fall short of the 851 annual class contact requirement of a full-time lecturer. This will have serious repercussions later in the year when the Division's hours are audited. This is because the senior college managers would wish to increase the number of hours a MGL in the Division would be expected to be in front of a class of students per week in order to ensure the annual number of class contact hours would be as close as possible to the mandatory annual class contact hours of 851. This could mean that a lecturer in the Division could have her/his class contact hours increased from 23 or 24 hours per week to 24 or 25. This is compared to the 21 hours class contact time expected prior to 1993. This change, however must be further contextualized. Up to ten years ago the Division would have provided service hours of 3 hours per week out of approximately 21 hours per course. The subject provided would not have been Key Skills or its forerunner Core Skills, at this time, it would have been General and Communication Studies. I return to the cuts in class contact below.

In a calmer tone EM added that most of our service work involved us in the 'often vain attempt, to include some more general education in these classes.' Thus he indicated that:

> EM: Where we teach Key Skills we have always, perhaps through the back door, tried to include discussion about the important issues of life in general, but that becomes more and more difficult in the time allowed, and because they're so prescriptive about what we're supposed to do with them.

In order to see if he felt the same about our other service work I asked:

> GF: What about our other service work, Industry and Society and so on?

> EM: Well that's our input if Key Skills are integrated into the vocational area, and as you know in some cases they don't get done there. But with Industry and Society, yes, we can include some general work, but the cuts make that more problematic.

Our Industrial Studies input into general vocational classes will be discussed later. What struck me most about the above statement was EM's assertion that the staff teaching in some of the general vocational areas put little stress on Key Skills. He was referring here to some BTEC National courses in which Key Skills (still referred to as Common Skills) are seen, at the very least, as a peripheral imposition. On some of the BTEC National courses on which I teach the Industrial Studies element, the students only hear of Common Skills through me. Further to this, as has been indicated in Chapter Two, the new specifications for HND Telecommunications, for example, exclude the 'Society' element of the old specifications and are focussed on business issues such as 'costing' and 'financial planning' and such items as 'GANTT charts' for progress-

mapping of a work project. The unit is now called 'Business Management Techniques' (BTEC, 1997).

I am conscious of the fact that EM, as Head of the Division that provides this service work, has an axe to grind on this subject. It has been his life work for thirty years now. Clearly, many of the other lecturers I interviewed saw Key Skills quite differently (fifteen from the eighteen interviewed). Some, as argued above, confuse them with basic skills. I am sure organizations like the QCA (Qualifications Curriculum Authority) would be quite perplexed at this. For, as far as the QCA (1999) are concerned, at Key Skill 'level 3', for instance, candidates are 'expected to deal with complex subjects and activities'. Notwithstanding this, one lecturer whose reply is typical postulated that:

> BI: Key Skills are essential. Many of those I teach have basic problems with their literacy and numeracy.

In contrast another perceived in Key Skills a vehicle for improving their students' employability.

> GF: What do you see Key Skills as adding to your students' vocational education?
>
> AN: I think it makes them more employable. They need to be able to communicate adequately, be numerate and have IT skills such as word-processing, spreadsheets and databases. These things they will need for the future, and will be useful for employment.

Thus, unlike those such as EM who have a long-standing commitment to general education, far from seeing Key Skills as a vehicle for inculcating general education, fifteen of the lecturers I interviewed either saw Key Skills in terms of

literacy and numeracy, or, more likely, as making their charges more employable.

Should vocational education and training include general education?

Notwithstanding the above, it was not the case that my interviewees thought that general education had no place on a general vocational course. As already mentioned above most did (seventeen from the eighteen interviewed). However there was one exception, and, in the interests of balance, I will commence with his responses.

> GF: Should vocational education include elements of general education such as critical and analytical thinking about the world in general?
>
> BI: Well it is supposed to be about the vocational, about work. Yes, that's how I see it.
>
> GF: But, should there be other things as well? Things such...

Here I was cut off by a swift and impassioned interjection.

> BI: The whole purpose at the end of the day of vocational education is about *putting them into* [said with much emphasis] a vocation.

Given this response it is likely that for some lecturers in further education, general vocational courses are seen purely in terms of training for the job. However, it must be noted that this lecturer is very new to the profession; he has only been teaching for twelve months. With longer service his view might change. Nevertheless, I feel his voice deserves to be heard.

Meanwhile it was evident that the overwhelming view from all the areas I studied was that there should be some general education on general vocational courses. Indeed the Head of Electronics, when asked whether general education should be taught on general vocational courses, saw general education as the 'education' input on such courses. He argued:

> PT: Yes is the short answer. Let's face it this is vocational *education* [his emphasis] and training we're talking about. Much as we engineers whinge about such units as Industry and Society, or general education subjects, or whatever they're called now, students need it. They need an alternative viewpoint.

He went on to answer some of my own Divisional Head's anxieties, discussed above, by justifying the cuts in service work of recent years.

> PT: The worry is if it [general education] comes off the time allowed for the technical delivery. As you are know we went down from 23 hours to 21 hours to 20 hours and finally down to 17 hours. Well 2 hours for Industry and Society is fine when it's out of 21 or more hours, but 2 hours in 17 becomes very difficult to justify from a technical view. The result was, as you know, the awful decision had to be made. It had to go down to a 1 hour slot. We felt there was an attack on the technical quality of the course. Something had to be done.

To an extent, I am sure some of this response was for my benefit. When he came to the second 'as you know' he looked up and smiled in what I felt was an attempt to depreciate the 'awful decision'. He was well aware that, as the Industry and Society lecturer, *I* was the one who suffered the most from this cut. The problems of what Hammersley and Atkinson (1995, pp124-156) term 'insider accounts' and the 'danger of reactivity' (p156) were discussed in Chapter Three. Nevertheless, it is clear that in the face of such reductions something has to give. Understandably, as far as individual Divisional Heads in vocational areas

are concerned, the last to suffer will be the technical lecturers on a vocational course. In the case just discussed I am an outsider from another Division. I have my own Divisional Head who is responsible for my work. Moreover, a technical course such as Telecommunications with a less than dominant technical nature would clearly not be a viable course.

Another lecturer from the same area made similar comments to PT's above regarding general education, but went on to add that the students must see the relevance of it, or it will not work. As a result this lecturer pointed out that:

> GC: One thing that is important is that the student sees the relevance of his studies to the vocation that he is going into...Hence the inclusion of Industrial Studies in terms of reflection on industries' effects on society, perhaps in terms of (pause) environmental issues...they would be better workers if they reflected on problems their industry faces vis-a-vis society.

He proceeded to emphasize what I believe to be his major point:

> GC: But you have to be careful how these things are done; if they're artificial it won't work.

This is a view with which I have considerable sympathy. I am still learning after seventeen years how to make general education as relevant as possible to my students. The latest moves by BTEC (1997), discussed above, if extended from HND to the BTEC National course could make this experience as irrelevant as it already is for GNVQ. The latter's specifications have never included a unit such as that of the older BTEC National's 'Industry and Society' that provided opportunities for the inclusion of general education.

Another lecturer from the same area whilst seeing general vocational courses as potentially 'too focussed', also highlighted the dangers of students not seeing some of their work as relevant. He explained this by saying:

> DT: Last week I had an HND student with a problem with his project. The solution to the problem involved a little thinking about mechanical engineering and thermal engineering. He immediately said that this was not his subject. 'I'm studying Electronic Engineering. It's nothing to do with this'. I told him that engineering was not as narrow as that. They need to think outside their narrow topics.

He was using this discussion to emphasize the breadth that what he believed 'real' engineering entailed. He proceeded to indicate how he saw general education as highly relevant in today's world of engineering.

> DT: I mean they have to have some idea about people, about finance. But most importantly it's about people, and how to deal with them. It's about politics, geography, history - where does it end? Yes, general education in the broadest sense is vitally important. We specialize too much.

There is a tendency amongst general vocational students to picture themselves in their future roles working on their own on some technical engineering project. Both the vocational lecturers and myself include some assignments that involve working in groups in our units of study. Yet the students constantly ask to work on their own on these assignments. They rarely see themselves as working in teams on projects, yet we are led to believe that much of their future working lives will involve this skill. Wellington (1994) in his research into 'the needs of employers' notes that the 'ability to work as a member of a team' is seen as a highly important attribute in young people. Thus, for example research by The Polytechnic of Wales indicates that 99% of Welsh employers rated this attribute 'very important' or 'important'. Moreover, the disposition to 'work as a member of

a team' ranked fourth in a list of their 'needs' (in Wellington, 1994, p308). BTEC (1991) argued that the Common Skill of 'Working and Relating to Others' would prepare future workers for working 'as a member of a team' (p17). As a result the future worker, for example, would be prepared for working in a 'small office or laboratory team' (p29). Clearly, as DT argues, an understanding of people would be of benefit here.

AN from the area of Art and Design also stressed that any general education would have to be 'closely related to the subject they're studying', and only then would it be 'acceptable to them'. For their part many of the Science lecturers stated that general vocational courses should 'include elements of general education such as critical and analytical thinking about the world in general' (Appendix A). SL's response to the question was typical of this area. Thus, he argued that such skills should be included, but that:

SL: They would have to be made palatable to the students.

GF: How do you mean?

SL: (long pause) Well as you know, you can't just thrust anything down students' throats. They have to understand why they're doing it.

Clearly a common thread running through all the above responses is that general education is a good thing, but that the students have to see the relevance of what they are doing. It has to be made pertinent to their vocational area. This is difficult, but it can be done. The Blakewater College of Technology and Design (1983) syllabus for general education discussed in Chapter Two is one example of how this can be accomplished.

Lecturers' views on the 'outcomes' model

Following Dewey, Carr and Hartnett (1996, p186) have asked the question:

> What kind of education will cultivate knowledgeable and enlightened citizens who can participate in the collective formulation of common purposes and goals?

The majority of those I interviewed (seventeen from the eighteen) and those I observed during my case study believe that such an education as that mentioned above would not be one that is based on an 'outcomes' approach to general vocational education and training. This is not to say however that A levels offer an alternative that 'will cultivate knowledgeable and enlightened citizens' (Pring, 1995 pp48-49). The majority of my respondents firmly believed that 'general education' should be a provision on all general vocational courses. LT's answer, to my questions regarding the inclusion of 'general education' in general vocational courses, of, 'Yes, of course it should', was typical of their responses. Nevertheless all saw GNVQ as militating against its inclusion. A number of my interviewees (seventeen) pinpointed the emphasis on 'outcomes' and 'PCs' (Performance Criteria) in the GNVQ qualifications as a problem. BTEC (1994) describes PCs as the 'statements that set the acceptable level of performance' for a task.

The negative perceptions of my interviewees with reference to 'outcomes' and 'PCs' was more than an antipathy to the language used in the 'specifications'. In many ways I felt that their attack on the qualification was more

deep-seated than that. I discuss below three forms of their response to this theme. I will commence with one Science lecturer's strong dissatisfaction with the GNVQ model. In his response to my question:

> GF: Should vocational education be purely about preparing students for the world of work?

after answering in the negative, he proceeded to argue that:

> SL:...Its all gone sort of 'PC'-based and most of the assessment has nothing to do with science, whatsoever. And the science bit has little to do with science, as well.
>
> GF: How do you mean?
>
> SL: Well, the one grading theme that's science is very woolly. I mean, '*demonstrates command of language' and 'synthesises knowledge' of the subject* [the italicized words were said with a clear verbal sneer]. I mean, that's not as accurate as sitting somebody down with a test. Basically you can only put them into three categories - they've got a Pass, they've got a Merit, or they've got a Distinction. Whereas, if you sit someone in an exam you're marking on a much finer scale, aren't you? It's all too prescriptive, and this makes it difficult to include more science in spite of them.

Clearly if the restrictions imposed by the PCs make it difficult to 'include more science', then it is tremendously difficult to include 'general education' in these circumstances. The 'finer scale' this lecturer is referring to is for A level Biology, which he also teaches. It is clear from the above answers that this lecturer sees GNVQ as deficient in so far as the inculcating of his subject is concerned, as it grades the students poorly for the little science learnt. This specific deficiency has ceased following the introduction of 'Curriculum 2000' in September 2000. From that date GNVQ grades changed to the A-E grades awarded for A levels.

For his part another lecturer indicated that the overall effect of GNVQ was that it was too constraining. Thus, he argued:

DM: The GNVQ structures, with their stress on 'outcomes' are far too mechanistic.

GF: In what way are they mechanistic?

DM: It's like working in a straitjacket. There's little room outside the structure of the units...Within them everything's down to completing range statements, performance criteria. It's as if you're ticking off a checklist as to what the students have covered...it doesn't leave room for much else.

The 'much else' this lecturer from my own Division refers to is, in his case, 'general education'. For, like myself, the 'units' he teaches, for example 'Industry and Society' on general vocational courses, are becoming more about 'Industry' and less and less about 'Society'. Clearly the GNVQ model puts constraints on any wandering from an overly prescribed specification. Incidentally TS, the Faculty of Business and Management interviewee, pointed out that in his area the equivalent unit to Industry and Society on BTEC National Business Studies courses had been People and Organization. With this unit he held that:

TS: We did give some General Education input, but with GNVQ my work now involves just teaching the Key Skill Communication and a lot of tutorial work.

Finally, my respondent from the Faculty of Technology was forthright in presenting his strongly-held views. When the subject of GNVQ and the language of 'outcomes' and 'PCs' was raised, he interjected forcefully:

DN: I see it as pseudo-intellectual Americanized bullshit.

GF: How do you mean?

DN: The students don't understand it, and I'm not sure I do. I don't want to. The whole thing's just weird.

GF: What's weird about it?

> DN: Well it gives them no background knowledge about engineering principles. It's all about projects. They're expected to play around with circuit boards and solve problems. There's no saying at the end of the day that they understand what they've done.

DN's response highlights a generally-held belief shared by all my interviewees. The 'outcomes' approach, or perhaps the way lecturers are constrained within the specification, militates against any in-depth knowledge of the subject matter concerned. I say perhaps, because all the lecturers could see the value in students getting the right answers, or 'outcomes'. However, in the way the specifications are written not enough value is, in their view, given to knowledge and understanding.

Lecturers' views on education for life and not just work

The majority of the lecturers I interviewed believed that general vocational education and training should involve more than just preparing their students for the 'world of work' (seventeen from the eighteen interviewed). One of the arguments used was that many of their students would not find themselves in their future lives in the occupation related to their course of study. Thus, AN indicated that:

> AN:...although in a way it [the Textile and Fashion course on which she teaches] is vocational and that's what it's about. It doesn't work out like that these days, does it? I mean you can do a vocational course and not necessarily all the students end up in work, or working in that industry. It should be...about the specific subject...but it should be broader than that. We should be preparing them for life as well, I think.

FEDA (1997, p113) notes that a 'high proportion of young people are working in sectors unrelated to their GNVQ subject'.

However, whilst many of my interviewees saw the need for a broader education that prepared their students for life as well as work (fourteen mentioned this during their interviews), they saw a number of problems for such a view being a viable consequence in today's world of post-16 provision. One of the major problems they raised was, as mentioned earlier, the issue of lack of time. PT raised the issue of the cuts in class time on numerous occasions in our interview. This could perhaps reflect his position as a Divisional Head.

> PT: Yes, its not just about preparing for work. Many of our Telecommunication students won't end up in the telecommunications industry. A more 'general education' is probably the answer. But we're back to my old hobby horse of the time factor. There just isn't enough time for it on our course today.

One or two lecturers, when asked if general vocational courses should include 'education for life as well as work', pointed out that great care would be necessary with the 'education for life' element. He argued that:

> GC: They'll just reject it out of hand if they can't see the point of it.

When I asked if he could see a way of ensuring they saw 'the point of it', he returned to the belief that any alternative provision would have to be related, 'no matter how loosely', to the industry they hoped to join when they progressed to the world of work. It is clear that a lecturer on any general vocational course that includes such an element of 'general education' would have to take great care in the teaching method utilized. Indeed, VS pointed out that, with the inclusion of 'general education' as a whole, 'care will have to be taken' with its introduction,

and it will have to be, as VS argued, 'related back to their vocational element'. She added that the students would 'resent it' if this was not the case. Nevertheless, this is no excuse for not including general education.

For his part, my Divisional Head also emphasized the same fears in his responses. He had probably heard them expressed to him over his long teaching career.

> EM: Liberal Studies was a great idea, that every course has a section concerned with the well-being of the whole person. It was revolutionary. But it can get very paternalistic. If fully interpreted, if you include personal skills as well, does it really move into a coping with life in a controversial way like the 'how not to get pregnant' classes. Yes - 'preparing young people for their lives' - I feel well-qualified, as an ex-teacher of Liberal Studies, to say that, as a blanket imposition on all students there are dangers with it, particularly the kind of freedom people had to do their 'thing', which didn't have to be the same as someone else's. The freedom was terrible really.
>
> GF: Do you feel that the 'freedom' of the old 'Liberal Studies' was, so 'terrible' that 'general education' should not be included on vocational courses today?
>
> EM: Not at all, I do think it should be included. But I'm aware of all the criticisms that were made in the past. What I am saying is that we should learn from them. We can't just ram things down their throats.

At a glance it would appear that EM's last sentence rather contradicts the body of his argument. Nevertheless, I see this ambivalence as his way of emphasizing the care and expertise that is required of the general education lecturer if she is to ensure that her subject is not rejected by the students. However, in spite of their doubts, from these responses it can be seen that the majority of the staff and students in my study believed that general vocational education and training should include preparation for life as well as work.

Summary

In this section I have explored perceptions of change in the general vocational curriculum. The section was divided into two parts. In the first (pp161-171) I examined overall change in general vocational courses. In brief, the responses demonstrated that many lecturers in FE see these changes as having a negative effect. In the second section (pp172-188) I analysed the debate around 'general education' and vocationalism. I found that, with some exceptions, most of the lecturers in my case study (interviewed and observed) believed that 'general education' should be included in general vocational courses. Further to this, they believed that general vocational education should prepare young people for their life roles and not just their work roles. However, they could all see problems that militated against such a broadening of the general vocational curriculum. Thus, for example, many believed that as a result of cuts in class contact time it is impossible to include 'general education' in courses. Consequently, what I see as the 'general education' project of encouraging a propensity for reflective thought with the aim of producing future critical citizens in a truly participatory democracy is stymied. To explain further, I see 'general education' as playing a major role in what Dewey (1966) indicates as a means of:

> securing direction and development in the immature through their participation in the life of the group to which they belong...(p81).

An education just for work would not encourage such 'participation'.

Review of findings

This chapter has focussed on the impact of funding and policy changes in the FE sector during the past decade. In the interests of clarity it has concentrated on changes in general vocational curricula and the professionalism of college lecturers. It is my belief, and this belief is borne out by my research, that the former changes were pivotal to the latter. This is because the modifications to the general vocational curricula necessitated radical changes to the working lives of teacher professionals. This is demonstrated both in this thesis and also in my earlier study (Fielding, 1996). For their part Green and Lucas (1999b) note that the changes, following the Incorporation of colleges, to the general vocational curricula are a 'primary vehicle of the new "learning society"' (pp225-226). Yet, clearly this aim of the policy-makers is not being met by the new qualifications. A recent FEDA (1997, p9) survey indicates that:

> completion rates are currently low (42% of registrations, 58% of the second year body).

A consequence of the changing general vocational curricula has been that college SMTs and their intellectual supporters at the FE Staff College are keen to 'ease out inappropriate staff' (like Al, discussed earlier in this chapter), and 'change the culture of colleges' to meet the demands of the twenty-first century (Bridge, 1994, p194; Gorringe, 1994, p183; also Fielding, 1996, p120).

From my research it can be seen that the lecturers at Blakewater College clearly believe that their professionalism is under attack from the changes that

have occurred in the sector over the last decade. Many pinpoint the Incorporation of the college (April, 1993) as the time when the threat to their professional values began to take effect. Before Incorporation many felt that attempts to introduce changes into the sector had been too difficult to implement. I am reminded here of EM's postulation that throughout his long teaching career attempts to introduce change had largely been fruitless. However, he does *not* say that now. Thus, since April 1993 (the date colleges of Further Education were Incorporated), as my research indicates, change has been successfully introduced.

In order to carry out this review of my findings, I return to my initial thesis questions disclosed in Chapter One (p9). These were:

1. how have the changes affected teacher professionalism?

2. how have the changes affected the general vocational curriculum?

However, I commence with an examination of my belief that the changes are about preparing young people for the needs of industry alone.

Young people and the needs of industry

The data discussed above indicate that the lecturers at Blakewater College perceived the causes of the changes to the profession and the general vocational curricula as being a result of attempts to make the sector more business-like, and as responding to the need of industry (CBI, 1989). Yet, a clear majority of the lecturers I studied believe that this is over-emphasized as a

result of the recent changes. They do not, however, advocate that reference to employer needs should not be made. Nevertheless, they contend that general vocational education should not, in the words of Carr and Hartnett (1996):

> espouse the language and values of market forces and treat education as a commodity to be purchased and consumed (p192).

In Chapter Two Jonathan's (1983, p5) views about the difficulty in preparing future workers for the needs of industry were discussed. Such a task would require the 'prescience' we do not possess. It was also noted by two of the lecturers (AN, p186, PT, p187) that students do not always end up in occupations that they studied in their college courses. Likewise, all but one (a lecturer new to the profession) of the lecturers I interviewed and observed, firmly believe that general vocational education should also have a social role. It should not be solely about preparation for work. It should also be about preparation, as one interviewee (DT) contends, to be 'good citizens' (p172). Moreover, I believe these future 'good citizens' need a general vocational education that will, in Gutmann's words, prepare them to truly:

> learn not just to behave in accordance with authority but to think critically about authority if they are to live up to the democratic ideal of sharing political sovereignty as citizens (quoted by Donald, 1992 , p167).

Thus, following Dewey (1966) 'education should not cease when one leaves school', but should continue beyond this, in our case into the FE sector in order:

> to ensure the continuance of education [in the future citizen's future social as well as economic life] by organizing the powers that ensure growth (p51).

I have some sympathy with GC's (discussed pp128-130) aversion to students questioning their assessment grades. However, if the ideal of the reflective participatory democracy is to be realised such issues must be open to scrutiny.

Teacher professionalism

The managerialist discourse of professionalism is perceived by the lecturers in my case study as antipathetic to their firm view that professionalism should be defined in terms of service to the community. Moreover, despite the effects of recent changes, large numbers of lecturers still insist on seeing the definition of professionalism as a highly contested area. Thus for example lecturers at Sheffield College, the second largest college in Britain, took industrial action in December 1999 to protest against attempts to devalue the profession by introducing 'instructors' in the name of cutting costs and increasing 'efficiency' (*The Lecturer*, 2000, February, p4). Closer to my Case Study, lecturers at a local college have, by threatening industrial action, managed to limit their overall weekly teaching hours to a maximum of twenty four. Many lecturers at this college had been expected to teach for up to thirty hours per week for long periods of the year. They argued that this increase in class contact hours would not enable them to provide a better professional service to their students (NATFHE News, 2000, 18th February). More recently, on May 22nd 2001 there was a national strike in the run-up to the June General Election over pay and conditions in the sector (*The Lecturer*, July 2001, p1).

However, in my earlier study (reported in Fielding, 1996; Fielding, 1998) I noted that teaching staff differed, according to their position in the college hierarchy, as to how they perceived the changes since Incorporation. Thus, the senior managers 'tended to see the changes in a far more positive light than the other grades within the college'. For their part, the middle managers could see 'both good and bad results from the changes'. In contrast the MGLs saw 'little that could be described as positive in the changes' (Fielding, 1998, p35).

Now my views are rather different. For, whilst I believe that the perceptions of the changes on the part of the SMT and MGLs have changed little, those of the middle managers have. This is, I believe because many of their former gains, during early post-Incorporation period, have now been eroded. Thus, as EM and PT pointed out, the middle manager's work is now considerably more stressful than it was a few years ago.

Another result of the managerialist discourse that I noted in my most recent research was the tendency of college lecturers to use industrial terminology. In many ways I believe this to be a result of many years of seeing its use with reference to education in documents such as *'Towards a Skills Revolution'* (CBI, 1989 in Jessup, 1991) and the 'business-like' language of the SMT. However, I must point out that such industrial language is used in teaching staff-rooms sometimes in jest, but, more often, as a means of ridiculing its use. Use of the terms 'punters' and 'customers' for students are examples.

Three different vocational areas were studied in this thesis. There were some interesting differences between those areas, and yet a great deal of

similarity. In many ways the differences can be located in the use of language. Sachs (2001), in her study of the 'professional identities of teachers in Australia' (p149), argues that '[t)here is no singular version of what constitutes professionalism or teaching as a profession' (p150). She goes on to contend that professional identities 'use as resources narratives of the past' in the development of the 'criteria for their present' and 'future' identities (p154). Moreover, 'in times of rapid change' these identities are 'shifting' and 'ambiguous' (ibid.). They are not static. Further to this, she supports the view that 'teachers inhabit multiple professional identities' (p155). Thus, for example, she believes that a teacher can be recorded in the 'general category' of a 'secondary teacher', but that teacher could also be differentiated according to subject discipline, age range taught, etc. (ibid.).

Following the same logic this can be seen as applying to professional identities in the FE sector. It is possible that FE lecturers have more diverse histories than schoolteachers. As a result an FE teacher can also be categorized in different ways. Thus, for example, in FE a sociology teacher could teach to GCSE or A level standard, or could be involved in teaching Industrial Studies and Key Skills on engineering courses. In addition many FE teachers have spent a number of years working in industry, and this must have an impact on their professional identities. One of my interviewees (SL), for instance, teaches A Level chemistry and GNVQ science, having spent a number of years working in industry as an Industrial Chemist. This must have had an impact on his professional identity.

Clearly, different professional identities, and their variable formation, must influence perceptions of the concept of professionalism. In the case of FE, Shain and Gleeson (1999) indicate that:

> lecturers in FE have historically been internally stratified according to division of skill, age, gender, ethnicity, expertise and class (p155).

As far as expertise is concerned, I have already mentioned the industrial language of some of the lecturers' responses above. It is noteworthy that the lecturers using this language were from an engineering background, and this possibly reflects their occupational expertise in this area. In contrast lecturers from the Art and Design area tended to use the language of 'aesthetic appreciation' in their responses (see JM, p148). Again, this is possibly because of their occupational expertise. Notwithstanding these differences, following Sachs (2001), the concept of a 'fixed teacher professional identity' is useful as a 'framework' when the state wishes to introduce radical modifications to the working lives of, in my case study, college lecturers. I would tentatively contend that it is, perhaps, in response to such concerted radical attacks on their working lives that the lecturers in my case study have largely spoken in one undifferentiated voice. Further to this, I would argue that it is possible that teachers in FE, following the changes, have acted in the categories outlined by Mac an Ghail and Hatcher for the school sector, and, in the FE sector Shain and Gleeson. Thus the lecturers in my case study have either accepted the changes without question (a small group), or completely rejected the changes (perhaps a larger group), or rejected some and accepted others depending on whether the

changes have been beneficial to students' educational needs (probably the largest group). However, it must be pointed out that the biggest difference in the responses between those I interviewed (including those I observed) depended on length of service. I am thinking particularly of BI's responses to some of the questions. I pointed out at the time that perhaps with more experience in the sector his views will come closer to those of his colleagues.

Finally I noted that some course teams, in the face of great difficulties, such as cuts in course hours, appeared to be attempting to promote a collegial approach in the interest of what one lecturer (discussed above) called the 'good citizen'. Perhaps in these course teams we have college lecturers beginning to develop their 'own forms of collegiality', forms noted by Smyth (1991, p334) and considered in Chapter Two. Moreover it is hoped that those 'forms' would see the development of Elliott's (1996b) 'pedagogic culture' as an alternative to 'managerialism' (pp101-107) as discussed in the Literature Review above.

The general vocational curriculum

Changes in the general vocational curriculum were viewed unfavourably by all but one of the lecturers I interviewed. In the first place my interviewees asserted, sometimes quite vehemently, that the changes were a result of external forces that were encouraging FE senior managers to initiate changes that would force colleges to be more business-like and efficient. These external forces are perceived as, largely, the result of economic changes, and the

response of various governments of the last decade to those changes. Many of my respondents argued that colleges were not true businesses because their prime aim was to offer a service to their *local* community, rather than to make a profit. In the second place respondents, such as GC and AN (p167, p169), maintained that the curriculum changes did not prepare their students better for work, or HE.

AN also believes that Key Skills make students more 'employable'. This belief resonates with that of a recent study for the DfEE (2000) by the Department of Educational Studies at the University of Sheffield in which it was noted that one college in the study:

> was particularly concerned to use Key Skills as a vehicle for improving their students' general 'employability' skills (p13).

Nevertheless, lecturers such as BI perceive Key Skills in terms of basic skills. For his part EM believed that the changes to Key Skills made it more difficult to discuss 'important issues of life' with students. Key Skills have become far too 'prescriptive'. This is a common worry amongst Key Skills lecturers following the curricular changes.

It was also the belief of the lecturers I observed, and interviewed, that the new curricula, with their concentration on 'outcomes', are detrimental to the education and training of the students involved. This is because the way they are now assessed increases the tendency to teach, or train, for the exams as opposed to educate for future lives. Further to this LT pointed out that class-work has become a 'copying exercise' in order to ensure the 'outcomes' are met. In

addition, DM argued that the new qualifications, with their emphasis on 'outcomes', made it difficult for lecturers to assess, as they did in the past, what he termed, the 'process'. This 'process' he defined as the assignment of equal weighting to the mechanics of how the student went about the production of a piece of work, *and* to the end product. This he saw as an educational advantage over the 'outcomes' approach. The newly-introduced (since Incorporation) funding methodology was seen as the main culprit for the concentration on 'outcomes'. This means that there is no longer the time for what seem to be 'expensive' extras such as the 'process' side of teaching and learning. Further worries were raised around the issue of the time allowed to teach the new qualifications.

All but one of the lecturers in my case study contend that whilst General Education should be a part of all general vocational courses, cost cutting that had resulted in massive cuts in class contact hours made such a provision unlikely. These cuts were discussed in Chapter Two (see Dee, 1999; and Lucas, 1999). Further to this, my research indicates that Key Skills cannot be seen as a replacement for General Education. Finally, my study shows that college lecturers at Blakewater College believe that general vocational education and training should prepare young people for life both inside and outside of the workplace. Unfortunately, they believe that, at present, it does not. This is a result, in my view, of the fact that the changes have been introduced alongside a massive reduction in unit costs. Efficiency is the watchword. In the context of general vocational education, efficiency means as cheaply as possible. Cuts in

course class contact hours were noted by all of the lecturers in my study. It is perhaps factors such as this that militate against Wolf's (1995, p37) belief that GNVQs are in the interest of FE teachers, as discussed in Chapter Two. The effect of cuts in teaching time is that FE does *not* prepare people adequately for life both inside and outside of the workplace.

In addition, I believe that the 'core value' of inculcating 'active citizenship and social cohesion', promoted by David Blunkett in his introduction to the Green Paper on 'Lifelong Learning', will remain a dream (DfEE, 1999b). As indicated above, all of those I interviewed saw all the recent changes in FE as an attempt to introduce the managerialist concept of 'value for money' into the sector. Unfortunately, as I have already argued, 'value for money' has up to now been seen as part of a drive to cut costs. The other side of the 'value for money' concept - that is investment - has been sadly lacking in FE in recent years. Thus, I argue that if the changes enshrined in the Curriculum 2000 initiative (not considered in this thesis) do not include the investment of funds to, for instance, increase course contact hours, then the struggle for the core aim of general vocational education and training to encourage the development of the reflective citizen in a truly participatory democracy will not be achieved. Further to this, the 'critically reflexive ethnographic praxis' of Jordan and Yeomans (1995, p404), discussed in Chapter Three, whose aim is the inculcation of a 'really useful knowledge' (p401) that will have a truly 'emancipatory' effect becomes more problematic.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

Sikes (2000, p268), discussed in Chapter Three, points out that all 'accounts of research' should be tentative in nature. They are not 'unproblematic', and nor are the conclusions that follow. Ainley and Bailey (1997) indicate that within the FE sector there is great diversity of provision (pix). Later they argue that '[t]here is...no such thing as a typical college' (p8). Nevertheless, they contend that the two colleges they studied, whilst different in many ways, showed 'some essential similarities'. As a result they postulate that it is possible to relate their work to 'every college in the country' (ibid.). Following on from this, I believe that my thesis, whilst it has been a study of *one* college of further education, can also be related to 'every college in the country'. However, again following Ainley and Bailey (1997, ibid.), I am aware that my thesis 'is limited in scope by being confined' to one college. These limitations to my work are discussed at the end of Chapter Three. They will not be repeated here.

This final chapter is structured in three parts. In the first (pp202-205), I will assess what contributions my work makes to knowledge and theory. It is in this section of the chapter that I will analyse the complex and fraught way the changes since 1992 have affected teacher professionalism in FE, and the general vocational curriculum. In the second (pp205-213), I will examine what implications these perplexing and intricate changes have for the further

education sector. Here I will make recommendations regarding future policy and practice. In the third (pp213-214), I end with a concluding statement.

Contributions to knowledge and theory

The data, discussed and analysed in the preceding chapter, clearly show that the changes in FE, affecting teacher professionalism and the general vocational curricula, have had detrimental effects on teaching and learning in the view of the lecturers in my case study. They argued that the drives for efficiency, dictated by the managerialist discourse central to these changes, had a clear debilitating effect on their professional identities. These identities they perceived in terms of *service* to the community. Thus lecturers such as GC asserted that professionalism, for him, 'had connotations of service' (p143).

Professional identities

Nevertheless, I noted that within my case study there were differences in how different groups within the college structure perceived the changes to professional identities. My M.A. dissertation (Fielding, 1996), put forward the view that, at the time of writing, senior college managers saw the changes occurring in the sector as beneficial to the future of the college. The middle managers saw both good and bad in what was happening to the sector. The main grade lecturers saw little that could be described as positive. However, in contrast, my present study indicates that senior managers still see the changes

in a positive light, and the main grade lecturers still hold a negative view of them. Yet, in contrast to 1996, the middle managers are far less positive about the changes. I interviewed three middle managers in my study and was in contact with twenty-one others in my role as participant observer. This represents a sample of twenty-four from thirty-two. All, at some stage in my research, expressed grave doubts as to the effects of the changes taking place in the sector. My research data indicate that this could be because, once the terms and conditions of main grade lecturers had been attacked and worsened, their working lives came under similar attack. All talked of the real stress of carrying out their work roles. Stress was caused, for instance, by the introduction of a more threatening form of Appraisal. In Chapter Four PT and EM argued that their work is much more stressful than before. This is because they are now obliged to 'sit in on lecturers' classes and assess their teaching abilities' (PT, p136), and this leads to stressful 'confrontations' (EM, p138).

There are two other inconsistencies worthy of note. The first relates to the fact that lecturers often see themselves as, for example, professional engineers/fine artists who have chosen to become professional engineering/fine art *lecturers*. It was one of the interviews with a lecturer from the Faculty of Art and Design that raised the possibility that there was perhaps a slight variation in the overall view that the professional can be defined in terms of public service. Nevertheless, she (JM) did not deny the public service view of a professional. Notwithstanding this, she went on to refine her thinking on this concept by asserting that for her it involved aesthetic considerations (p148). I would argue

that she was repositioning herself in terms of not just being a professional teacher but being a professional fine art teacher. This repositioning was only made by one lecturer in my case study. It is a pity I did not look for a similar repositioning around the concept of professionalism amongst the other lecturers. However, I feel sure that, if pressed, they too would reposition their definitions of professionalism in terms of their background discipline. Clearly this is worthy of note. Lecturers are *not* an homogeneous group. This must be taken account of when theorizing about them. The second inconsistency, whilst it relates to ideas about what it means to be professional, is more about the general vocational curriculum. Consequently, it is discussed in the next section.

The general vocational curriculum

It was believed, by the majority of college lecturers in my case study, that changes to the general vocational curricula entailed an over-concentration on preparation for work. Thus, they argued, teaching and learning in FE should be much more than this. All but *one* asserted this (see BI, p178 above).

In Chapter Four I noted that BI was new to the profession, and that, perhaps with more experience, his views would alter. Nevertheless, this aberrant view in a way highlighted, and gave added poignancy to, the strongly held view of all the other lecturers. This view was that GNVQs were not *general* enough (see DT's response p181). In many ways they can be seen as far too specific when taking into account the future lives of many of the students on these

courses. Thus, AN noted (see Chapter Four, p186) that not all students, even the successful ones, necessarily end up in the vocational areas that they studied at college. This knowledge is clearly at variance with the policy makers' present 'obsession with retention and completion' (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 1999, p114, discussed in Chapter Three).

Finally, the knowledge that all but three of my interviewees perceive Key Skills in terms of basic education is highly interesting (see BI, p177). It is interesting because the literature on the subject is very precise. Key Skills are far more complex than this. Thus BTEC (1996) with reference to Core Skills (the forerunner of Key Skills) states quite clearly that:

> They enable people to make decisions, carry out tasks efficiently and confidently, and work well with others - all skills which are needed in any situation (p5).

Misconceptions of the nature of Key Skills abound in the FE sector. This knowledge is significant and has important implications for the sector. It is also the case that all the above additions to knowledge and theory have implications for policy makers and those teaching in the FE sector.

Implications for FE

Teacher professionalism in FE

Teachers in FE are over-burdened with greatly increased paperwork and stressful external and internal inspections (see Chapter Four, for example PT,

p136). All this is in the interests of central control over the profession. The prime aim of this central control is to ensure 'state surveillance' of the profession (see Wood and Jeffrey, 1996, p38, discussed in Chapter Two). Thus, a 'managerialist' form of professionalism assumes an hegemonic prominence. What is worse, for the FE lecturers in my case study college, is that this definition of professionalism thwarts the public service version to which they aspire (see GC, p143). As a result, managerialist surveillance 'priorities take precedence over teaching, learning and professional concerns' (Gleeson and Shain, 1999, p554; and Ainley, and Bailey, 1997, pp66-67, discussed in Chapter Two).

The New Labour government with its mantra of 'education, education, education' and concomitant nostrum of 'lifelong learning' is, in my view, seriously compromised. In the case of FE, following Gleeson and Shain (1999, p558-559), it is essential that the hegemonic dominance of the managerialist discourse should be reversed. In its place definitions of teacher professionalism that give prominence to the public service ideal should be promoted.

Without such a change in policy the present managerialist ethos that seeks to modernise the sector will result in incoherence and disharmony. Clearly, these unforeseen constraints on modernization will militate against the New Labour project of 'lifelong learning'. Yet, the government's

> vision of how lifelong learning could enable *everyone* [my emphasis] to fulfil their potential and cope with the challenge of rapid economic and social change (DfEE, 1999b, Foreword)

is endorsed by the lecturers in my case study (see, for example, RN's response p143). However, FE teachers see such a vision as unattainable in the present circumstances. This is a result of the already mentioned incoherence and disharmony that have accompanied the imposition of managerialist forms of the concept of professionalism.

Shain and Gleeson (1999, p559) record that there has been incoherence in 'planning at national and regional level'. This was a negative feature of the changes noted by one of the lecturers interviewed in Chapter Four (DN, p131). Further to this, Peek (1999) contends that FE is 'operating in a turbulent environment' of 'external pressures' (p7). Peek proceeds to postulate that a regime of constant adaptation is necessary if colleges are to meet these external pressures. Thus, he asserts that 'colleges...thrive on unpredictability' (p8). For those living in the real world this is not the case - witness the turmoil of 'mismanagement, low morale, sleaze, and industrial action' (Gleeson and Shain, 1999, p559). This turmoil has been a feature of the sector since Year Zero of post-Incorporation and the imposition on FE teachers of managerialist forms of professionalism.

The disharmony amongst those FE teachers, mentioned above, has been a result of the 'combined feeling of individual stress and insecurity' reported by Ainley and Bailey (1997, p68). It is feelings such as these that give sustenance to the disharmony in the sector. All the lecturers in my case study college would recognize similarities between their feelings regarding the changes to those of Ainley and Bailey's lecturers. Furthermore, it is my belief, following Gleeson and

Shain (1999, p558), that constraints on the necessary modernization of the FE sector such as these directly result from the managerialist discourse of professionalism. Thus, 'a public vision of *further education*' is necessary. I would further argue that such a 'public vision requires a version of professionalism that incorporates public service'. It is *this* vision that government policy makers must embrace.

Clearly this would necessitate funding and accountability regimes much different from those which are operative at present. It must be mentioned firstly that all the lecturers in my case study believed that the pre-Incorporation methods for funding and for ensuring that those working in the sector are accountable were highly suspect. Thus, for example, funding through the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) was seen as a lottery. A college's level of funding often depended upon where the college was situated. Some LEAs were generous. Others were not. In the words of Ainley and Bailey (1997) 'they showed little interest' (p12) in the FE colleges under their authority. Notwithstanding this, the FEFC's method of funding is remote, takes little account of local differences, and is undemocratic. FE colleges, in the interests of their own survival, must cater for the needs of local employers (see DN's response, p131). An answer to this problem would be to return the sector to local authority democratic control. This has long been argued for by NATFHE (1992, 1999). Indeed it has been argued that the present funding methodology, far from being efficient, is wasteful. Ainley and Bailey's (1997) study of two colleges in the sector reveals this inefficiency and waste. Their interviewees wished to 'go

back to a world of regional planning'. Competition for funding that caused 'unnecessary duplication and waste' was their prime reason for such a restoration (p114). Policy makers must reintroduce local democratic control to oversee the funding of FE colleges. However, they must also take account of the anomalies in the system that were prevalent prior to Incorporation, and ensure that funding systems are in place that will take full account of each locality's individual financial needs. This will end the supermarket mentality of 'pile 'em high, sell 'em cheap' that prevails in many colleges today.

Secondly, as to the accountability of colleges and the lecturers in them, again, there needs to be a less onerous and stressful method than that of today. It is often the case that chaos ensues within a college in the twelve months preceding an FEFC inspection. In many ways this is to the detriment of teaching and learning. The monitoring of the work of individual teachers was seen by the lecturers in my case study as both threatening and inappropriate (see, for example, PU, p154). They also saw it as insensitive in its application. It is threatening because it is seen as a tool for managerialism that is aimed at controlling what they do both inside and outside the classroom. The lecturers see it as inappropriate because there is debate over what is measured, and into the very fact that the results of their work are seen as measurable (see Chapter Two). This idea of measuring success is also discussed in the following section of this chapter. This was also noted in Elliott's (1996) study of an FE college (p61). Further to this, one of the reasons the methods used for monitoring their work are seen as insensitive is the marketized form this has taken. Thus, the

student has become the 'customer' and in this role is expected to closely monitor the work of the lecturer (see Randle and Brady, 1997, p136, and p129 in this thesis). Yet, perhaps paradoxically, the lecturer is expected to assess the work of the student, who is now transmogrified into the 'customer'. I would argue that policy makers must take account of this. Lecturers clearly are not against being accountable for their work as such. The lecturers in Elliott's (1996, pp69-70) study seem to be arguing for a more democratic demarketized model. This model sees the lecturers as monitoring their own quality in teams. Arguably these reflections would have to be made public (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). I would advocate that policy makers should examine closely these more democratic ideas, ideas that would involve the lecturer, and be less oppressive. They would also necessitate a reduction in the administrative burden and the introduction of stability into the working lives of FE college lecturers. For, it is clear that lecturers do not see *all* the changes following Incorporation as bad *per se*. Thus, for example, the need to be accountable and the emphasis on student-centred approaches were both seen as positive (see JM, p149, RN, p164). What was questioned was the undemocratic nature of their accountability.

The general vocational curriculum

It has already been mentioned that the quality of the lecturers' work is seen, within the managerialist discourse, as measurable. There are problems with this. In the first place, raw figures such as these take no account of 'value

added' (Hodgson, 1997, pp162-163). This second approach to assessing the quality of lecturers' work takes account of 'teacher commitment' and has 'local relevance' (p173). This would be an answer to DN's worries mentioned above (p131). In the second place, the managerialist approach takes no account of the lives and experiences of that which is being measured - the student. Thus, the reality of student life is eschewed. For, as argued in Chapter Two (and discussed by respondents such as AN, p186), students change their minds as to their future aims, and do not complete their courses for a variety of reasons. Yet often students develop in many ways as a result of their changing lives. These developments may not lead directly to the acquisition of a qualification or a future career. Nevertheless, as Bloomer and Hodkinson (1999, discussed more fully in Chapter Two) contend:

> learning is about the whole life - about the search for identity and fulfilment. To focus exclusively on employment to the exclusion of everything else is to miss a large part of the point (p116).

The 'point' is, I would argue, that if the present government is fully committed to 'lifelong learning'; if their aim is to thoroughly 'satisfy student needs'; if they are serious about ameliorating social exclusion, then the managerialist paradigm must be curtailed. Policy makers should take account of the fact that learning is more than just preparation for work. They should also build on some of the more beneficial results of change in the FE sector. Thus, following Bloomer and Hodkinson (1999, pp113-115), policy makers should encourage colleges to accept students 'of different types, interests and backgrounds', improve 'stable teacher-student relationships' and embrace the

fact that education and training means much more than preparation for work. Policies such as these would empower the lecturers discussed in Chapter Four in such a way as to ensure the possibility of successful 'lifelong learning' and social inclusion, and to truly meet the needs of the students concerned. All of these are stated government aims (DfEE, 1998, DfEE, 1999b).

Additionally, in the interests of achieving the above three objectives, I would recommend that general vocational specifications are made less prescriptive. Policy makers should encourage FE lecturers, in their vocational teams, to devise a curriculum that would both meet those needs *and* the needs of local industry. One form of this kind of development was discussed in Chapter Four (see Blakewater College, 1983). In this scheme colleges were encouraged to devise their own curriculum, and the result was validated by the awarding body concerned. However, this new general vocational curriculum should include the input of all the players involved. This would include democratically elected representatives of the local community, parents, students, and indeed, local employers. This last player would please lecturers such as DN (p131). Thus, the overly-prescriptive specifications of today that do not meet the *local* needs of *all* concerned would be avoided.

It was also noted by the lecturers in my case study that the provision of Key Skills in the general vocational area was highly prescriptive, and made it difficult to include the provision of general education. This over-prescription, the lecturers felt, was exacerbated by the cuts in contact hours (EM, p176). This was because this meant that general education could not be included as an 'add-on'.

Yet all but one of the lecturers believed that, because students do not always end up employed in their vocational area, general education should be included. In addition they argued that education and training should be far more than just work preparation. Further to this, if the government aims of social inclusion, lifelong learning, and meeting students' needs are to be fully realised then policy makers need to take account of the need for general education in the general vocational curriculum.

Final statement

To conclude, I believe that the community should, through critical reflection, devise the changing educational needs of a highly transient future. Moreover, that community should include all interested members of the public. This community *must*, if education and training for *all* incorporates both the practical *and* the liberal, include the educationally dispossessed.

To take this further, it is clear that this would require a much different kind of education and training than the marketized one of today. It would require an education and training whose aims and values would be seen as aiding and abetting Carr's (1991a) ideal of creating democracy through the 'active citizen'. Clearly, for such a democracy to work would necessitate, in Carr's words:

> the obligation to educate future citizens so that they can actively influence this process through democratic debate (p187).

Consequently, I believe that:

> education should prepare citizens for consciously reproducing (not replicating) their society...We should therefore support a set of practices which prepare future citizens for participating intelligently in the political processes that shape their society...For a society to reproduce itself consciously it must cultivate the kind of character and the kind of intellect that enables people to choose rationally (one might say autonomously) among different ways of life (Carr, 1991a, p187, citing Guttman).

Thus, in the case of general vocational education and training, the 'controlled vocationalism' of today would require transforming into one that would 'provide a vehicle for meaningful learning and personal development' (Bates et al., 1998, p115, p123). In turn, this would necessitate the introduction of a form of lecturer professionalism based not on managerialism, but on public service.

Bibliography and References

Ahier, J. Cosin, B. Hales, M. (1996) *Diversity and Change: Education, Policy and Selection*, London: Routledge.

Ainley, P. and Bailey, B. (1997) *The Business of Learning*, London: Cassell.

Apple, M. W. (1996) 'Series Editor's Introduction', in Carspecken, P. F. *Critical Ethnography in Educational Research: A Theoretical and Practical Guide*, London: Routledge.

Ashworth, P. D. and Saxton, J. (1990) 'On Competence', in *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, Vol. 14, No 2, Summer, pp3-25.

Atkinson, P. Delamont, S. and Hammersley, M. (1993) 'Qualitative Research Traditions', in Hammersley, M. (ed.) *Educational Research: current issues*, London: Paul Chapman, pp16-31.

Avis, J. (1994) 'Teacher Professionalism: one more time', in *Educational Review*, Vol. 46, No. 1, pp63-72.

Avis, J. (1996) 'The Enemy Within: Quality and Managerialism in Education' in Avis, J. Bloomer, M. Esland, G. Gleeson, D. and Hodkinson, P. *Knowledge and Nationhood*, London: Cassell, pp105-120.

Avis, J. (1999) 'Shifting Identity: new conditions and the transformation of practice - teaching within post-compulsory education', in *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, Vol. 51, No. 2, pp245-264.

Avis, J. Bloomer, M. Esland, G. Gleeson, D. Hodkinson, P. (1996) 'Where Next? Education and Democratic Politics', in Avis, J. Bloomer, M. Esland, G. Gleeson, D. Hodkinson, P. (1996) *Knowledge and Nationhood*, London: Cassell, pp164-180.

Avis, J. Bloomer, M. Esland, G. Gleeson, D. Hodkinson, P. (1996) *Knowledge and Nationhood*, London: Cassell.

Bailey, C. (1989) 'The Challenge of Economic Utility' in Cosin, B. Flude, M. and Hales, M. (eds.) *School, Work and Equality: A Reader*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, pp223-237.

Ball, S. J. (1984) 'Beachside Reconsidered: Reflections on a Methodological Apprenticeship', in Burgess, R. J. (ed.) *The Research Process in Educational Settings: Ten Case Studies*, London: The Falmer Press, pp69-96.

Ball, S. J. (1993) 'Self-doubt and Soft Data: Social and Technical Trajectories in Ethnographic Fieldwork', in Hammersley, M. (ed.) *Educational Research: current issues*, London: Paul Chapman, pp32-48.

Ball, S. J. (1994) *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-structural Approach*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bates, I. (1998) 'Resisting "Empowerment" and Realizing Power: an exploration of aspects of the GNVQ', in *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp187-204.

Bates, I. Bloomer, M. Hodkinson, P. Yeomans, D. (1998) 'Progressivism and the GNVQ: context, ideology and practice', in *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp109-125.

BECTA (British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) (1999a, April) 'Daventry Tertiary College: The Northamptonshire Key Skills On-Line Project', in *Agenda to good practice in planning and implementing ILT Projects*, Http://ferl.becta.org.uk/ellillt.

BECTA (1999b, April) 'Dundee college: Basic Skills development for Priority Sectors', in *Agenda to good practice in planning and implementing ILT Projects*, Http://ferl.becta.org.uk/ellillt .

Bell, J. (1993) *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bender, S. (1997) 'Employers' responsibility for training', in *General Educator: Journal of the NATFHE General Education Section*, Sheffield: NATFHE, pp14-15, November-December, Issue 49.

Berryman, S. (1994) 'New contracts must be opposed', in *The Lecturer*, NATFHE, p5.

Biot, C. (1993) 'Voices of the Researched in a Report for Policy-Makers', in Burgess, R. (ed.) *Educational Research and Evaluation for Policy and Practice?*, London: Falmer Press, pp61-80.

Blakewater College of Technology and Design (pseudonym) (1983) *General Studies-NWRAC Assessment Scheme Year 1.*

Blakewater College (1992) *Professional Academic Contract*, May.

Blakewater College (1993) *Scheme for Professional Development and Appraisal*, *January.*

Bloomer, M. (1998) '"They Tell You What To Do and Then They Let You Get On With It": the illusion of progressivism in GNVQ, in *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp167-186.

Bloomer, M. and Hodkinson, P. (1999) *College life: the voice of the learner*, London: Further Education Development Agency.

Braverman, H. (1974) *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, London: Monthly Review Press.

Bridge, W. (1994) 'Change where contrasting cultures meet', in Gorringe, R. and Toogood, P. (eds.) *Changing the culture of a college*, Bristol: Coombe Lodge, The Staff College, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp189-198.

Bridges, D. (1993) 'Transferable Skills: a philosophical perspective', in *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp43-51.

BTEC (Business & Technology Education Council) CGLI (City and Guilds London Institute) *The Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education: Part B Core Competences and Vocational Module Specifications*, London: BTEC/CGLI, January.

BTEC (1986) *Common Skills and Core Themes*, London: BTEC, July.

BTEC (1991) *Common Skills: General Guidelines (Interim Document)*, London: BTEC, February.

BTEC (1992) *Common Skills and Core Themes: General Guidelines*, London: BTEC, Issue 1, May.

BTEC (1994) *Core Skills Revision*, London: BTEC, Issue 1.

BTEC (1995) 'Unit Structure', in *Engineering Seminars*, London: BTEC, Issue 1.

BTEC (1996) *Dearing, Beaument, Capey Briefing*, BTEC Professional Development, Issue 2, August.

BTEC (1997) *BTEC Higher National Diplomas in Engineering*, London: BTEC, Issue 1, May.

Burgess, R. G. (1984) *In the Field: An Introduction to Field Research*, London: Routledge.

Carr, W (1989) *Quality in Teaching*, Lewes: Falmer Press.

Carr, W. (1991a) 'Education for Democracy? A Philosophical Analysis of the National Curriculum', in *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp183-191.

Carr, W. (1991b) 'Education For Citizenship', in *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 4, pp373-385.

Carr, W. (1993) 'Education and the World of Work: Clarifying the Contemporary Debate', in Wellington, J. (ed.) *The Work Related Curriculum: Challenging the Vocational Imperative*, London: Kogan Page, pp221-233.

Carr, W. (1995) *For Education: Towards Critical Educational Enquiry*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1986) *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research*, Lewes: The Falmer Press.

Carr, W. and Hartnett, A. (1996) *Education and the Struggle for Democracy: the politics of educational ideas*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Carspecken, P. F. (1996) *Critical Ethnography in Educational Research: A Theoretical and Practical Guide*, London: Routledge.

CBI (Confederation of British Industry) (1989) 'Towards a Skills Revolution: Executive Summary', in Jessup, G. (1991) *Outcomes: NVQs and the Emerging Model of Education and Training*, London: Falmer Press, pp174-181.

Chitty, C. (1989) *Towards a New Education System: The Victory of the New Right?*, London: Falmer Press.

Clifford, J. (1986a) 'Introduction: Partial Truths', in Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. E. (eds.) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, London: University of California Press, pp1-26.

Clifford, J. (1986b) 'In Ethnographic Allegory', in Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. E. (eds.) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, London: University of California Press, pp98-121.

Cockett, M. and Callaghan, J. (1996) 'Caught in the Middle - Transition at 16+', in Halsall, R. and Cockett, M. *Education and Training 14-19:Chaos and Coherence,* London: David Fulton, pp50-72.

Crace, J. (2001*The Missing Millions*, The Guardian, Further, June 19th, p51.

Dean, J. (1991) *Professional Development in Schools*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Dee, L. (1999) 'Inclusive Learning: From Rhetoric to Reality? in Green, A. and Lucas, N. (eds.) *FE and Lifelong Learning: Realigning the Sector for the Twenty-first Century*, London: Institute of Education University of London, pp139-160

Deem, R. and Brehony, K. J. (1994) 'Why Didn't You Use a Survey So You Could Generalize Your Findings?: Methodological Issues in a Multiple Site Case Study of School Governing Bodies after the 1988 Education Reform Act', in Halpin, D. and Troyna, B. (eds.) *Researching Education Policy: Ethical and Methodological Issues*, London: The Falmer Press, pp154-169.

De Landsheere, G. (1993) 'History of Educational Research', in Hammersley, M. (ed.) *Educational Research: current issues*, London: Paul Chapman, pp3-15.

DES (Department of Education and Science) (1988) *Education Reform Act*, London: HMSO.

DES (1992) *Further and Higher Education Act*, London HMSO.

Dewey, J. (1960) *How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process*, Lexington: D. C. Heath and Company.

Dewey, J. (1966) *Democracy and Education*, New York: Free Press.

DfEE (1998) *The learning age: A Renaissance for a New Britain*, London: The Stationery Office.

DfEE (1999a) *Press release: Blunkett to Transform Post-Sixteen Learning*, Http://www.dfee.gov.uk/news .

DfEE (1999b) *White Paper: Learning to Succeed*, Http://www.dfee.gov.uk .

DfEE (2000) *Effective Delivery of Key Skills in Schools, Colleges and Workplaces*, Centre for Research in Post- Compulsory Education and Training, Department of Educational Studies, University of Sheffield.

Donald, J. (1992) *Sentimental Education: Schooling, popular Culture and the Regulation of Liberty*, London Verso.

Ecclestone, K. (2000) 'Bewitched, bothered and bewildered: a policy analysis of the GNVQ assessment regime 1992-2000', in *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 5, pp539-558.

Edexcel Foundation (1999) *DfEE Key Skills Project: Final Report*, Edexcel, June.

Edwards, T. (1997) 'Educating Leaders and Followers', in Edwards, T. Taylor Fitzgibbon, C. Hardman, F. Haywood, R. Meagher, N. (eds.) *Separate but Equal?: A Levels and GNVQs*, London: Routledge, pp8-28.

Eisner, E. (1993) 'Objectivity in educational research', in Hammersley, M. (ed.) *Educational Research: current issues*, London: Paul Chapman, pp49-56.

Elliott, J. (1989) 'Knowledge, Power and Teacher Appraisal', in Carr, W. (ed.) *Quality in Teaching: Arguments for a Reflective Profession*, Lewes: The Falmer Press, pp201-219.

Elliott, G. (1996a) *Crisis and Change in Vocational Education and Training*, London: Jessica Kingsley.

Elliott, G. (1996b) 'Educational Management and the Crisis of Reform in Further Education' in *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, Vol. 48, No. 1, pp5-23.

Esland, G. (1996) 'The New Right, Education and the Global Market', in Avis, J. Bloomer, M. Esland, G. Gleeson, D. Hodkinson, P. *Knowledge and Nationhood*, London: Cassell, pp11-39.

Evans, R. J. (1998) *In Defence of History*, London: Granta.

FEDA (Further Education Development Agency), Institute of Education and The Nuffield Foundation (1997) *GNVQs 1993-1997: A National Survey Report*, London: FEDA.

FEFC (Further Education Funding Council) (1992) Circular 92/01 *Autonomy of Colleges and Parliamentary Accountability*, Coventry: Cheylesmore House, 28th February.

FEFC (1993) *Circular 93/18 Publication of Information Relating to Student Achievements*, Coventry: Cheylesmore House, 18th January.

FEFC (1994) *Circular 94/09 Holdback of Grant*, Coventry: Cheylesmore House, 29th April.

FEFC (1998) *Circular 98/23 Standards, Accountability and Cost-effectiveness: A New Partnership in Post-16 Education and Training*, Coventry: Cheylesmore House, 16th July.

FEFC (1999) *Strategic Planning: An analysis of planned provision in the North West*, Coventry: Cheylesmore House, January.

Feinberg, W. (1983) *Understanding Education: Towards a Reconstruction of Educational Inquiry*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

FEU (Further Education Unit) (1982) *A basis for choice: Report of a study on post-16 pre-employment courses- Second Edition*, Stanmore: DES, December.

FEU (1985) *Supporting YTS Third Edition*, Stanmore: DES, May.

Fielding, G. (1996) *Change in colleges of Further Education: A Case Study*, unpublished MA dissertation: University of Sheffield.

Fielding, G. (1998) 'Change in Colleges of Further Education: A Case Study', in Golby, M. (ed.) *Teachers' Research*, Perspectives 58, August, University of Exeter, pp23-40.

Flores, E and Granger, S. (1995) 'The Role of the Collaborator in Action Research', in Noffke, S. E. and Stevenson R. B. (eds.) *Educational Action Research: Becoming Practically Critical*, New York: Teachers college Press, pp165-179 .

Fischer, G. E. (1986) 'Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory', in Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. E. (eds.) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, London: University of California Press, pp194-233.

Gee, R. (1995) 'A target to aim for', in *College Management Today*, Vol. 3, Issue 1 January, pp7-10.

Giddens, A. (1981) *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism: Vol. 1*, London: Macmillan.

Gillard, D (1997) 'New Government- New Values?' in *Forum*, Vol. 39, No. 3, Autumn, pp86-88.

Gitlin, A. Siegel, M. and Boru, K. (1993) 'The politics of method: from leftist ethnography to educative research', in Hammersley, M. (ed.) *Educational Research: current issues*, London: Paul Chapman, pp191-210.

Gleeson, D. (1989) *The Paradox of Training: Making Progress out of Crisis*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Gleeson, D. and Shain, F. (1999) 'By Appointment: governance, markets and managerialism in further education', in *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 4, September.

Golby, M. (1993) *Case study as Educational Research*, Tiverton: Fair Way Publications, C125 Course Paper.

Gorringe, R. (1993) 'Changing College Cuture', in *College Management Today,* Vol. 1 Issue 1, November, pp4-7.

Gorringe, R. (1994) 'Foreword', in Gorringe, R. and Toogood, P. (eds.) *Changing the culture of a college*, Bristol: Coombe Lodge, The Staff College, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp183-188.

Grace, G. (1978) *Teachers, Ideology and Control*, London: Routledge Kegan Paul.

Green, A (1997a) *Education, Globilization and the Nation State*, London: Macmillan.

Green, A. (1997b) 'Core Skills, General Education and Unification in Post-16 Education', in Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (eds.) *Dearing and Beyond. 14-19 Qualifications, Frameworks and Systems*, London: Kogan Page, pp88-104.

Green, A. and Lucas, N. (1999a) 'From Obscurity to Crisis: The Further Education sector in Crisis', in Green, A. and Lucas, N. (eds.) *FE and Lifelong Learning: Realigning the Sector for the Twenty-first Century*, London: Institute of Education, University of London, pp9-41.

Green, A. and Lucas, N. (1999b) 'Repositioning Further Education: A Sector for the Twenty-first Century', in Green, A. and Lucas, N. (eds.) *FE and Lifelong Learning: Realigning the Sector for the Twenty-first Century*, London: Institute of Education, University of London, pp225-235.

Grundy, S. (1989) 'Beyond Professionalism', in Carr, W. (ed.) *Quality in Teaching: Arguments for a Reflective Profession*, Lewes: The Falmer Press, pp79-100.

Gutmann, A. (1987) *Democratic Education*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Halpin, D. (1994) 'Practice and Prospects in Education Policy Research', in Halpin, D. and Troyna, B. (eds.) *Researching Education Policy: Ethical and Methodological Issues*, London: The Falmer Press, pp198-206.

Halsall, R. (1996) 'Core Skills - The Continuing Debate', in Halsall, R. and Cockett, M. (eds.) *Education and Training 14-19: Chaos or Coherence*, London: David Fulton Publishers Ltd, pp73-88.

Hammersley, M. (1992) *What's Wrong with Ethnography?: Methodological explorations*, London: Routledge.

Hammersley, M. (1993) 'On the teacher as researcher', in Hammersley, M. (ed.) *Educational Research: current issues*, London: Paul Chapman, pp211-231.

Hammerley, M. (1998) *Reading Ethnographic Research: A Critical Guide (Second Edition)*, London: Longman.

Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (1995) *Ethnography: Principles in practice (Second Edition)*, London: Routledge.

Haralombos, M. and Holborn, M. (1995) *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*, London: HarperCollins.

Hargreaves, A. (1994) *Changing Teachers, Changing Times: Teachers Work and Culture in the Post Modern Age*, London: Cassell.

Harrison, S. and Knights, G. (1993) 'Cross-Curricularity', in Edwards, J. and Fogelman, K. (eds.) *Developing Citizenship in the Curriculum*, London: David Fulton Publishers Ltd., pp16-29.

Hatcher, R. (1994) 'Market Relationships and the Management of Teachers', in *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 15, No.1, pp41-62.

Held, D. (1987) *Models of Democracy*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hodgson, A. (1997) 'Building Institutional Capability for National Education Reform: The Case of the 'Formative Value-Added System', in Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (eds.) *Dearing and Beyond. 14-19 Qualifications, Frameworks and Systems*, London: Kogan Page, pp161-176.

Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (1999) *New Labour's Educational Agenda: Issues and Policies for Education and Training from 14+*, London: Kogan Page.

Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (eds) (1997) *Dearing and Beyond. 14-19 Qualifications, Frameworks and Systems*, London: Kogan Page.

Hodkinson, P. (1991) 'Liberal education and the New Vocationalism: a progressive partnership?', in *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp73-88.

Hodkinson, P. (1998) ' Choosing GNVQ', in *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp151-165.

Hodkinson, P. and Issitt, M. (1995) 'The Challenge of Competence for the Caring Professions: An Overview' in Hodkinson, P. and Issitt, M. (eds.) *The Challenge of Competence: Professionalism through Vocational Education and Training*, London: Cassell, pp1-12.

Hyland, T. (1994) *Competence, Education and NVQs: Dissenting Perspectives*, London: Cassell.

Hyland, T. and Johnson, S. (1998) 'Of Cabbages and Key Skills: exploding the mythology of core transferable skills in post-school education', in *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp163-172.

Issitt, M. (1995) 'Competence, Professionalism and Equal Opportunities', in Hodkinson, P. and Issitt, M. (eds.) *The Challenge of Competence: Professionalism through Vocational Education and Training*, London: Cassell, pp70-85.

Jessup, G. (1991) *Outcomes: NVQs and the Emerging Model of Education and Training*, London: Falmer Press.

Jessup, G. (1993) 'Towards a coherent post-16 qualifications framework: the role of GNVQs', in Richardson, W. Woolhouse, J. and Finegold, D. (eds.) *The Reform of Post-16 Education in England and Wales*, Harlow: Longman, pp131-145.

Jonathan. R. (1983) 'The Manpower Service Model of Education', in *Cambridge Journal of Education*, Vol. 13, No.2, pp3-10.

Jones, J. (1995) "Professional Artistry' and Child Protection: Towards a Reflective, Holistic Practice', in Hodkinson, P. and Issitt, M. (eds.) *The Challenge of Competence: Professionalism through Vocational Education and Training*, London: Cassell, pp86-96.

Jordan, S. and Yeomans, D. (1995) 'Critical Ethnography: problems in contemporary theory and practice', *in British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol.16, No.3, pp389-408.

Keddie, N. (1971) 'Classroom Knowledge', in Young, M. (ed.) *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education*, London: Collier Macmillan, pp133-160.

Kelly, A. V. (1989) *The Curriculum: Theory and Practice (Third Edition)*, London: Paul Chapman.

Kemmis, S. (1990) *Curriculum, Contestation and Change*, Deakin: Deakin University Press.

Kemmis, S. (1995) 'Prologue: Theorizing educational practice', in Carr, W. *For Education: Towards Critical Educational Inquiry*, Buckingham: Open University Press, pp1-17.

Knight, P. Helsby, G. Saunders, M. (1998) 'Independence and Prescription in Learning: Researching the Paradox of Advanced GNVQs', in *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 1, pp54-67.

Kogan, M. (1989) 'Accountability and Teacher professionalism', in Carr, W. (ed.) *Quality in Teaching: Arguments for a Reflective Profession*, Lewes: The Falmer Press, pp135-144.

Lacey, C. (1993) 'Problems of sociological fieldwork: a review of the methodology of *Hightown Grammar*', in Hammersley, M. (ed.) *Educational Research: current issues*, London: Paul Chapman, pp114-131.

Lawn, M. A. and Ozga, J. T. (1981) 'The Educational Worker? A Re-assessment of Teachers', in Barton, L. and Walker, S. (eds.) *Schools, Teachers and Teaching*, Lewes: The Falmer Press, pp45-64.

Lawn, M. (1989) 'Being Caught in Schoolwork: The Possibilities of Research in Teachers' Work', in Carr, W. (ed.) *Quality in Teaching: Arguments for a Reflective Profession*, Lewes: The Falmer Press, pp147-161.

LEAF (1999) *LEAF News Special Edition*, Thorpe Bay: Lecturers Employment Advice & Action Fellowship.

Lucas, N. (1999) 'Incorporated Colleges: Beyond the Further Education Funding Council's Model', in Green, A. and Lucas, N. (eds.) *FE and Lifelong Learning: Realigning the Sector for the Twenty-first Century*, London: Institute of Education, University of London, pp42-68.

Lumby, J. (1999) 'Strategic Planning in Further Education', in *Educational Management and Administration*, Vol. 27, No. 1, January, pp71-83.

Mac an Ghaill, M. (1991) 'Young, Gifted and Black: Methodological Reflections of a Teacher/Researcher', in Walford, G. (ed.) *Doing Educational Research*, London: Routledge, pp101-120.

Mac an Ghaill, M. (1992) 'Teachers' Work: curriculum restructuring, culture, power, and comprehensive schooling', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 13, No.2, pp177-199.

Mann, P. (1985) *Methods of Social Investigation*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Mansell, J. (1991) 'The Role of the Further Education Sector', in Chitty, C. (ed.) *Post-16 Education: Studies in Access and Achievement*, London: Kogan Page, pp113-123.

Marcus, G. (1986) 'Contemporary Problems of Ethnography in Modern World Systems', in Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. (eds.) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, London: University of California Press, pp165-193.

Marshall, K. (1991) 'NVQ's: An Assessment of the "outcomes" Approach to Education and Training', in *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, Vol. 15, No. 3.

Marx, K. (1968) 'Manifesto of the Communist Party', in *Marx & Engels Selected Works*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, pp35-63.

May, J. and Greer. A. (1968) *A Students' Guide to the Development of Education in England and Wales*, Reigate: A Strawberry Hill Booklet.

McLoughlin, T. H. (1992) 'Citizenship, Diversity and Education: a philosophical perspective', in *Journal of Moral Education*, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp235-250.

McPeck, J. E. (1981) *Critical Thinking and Education*, Oxford: Martin Robertson.

Measor, L. and Woods, P. (1991) 'Breakthroughs and Blockages in Ethnographic Research: Contrasting Experiences During The Changing Schools Project', in Walford, G. (ed.) *Doing Educational Research*, London: Routledge, pp59-81.

NATFHE (1992) *The Community College*, London: NATFHE.

NATFHE (1995) *FE Public Expenditure Survey - the Budget*, London: NATFHE.

NATFHE (1999) *National Conference Report*, London: NATFHE.

NATFHE News (2000) *Turning the Corner*, Blakewater College: NATFHE News, 18th February.

NCVQ (National Council for Vocational Qualifications) (1996) *Core Skills in GNVQs: Principles and Practice*, London: NCVQ, March.

NWRAC (North West Regional Authority Council) (1983) *A Consultation Document for General and Communication Studies*, Manchester: NWRAC.

Ozga, J. T. and Lawn, M. A. (1981) *Teachers Professionalism and Class*, London: The Falmer Press.

Ozga, J. T. and Lawn, M. A. (1988) 'Schoolwork: interpreting the labour process of teaching', in *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 9, No.3, pp323-336.

Peeke, G. (1999) *Changing College Cultures*, London: FEDA.

Pelling, H. (1976) *A History of British Trade Unionism*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, Ch.12, pp234-256, and Conclusion, pp290-292.

Peters, T. (1987) *Thriving on Chaos: Handbook for a Management Revolution*, London: Pan Books.

Phillimore, A. J. (1996) 'Flexible Specialization, work organization and Skills: approaching the 'second industrial divide'', in Ahier, J. Cosin, B. and Hales, M. (eds.) *Diversity and change: Education, Policy and Selection*, London: Routledge, pp125-143.

Phillips, D.C. (1993) 'Subjectivity and objectivity: an objective inquiry', in in Hammersley, M. (ed.) *Educational Research: current issues*, London: Paul Chapman, pp57-72.

Pring, R. A. (1995) *Closing the Gap: Liberal education and vocational preparation*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.

QCA (Qualifications Curriculum Authority), (1999) *Key Skill Units: Levels 1-3*, Sudbury: Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

Randle, K. and Brady, N. (1997) Managerialism and Professionalism in the 'Cinderella Service', *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, Vol. 49, No. 1, pp121-139.

Reeves, F. (1995) *The Modernity of Further Education: The direction of change in further education colleges*, Wolverhampton: Bilston Community College Publications.

Reynolds, D. (1991) 'Doing Educational Research in Treliw', in Walford, G. (ed.) *Doing Educational Research*, London: Routledge, pp193-209.

Richardson, W. Woolhouse, J. and Finegold, D. (eds.) *The Reform of Post-16 Education and Training in England and Wales*, Harlow: Longman.

Robson, J. (1998) 'A Profession in Crisis: status, culture and identity in the further education college', in *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, Vol. 50, No. 4, pp585-607.

Rosenberg, C. (1987) *1919: Britain on the brink of revolution*, London: Bookmarks.

Sachs, J. (2001) 'Teacher professional identity: competing outcomes', in *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp149-161.

Schön, D. A. (1987) *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, London: Jossey-Bass.

Sikes, P. (2000) '"Truth" and "Lies" Revisited', in *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 2, April, pp257-270.

Shain, F. and Gleeson, D. (1999) 'Under new Management: changing conceptions of teacher professionalism and policy in the further education sector,' in *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp445-462.

Sharp, P. 'The Beginnings of GNVQs: an analysis of Key determining events and factors', in *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp293-311.

Simon, B. (1974) *The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780-1870*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Simon, B. (1992) *What Future for Education?*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Smith, C. T. B. Clifton, R. Makeham, P. Creigh, S. W. Burn, R. V. (1990) *Strikes in Britain*, Manpower Paper No. 15, Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Smyth, J. (1991) 'International Perspectives on Teacher Collegiality: a labour process discussion based on the concept of teachers' work', in *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 12, No.3, pp323-346.

Spours, K. (1997) 'GNVQs and the Future of Broad Vocational Qualifications,' in Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (eds.) *Dearing and Beyond. 14-19 Qualifications, Frameworks and Systems*, London: Kogan Page, pp57-74.

Staff News (1995) *The New Funding Methodology*, Blakewater College, December.

Stake, R. E. (1998) 'Case Studies', in Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, London: Sage, pp86-107.

Stenhouse, L. (1984) 'Library Access, Library Use and User Education in Academic Sixth Forms: An Autobiographical Account', in Burgess, R. G. (ed.) *The Research Process in Educational Settings: Ten Case Studies*, London: The Falmer Press, pp211-233.

Taylor, S. (1994) 'General Education: death or metamorphosis?', in *General Educator: Journal of the NATFHE General Education Section*, Sheffield: NATFHE, January-February, Issue 26, pp10-11.

The Lecturer (1995) *Conference Report*, London: NATFHE, July.

The Lecturer (1998) *NATFHE National Conference: Adult Education loses out*. London: NATFHE, July, pp9-12.

The Lecturer, (1999) *National Conference*, London: NATFHE, July, p1.

The Lecturer (2000) *Strike shuts second biggest college*, London: NATFHE, February, p4.

The Lecturer (2001) *National Strike Puts FE On The Map, London: NATFHE,* July, p1.

Troyna, B. (1994) 'Reforms, Research and being Reflexive about being Reflexive', in Halpin, D. and Troyna, B. (eds.) *Researching Education Policy*, London: The Falmer Press, pp1-14.

Turner, A. (1996) 'General education and core skills', in *General Educator: Journal of the NATFHE General Education Section*, Sheffield: NATFHE, March-April, Issue 39, pp16-18.

Unwin, L. and Wellington, J. (1997) "Personal Effectiveness' as a Cross-Curricular Goal: Catalysts, Barriers and Varying Perceptions', in *Pastoral Care*, Vol. 15, No. 2, June, pp4-15.

Walford, G. (1991) 'Reflexive accounts of Doing Educational Research', in Walford, G. (ed.) *Doing Educational Research*, London: Routledge, pp1-18.

Waugh, C. (1995a) 'Professor Smithers' attack on Core Skills: is he right?', *General Educator: Journal of the NATFHE General Education Section*, Sheffield: NATFHE, Issue 37, November-December, pp19-21.

Waugh, C. (1995b) 'Needed: a movement for valid Core Skills', in *General Educator*, Issue 34, May-June, p24.

Waugh, C. (1996) 'Dearing's concept of Core Skills', in *General Educator*. Sheffield: NATFHE General Education Section, Issue 41, July-August, pp10-13.

Wellington, J. J. (1987) 'Skills for the Future? Vocational education and new technology', in Holt, M. (ed.) *Skills and Vocationalism: The Easy Answer*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, pp21-42.

Wellington, J. J. (1994) 'How far should the post-16 curriculum be determined by the needs of employers', in *The Curriculum Journal*, Vol.5, No. 3, pp307-321.

Wellington, J. J. (1996) *Methods and Issues in Educational Research*, Sheffield: University of Sheffield Division of Education.

Wolf, A. (1995) *Assessing Assessment: Competence-Based Assessment*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Woods, P. and Jeffrey, R. (1996) 'A new professional discourse? Adjusting to managerialism', in Woods, P. (ed.) *Contemporary Issues in Teaching and Learning*, London: Routledge, pp38-56.

Wringe, C. (1984) *Democracy, Schooling and Political Education*, London: Allen and Unwin.

Yeomans, D. (1998) 'Constructing Vocational Education: from TVEI to GNVQ,' in *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp127-149.

Young, M. (1971) *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education*, London: Collier Macmillan.

Appendix A

Stimulus Questions/Prompts for Semi-Structured Interviews with Lecturers

Change in Qualifications

1. Could you comment on the changes in qualifications over the last ten years?
2. Have the changes affected the way that your students are taught?
3. What effects have the changes had on your students?
4. Do the changes better prepare your students for the world of work?
5. Do the changes better prepare your students for higher education?

Effects on Professionalism

6. Could you comment, in general, on the effects the changes have had on you as a professional?
7. Have the changes improved things?
8. Have the changes worsened things?
9. What are the key differences between your work today and what it was before?

General education and vocationalism

10. Should vocational education include elements of general education, such as critical and analytical thinking about the world in general?
11. How do Key Skills fit in with your course?
12. What do you see Key Skills as adding to your course?
13. What do you see Key Skills as adding to your students' vocational education?
14. Should vocational education be purely about preparing students for the world of work?
15. Should vocational education be about preparing young people for their lives both inside and outside of the workplace?

Appendix B Staff Interviewees

Initials	Gender	Years Teaching	Years in Industry	Work Area	College Position	Date of Interview
EM	M	28	2	Div. of Combined Studies	Middle Manager	03/12/98
DT	M	9	6	Div. of Electronics/ Electrical	MGL	08/12/98
JH	F	22	8	Div. of Combined Studies	MGL	11/12/98
PT	M	18	10	Div. of Electronics/ Electrical	Middle Manager	24/02/99
GC	M	28	9	Div. of Electronics/ Electrical	MGL	25/02/99
SL	M	6	10	Div. of Science	MGL	04/03/99
BI	M	1	5	Div. of Science	MGL	04/03/99
RN	F	14	2	Div. of Science	MGL	10/03/99
DM	M	21	8	Div. of Combined Studies	MGL	10/03/99
AN	F	16	4	Div. of Textiles/ Fashion	MGL	25/03/99
VS	F	23	3	Div. of Textiles/ Fashion	MGL	15/04/99
AI	F	22	7	GNVQ/Key Skills Coordinator	Middle Manager	21/04/99
LT	M	15	15	Div. of Special Services	MGL	22/04/99
JM	F	21	9	Div. of Textiles/ Fashion	MGL	23/04/99
DN	M	21	8	Div. of Electronics/ Electrical	MGL	26/04/99
PU	M	19	4	Div. of Science	MGL	27/04/99
WQ	M	19	8	Div. of Textiles/ Fashion	MGL	27/04/99
TS	M	8	20	Div. of Business	MGL	23/06/99