

**The Workforce Strategy for Further Education: The  
Professionalization Agenda and the Inclusion of Support  
Staff**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the positioning of FE support staff within the professionalization agenda, through a Critical Discourse Analysis of a key text: The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012, Lifelong Learning UK, (2009). It will ask where non-teaching staff are positioned within and by this improvement agenda and how is this positioning achieved. The study initially considers traditional, New Public Managerialist and alternative (dialogic) models of professionalism and the influences on and characteristics of these. Utilising an eleven stage analysis framework, the study will deconstruct the Strategy and its sister texts, to explore language-use techniques and how they are employed to secure the professionalization of the FE workforce. Findings show micro level lexical devices, working with a meso level of validating, legitimation techniques, within an over-arching macro level of theoretical influences, such as Social Constructionist and CDA approaches. At the start of undertaking this investigation, experience and early readings of the texts postulated a position where support staff were excluded from the professionalization agenda and its associated benefits, including from the ability to be able to secure a recognised professional status. However, CDA analysis and deconstruction, revealed support staff as being absent, rather than overtly excluded, within the texts. A finding which offered a radical space for considering the possibilities for future investigation of alternative models of professionalism for FE support staff.

## Chapter One: Introduction

Political rhetoric currently stresses the need to 'professionalize the FE workforce' but it is clear that this agenda cannot focus on teachers alone (Robson and Bailey, 2009, p.115).

Robson and Bailey's (2009) claim encapsulates the key issue influencing my interest in understanding the agenda for the professionalization of the Further Education (FE) sector. They acknowledge that there are calls for professionalization of those working in the FE sector, but more significantly, they also acknowledge that any development agenda will need to include more than just teaching roles. A key focus of my interest and also the means for driving these improvements, are the initiatives and policies stemming from this agenda, in particular questioning how or whether college support staff roles are being included in the process or its outcomes (Arkinstall, 2010). The crucial consideration is whether, when really scrutinised, the professionalization of education staff includes *all* staff or whether it primarily or in the main, means teaching staff.

This EdD thesis is located within a broader field of similar work on professionalization being undertaken within the Further Education sector. Examples include work into researching the changes in teacher training and qualifications in FE, the impact of the Strategy itself and progress made towards implementing the recommendations made within the policy. Some initial illustrations of related research include The Quality Improvement Agency's 2008 study by Dr Joe Harkin, who conducted an



analysis of the results of various case studies of workforce development carried out by Centres of Excellence in Teacher Training (CETTs), exploring the changes in teacher and trainer qualifications (Harkin, 2008). In 2009 the LLUK commissioned a study which explored the impacts and issues associated with the workforce Strategy among work based learning providers who are funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LLUK, 2010) and in 2011 the Association of Colleges, the Sixth Form College's Forum, the 157 Group and LLUK combined to research the progress made in the implementation of the workforce Strategy, across members of these groups (157 Group, 2011). These studies explored the changes heralded by the workforce reforms agenda, with a key focus on changes to teaching qualifications, and showed inconsistencies in the up-take of, and responses to, the reform recommendations, citing a range of reasons that underpinned these – predominantly finding financial implications, in an era of heightened recognition of a need for improved efficiencies in the future utilisation of the FE workforce, to be a major influence. This thesis holds an association with these studies, with regard to a shared interest in the professionalization of FE, but has a different focus with regard to its concern with understanding support staff roles within this agenda, rather than teaching ones.

### **1.1 Why FE Workforce Reform?**

Researching a more intellectually rooted understanding of the professionalization agenda and the inclusion of college support staff roles in this process is a significant concern for me. As a Student Services

Manager in a sixth form college, I directly manage and have responsibility for the largest team of non-teaching staff in the institution and as such I work with a broad array of colleagues potentially affected by this agenda.

Simultaneously, my own career change, moving from working in the Accountancy Industry into private residential care for young people and then in primary education, stimulated an interest in understanding the complex influences impacting upon my sense of being a 'developing professional'. Concurrent to this career change, I undertook a decade of personal education, studying an undergraduate degree in childhood and youth studies and a post-graduate degree and certificates in education and social science research. This was aimed at strengthening my professional and personal development and the comprehensive programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) offered through my employment. As such, much of my personal and professional development has comprised continual, part time, private study, undertaken with the aim of improving my professional and personal standing.

Advancements in my personal, professional and academic selves, together with the rise in seniority of my roles, have primarily been accomplished while being employed in the education sector; a sector which is arguably built on a central concept of education as being a means for achieving personal development or advancement. Carr (1989) argues this conceptualisation is one where education enables individuals to "... deepen their self-awareness, examine their existing desires, attitudes and

beliefs, rid themselves of ignorance, prejudice and superstition and so transform themselves and the social context in which they live” (p.31). With this in mind I have long questioned how there feels to be a contradiction between my ‘ideal professional-self’ and my ‘actual professional-self’, as my sense of having a concrete (actual) professional identity, feels to have been in decline since leaving previous career roles. Essentially the feeling of belonging to an acknowledged ‘profession’ began to diminish when I moved into education support staff positions. Discussing this perception with a range of education support staff colleagues found they also echoed this feeling of being ‘professionally adrift’ and this further fuelled my interest in exploring the professionalization agenda more fully (Arkinstall, 2010).

Other factors have compounded this interest, including national developments and agendas such as workforce reform and institutional experiences such as *whole* college staff training events which effectively only include teaching staff. Reading my institution’s Staff Development Plan and speaking with colleagues on the ‘receiving’ end of this drive for professionalization, focussed my research interest onto understanding these developments in a more academic manner and being able to set them within a broader (national) context.

## **1.2 Contextual Information**

The Sixth Form College in which I work has approximately 1300 full time 16-19 and 19+ and 200 Adult Community Learning students. Provision

includes International Baccalaureate, AS and A Levels, Vocational, Community Learning and Level 1, 2, and 3 Qualifications in a broad range of subjects. Telford & Wrekin is a New Town, with a Unitary Authority, in an area of high population mobility and an above average level of disadvantage. The college has 8 – 12% Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students, a notably higher percentage than the local population which has 6% BME. The college comprises 45% teaching staff and 55% support staff, while the Senior College Management Team (SMT) comprises, five senior staff, only one of whom represents the support staff team, an 80% / 20% split. These ratios appear to me to offer an implicit commentary on the positioning (or value) of support staff in college. Given that the SMT is the institution's decision making body, the disproportionate weighting in favour of teaching staff may hold particular significance if support staff wanted to influence or challenge actions in college (e.g. CPD activities).

The availability of data to ascertain if the staffing structure in my own institution reflects that of other local sixth form colleges is limited. The Learning and Skills Improvement Services conducts an annual survey of all Further Education colleges in England, through the Staff Individualised Record (SIR) (LSIS, 2012). LSIS explains 'The SIR data is gathered from further education colleges for each academic year and comprises demographic and socio-economic data and information about staff from various occupational groups' (LSIS, 2012). The most recent results include responses from 336 of a potential 345 FE colleges, with 9 of the 45 responding West Midlands FE Colleges being sixth form colleges (as my

institution is) (AOC, 2012 and LSIS, 2012). While LSIS's analysis focuses predominately on the sector's staff profile in terms of factors such as gender, age and ethnicity, together with the staff qualifications and subjects taught, it does show senior management positions comprise 0.4% of the workforce, teaching staff 48.9% and other managers, administrative and professional staff, technical staff and word processing, clerical and secretarial staff comprising 29.8%. However it is not possible to ascertain what, if any, percentage of the senior manager positions are held by teaching or non-teaching staff (LSIS, 2012).

### **1.3 Background to the study – Key Sources of Material**

Two key policy/guidance texts form my core research documents as these are the current policy texts which set out the professionalization agenda for the FE sector workforce:

Lifelong Learning UK, (2009), *The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012: Revised version 2009/2010*, London, Lifelong Learning UK. (Appendix 1).

Lifelong Learning UK, (2009), *The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012: A guide for Learning Providers: Revised version 2009/2010*, London, Lifelong Learning UK. (Appendix 2).

Tracing the history of these policy texts reveals years of governmental concern over the condition of adult skills in the UK, which is expressed in a number of reviews and White Papers (brief details of which, for the purposes of contextualisation, will follow) and ultimately culminates in the

development of the workforce Strategy as an approach to addressing some of those concerns.

Lord Leitch's 2004 Review of Skills in the UK highlighted increasing anxieties about the lack of UK adults' basic abilities and resultant financial and societal dilemmas, emphasising 'Our nation's skills are not world class and we run the risk that this will undermine the UK's long-term prosperity' (HM Treasury, 2006, p.1). Leitch argued a pressing need to address this skills deficit in order for the UK to successfully compete in a global market, stating the urgency for "... developing skills in order to maximise economic prosperity, productivity and to improve social justice" (HM Treasury, 2006, p.1). The review defines skills as the competences which are utilised in employment and highlights that the attainment of certain fundamental competences is a requirement common to all jobs, locating the responsibility for improvement as lying with both individuals and employers, "We recommend radical change right across the skills spectrum ... Institutional change and simplification are necessary ... Employer and individual awareness must increase" (HM Treasury, 2006, p.2).

In November 2004, the then Secretary of State for Education and Skills and Chair of the Learning and Skills Council, tasked Sir Andrew Foster to conduct an independent evaluation of further education colleges' future role. Published in November 2005, 'A Review of The Role of Further Education Colleges' made a series of strategic proposals related to

various elements of the sector such as its vision, purpose and quality, including recommendations for improvements in workforce development and leadership (Foster, 2005, pp.5-6). Foster (2005) highlighted concerns about a lack of national, harmonized approach to the advancement of FE staff, observing “Equally disturbing is the poor state of workforce planning and development” (p.5). The proposal to address this concern resulted in the key policy text which is considered here, The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012, originally published in 2007 and then revised in 2009, following Foster’s recommendation “... that a new national workforce development Strategy should be produced ...” (Foster, 2005, p.5).

In 2006 The Department for Education and Skills published the White Paper, Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances, which included initial responses to The Foster Review (2005). The response emphasises various points for improvement, highlighting “Colleges and providers will be responsible for driving up quality within their own organisations, with an increasing emphasis on self-improvement” (DFES, 2006, p.8). This includes paving the way for the development of the FE workforce, stating “The Strategy will be backed by new measures to support the development of the workforce” (DFES, 2006, p.8).

In 2007, evolving from recommendations within this white paper, the first version of Lifelong Learning UK’s, (2007), The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012, was launched. This

Strategy embodied the aim to professionalise the FE workforce, expressed in the various reviews and government papers that had gone before stating the need “... to have a workforce that is up-to-date and possesses relevant skills through broader recruitment strategies and continuing professional development as set out in the FE White Paper 1. (1 being the White Paper: DfES, March 2006: FE White Paper – Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances)” (Lifelong Learning UK, 2007, p.4).

Having briefly considered the policy context for the development of this agenda, I shall return to matters of context in later chapters, for a deeper consideration, when exploring the literature and discussing my findings.

The combination of these personal academic and professional influences and the policy’s historical context lead to the development of my key research question, which is:

To what extent does The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012 include college support staff in the professionalization agenda?

The focus of this thesis is to then explore the workforce reform Strategy, via a Critical Discourse Analysis, to consider whether support staff roles are included in the professionalization agenda for the FE sector. This will include an exploration and consideration of central concepts linked to the notion of ‘professionalization’ such as profession, professional and professionalism. These concepts, together with different models of professionalism, shall be explored further in Chapter Two, where I review



the literature and further explore the development of the Strategy, the influences on the agenda for professionalization and how this is being achieved. There will also be discussion on any gaps in the literature - particularly pertinent as this highlights the lack of inclusion/visibility of FE support staff in research narratives. Chapter Three details my methodological stance and methods employed, in particular exploring the links between Social Constructionism and Critical Discourse Analysis – key influences on my ontological and epistemological position (and consequently this thesis) – concluding with consideration of matters of relativism, reflexivity, validity and reliability and personal bias. The examination of my findings, in Chapter Four, further explores the analytical framework employed in this thesis and gives a detailed and critical interrogation of the key source texts. These findings are then discussed in Chapter Five, exploring what kind of claim to knowledge this thesis offers, the messages from the texts and how these are achieved. Finally I conclude, in Chapter Six, by revisiting the findings and discussion's conclusions in relation to my original research question and complementary questions (developed in Chapter Two) and considering possible next steps, emerging from this research.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

Having rudimentarily traced the historical development of the current drive for the professionalization of the FE workforce, developing a *fuller* understanding of this topic meant starting with a systematic exploration of what is already known about it. Reviewing existing literature can take various forms, ranging from simple Annotated Bibliographies (essentially being a list of publications read) through to conducting Systematic reviews (generally centring on specific elements which are policy or practice-relevant, using explicit, technical, replicable processes, oriented in quantitative/positivist approaches) (Potter, 2006, pp.154-157; Hammersley, 2007, pp.242-254). Ridley (2008) highlights the usefulness of thinking of the review as comprising two components; a 'doing' element and a 'result' element, suggesting "... it is helpful to break it down into two parts: first, the finished *product* of the literature review which appears in the final draft of the dissertation or thesis, and second, the *process* that is involved in conducting the review of the literature" (p.2).

Traditional/Academic reviews generally explore, summarise, interpret and critique literature on a specific topic of interest, and sit 'between' the two forms mentioned above. Adopting an essentially traditional academic review approach enabled me to investigate, encapsulate, interpret and critique literature on my topic of interest. This also facilitated: my gaining knowledge of the subject field; a historical contextualisation of the subject; the emphasising of relevant concepts, explanations and theories; the

identification of definitions of particular concepts and any correspondences and disparities in these definitions; the investigation of how other researchers have undertaken their work; the identification of thin areas or gaps in the literature; the refining / re-focussing of my research question(s) and the development of an initial corpus of evidence with which I will be able to compare any subsequent research findings (Punch, 1998, p.43; Ridley, 2008, pp.16-28; Wellington, 2008, pp.34-40; Wellington *et al*, 2009, pp.72-73).

In order to ground my investigation of the extent to which college support staff are included in the education professionalization agenda, I began by first considering what the literature revealed about the history and meaning(s) of the term professionalization and related concepts, such as profession, professional and professionalism.

## **2.1 Professionalism: The Historical Context**

Exploring professionalism's shifting meanings and functions in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century Nixon *et al* (1997) detail the origins of the traditionally dominant conceptualisation of this notion. The late 1940s through to the 1960s saw particular occupations being perceived as holding a certain, uncontested level of status. This afforded these groups the potential for independence and self-government, as well as assigning the position of 'scholarly authority', to the groups' members. As Nixon *et al* (1997) note, "During that period professionals achieved legitimacy through society's acknowledgement of their specialist knowledge and expertise" (p.7). This

reading of professionalism was subjected to prolonged public critique however, over the next two decades (1970s and 1980s), which challenged the privileged positioning of professionals as societal leaders and experts because of their specialist knowledge, and Nixon *et al* (1997) depict the situation as resembling 'two tussling territories'. Private and public sector employees experienced their claims to professionalism differently to each other, dependent upon whether their legitimacy was sought from (or conferred by) corporate or state employers. The resultant condition found *public sector* professionals entrenched in guarding against oppositions, which challenged their standing as being derived from their expert knowledge. Perkin (1990) argued that this state "... the splitting of the professional class into two warring factions" was also an omen of a wider political crisis for Britain, being "... the unwelcome choice between the two extremes of an authoritarian state run by powerful and domineering professional bureaucrats and a more diffuse neo-feudal system of great corporations run by equally dangerous and domineering professional managers" (p. xiv).

In the 1990s, these understandings came under threat from new intellectual movements like postmodernism, as Nixon *et al*, (1997), stressed what it meant to attain professionalism was under threat from factors including "... postmodernist theorising about the changing conditions of knowledge and the impact of that theorising - and those changing conditions - on professional identity" (pp.6 – 7). The conventional understanding of 'professional' was based on the attainment of *expert*

*knowledge*, the notion of which itself was being challenged, and the securing of significant levels of *autonomy* for the group. This model was becoming viewed as restrictive and untenable because professional status had to be 'bestowed' upon a group by other professional groups, rather than it being secured by/for oneself. As Nixon et al (1997) emphasise, "The relation between autonomy and status was thus complex and one-sided: if you were granted autonomy, you could claim professional status; but no attempt to claim such status could guarantee professional autonomy. The dice were loaded in favour of those who had already arrived." (p.8). Having established the historical context in which the traditional depiction of professionalism became so dominant, I explore an overview of professionalism as a concept, before more detailed discussions of the traditional model and two alternatives.

## **2.2 Professionalism: The Concept**

Having considered the historical context of the concept of 'professionalism', what emerged throughout this review was three broad 'models' of or 'approaches' to understanding and defining professionalism, which incorporate some overlapping characteristics and elements. These common features comprise references to levels of knowledge held by professionals, behaviours they demonstrate, and the framework in which they practice, be this through high levels of professional autonomy or through being subject to external control and accountability. The literature featured discussions of the post-war Traditional approach, with an emphasis on professionals attaining certain levels of qualification, training,

expertise, professional status and workplace autonomy – employed to the benefit of the professional self and for wider societal good through a public service ethic. The review also revealed that as the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century progressed, there was a political shift towards securing improvements through increased marketization and accountability within ‘public services’. This shift manifested in a New Public Management approach to professionalism, likened more to a re-professionalization or de-professionalization as practitioners become increasingly subject to frameworks of accountability and control, with opportunity for professional autonomy and freedom being diminished. In response to this political shift and emerging from anxieties surrounding re/de-professionalization is a third approach, a more Dialogic Alternative, evolved from the Traditional approach and involving dialogue with the public and stakeholders. I offer a detailed consideration of each of these approaches, after first exploring what my review revealed about professionalism *per sé*.

What I found in my various readings could perhaps be most accurately understood as a range of discourses about professionals and what being a professional means and these encapsulated the various themes of the literature. I found a range of perceptions, not specifically distinct and separate as they often overlap and intertwine and which I describe as (including, but not necessarily limited to) – the professional-*as-expert*; the professional-*with-privileged knowledge*; the professional-*with-professional status* (bestowed not claimed); the professional-*as-member of an elite*; the professional-*as-working to a set of (practice) standards*; the professional-

*as-autonomous* (this was originally self-serving autonomy, but as found in Nixon's work, there are increasing calls for this autonomy to be employed in social development); the professional-*as-a plurality* (so encompassing all/some of these and enacting one, some, or all of them at the same time – changing the 'professional-as hat' dependent upon what the context calls for).

These various discourses and their interwoven and related nature were significantly influential when formulating my interpretations of profession, professionals, professionalism and professionalization and are reflected in my interpretations' acknowledgement of the multifaceted nature of the concepts. The key features identified through the review can be summarised into the following interpretations, which can subsequently be used in the reading of any further texts and in the reading and analysis of policy texts, as part of this research project.

**Profession:** is typified as a being a group of roles subject to certain expectations. These being expectations that those within the group will have attained certain knowledge; will demonstrate a certain standard of behaviour; will have undertaken certain qualifications and training; will bring a level of 'expertise' to the group. The traditional expectation of the group securing professional autonomy is also key, with I would argue, the expectation that this be used for the wider social good, rather than self-interest. These expectations of the group are underpinned by how those external to the group perceive it – that those within the group will be

individuals who can fulfil these expectations. **Professional/s:** are those who meet and fulfil these expectations. **Professionalism:** is characterised by how individual(s) perform the role of a professional; what they 'do' on a continuous, daily basis as they attain, retain and maintain the status of being a professional. A key element would be how they use their professional autonomy and expertise for the wider social good. **Professionalization:** comprises the drivers behind the agenda for a group (FE) to achieve and maintain these three (profession, professional, professionalism). This would include national policy drivers, institutional professional standards/drivers or various widely held belief systems (as with the notion of professionalization as an ideology) that incite internal individual drivers (Arkininstall, 2010). That is to say individuals themselves may want to be professional and may have a personal perception of what that entails, irrespective of institutional and policy contexts.

These 'interpretations' offer a definition of ideas employed throughout this research, with practical classifications which resonate with the literature considered, especially the work of sociologist Julia Evetts, and her 2005 paper "The Management of Professionalism: A Contemporary Paradox". Evetts' (2005) portrayal of profession as comprising a distinct type of occupation; professionalization as the means of adhering to, advancing and maintaining the integrity of the occupational group and understanding of professionalism as a value, an ideology or a discourse of managerial change and control, were significant influences on generating my own interpretations of these concepts (pp.1- 4).



### 2.3 Professionalism: A Traditional Model

Randle and Brady highlight a number of significant characteristics which typify the post-war 'traditional' model of professionalism, including:

... the presence of expert, tacit knowledge and skills; professional autonomy over work in terms of decision-making and implementation; work perceived as socially useful and implicitly anti-commercial; the relationship with the client being one of loyalty whilst the locus of power rests with the professional; the attainment of high standards in the execution of work-related tasks; and the organisation of the work on the basis of collegiality. This can be characterised as a 'public service ethic' where the prime concern is to provide "quality educational opportunities for students" (Randle and Brady, 1997, p.127).

Two crucial components of this position are the contradictory nature of the model's relationship to/with government and its focus on 'service'. Commenting on the first of these features, which was "... based on the assumption that state control would threaten its very essence" (Nixon *et al*, 1997, p.8), Nixon *et al* (1997) stress the significance of the self-government in this model. They also note the imperative for this to be bestowed, rather than taken, "The crucial issue is that professionals were granted this autonomy; they did not have to grab it' and 'True' professional status could only be conferred" (Nixon, *et al*, 1997, p.8).

In a practical example, connected to this study's focus, Leggatt (1970) highlighted how features of the education sector *itself*, compounded the problems encountered with professional status having to be bestowed. He noted factors such as its gender and class make-up, impacted upon this conferring of professional status, noting the sector was, "... particularly

vulnerable on this count, given their occupational characteristics: 'the large size of the group, its high proportion of female members, its lowly class composition, its small measure of autonomy as a group and its segmentation" (Leggatt, 1970, p.161). Two factors then served to thwart any presumption of professionalism. The (then) demographic composition of the sector, together with a form of 'occupational hierarchy' which sited the medical and legal professions in pinnacle position and whereby the status of 'profession' was bestowed upon occupations, according to their location within this 'pecking order', combined to prevent the education sector progressing up through this hierarchy. The dominant perception - that the gender and/or class of (most of) the sector 'excluded' them from any presumption of professionalism – and the segregated, hierarchical positioning of the occupation, combined to result in no 'instinctive' bestowing of the status of 'profession' upon the group.

Here then is the crux of the difficulties in securing a professional identity: not being in a position where it is instinctively bestowed, any active attempts by a group, to secure this status for themselves, positions them as at odds with the very philosophy of professionalism. Employing examples from education again, Nixon *et al* (1997) highlight this difficulty, noting "Many of the ambiguities of teacher professionalism can be explained in terms of this irony: in seeking professional autonomy teachers necessarily called into question their own public service ethic which was seen as the hallmark of professional status" (Nixon *et al*, 1997, p.8). Consequently the connection between a group's standing and its self-

government was a complicated and imbalanced relationship: autonomy and the status of profession *could be bestowed* upon the group, but *no* amount of endeavours to actively petition for this status, would be successful.

A point to note here is that, while the focus of this thesis is the professionalization of FE support staff, many examples found within the literature, which could be employed for illustrative purposes with regard to the arguments / points being made, refer to teaching staff. Their inclusion is not a shift in focus but a reflection that historically the majority of research into the professionalization, professionalism and professional identities of FE staff, has focussed on teaching or quasi-teaching roles. I consider this matter further later in this review.

Heading toward the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century desire to attain the status of profession still prevailed and one manifestation of this was an attempt to delineate the features and qualities common to already established professions. The aim was that identification of these would enable the development of a 'set of criteria' against which occupational groups could measure their advancement toward attaining/displaying the desired level of professionalism (Nixon *et al*, 1997). Drawing on Esland's (1980) précised review of the development of these 'criteria', Nixon *et al* (1997) emphasise a major trait, perceived to be common to all professions and professional undertakings: being that they were underpinned by an expert intelligence. They note "... one of the underlying assumptions of the

traditional model of professionalism was of specialist knowledge and expertise as essentially static: a body of received wisdom over which professionals kept guard” (Nixon *et al*, 1997, p.8). Indeed, the significance of the perception of an association between expert knowledge and professional status is a persistent feature of traditional approaches to professionalism.

Popkewitz (1985) argued that there are factors in teachers’ own teacher-training that conspire to inculcate and also to legitimate the perception of professionalism as pertaining to a ‘professionals-as-experts’ model and the privileging of ‘expert-knowledge’. Teacher training takes place in an institutional context where the establishment of the ‘appropriate’ vocabulary, customs and actions, on the part of the trainees, happens in an arena where performance is controlled by systems which preside over how individuals act and react, in relation to the practices of schooling. He argued that two key factors influenced these systems, the most significant of which was the professionalization of *knowledge*, which gives particular professions collective power to influence how *meaning* and *reality* are characterised in specific institutional fields (Popkewitz, 1985, p.91). So, if a group or profession has the collective power to influence what is accepted as knowledge (or even as ‘truth’) and the group’s members are trained in line with that ‘truth’, we find a form of self-fulfilling prophecy, whereby the group can claim authority for that knowledge because all members of that group or profession ‘possess’ it. As Popkewitz puts it “Teacher education becomes a legitimating mechanism” (Popkewitz, 1985, p.91).

This notion that certain (forms of) knowledge are privileged or given prominence is further emphasised by DiMaggio's (1991) portrayal of various institutional determinants or signifiers of the professionalization of a sector. Again, these continue to emphasise the association between professionalism and the attainment and privileging of 'appropriate' knowledge. He describes features such as the coming together or grouping of university-qualified specialists; the formation of, and intensification in, a corpus of data and knowledge about the sector/field and the setting up of professional bodies for sector members (which similarly necessitates the attainment of certain 'appropriate' knowledge or qualifications as an 'entry' requirement). These features, he observed, were commonly present as occupational groups progressed through the process of professionalization (DiMaggio, 1991, pp. 267-292).

Further acknowledging the significance certain knowledge holds in a traditional approach to defining concepts relating to professionalization, Evetts (2003) offers a Sociological Analysis of Professionalism, describing a 'profession' as being a collective set of careers, which are founded on both practical and implied knowledge. She highlights how the members of these groups share common traits, including the attainment of 'career-specific' know-how and skills, noting that "Professions are essentially the knowledge-based category of occupations which usually follow a period of tertiary education and vocational training and experience" (Evetts, 2003, p.397). Evetts (2003) advances this discussion by arguing that rather than continuing with this long tradition of trying to *define* 'profession', it may be

more prudent to call for investigations to focus on trying to understand why the concepts of 'profession' and specifically 'professionalism' *hold such an attraction*, instead.

Summarising texts which offer two contradictory accounts of professionalism - as either an *ideology* (i.e. the system of ideas at the basis of a political theory) or as a *normative value system*, Evetts (2003) suggests professionalism's persistent attraction may be more readily evident in the latter interpretation. Positioning professionalism as a normative value system facilitates an understanding of the concept which democratises the idea, by bringing certain (privileged) values, positions and perceptions into being. Similar to Popkewitz's comments, on how certain actions which influence how meaning and reality are characterised ultimately serve to legitimise themselves, this normative positioning serves to secure a consensus on what professionalism *is* and *means*. By shaping society's world view of the concept this way, it also consequently becomes possible to create every-day, taken-for-granted, ways of doing, or demonstrating, or achieving 'professionalism'. Thus a value position framework is produced which then guides and influences the behaviours of others - both of those 'doing' the concept and of others who encounter or interact with those 'inside' professionalism (Parry, 2010). It creates an idea and expectation of what being professional means and then strives to establish this as the 'given' norm. This approach, of viewing professionalism as a normative value system, thus links back to the notion of certain forms of knowledge being privileged, as emphasised earlier by

Popkewitz (1985) and DiMaggio (1991). Given Evetts' (2003) call for researchers to re-focus on the persistent *attraction* of professionalism, understanding the normative value system approach as being an opportunity to secure a positioning of professionalism which brings with it an ingrained, taken for granted meaning across society, may illuminate this attraction. As she observes when considering the difference between ideology and normative approaches to professionalism:

The most obvious difference is that while professionalism as value system is guardedly optimistic about the positive contributions of the concept to a normative social order, professionalism as ideology focuses more negatively on professionalism as a hegemonic belief system and mechanism of social control for 'professional' workers. Not surprisingly, professional workers themselves prefer and utilize the normative discourse in their relations with clients, their occupational identities and their work practices (Evetts, 2003, p.399).

Having secured a position which 'determines' what it means to 'perform' professionalism and which is underpinned by a 'need' for those performers to hold certain, privileged knowledge, those 'inside' this position may have a vested interest in, or *attraction* to, maintaining this positioning or status quo. On the face of it, this approach appears to offer those on the inside of professionalism a position of neutrality, as it places them as not being the ones who influence the definition or understanding of 'professional'. The normative value approach creates a situation whereby *society* 'knows' what it means to 'do' professionalism, the definition becomes located *outside* the group who are 'doing' professionalism. So where one encounters someone performing in line with these 'taken-for-granted

criteria', it becomes accepted that they 'must be a professional doing professionalism', mustn't they?

Alternatively, exploring Evetts' (2003) grouping of interpretations of professionalism as an *ideology* highlights why the normative positioning may be the more attractive interpretation. She highlights how positioned as an ideology, professionalism becomes understood as a ruling set of principles, which operate as an instrument for the manipulation of a collective group. Some implications of seeing 'professionalization' as a form of ideological control can be seen within the idea of professional autonomy being replaced by government mandates on how professional workers should behave. If the idea of what it means to be or do 'professional' is externally set by a ruling group, the opportunity for autonomy (for example of decisions, actions and potentially knowledge) becomes restricted or eroded. If a government department dictates what constitutes professional behaviours (and also, therefore, what *does not*) it is arguable that the notion of professionalization is more focussed on moulding the workforce into a 'form' deemed appropriate or suitable by the (current) ruling group, rather than enabling them to evolve organically, in line with the needs of the group and the field in which they work. This notion is echoed in Said's arguments about what he viewed as being a significant risk to professional morality and principles:

The particular threat to the intellectual today, whether in the West or the non-Western world, is not the academy, nor the suburbs, nor the appalling commercialism of journalism and publishing houses, but rather an attitude that I will call



professionalism. By professionalism I mean thinking of your work as something you do for a living, between the hours of nine and five with one eye on the clock, and another cocked at what is considered to be proper, professional behaviour— not rocking the boat, not straying outside the accepted paradigms or limits, making yourself marketable and above all presentable, hence uncontroversial and unpolitical and 'objective'. (Said, 1994, p. 55).

Similarly, Nixon talks of de-professionalization - the removal or diminishment of professional control, influence and autonomy – whereby manoeuvres to professionalise a sector can also be read as attempts to exert more control over it (externally), as he notes “This process of increased professionalization undoubtedly contains within it contradictory tendencies towards de-professionalization and de-skilling” (Nixon, 1999, p.217). Reading ‘professionalization’ as a form of ideological control which, positions your ‘professional grouping’, as being a means for others to control your behaviours (perhaps in line with their aims, rather than your own) is perhaps less attractive. While the interpretations offered by Popkewitz (1985) and Evetts (2003) - the normative positioning of professionalism with professions as being able to influence what is accepted as knowledge - may not offer the opportunity to secure full professional autonomy. However they may facilitate the opportunity for ‘professionals’ to influence the societal (normative) view of what it means to ‘do or be’ professional.

In her study of college Middle Managers, Briggs (2004) moves the discussion beyond the issue of attaining privileged knowledge and whether this positions one as a member of an authoritative and

autonomous grouping, or as part of a collective which is subject to control and manipulation by others, to also considering what the attained knowledge may be used for. Noting the emergence of conflicting aspects of 'being/doing' professional, where, "... the "schismatic" view of college management is being replaced by a holistic one, where professionalism is seen to encompass both client-centred, learning-based values and the principles of funding-based business efficiency. This is not an easy combination to achieve:" (Briggs, 2004, p.598). This apparent bracketing off of 'business efficiency' as a separate part of the role, as though it would have no influence on 'learning-based' values, is a significant matter, and arguably a position that would be difficult, if not impossible to achieve. Briggs also notes this difficulty in attempting to incorporate, balance and achieve these conflicting principles, "Individual managers are aware of the contradictions within their role, as they try to produce positive outcomes for clients and students through the unwieldy agency of college bureaucracies" (Briggs, 2004, p.598).

A further example of these emergent contradictory 'calls' on professionalism was evident in my institution's Staff Training and Development Plan 2009/10. Here professionalism is depicted as the process of conducting oneself in line with specific college guidance, stating "Professionalism is the focus upon working to professional standards and developing professional practice in the framework provided by college policies and procedures" (Anon, 2009, p.3). Similar to previous discussions, this approach incorporates elements of specific (privileged)

knowledge, "... development of the College is dependent on ensuring that all staff build on and enhance their existing skills and expertise" (Anon, 2009, p.2). It also features an expectation that staff practice will be performed at a certain, implicit, standard. This model *appears* to echo elements of the 'traditional' approach, by encouraging staff to 'better themselves and their practice' through the attainment of expertise, knowledge and/or qualifications and to 'raise' their work to the standard widely perceived as demonstrating one's professional status (widely perceived in this manner because of the power / pervasive nature of the normative value system). However, insisting that professionalism is 'attained' through compliance with the guidance created by (senior) college managers, is suggestive of potential tensions between managers and professionals, with the latter having less autonomy to practise how they see fit. This model then becomes more indicative of the *de-* or *re-*professionalization of staff, through the imposition of a narrowly defined framework for 'being/doing' professional, designed and insisted upon by management, focussed on the "... development of the college" (Anon, 2009, p.2). A focus arguably influenced by the necessity to vie for 'custom' in an increasingly competitive FE 'market-place'.

This Training and Development Plan highlights some of the emerging limitations of the traditional approach to understanding professionalism. As the approach here directs that 'professional practice' is to take place *within a framework determined by college policies and procedures*, (which were generated solely by the college Principal and Vice Principal, rather than

incorporating wider staff involvement or being informed by wider research), it sits in contradiction with Labaree's (1992) call for any approach to include opportunities for professionals to secure workplace autonomy. The difficulties in trying to balance the conflicting nature of these competing characteristics of professionalism are explored by the authors, to whose work I now turn, who locate the origins of these conflicts, at least in part, in the emergence of a 'new' political approach to educational improvement.

#### **2.4 Professionalism: A New (Public) Managerialist Model**

An important consideration in the 'evolution' of models of professionalism, is the impact on the FE sector, and the attack on existing forms of professionalism, in and through the emergence of neo-liberal educational reform and 'new managerialism'. This approach typically features practices widespread within the private sector, principally the imposition of an authoritative management group which supersedes professional skills and knowledge. Discipline (of the workforce by management) is tightly controlled, efficiency, external accountability and monitoring are key drivers, with a strong focus on standards (Gleeson and Shain, 1999; Randle and Brady, 1997 and 1997a; Harris, 2005). Gleeson and Shain argue the impact of this approach and sector developments following the 1988 Educational Reform Act, need to be considered in the context of wider national changes, occurring from the late 1970s (Gleeson and Shain, 1999).

Nixon *et al* (1997) observed the late 1940s through to the 1960s saw particular occupations being perceived as holding a certain, uncontested level of status. This afforded these groups, including teachers, the potential for independence and self-government, as well as assigning the position of 'scholarly authority', to the groups' members. They note, "During that period professionals achieved legitimacy through society's acknowledgement of their specialist knowledge and expertise" (Nixon *et al*, 1997, p.7). Gleeson and Shain (1999) also highlight how a series of post-war factors (a scarcity of accredited teaching staff, a need for access to wider educational opportunities and the powerful influence of dominant trade unions) combined to '... strengthen claims for teacher autonomy and to force the state to maintain the rhetoric of indirect rule, partnership and professionalism' (p.463).

Challenges to professional autonomy found form in a range of key political developments from the late 1970s onwards, such as Callaghan's 1976 Ruskin speech, in which the Labour Prime Minister called for the 'Great Education Debate'. Increasing concerns the education system was not serving the needs of the nation and its economy, together with fears over the UK's ability to compete in an emerging globalised 'market', compounded suspicions that too few people were being 'well served' by or getting much out of education. Thus Callaghan called for a national debate on the UK's education - its system, its purpose and its future.

Conservative Prime Minister Thatcher responded to the principle set out in Callaghan's speech, specifically through focussing on the 'quality' of education. The Conservative years launched the principle of marketization in education, linked to the belief that private sector practices and approaches were more superior, successful and productive than those of the public sector. While education remained within the public sector, introducing an environment of marketization style competition would be a key means of raising the quality of education – if there is a need to 'compete' for your 'customers' then your 'product' needs to be superior. Marketization initiatives, such as 'Open Enrolment, 1980 Education Act & 1988 Education Reform Act' (which heralded parental rights with regard to enrolling their child at a school of their choice) '...were designed to increase diversity and choice in the system,' (Whitty, 2000, p.2). This approach separated the 'providers' of education (e.g. schools, colleges, universities) and the 'customers' for education (e.g. parents, students) and thus the Thatcher/Conservative years brought about a quasi market model for education – quasi because while no currency was exchanged, as in economic markets, 'buyer' and 'seller' *roles were* created. The 1988 Educational Reform Act began the de-centralisation of education, through the removal of Local Education Authorities' control, with the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act building on this, by bestowing independent corporate status upon FE institutions, with colleges being governed by non-elected boards.

Various subsequent government and political initiatives continue to be founded on this principle of marketization ‘... dominated by neo-liberal ideas about the perceived superiority of the free market as a means of providing public services most economically, effectively and efficiently’ (Mather *et al*, 2007, p.109). Hendry notes, ‘Driving this reform programme was a set of ideas and belief that markets, competition, and the role of the private sector was the only way to force through rapid improvements in quality and quantity’ (Hendry, 2007, p.1). Figures such as Blair and Brown, brought their own ‘spin’ to this quasi-market, through for example the (re) introduction of faith schools, independent schools and academies - all based on the principle of ‘customers shopping around for the best product’. Indeed Blair’s own Ruskin speech, (16/12/1996), featuring the famous ‘education, education, education,’ sound-bite, directly linked the then current concerns to those raised twenty years earlier, noting Callaghan had:

... questioned the existing set of relationships between government, parents, employers and teachers and pointed the way forward. Since then, the education service has been reformed by successive Tory governments, but the questions Callaghan posed and the issues he raised remain - remarkably - relevant today’ (Blair, 1996, pp.7-8).

Blair noted education would be a priority as it was ‘... increasingly recognised across our society - that our economic success and our social cohesion depend on it’ (Blair, 1996, p.1). He went on to link the UK’s economic and social success, with initiatives to raise standards and increase accountability, (key principles underpinning the marketization

agenda), as 'A new Labour government will focus on standards' and 'We will expect education – and other public services – to be held accountable for their performance' (Blair, 1996, p.1).

These developments were also set in a context of aims to reduce taxes and public spending, with a focus on 'getting more for less', while still raising quality. This was typified by initiatives such as 'outsourcing' where, for example in FE rather than directly employing canteen or cleaning staff, it was more economically prudent to contract out services to external companies. In addition to these economic developments, 1992 saw the control and distribution of FE funding transfer to the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) – a move highlighting the 'contradictory' nature of the quasi market created around education. While the 1992 incorporation of colleges bestowed independent status, this apparent de-centralisation of funding, served to just locate control of the finances in a different, yet still central, body/location. FE became located in a 'half-way-house' position, between private and public sectors, subject to the 'worst' (or 'best' if you are in government) features of both – decreased public funding meaning the drive to increase customers and quality has to be achieved with less resources, while concurrently increased accountability means that any failures will result in financial penalties. As Randle and Brady (1997a) describe 'The FEFCE, therefore, has been crucial in influencing the management of the college at both the strategic and operational levels since incorporation' (p.230). Drawing on this work, Gleeson and Shain, noted:



Despite an increase in autonomy, FE colleges are in reality controlled by central government principally through the FEFC's funding mechanisms ... (as) ... The new funding formula, based on the principle of 'more for less', means that funds may be 'clawed back', if colleges fail to meet targets, retain students or if students do not successfully complete courses (Gleeson and Shain, 1999, p.463).

A situation which is still reflected in today's college funding formula, although the funding bodies have changed.

This consideration of how 'new managerialism' came to influence FE sets the scene for understanding the impact on the sector and its workforce - impacts which in turn contributed to the catalyst for the emergence of new or alternative models of professionalism. As Harris (2005) notes, 'The marketization of education and research has brought into question the autonomy and expertise traditionally enjoyed by academics' (p.424).

The literature shows these effects can be grouped according to changes in: external expectations of the sector and its workforce; workloads of staff (both in terms of volume and shape); employment/working conditions; working relationships; professional identities; the sector's provision and conflicts between (perceived) value bases and (missed) opportunities for employee engagement. Randle and Brady (1997a) offer an insightful summary, noting 'Marketization has re-constituted the student as 'customer' and encouraged surveillance of lecturers through quality systems and complaints procedures. The 'customer' has in turn taken on the role of manager in the classroom, being in a unique position to monitor

and evaluate the hidden and indeterminate aspects of the lecturer's role' (Randle and Brady, 1997a, p.238).

#### **2.4.1 External Expectations**

New managerialism's focus on economy, efficiency, effectiveness (the 3 Es) created an environment in which public and political demands of the FE sector and its workforce became characterised by expectations more akin to a market-oriented, customer - provider relationship. If expectations of a high quality, effective, efficient 'service' are not met, custom can be taken elsewhere (to other providers) at a potentially significant cost to the organisation (Henry, 2007; Randle and Brady 1997, 1997a). These changes are exemplified by Hendry's assertion '... public and politicians have even greater expectations of public services. They want services to be efficient, effective and flexible' (Hendry, 2007, p.1).

#### **2.4.2 Workloads and Working Conditions**

Changes in workloads and working conditions are typically described as stemming from the institutional restructuring heralded by the drive for securing 'more for less'. Portrayals of significant concerns include anxieties over: workload levels; changes to the shape, scope and responsibility of roles; requirements for non-teaching staff to undertake activities previously the duty of academics; reduced opportunity for professional autonomy; an increased imbalance between work and home life; changes to employment contracts meaning more staff are engaged on a casual or temporary basis and ever present fears for job security

(Gleeson and Shain, 1999; Hendry, 2007; Mather *et al*, 2007; Randle and Brady 1997). These significant concerns have been encapsulated by a range of authors:

Among lecturers, reduced autonomy, insecurity, new contracts and longer hours, have further complicated middle managers' remit ... (and staff live with) Facing the constant threat of redundancy and living with vulnerability (Gleeson, and Shain, 1999, p.466 and p. 472).

UNISON has argued over a number of years that one way to tackle workload was to utilise the skills and potential of the whole school team giving support staff opportunities to develop professionally (Hendry, 2007, p.4).

...a lengthening of the working day/week (this has been termed "extensification") and then an intensification of the work undertaken within this time (that is, an increase in labour productivity or "more for less" from lecturing staff) (Mather *et al*, 2007, p.115).

... used to justify changes to workers terms and conditions by employers who face budgets tightened by assumed 'efficiency savings' (Hendry, 2007, p.9).

The SMT also acknowledged that a gap in management expertise existed as former academics, now occupying management positions, grappled with problems which required a range of new management skills (Randle and Brady, 1997, p.124).

### **2.4.3 Identities, Relationships and Roles**

While the above effects include changes in working / employment conditions, the literature also highlights how a new managerialist approach

impacted on staff's sense of professional identity, their individual roles and responsibilities, their working relationships and a conflict between value bases held by academics and 'new' management teams. Authors describe a sense of professional identity uncertainty as operational autonomy is encroached by management's governance:

... the often volatile working conditions in FE, which give rise to ambiguity and connect lecturers and senior managers in a complex duality of control and support (resulting in) ... a crisis of professional identity in FE which finds expression elsewhere in the public sector where fixed notions of professionalism, based upon a fragile post war consensus, are in question (Gleeson and Shain, 1999, p.462 and p.467).

With the perception of this approach:

... controlling the job and how it is performed, whereby professional autonomy (i.e. being left alone to get on with the job of applying one's skill in the classroom – see Hoyle, 2001) has been attacked through work intensification and more oppressive management controls and interventionist strategies (Mather *et al*, 2007, p.111).

The shifting balance between management and academic roles serves to distance staff, resulting in dysfunctional communications, strained working relationships and claims of professionals being 'de-skilled':

... has created an increasingly alienated workforce and that the processes of change in many institutions have had negative outcomes (Mather *et al*, 2007, p.109).

In considering new modes of learning, notions of quality in education and the intrusion of the market into the college, the deprofessionalisation and, indeed, "proletarianisation" of the

FE lecturer is suggested as a possible outcome (Randle and Brady, 1997, p. 121).

Thus the drive for increased efficiency, effectiveness and 'productivity', brought changes which are perceived as contributing to the 'de-skilling' of academic roles and argued as serving to '... reposition the lecturer as an assessor, concerned with measuring student performance; rather than a teacher, facilitating student learning' (Randle and Brady, 1997, p.131). For Mather *et al* this is encapsulated in finding:

... the redesign of work practices that have moved the lecturing profession away from a craft system of production where lecturers, as subject specialists, had more autonomy over what was taught, towards a factory system of production where standardisation in the form of modularisation has taken place and subject specialists are expected to teach outside their specialism simply to fill up their timetables in order to keep costs down' (Mather et al, 2007, p.122).

#### **2.4.4 Discourse and Discursive Practices**

An additional feature of new managerialism is its impact on the discourse and discursive practices in education – the language used about and within the field and how it is employed – a feature which holds particular significance for the focus of this research and which is discussed further in subsequent chapters. This shift has been highlighted as a feature of the marketization of education, as '... the language of FE has changed to reflect the new 'business' ethos, with students referred to as 'customers' or 'clients', teaching as 'the management of learning', and desks as 'work stations' (Gleeson and Shain, 1999, p.467). This has been observed elsewhere in the literature, as traditional educational vocabulary has:

... been replaced by a different set of terms such as “client-contractor” or “provider-customer” that to many would appear to reflect the way in which public services have been commodified. The use of terms such as “market testing” and “compulsory competitive tendering” also reflect the changes in the way that public services are now conceptualised (Mather *et al*, 2007, p.110).

With the combination of these effects the impact of new managerialism and its ensuing consequences has particular significance for the development of new / alternative models of professionalism, consideration of which follows. Randle and Brady (1997) summarise the ‘competing’ agendas as a ‘... clash in values that we identify at Cityshire as one between ‘managerialism’ and ‘professionalism’ (p.127), and locate ‘responsibility’ for these changes specifically with this political approach, ‘The deprofessionalization of the lecturer is the outcome of government Strategy’ (Randle and Brady, 1997a, p.237).

## **2.5 Professionalism: An Alternative (Dialogic) Model**

The literature thus far, depicts a post war landscape, where a ‘hierarchy of occupations’ and a preferencing of certain sectors combine with a tradition of professional status being bestowed rather than claimed. Implied within these texts and previous literature explorations (Arkininstall, 2010), is also an implicit assumption that the professionalization of staff is socially useful and desirable. Nixon *et al* (1997) state, “The assumption that professions may be a positive force in social development, standing against the excesses of self-interest and competition, can be traced back to Durkheim (1957)” (p.7). This point about standing against self-interest and holding a mirror to society to critique itself and its practices is an important one. It

positions professions as unifying, steadying influences on society, as being significant vehicles for advancing the interests of the community, rather than the individual. How then does the 'traditional' model of professionalism, sit with the assumption, prevalent throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, that achieving professional status is socially useful and desirable?

The traditional model features a number of positive aspects, which may benefit society as well as the professionals. The ability to secure levels of professional autonomy and freedom has the potential to foster a sense of long term commitment and service, within individuals, to their profession, field and possibly their individual institutions. Securing a professional's long term service and commitment to their vocation is beneficial to society as knowledge and expertise are retained (in the group) rather than being lost by disillusioned professionals leaving their role (or maybe even the country). This knowledge and expertise then remain 'available' for society to access and benefit from. Alternatively, forcing professions into compliance to (externally) set standards, for example with regard to qualifications or practice, may negatively impact upon this sense of commitment and long service. It may also limit any developments or advances that could have occurred 'organically' as a result of professionals' autonomy and freedom, both of which have the potential to impact upon societal benefits.

Key characteristics of the traditional model include the privileging of and attainment of 'specific' knowledge; the portrayal / positioning of professionals-as-experts; securing autonomy or self-governance; the grouping of individuals sharing these 'profession-membership-characteristics' (and the exclusion or othering of those who do not) and a situation where professional status is bestowed, not claimed. Potentially these characteristics serve to promote/protect the interests of those 'inside' these professions, rather than acting as a force for social development. By facilitating the circumstances in which select occupational groups can be established, then subsequently creating a situation, as Evetts (2003) depicts, where the circumstances which conspired to secure these groups' privileged positions are also 'accepted' or perceived as being the 'norm', this approach becomes a self-legitimising process.

Developing an alternative or evolved model could facilitate an approach to professionalism that may more readily incorporate opportunities for employing these characteristics and specialist knowledge for social development. An alternative that also acknowledges the contradictory facets of professionalism, as incorporating philanthropic uses of privileged knowledge, while being subject to market oriented influences. An alternative that acknowledges the continuous and dialogic nature of professionalism. As highlighted by Labaree's advancement from the traditional positioning of professionalism as 'arriving at a certain point', arguing "... professionalization is more a process than an outcome"



(Labaree, 1992, p.127) and Nixon's evolved version involving dialogue with the public and stakeholders (discussed later).

The key policy text analysed in this thesis (LLUK, 2009) maintains that its ethos (and subsequent guidance) is aimed at making major contributions to securing national social development. It states "We need a Further Education Sector workforce which can support the creation of an inclusive society where all children and young people achieve their full potential and contribute to society and their communities" (LLUK, 2007, p.5). This echoes the suggestion of a relationship between the professionalization of a sector and the potential for this professionalization being employed as a positive force in social development (Nixon *et al*, 1997; Briggs, 2004).

This Strategy statement supports propositions about the social usefulness and desirability of sector professionalization and that this belief influenced and informed the impetus for securing the development of the FE workforce, (whether we accept this assertion, of a selfless drive for social development, as being the impetus behind workforce reforms, at face-value, or not). The idea that the professionalization agenda is rooted in an assumption that professionalism is a 'good thing', lead me to question whether then this agenda is (potentially) *most* beneficial to those it targets *or* those actually imposing the agenda *or* those 'being socially developed by these good intentions/works'. It also lead me to question whether, if the workforce agenda preferenced or adopted one specific model of

professionalism, was it the most 'suitable' model for securing social development.

The traditional approach positioned professionals as experts and certain knowledge as privileged and called for autonomous self-government. Being able to balance these 'traditional' characteristics, with externally imposed standards frameworks, the call for professional practice to also be increasingly philanthropic, to be market oriented and to facilitate wider social development, becomes a progressively complex task. Discussing Higher Education academics, Nixon (2001) cautions "... the version of professionalism to which the notion of academic freedom has sought to lend credibility remains inward-looking and self-referential. Academic freedom is, ultimately, freedom for the academic" (p.175).

Stronach *et al* and Nixon's work, offers the possibility of alternative approaches to address some of these inherent complexities. Similar to Labaree (1992), Stronach *et al*, (2002) suggest the traditional approach depicts too rigid an image. Instead, they contend it may be more suitable to view professionalism as a variable, unresolved concept or process:

... we aim to create different possibilities for 'professionalism', and especially ones that resist the increasingly universalist, essentialist, reductionist accounts that seem to appeal to governments, media and their agents – including educational researchers content to be the 'compliant technicians' of these developments. We seek, therefore, to develop an 'uncertain' theory of professionalism (Stronach *et al*, 2002, p.116).

Exploring issues of nurses' and teachers' modern professional identity, Stronach *et al* (2002) found discord, as various facets of individuals' professional-selves, all vie for fulfilment and prominence. They portray a position where individuals are subjected to competing external pressures, which press them into endeavouring to be all things to all men, "The teacher and nurse are thus located in a complicated nexus between policy, ideology and practice" (Stronach *et al*, 2002, p.109).

They argue that the dominant notion of the 'professional' has come about as a result of the various characteristics, perceived as being both, present in and expected/wanted from 'professionals', being condensed to their *nth* degree. The suggestion being this creates a form of 'idealised' professional, "... the 'professional' is a construct born of methodological reduction, rhetorical inflation and universalist excess" (Stronach *et al*, 2002, p.110), further complicated by calls for, or the pervasive portrayal of, "... the professional as agent for good in society" (Stronach *et al*, 2002, p.110).

The argument continues that in turn this creates a divergence in the 'professional' identity, positioning them simultaneously as one compacted, simplistic representation of the notion and concurrently a figure bestowed with an overstated, implausible significance. This echoes the position depicted in Evetts' (2003) calls for professionalism to incorporate philanthropic and market oriented practices, whereby the professional attempts to satisfy a number of contradictory expectations. Stronach *et al*

suggest that these polarities serve both "... as morality and destiny" whereby "... the professional is moralized both by being 'reduced' to a singular meaning and employment, and simultaneously inflated to improbable symbolic importance" (Stronach *et al*, 2002, p.111).

The result of these polarities of positioning and expectation is a professional identity which is divided and multiple in its nature and Stronach *et al* go as far as to argue "There is no such thing as a teacher or a nurse" (Stronach *et al*, 2002, p.116). Quoting the frequency with which their research participants depict a (professional) role which is congested, overloaded and embattled, they contend "... 'a professional' is plural and 'the professional' (*The Nurse, The Teacher*) is a false singularity" and "Professionals are not just plural; they are inherently split, in ways which 'define' the role" (Stronach *et al*, 2002, pp.117-118).

These complexities lead them to argue for an understanding of professional identities which allows for the multi-faceted, subtleties inherent in the concept, together with recognising and acknowledging the divergent, conflicted expectations and demands placed on the modern day professional and their practice. Stressing, 'Professionals' juggle between 'economies of performance' and 'ecologies of practice' (Stronach *et al*, 2002, p.121), they conclude calling for "... a more nuanced account of professional identities, stressing the local, situated and indeterminable nature of professional practice, and the inescapable dimensions of trust, diversity and creativity" (Stronach *et al*, 2002, p.109).

Expanding the idea of conflicted expectations of and calls on the notion of professionalism, Nixon (Nixon, 2001, 2003, and Nixon *et al*, 1997, 2001) critically explores its links with the New Public Management (NPM) agenda. NPM heralded a raft of initiatives aimed at promoting market oriented practices and a focus on public accountability as a means of securing public sector reform. Nixon argues that some impacts of the NPM agenda serve to segregate and marginalise professionals, while concurrently intensifying their accountability. Nixon *et al* (2001) acknowledge that calls for academics to re-delineate their professionalism may clash with this agenda, recognising:

... two competing notions of academic freedom: the traditional notion of academic freedom as freedom for academics and, an emergent notion of academic freedom as freedom for others. It is with reference to that emergent notion that this article speculates upon the possibility of a new professionalism for higher education, while recognising that a new professionalism of this kind would be deeply at odds with the prevailing managerialism of higher education as manifest in its quality-control mechanisms, accountability procedures, and planned systems of professional accreditation (Nixon, *et al* 2001, p.227).

Focussing on Higher Education academics, Nixon challenges the proposition that positions professionalism as deriving from the occupation's self-governance and autonomy, as was prevalent in discussions of a traditional approach. He argues for a re-thinking of professionalism, which would challenge the occupational impasse and stagnation, and re-focus perceptions (and enactments) of the notion back onto the group's fundamental values and ethos. At the core of this Nixon contests current perceptions of 'academic autonomy', calling instead for

“... in terms of increased inclusivity: ‘freedom for all’ rather than ‘freedom for academics’ (Nixon, 2001, p.173).

This key theme in Nixon’s argument recognises autonomy as a characteristic of previous understandings of professionalism, “... the notion of academic freedom as *freedom for academics*: their freedom to speak their own minds, to teach in accordance with their own interests, and to develop those interests according to their own research agenda” (Nixon, 2001, p.175). *However*, he goes on to propose that rather than this being an instrument for achieving social development, it has been employed (though not necessarily in a widely publicised or acknowledged manner) for self-protection/promotion, stating “It is good that academic freedom be seen for what it always was: an attempt to protect the interests of a particular occupational group” (Nixon, 2001, p.175). He argues this is further compounded by different classifications of the concept of ‘freedom’. Some of which lend themselves more readily to ‘benefitting’ the self, while others more readily to ‘benefitting’ society, as in “... tensions between categories of freedom (such as freedom of speech) that have the status of a public right and categories of freedom (such as academic freedom) that apply exclusively to a subgroup or elite” (Nixon, 2001. p.177).

Progression on and away from the tensions of these polarities underpins Nixon’s call for re-consideration and re-positioning of (academic) professionalism, specifically in terms of its characteristic of autonomy. Nixon’s response is not to call for the re-definition of (academic) freedom,

but rather to re-position professionalism in relation to it; to take professional 'freedom' activities and values and re-align them with each other, in order that each is also employed to the benefit of a wider (social) good. Thus he calls for, "...not a 'reinterpretation' of academic freedom, but a reorientation of professional values and practices such that academic workers 'use' their academic freedom as *freedom for all* " (Nixon, 2001, p.178).

While the discussion has focussed here on Nixon's critique of academic autonomy and self-interest as a means of understanding some of the limitations of a traditional model of professionalism, it should also be noted he is equally if not more critical of NPM and its impact on professionalism. In his 2003 piece on the impact of the NPM agenda on higher education, Nixon describes how NPM was:

... driven by the resurgence of neo-liberal market ideologies that dominated the last quarter of the last century and continue to exert a major influence on how universities are managed. It was largely based on the assumption of a general breakdown of trust in the public and non-profit-making sectors and on the further assumption that public trust is best regained through systems of accountability that support competition across these sectors. If only the public and non-profit-making sectors could learn from, and behave as if they were part of, the private sector, all would be well. From that forlorn hope came the endless target-setting, league tables, inspection regimes, and centrally controlled funding mechanisms that now characterise the university sector and dominate the working lives of those within it (Nixon, 2003, p.7).

His following critique also highlights how some of the effects of NPM serve to exacerbate the insular, self-interest elements of professionalism he disparaged above:

It is a fudge: a muddle masquerading as a serious response to a problem it fails to address, let alone analyse. Far from encouraging institutions within the public and non-profit-making sectors to engage with their publics, the new public management of higher education has served to render them defensive and inward-looking (Nixon, 2003, p. 8).

This brief exploration of Nixon's critique of NPM highlights the struggle to resolve the contradictions between a call for more public accountability, increased commercial, market oriented practices (together with the associated means of regulation to ensure the attainment of these), and a perception of an entrenched elitist, self-interested, autonomous academic professional aloofness, further fuelled calls for change.

Nixon concludes the professionalization agenda is, at least for the foreseeable future, a pervasive and persistent factor of our societal and fiscal environment and that consequently, interpretations of professionalism remain of fundamental importance. He proposes our focus should be on how to evolve our interpretation of professionalism, to also encompass deliberation on what the 'sector' is actually 'for'. Briggs (2004) emphasised the need to acknowledge the client-centred and learning-centred nature of academic practices; Evetts (2003) highlighted the need to encompass philanthropic practices and similarly Nixon (2001) calls for academic freedom to be 'turned outwards' for social good. He argues,



“What we profess is fundamental to, and informs, how we practice; how we practice is dependent upon what we profess. What we require are not new practices, but new evocations of the values underlying those practices. That is what professionalism means” (Nixon, 2001, p.183). Nixon presents a new professionalism which seeks a more receptive ‘relationship’ with exterior influences impacting on (in his case) universities (such as the marketization features highlighted by Mather *et al*, 2007 and Hendry 2007, earlier). This moves to dissociate the model from the exclusivity and selectiveness associated with ‘traditional’ professionalism and how it distances itself from engaging with external pursuits like getting employment or thinking about industry. Nixon’s ‘new professional’ does not merely abide by these outside influences - it engages in discourse and communications with them, endeavouring to formulate a convincing argument regarding the value and purpose of (a university) education in this transformed era, and Nixon *et al*, “... characterise this ‘emergent’ professionalism in terms of new forms of agreement-making that seek to reinforce the primacy of the relation between professionals and their publics, and the need to ground that relation in an ongoing dialogue regarding the ends and purposes of learning (Nixon *et al*, 2001, p.234)

Conducting this review of approaches to professionalism and understanding some of the benefits and challenges associated with these, will be advantageous in my subsequent analysis of the professionalization agenda, as it offers an additional ‘tool’ for unpicking and deconstructing policy content. Nixon offers a summary assertion, which seems a key

point that also encapsulates the messages of the alternative approach and is one I will carry with me as I further explore the drive for the professionalization of the FE workforce. He proposes embracing the calls for professionalism to turn outwards, to be used for social development and to evolve into an appropriate representation of the positive values professionalism previously stood for. To do this, he argues, also necessitates interpreting professionalism as a process and a range of activities, rather than a single, fixed entity. He argues, “The choice, however, is not between a hopelessly compromised and over-managed professionalism, on the one hand, and the return to the grand old days of ‘amateurism’, on the other. Rather, the choice is between different versions of professionalism that represent different values and priorities and that constitute different moral bases” (Nixon, 2001, p.178).

## **2.6 The Development of the Workforce Strategy**

The introduction to this thesis included a broad mapping of the national development of the professionalization agenda. Having considered approaches to and critiques of the notion of professionalism and developed interpretations for use in this project, I now highlight some further elements of this national development, which marked significant points in progression of the agenda for the professionalization of the FE workforce.

In 2003, as Lord Leitch was reviewing UK skills for his 2004 report, Government, employers and school workforce unions, launched a national

agreement and initiative, "Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: A National Agreement. Time for Standards" (ATL *et al*, 2003), which set the scene for some developments considered here. The agreement was developed with the aim of lifting professional practice and addressing concerns over staff roles and responsibilities. The group stated their purpose as being "... to help schools, teachers and support staff meet the challenges that lie ahead. It promises joint action, designed to help every school across the country to raise standards and tackle workload issues" (ATL *et al*, 2003, p.1). Chiefly the text focuses on teachers, but does also refer to support staff when it says "This Agreement will also have significant implications for support staff..." and "... support staff will have access to expanded roles and improved choices and career opportunities, including proper recognition for existing responsibilities" (ATL *et al*, 2003, p.3). Building on this and further paving the way for subsequent workforce reform plans, a joint Support Staff Working Group, was established in June 2006. The group aimed to secure the involvement of ambassadors for non-teaching staff in policy and practice developments, by ensuring that support staff unions and employer representatives would "...review the main support staff employment issues" (Support Staff Working Group, 2006, p.3). This group sought to establish the possibilities for securing an equivalence of union representation, continuing professional development opportunities and employment conditions, for support staff, commensurate with their teaching co-workers.

In 2007 the Schools Minister Jim Knight further promoted the intention to improve the status and footing of support staff roles, claiming “Each time I visit a school, I am reminded of the increasingly significant and powerful contribution that support staff are making every day in the classroom...” (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007, p.1). While the focus of this briefing document was schools rather than FE, it does offer evidence of the roles of *education* support staff, coming to the fore within the literature, in a research environment which otherwise predominantly features teaching roles. With a focus on school staff, this may be of restricted relevance for my area of interest; however it *is* worthy to note the Minister’s plans focus principally on ‘quasi-teaching’ roles such as Teaching Assistants (TAs), and thus overlooks numerous other non-teaching roles. As a starting point though, in disentangling and understanding the professionalization policy guidance, the Minister’s intentions for developing the education sector, do at least include an acknowledgement of support staff contributions.

The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012 (LLUK, 2007), was also launched in 2007 and is a key text in both the professionalization agenda and in the stimuli for my research interest. This Strategy document offered the first, formal expression of the intention to ‘improve’ the FE workforce and this aim was further confirmed in the subsequent, revised version of the Strategy, issued in 2009. This revised version is also the text that influenced and informed the format and content of my own institution’s Staff Development Plan. The development

and issuing of this guidance, was complemented by various 'how-to-guides' offering practical examples and advice on how to implement the Strategy. Lifelong Learning UK issued their own guide for learning providers, which offers direction on how to execute the Strategy and secure the improvement of specific workforces (LLUK, 2009a). Villeneuve-Smith *et al*, (2009), also offer advice in their 'guide', Rethinking Continuing Professional Development in Further Education: Eight Things You Already Know About CPD, where they stress that the idea of and content of the workforce agenda is not completely new. This guide aims to re-emphasize the links and relationships between using educational institutions' and educationalists' existing understanding about skills development and any activities/strategies aimed at reforming the workforce – i.e. suggesting the agenda is less about re-inventing the wheel and more about re-visiting it: re-visiting the knowledge and experiences that positioned staff as 'professionals' in the first place and employing this in their growth. As they note "... it might be helpful to think about continuing professional learning rather than CPD. This aims to make explicit the link between what you already know as educators about both learning and the development of skills, expertise and capabilities – and the professional development of your staff"(Villeneuve-Smith *et al*, 2009, p. 2).

Having traced the genesis of the professionalization agenda both nationally and in terms of the specific Strategy aimed at workforce reform in FE, together with considering models of professionalism, I began to

explore what the literature tells us specifically about the professionalization of college support staff.

## **2.7 The Professionalization of Support Staff**

Predominantly the literature reviewed focussed on professionalization in one of three broad fields of investigation, being research on the professionalization of *teaching staff*; or of *school support staff* and a nominal amount on *FE / Sixth Form College support staff* (the group which is the focus of this thesis). Within these three fields, the specific research subject or focus included exploring: the influences behind the drive for professionalization; how professionalization is actually being achieved and consideration of the effects of this drive on people's sense of professional identity.

### **2.7.1 What is Influencing the Professionalization Agenda?**

Influenced by the work on power, by authors such as Miller and Rose, and Foucault, Evetts' (2003) research offers an exploration of *what* may be influencing the drive for professionalization. Evetts argues that conceptualising professionalism as an ideology enables those in positions of power or influence, to use the professionalization agenda as a means of 'controlling' the actions of (groups of) individuals, rather than the discourse being owned by the profession itself, as in the traditional model. She notes "... the significance of this discourse of professionalism is that it operates as an ideology or a belief system at the macro level and as a control mechanism of individual practitioners at the micro level where the control

is exercised...” (Evetts, 2003, p.24). This assertion recurs in her later work where she states, “... the discourse of professionalism can be analysed as a powerful instrument of occupation change and social control at macro, meso and micro levels...” (Evetts, 2005, p.3). This echoes issues raised during the earlier exploration of approaches to professionalism, with Nixon (1997, 2001, 2003) highlighting the links between the drive for professionalization and the ethos of the NPM agenda and Stronach *et al* (2002) detailing tensions between ‘economies of performance’ and ‘ecologies of practice’ (p.121). Together with Evetts’ work, these writers highlight the concerns over professionalization as being employed as a mechanism of control over others’ practice.

Bailey and Robson (2004) concur that the drive for professionalization is rooted in attempts (or desires) to change the workforce. They argue that endeavours to secure change are made more palatable and less obviously manipulative by them focussing on the positive consequences of change, (for example reviewed and updated pay structures) distracting attention from the agenda being seen as a means of control. They suggest that rather than overtly discussing the aim of increasing sector accountability or the adoption of a market-oriented stance, those in power have approached change via discussions of improving employment terms and conditions, as a ‘hook in’ *and then* introduced expectations of staff development as a later ‘consequence’. They note workforce professionalization strategies “... have been presented sometimes in terms of the need for the ‘reform’ or ‘modernization’ of existing agreements, while at other times there have

been statements to the effect that changes are intended to enhance the 'professionalism' of the workforce" (Bailey and Robson, 2004, p.373).

### **2.7.2 How is Professionalization Being Achieved?**

Alongside explanations of *what* is influencing the drive for professionalization, the literature reveals various considerations of *how* this drive is actually being achieved in the workplace. Evetts (2003) suggests one strategy has been a push on (institutions) increasing the number and type of qualifications and occupational training, expected of their staff, noting "This professionalization will be achieved through increased occupational training and the certification of the services workers – a process labelled as 'credentialism' by Collins (1979; 1981)" (p.23). This approach was also found by Bailey and Robson (2009), when exploring discourses of professionalism in relation to FE support. They echo the perception of there being a need for the professionalization of the sector and that this is being addressed in part through a raft of CPD activities. Drawing directly on Evetts' work they state "... the discourse of professionalism is increasingly used in contemporary employment settings by both managers and workers as a mechanism for facilitating and promoting social and occupational change" as "... there is a perceived need to 'professionalise' the service and its workers" (Robson and Bailey, 2009, p.102).

Alternatively, Briggs (2004) found the drive for professionalization being approached by the development of *multiple classifications of*



*professionalism* – that is multiple ways of describing what ‘being/doing’ professional means, based on individual institution’s parameters. As she explains:

This research indicates that if professionalism is to be achieved, each college will seek its own definition, based upon an agreed understanding of the educational values of the college, what its purpose is in relation to its clients and students, and how these are to be achieved (Briggs, 2004, p.598).

She found this approach enabled each institution, to develop individual roles and with them individual understandings of ‘being a professional’. Rather than developing the *individuals* (for example through the CPD strategies discussed above) so that they may attain a certain model of professionalism, adapt the *model* so it fits more individuals and your institutional requirement. Concurrently Bailey and Robson (2004) highlight how since the incorporation of FE colleges there have been moves to increase the *numbers and varieties of support roles*, and staff working in these roles. They argue that efforts for the professionalization of these roles is aimed at “... making the services more accountable, more efficient and responsive to the needs of ‘users’ and of the national economy, changes in methods and patterns of training, of pay structures, of external monitoring and control have been introduced” (Bailey and Robson, 2004, p.373). In this situation, Briggs’ call for the employment of *multiple* perceptions of professionalism, would enable these diverse and in some cases institutionally unique, college support staff roles, to be ‘catered’ for

by increased possibilities for being perceived as a professional and opportunities for enacting professionalism.

### ***2.7.3 A Professional Identity Crisis***

Having considered influences on the drive for professionalization and how this is being achieved in certain institutions, I turn to explore a related subject featuring in the literature. Echoing a significant personal stimulus for choosing this research topic, the links between the professionalization agenda and its impact on individuals' sense of professional identity feature prominently throughout the texts reviewed. Van Zanten (2002) investigated the impact of a range of measures (here specifically professionalization) on explanations of the public and specialist identities of educationalists. She highlights two contradictory positions, the first being the positive conception of professionalization, where the process is perceived as offering ways for re-establishing teachers' practice and professional status, in the restructuring of the education sector agenda. Less positively, alternative perceptions locate professionalization as being a means of manipulating behaviour, (as highlighted in earlier discussions) rather than re-emphasizing the autonomy and expertise of teachers' practice (Van Zanten, 2002, p.292). Both positionings impact on teachers' sense of professional identity, in either positive or negative ways.

Evetts (2003) further explores these conflicting perceptions and their impact on workers' professional identity. In her work on the construction of professionalism, she considered the complexities faced by social scientists

exploring the discourse of professionalism in professional environments (other than the medical and legal vocations). She proposes that when faced with opposing perceptions of professionalization the result is "... a form of occupational identity crisis, which is often expressed as forms of discontent perceived by particular groups of workers" (Evetts, 2003, p.23). This 'identity crisis' was also identified by Briggs (2004) who depicts the issue as "... a "struggle" for identity which arises out of "ambiguities and contradictions"" (p.598) which she sees as deriving from competing interpretations of professionalization. She goes on to offer ideas for further research, which also reverberate with my own interests for the future: "Further research, which directly investigated the differing perceptions of professionalism and the extent of shared identification with the concept, would provide valuable insight into these issues" (Briggs, 2004, p.598).

Bailey and Robson (2004) found a similar sense of identity crisis, specifically emerging among FE support staff, as the sector endeavours to comply with the professionalization agenda, via the establishment of and recruitment into, increasingly numerous and varied support staff roles. Mirroring Briggs' (2004) observation of the creation of multiple versions of 'how to do professionalism' (see earlier) and specifically exploring Learning Support Worker positions, they discovered sixty one *different* job titles for this type of role, with comparable numbers of disparities and inconsistencies in the terms and conditions of employment related to them (Bailey and Robson, 2004, pp. 382-386). They emphasise anxieties over the potential impact this may have on staff professional identities,

suggesting "... we are concerned with the way relationships amongst FE teachers, students and learning support workers are being constructed, as all parties adapt to shifts in working practices, with potentially significant implications for their understandings of their professional roles, relationships and responsibilities" (Robson and Bailey, 2009, p.101). This concern, for the negative impact upon professional identities, as the increasingly numerous variety of staff roles within FE obscure the sense of what is at the heart of being a professional, could also be indicative of a 'divide and rule' approach being implicit with reform policy. As Hendry (2007) observed 'The Government have emphasised the 'freeing-up' of expensive and highly skilled staff through appropriate use of support staff' (p.9) - creating a sense of 'segregation' of staff (roles), with the ensuing sense of 'isolation' (between management, academic and support staff), may lessen resistance to the imposition of significant sector changes.

#### ***2.7.4 Professionalization of Support Staff: What Was Not Found***

Having acknowledged that a key aim of conducting a review of the literature is to identify gaps or thin areas in the research in your chosen field, I turn now to briefly consider some matters that this review did not uncover. The review process involved building on previous reviews I had conducted by searching through journal articles, books, edited chapters, professional texts, EdD resources, newsprint and online articles. I followed up references, cross referenced source materials in terms of the arguments made and authors cited, networked with EdD peers with regard to recommending sources to each other and networked with work

colleagues in a similar vein. This resulted in my sourcing texts which enabled: a tracing of the historical evolution of the professionalization agenda, and how this national agenda specifically developed in terms of the FE sector; an investigation of the development of the concepts of 'profession', 'professionalism' and 'professionalization', with various ways of defining these terms and an outlining of various policies and related guidance, on the workforce professionalization agenda. This was underpinned by academic investigations of the implications, heralded by this agenda, for educational staff in relation to factors such as their sense of identity and working conditions.

Goodrham's (2006) paper offers an example of a text encountered during this review, which was of more interest for what it *omitted* than what it included. Exploring the links between employee's perceptions of their own professionalism and their aptitude for connecting with research, he aimed to consider "... practitioners' own understandings of their professionalism and their capacity to engage in 'research' *in* the FE sector. It aimed at identifying ways of better using research for the advancement of professional practice within FE" (Goodrham, 2006, p.1). Similar to other authors considered here, he emphasises the consequences of the professionalization agenda in terms of the pressures produced for workers' sense of identity, as the institutional focus alters "... towards tighter performance management and practitioner accountability" and he observed "This created tension for many participants in relation to their preferred understanding of the purpose and focus of their work"

(Goodrham, 2006, p.1). Goodrham makes some significant points here, which echo the work reviewed so far, however the focus of this work is again on the implications for *teaching* staff – there is no reference to whether this focus was a conscious decision, or whether Goodrham did not consider that support staff may *also* benefit from or be involved in research in FE, or in the drive for professionalization (Arkinstall, 2010).

Citing this paper, as one example, evidences an omission which is of key interest to me – being the restricted availability of texts which consider policy and reform developments from a support staff perspective, especially in terms of support staff as a whole, in all their roles and guises. Research inclusions generally focus on support staff in *quasi-teaching roles*, be these in schools or colleges, such as the Learning Support Workers discussed in Bailey and Robson (2004) and Robson and Bailey (2006). In terms of broader non-teaching roles, Briggs (2004) did work with FE College Middle Managers, but in the main, reference to support staff roles, of *wider varieties*, is lacking.

Bailey and Robson observed that “Political rhetoric currently stresses the need to ‘professionalize the FE workforce’ but it is clear that this agenda cannot focus on teachers alone” (Robson and Bailey, 2009, p.115) and national and institutional policy and guidance, the development of which has been traced back here to 2003, emphasises the significance of this drive for the professionalization of the FE sector. While the work explored has favoured a range of differing approaches and models for use in

actually securing the improvement of the FE sector, what has been consistent is an ethos of acknowledging the *need* for improvement or adaptation. Consequently, I would argue, that while the research considered here has made (specific) reference to a range of staff roles, in general they all appear underpinned by the notion of *workforce* reform: implying the inclusion of *all staff*. Indeed, my working interpretations, developed earlier, of profession, professional, professionalism and professionalization, have been oriented to be more inclusive than some traditional notions of what it means to be a professional, having been influenced by the limitations of a traditional approach and my previous review work (Arkininstall, 2009).

This impelled me to question why the inclusion of a broader range of non-teaching staff is visibly lacking. Perhaps it is that education research has a tradition of focussing on teaching roles and the inclusion of other roles is still in its early stages. Presumably part of the reason for this is that education research does focus on teaching and support of learning and the extent to which support staff are involved in teaching and the support of learning may be difficult to identify and quantify. It may also be that 'official' requirement for the inclusion of this group of staff, within the workforce professionalization agenda, is still in its infancy. Or it may be something in the policy language which serves to marginalise this group from the intentions and/or processes of the professionalization agenda (Arkininstall, 2010). The work reviewed here, combined with this final consideration stimulated my interest in understanding whether, when

really scrutinised, the agenda for the professionalization of the FE sector, and specifically its staff, includes *all* staff, or whether it in the main means teaching staff and directly lead to the development of my research questions.

## **2.8 Research Focus/Questions**

Having started this review with an initial research interest in understanding to what extent my key text (The Workforce Strategy) includes college support staff in the professionalization agenda, my readings stimulated the addition of some complementary issues to explore. As well as considering how far support staff are included in the agenda, investigating what it is within the Strategy that that includes/excludes them; whether these elements are replicated in the Strategy's sister texts and why support staff might be excluded, together exploring the assumption that the idea of professionalism is a 'good' thing, with would enrich the understandings developed through this thesis.

My primary research question then is:

To what extent does The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012 include college support staff in the professionalization agenda?



Complementary to this are:

- 1) What elements within this policy text serve to include/exclude support staff or to subordinate their professionalization, to the professionalization of teaching staff?
- 2) Are inclusionary/exclusionary elements replicated in related college policy texts?
- 3) Why might support staff be excluded from the discourse on professionalism?
- 4) The workforce professionalization agenda is rooted in an assumption that professionalism (or a specific model of professionalism) is a good thing: is the approach adopted by this agenda beneficial to those it targets for professionalization?

## **2.9 Conclusion**

In conclusion, in exploring the literature in this field, it was the questions about the absence of support staff in the texts that reinforced my research interest. References to, or inclusion of, a consideration of the wide variety of FE support staff roles were noticeably lacking. Questioning whether something in the policy language serves to actively marginalise this group of staff stimulated the above research questions and informed this thesis. My opening quotation, “Political rhetoric currently stresses the need to ‘professionalise the FE workforce’ but it is clear that this agenda cannot focus on teachers alone” (Robson and Bailey, 2009, p.115) encapsulates the core of my focus. The methodology adopted and methods employed, to which I now turn, facilitated a rigorous investigation of these issues.

They enabled the exploration of why FE support staff feature so infrequently in the research and literature on the professionalization agenda, together with identifying the means and techniques by which this occurs.

## Chapter Three: Methodology.

### 3.1 Introduction

In considering the contested and persistent issue of whether value-free educational research is possible, Carr (2000) called for a debate that would seriously "... help to dispel the illusion that educational research is a politically uncontested, neutral activity producing a domain of empirical findings free from ideological assumptions and partisan beliefs" (p. 446). Carr's assertion here, as a Critical Theorist, held particular resonance for my own positionality, to which I shall return later.

Similarly, Sikes (2007) cautioned against making implicit assumptions of the value-free nature of such work and emphasised that:

... it is important for all researchers to spend some time thinking about how they are paradigmatically and philosophically positioned and for them to be aware of how their positioning – and the fundamental assumptions they hold - might influence their research related thinking and practice (Sikes, 2007, pp. 6 – 7).

Thus having identified the phenomena I am interested in understanding on a more academic, intellectual level, together with having reviewed what is already known, or not known about this area and related matters, I turn to consider how will I actually research this topic, what 'tools' I will use and what influences will be brought to bear when making decisions related to these issues.

This call for researchers to not only recognise elements of subjectivity within their own research, but to acknowledge that it may play a central and valued role in the work of others, is echoed in the guidelines of a key professional body for educational research, “All research is influenced by the ideology of the researcher ... It is good practice to provide a clear statement of methodological stance in terms of the values and beliefs of the researcher” (BERA, 2000, p. 5).

Eisner (1992) goes as far as to question whether it is possible for any approach to attain ontological objectivity, (attaining the eradication of researcher influenced bias, securing an undistorted view of reality or use of methods that eliminates the scope for personal judgement), as called for by positivist approaches, arguing that the notion of certain or absolute truth is questionable, for what holds true today, may not tomorrow (Hammersley *et al*, 2003, pp. 16-17). Sikes (2007) also asserts that researchers’ ontological beliefs (their philosophical position on ideas they hold about the nature of things, of being, of existence, of reality) and their epistemological beliefs (the ideas they hold about the theory of knowledge, what knowledge is, how it is acquired) will influence the choices they make and approaches they adopt when designing, planning and conducting their research (p. 5). She suggests researchers’ decisions and assumptions etc:

... are coloured by values and beliefs that are based in, for instance, political allegiance, religious faith, and experiences that are consequent upon social class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, historical and geographical location, and so on (Sikes, 2007, p. 6).

What appears to be emerging here are broad, but polarised stances, which are characterised by those who assert that it is possible and indeed imperative to suppress all researcher oriented influences throughout every feature of the research process, contrasted by those who argue this is not possible let alone desirable. Having introduced the question of whether value-free research is possible and some calls for acknowledgment of the role of researchers' own subjectivity in their work, I turn to consider some key research paradigms in more depth, starting with an approach which challenges these ideas and then to illuminate my own position in relation to these.

### **3.2 Positivist Approaches**

Ontological and epistemological positionings which favour an objectivist approach toward the attainment of knowledge and which embrace the possibility for accessing a distinct, autonomous reality underpin the belief system of Positivism. Generally positivist approaches have featured attempts to restrict research claims to being made on the basis of empirically generated evidence and have historically claimed that accurate data could only be gleaned from phenomena that were directly observable. These underpinnings lead to the promotion of experimental methods, (such as Randomised Controlled Trials), as being the necessary means for generating suitable evidence, with a focus on investigating statistical or causal associations – beliefs which have predominantly aligned themselves with the use of quantitative data. Positivism strives for the suppression of the influences and consequences of researchers –

being their personal assumptions, interpretations and values and value-judgements – in their work, as highlighted by Greenbank (Greenbank, 2003, p. 792).

To this end positivism has typically advocated the notion of *procedural objectivity*, (the eradication of researcher influenced bias), as the means for attaining value-free research, highlighting the importance of replicability as a means of testing such eradication, promoted by the use of transparent, precise procedures which enable others to replicate the research (and presumably arrive at the same results / conclusions). Although Eisner (1993), for example, is critical of this concept, denouncing it as simply being indicative of a number of people being able to reach agreement on a given subject, rather than it evidencing a shared grasp on an objective and attainable, single reality. He argues “It merely demonstrates that people can agree: we hope for good reason, but what constitutes good reasons as contrasted with poor ones is itself a matter of consensus” (Eisner, 1993, p. 53).

### **3.3 Interpretivist Approaches**

Interpretivist approaches stress the difference in character of the phenomena various researchers investigate, highlighting that inanimate objects and non-human life as research subjects, differ from human participants, in that they have no need to interpret or make sense of their environments. It is this element that becomes the focus for Interpretivists - how humans make sense of (interpret) their world. Central to interpretivist

philosophy is the view that we cannot understand *why* people do what they do without understanding *how they interpret* the world around them, while remembering that individuals' interpretations will be influenced by the cultures and times they live in and differ across and within their societies. While much quantitative work has been conducted to investigate phenomena which are not directly observable (e.g. research into intelligence and attitudes) the methods positivists employ in these investigations, such as experiments and tightly structured surveys, rely upon their belief in direct, linear relationships of association. Interpretivist ideas reject such models of association, based on direct lines of cause and consequence, stressing the need to recognise that many relationships studied do not follow a set of global rules, but have a more varied and conditional nature. Gage (2007) notes, "... interpretivists reject 'the assumption of the uniformity of nature' and 'linear causal models'" (p. 153). Rejection of such assumptions and a belief in the necessity of understanding how people interpret their world, as a source for understanding why they do what they do, has led interpretivists toward adopting more qualitative methods. This also reflects their arguments that all research techniques involve intricate modes of communication. That in reaching any understanding, the research process and 'findings' are influenced by the extent to which the researchers are ready to sideline their own preconceptions and personal and cultural history, in order to allow others' understandings, interpretations and perceptions, to become evident.

Assumptions aligned to a positivist approach level a number of criticisms at interpretive research, arguing that being able to evidence research validity and the reliability of data and findings is more readily achieved through quantitative approaches. Added to this are further criticisms of an inability to be able to make generalisations from any conclusions qualitative studies draw, emphasising the speculative nature of any conclusions made about causal relationships. While recognising the difficulties faced by qualitative research's attempts to create generalisable propositions, interpretivist approaches would argue such research should not be viewed as worthless. If the rich data is based on 'good' research, that is it upholds the notion of 'critical spirit' proposed by Hammersley (1993), is open to serious scrutiny and aims to achieve accountability by being transparent and forthright in recognising and declaring where individuals' influences and values may be impacting upon the study, then it has its part to play in extending knowledge. Interpretive researchers may use different criteria/standards of judgement, when assessing the 'value' of research. One such example is Lincoln and Guba's (1985) notion of 'trustworthiness', the means by which "... an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an enquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of" (p.290), which encompasses issues of establishing credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Considering arguments over *who is best placed to conduct research* – 'outside' remote researchers or 'inside' practitioner-researchers - Kemmis (2007) suggests the notion of achieving objective 'value-free' human studies is deceptive and claims that criticisms of subjective, interpretive



factors miss the importance of researcher self-reflection in insiders' recognition of the researcher's influence on the research process (p. 173).

### **3.4 Critical Theory Approaches**

Approaches in this third paradigm, Critical theory, are influenced by Habermas' early work and a perception that both positivist and interpretivist methodologies are only partial, in their exploration of social behaviour, as they do not fully consider the ideological and political contexts in which these actions occur. This paradigm is explicitly political and works to liberate groups and individuals for an equal society. It is overtly directive, holding beliefs of the kinds of behaviours necessitated by an egalitarian society. Not content to describe a social order and the behaviours of its citizens, critical theory has an explicit objective of achieving a democratic and equal society for all, "Its purpose is not merely to understand situations and phenomena but to change them" (Cohen and Manion, 2005, p. 26).

There is a Marxist notion - 'false consciousness' – that holds that people are not able to perceive occurrences on a sufficiently sophisticated level of awareness, particularly with regard to oppression, subordination, social relations and exploitation; so that individuals are unable to see the true nature of a situation. Thus they are unable to understand the situation to any level of sophistication sufficient enough to enable them to grasp the 'reality' of what is going on, and potentially to escape or challenge this. Thus critical theory argues that the controlling, exploitive, illicit, actions of

some, enacted in the interest of themselves or their 'group', rather than in the interest of the wider public good, produce or result in the behaviours which can be observed in those 'outside' this group. That is, the positioning of groups or individuals as being relatively powerless, oppressed or repressed is achieved by the securing of power or freedom by, and for, one group or individual, at the cost of another's. The aim here is to reveal whose interests are being served and to question the extent to which these groups, individuals and interests are contributing either toward, or against, a democratic and equal society.

Rooted in an intention to transform instances of societal inequality and imbalance, to identify and address oppressive and disempowering actions, Critical theory informed approaches, for example when employed in educational research, are concerned with concrete, tangible strategies. This could include questioning how knowledge is socially constructed (through and within 'education') and identifying which individuals / groups are positioned to characterise what counts as 'true', appropriate knowledge; together with considering which or whose interests are served in this process, how it generates and perpetuates societal power and inequality and any legitimising processes included in these practices, the aim then being to interrogate and transform this situation. Cohen and Manion (2007) note this as being, what Critical theorists would identify as a key difference, between their approach and that of the preceding two, that "... the positivist and interpretive paradigms are essentially, technicist,

seeking to understand and render more efficient an existing situation, rather than to question or transform it” (p. 27).

In order to envisage the relationship between the three approaches outlined here (positivist, interpretivist and critical), Carr and Kemmis (1986) offer a ‘schematic’ depicting Habermas’s depiction of three ‘interests’ around which knowledge and manners of understanding are built. These interests: Technical, Practical and Emancipatory, in turn characterise an ‘approach’ to knowledge: Instrumental (causal explanation), Practical (understanding) and Emancipatory (reflection – as in self-emancipation through critical self-awareness) which in turn ‘map’ the approaches of the three paradigms discussed here (Positivist, Interpretivist and Critical) - these being the Empirical, Interpretive and Critical ‘sciences’. Cohen and Manion summarise, “... Habermas’s early work is an attempt to conceptualize three research styles: the scientific, positivist style; the interpretive style; and the emancipatory, ideology critical style” (Cohen and Manion, 2007, p. 28). The Critical theorist argument being that while the critical approach includes elements of both the other two paradigms, it incorporates them, it also goes further than their scope – it investigates and exposes, (technical interest), understands and considers interpretations (practical interest) and then seeks to be transformative (emancipatory interest). In common with both positivist and interpretivist approaches, certain research methodologies lend themselves more readily to a critical theory approach - action research and ideology critique. Here ideology is understood as the preferencing of one ‘set’ of

interests, (for example the perpetuation of a group's power, over others, being due to the ongoing subordination of said others, in order to retain that power), but which means the actions that secure that preferenced position cannot be replicated more widely to the benefit of others. That, "... systems, groups and individuals operate in rationally indefensible ways because their power to act relies on the disempowering of other groups, i.e. that their principles of behaviour cannot be generalized" (Cohen and Manion, 2007, p. 28).

The lines of argument, presented in the outlines of these three paradigms, contend that how we *understand the nature of things* and how we *understand knowledge*, has been recognised as having influence over and consequences for how we approach both life and research, with some suggesting that no research can be entirely free from researcher influence. Donald Campbell's (1988) description of 'qualitative knowing' supports this suggestion, arguing all research either grows from or depends upon someone's view of the world, be that the researcher, the participant or the funder and these views necessitate the involvement of personal judgements or values (Campbell, 1988, cited in Hammersley, 2007, p. 135). Having briefly considered three broad paradigms which can characterise some form these 'world views' may take, what does this hold for the choice of Methodology and Methods to be used in both this study and others?

First to note is the difference between Methodology and Methods, as

Sikes notes:

...‘methodology’ and ‘method’ are used interchangeably. They are not the same thing, and being aware of how they differ and, as a consequence, being able to address, discuss and offer a rationale for both methodology and procedure, is a necessary and crucial part of the research process (Sikes, 2008, p. 2).

**Methodology** can be defined as the *attainment* of understanding, the *production* or *generation of knowledge*, a theoretical approach or stance, rather than the actual, practical techniques used in this process. As others emphasise:

Methodological work is, therefore, philosophical, thinking, work (Sikes, 2008, p. 2).

... the process through which meaning is developed and sought (Corcoran, 2009).

... the aim of methodology is to help us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself (Cohen and Manion, 2005, p. 45).

Understanding researchers’ methodology as being the process by which meaning is developed and sought and this being associated with their philosophical positioning emphasises the potential for a significant and influential relationship with their own epistemological and ontological stance. If the methodological approach you ‘use’ reflects how you seek and make meaning of / from your research, then your own understanding

of knowledge and the nature of things, has the potential to influence this and show through in your approach.

If methodology is the philosophical, theoretical stance to our research, **methods** can be defined as the *practical* element of the study. They are the functional *processes* or practices which are employed as the (suitable) tools to gather and then analyse data, which may in turn inform the knowledge production described by methodology. This is reflected in observations such as:

... methods – on the other hand, are the specific research techniques that are used in order to collect and then analyse data (Sikes, 2008, p. 3).

... sites where knowledge production takes place (Corcoran, 2009).

By methods, we mean that range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction (Cohen and Manion, 2005 p. 44).

So the methodological approach toward and the methods used within research are both potentially influenced by our theoretical and philosophical stance. The methodology, our research thinking, will be difficult to separate out from the influence of our everyday, ingrained world view - our ontology and epistemology. Similarly, the methods we employ to explore and understand the ideas, questions, phenomena - our research – are potentially subject to the same influence. Gee (2011)

supports this contention, arguing theory and method are inseparable as “... any method always goes with a *theory*” (p. 11). He argues that individuals with different ideas or beliefs about an issue or topic will use different processes in their research, as methods comprise assorted investigation devices and “Tools of inquiry are designed to describe and explain what the researcher takes to exist and to be important in a domain” (Gee, 2011, p. 11). Positivist stances tend to embrace the possibility of there being a distinct, autonomous reality, with an objective approach toward understanding knowledge generation. This lends itself to employing research methods that focus on tangible phenomena – things that can be ‘seen’ and ‘counted’, ‘real’ observable data – thus its preoccupation with empirically generated evidence. While interpretivist stances embrace the possibility of there being multiple and varied interpretations and understandings of ‘what counts as reality and knowledge’ and that these variations in interpretation will depend upon the individual and historical context of the researcher(s) and each research participant. Here methods employed are focused on understanding / investigating the less tangible, more ephemeral phenomena of how individuals interpret their world and to use this ‘data’ to understand why they do what they do. The critical theorist approaches incorporate elements of both positivist and interpretivist paradigms and then goes further than their scope, with methods focussing on facilitating the investigation and exposure of social inequalities and seeking transformative remedial recommendations / actions.

Having read earlier suggestions which support the proposition that all approaches and stances have their limitations and flaws Schofield (2007) suggests that 'fitness for purpose' is an important criterion when considering research traditions (p.199). Acknowledging our personal positioning, through reflective consideration of the influences and value positions both we and (potentially) our participants bring to the study, is significant when reviewing the 'tools and techniques' (the methods) used in our investigations – considering how suitable, appropriate, efficient and sufficient they are for the task at hand together with how they 'fit' with our own positionality.

### **3.5 My Position**

To understand my interest in and position toward, my specific research topic, I reflected upon my own positionality and particular methodological stance, questioning why I would propose that a policy text could potentially position various college staff in certain ways. My years of study and working with young people had strengthened my conviction that events, happenings and occurrences could be understood, interpreted, perceived and experienced in a plethora of different manners, dependent upon the individual participant and the specific context. Interpretivist stances which focus on how humans make sense of (interpret) their world, and central philosophy that we cannot understand *why* people do what they do without understanding *how they interpret* the world around them, was a significant influence. As was the Interpretivist caution that this approach also necessitates the acknowledgment that individuals' interpretations will be



influenced by the cultures and times they live in and differ across and within their societies. Working through the process of reviewing the literature in my chosen field, undertaking the policy analysis, gathering my findings, and reflecting on my own position toward, and role within, the area being researched, together with any contributions this study may (or may not) be able to make to the field, also resonated with elements considered with regard to Critical theory approaches. In particular the notion of not only considering occurrences, what they mean and how they came to be so, but also how they could be different – the ‘research as transformation’, emancipatory influences of Critical approaches are significant and I shall return to this consideration later in my discussion.

This emergent sense of there being multiple, contextually and individually dependent, perceptions and understandings of ‘the world’, forms the essence of my ontological, epistemological and methodological position. That said, this itself is not in a fixed or final position, as my reading, exploration and understanding expands, broadens and develops, so too the ways I interpret and make sense of my world, become more intricate. There are however, some constants. Given the arguments above, I support suggestions that researchers’ decisions and assumptions are “... coloured by values and beliefs” (Sikes, 2007, p. 6) and that “All research is influenced by the ideology of the researcher...” (BERA, 2000, p. 5). I also support the notion that there is a need for researchers to identify and declare their value position: “It is good practice to provide a clear statement of methodological stance in terms of the values and beliefs of

the researcher” (BERA, 2000, p. 5). This highlights some of my distance from positivism, as Greenbank argues positivist approaches strive for the suppression of the influences and consequences of researchers – being their personal assumptions, versions, interpretations and values and value-judgements – in their work (Greenbank, 2003, p. 792). Positivist belief in a distinct, autonomous reality, that ‘true knowledge’ is scientific, with research claims restricted to being made on the basis of empirically generated evidence and a historical claim that accurate data could only be gleaned from phenomena that were directly observable, is another element that distances my stance from it. My position is more readily aligned with Gage’s (2007) suggestion that interpretivist approaches “... reject ‘the assumption of the uniformity of nature’ and ‘linear causal models’” (p. 153).

Exploring the underpinning of my stance highlighted a number of influences, and it is those to which I now turn, first by considering the context for my research interest, so I could ground my exploration in a practical situation to aid my understanding of my positionality.

In order to contextualise the methodological approaches adopted in this study, I shall situate my investigation within the framework offered by my current professional and personal position. In recent years there has been an increasingly concerted effort on the part of my college’s Senior Management Team to reorganise, restructure and reduce the college’s management and staffing structuring. Two key features of this

manoeuvring have been a 'shifting' Staff Training and Development Strategy and regular, frequent changes in the nomenclature and responsibilities for staff roles in college. One personal consequence of this has been a heightened sense of there being a juxtaposition between the sense of my 'ideal professional-self' and my 'actual professional-self' - as my feeling of belonging to an acknowledged 'profession', my sense of having a concrete (actual) professional identity, is increasingly diminishing. Discussions with college's Staff Training and Development Manager and members of the Senior Management Team led me to consider The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012 and its calls for workforce reform. This Strategy has had direct influences over staff deployment and their training and development in college, having informed major elements of the college Staff Training and Development plan. Furthermore the broader agenda to develop the FE workforce has had consequences for the training and qualifications required to teach in the FE sector, (potentially mirrored for non-teaching staff) and the scope and responsibilities associated with staff roles. However, the development and professionalization of teaching and non-teaching roles seemed to be approached, handled and prioritised differently. This led me to question whether there is anything in the Strategy and related/subsequent policies, that 'constructs' (or talks into being) a specific 'view' of being or doing 'professional' - one which is more inclusive of, or accessible to certain staff roles than others, or which in some cases ultimately excludes them from aspects of this professionalization agenda.

My interpretations were initially influenced by Foucauldian claims that discourse is constitutive and work such as Mehan's (2003) focusing on representation and lexical labels, led me to question the attainment of the label or position of 'professional'. This was further stimulated by Maybin's (2003) discussions of the Bakhtin/Volosinov writings, suggesting that certain expressions communicate particular ways of thinking about the subject of which they 'speak'. She notes, "By 'evaluative accent', Volosinov means the kind of judgement which words or phrases convey, about what they are referring to" (Maybin, 2003, p. 65). Thus, a national Strategy that 'speaks' of the need to professionalise the FE sector could possibly be 'read' as evaluating those in the sector as presently 'not being professional'.

### **3.6 Social Constructionism**

Social Constructionism is a theory of knowledge that explores how social phenomena develop in social contexts, arguing social constructs as concepts or practices are 'created' by particular groups. Social constructs are commonly comprehended as ideas or customs coming about as a result of numerous choices made by humans, rather than resulting from inherent, natural laws. A key focus of this approach is to reveal the ways individuals and groups participate in the formation of their perceived social reality. It involves looking at the ways social phenomena are created, institutionalised, recognised, and made into tradition by humans. Reading some of the literature on Social Constructionism revealed an overarching framework which seemed to further encapsulate, articulate and

conceptualise my views and ways of thinking about and understanding the world. It also proffered an approach which could provide a starting point to address some of the questions/concerns raised by the workforce professionalization agenda and its portrayal of professionalization. Social Constructionism offered the opportunity to explore the possibility for there being more than one understanding of being or 'doing' professional and of potentially critiquing the idea that the view of the 'state' of the FE workforce (as depicted in the Strategy) is the *one true/only* way of understanding the matter. As Burr (2008) explained, "... there exists no truth but only numerous constructions of the world, and that which becomes regarded as truth depends upon culturally and historically specific factors" (p. 84). This is not to over simplify social constructionist arguments to being a relativist position where any view is as good as another, as Burr notes "These questions regarding truth and reality are problematic ones for social constructionists," and she emphasizes that "Social constructionism is not the only body of theory to find the concepts of reality and truth problematic" (Burr, 2008, p.82). Rather than a clear cut dichotomy, the 'realism-relativism' debate is more complex, subtle and overlapping in places (Burr, 2008, p.88), with for example, 'relativists' conceding "... a real world existing independently of our talk about it" (Burr, 2008, p.88) and 'realists' recognising the potentially constructive power of language. The suggestion of 'numerous constructions of the world' does not refute the actuality of occurrences, but suggests that discourse is the way we appreciate reality, which moulds our perceptions of it. Referencing Foucauldian arguments, Burr states this is "... not denying the existence of

a material world or that this materiality may have unavoidable consequences for people. But they are pointing out that, once we begin to *talk* about or otherwise signify or represent the material world then we have entered the realm of discourse; and at that moment we have engaged in social construction” (Burr, 2008, p.91).

Seen from this standpoint, explanations and understandings of being / doing ‘professional’ and the ‘need’ for professionalization could be “constructed” in a number of ways, which could in turn hold considerable significance for the staff and roles subjected to this agenda.

Burr (2008) suggests there are a number of key principles which underpin a Social Constructionist approach: 1) To challenge or critique anything appearing to be “taken-for-granted knowledge”, resisting the claims of traditional scientific empiricism and positivism, this approach cautions against propositions that the ‘real’ world can be revealed through observation. 2) The contention that our comprehension of anything is dependent on the cultural and historical context of that understanding, that how things are understood (and, for example, explained) will depend upon where and when we are doing the understanding (see my example of the concept of teenager below). 3) Our ways of understanding or knowing anything result from joint social activities where we construct knowledge between us rather than it being a finite external resource which we can access. 4) Finally that social action and knowledge are linked, if knowledge is socially constructed it becomes possible to have infinite

constructions of the world and how we understand it and each of these will incite different actions from individuals (pp. 3-5). For example, what in the twenty first century is understood as post-natal depression was once understood as insanity in women, one 'knowing' incites the action of referring a new mother for counselling support, the other incites the action of detaining her within an asylum.

Burr's (2008) third point here mirrors Hyatt's perspective which argues:

... that language and social reality are related and challenges the argument that language is a neutral reflection of society and social reality. Rather, it argues that language, instead of drawing meanings passively from pre-existing knowledge of the world, plays an active role in classifying the phenomena and experiences through which individuals construct, understand and represent reality (Hyatt, 2005, p.42).

Within the Social Constructionism framework approaches can be said to adopt one of two key stances – Micro and Macro Social Constructionism. The former, essentially concerned with discourse found in individuals' daily exchanges, argues that a myriad of constructions available for understanding our world are located within these exchanges and therefore restricts its focus to these texts and the micro processes contained within them. The latter, while recognising the constructive force of language, argues this stems from or is connected to institutionalised customs, social interactions and social or tangible structures, which locates the notion of power at the core of this stance (Burr, 2008, pp. 221-23). With issues of power holding such a key position in Macro Social Constructionism, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is promoted as one of the research

approaches of this methodology and the influence of this approach on CDA has been acknowledged, "... social constructionism and Wittgenstein's "meaning is use" maxim has strongly influenced discourse theory" (McKenna, 2004, p. 12). In considering the fundamental beliefs of CDA, whereby it promotes the adopting of a principled positioning toward tackling disparities and discrimination rooted in power inequities, Hyatt also notes the influences of this approach, "The post-structuralist approach to discourse therefore implies a social constructionist view of discourse. Reality is not fixed but constructed through interactions" (A.E.R.S., 2008, online para. Critical discourse analysis: basic tenets of critical discourse analysis). Burr (2008) summarises her position on the links with CDA as being, "The central concern of CDA is with the relationship between language and power, and with the use of discourse analysis to expose power inequalities and ideology" (p. 170). These principles would tend towards the positioning of CDA as being more aligned with critical educational research paradigms, than positivist or interpretivist ones.

This focus on understanding power belies the influence of Foucault's work on discourse analysis (as a broader tradition) and also on others' work on CDA, such as Fairclough's (Burr, 2008), where Fairclough notes that discourse "... is characterized by having the distinctive and more important role in the constitution and reproduction of power relations and social identities" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 136). Foucault focussed on how discourse is used to express wider "meaning making" and for him 'discourse' doesn't



refer to tangible occurrences of language use in interactions. Instead it is employed as a theoretical concept - as an arrangement of utterances, which create an object. He argued discourse as a system of representation offered a group of statements which supply language for discussing (a way of demonstrating the knowledge about) specific topics at specific moments in history. 'Truth' and knowledge are historicized for Foucault, they are only understandable and relevant at particular moments in time – for example, how we view and talk about being a teenager is pertinent to the mid twentieth century onwards – 'teenager' is a concept that had not been 'constructed' previous to this point (despite there having been people aged thirteen to nineteen since numbering human age evolved) (Hall, 2003). Foucault later focussed on how institutions employed discursive practices to manage others' behaviour – studying the associations between power and knowledge and how these two work within organisations – arguing that power is not only negative but also productive. The language used to 'talk' about a subject comes to construct a widely believed perception of that subject as the 'truth' – people will act in relation to that 'truth' and their actions will have implications and real outcomes for the subject:

Discourse, Foucault argues, constructs the topic. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. It also influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others (Hall, 2003, p. 72).

Building on the influences of how Foucault approaches Discourse Analysis, Fairclough (2003) notes how “CDA provides a way of moving between close analysis of texts and interactions, and social analyses of various types. Its objective is to show how language figures in social processes. It is critical in the sense that it aims to show non-obvious ways in which language is involved in social relations of power and domination, and in ideology” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 229).

This approach of using Critical Discourse Analysis, as its influences include elements of Social Constructionism and Foucault’s work, holds significant potential for understanding how the workforce professionalization agenda and Strategy ‘works’. For being able to unpick the messages, both explicit and implicit within the text, to understand the power at play and what possibilities, limitations and opportunities this holds for FE sector staff, in terms of attaining, demonstrating, or even re-thinking professionalism. This is especially in view of Burr’s (2008) assertion that this approach is concerned with detecting the discourses functioning in a specific section of life and exploring the connotations these may have for power relationships, subjectivity and one’s practice (p. 170). Reflecting upon why I ‘opted’ for this post-structuralist approach, rather than, for example, a modernist one, further emphasised how my ontological and epistemological positions, have evolved and developed over a number of years, as discussed earlier. For example, over time I found social constructionist arguments ‘explained’ my perception of there being multiple possibilities for understanding and experiencing ‘the world’

and post-structuralist understandings of discourse, assert that 'reality' is constructed through interactions. Akin to this, Gramscian notions of hegemony, purport that the dominant class in a society can 'sway' what becomes 'accepted' as 'reality' by influentially defining what is to be considered normal (through societal interaction). The commonality here being that these three approaches hold that meaning is jointly (although not necessarily equally) created, rather than being an exact representation of a single reality. These explanations illuminated and encapsulated my understanding, (where others felt 'lacking or not quite right'), concurrently positioning my arguments within a post-structuralist approach as opposed to other approaches.

While elements of Social Constructionism may strike a resonance with my own ontological and epistemological positioning, together with having identified CDA as an appropriate method/technique within this framework, it is important to acknowledge that all theories, methodological approaches and methods have their strong points and also, they have their limitations. They are not to be consumed wholesale without question, thus I turn to consider some strengths and weaknesses of using a Social Constructionist influenced Critical Discourse Analysis framework for this study.

### **3.6.1 Some Strengths.**

#### ***3.6.1i Offering the opportunity to understand the effects of the workforce strategy.***

In my personal and professional experience the impact and lived effects of the FE workforce professionalization agenda are becoming evident. Here I interpret effects differently to a positivist, who may approach this by measuring 'counts' of different actions undertaken by FE staff following the introduction of the Strategy. For me understanding effects is more about exploring what it is that 'pressures' staff into behaving, acting or responding in certain ways - the feelings, pressures, incitements, demands and norms that require, coerce, compel and pressurise staff into specific reactions and actions.

One example of change heralded by the Strategy is the new requirements for teaching staff qualifications and registration with the Institute for Learning (IfL), whereby teachers taking on their first post after September 2007, will be "... required to undertake and complete Professional Formation within 5 years of their first appointment" (IfL, 2011). This essentially means 'new' FE teachers will need to attain an 'approved' qualification, register with the IfL and demonstrate other criteria against which their 'evidence of their doing/being professional' will be measured.

Some may approach understanding the effects of this particular 'professionalization' change by 'counting' the number of staff undertaking

these qualifications. However, CDA also offers the possibility to understand what other pressures or influences are impacting upon staff actions, especially given the significance and effects of this new requirement, significant as it potentially suggests people are not already professional and thus need new qualifications. For example, the IfL also *suggest*, “Teachers who were employed in the sector before September 2007 are not required to achieve QTLS or ATLS, but are encouraged to do so as a demonstration of the currency of their teaching practice” (IfL, 2011). Language-use here is being employed to exert ‘power’ in a subtle manner, as it positions pre and post 2007 teachers on either side of a *direct* stipulation to attain certain ‘approved’ qualifications. So pre 2007 staff are already positioned as ‘lacking’, by not having these, but now they are also potentially positioned as un-cooperative, un-ambitious, or un-professional if they do not ‘choose’ to take up IfL’s suggestion that they also gain additional qualifications to ‘demonstrate the currency of their practice’.

Experiences from my own institution, while undertaking this study, further demonstrated how the Strategy’s language-use was permeating into the FE sector, as it ‘flavoured’ management discussions. By this I mean language used to talk about staff development, staff re-organisation and curriculum development echoes phrases from and the content of the Strategy. The planning and enactment of recent restructuring, re-organisational and reduction of the college workforce is spoken of in terms of ‘a greater need for staff flexibility’; ‘a more responsive staff body’; ‘need

for workforce flexibility in the face of a changing marketplace'; 'the need to be able to respond to the national skills shortage. Language-use, which seemed to locate the need for restructure within the staff 'themselves' (rather than in decreased funding and tighter budgets for example).

In light of understanding effects such as these, Fairclough's assertion of the potential of CDA as, "The aim of critical social research is better understanding of how societies work and produce both beneficial and detrimental effects and of how the detrimental effects can be mitigated if not eliminated" (Fairclough, 2003a, pp. 202-203) seems significant. CDA offers the opportunity for understanding some of the outcomes of the implementation of the workforce professionalization agenda, for example in terms of how the Strategy creates or restricts opportunities for the performance of professionalism. Similarly to Fairclough, Gee (2011) claims there is also potential for CDA being able to highlight those advantaged or disadvantaged by this agenda, "... discourse analysis can illuminate problems and controversies in the world. It can illuminate issues about the distribution of social goods, who gets helped, and who gets harmed" (p. 10).

**3.6.1ii *Enabling the opportunity to understand how 'the Strategy' achieves these effects.***

A critique levelled at other approaches to analysing discourse is a tendency to limit their work to offering an explanation of 'what was said', whereas CDA goes beyond this, beyond being a tool for simply describing

or depicting an issue. Rogers *et al* (2005) note how CDA analysts "... often separate their work from other forms of "non-critical" discourse analyses by arguing that their analyses move beyond description and interpretation of the role of language in the social world, toward explaining why and how language does the work that it does" (pp. 368-369). While being able to describe, it also offers the opportunity for deepening theories on how the outcomes (in this case arising from the workforce professionalization agenda) are *actually achieved*. Gee (2011) argues that his interest in CDA lies in its being able to:

- a) illuminate and gain us evidence for our theory of the domain, a theory that helps to explain how and why language works in the way it does when it is put into action; and b) contribute, in terms of understanding and intervention, to important issues and problems (Gee, 2011, p. 12).

CDA then proffers the possibility for moving analysis beyond describing the language used in the Strategy text(s) to really exploring and understanding *how it is used in order to achieve certain ends or outcomes*, how it is 'put together' to secure these results. In his consideration of critical social research on new capitalism, Fairclough (2003a) also emphasizes the importance of the role language plays in being able to fully comprehend social change, "... the language element has in certain key respects become more salient, more important than it used to be, and in fact a crucial aspect of the social transformations which are going on – one cannot make sense of them without thinking about language" (p. 203).

Echoing influences touched on earlier, Hyatt (2005) argues the significance of Foucault's work on CDA's ability to unveil how language-use actually achieves these outcomes. Certain establishments or areas of practice (for example education or medicine) employ discourses (or ways of describing or portraying something) as a means of categorising and segmenting our world. Language and other social practices are employed together to create meaning, specific to the cultural and historical context within which they are operating (Gee, 2011). Hyatt argues that for Foucault, "... these discourses are hierarchically arranged and so have differing degrees of power and influence. The dominant discourses are understood by existing systems of law, education and the media, and are in turn reinforced and reproduced, and less powerful discourses marginalised, misunderstood and ignored" (A.E.R.S., 2008, online para. Critical discourse analysis: what is critical discourse analysis?). Thus CDA can highlight how the preferencing of discourses which facilitate certain (desired) outcomes are perpetuated at the expense of those discourses that may challenge this status quo. For example discourses that enable those in powerful positions within these institutional arenas to retain and maintain their position of power through establishing 'normative' understanding of how things are.

**3.6.1iii CDA is critical and brings with it a political element, a call for social change.**

As suggested above, certain discourses can become so influential that they prevail over all other understandings or readings of a situation (which



is not to say they are without resistance, notions of which are explored in Chapter Five). As highlighted in the earlier review of literature, this creates a normative positioning where this interpretation becomes 'accepted' as the given, the 'truth', the actuality, it becomes self-legitimising. As Hyatt puts it "... a naturalised discourse loses its ideological character and appears as neutral – it represents its 'story' as the 'truth' and implies that the learning of this discourse requires only the learning of a set of skills or techniques" (A.E.R.S., 2008, online para. Critical discourse analysis: basic tenets of critical discourse analysis). The *critical* element of CDA here is vital – for more than mere description, it enables the identification of language-use where it is employed to promote and perpetuate certain interpretations of a matter, or 'how things are', while marginalising other interpretations that may resist or challenge these. Influenced by the likes of The Frankfurt School of Critical Theory and neo-Marxist thought, this critical approach focuses on the exposure of inequality and discrimination resulting from power imbalances played out through language-use (McKenna, 2004; A.E.R.S., 2008). Gee (2011) highlights how Critical Discourse Analysts "... want to speak to and, perhaps, intervene in, social or political issues, problems, and controversies in the world. They want to apply their work to the world in some fashion" (p. 9). By facilitating or signposting the possibility for intervention CDA takes research beyond the identification, description, exploration and communication of phenomena, into offering opportunities for addressing any inequalities or injustices which the research identifies (although not necessarily by that researcher, or by them alone or within the scope of the identifying study). This is a

crucial element of CDA, in that having enabled us to identify the effects a certain 'piece of language-in-use' may have, together with facilitating an understanding of how the language-use actually achieves these effects, there is a political/social change characteristic to CDA which promotes the addressing of the identified issue. This element of intervention is further emphasised by Gee (2011) in his contention, made earlier, that it is social practices that give language meaning and that these practices "... often leave us morally complicit with harm and injustice unless we attempt to transform them" (p. 12).

The foundations of CDA are built on the premise that access to societal *and* language resources is both inequitable and also managed by those already 'in power'. It is this institutional control of resources that Hyatt argues is fundamental to CDA and its "... role is to uncloak the hidden power relations, largely constructed through language, and to demonstrate and challenge social inequities reinforced and reproduced" (A.E.R.S., 2008, online para. Critical discourse analysis: basic tenets of critical discourse analysis). CDA's ability to move analysis language-in-use beyond description, to opportunities for addressing inadequacy and promoting social change (through the identification and tackling of inequalities and oppression), echoing a difference between interpretivist and critical approaches discussed earlier, is reflected in the first of eight features McKenna (2004) identifies as characterising Critical Discourse Studies – Teleology. "CDS has a teleological commitment to justice, democracy, equality and fairness:" (p.10), where interpreting and

explaining phenomena by understanding the purpose they serve (i.e. the outcomes language-use actually secures) rather than by hypothesizing about their possible causes, enables one to focus on how to address inequalities, as opposed to being preoccupied by the inequalities' origins.

In terms of being critical, equally as significant as considering what is included in texts or speech is considering what is *not* included, for example as seen in the review of literature, some pieces on the reform of the educational workforce sector were more revealing for what they (or more precisely whom they) *did not incorporate* in their discussions of 'doing' professionalism. The inclusion of only limited interpretations or readings of a situation lend weight to the positioning of the situation, as being the 'way things are' or as being 'the one truth'. The exclusion of different or other explanations, portrayals, or interpretations bolsters the perception of the position portrayed in the text as being actuality. Hyatt cautions this necessitates us "... to consider the myriad ways in which a text could have been written and what these alternatives imply for ways of representing the world, understanding the world and the social actions that are determined by these ways of thinking and being", as part of a *critical* analysis (A.E.R.S., 2008, online para. Critical discourse analysis: how to do critical discourse analysis – a framework for analysis). Some key features for ensuring a critical approach include analysts: working reflectively (digging deep into the content and context of a text); being reflexive (noting how our ontological and epistemological positioning influences our readings and interpretations); interrogating (not to take for

granted, or at face value, texts' assumptions); being dialogic (to produce interpretations with others) and to compare (to explore other texts and their treatment of the subject) (A.E.R.S., 2008).

### **3.6.1iv *The potential for CDA to link with and contribute to 'Theory'***

One of the most complex matters I have had to grasp as a doctoral student is the role of and personal/professional alignment with one overarching 'Theory', for example when trying to identify and characterise my ontological and epistemological position (hence the previous use of the word developing). Elements, features and characteristics of a range of theoretical stances and methodological approaches appeal, as both 'fitting' to the way I understand and interpret the world and the way I would approach 'phenomena' as a research interest. CDA seems to reflect this complexity, as rather than acting as a 'stand alone' method or tool, it has associations with a range of theoretical origins and has the potential for producing results which could contribute to, influence or enhance these. Henderson (2005) describes how, faced with similar dilemmas, she is "... now using CDA to provide a theorisation of the social world. In accepting that the social and textual world is constantly changing, I have been cognisant of the need for theory to also be able to bend, flex and work with those changes, and CDA has been particularly useful in this regard" (p.2). Similarly Fairclough calls for the development of the interactions and interconnectedness between social theory, the work of social theorists and CDA, as a means of strengthening the claims of both, arguing it is:

... a matter of, on the one hand recognizing that it is often social theorists who produce the most interesting critical insights about language as an element of social life, yet, on the other hand, challenging them and helping them to engage with language in a far more concrete and detailed way than they generally do. Without detailed analysis, one cannot really *show* that language is doing the work one may theoretically ascribe to it. (Fairclough, 2003a, p. 204).

Hyatt (2005) and Henderson (2005) both acknowledge the potential CDA has for the development of theoretical knowledge. Henderson (2005) discusses the potential for theoretical diversity as she considers CDA's ability to combine different fields' approaches to analysis, as recognised by Burr (2008) in her assertion that CDA has contributions to make to the interests of both Micro and Macro Social Constructionist research. Henderson states "One of the benefits of CDA is its ability to bring together social and linguistic analyses of discourse, thus integrating analysis at the macro level of social structure with analysis at the micro level of social action" (Henderson, 2005, p. 5). Similarly, Hyatt highlights the links with recent re-evaluations of Gramscian influenced theory on hegemony - the idea that the system of 'naturalisation' finds collections of individuals 'permitting' themselves to be oppressed through a process of constructions, customs and actions, rather than through a process of compulsion by others. He states "Critical Discourse Analysis argues that language helps to construct a negative hegemony by presenting the dominant group's thinking as common sense, inevitable, the way things are, etc" (A.E.R.S., 2008, online para. Critical discourse analysis: influences from critical social theory). He notes the work on attempts to realign understandings and interpretations of this concept, by offering

alternative readings, opens the possibility for resistance or change, the potential to overcome ideas or specific versions of the world, argued to have universal 'acceptance', stating "If language is constructed, it can therefore be deconstructed and reconstructed. It offers a discourse of possibility" (A.E.R.S., 2008, online para. Critical discourse analysis: basic tenets of critical discourse analysis).

### **3.6.1v *The Significance of Context***

Given that my ontological and epistemological position leans towards the possibility of multiple interpretations, readings and understandings of situations and phenomena, the significant attention CDA places on the context of texts or utterances, is key. Gee (2011) claims that analysis enables us to "... gain information about a context in which a piece of language has been used and use this information to form hypotheses about what that piece of language means and is doing", arguing the process always involves "... a movement from context to language and from language to context" (p. 20). Being able to understand the various readings of a text means being able to 'stand in others' positions', to attempt to view the matter from a point other than my own – which necessitates knowledge of the historical, cultural and political contexts, in which the text or utterance was both produced *and* received. That is to say language-use is not simply a representational system of identifying some external manifestation, of some pre-existing knowledge – my positioning is of a view of language as both being constructed by social practices, while

simultaneously constructing that of which it speaks, as influenced by Foucauldian thought. Gee (2011) depicts it thus:

Which comes first? The context or the language? This question reflects an important *reciprocity* between language and context: language simultaneously *reflects* context (what is out there in the world) and *constructs* (*construes*) it to be a certain way. While “reciprocity” would be a good term for this property of language, the more commonly used term is “reflexivity” (in the sense of language and context being like two mirrors facing each other and constantly and endlessly reflecting their own images back and forth between each other) (Gee, 2011, p. 101).

McKenna (2004) also highlights the importance of context, in the third of his characteristics of Critical Discourse Studies – Materialism. Drawing on the influences of Fairclough, Bakhtin/Volosinov, Foucault and Gee, he notes language emerges and develops in and through tangible oral interactions, rather than through an elusive system of linguistic symbols or some internalised consciousness of the various interactants. He notes “A materialist conception of discourse underlies most critical discourse studies to the extent that social context relates to textual production” (McKenna, 2004, p. 11).

Hyatt’s positioning of the creation of meaning as a discursive process, echoes these discussions of language as being more than a system of symbolic representation, he argues it “... challenges the argument that language is a neutral reflection of society and social reality” (Hyatt, 2005, p.43). Understanding this process as a discursive one, one that proceeds by reasoning or argument from a premise to a conclusion – i.e. it is an

active, collaborative process, not an intuitive arrival at a pre-existing given point, meaning is made and created together - again emphasises the significance of context. Hyatt contends that texts and utterances “ ... do not occur in isolation – socio-political, socio-historic contexts contribute to production and interpretation of text and are crucial aspects of the analysis”, arguing that “Language then needs to be viewed as more than a representative process of communication but part of a wider ideological process of the representation and construction of meanings. It is active rather than passive in the process of representing the world. It is a process of performance rather than a process of quiescent and neutral mirroring” (A.E.R.S., 2008, online para. Critical discourse analysis: introduction).

### **3.7 Some Limitations**

Critical Discourse Analysis is not without its drawbacks, some of which I shall consider here.

#### ***3.7.1 Some still consider it a ‘new’ (if not disjointed) discipline and question how do you actually do it***

While having acknowledged CDA taking influence from a wide range of fields and theoretical positioning as being a potential strength, concerns have been voiced that CDA’s (relatively) recent emergence is a matter for consideration, as its exponents fail to satisfactorily, overtly clarify its theoretical roots and route into conception (Henderson, 2005; Luke 2002; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 2005, Widdowson, 1995). The key points of scepticism expressed about CDA are concerned with its relative ‘youth’ as



a theory; that it takes influences from a wide range of fields; that it is unrealistic to hope to achieve CDA's expressed, explicit aims (to effect social transformation) through theory alone and the paradoxical nature of CDA's very philosophy, arguing the impossibility of being able to both analyse and critique concurrently. Rajagopalan (2000) offers a useful summary of the position of two sceptics:

For both Hammersley and Widdowson, theories and analyses are what we do with words, so that they can at best make a difference in the realm of words. If, on the other hand, we want to make a difference in the world of reality "out there," we had better come out of the ivory tower of theories and analyses and actually act upon the basis of those findings. Both Hammersley and Widdowson are thus convinced that CDA's fundamental claims and hence its very *raison d'être* are suspect right from the start (Rajagopalan, 2000, p.70).

As Henderson (2005) states "Some scepticism about its place as a theoretically-grounded analytical and methodological approach for the social sciences remains" (p. 2), which illuminates one of the initial difficulties or challenges I found with CDA – how to *actually do it*. While CDA in many ways benefits from its widespread roots and relations with theory, one result has been a plethora of approaches or actual techniques for undertaking a rigorous CDA analysis of your chosen material. To give a few examples I have encountered: Fairclough offers an eight point/stage framework, (Fairclough, 1995, 2001, 2003a); Gee describes seven 'tasks' employed in building language-use and four 'tools' employed to explore these tasks (Gee, 2011) and Hyatt offers an eleven stage framework for analysing texts (which I shall use) (Hyatt, 2005, and A.E.R.S., 2008). While the variety of approaches potentially offers an option to suit a range

of needs and ontological / epistemological stances, they also serve to compound the complexities faced by a student researcher. Van Dijk echoes these complexities when observing “Critical discourse analysis is far from easy. In my opinion it is by far the toughest challenge in the discipline” (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 253).

### **3.7.2 CDA is critical and brings with it a political element, a call for social change**

It is significant to note that, while CDA’s political element and alignment with social change has earlier been promoted as a strength, this is also a feature of CDA that is widely critiqued. Contrasting with many other academic stances, CDA seeks not to refute or attempt to set aside its political, social attitude, (for example as positivist approaches attempt to, through striving for (unattainable?) value-free, neutral research experiments), instead overtly identifying and standing up for its position. As Van Dijk (2001) puts it “... CDA is biased – and proud of it” (p.96). In discussing the significance of analysts’ attention to reflexivity and reflectivity, Hyatt argues these as being a method for addressing the issue of this “... criticism levelled at critical approaches to textual analysis is that they are generally, and explicitly, partial and political” (A.E.R.S., 2008, online para. Critical discourse analysis: critiques of the approach).

A ‘sister’ tradition from the Discourse Analysis field raises concerns about CDA’s overtly political stance. Analysts adopting a Conversation Analysis (CA) stance are concerned with understanding the characteristics of

everyday social interactions and how 'conversations' are constructed, produced and recognised by the interactants. Echoing CDA's interest in understanding how language-use achieves certain outcomes, CA's focus is on how the objects or "devices" (Sacks, 2003) found within everyday utterances and conversations are used to construct activities – rather than the particular words employed, it is the purpose they fulfil in the specific interaction that is of interest. However, CA also contends that any information not directly recorded within the data being analysed (i.e. the direct content of the recorded conversation), should not be considered or allowed to influence the analytic process – if it is not in the data, you cannot talk about it, "CA is data driven, not theory led" (Wooffitt, 2003, p. 58). The general CA approach is to 'set aside' any political opinions or conjecture about conventions, theories or ideologies, so that only the individuals' actual interactions are studied to evidence the participants' orientations and consequently CA may critique the inclusion or consideration of the wider political, ideological and theoretical influences behind the texts being investigated.

### **3.8 The Issue of Hegemony**

The Gramscian notion of hegemony purports the idea that societies which are culturally varied can be governed or over-shadowed by one element or group within that society and that the beliefs of this dominant faction become 'accepted' as the 'norm'. Gramsci's approach to this idea lay in the belief that, "... the domination of a class depends not so much on the repressive machinery of the state, but on the fact that a prevailing mode of

thought shields the existing social order, by persuasively defining for the society what is to be regarded as natural and normal” (Mautner, 2000, p. 227). Earlier Hyatt highlighted how attempts to rework understandings of Gramsci’s concept opens the possibility for resistance or change, but he also noted that the issue of ‘challenging’ the notion of hegemony has been argued as a weakness of CDA and in particular he cites Maley’s work (A.E.R.S., 2008). Maley (1994) claimed there is a difficulty in attempting to critique any contention by using the notion of hegemony as an arguing point. He argued the intrinsic problem with this, “... is to label oneself a victim of the ‘naturalization’ process, acting as the unwitting tool of the prevailing hegemony – thus proving the very point one has set out to question” (Maley, 1994. p. 349), or as Hyatt puts it “... there is a logical problem inherent in challenging any argument based on a notion of hegemony, as to do so opens oneself to charges of being a victim of ‘false consciousness’” (A.E.R.S., 2008, online para. Critical discourse analysis: critiques of the approach). The notion of hegemony is the idea that parts of society ‘consent’ to being subjugated by a dominant group through ‘naturalisation’ (where the dominant group’s ideas become embedded as the ‘norm’). To argue against any claims made, on the basis of their being representative of a dominant hegemony, positions the argument as being open to accusations of ‘false consciousness’. This is the Marxist notion that people are not able to perceive things on a sufficiently sophisticated level of awareness, particularly oppression - that individuals are unable to see the true nature of a situation. Thus they are unable to understand the situation to any level of sophistication sufficient enough to enable them to

grasp the 'reality' of what is going on. So if you make an argument that something is representative of a dominant hegemony that argument won't stand up as you are falling prey to false consciousness. That being you are not able to understand the 'reality' of the situation on a sufficiently sophisticated level to argue otherwise.

That said, having used CDA to deconstruct and interrogate the reform Strategy, the key text for my research, which has been 'employed' to attempt to 'control' the direction and actions of the FE workforce, has offered opportunities for (future) counter-oppressive strategies/actions. CDA enabled the beliefs and position, of the dominant (hegemonic) societal 'layer' (government), to be revealed within the Strategy's aims and claims, and the 'oppressive', controlling nature of these discursive norms, to be potentially challenged or resisted (discussions in Chapter Five consider how).

These arguments about the treatment of hegemony are further compounded by claims of CDA analysts being reductive in their approach to texts, by seldom (overtly) making explicit the possibilities for multiple readings and interpretations of texts, dependent upon the reader. With regard to the recognition of the possibility of multiple readings, Widdowson (1995) argues "... in CDA we do not find this. There is rarely a suggestion that alternative interpretations are possible. There is usually the implication that the single interpretation offered is uniquely validated by the textual facts", cautioning this as a weakness of CDA as "... this very

persuasive effect is indicative of its limitation: it is itself a critical discourse and as such it is interpretation, not analysis” (Widdowson, 1995, p. 169). This (mis)interpretation of CDA, Hyatt argues, is how it could potentially be critiqued for underpinning arguments with challenges to the existing hegemony, by “... producing an intellectual and interpretive hegemony as oppressive as the one critical discourse analysts seek to challenge” (A.E.R.S., 2008, online para. Critical discourse analysis: critiques of the approach). He goes on to challenge this critique however, employing arguments discussed earlier, that meaning (of texts) is not produced by or within those texts, but by the social practice of collaboratively interpreting them and assigning an agreed / accepted meaning, “Such a commitment to a particular preferred reading of a text denies the essential understanding that texts do not contain meaning, but that meanings are pragmatically interpreted from texts” (A.E.R.S., 2008, online para. Critical discourse analysis: critiques of the approach).

### **3.9 Notions of Being Value-free and Objective and The Issue of Relativism**

Educational research has predominantly been influenced by two dominant paradigms; the interpretative stance – being subjective in nature and characterised by the search to understand how humans make sense of, or interpret, their world and the positivist stance – being objective in nature and underpinned by the faith that there is a single autonomous “truth”. Social Constructionist approaches in general and CDA in particular are faced with needing to coherently and comprehensively address ideas

around and critiques of, the issue of 'reality/relativism', the foundations of which are linked to these dominant paradigms. Key to discussions about reality-relativism are two propositions: one, *realism*, being the belief in an exterior world existing separately from any representations of it and the other, *relativism*, being the belief that the various world-constructs we create may only be evaluated against each other, rather than being measured against some essential (non-existent) truth.

Carr's (1989) discussion of the pervasive and persistent nature of the empiricist/positivist mind-set, exemplifies how invasive the historical notion of a single "truth" is, as empiricism's dualistic arguments purport "Science is a value-free theoretical activity concerned only with the disinterested pursuit of empirical knowledge" (p. 29). The assertion that research methodologies and methods either can or cannot be value free appears to be underpinned by a series of assumptions, which generally characterise the polarised arguments between positivist and interpretivist approaches to research. Social Constructionist approaches including CDA, Burr (2008) notes, would argue that objectivity or value-freedom is an unattainable concept as one can only experience the world from one standpoint or another, "... the questions we come to ask about that world, our theories and hypotheses, must also of necessity arise from the assumptions that are embedded in our perspective" (p. 152).

One implication for this debate is that it complicates the possibility for arguing the moral appropriateness of interventions or actions (a key

feature of CDA), for example how do we “substantiate” and address concepts such as oppression when everything is viewed in relation to everything else – one man’s construct of oppression is another’s construct of potential for liberty. Further complicating matters is that rather than forming two opposing debates, arguments around realism-relativism more accurately adopt various positions on a kind of continuum, acknowledging and accepting elements from each other (Burr, 2008, p. 88).

In discussing the role of interpretation in analysis, Gouveia (2003) highlights arguments toward one end of this continuum, suggesting “... one could then say that the crucial feature in CDA is that the analyst is not only necessary to observe the properties of a discursive phenomenon, but is necessary even to bring about these properties, since discursive phenomena do not have objective properties independent of the analyst’s mind” (p. 57). This *leans* towards arguments which postulate the attainment of a concrete, external, *single* reality is (at the least) unlikely – instead arguing the role of context and interpretation in the development of meaning. Gouveia (2003) claims that, in an attempt to challenge this proposition, Widdowson (1995) ‘takes the argument to the *nth* degree’ by claiming that all then becomes a matter of interpretation, an ‘anything goes’ situation, “... what “is actually revealed is the particular discourse perspective of the interpreter’ and that CDA ‘cannot provide analysis but only partial interpretation” (Widdowson, 1995, p.169). Gouveia’s (2005) retort to this emphasises points made earlier on the significance of reflective and reflexive practice, that “Widdowson is, strangely enough,



missing the fact there is no value-free CDA, that, ultimately, there is no value-free science” (Gouveia, 2003, p. 57). Widdowson, McKenna (2004) argues, is however not alone in extrapolating this stance toward the role of interpretation and relativism as being a free-for-all, citing Terwee he states relativism oriented positions are, “... often misunderstood or misapplied to draw the conclusion "that we are free to construct any meaning we like" (McKenna, 2004, p. 12. citing, Terwee, 1995, p. 193).

A final observation here is to note Fairclough’s (2003a) response to the notion that we are free to construct any meaning we want, “This is not a matter of reducing social life to language, saying that everything is discourse – it isn’t.” (p. 2). Social Constructionist and CDA approaches emphasise *constitutive* nature of discourse, that it concurrently *depicts* an occurrence *and* also forms *part* of that occurrence. Thus Critical Discourse Analysts would not ‘deny the reality’ of things such as oppression and inequality, rather they argue the meaning of these, how they are experienced and understood are ‘constructed’ by those involved and are culturally and contextually dependent.

### **3.10 The Issue of Text(s)**

This particular study focuses solely on the analysis of texts, rather than incorporating participant data and critiques have been levelled at approaches that restrict their investigations to consideration of nothing but texts, indeed this was a major concern of my peer group at my first ‘student presentation’ (Burr, 2008). There is a tension here between

Foucauldian oriented approaches and those such as Conversation Analysis, between their different treatment of the content of the data – broadly this is a polarisation between approaches which argue the need to look solely within, or alternatively beyond, the scope of the text being analysed to understand its influences and context. Burr (2008) notes:

Discursive psychologists maintain that meaning is produced by the interactants within the interaction itself and that the text is therefore all that is needed in order to study that meaning. We do not need to look beyond the text, say to the status and power relationship between the interactants, or the wider social meaning of the words and concepts they are using, to understand what is going on. The problem with this is that our talk often draws its effectiveness from, and can help to reproduce, social and material power structures. Those working within a Foucauldian tradition argue that the meaning of a conversation cannot be fully grasped if we do not locate it within this wider social and material context (Burr, 2008, p. 174).

There is also (potentially) an issue with regard to the critique of the texts used in this study (or indeed in any CDA analysis) as being ‘texts with specific functions’. Pioneers of Conversation Analysis, such as Goffman and Garfinkel, claim in order to explore the use of key concepts (e.g. sequential positioning, turn taking and adjacency pairs) which constitute social interaction, the texts used need to be recordings of ‘naturally occurring data’ (Heritage, 2003; Wooffitt, 2003). Consequently Conversation Analysts may argue the documents (policy/Strategy statements) used here constitute texts developed to perform specific functions and thus are ‘biased’ toward *ensuring* specific outcomes, rather than showing how the natural occurrence of individuals employing specific interactional tools, achieves these ends.

The aim in this thesis is to look beyond the component parts of any texts to also consider the wider ideological, political and theoretical influences behind them, looking wider to consider the discursive practices employed by the 'author(s)' to fully understand how the context in which they were written influences the construction of 'the professionalization of the FE workforce'. Thus I found the need to balance the beliefs and approaches of the various influences on my position, incorporating the sole use of text oriented data in this study – initially employing CDA to deeply and rigorously explore how the language-use in this nationally issued documentation is employed with the aim of achieving certain outcomes – with the (future) potential of exploring the opportunities for political/social change (perhaps in relation to the adoption of or alignment with models of 'doing' professional) using what is learnt here, with participants' (other) readings, interpretations or experiences.

### **3.11 Reflexivity**

Both Social Constructionist stances and CDA approaches highlight the value of the 'reflexive' discourse. This places an emphasis not only on a critical reflection of practice but on locating such reflections in the context of broader life-based experiences, where researchers need essentially to look both 'outward' as well as 'inward', to acknowledge how their own theoretical and value positions/beliefs may influence their work (Moore, 2007). Consequently this approach is widely advocated as a major consideration when conducting research, "... researchers should adopt a reflexive approach and attempt to be honest and open about how values

influence their research” (Greenbank, 2003 p. 791). Adopting a reflexive approach emphasises the importance of overtly acknowledging the values and viewpoints which influence the research, be they of a political or personal nature. Reflexivity also facilitates the recognition of some key Social Constructionist and CDA underpinnings, such as the *constitutive* nature of discourse, for example establishing that the researchers’ telling of an event is constitutive as it concurrently *depicts* an occurrence *and* also forms *part* of that occurrence. Furthermore, working reflexively, not only acknowledges the subjectivity of the research and researcher influence on the work, it also enables researchers to acknowledge that their preferred methodological approach is *itself* a social construction and is thus subject to the various critiques the methodology brings to bear on other approaches and theories (Burr, 2008, pp. 156-158).

### **3.12 Validity and Reliability**

“Reliability is a central concept in measurement, and it basically means consistency ... A second central concept ... is validity ... the extent to which an instrument measures what it claims to measure” (Punch, 1998, pp. 99-100). As Punch (1998) contends, ensuring and demonstrating consistency within a research approach, methods used, findings and analysis, together with striving to evidence the validity of any ‘measurements’ taken, have long been central concerns to researchers especially those adopting positivist, empirical approaches. Social Constructionist approaches however would argue their position is not concerned with unearthing detached, neutral facts or truths, as this would be in direct opposition to

the belief that there are multiple constructions of the world and the historical and cultural specificity of knowledge. Instead Burr (2008) suggests the turn has been toward advocating different approaches to justifying their findings/work, “Usefulness and fruitfulness are general criteria that could apply to any research ... a number of criteria that contribute toward the overall trustworthiness and soundness of the analysis” (p.159). This seems cognisant with CDA’s alignment with political/social change and the drive to address inadequacy and social injustice. The aims of this approach facilitate a ‘fruitful’ means of identifying the means by which those in power are able to attain or maintain control over, or oppression of, others and their actions together with ‘useful’ opportunities for identifying and enacting measures to tackle and transform these inequalities and discriminations.

### **3.13 Personal Bias**

It is important to note that while researchers may bring considerable skills to the investigative process, they are still a person with beliefs, values and a sense of self, which may potentially impact upon their research. A constant theme in research methods texts is caution about the potentially skewing influence of bias, of which one element is the personal bias of the researcher (Oakley, 2007). Social Constructionist and CDA approaches would argue that striving to achieve the objectivity called for by such arguments, is unfeasible as one can only experience the world from one standpoint or another, “No human being can step outside of their humanity and view the world from no position at all” (Burr, 2008, p. 152).

Consequently acknowledging the researcher as part of the process, rather than someone standing outside it is a significant consideration (Hammersley *et al*, 2003). In this manner, working reflexively (noting how our ontological and epistemological positioning influences our readings and interpretations) enables the identification of any limitations, bias, or specific interpretations the researcher's position may have brought to the investigation. Feeding this back into the research process, through overt acknowledgement of their existence and influence, enables audiences/readers to 'allow for' these, as they judge or assess the research's findings and recommendations/actions (which are a key point of CDA).

### **3.14 Conclusion**

In wider terms, the limitations of the methodological stance and method discussed here include a key issue – consideration of the extent to which analysing policy documents will enable a comprehensive understanding of how the language used in these contribute to the construction of 'professionalism' within the reform agenda, and the positioning of staff in relation to this. Earlier it was suggested that these texts may have been created with specific functions in mind and that my subsequent 'findings' may potentially be only one of many possible social constructs (views or interpretations). Acknowledging this returns us to some of the complex debates discussed in the critiques of Social Constructionism - if 'everything' is just one of many possible constructs, then how can we use this 'knowledge' to improve situations for those marginalised by the

dominant constructs. Following this line, it could be argued that adopting this methodological stance could limit the ability to fully understand what is 'really' going on and merely offers a range of 'either – or' statements, which could be juggled to avoid concluding a 'concrete answer'. However, I would contend that adopting a methodological stance that comprises a Critical Discourse Analytic approach, within the overarching framework of Social Constructionism, facilitates the opportunity to consider the possibilities for 'doing' professionalism from a number of perspectives. It acknowledges the possibility that individuals have a range of positions available to them, which may be offered, claimed, accepted or resisted at any point and their positioning has the potential to continually change and transform throughout. As Olssen *et al* (2004) suggest, adopting this form of approach advocates a "... commitment to a form of 'permanent criticism'", rooted, they suggest, in Foucault's "... broader programme of freedom of thought. It is the freedom to think differently from what we already know" (p. 39).

## Chapter Four: Findings

Analysing the Strategy and related texts generated a range of findings, including identifying a number of key messages, embedded within and across the texts. A key point to emphasise is these interpretations should be viewed as provisional, tentative, personal readings. That is they are not being argued, or proffered as concrete certainties. This is in accordance with the notion that particular language-use, within discourses, can induce, create and imply certain interpretations, rather than viewing language as having a direct relationship with meaning – discarding the idea that specific words ‘mean’ specific things. Hyatt notes:

The way in which people make sense of the world is through language - it is a discursive process. This perspective argues that language and social reality are related and challenges the argument that language is a neutral reflection of society and social reality. Rather, it argues that language, instead of drawing meanings passively from pre-existing knowledge of the world, plays an active role in classifying the phenomena and experiences through which individuals construct, understand and represent reality (Hyatt, 2005, p.43).

The messages and perceptions that follow, are the interpretations and impressions the language-use in the Strategy, evoked, constructed and implied in my readings, and are not indicative of a direct one-to-one relationship between the words and their meanings. My ontological, epistemological and methodological position invokes an understanding of ‘meaning’ as being socially, historically and contextually constructed, rather than being a direct system of representation. What follows is not to suggest that the Strategy’s ‘words’ are actually saying/meaning this, rather



this is what the language-use, strategies and techniques, evoke in my readings of the text.

#### **4.1 The Texts**

Two key policy/guidance texts form my core research documents:

1) Lifelong Learning UK, (2009), The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012: Revised version 2009/2010, London, Lifelong Learning UK.

2) Lifelong Learning UK, (2009), The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012: A guide for Learning Providers: Revised version 2009/2010, London, Lifelong Learning UK.

These texts are significant as they set out the issues perceived, by government and LLUK, to be causing concern with regard to the work of the FE sector. The second text offers a guide on implementing the recommendations for addressing these concerns, as detailed in the first text. A complementary text to be analysed is a 'promotional' poster (Appendix 3), used by LLUK to disseminate this policy and advertise sources of further information and support for the FE workforce. For ease of reference, the key policy document (1) shall be referred to as: the Strategy; the implementation guide (2) as: the Guide, and the promotional poster (3) as: the Poster.

## 4.2 The Analytical Framework

While CDA benefits from its widespread roots and relations with theory, one result has been the creation of a plethora of approaches or techniques for undertaking a rigorous CDA analysis, leading to criticisms about the difficulty of ascertaining 'how to actually do CDA'. There have been various attempts to formulate a systematic approach to conducting CDA, including offerings from Fairclough, Wodak, van Dijk, Chouliaraki and Fairclough and Gee. While diverse in design, Luke (2002) argues these contributions share a collective approach:

CDA involves a principled and transparent shuttling back and forth between the microanalysis of texts using varied tools of linguistics, semiotic, and literary analysis and the macro analysis of social formations, institutions, and power relations that these texts index and construct (Luke 2002, p. 100).

When assessing which approach would be most suitable for my research, I considered: Fairclough's eight point/stage framework, (Fairclough, 1995, 2001, 2003a); Gee's seven 'tasks' employed in building language-use and four 'tools' employed to explore these tasks (Gee, 2011) and Hyatt's eleven stage framework for analysing texts (Hyatt, 2005; Hyatt 2011, and A.E.R.S., 2008) (Appendix 4). While the variety of approaches potentially offers an option to suit all needs and ontological / epistemological stances, they also serve to compound the complexities faced by a student researcher. Van Dijk echoes these complexities when observing "Critical discourse analysis is far from easy. In my opinion it is by far the toughest challenge in the discipline" (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 253).

The approach I adopted employs the suggestions and techniques established by Dr David Hyatt in his Critical Literacy (Hyatt, 2005) and Critical Policy Discourse Analysis Frame (Hyatt, EdD weekend 15/10/2011). This frame is a suitable vehicle for this study's analysis, as it is "... grounded in a social-constructionist orientation to language, and is underpinned theoretically by insights from Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Literacy" (Hyatt, 2005, p. 43) - two approaches influencing and underpinning my methodological stance. Hyatt's recent developments to this approach, build to offer an "... analytical framework for the analysis of policy articulations by doctoral students" (Hyatt, EdD weekend 15/10/2011), emphasising the suitability of this form of analysis.

This frame also offers a structured, detailed, accessible (useable) configuration of eleven distinct steps for analysing language-use. These analytical steps 'unlock' messages within and behind texts, at the micro level, by deconstructing individual words and phrases, and are then further enhanced by the macro devices Hyatt offers, to add depth and richness to the analysis (for example by also considering Temporal Context, Policy Drivers, Levers, Steering and Trajectories and Warrant) (Hyatt, 2005; 2011). One limitation is undertaking all eleven stages of analysis, and considering the additional macro layers, on multiple texts, produces a sizeable amount of 'data' for a lone student researcher to both handle and do 'justice' to. However Hyatt does support the use of those stages (micro or macro) which are helpful and constructive, but not to be controlled by the framework, by using elements which don't work for or fit with your

specific study, as he notes “... take those aspects of the frame which are useful, but not be constrained by it.” (Hyatt, EdD weekend 15/10/2011).

### **4.3 Analysis**

This approach comprises two component levels, aimed at exploring the text's context and also its deconstruction, and having conducted a preliminary analysis of the Strategy using Hyatt's eleven stages, some analytical aspects of the frame produced more prolific results than others. Consequently, for some elements or stages of analysis, the technique has been applied to the Strategy and either the Guide or the Poster or both, as complementary, related texts. The aim being to consider whether the results from exploring language-use in the Strategy, were echoed in these 'sister' texts.

### **4.4 Contextualisation**

Hyatt (2011) identifies three components to considering the contextualisation of policy, being “... temporal context; policy levers and drivers; and warrant” (Hyatt, EdD weekend 15/10/2011) and examples of the latter two, with regard to the Strategy, were investigated for contextualisation analysis purposes.

#### **4.4.1 Temporal Context**

A policy's temporal context, refers to its context 'at this point' (synchronic context) in relation to its context 'over time' (diachronic relevance) and Hyatt (2011) identifies four layers to this element of analysis. The

*Immediate Socio-Political Context* concerns the policy's environment at the time of its emergence; the *Medium Term Socio-Political Context* concerning factors extending beyond the immediate lifespan of the policy, but which are also provisional enough to not become embedded as significant cultural context, for example the period covered by 'New Labour' rule, during which the Strategy text was published; the *Contemporary socio-political individuals, organisations & structures* which considers those individuals, groups and agents who contribute to, contest or influence policy production; and *Epoch*, influenced by Foucault's conception of how certain 'realities' or 'understandings' will dominate as being 'the truth' at certain periods (episteme) (Foucault, 1972, p. 211). Aspects of the Strategy's temporal context were considered in the Literature Review, when discussing New (Public) Managerialism.

#### **4.4.2 Policy Drivers, Levers, Steering and Trajectories.**

This stage is concerned with exploration of any policy propellants - what drives or steers it, what influences it and the direction in which it travels - specifically the articulation of any proposed policy objective or ambitions.

Examples of this level of driver are found in the Strategy's Introduction:

*The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England* was designed to help shape the future workforce in the sector. Its purpose is to support all employers in the sector in implementing their own workforce plans to ensure the delivery of excellent learning provision (LLUK, 2009, p. 2).

Hyatt (2011) notes the importance of developments in understandings of *how* 'policy' comes into being and what shapes its creation - how rather

than being understood as an artefact, set out and preserved in a text - 'policy' is becoming viewed as a 'process'. A process entailing the construction of 'policy', then the treatment of abstract concepts within 'policy' as though they have a concrete, material existence and the application / execution of these as concepts as though they are concrete entities. This developed understanding of 'policy as process' is highlighted in Taylor's (1997) suggestions:

... rather than maintain the macro/micro dichotomy—or even a macro/meso/micro categorisation—I would want to emphasise the many layered nature of policy making and the importance of exploring the *linkages* between the various levels of the policy process with an emphasis on highlighting power relations. In other words, we need to think about the three aspects included in my title: contexts, texts and consequences (Taylor, 1997, pp. 32 - 33).

As Hyatt notes, “An engagement with drivers and levers is central to understanding the evolution of a policy – how it develops and is interpreted in different contexts through the nuanced interaction of various actors – at different times, at different levels, within local ecologies or contexts...” (Hyatt, EdD weekend 15/10/2011). Consequently an exploration of the Strategy's policy-trajectory, tracing its evolution, was discussed in the Literature Review, in 'The Development of the Workforce Strategy'. This broadly mapped the progression from the national agreement, “Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: A National Agreement. Time for Standards” (ATL *et al*, 2003), which set the scene for subsequent workforce reform developments, through Lord Leitch's 2004 UK skills review, to the 2006 development of a joint Support Staff Working

Group, further paving the way for workforce reform plans. This was later emphasised in 2007 by (then) Schools Minister Jim Knight promoting intentions to improve the status and footing of various school staff support roles. 2007 also witnessed the launch of The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012 (LLUK, 2007), subsequently revised in 2009 and complemented by various 'how-to-guides' at both publication points.

While the scope of this study only allows for brief mapping of the policy's development, it does highlight its complex evolutionary nature. Furthermore being able to contextualise the Strategy's development, within a period of growing governmental concern at a perceived national skill shortage, adds understanding to the consideration and discussion of micro-level analysis findings (deconstruction stage).

#### **4.4.3 Warrant**

Warrant denotes the validation, authorisation, or rational justification, offered for various actions, activities, beliefs or expressions (Hyatt, 2011). Cochran-Smith and Fries (2001), detail three sub-classifications of this form of legitimisation:

... the discourse of both professionalization and deregulation of teacher education revolves around the establishment of three warrants that legitimize a particular set of policy implications and at the same time undermine competing policies: *the evidentiary warrant*, *the political warrant*, and *the accountability warrant*. Taken together, these three warrants are used to add up to "common sense" about what should be

done to improve the quality of the nation's teachers (Cochran-Smith and Fries, 2001, p. 4).

Examples of *Evidentiary Warrant* are perhaps more problematic within the Strategy, as this form of legitimisation is achieved through claims / positions being 'justified' through the inclusion of 'evidence', and supporting evidence for statements made in the Strategy, are limited (to at best signposting 'its 'sister' documents). However, examples of *The Accountability Warrant* and *Political Warrant* are more evident.

Cochran-Smith and Fries, (2001) define Accountability Warrant as being "... a set of "reasonable grounds" for action based on outcomes, results, and outputs" and arguments employed to "... demonstrate that recommended policies are justifiable and justified by the outcomes and results they produce" (p. 7). Hyatt also emphasizes, this "... can be reinforced by discussions of what might happen if the policy is not implemented or of the potential negative outcomes of an alternative policy approach" (Hyatt, EdD weekend 15/10/2011). For example, in the Strategy's Preface, the significance of the impact of (reported) changes, in the environment in which the FE sector is working, is emphasised through the statement that "It is vital for us all in England to ensure that the entire further education workforce is appropriately trained," (LLUK, 2009, p. 1). Deconstructive analysis of the body of the Strategy (later) highlights a number of techniques which evoke implicit messages about the consequences for not following this recommendation. Intertwined with this, Political Warrant, the technique of validating policy as being in the nation



or public's good or interest (Hyatt, 2011) is also exemplified throughout the Strategy. Cochran-Smith and Fries (2001) describe this technique, as being the ways 'authors' "... justify their positions in terms of service to the citizenry" (p. 10), Strategy examples of which include:

The further education sector needs to be able to respond to the many economic and social challenges that this country faces (LLUK, 2009, p. 3).

The promotion of equality and diversity results in social and economic benefits (LLUK, 2009, p. 7).

The sector fulfils a vital role in educating young people and providing skills development for young people and adults (LLUK, 2009, p. 12).

#### **4.5 Deconstruction**

Hyatt (2011) emphasises the value of deconstructing policy, as part of a comprehensive analysis - further supporting the suitability of this approach as he describes a systemic-functional understanding of language; that it offers users a range of language (item) choices, at specific times and contexts, to create specific meaning, at a specific point, and that this notion of context is imperative to understanding (and analysing) language-in-use.

Linked to the centrally significant concept of context, and echoing earlier discussions of Social Constructionism and the process of 'naturalisation' (regarding notions of hegemony), are ideas about the constructive nature of language use. The proposition being certain language use, through a

process of constructions, customs and actions, becomes embedded within society, creating a perception of a situation, or individuals which are taken as the 'norm', as 'reality'. This 'view' becomes naturalised as 'the way things are', facilitating a situation where individuals 'permit' themselves to be subject to oppressive or controlling practices, or at least to practices which may not be beneficial to them, because the naturalisation process renders the situation as being beyond question.

Gee (2011) argues that language and other social practices, such as teaching English in college, mentoring a student or attending a college committee meeting, are employed together to create meaning, specific to the cultural and historical context within which they are operating, as with the 'naturalisation' process. Gee describes social practices as "... a socially recognized and institutionally or culturally supported endeavour that usually involves sequencing or combining actions in certain specified ways" (Gee, 2011, p.17). If meaning is socially created, it can also be disassembled and then re-formed to aid understanding. It is as part of this deconstruction process that Hyatt (2011) suggests a range of additional analytical processes.

#### **4.6 Time - Tense and Aspect Use In The Strategy**

Understanding tense as, "... a form taken by a verb to indicate the time (also continuance or completeness) of the action etc."(Thompson, 1996, p. 1436) and aspect as, "... a verbal category for form expressing inception, duration or completion" (Thompson, 1996, p. 73) highlights how this

element of language-use can be employed to evoke certain interpretations of occurrences. The present simple tense enables an occurrence to be portrayed as being factual, a current reality. The past simple tense positions this occurrence as being an event that happened, previously, but which was 'complete' in that it no longer holds bearing or significance for current or future events. To indicate a past event as a 'completed' action, but which has a 'continuance or duration' because it still has a bearing on or holds significance now, or for future events, the present perfect or future perfect tenses can be employed. The potential to use tense and aspect, as not only indicators of time, but also in the construction of an occurrence as actual, pertinent or important, is observed by Hyatt, "... tense and aspect are not merely concerned with the time frame of an action or process but also impact clearly on the representation of that action or process as true, relevant or significant" (Hyatt, 2005, p. 48).

Various forms of tense are employed throughout the Strategy with a significantly powerful example being where the present perfect tense is used to signify an action that happened previously, but which still has significance in the present. This linking of past, present and potentially future events adds weight to their significance while simultaneously constructing them as factual or reality – it adds gravitas or substance to the author/s' arguments or claims:

The vision and Strategy have been developed through consultation within the sector, facilitated by Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK, 2009, p. 5).

Hyatt suggests switching present perfect to past simple to see the semantic effects of tense use (Hyatt, 2005, p. 48). The example above would become, 'The vision and Strategy were developed through consultation...' which, although subtle in its difference, does give a stronger impression of the Strategy's development being an action that is closed, with no relevance now. Whereas the author/s' use of tense portrays something factual, that occurred previously but which still has implications for, or links with, current activities, plans and actions.

#### **4.7 Metaphor Use In The Strategy**

Metaphors are a method of using a representation, narrative or description of a concrete thing to characterise something less concrete or an ethereal quality or idea, evaluating two apparently dissimilar things to show one significant similarity, e.g. her home was a prison. Hyatt (2005) argues metaphors fulfil a significant role in individuals' perception of their environment, how they communicate this to others and how they position others in relation to this. He notes "... the purpose of metaphor is functional in that it serves to construe a differently foregrounded meaning than its alternatives" (Hyatt, 2005, p. 50). Halliday (2005) suggests that in addition to lexical formation (which essentially takes the form "The [thing A] is a [thing B]") metaphors can also be grammatical, "... clauses in which one type of process is represented in the grammar of another" (p. 282). One example of grammatical metaphor, prevalent throughout the Strategy, is nominalisation, the practice of turning verbs into nouns (Hyatt, 2005). For example instead of using the verb *to implement*, the related noun

'implementation' is used instead. Hyatt suggests nominalisation can make texts "... appear more prestigious, academic, and serious. It can construct an argument as significant and well thought through" (Hyatt, 2005, p. 50). Examples of nominalisation have been underlined in these Strategy excerpts:

The promotion of equality and diversity results in social and economic benefits and is a legal requirement (LLUK, 2009, p. 7).

*Implementing the Workforce Strategy: An Overview of National Partner Contributions* will be a working document to support national partners in the co-ordination, management and design of projects and activities that support the achievement of the Strategy and vision (LLUK, 2009, p. 15).

In this stage of analysis, I found nominalisation to be a powerful language-in-use technique, as structuring expressions in this way, becomes common place to the point they go unquestioned, with examples in ten of the Strategy's fourteen pages, with six pages featuring multiple examples. At times this form of usage was so ingrained and taken for granted it was difficult to separate out examples of its occurrence.

#### **4.8 Presupposition / Implication Evident In The Strategy**

Building on how tense usage can indicate the relevance of a statement, and the inclusion of metaphor can add weight to an argument, other techniques can indicate the author/s' underlying presuppositions about their text or speech subject. These can evoke the interpretation that the

author/s' portrayal is 'factual', rather than one perception, possibility or explanation. Techniques indicative of the author/s' presuppositions or stance toward the subject, include their use of: factive verbs, adjectives and adverbs; change of state verbs; negative questions and tags; invalid causal links and rhetorical questions (Hyatt, 2005, pp. 50-51).

The Strategy includes examples of use of two of these techniques; change of state verbs and factive verbs. Hyatt notes factive verbs, "... presuppose their grammatical complements" and "... therefore represent them as facts" (Hyatt, 2005, p. 50). For example:

It was felt that these new themes would emphasise some important elements of the Strategy that were previously inferred within other themes (LLUK, 2009, p. 13).

This statement *presupposes* that the Strategy's important elements *were* previously only inferred, it offers the reader no evidence to support the assertion that this *was* the case. The perception is constructed and offered here as reality.

Change of state verbs are used more prolifically throughout the Strategy, whereby these presume the "... factuality of a previous state" (Hyatt, 2005, p. 50), that the state of being has changed or was different at a prior point.

Here for example:

The world we are operating in has changed dramatically over the last six months... (LLUK, 2009, p. 1),

the author/s presupposes that the 'world's state of being' has changed from a previous position.

We are also working with national partners to develop further accessible resources to use for their own workforce planning and development and to help make links with the national improvement agenda for the sector (LLUK, 2009, p.1).

This presupposes that accessible resources and the workforce both need developing, (either because resources don't currently exist or are not accessible and because the workforce is not currently of a suitable standard), and that the sector needs to be improved. Similarly the call to

Develop a range of partnerships to stimulate and respond to demands for learning (LLUK, 2009, p.5),

presupposes there is not an existing (or sufficiently suitable) range of partnerships that the FE sector is currently involved in.

The profuse use of change of state verbs is another technique adding weight and significance to the Strategy's claims or arguments, by constructing them and portraying them as factual reality, rather than as one of a number of interpretations.

#### **4.9 Medium**

Hyatt highlights how a type of interdiscursivity (the aspect of a discourse that relates it to other discourses), which he terms 'conversationalizing',

serves to further influence the reader to accept the text's content as true.

He notes:

This 'masquerade' (Hyatt 1994) of friendship, a shared communication with a trusted confidant, an individual projected as someone you can believe in, who wouldn't lie to you, who has your best interests at heart, can predispose the text receiver to believe what the text producer is communicating (Hyatt, 2005, p. 50).

The Strategy's Preface launches the text, employing a conversationalizing tone which replicates that of interactions between friends. This use of medium conveys a sense of friends (the author/s) communicating their concern over certain issues, while simultaneously reassuring other friends (the readers) that they have the solutions to these issues and that if these are adopted and acted upon, the status-quo will be restored. This sets the scene for the text that follows, positioning the Strategy's concerns, recommendations and solutions as factual and necessary.

I am delighted to introduce the revised version of the first *Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012*, and I would like to thank the many people who have contributed to this document (LLUK, 2009, p.1).

The development of the first Strategy was an ambitious aim for all of us working in the sector (LLUK, 2009, p.1).

The world we are operating in has changed dramatically over the last six months and, more than ever, providers need to understand the changing needs of learners and their employers (LLUK, 2009, p.1).



I would like to congratulate you for all your work in the last year and hope that you will continue to work with us to achieve our vision for the further education workforce (LLUK, 2009, p.1).

These examples convey the perception of a friend-like relationship between author and reader, which reads as quite personalised, intimate and two-way referring to I, we, us, rather than employing a neutralised, impersonal, directive approach.

Hyatt (2005) describes interdiscursivity being exemplified in the way the higher education discourse has been infiltrated by a business discourse. This form of interdiscursive penetration is also evident throughout the Strategy, in the author/s' use of terms, which evoke a sense of being more oriented toward a 'marketization discourse', than an educational one. This suggestion mirrors Nixon's arguments (cited earlier) that elements of the NPM agenda are aimed at promoting market oriented practices and a focus on public accountability, as a means of securing public sector reform (Nixon, 2001, 2003, and Nixon *et al*, 1997, 2001). Examples of this interdiscursivity are evidenced in the Strategy's assertion of the need for:

... a workforce that reflects the diversity of the sector's customer base (LLUK, 2009, p. 5).

or its priority to:

... help the sector to be more accountable to government, community and learners; (LLUK, 2009, p. 10).

#### **4.10 Audience**

Augmenting the 'portrayal' of the relationship between author and reader, 'created' through this conversationalizing medium, Hyatt emphasises the need for analyses to further consider the text's supposed audience, in terms of, "... how they are projected in terms of social distance – relationship to and familiarity with the text producer – and status" (Hyatt, 2005, p. 52). The precise nature or composition of their audience is an unknown factor for authors, however they will have a (potentially idealised) perception of them and Hyatt notes, "In this idealisation and projection, clues can be found as to the ideological presuppositions of the text producers" (Hyatt, 2005, p. 52).

Similar to the use of medium, the Preface opens with a sense of the author 'speaking' to the audience, as though they are well known to each other and share and agree upon the expressions, concerns and solutions offered throughout the Strategy. An implicit assumption is being made, that 'we' (author and reader) are being positioned as being in agreement about these matters.

Reading on from the Preface the tone shifts from conversational to being more a series of statements (i.e. about the state of the FE sector). Combining these observations, with suggestions to address the concerns raised, evokes a reading of the author/s offering a 'factual commentary', positioning the audience as 'allied recipients' of these 'facts'. For example, the assertion that:

The further education sector needs to be able to respond ...  
(LLUK, 2009, p. 3).

makes no direct reference to the author/s as perceiving the audience in a certain form, but potentially does indicate the author/s' pre-supposition that the audience will be allied with them, in accepting this statement as reality.

Positioning the audience as allied to the author/s, while also being separate from a 'third party' group, is further achieved by the text's pronoun use. Analysis highlighted frequent use of the terms 'they' and 'their', creating a sense of the author/s referring to a 'third party', one other than either the audience or author/s. This has the effect of positioning/perceiving of the audience as being aligned with the author/s' propositions, arguments and recommendations. The effect positions the 'third party' as marginalised from the author/s and audience, who are positioned as having already commenced on professionalization activities.

Sector employers need to anticipate and meet the workforce requirements to satisfy changing learner needs and social, economic and technological changes at both national and local level (LLUK, 2009, pp.12-13).

Here 'sector employers' – a group which arguably could include either members of the audience or the author/s – are positioned as needing to undertake a specific action, with an implicit assumption that this need is not currently being met. The positioning of this group as a 'third party', who have not yet acted to 'satisfy changing learner needs' or 'social, economic

and technological changes', is compounded by the statements following on from this one:

They need to work closely with industry and learners to plan and deliver courses that meet the identified skills needs (LLUK, 2009, pp.12-13).

They need to develop the capacity of the workforce to deliver the new 14 to 19 curricula to increasing numbers of learners (LLUK, 2009, pp.12-13).

The use of 'they' serves to further portray the group as being othered, or marginalised, by their 'failure' to have acted upon the need to anticipate and meet changing requirements, from the implied oppositional group - the 'us' to the Sector Employers 'them' - being the author/s and reader/s, positioned as having acted (all be it that this is achieved by implicit default).

#### **4.11 Age, class, disability, gender, race/ethnicity, and sexuality issues**

Consideration of the portrayal of, or reference to, individual characteristics such as age, highlights further attempts to validate the contentions of those in power, through the depiction of others as "... less socially valued, as a result of these issues" (Hyatt, 2005, p. 52). Creating a perception that stereotyped or derogatory portrayals of individuals are "... a 'normal', naturalised and commonly-shared viewpoint" (Hyatt, 2005, p. 52), serves to strengthen attempts to validate arguments as being 'factual'.

The Strategy does feature direct references to age, generally as a means of identifying differentiated provision offered by the FE sector rather than to position 'typecast portrayals' of individuals as 'truthful' for the purposes of the author/s' 'agenda'. For example:

The sector fulfils a vital role in educating young people ... (LLUK, 2009, p. 12).

... the learning requirements of the increasing numbers of 16 to 19 year olds (LLUK, 2009, p. 6).

The sector needs to provide adult learners with ... (LLUK, 2009, p. 4).

It is arguable that as a policy designed to improve the FE sector workforce (and its provision) the Strategy would aim to at least treat these issues with neutrality, and ideally overtly address inequality and discrimination. Indeed the Strategy features priorities for policy-making, planning and training, informed by the belief that "The promotion of equality and diversity results in social and economic benefits ..." (LLUK, 2009, p. 7), suggesting it seeks to ensure individuals are not stereotyped, discriminated against or marginalised, on the basis of these characteristics.

However there are also indirect 'references' to individual characteristics, more indicative of implicit assumptions or beliefs, underpinning the claims made publically within the text. An example, more subtle or questionable

in its veiled treatment / depiction and subsequent positioning of people, in relation to personal characteristics, can be found in the image on page ten. If the Strategy's author/s wishes to claim the promotion of diversity and eradication of inequality, why feature an image which perpetuates the (stereotypical) portrayal of caring / nursing / nurturing roles being performed by *women*. Perhaps the inclusion of this image does more to indicate the pre-suppositions being made, about 'who is suitable for which role', than the body of text does.

#### **4.12 Reference The Strategy Makes To Other Texts, Genres, Discourses and Individuals**

To add further weight to the significance of their claims and arguments, texts will reference other texts, genres, discourses and individuals, to legitimise their expressions and positioning. Analysis of the use of medium identified the concepts of conversationalising and interdiscursivity: the aspects of a discourse that relates it to other discourses, as Hyatt puts it, "... the diverse ways in which genres and discourses interpenetrate each other" (Hyatt, 2005, p. 53). In addition to this, intertextuality finds texts directly or indirectly using or signposting parts of other texts, or adopting (elements of) other pieces' style. Similarly these techniques are used to support, legitimise or reinforce the author/s' position.

The Strategy does make direct reference to its own previous incarnation, published in 2007 and to its current sister documents, the Guide, a related 'toolkit', a discussion document used with national partners and an

evaluation of the first year of the Strategy (LLUK, 2009, p.p. 1 & 15). It also refers to related texts, “*Pursuing Excellence*, the National Improvement Strategy for the sector...” (LLUK, 2009, p. 3) and “... the *Annual Workforce Diversity Profile 2008*” (LLUK, 2009, p. 14). While not directly quoting from these, signposting them serves to support the assertion that a ‘raft’ of (revised) policy is ‘needed’ to highlight and subsequently secure change – it adds weight and legitimacy to its arguments about the need for change.

In terms of evidence or other texts being employed to substantiate the Strategy’s arguments, the choice used is limited to counterpart texts. The British Educational Research Association highlights the role of research to evidence-based policy (making) and policy context, including the contribution of what they describe as, “... Blunkett’s (2000) now notorious appeal to research to ‘determine what works’” (Saunders, 2009, p. 2). Then Secretary of State for Education and Employment, Blunkett argued, “Social science research evidence is central to development and evaluation of policy ...” (Blunkett, 2000, p. 21). Given the prominence and significance of this assertion, it’s surprising that the supporting, legitimising ‘evidence’ (e.g. texts) offered here is of a similar genre (for example other policy documents or texts relating to or stemming from the Strategy itself), rather than the inclusion of any research oriented evidence. This in turn further supports earlier assertions that examples of *evidentiary warrant* are, at best, restricted.

#### **4.13 Pronoun Use In The Strategy and The Guide**

The manner in which author/s employ pronoun use can fulfil a number of functions, serving to position others as included in a common understanding or approach, or to locate them outside this commonality. Hyatt states the use can highlight, "... how the reader and other participants are positioned as allies or in-group members with the author, thus assuming shared knowledge, beliefs and values, or how readers and other participants are marginalised as 'outsiders' with different beliefs and agendas" (Hyatt, 2005, p. 47). Certain pronouns (we, us, our) are used as means of including or aligning others, while others can be used to exclude them (them, they, their, she, he, your, you, it). However the distinction is not always a simple case of either/or. Laugharne and Baird (2009) noted their "... analysis showed 'we' and 'they' to be a more complex relationship than one of opposition. So, in these documents, 'we' may not always indicate inclusivity and 'they' may not be indicative of exclusivity" (p. 227).

Analysis of pronoun use in the Strategy produced extensive data, leading me to further analyse this text and also use of this technique in the Guide. This additional analysis enabled consideration of whether the Strategy as a policy document introducing various recommendations for improvement, positioned the audience differently or similarly, compared to the Guide, designed as a supporting text which details how to implement these recommendations.



#### **4.13.1 *Inclusive Pronoun Use***

Both texts employ inclusive pronoun use to position readers and other participants mentioned in the texts, as collaborators in the whole agenda. This use of language creates a sense of 'all being in this together', as though the text's readers, authors, developers and implementers are all working toward a common shared goal, the professionalization (or improvement) of the FE sector workforce. Hyatt (2005) also suggests this is indicative of an implicit assumption that the group shares knowledge, beliefs and values. Moreover there is an assumption the text's position is the (only) 'truth' or way of understanding the world; that issues and proposed solutions detailed within the text, are accurate and the only / right means of addressing these issues and finally that doing so through the professionalization of the FE workforce is a socially worthwhile exercise. This assumption manifests in the author/s employing various validation and legitimisation techniques, for their arguments – for example the pre-suppositions underlying their statements, or the use of tense and aspect.

The inclusive use of pronouns (we, us, our), in both the Strategy and the Guide, can be grouped into a number of approaches to their use.

##### **4.13.1i *We, Us, Our - As Being All Inclusive***

Sinclair (1990) suggests 'we' can be used to denote a group which includes yourself, your audience and also others who may or may not be present at the time (p. 30). In Strategy and the Guide this 'we' could

include the author/s, current and subsequent readers, National Partners and other Stakeholders. Acknowledging Hyatt's (2005) suggestion, this use creates a sense of inclusivity - that all these parties have a role and an interest in the activities being spoken of.

The Strategy and Guide include examples where 'we' and 'us' are used to bring (potentially) all participants (author/s, readers, National Partners, Stakeholders etc.) into the subject being referred to:

The world we are operating in has changed dramatically over the last six months... (LLUK, 2009, p. 1).

... an ambitious aim for all of us working in the sector (LLUK, 2009, p. 1) and (LLUK, 2009a, p.1).

This inclusive language-use creates a sense of alignment, togetherness and commonality, by positioning the 'group' as sharing a certain perception, interpretation or belief (i.e. that the world in which FE works is changing and the aim of developing the Strategy as being ambitious).

However, the Strategy and the Guide also feature examples, where the 'inclusivity' of the group is more questionable, as Laugharne and Baird (2009) highlight, "... 'we' may not always indicate inclusivity" (p. 227) as follows.

#### **4.13.1ii *We, Us, Our - As Being Inclusive of an Ambiguous Grouping***

Both texts also feature examples where those referenced by the terms, potentially comprise an ambiguous grouping:

We need a workforce who can embrace change and respond positively to the opportunities and challenges it brings (LLUK, 2009, p. 1).

Recruiting the people we need (LLUK, 2009, p. 9 & p. 12), (LLUK, 2009a, p. 3).

... we need truly world-class education... (LLUK, 2009a, p. 9).

In these examples, 'we' could arguably be all inclusive, but the clause topics are more negative than in the all-inclusive examples. The use of 'we need' implies that the 'subject' that follows is not currently adequate, or in place. There is an implicit suggestion that the current workforce does not embrace change, or the people currently employed are 'different' to the ones it is hoped to recruit, or that current education provision is not world-class. This suggests the 'we' (holding these perceptions) may include the author/s, government, employers or industry, but not necessarily those who are already members of the 'inadequate' workforce, providing sub-standard education – as they may perceive the situation differently. The need for a certain type of workforce, recruitment of staff, or world-class education could be linked to a wider societal need/benefit, but alternatively, they could as equally be linked to the aims of a smaller group (for example The Department for Education). Linking this ambiguous 'we' with issues and solutions, enables the arguments to be (positively) positioned as being

about the good of society – whereas they may just be a set of politically held beliefs (there being a skills shortage) and aims (of addressing them via FE). Laugharne and Baird (2009) found, “... the use of ‘we’ and ‘our’ is used for variously the government, the minister and the nation“(p. 233). Implications of this ambiguous use are considered in the discussion and conclusion chapters.

#### **4.13.2 Exclusive Pronoun Use**

Both texts also feature examples of pronouns being used in an exclusive manner which Hyatt suggests can marginalise or ‘other’ participants and readers, as “... ‘outsiders’ with different beliefs and agendas” (Hyatt, 2005, p. 47).

Table 1 (Appendix 5) summarises the findings of how language-use within these two texts is grouped into various approaches to exclusive pronoun use (together with including references to an example of each).

##### **4.13.2i It**

The use of ‘it’ essentially takes two forms, where the term is employed to refer to or indicate a subject; or to comment on a happening, experience or situation and to suggest something or recommend a course of action, as being necessary (Sinclair, 1990, p. 29, p. 411, p. 413, p. 414). The Strategy and the Guide both predominantly use ‘it’ to indicate a subject (as underlined in the following examples), with ‘it’ meaning the Strategy or Guide:

Its purpose is to support all employers... (LLUK, 2009, p. 3).

... this Guide *for Learning Providers* will be useful for you and your colleagues and that you will use it... (LLUK, 2009a, p. 1).

Or 'it' as the Strategy's underpinning vision:

... a shared vision for the workforce and a Strategy to achieve it (LLUK, 2009, p. 6).

Or as indicating the FE Sector, or Workforce:

The workforce needs to reflect and understand the diversity of its learner base and the local communities it serves so that it provides an inclusive and responsive approach to meet needs more effectively (LLUK, 2009, p. 6).

... the sector improve its efficiency and its support structures" (LLUK, 2009a, p. 5).

This use, positions the subject/object as a 'third party', creating a perception of something concrete or tangible, simultaneously creating a (subconscious) expectation of this 'state of being' provoking others to *react* to it. At its simplest the reaction could just be acknowledgment of the subject's 'existence', which could trigger subsequent reactions. Acknowledgement could lead to acceptance or rejection, leading to action or reaction in relation to this acceptance/rejection, ultimately provoking a concrete 'response'. Positioning subjects in a way, so that they can provoke actions or reactions, adds weight to interpreting the subjects as fact or reality.

This approach links to the texts' other use of 'it', combining a comment, about a situation or state of being and a recommended course of action, again creating a perception of the situation and recommended action as being reality:

It is vital for us all in England to ensure that the entire further education workforce is appropriately trained (LLUK, 2009, p. 1).

The Strategy covers the whole workforce of the sector. As such it is applicable to all employees in: further education colleges • sixth form colleges • specialist colleges • publicly funded work based learning providers • local authority or voluntary and community sector learning providers (also known as adult and community learning providers) • offender learning providers. (LLUK, 2009a, p. 2).

Deconstructing an 'it' statement may enable a deeper exploration of the implications of the use of 'it':

As the sector faces a changing environment, it is vital that the skills and knowledge of the workforce remain comprehensive, relevant and current and that staff are confident in the use of digital technology (LLUK, 2009, p. 7).

Here the author/s constructs a sentence which *comments on something*: the changing environment in which the FE sector is working, then *recommends a necessary course of action*: being that staff skills stay appropriate, up to date and that they include capabilities in working with digital technology. Hyatt (2005) though argues pronoun use can also be employed to position reader/s and other participants as, "... marginalised

as ‘outsiders’” (p. 47). This positions the statement as achieving a more implicit manoeuvre, than just linking a situation to a course of action.

Re-reading the sentence, with Hyatt’s assertions in mind, offers a different possibility: *The author/s perceives there to be a certain state of affairs*, that the FE Sector needs improving in order to meet the challenges it does/will face; *and in order to ‘address’ this perceived issue*, locating the problem somewhere, or with someone, offers the possibility for concurrently locating the responsibility for, and solution to, it too. In this case the author/s locates the issue in the sector staff’s skill base’ stating a belief that it is ‘... vital that the skills and knowledge of the workforce remain comprehensive, relevant and current’, locates the issue with the sector workforce, as the skills base is ‘theirs’ and arguably their responsibility, if it is (or remains) deficient.

#### **4.13.2ii *Exclusive or Inclusive – Pronouns Appearing As One Use, But May Be Read As The Other***

Analysis should consider how texts’ participants are positioned by language-use and pronoun use is significant, in terms of the effect it produces for these parties (Hyatt, 2005). Mirroring Laugharne and Baird’s (2009) observations of the use of ‘it’ as not being clearly delineated between inclusive and exclusive use, my reading suggests there is a kind of reversing of the inclusivity / exclusivity effects for some pronoun use. In some examples, inclusive terms subtly re-position and marginalise some participants, because they haven’t started making the changes called for

in the Strategy. These groups are positioned as lagging behind in terms of professionalization - so the inclusive pronoun use may be aimed more at cajoling them into action. The Strategy includes examples where 'we' may appear to be used in one way, but when considered in its wider context, may be acting as another:

Together, we have all begun to address the priorities highlighted by this Strategy (LLUK, 2009, p. 14).

On first reading, this 'we' use aligns the reader/s and other participants with the author/s suggesting that all are contributing to a shared response (by beginning to address priorities highlighted in the Strategy). However, considering the use of 'we', by setting it in the context of the statement immediately preceding it:

In the last year, stakeholders have overwhelmingly shown their support for the Strategy through developing and implementing plans and undertaking projects that move towards the vision of excellence in the workforce (LLUK, 2009, p. 14).

It could also be seen as an example of a marginalising use. If 'we' is read as referring back to those parties named in the preceding sentence, (The Stakeholders) it could be these parties who are being aligned with the author/s. In which case this use serves to exclude those who are not either an author or Stakeholder, positioning them as being outside the work already undertaken.



#### 4.14 Activisation / Passivisation In The Strategy

Considering the active or passive composition of text statements reveals attempts to explicitly or implicitly omit or conceal agency, to obscure the performer of an action. This can methodically accentuate or subdue 'those' being positioned as being accountable for actions, as Hyatt suggests, "The manipulation of agency transparency serves to construct a world of various responsibilities, and power" (Hyatt, 2005, p. 48). Again this gives the use of certain grammatical structures a sense of their being incontestable and all-encompassing, of positioning them as 'reality'. Hyatt also cautions that this is not to assume transforming constructions through activisation or passivisation, is a manoeuvre that would go unnoticed, or that the 'new' meaning would be consumed unquestionably by reader/s, "... the construction is effected through a layering of strata of representations and the claim for relevance of this aspect of the Frame is as one of these myriad strata" (Hyatt, 2005, p. 48).

Forms of agency in the Strategy could be grouped into three main types, one of which comprises statements where an agent is '*named*' and their *role as agent is clear*. This group is sub-divided, to include named agents directly '*involved in or comprising*' the FE Sector: including Employers; Employers Plus Others; Employers and Stakeholders; The FE Sector; FE Sector Plus Others; FE Sector and LLUK.

Employers have the primary role in recruiting staff (LLUK, 2009, p. 12).

Then there are named agents '*connected to or working with*' the FE Sector: including IFL – (Institute for Learning); LSIS (Learning and Skills Improvement Service); LLUK (Lifelong Learning UK); LLUK Plus Others - LLUK and Information Authority; National Partners (Composition defined at LLUK, 2009, p. 1); Stakeholders (Composition defined at LLUK, 2009, p. 6):

Lifelong Learning UK is analysing and interpreting data, policy and market information... (LLUK, 2009, p. 10).

There are also references to two potentially '*broader groups*' named as agents, being: Everyone and Government:

Everyone affects, and is affected by, the Strategy (LLUK, 2009, p. 9).

The Strategy is also 'named' as the agent, although it's questionable the extent to which a text could be argued as the performer of an action; maybe this is a half-way position where the agent is one step removed (e.g. author/s), but also echoing the suggestion in the analysis of pronouns, where the use of the impersonal 'it' can create a perception of a subject as being 'real', and therefore potentially also capable of provoking others to act, or being responsible for actions:

The Strategy needs to build on the existing strengths of the workforce, (LLUK, 2009, p. 9).

The second form of agency use comprises statements where an agent is 'included', but where their *role as agent may be more ambiguous, or obscure*, creating a position where their responsibility is more implied than overtly stated.

Similarly these can be sub-divided into those directly '*involved in or comprising*' the FE Sector:

They need to develop the capacity of the workforce, (LLUK, 2009, p. 13).

This possibly refers to sector employers, who were named two sentences previously, but this is not explicit in this statement.

Again there are those '*connected to or working with*' the FE Sector: including IFL and Somebody Else; LLUK Plus Others; LLUK and Everyone; Partners (presumably the National Partners):

The success of the Institute for Learning, the professional body for teachers and trainers across the sector, shows a real enthusiasm for raising the professionalism and standing of the practitioner workforce (LLUK, 2009, p. 14).

This reads as the IFL as an agent 'doing' the action of *being successful*. However with regard to the actions of *showing enthusiasm, or raising the professionalism* and standing, is there an implied responsibility (of agency), whereby the IFL is conferred with the 'doing' of these also,

although other participants could equally be involved in these 'actions', who are more obscured here.

There are also references to potentially '*broader groups*' being: Individuals; Individuals and Somebody Else; Professionals and We:

The individuals who are recruited need to be professionally qualified (LLUK, 2009, p. 12).

Here, the 'individuals' are positioned as 'responsible' for *being professionally* qualified, but there is also an action of *recruiting* referred to, which would arguably necessitate the involvement of another party to do the actual recruiting.

Finally, statements also take the form, predominantly used in the Strategy, of *not* actively '*naming*' an agent, of not implicitly or explicitly 'assigning' responsibility for action:

Such intelligence enables the identification of necessary actions and provides evidence to justify targeted interventions to promote diversity within the workforce (LLUK, 2009, p. 10).

A key part of the vision is to build a fully professionalised workforce and ensure that professional behaviours are evident across the workforce (LLUK, 2009, p. 12).

The actions referred to here are, arguably, (morally) admirable aspirations for the FE Sector – to ultimately secure a diverse and professionalised workforce. However, who actually has or had responsibility for undertaking

the actions of identifying necessary actions; providing evidence; justifying and targeting interventions; promoting diversity; building a fully professionalised workforce and ensuring that professional behaviours are being evidenced? Furthermore, who *defines* diversity and professional behaviours? It is elements such as these that example the ambiguity of agency in the Strategy.

#### **4.15 The Use Of Adjectives, Adverbs, Nouns, Verbal Processes – Evaluation and Semantic Prosody In The Strategy and The Guide**

The creation of specific portrayals of occurrences and individuals can be further controlled via the use of descriptors or names which are more weighted, striking or typecasting, than other available choices. Terms can be employed to convey positive or negative connotations, or to position assertions as 'factual', or to exaggerate or abridge the extent of a situation or occurrence. This stage of analysis can also highlight the author/s' stance with regard to what they are 'speaking of'. Hyatt (2005) identifies two forms of evaluation which can be revealed here, whereby a particular term explicitly illustrates the author/s' standpoint, for example if they were to describe the Strategy as horrendous or exceptional. The author/s' views can also be revealed through a less obvious form of evaluation, whereby seemingly impartial terms are employed, but which have the ability to evoke certain responses in readers who share these views. These terms don't explicitly make an evaluation of their 'subject' rather they provoke one within an audience who is attitudinally aligned with the author/s. The first of these evaluation forms is 'inscribed' and the latter 'evoked' and

Hyatt notes their potential as, “Such mechanisms can be seen as powerful devices in a hegemonic view of language construction in the role they play in projecting a notion of 'common sense' (Hyatt, 2005, p. 49).

Analysis of these terms within the Strategy and the Guide, revealed various usages which are grouped and discussed below and the full findings are included in Table 2, Appendix 6.

#### **4.15.1 Terms Relating To My Research Focus**

The Strategy and the Guide include numerous examples of the use of lexical items which link directly to my research focus and research questions, such as the notion of and term ‘professional’ and various versions of this (e.g. professionals, professionalism, professionalise, professionally):

To have a workforce of professionals who drive forward their own levels of expertise (LLUK, 2009, p. 5).

The sector workforce includes teachers, trainers and other professionals; (LLUK, 2009a, p. 9).

The Strategy also refers to staff being recruited into the FE Sector as ‘entrants’:

The sector needs to attract new entrants (LLUK, 2009, p. 6).

Which is an interesting reference given that entrant is defined as, “A person who enters (esp. an examination, profession etc)” (Thompson,

1996, p. 451), and offers an example of reinforcing messages about the need for a 'professional' workforce, without stating this overtly.

#### **4.15.2 Terms That Example Overgeneralisation**

Both texts include examples of terms which overgeneralise the situation, of which they 'speak':

The development of the first Strategy was an ambitious aim for all of us working in the sector (LLUK, 2009, p. 1).

... and a system that works with employers and communities to shape all our lives for the better (LLUK, 2009a, p. 9).

Practically it is impossible to be accurate in making the assertion that the aim was ambitious for *everyone* working in the sector, or that a system will shape *everyone's* life for the better, but confidently stating it was or it will, adds weight to the impression of significance given by these utterances.

#### **4.15.3 Terms Oriented to The New Public Management Agenda**

This stage of analysis also highlighted the use of terms, which while not either loaded adjectives or overgeneralisations, did resonate with elements of discussions raised when reviewing the literature. Certain phraseology choices evoked a sense of their being oriented toward a 'marketization discourse', echoing Nixon's assertions about The NPM agenda (Nixon, 2001, 2003, and Nixon *et al*, 1997, 2001). He argues that NPM elements aimed at promoting market oriented practices, employed as a means of securing public sector reform, serve to marginalise

professionals, while concurrently intensifying their public accountability. Evoked evaluation finds 'neutral' terms stimulating certain attitudinal responses within audiences and the terms within this group evoked certain responses, which seemed significant:

... help the sector to be more accountable to government, community and learners; (LLUK, 2009, p. 10).

A Framework for Accountability, setting out the sector's responsibilities; (LLUK, 2009a, p. 10).

These examples work by raising the matter of accountability, thus evoking a sense of market oriented drivers and agendas working within the FE sector. They evoke a sense of 'the student' (and others such as government and community) as being positioned such that, FE sector professionals have an 'obligation' to account for their practice, to them. This is significant as a means of further reinforcing the perception of the re-positioning of professionals, students and other stakeholders within the FE arena.

#### **4.15.4 Terms That Example Inscribed Evaluation**

The Strategy and Guide both feature terms linked to the notion of inscribed evaluation. Their use seemed to have necessitated a form of value judgement being made and examples in this group included terms such as Accessible; Better; Continuously Improves; Excellent; Expert/ise; Outstanding; Primary Role/Aim; Unsatisfactory and Vital. All these terms specifically position the author/s in relation to the subject to which they refer and signpost their attitudinal judgement regarding this. This is highlighted in the Strategy statement:



To have a workforce that is excellent at designing, delivering and supporting learning, (LLUK, 2009, p. 5).

Excellent is a subjective measure of something being of a superior standard or quality, which necessitates 'someone' assigning a set of criteria for assessing whether the level of 'excellent' has been achieved. Furthermore, the section including this statement is titled 'The Visions', and opening the statement with 'to have' suggests the author/s sees these activities or situations, as representing a *future position* (not yet achieved). These two elements then combine to convey the message that the author/s perceives that only excellent design, delivery and support (with regard to learning) is acceptable (there is no mention of alternative levels) and that the current position is not one of excellent delivery, design or support. Other examples include:

Professionals need to continually reflect on and develop their skills and expertise towards excellence (LLUK, 2009, p.7).

*Pursuing Excellence*, the National Improvement Strategy for the sector developed by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, sets out in Aim 3 that: "The further education system continuously improves so that colleges and providers aspire to and achieve excellence, and no provision is unsatisfactory" (LLUK, 2009, p.3).

#### **4.15.5 Examples Of Semantic Prosody and Lexical Cohesion**

Lexical cohesion, the manner in which language-in-use techniques create a sense of unity and solidity in a text, can be achieved through a number of ways. Halliday notes "Lexical cohesion is created by the repetition of a

lexical item (e.g., *call ... call*); the use of a synonym (e.g., *call ... refer to*); the use of high-frequency collocates (e.g., *house ... family*); (Halliday, 2005, p. 282). Linked to this is the notion of semantic prosody and while being a difficult notion to define briefly, (Stewart, 2101, p. 1), Louw (1993, 2000) does illuminate the concept in terms beneficial to this analysis. He describes “A consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates” (Louw, 1993, p. 157), later expanding this to, “... meaning is established through the proximity of a consistent series of collocates, often characterisable as positive or negative, and whose primary function is the expression of the attitude of its speaker or writer” (Louw, 2000, p. 9). Examples of two of these types of techniques, repetition and collocation, are evident in the Strategy and the Guide and examples of repeated words are included in Table 2, Appendix 6.

Hyatt notes that linking certain terms through collocation can produce positive or negative effects, and cites Michael Stubbs who, “... also gives an example of positive semantic prosody – provide - which has amongst its typical collocates words such as care, food, help, jobs, relief and support” (Hyatt, 2005, p. 49). Both texts include examples of collocation, the majority of which notably feature the term ‘provide’, (or derivatives of it), being collocated with the term learning (or derivatives of it):

I am delighted to introduce the first *Guide for Learning Providers*, (LLUK, 2009a, p. 1).

...plans to ensure the delivery of excellent learning provision (LLUK, 2009, p. 2).

By 2020 the sector needs to provide 14 to 19 learners with a greater choice, (LLUK, 2009, p. 4).

The sector needs to provide adult learners with access to excellent provision... (LLUK, 2009, p. 4).

This collocation, and the frequent repetition of it, adds weight to the significance of this message, and Louw asserts (1993, 2000) that meaning and the author/s' attitude are *also* conveyed here. The term 'learning' is suggestive of a multi directional process, involving reciprocal back-and-forth interactions between two (or more) parties. Coupling 'learning' with 'providing' evokes a sense of learning as a *commodity* which is given and then received with no further interaction, echoing back to the discussion on the 'marketization discourse' and NPM agenda. Positioning, learning as a distributable commodity bolsters the 'accountability' agenda – if 'learning' is 'provided' but not 'received' the provider is positioned as accountable as to why this did not happen, why did their provision fail? Positioning the accountability for the 'failure' of the provision of learning, with the 'provider' (i.e. the FE workforce), is a significant move in an agenda aimed at professionalising this group.

#### **4.16 Visual Images In The Strategy And The Poster**

Hyatt's (2005) ninth analytical stage is a consideration of any visual images used and he notes that previously photographic images have been perceived as capturing specific moments and fixing them, as (accurate) records of reality. He suggests, that while there is growing awareness of the possibilities for stage-managing images' content and the 'messages'

they convey, they are still powerful communication devices, "... visual images do play a powerful role in the construction of truth and reality" (Hyatt, 2005, p. 52). The analytical findings from of a number of images from the Strategy and the Poster have been included here, in the main body of the study – Appendix 7 offers the findings from the remaining images.

4.16.1 *The Strategy Front Cover*



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**The Workforce Strategy**  
for the Further Education Sector  
in England, 2007-2012

Revised version: 2009-2010

One resource which can be drawn upon to achieve certain 'functions' when creating images, is the use of 'view point' (the positioning of the image's subject in relation to the viewer). Jewitt and Oyama (2001) note "Point of view also creates meaning potential. This does not mean that it is possible to say what different points of view will mean exactly. But it is possible to describe the kinds of meaning they will allow image producers and viewers to create..." (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001, p.135). The Strategy's front cover features three images, positioned on the same horizontal line, taking the same shape and two are the same size. With the exception of the young man in the third, furthest right image, the visible faces are positioned facing to the right of the page, strengthening a perception of them having been designed to be read from left to right (as with English text). The viewer is positioned on the same vertical angle as the image subjects (that is they do not look down on or up to them), an angle which Jewitt and Oyama (2001) suggests creates a "... relation of symbolic equality" (p.135), evoking a sense of there being an equality of status/level, between viewer and subject and 'equal involvement' in the image's content/messages. Jewitt and Oyama (2001) also caution that "... 'power', 'detachment', 'involvement' and so on, are not 'the' meaning of these angles. They are an attempt to describe a meaning potential, a field of possible meanings, which need to be activated by the producers and viewers of images" (p.135). Which echoes the notion of socially constructed meaning, as discussed throughout this study. That said, corresponding to Hyatt's (2005) earlier observation of the possibility for stage-managing images and the messages they convey, it is important to

remember people can be quite active and sceptical in how they read images, being aware of how they are being manipulated, so 'messages' don't necessarily go unquestioned or unchallenged.

The overall impression created by the various components of the first image (subjects' ages; gender; clothing; seating positions; positions in relation to each other and parties not visible; facial expressions; other visible props or items) is that the group are in a 'meeting'. This 'meeting' could take any number of forms, however, given the text's subject matter, it is arguable the image is an attempt to create the perception of a group of FE staff, engaged in a meeting or discussion, especially when read in context with the other two images here.

The middle image features two individuals; the more visible one being a young male dressed in what appears to be a 'lab coat', the perception of which is strengthened by the activity taking place (the use of test tubes and adjustable pipette, while wearing safety glasses). He is concentrating on the activity he is engaged in and is positioned facing toward the right of the image. The second individual is behind the young man and only their outstretched arm is visible. Their positioning combines to suggest that this 'faceless' individual is guiding (or instructing) the activity. Similar to the first image, reading this in the context of the text's focus boosts the perception of this being an image of a form of practical teaching session.

The third image features two seated young people, surrounded by shelves and stacks of books. They are positioned looking at an item, not visible to the audience, but the image's elements combine to create a perception of a library or reading room scenario. The individual to the right, the last in these three images, is the only person positioned straight on to the audience, adding weight to the suggestion that the various elements combine to 'provoke' a left to right reading of the visual 'messages', as this position acts almost as a 'full stop'.

Throughout the text various images are grouped together, which initially provoked me to read them together and then to question whether this was the author/s' intention. This group, whether read together or individually, convey a 'message' of the Strategy as being concerned with educating or training – be that of learners or staff. This group features images of 'staff' and 'students', involved in studious activities, working in groups or with others present, combining a mix of genders and ethnic backgrounds. The facial expressions convey a sense of activities and interactions being undertaken with a level of gravitas, concentration and seriousness, but also with a level of fun or enjoyment. One key difference in the three is the larger size of the 'staff' image, suggestive of it holding greater significance, perhaps being designed to create a perception that while FE involves staff and students, the focus of this text is staff.



#### 4.16.2 *The Preface*

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# Preface



The Preface features one untitled image, in a section purporting to be the words of and to be signed by David Hunter, Chief Executive, LLUK, leaving the audience to assume the image is this author. This move seems significant, and could be indicative of the author/s' confidence that readers will recognise LLUK's Chief Executive and a perception of the significance of this individual's role, that the position is 'important' and

influential enough that all those working in the FE sector would be familiar with his image. The combination of this assumption and the signature, indicating ownership of this part of the text, adds weight to the messages being conveyed here.

The staging of this image suggests a number of things: The 'head shot' focuses the viewer on the subject's face, it doesn't distract with the positioning of the main body or any contextual items, which has the effect of trying to 'control' the messages being conveyed. The subject's face is clearly visible, a distance shot could mean the face and characteristics become less clear, potentially portraying him (and his messages) as distant, aloof, or removed from the reader. The image fills the space, so the subject appears large and potentially intimidating – which in turn could 'turn off' the reader. Alternatively, being this 'close' to the audience engenders a sense of camaraderie and conversationalising - conveying a sense of 'all being in this together', as Jewitt and Oyama (2001) note "Frontality allows the creation of maximum involvement. The viewer is directly confronted with what is in the picture" (p.135). The slight smile conveys a friendly approachability - underpinned by being angled to the audience in a non-threatening, open disposition - while maintaining a sense that the subject matter at hand is a serious one. The blank background focuses attention on the subject, rather than distracting with additional context which could complicate the communication of any messages. The conservative colour suit reinforces the sense of this being

a 'serious topic', while the bright tie balances this by adding to the feeling of this being a discussion between friends.

#### **4.16.3 Introduction**



This image sits beneath a box of text which defines 'employers'. The ages, facial expression and positioning of the two individuals in the image, combine to convey a 'message' of 'student and staff' engaged in an activity (or learning) conversation. The positioning and body language is evocative of a less confident, less experienced individual, being guided by a more confident, experienced other. For example the female's hand tucked under her jaw conveys a sense of hesitancy, appearing potentially

deferential or submissive, positioning the authority, power or expertise, in the other individual. Jewitt and Oyama (2001) offer examples of images where “... the frontal angle was used to increase audience identification and involvement with represented participants” (p.138), which may be happening with the design of this image. If frontality evokes identification, this image offers a means of connecting with a wider audience, in terms of age, ethnicity and race, linking to the Strategy’s claims to promote equality and diversity, while simultaneously evoking identification with a young, nervous student, emphasising the ‘need’ for a professionalised (empathetic) workforce.

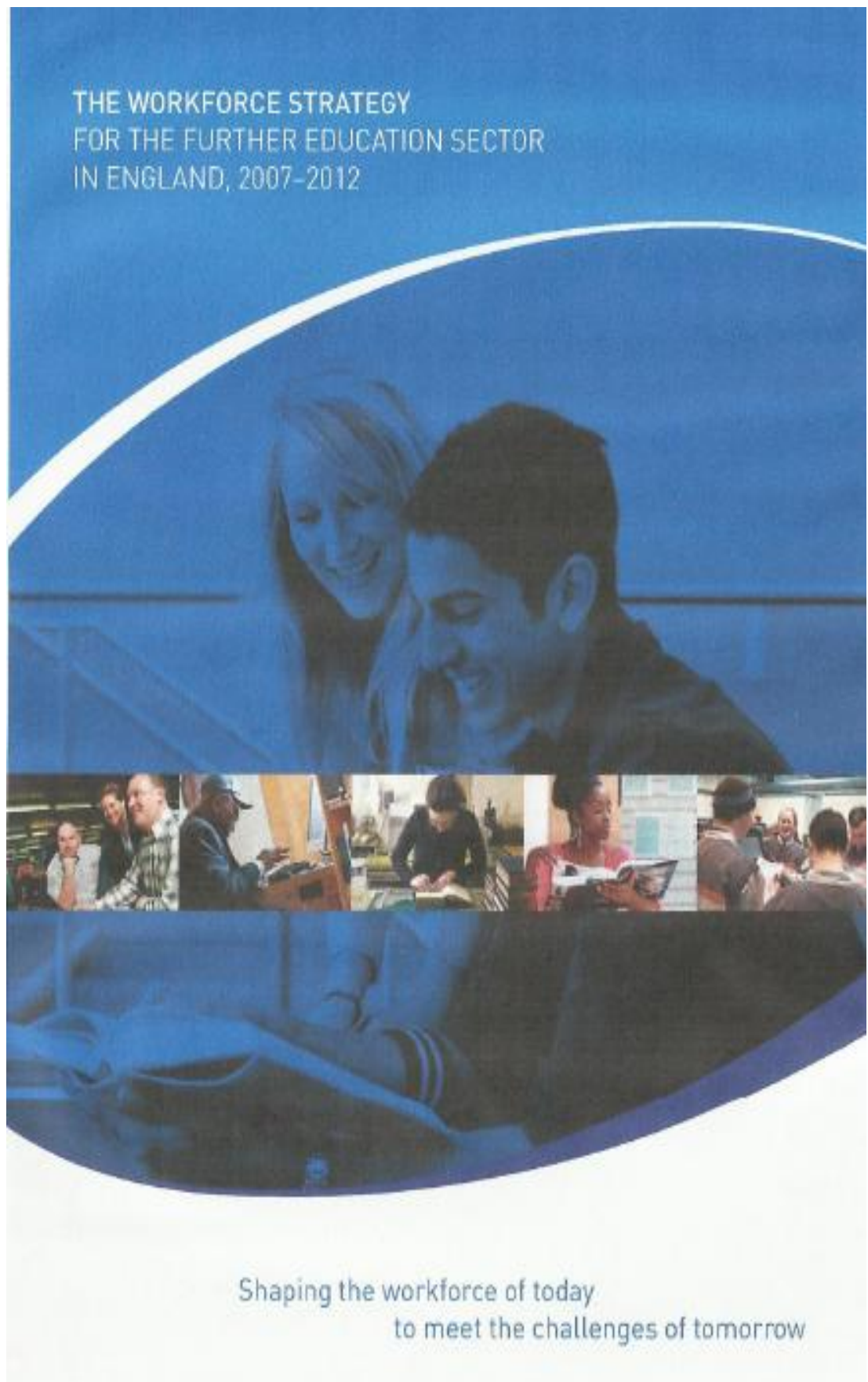
**4.16.4 04: A strategy for success; Strategic themes; Priority 1 themes Understanding the nature of the workforce; 3 Using data to understand workforce diversity and target actions**



In section four this image, comprises items and subject positioning, (e.g. chest of drawers, floor to ceiling curtain, bed, uniformed woman bending to help and older man from a wheelchair), sufficient to convey a picture of two people, posed in a helping/nursing/supporting activity, in a hospital or nursing home scenario.

The Strategy's focus is again mirrored in this image, emphasising a 'caring' role which necessitates those engaged in it to be suitably trained and qualified. Yet the title text references the 'need' to understand workforce nature and diversity, provoking two questions about this image: is the usage of a 'hospital setting' suggestive of an unspoken Strategy aim of ensuring that learners who progress through FE, emerge equipped with skills that the nation's employers are looking for. Furthermore, given the claim of being concerned with promoting diversity, as a positive factor, why feature an image which perpetuates the idea of 'caring' roles being performed by women, and possibly here by BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) women?

4.16.5 *Back cover*



The back cover of this version of the Strategy features an image of the front cover of its original 2007 version. This is almost a visual version of the 'present perfect tense' - using an image of a previous version of the Strategy links a past event to current happenings, strengthening the perception of the significance of both the 2007 and 2009 versions. Similarly it is also an example of reference to other texts - another means validating its arguments and assertions (Hyatt, 2005, p. 52).

#### 4.16.6 The Poster

LIFELONG LEARNING UK  
Skills for Learning Professionals

# CHANGES

There's an easier way of dealing with the changes in the further education sector

**Simply contact our Information and Advice Service**

If you teach or train in the further education sector, be it in a college, workplace or community setting, achieving and maintaining professional teaching status is becoming a requirement. How does this affect you?

We're here to help. So if you have any questions or concerns about the changes, all you have to do is phone or email us.

**Making change easier**

Call our Information and Advice Service on **020 7936 5798** between 9.00am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. Email **advice@lluk.org** or visit **www.lluk.org/changes/** for more information.



This promotional poster accompanies the Strategy and is displayed in our college's staff room and features a number of interesting images and messages.

The overlapping green rectangles on a white background convey an impression that four pages having been thrown in the air, randomly landing in this position. This appears an illustrative representation of 'chaos', which is contained by the formal white outline – evoking my reading of this as a pictorial metaphor for the 'chaos' of the changes in the FE Sector, being contained by the 'solid outline of LLUK' (especially as the only item to appear in the white space is the LLUK logo).

The graphics of the 'feature' word, CHANGES, gives an appearance of being carved from a solid, unyielding block, flanked by depictions of TNT drums, which have exploded, creating smoke and charring the edges of CHANGES. The cartoon style graphic person appears to be shaking its fists, and the limited facial expression is sufficient to convey anger, while its side nearest to the 'explosion' has also been charred black. Underneath this, in bold black font, is the text 'There's an easier way of dealing with the changes in the further education sector'.

The images here seem at odds with the Strategy's 'positive' visual images, given its suggestion that the character has tried exploding/destroying the changes faced by the sector, or at least tried impeding or slowing their progress. Conversely, the text conveys the message that this is not the

easiest way of dealing with FE sector changes. A characterisation of an FE professional trying to blow up the changes conveys a sense of acknowledgement that they may not be welcomed by those in the sector; while the cartoon depiction may be an attempt to counteract this, by playing down or trivialising potential resistance to the Strategy. However, there is no explicit move to position the character as directly causing the explosion, and if they are just a bystander, or victim, this positions the changes *themselves* as explosive. This then positions professionals on the 'receiving end' of these transformations, subjected to explosive developments, in which they are getting caught up, injured or charred.

The signpost to 'Simply contact ...' LLUK's Information and Advice service, seems a juxtaposition – suggesting the potential implications of these 'explosive, damaging' changes, (e.g. worry, stress, de-professionalization, re-professionalization), could be resolved by a *simple call* to the advice service, of the organisation introducing these changes, seems contradictory. What impartial advice would be available given the Poster's implied message: 'we are making these changes to the way you are accredited, to your qualifications, to your professional standing, to your autonomy and to your daily practice – we know it is scary and not welcome – but if you want an easier way to respond, rather than blowing up the idea, phone us'.

The section starting "If you teach or train in the further education sector...", followed by "Making change easier", with a series of contact details,

marginalises a range of FE sector staff by associating the changes, the content of this poster and the advice and support available, with only teachers or trainers. This overlooks the many varied non-teaching staff working in the sector and similarly, the reference to 'achieving and maintaining professional teaching status' limits the scope of 'being professional'. While acknowledging the changes to teaching qualifications, this conveys a message that professional status is based solely on holding a (teaching) accreditation deemed suitable at that given point in time.

The details conveyed by the Poster are limited, other than stating changes are happening; implying there are easy and difficult ways of responding; signposting a source of further advice and listing contact points for questions or concerns.

Analysis of the Strategy, Guide and Poster at the micro and macro levels highlighted how various techniques are used and combined to support, legitimise and convey the author/s' expressions, perceptions, interpretations and arguments as being the factual norm. These being the changing context, in which English FE institutions operate, necessitating a flexible, responsive, professionalised workforce to meet the changing needs of FE learners and that currently, the workforce is not in a position to meet these challenges.

#### **4.17 Conclusion**

Analysing this group of texts and exploring the ‘results’ of these processes produced the findings discussed here. What this showed is that the fundamental aim of the Strategy, to secure the professionalization of the FE workforce, has been approached via a range of techniques. On starting this analysis I perceived that the dominant method used would be to employ specific lexical items and techniques to ‘influence’ the behaviours of those subjected to the Strategy. However my findings revealed a number of additional and powerful practices being exercised. The use of contextualisation, showing the text’s current context in relation to its context over time, combined with the inclusion of policy drivers, strengthened its positioning as a ‘portrayal’ of the ‘reality’ of the situation (i.e. the *need* for professionalization). This was further reinforced through techniques employed to offer political and accountability warrant for the text, asserting validation and authorisation of the texts’ statements and arguments. Perhaps the most surprising technique I found was the powerful combination of employing visual images to reinforce, echo and bolster the messages communicated through the language-use techniques. When conducting the analysis, the images used in the texts stimulated a prolific ‘number of findings’ – indeed, when reflecting on what I would do differently in future, this kind of analysis would be a method I would repeat in more depth.

## Chapter Five: Discussion

How then do the various elements of my findings come together in a coherent understanding of the professionalization agenda, of the positioning of support staff within this and how this all sits in relation to the literature and theoretical underpinnings. Smyth's (1989) work on reflective practice, calling for the restoration of political, personal and principled factors to education discourses and instilling an appreciation of politics and power into any actions, (p. 3) offers a framework for such consideration. This consideration shall also include a reflective exploration of my role and its influence on the research, the role my 'journey' played in this and what type of claim to knowledge my thesis offers.

While Smyth focuses on schools rather than FE, his work suggests a direct linking between national difficulties and teaching and education, which resonates with messages implicit in the Strategy, noting "...recent attempts to 'reform' schooling in the USA and other western democracies by ensuring that what goes on *inside* schools is directly responsive to the economic needs *outside* of schools" (Smyth, 1989, p.3). This resonance is further emphasised by his observations that:

Because of the way in which capitalist systems in general have been able to ascribe the causes of our economic ills to the personal inadequacies and failings of individuals (illiteracy, lack of incentive, and poor work habits among students) rather than deficiencies of the system itself, it has not been difficult to link this with the systematic failure of schools to meet the needs of industry. The argument is such a compellingly simplistic one that it is proving extremely difficult to dislodge - get students in schools to conform

through more compliant forms of education, and all our economic woes will disappear. The kind of position represented by these ideas needs to be challenged and roundly critiqued through the kind of reflective process being spoken about here (Smyth, 1989, p.4).

In response to these concerns, Smyth offers a four stage model for challenging what impedes reflective practice. He characterizes the sequential stages as, "... a series of questions: 1. Describe ... what do I do? 2. Inform ... what does this mean? 3. Confront ... how did I come to be like this? 4. Reconstruct ... how might I do things differently?" (Smyth, 1989, pp. 5-6). Cohen and Manion (2007) suggest these correspond to Habermas's stages of reflexive practice for ideology critique, as part of a Critical Theory approach: "Stage 1: a description and interpretation of the existing practice; Stage 2: a penetration of the reasons that brought the existing situation to the form that it takes; Stage 3: an agenda for altering the situation; Stage 4: an evaluation of the achievement of the situation in practice" (pp. 28-29).

Combing the contributions of reflexive practice and Smyth's linking of 'inside and outside' schooling issues and the steps suggested here, offered a suitable foundation for this discussion chapter. Commenting on student CDA research studies, Hyatt (2011) observed, "What makes it critical? Being reflexive; Acknowledging your own position and bias; Having an action – so what happens next?" (Hyatt, 2011a). Luke's (2002) assertion that "CDA involves a principled and transparent shunting back and forth..." (p. 100) was mirrored in there being a layering of contributory elements to my findings: the fine detail analysis identified lexical devices,

forming a 'Micro layer'; through a 'Meso layer' involving consideration of how the Micro devices do-what-they-do, the implications of these, the messages they imparted; through to a 'Macro level' which considered overarching theories and positioned all this in a wider theoretical and national context. This approach offered the opportunity to facilitate and capture the journey through, within and across these research 'layers'.

### **5.1 Messages From The Texts**

As this study developed, it became evident the Strategy document would be the key text for consideration, as this introduced, set out and launched the aims and objectives of the FE professionalization agenda. The related texts could offer an aesthetic counter balance to just using the Strategy, confirming or challenging the findings derived from the core text. The Guide, helping employers implement the Strategy's requirements and the Poster, signposting sources of support for responding to the changes heralded by the professionalization agenda, also offered a wider consideration of the texts' various audiences. It is important to consider these various audiences (employers, stakeholders, institutions, workforce), because the three texts tended to 'talk' separately to them – potentially treating them differently. This offered a balanced picture of the 'professionalization' messages, how they were expressed and to whom. The Strategy, while concerned with professionalization of 'the whole' sector, chiefly 'talks to' stakeholders, employers and institutions, similarly the Guide 'talks to' employers and the Poster to (some of) the staff impacted by this agenda.

Working with all three texts emphasized that they contributed, different levels and volumes of research data, dependent upon which stage of the analysis framework was being used (for example analysing Metaphor use when looking at nominalisation, produced less data with the Poster than with the Strategy). Hyatt (2005) commented that when using his framework, users "... could and should supplement these criteria according to their contexts, the context of the text(s) under examination and the needs and interests of the learner (p. 47). Echoing, certain stages of analysis of the Strategy proved more data rich and so adopting a more purposive use of the analysis framework, these 'data rich' analysis stages were also applied to the Guide. Similarly, while the Poster was limited in terms of written text, it offered 'data rich' analysis opportunities, as did the Strategy, with regard to Visual Image use.

Analysis revealed some key messages embedded within the Strategy and replicated in the other two texts. An important point to remember here is that, these are provisional, tentative, personal interpretations, rather than concrete certainties. This is in accordance with the notion of how language-use, within discourses, can evoke certain interpretations rather than a view of language as having a direct relationship with meaning – discarding the idea that specific words 'mean' specific things. Hyatt notes:

The way in which people make sense of the world is through language - it is a discursive process. This perspective argues that language and social reality are related and challenges the argument that language is a neutral reflection of society and social reality. Rather, it argues that language, instead of drawing meanings passively from pre-existing knowledge of the world, plays an active role in classifying the phenomena



and experiences through which individuals construct, understand and represent reality (Hyatt, 2005, p.43).

My ontological, epistemological and methodological position understands meaning as being socially, historically and contextually constructed, rather than being a direct system of representation. What follows is not the suggestion that the Strategy's 'words' are actually saying/meaning this, rather this is what the language-use, strategies and techniques, evoke in my readings of the text. These interpretations are one way of 'receiving' these texts' messages, and are not offered as a single, factual authority. Rather they are positioned as additionally contributing to a field of 'understandings' of the professionalization agenda, and as Burr (2008) notes "... my reading becomes one of many possible (and equally valid) readings of the text" (p.159) and their "Usefulness and fruitfulness..." (p.159) becomes evident in discussions in how this understanding of this agenda's positioning of support staff, will contribute to "... doing something about ... [it] (Burr, 1995, p.119).

### **5.1.1 A perception of a national skills shortage**

The Strategy does not overtly employ the phrase 'national skills shortage', but it does impart an implicit message that its recommendations are, at least in part, made as a means of addressing a perceived shortage of skills among the nation's workforce. This finding is a reflection of the perceptions identified in the literature review and introduction, in the texts detailing the development of the Strategy. Pieces such as Leitch's 2004 Review, The Foster Review (2005) and The DFES White Paper, Further

Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances, were all rooted in increasing anxieties about the lack of UK adults' basic abilities and resultant financial and societal dilemmas. As Leitch emphasised 'Our nation's skills are not world class and we run the risk that this will undermine the UK's long-term prosperity' (HM Treasury, 2006, p. 1). These concerns, compounded by other influences on the Strategy (also discussed earlier) filtered down into its text. Recommendations such as "... more than ever, providers need to understand the changing needs of learners and their employers" (LLUK, 2009, p. 1) and a need to "... provide adult learners with access to excellent provision for basic skills, training for work ..." (LLUK, 2009, p. 4), belie origins concerned with an overarching perception of national skills being an issue. Identifying this message and tracing its influences and origins, is in line with Smyth's and Habermas' stages of describing a current situation and how that came to be (Cohen and Manion, 2007, pp. 28-29). However, identification does not equate to acceptance. There is a history in the UK of 'concerns over skills shortages' finding a prominent voice, as exemplified below:

**2004**

... most employers that presented evidence to the Review expressed concern about shortages... (HM Treasury, 2006, p.33).

**2005**

Skills gap 'threatens UK future' (BBC, 05/12/2005).

**2006**

UK faces 'looming skill shortage' (BBC, 04/09/2006).

**2010**

Skills shortage is getting worse, bosses warn (Guardian, 18/05/2010).

**2012**

Science graduates 'lack skills needed by business' (BBC, 24/07/2012).

However the validity of these concerns, the skills being referred to, the causes of any shortage (if they do/did indeed exist), or the broader implications of these, lie outside the focus and scope of this study. What is significant here is that the Strategy's recommendations were rooted in a perception of a skills shortage and consequently, that perception potentially holds implications for those in the FE sector.

### **5.1.2 The answer to the problem of the skills shortage, at least in part, lies within the FE Sector**

The implied positing of a national skills shortage is 'followed' by another implicit message that, at least in part, the means for addressing this deficiency, lies with the FE Sector. Leitch stated, "Today, more than one third of adults do not hold the equivalent of a basic school-leaving qualification. Almost one half of adults (17 million) have difficulty with numbers and one seventh (5 million) are not functionally literate" (HM Treasury, 2006, p.1). He then went on to observe, "Continuing to improve our schools will not be enough to solve these problems. Today, over 70 per cent of our 2020 workforce have already completed their compulsory education" (HM Treasury, 2006, p.1). This notion of 'answers' lying within FE filters through to Strategy statements such as, "The influence of the sector on individual learners, their employers and their communities can be profound" (LLUK, 2009, p.7). This is combined with recommendations that the sector changes should see providers, "Promote the benefits of

learning and skills development and of qualification achievement” and “Increase participation from learners of all ages and backgrounds” (LLUK, 2009, p.5). Messages linking the issue of the ‘state’ of society’s skill levels and the role FE practitioners within this are indicative of understandings of professionalism reviewed earlier. They are suggestive of the ethos underpinning the traditional and alternative models of professionalism, which incorporated the idea that professional status should be used to the benefit and development of wider society.

### **5.1.3 A perception that the FE Sector is failing**

Ideas of a national skills shortage and solutions lying within the FE sector, are accompanied by further implicit suggestions that the FE Sector is failing (or at least not sufficiently succeeding) and is thus not currently in a position to rise to the challenge of resolving this national dilemma. This is evidenced through assertions such as “*Pursuing Excellence*, the National Improvement Strategy for the sector developed by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, sets out in Aim 3 that: “The further education system continuously improves so that colleges and providers aspire to and achieve excellence, and no provision is unsatisfactory”. The *Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector* contributes to this aim” (LLUK, 2009, p.3). By posing this ‘comment’ as an ‘aim’ (meaning to propose or intend) conveys a perception that the FE sector is not currently at this point – that it is not continually improving, or there are unacceptable levels of unsatisfactory provision, that it is not aspiring to or achieving excellence. This is subsequently ‘linked’ to the ‘skills’ issue through moves

such as stating the sector's future must feature a "... transformed and responsive network of providers committed to meeting regional and sub-regional skills needs" (LLUK, 2009, p.4).

#### **5.1.4 The root of FE's failure, lies at least in part, within its workforce**

The review of literature generated a 'definition' of 'professional' as those who have attained certain knowledge and qualifications/training; who demonstrate a certain standard of behaviour; and whose professional autonomy is used for wider social good. In this regard, the 'next' assertion – that the failure of the FE Sector lies within (at least in part) the sector's workforce – is suggestive of the contention that this is 'because' they are not sufficiently 'professional'. That is either the levels of professional knowledge or behaviours are an issue or their professional status is not being employed to benefit others. This doesn't read as directly 'blaming' the FE workforce for the nation's skill shortage, rather it appears as an inverse implication, whereby an 'issue' has been identified, and what follows is a series of attempts to work backwards, to find a 'site' to locate the matter. Employers lobby the government about a lack of skills deemed necessary to compete on a global playing field and in order not to alienate or marginalise these industries (who may take their operation and finances out of the UK if they feel they are not being 'heard') the 'issue' is traced back, towards its roots. Thus universities, colleges and schools become positioned as 'part of the problem' and with schools having been a significant focus for successive governmental interventions, (as observed

in Leitch's earlier comments) attention turns to the fields of FE and HE. Sector organisations such as LLUK and their national stakeholders seek to distance their own position from the problem, shifting focus onto others, such as the FE workforce. This links to Smyth's earlier assertion of how '... capitalist systems in general have been able to ascribe the causes of our economic ills to the personal inadequacies and failings of individuals' (Smyth, 1989, p.4). Strategy examples of this manoeuvre include expressing a need "To have a workforce that is highly skilled, qualified and committed to continuing professional development" and "To have a workforce that is flexible enough to meet the changing needs of learners and their employers" (LLUK, 2009, p. 5). The implication being that currently the workforce is neither sufficiently skilled nor flexible enough to be able to meet the needs of employers (be that via the 'skilling' of FE learners).

#### **5.1.5 The way to 'solve' this, is to professionalize the FE workforce**

Having created a perception that there are deficiencies and issues within the FE workforce which need addressing, the messages move to offer the 'solution', that is, professionalize the FE workforce – with the ensuing implication that this in turn will resolve the national skills issues and related economic woes. The Strategy states it aims to "...enhance the development of a highly professional and expert workforce for the future" (LLUK, 2009, p.3) and "To have a workforce of professionals..." (LLUK, 2009, p.5). Combined with the observation that "The sector vision for the future includes a step change in the professionalism and quality of the

sector's workforce" (LLUK, 2009, p.6) these statements are suggestive of there being a belief in an unquestionable need for the recommended 'professionalization'.

It is important to acknowledge the précised nature of these messages - they oversimplify the issue and overlook any number of potential contributory factors to a skills shortage. These influences could include the role of secondary education; the global and national economic crisis; changing aspirations of young people; changing skill sets required by employers to compete globally. Many additional factors may be pertinent to the root of the skills issue, but deeper consideration of these is beyond the span of my current piece of research, other than to acknowledge the Strategy's focus on locating the issue within the FE sector and its workforce, is a somewhat reductionist stance.

These five messages form an almost sequential progression, from a starting perception of an 'issue' (national skills shortage) through to a proposed solution. Two further messages permeated this 'journey' of propositions, but which did not necessarily take the shape of a 'step' in this process.

#### **5.1.6 Calls for professionalization of the FE Workforce are influenced by the NPM Agenda**

The Strategy is shot through with messages rooted in the NPM agenda - seeking to steer FE in a more marketised direction, similar to the way the

HE sector is being driven. The emergence of neo-liberal educational reform and 'new managerialism' had a significant impact on the FE sector. The NPM approach typically features practices widespread within the private sector, principally the imposition of a authoritative management group which supersedes professional skills and knowledge. Under this approach, discipline (of the workforce by management) is tightly controlled, efficiency and external accountability and monitoring are key drivers, and there is a strong focus on standards (Gleeson and Shain, 1999; Randle and Brady, 1997 and 1997a; Harris, 2005). This is evidenced through priorities focussing on external answerability, by being able to '... help the sector to be more accountable to government, community and learners;' (LLUK, 2009, p. 10). Other examples are more implicit in the way they communicate 'accountability', such as the priority 'To have a workforce that is flexible enough to meet the changing needs of learners and their employers' (LLUK, 2009, p. 5), whereby the sector becomes positioned to be responsive to the needs of the market. This is a shift from a sector being driven and informed by a traditional educational framework, towards one which is more evocative of a 'marketization' oriented framework, with 'education suppliers' vying for the custom of a range of potential clients.

#### **5.1.7 The Strategy features a specific model of 'professional', for the professionalization of FE Sector**

The Strategy did not initially appear to offer an overt, explicit model of professionalism, for the agenda to professionalise the sector. However,



after numerous re-readings and reflexive deliberation, it became evident that a specific version of professional *is* implied within the Strategy.

The traditional model of professional, discussed earlier, refers to professionals demonstrating and holding a level of expertise; of having reached a certain level, or specific type, of qualification and to demonstrate certain standards of practice, combined with a level of autonomy within their role or field. Reflecting this, the Strategy agenda calls for FE teaching staff to achieve specific qualifications, the exact details of which are set out in supplementary texts, 'Staff need to be supported through initial training and qualifications, induction and professional formation to achieve professional status (LLUK, 2009, p. 12). Similarly references can be found to an expectation of expertise, 'To have a workforce of professionals who drive forward their own levels of expertise' (LLUK, 2009, p. 5) and to the attainment of certain standards of practice, with a priority being to 'Increase the quality of provision' (LLUK, 2009, p. 5).

However, the model intimated in the Strategy, is less one of traditional professionalism minus the autonomy and more one of re-professionalism, based on (teaching) staff achieving specific *new* qualifications; as highlighted by Lawy and Tedder (2009), 'The introduction of a new raft of teacher qualifications based on the LLUK standards (PTTLS, CTTLS and DTTLS) [3] followed in 2007' (p.56). Syllabuses for training future FE teachers now focus on making certain they reach a required level of

standard, particularly with regard to English, maths and IT skills, which Lawy and Tedder (2009) argue, echoing the NPM agenda, provides '...a measurable accountability framework for Ofsted inspection teams to make their judgements' (p.56). The launch and rationalisation of this new collection of qualifications may indicate a governmental concern with credentialism - a conviction that qualifications themselves can initiate educational improvement (Collins, 1979; 1981 (p.23) - as opposed to other means of securing improvement, perhaps through investment in practical resources.

Consequently '... educators have been faced with a raft of changes that have challenged their identifications and ways of working' (Lawy and Tedder, 2009, p.64). One issue with the direction this re-professionalisation is taking FE, being that it offers little room for acknowledging the existing expertise of professionals working in the sector and their subject/disciplinary knowledge, or knowledge derived from previous working experience or experience of their particular craft. As Lawy and Tedder (2009) note:

The latest regulations (DIUS, 2007) replace those that had been established as recently as 2001, and required all those teaching in the sector to gain formal qualifications. One consequence of that change in regulation was a substantial increase in the number of trainees attending courses: frequently they were people who were long-established in their professional role but did not hold a teaching qualification (Lawy and Tedder, 2009, p.56).

Thus a re-professionalisation model, requiring staff to attain *new* qualifications, to meet specific, measurable standards which focus on targets and achievement, and which disregards previous experience or expertise, is promoted throughout the Strategy and its sister texts. Be that through its explicit requirements, or more implicit messages. Consideration of the implications of this re-professionalization model, including the connotations for professional autonomy, follows later.

With regard to stages of reflexive practice, echoing earlier discussions of Habermas's and Smyth's frameworks, I found Smyth's (1989) phases, Describe, Inform, Confront and Reconstruct, helpful for considering how the elements of my work fit together. Thus far, the study's findings offered an initial 'description', although rather than ask what do I do, as Smyth suggests, I asked what does the Strategy do. In terms of an 'inform' phase offering a space for considering what does this mean; being able to identify explicit and implicit messages within the texts, via the micro analysis, built on the foundational description of these findings. Leading on from this, the 'confront' phase, reflecting on how did I (it) come to be like this, offers space for exploring how these messages and the implications therein, came to be – here from a more theoretical standpoint, taking a macro overview, broadening the micro analytical work already undertaken, and to which I turn next. This would then culminate in space for deliberation of the fourth phase, reconstruction, echoing a significant, overt element of a CDA approach – to be overtly political and involved, by

considering what (social) change research will bring (Smyth, 1989, pp. 5-6).

## **5.2 How Did It Come To Be Like This - How Are These Messages Achieved**

Reflecting upon how this situation came to be identified some key discursive processes, which I consider equally important findings, as they show how the various techniques come together as a 'successful whole'. Their consideration shows how a position was postulated through the texts, which was then supported, reinforced and legitimated via the employment of various strategies - at the macro level through overarching theory techniques; and the micro level through lexical techniques.

### **5.2.1 Create a perception of a certain position**

Analysis showed the texts' messages evoke a sense of a certain 'state of being' (a national shortage of employer desired skills); a solution to which is then 'located' in the FE sector; the subsequent implication is that the sector is failing, and unable to currently provide the solution; the 'response' to which is to argue the need to professionalise FE workforce. These postulations are reinforced as 'accurate', by conveying the implicit suggestion that if the recommended actions are not adopted, the situation will remain or potentially worsen. Various techniques were employed to position these messages as valid – consideration of which follows.

These manoeuvres echo an approach employed in politics, whereby descriptions of a state of being, (positioned as an 'issue'), are interlaced with prophecies about what will happen, if the recommended course of action is not adopted to address this. Thus creating a perception that this position is 'factual' and *there is only one* course of suitable action – reinforced with messages of (dire) implications and consequences of failing to 'comply'. Something which became known as the 'TINA tenet', in 1990's UK, as Fairclough comments, "...in the famous expression of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, 'there is no alternative' (widely referred to as the 'TINA' principle). Notice the slippage between description and prediction in the reports – claims about what is the case alternate with predictions about what 'will' happen" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 99).

This technique resembles a form of mythopoesis, whereby descriptions of a state of being are employed in the legitimisation of claims about the beneficial or detrimental consequences of varying responses or actions. Hunt (2009) comments that '*Mythopoesis* means, literally, 'myth-making'; a 'myth' being a story that embodies ideas about social, natural, and sometimes supernatural, phenomena. Thus, *mythopoesis* refers to the process of sense-making by which individuals come to know their world and relationship with it' (p. 87). Here, the 'story', a concern about skills, is made sense of through the legitimisation of the recommended courses of action, by 'warnings' of the consequences should these actions not be adopted – that is 'if we fail to address the problem of skills, through

professionalizing the FE sector workforce, the nation will not be able to compete globally'. The depth and crux of the concern, argument, and positioning of solutions is not communicated as naïvely as summarised here – but the technique is powerful, as observed by Hyatt (2011) who suggests recommendations ‘... can be reinforced by discussions of what might happen if the policy is not implemented or of the potential negative outcomes of an alternative policy approach’, noting mythopoesis as ‘...moral tales and cautionary tales advising us as to the positive and negative outcomes of particular courses of action’ (Hyatt, EdD weekend 15/10/2011)

### **5.2.2 Warrant**

The Findings chapter highlighted how a text’s warrant validates and gives authorisation or justification, to its various actions, activities, beliefs or expressions (Hyatt, 2011). Cochran-Smith and Fries (2001), detail three sub-classifications, two of which “... *the political warrant*, and *the accountability warrant*” (p. 4) were more evident in the Strategy. Accountability warrant is evidenced in how a text argues various actions and recommendations as being legitimate and valid, by linking these to the consequences and effects of (not)adopting this course of action, the arguments it uses to “... demonstrate that recommended policies are justifiable and justified by the outcomes and results they produce” (Cochran-Smith and Fries, 2001, p. 7). Hyatt (2011) suggests “An example in education would be policy initiatives which claim to improve standards or results” (Hyatt, EdD weekend 15/10/2011).

In the Strategy mythopoesis and accountability warrant were employed to legitimise and validate its claims. The first two pages of text offer statements, interpreted as modelling these techniques (Note: the Strategy has no page 2, going from page 1 to page 3). Initially the 'story' about the 'issue' of a national skills shortage is presented:

The world we are operating in has changed dramatically over the last six months and, more than ever, providers need to understand the changing needs of learners and their employers (LLUK, 2009, p.1).

The text then proffers its vision of a necessary outcome linked to this 'story', that the FE sector 'needs' to be positioned as able to act in response to this changing/changed environment:

It is vital for us all in England to ensure that the entire further education workforce is appropriately trained, has the flexibility to respond to these changing needs and is recruiting the best people from a wide talent pool (LLUK, 2009, p.1).

This is followed by suggesting a 'policy' or course of action, sitting between the 'story' position and the 'necessary' outcome:

This Strategy has been designed not only to equip staff to meet today's demands on the further education sector, but also to look ahead and anticipate what employers, communities and learners will want from the sector over the next five years (LLUK, 2009, p.3).

These arguments are subsequently reinforced by including an implicit 'warning' about a (potential) consequence, if the policy response is not adopted, by linking a failure to act, to the nation's inability to respond adequately in a globally competitive market:

The further education sector needs to be able to respond to the many economic and social challenges that this country faces (LLUK, 2009, p. 3).

Hyatt emphasizes this process can be “... reinforced by discussions of what might happen if the policy is not implemented or of the potential negative outcomes of an alternative policy approach” (Hyatt, EdD weekend 15/10/2011). The Strategy is shot through with implicit ‘warnings’ of the negative connotations of not adopting workforce professionalization - that the nation’s ability to compete globally, through the failure to address the skills shortage, will be impacted:

Sector employers need to anticipate and meet the workforce requirements to satisfy changing learner needs and social, economic and technological changes at both national and local level (LLUK, 2009, pp. 12-13).

Through its ‘absences’, this statement evokes the message that employers must be able to predict future need in order to respond to the requirements of a changing environment and failure to meet this recommendation will impact on the UK’s ability to compete in a global market.

Political warrant, the means of validating policy as being in the nation or public’s good or interest (Hyatt, 2011), is combined with accountability warrant, reinforcing the ‘power’ of each. Cochran-Smith and Fries (2001) describe this technique, as being “... the ways proponents of competing policies in teacher education justify their positions in terms of service to the citizenry” (p. 10). Strategy examples of political warrant link the call for



FE workforce reform, with subsequent benefits for the wider society, (as called for in the alternative model of professionalism), for the good of the nation:

The sector requires a workforce that can adapt to the changing needs of the business environment and society. This ability to adapt can be achieved through professional development and building on experience (LLUK, 2009, p.7).

The influence of the sector on individual learners, their employers and their communities can be profound. It is important therefore that the sector presents a workforce that reflects and understands the diverse communities of which it is a part (LLUK, 2009, p.7).

The sector fulfils a vital role in educating young people and providing skills development for young people and adults (LLUK, 2009, p. 12).

Note though, the Strategy is merely offering one ‘truth’, one perception of these issues – of a need for workforce reform and the potential societal benefits - and that this is just one of a number of varied possible positions, which are excluded from the text, as is discussed in this chapter’s section ‘Message from The Texts.

### **5.2.3 Further Techniques of Legitimation**

Having created a perception of an ‘issue’, needing specific responses, resulting in certain consequences if not acted upon, additional techniques are employed to further legitimate and validate the text’s claims, arguments and recommendations. Fairclough (2003) describes techniques such as Mythopoesis, Authorization, and Moral Evaluation, and Hyatt notes “It may prove of value to the analyst to consider the ways in which

the legitimization of policy is advanced and claimed through one or more of these strategies” (Hyatt, EdD weekend 15/10/2011).

Laugharne and Baird’s (2009) language based analysis of educational policy texts, found various references which exemplified authorization and interdiscursivity as legitimation. They note:

Fairclough’s (2003) concept of interdiscursivity speaks of reference to an authority figure or to other texts, to create a sense of the truth value of an assertion. We found there were numerous references in each document to external authority, such as Ofsted, OECD and to other countries, as examples of best practice. These interdiscursive references lend a sense of weight and value to the vision and policy change agenda adopted by each nation (Laugharne and Baird, 2009, pp.236-237).

Examples of interdiscursivity were evidenced throughout the Strategy, in the use of terms evoking a sense of their being part of a ‘marketization discourse’, rather than an educational one, such as the assertion of the need to:

... be able to respond to the many economic and social challenges that this country faces. (LLUK, 2009, p. 1),

or the priority to:

... help the sector to be more accountable to government, community and learners; (LLUK, 2009, p. 10).

Similar to Laugharne and Baird’s findings, this use of authorization sees the text referring to a range of ‘authorities’ to legitimate its arguments. These include references to ‘the government’, the text’s sister documents, its author/s, Stakeholders and ‘National Partners’. This last group includes:

“... government departments; sector organisations such as the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, the Institute for Learning, the Learning and Skills Improvement Service and the Learning and Skills Council; and unions, professional bodies and provider representative bodies” (LLUK, 2009, p.1). It is questionable to what extent these interdiscursive, authority references offer independent weight or legitimacy to the arguments, given that the group are all ‘working with Lifelong Learning UK at a national level to support the implementation of this Strategy’.

Moral Evaluation, with its call to a value system founded on notions of decency and desirability, notes Fairclough (2003), focuses on actions or positions perceived to be ‘good’ and ‘wanted’. Strategy examples include comments such as:

As a response to changes in the machinery of government, government policy directives, learner demands, technological change and increasing global competition, the further education sector has identified five changes that are required in developing the sector for the future: (LLUK, 2009, p.5).

And:

The Strategy needs to build on the existing strengths of the workforce, and to enhance the development of a highly professional and expert workforce for the future (LLUK, 2009, p. 3).

Arguably, being equipped and positioned to compete globally and to comprise a workforce of professional experts is a *desirable* aspiration – one that would be difficult to argue ‘against’. Thus incorporating a morally evaluative element legitimises claims through appealing to the perception

of there being a widely held, normative value system. Alternative interpretations of these examples, however, belie an implicit assumption in the second statement, that currently the FE sector does not have a professional and expert workforce. Similarly, the first statement implies a correlation between the FE sector and the UK's ability and capacity to compete globally, which postulates a very specific reading of the 'purpose' of post-16 education. One that positions education as being for equipping future workforces with market-desirable skills, rather than for example, as being a means for self-directed/chosen self-development. This is not to ignore whether 'competing in a global market' is a desirable end in itself, or related issues, omitted from the argument here, (e.g. the extent to which 'globalisation' facilitates the maintenance of global inequality and reproduction of existing global power relations). It is just the texts offer only one position, which does not reference (or acknowledge that there may be) alternative interpretations or positions, and the size of this study does not offer space for more detailed consideration of these.

#### **5.2.4 Discourse**

Discourse is a key theme in legitimation, linking the micro and macro level techniques and strategies considered here, and also the methodological approaches, theories and influences of CDA and Social Constructionism.

Foucault employs 'discourse' as a theoretical concept, as an arrangement of utterances which create an object, by offering groups of statements for discussing (demonstrating the knowledge about) specific topics at specific

moments in history. Influenced by Foucault's work, Fairclough notes discourse has, "... the distinctive and more important role in the constitution and reproduction of power relations and social identities" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 136).

Popkewitz highlights the impact of the role of 'discourse' and discursive practices in power relations and the constructions of 'truth'. He notes the significance of the professionalization of *knowledge*, whereby particular professions are 'given' collective power to influence how *meaning* and *reality* are characterised in specific institutional fields (Popkewitz, 1985, p.91). Where a profession's members are involved in the production and dissemination of policy directives for the field, it creates a form of self-fulfilling prophecy. The group can claim authority for the policy statements, because the group 'controls' what counts as knowledge and thus what counts as the 'truth' within said policy.

Foucault also focussed on how institutions employed discursive practices to manage others' behaviour, studying associations between power and knowledge and how they work within organisations showed power can be productive as well as negative. The language used to 'talk' about a subject comes to construct a widely believed perception of that subject as the 'truth' – people act in relation to that 'truth' and their actions will have implications and real outcomes for the subject:

Discourse, Foucault argues, constructs the topic. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and

reasoned about. It also influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others (Hall, 2003, p. 72).

Arguably then, if discourse and discursive practices have the power to construct 'truth' and subsequently to influence others' behaviours - the possibilities, for an agenda aimed at professionalising the FE workforce, are significant.

Being able to construct a specific portrayal of the state of the FE sector; to make 'authoritative' claims about what the problems and failings are; to 'define' what counts as professionalism within the field; and to then make recommendations which position this 'model' of professionalism as the 'answer' to these problems, is a powerful position. Evetts and Robson and Bailey have recognised the potential of such an approach, with regard to influencing the workforce's behaviours:

... the discourse of professionalism can be analysed as a powerful instrument of occupation change and social control at macro, meso and micro levels (Evetts, 2005, p.3).

... the discourse of professionalism is increasingly used in contemporary employment settings by both managers and workers as a mechanism for facilitating and promoting social and occupational change (as) ... there is a perceived need to 'professionalise' the service and its workers" (Robson and Bailey, 2009, p.102).

This is not to say that individual actors/workers will respond to the discourse in a uniform, submissive manner - not to assume that all people will simply be determined by this power (even if the mechanism is a productive one), where they take it up and buy into the normative

discourse themselves. Foucault's counter-balance to the 'constructive' force of discourse is his recognition of the possibility for resistance:

Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power. Should it be said that one is always "inside" power, there is no "escaping" it ... This would be to misunderstand the strictly relational character of power relationships. Their existence depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network ... there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: ... by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations, (Foucault, 1976, p.95).

This possibility for resisting, for disrupting attempts to impose a normative discourse as a means of controlling others' behaviours, was found throughout the literature review, as authors highlighted professionals' challenges to the emergence of a new managerialism (NPM) agenda.

Workers' responses suggest that there is resistance both at individual and collective level to these downward pressures ... (Mather et al, 2007, p.122).

... the fundamental causes of resistance, which are associated we argue with the impact of the new management upon professional autonomy' (Randle and Brady, 1997a, p.231).

The literature also revealed how resistance can take various forms, including more direct adversarial resistance as encountered by Randle and Brady:

The changes which were implemented at Cityshire met lecturer resistance in the form of both covert and overt action (Randle and Brady, 1997, p.126).

Lecturers continue to fight to maintain control over their labour process, to counter both deskilling and the degradation of work and a radical deterioration in their conditions of employment (Randle and Brady, 1997, p.137).

Or in the degrees by which managers comply with institutional change, as found by Gleeson and Shain:

... the 'unwilling complier' is altogether more sceptical and disenchanted with the new FE ethos... (where) Anger and frustration with one's lot is discernible... (Gleeson and Shain, 1999, p.479).

The vast majority of middle managers interviewed in the CTMC project complied strategically. This response is perhaps best explained as a form of artful pragmatism which reconciles professional and managerial interests (Gleeson and Shain, 1999, p.482).

The key being not to assume that people will accept and be 'shaped' by these discourses, indeed one alternative is that people don't actually pay any attention to them. The opportunities afforded by resistance will be explored later.

### **5.2.5 Micro Level Techniques**

Hyatt notes micro level strategies also contribute to the creation of a specific 'truth'. "We can use a 'tool' (a lexical-grammatical device) to 'create' an idea of a fact – this then becomes the norm, becomes accepted – it becomes part of the discourse about the 'subject'" (Hyatt, 2011a).

A number of these devices have been highlighted within the Findings chapter, including cohesion, repetition and collocation. Halliday notes lexical cohesion conveys a text's 'solidity' "... by the repetition of a lexical



item (e.g., *call ... call*); the use of a synonym (e.g., *call ... refer to*); the use of high-frequency collocates (e.g., *house ... family*)” (Halliday, 2005, p. 282). Collocation, Louw explains, is how “... meaning is established through the proximity of a consistent series of collocates, often characterisable as positive or negative, and whose primary function is the expression of the attitude of its speaker or writer” (Louw, 2000, p. 9). Examples of these techniques, are evident in the Strategy and examples of repeated and collocated words are included in Table 2, Appendix 6. This stage of analysis also highlighted the author/s’ stance with regard to what they are ‘speaking of’. One particular item, frequently repeated throughout the text, and often collocated with another item, is the use of the word ‘Strategy’. Why Strategy, why not plan, scheme or policy? My interpretation of this item is that its use suggests that this text is bigger than a plan - that more thought has gone into it and its development. The repetition and collocation of this term serve to convey the ‘Strategy’ as having involved significant preparation and a deep level of involvement (e.g. resources, individuals, groups) being invested in its creation - (although detailed exploration of the process of devising the Strategy, including any consultation or that quality of these processes is beyond the scope of my current work). The upshot of this being, that by creating a perception of the text involving a ‘higher’ level of investment, it also positions it as having more ‘riding’ on the success of its implementation.

Also worthy of note, is how contradictions and absences within the text, contribute (or not) to the construction of meaning and the messages

conveyed. Examples of contradictions in the Strategy include statements such as:

Employers have the primary role in recruiting staff (LLUK, 2009, p.12).

This statement positions the sector employers in the role of 'recruiter' - the inclusion of the term 'primary', is suggestive of the role including a level of authority or responsibility, not only for recruitment, but also for determining, or influencing, the criteria against which that will happen. However, the same section also states:

The diversity profile of the workforce needs to be representative of the learners and communities it serves (LLUK, 2009, p.12).

This reads as simultaneously directing the employers, the recruitment process and the shape of the workforce, as 'needing' to meet this diversity profile criteria. The 'need' for which is 'directed' by the Strategy's author/s rather than the employers performing their 'primary role in recruiting'.

Similarly, note the contradiction between these statements on the vision and purpose behind the Strategy:

Its purpose is to support all employers in the sector in implementing their own workforce plans to ensure the delivery of excellent learning provision (LLUK, 2009, p.3).

I would like to congratulate you for all your work in the last year and hope that you will continue to work with us to achieve our vision for the further education workforce (LLUK, 2009, p.1).

Again, this positions sector employers as able to implement their own workforce plans, while also positioning the whole Strategy (and its views, claims and recommendations) as the author/s' vision.

One effect of contradictory statements is that the texts' messages become confused, or obscured. At surface level, the text may be read as offering, or claiming, one 'thing', while at a deeper, implicit level, be intending or claiming the 'opposite'. Looking at the examples above, the Strategy positions employers as having authoritative, autonomous roles in the development and recruitment of their staff – they can set the agenda – by overtly naming the agents in the clauses: the employers. The contradiction occurs at an implicit level, whereby the Strategy's vision is 'ours' and the 'need' for the workforce to reflect diverse communities, is stated as a given. The point being that by obscuring the role or position of the author/s, with regard to the text's content and recommendations, through contradictory statements, they become more difficult to argue against or resist. 'Our' could include all of us, positioning the 'vision' as 'belonging' to all of us too. Similarly if a 'need' is positioned as a given, rather than the author/s' recommendation, it becomes positioned as 'common sense', as 'accepted'. The combined effect of these two factors, is the Strategy makes overt moves to empower various sector groups, while simultaneously back-grounding their subjection to the vision and plans of the author/s, through the implicit inclusion of various directives and recommendations (it says one thing but implies another).

Being critical recognises the significance of considering what is *not* included in texts as well as what is, for example as seen in the review of literature, some pieces on the education sector workforce reform were more revealing for what (whom) they *did not incorporate* in their discussions of 'doing' professionalism. The inclusion of only limited interpretations of a situation lends weight to the positioning of said situation, as being the 'way things are', as 'the one truth'. The exclusion of different or other explanations, portrayals, or interpretations bolsters the perception of the position portrayed in the text as being actuality. No alternative portrayals are offered, such as arguments which posit it is not a 'lack of skills' that is impacting on recruitment, but a range of other issues such as: employers' reluctance to offer the conditions to attract suitable employees, "... 10% of employers admit that the problem is really that the candidates they want won't accept the positions at the wage level being offered. That's not a skill shortage, it's simply being unwilling to pay the going price" (*Time*, 04/06/2012). Or a mismatch of 'expectations', "It's not actually about "skills shortages" - so many employers blame a dearth of talent for not being able to fill posts - but actually, what they mean is that they cannot find the right type of person to fill their role" (*The Telegraph*, 26/08/2011). Neither is there consideration of additional or alternative explanations for the 'causes' of any skills shortage, or any questioning of whether the 'whole' FE workforce is 'failing', or alternatives to the model of (re)professionalization offered.

Other 'absences' relate to professional behaviours, and the participation of a diverse cohort of learners:

A key part of the vision is to build a fully professionalised workforce and ensure that professional behaviours are evident across the workforce (LLUK, 2009, p.12).

Increase participation from learners of all ages and backgrounds (LLUK, 2009, p.5).

Stating the vision is 'to build and ensure', professionalised staff and behaviours, is different to stating that the workforce 'is' professionalised, displaying professional behaviours - the absence suggests the perception that this not currently the case – that the workforce is not professionalised, or displaying professional behaviours. Similarly, with the second statement, the 'absence' suggests a perception that only learners of certain ages and backgrounds, currently participate in FE. Yet the Association of Colleges 'Key Facts, Summer 2011', offer data which would challenge this assumption, noting the FE college student body in England has a varied composition and that annually 3.3 million people attend college for training or education, 2.4 million of which are adults, with age groups ranging from under 16s as 2% of the student body; 16-18 year olds - 28%, 19-24 year olds - 17%, 25-59 year olds - 49% and 60+ - 5%, (105,000 college students were aged over 60); that ethnic minority students make up 20% of students in colleges, compared with 13% of the general population; 13.3% of 16 to 18-year olds in colleges are from a disadvantaged background, compared with 8.3% in maintained school sixth forms and academies and with 67% of those receiving the £30

Education Maintenance Allowance in 2009/10 (an indicator of low socio-economic status) studying in a college (AOC, 2011).

Identifying absences holds further significance for this study, as a certain group of staff are 'absented' from inclusion in the Strategy's recommendations. The following two statements appear to empower sector staff, by establishing their 'right' to access a range of opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD):

Staff need to be supported through initial training and qualifications, induction and professional formation to achieve professional status (LLUK, 2009, p.12).

The individuals who are recruited need to be professionally qualified, and registered with an appropriate professional body (LLUK, 2009, p.12).

However, exploring these recommendations in the Guide it became evident they only refer to, or include, teaching staff. Changes to the qualification framework, and professional body membership, introduced by the professionalization agenda, stipulate 'teaching staff' must register with the Institute for Learning (IfL) – the IfL being a professional body comprising teaching and training staff. Where does this leave staff with no teaching qualifications? The Strategy appears to offer an entitlement to training, a qualification framework and the opportunity to become part of a professional body – all factors associated with traditional and alternative models of being 'professional' – yet 'absences' a significant cohort of the FE workforce from this entitlement. The implications of this absence, and

whether it overtly excludes or merely overlooks support staff, are considered later.

### **5.3 What Sort of Claim to Knowledge is This?**

Working through the analysis process, exploring my findings, considering these with regard to my methodological approach and attempting to position all of this in relation to the reviewed literature, highlighted a significant element that thus far I had 'take for granted' – the influence of the narrative surrounding and informing my research journey. A fundamental element of this being the possibilities offered by adopting a Critical Discourse Analysis approach, that it is critical and brings a political aspect, a call for social change. As Gee (2011) highlights, Critical Discourse Analysts "... want to speak to and, perhaps, intervene in, social or political issues" (p. 9). Recognising that I held a belief in the value of research 'knowledge' effecting 'change or improvement', led to questioning what sort of claim to knowledge my work offers. Do my interpretations have any authority; are they just the interpretation of one person; do they carry any more authority than those of my colleagues and why should they be listened to? As Wellington *et al* (2009) emphasise, one of the key criteria when assessing doctoral research is '... that it should make a contribution to knowledge in an area' (p.198).

My epistemological and ontological position, as noted earlier, has been influenced by Burr's arguments on the 'state' of knowledge and truth. That, rather than being a dichotomy the 'realism-relativism' debate is more

complex with, for example, 'relativists' conceding, "... a real world existing independently of our talk about it" (Burr, 2008, p.88) and 'realists' recognising the constructive power of language. Echoing Foucauldian arguments, Burr stresses though this is not to deny "... the existence of a material world or that this materiality may have unavoidable consequences for people. But they are pointing out that, once we begin to *talk* about or otherwise signify or represent the material world then we have entered the realm of discourse; and at that moment we have engaged in social construction" (Burr, 2008, p.91). Thus my account would be located toward the relativist end of the 'truth continuum', with regard to this being 'one account' of the research topic, not a claim of 'absolute truth' or 'how it is' and these interpretations, evoked by the texts' language-use, are part of a process of social construction, growing from engaging with the author/s' expressions, utterances and position. CDA's influence here is significant, as its overtly political stance of wanting arguments and findings to be persuasive enough to stimulate change, puts additional pressure on the research account - given there is a fundamental intention that, having understood 'what kind of claim to knowledge' the research makes, it is asked how these findings and interpretations could be used to 'change' anything.

Undertaking this investigation involved a range of research and reflective practice processes, informing my interpretation - which is not completely relativistic having been influenced by the literature review's findings - but which also does not claim to be the 'only' truth. Deconstructing the



Strategy text developed an understanding of its language-use and how this is employed to convey its messages, in a manner which evokes certain interpretations (as it did for me) and how this fits with what is already known about the FE professionalization agenda - culminating in the generation of proposals for how to challenge and change any social inequalities found (with regard to support staff in this agenda). The fundamental point being the inclusion of evidence, from the literature and the research, that supports (or refutes) this interpretation of the text. Not forgetting Burr's assertion that the validity, of even a lone research student's account, can be assessed through consideration of its 'Usefulness and fruitfulness...' (Burr, 2008, p.159). As she notes:

... within a social constructionist framework my reading becomes one of many possible (and equally valid) readings of the text. Others reading this text may well have seen what they consider to be important themes which I have completely missed, and to regard as quite unimportant or even non-existent the ones I have described. The question becomes not how truthful this account is, but how useful it may be in understanding and perhaps eventually doing something about ... [it] (Burr, 1995, p.171).

#### **5.4 On Being Reflexive**

Both Social Constructionist and CDA approaches highlight the value of 'reflexive' discourse - emphasising not only critical reflection of practice, but also to locate reflections in the context of broader life-based experiences, where researchers need to look 'inward' *and* 'outward', to acknowledge how their own theoretical and value positions may influence their work (Moore, 2007). Emphasising the significance of overtly adopting

this approach, Greenbank (2003) notes "... researchers should adopt a reflexive approach and attempt to be honest and open about how values influence their research" (p. 791) (be they of a political or personal nature). Consequently identifying the narrative around my research journey contributes to understanding how I interrogate, interpret and understand this study's findings.

### **5.5 My Journey**

Reflecting on my years of study and working in education it became evident I had long been interested in understanding the differences between teaching and non-teaching roles; why, as a member of educational support staff, was 'my' 'contribution' to the learner's journey perceived, by some, to be considerably less valued than that of my teaching counter-parts and similarly why were 'my' levels of professionalism and expertise also perceived to be considerably less valued, indeed just considerably 'less'. As my level of academic (and research) abilities reached more 'sophisticated' levels, this broad interest was able to be 'refined' into something that could be validly researched. Then, in an early supervision session, I encountered a 'light-bulb' moment which challenged my perception and understanding of my position and this interest.

My position had traditionally been one of professional indignation at the perceived marginalisation and subordination of non-teaching staff to their teaching colleagues. Experience had shown support staff could be as equally, if not more, experientially and academically qualified, as teaching

staff, fulfilling their roles to the same levels of professionalism, making a valid contribution to the learner's journey. Yes support and teaching staff undertake different roles and different contributions, with different levels and frequency of contact and interaction with learners. However, my belief held that the differences in these various elements of the professional characteristics of teaching and support staff (e.g. expertise, qualification, experience, contribution) did not necessitate them to be of less value. The Strategy encapsulated these perceived differences and appeared not only to be perpetuating the marginalisation of non-teaching staff, but to strengthen it, through an agenda which made little direct reference to support staff and no specific provision for the professionalization of their roles. The Strategy outlined the importance of teaching roles, with regard to the national skills development agenda and made provision to develop these. It contained moves to heighten the public profile of the FE workforce and raise levels of professionalism and associated working terms and conditions, underpinned by comprehensive training and qualification development, to enable these changes. Yet support staff seemed excluded from this, encapsulating all the layers and subtleties of my 'indignation' in one policy document. My interest then was in analysing, deconstructing and interrogating the text's language-use and lexical devices that marginalised support staff from being included in the professionalization agenda and the benefits and entitlements within the Strategy.

The light-bulb moment – “Have you considered”, asked my supervisor, “shifting your view point? Currently you interpret the Strategy as marginalising support staff – that it excludes them from this process of professionalization and benefits (e.g. raised status and recognition, enhanced training and development opportunities.) What is it support staff are *actually* being excluded from - a specific, and arguably narrowed, model of professionalization. Teaching staff are being ‘forced’ into a situation where, what counts as ‘professional’ is externally set (e.g. by government and LLUK), what counts as suitable FE teaching qualifications, are being both narrowed and externally dictated” (Skelton, 2011). The model has shifted from FE staff as experts in their own fields, with sufficient ability and training to teach and share this expertise with others, to one where FE lecturers are teachers first and foremost, but who can also play a musical instrument, or develop hairdressing skills, or have a Chemistry degree. Where does this agenda’s model of ‘professionalism’ (which is evocative of the NPM model discussed earlier) make provision for teachers’ autonomy, or to employ their own professional, academic or experiential expertise, in setting their own agendas, for example with regard to curriculum or subject content choices. Perhaps then, considered from a shifted vantage point, being positioned ‘outside’ the direct requirements and objectives of the Strategy agenda, offers greater potential than it does for those directly subjected to it. This ‘marginalisation’ may offer more room for manoeuvrability, for the adoption or development of, a model of professionalization which allows for levels of autonomy, allows for ‘doing professional’ to incorporate benefits for the

wider social good, and allows for alignment with the political elements of CDA and Critical Theory approaches, calling for social change, which resonated with my personal beliefs of 'being professional'. Consideration of whether this exclusion creates space for manoeuvrability is to follow.

The sense of my research 'potentially unravelling', evoked by this considerable change in my long held perception and understanding of the positioning of support staff, was further compounded, when part way through the research process, Lifelong Learning UK, the organisation behind the Strategy text, folded.

#### **5.6 A note about Lifelong Learning U.K. (LLUK).**

LLUK was formed in 2005 as a not-for-profit group, working on behalf of UK employers to secure the recruitment and development of suitably trained and qualified staff, they argue an interest in the wider social good, as their work "... will enable employees throughout the UK to access the learning they need, thus helping to build a prosperous and inclusive society" (LLUK, no date). LLUK's method was to, "... operate at a strategic level, taking responsibility for assembling labour market information, for developing standards and frameworks of qualifications, for building partnerships with funders and other key stakeholders, and for developing the voice of employers in the sector (LLUK, no date).

Under the UK 2010 Coalition Government, LLUK was disbanded in March 2011, with various elements of their responsibilities and work transferring

to other groups, "Monday, 04 April 2011 20:56. LLUK transfers responsibilities following closure: The Institute for Learning (IfL), the professional body for teachers and trainers across FE, has assumed certain responsibilities from the now closed Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) sector skills council" (FE News, 2011) and, "The new UK Qualifications and Skills (UKQS) team - working for the benefit of the lifelong learning sector - is now established within LSIS following the transfer from LLUK" (LSIS, 2011).

LLUK's closure and the subsequent distribution of roles, responsibilities and remits, entailed a period of transitional arrangements, "This was to be a temporary measure until March 2012 after which point a decision would be made, based on a consultation process with the sector, on a final destination for different parts of the footprint..." (CHYPS, 2011). LSIS (Learning and Skills Improvement Service) released a series of statements confirming they would continue to develop LLUK's endeavours to make certain there is consistency in standards, credentials and frameworks across the various institutions which constitute the lifelong learning sector (LSIS, 2011). As they state, "... as LSIS takes over this critical work please be assured that the commitment to making the UK lifelong learning workforce the best in the world remains unshakeable" (LSIS, 2011a).

In personal correspondence with the Director of UK Qualifications and Skills at LSIS, enquiring into the status of the Strategy, she confirmed, "The Strategy is therefore still current and relevant and for the sector to act

on and implement. There are many organisations operating in this arena, with different remits but all relating to the professionalization of the workforce, whether they work with individuals, organisations, providers, unions etc.” (Bance, 2011) (Appendix 8).

The closure of LLUK initially appeared as having the potential to render irrelevant the work of this study – if the Strategy folded with the organisation, then why concern ourselves with its effects and implications - but the professionalization agenda remained, with its Strategy, aims, guidance and intentions still valid and relevant to the FE sector and rendered this concern immaterial.

### **5.7 Some Implications**

This study’s methodological approach (influenced by CDA, Social Constructionism and Foucault’s work) enabled deconstruction of the messages, both explicit and implicit within the text, to understand the power at play and to consider what possibilities, limitations and opportunities this holds for FE sector staff, in terms of attaining, demonstrating, or even re-thinking professionalism. This is in line with Burr’s (2008) assertion that this approach is concerned with detecting discourses and exploring the connotations these may have for power relationships, subjectivity and one’s practice (p. 170).

The messages coming from the Strategy form a kind of flow, from ‘issue’, to ‘solution’, to finally postulating a ‘solution’ - which is influenced by the

NPM agenda and preferences a specific model of 'professional'. Surface readings give the impression that the professionalization agenda includes the entire FE workforce and is premised on an assumption that the agenda is socially useful and desirable. The literature review showed traditional professionalism features a number of beneficial aspects, such as the potential to foster a sense of long term commitment and service within individuals, to their profession, field and possibly also their individual institutions and the retention of knowledge and expertise within the field, which then remains 'available' for society to access and benefit from.

However the model promoted throughout the Strategy, all be it implicitly rather than overtly being stated, is more one of re-professionalism, which lacks or limits the possibility of autonomy for practitioners. The texts stipulate requirements for FE lecturers to attain new teaching qualifications, as Harkin found, "To be licensed all teachers must be trained to a standard that allows them to achieve either Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status or Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS) status [and] All teachers should undertake at least 30 hours of CPD a year..." (Harkin, 2008, p.3). This is combined with the Strategy establishing expectation for raising standards across the sector, "... the Government asked Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) to develop new professional teaching standards for the whole FE system, as announced in *Equipping our Teachers for the Future*<sup>1</sup>. These standards define what we expect of teachers, tutors and trainers..." (LLUK, 2006, p.i). Compelling professionals to attain certain (externally set) standards and specifically



named qualifications, before being considered 'professional' has potentially negative implications. Examples of the Strategy stipulating requirements to meet certain qualifications and standards, include:

The sector vision for the future includes a step change in the professionalism and quality of the sector's workforce (LLUK, 2009, p.6).

[The need to] Increase the quality of provision (LLUK, 2009, p.5).

The changes in required teaching qualifications do not just apply to 'new' recruits; in a move to align the credentials, of present staff, with this framework, existing teachers are also being coerced into achieving these new qualifications, as the IfL notes they are being (strongly) "... encouraged to do so as a demonstration of the currency of their teaching practice" (IfL, 2011). Forcing compliance overrides professional autonomy, potentially impacting on staff's sense of commitment to the sector, and subsequent long service – a benefit of the traditional model. Securing a professional's long term service and commitment to their vocation is beneficial to society as knowledge and expertise are retained (in the group) rather than being lost by disillusioned professionals leaving their role (or maybe even the sector). This knowledge and expertise then remains 'available' for society to access and benefit from and as the Strategy calls for building and retaining expertise within the sector, adopting an approach which puts this at risk could be a disadvantage. The restriction (or eradication) of professionals' autonomy may also limit any developments or advances that could have occurred 'organically', within the sector, as a result of professionals being able to exercise and employ

self-government and academic freedom, both of which also have the potential to impact upon societal benefits. This may be indicative of the interests lying behind the attempt to re-professionalise staff, for example, signifying a perception that professionals have too much power that needs curbing.

Exploring how the various 'parties' involved in FE, are positioned by the Strategy and professionalization agenda, is significant for highlighting relations and workings of power within the policy and the possibilities, limitations and opportunities this holds, in terms of attaining, demonstrating, or even re-thinking professionalism. The strategies and techniques, revealed in the analysis and findings chapters, combined to construct a range of positions for those involved in the Strategy's creation and dissemination and those subject to its remit and scope.

Inclusive pronoun use positioned the participants as collaborators in the professionalization agenda – evoking a sense of working toward a common shared goal, the improvement of the FE sector workforce. The *assumption* that all participants either 'believe' the sector need professionalising, are willing to work toward that goal, and/or accept the model the texts offer to achieve this is 'right' or suitable, manifests through the various validation and legitimisation techniques, discussed earlier. Similarly exclusive pronoun use, served to position 'others' as outside the group, its achievements and its 'understandings and values', as Hyatt

suggests they can be used to marginalise or 'other' participants as "... 'outsiders' with different beliefs and agendas" (Hyatt, 2005, p. 47).

The position of 'shared experience', created through inclusive use, makes alternative readings, or arguments against the 'claims', problematic, creating a sense that the recommendation is the (only) 'common-sense', normative, response. This is not to overlook that the Strategy offers one 'truth', one position on and perception of the 'problem' the government identifies and that this is just one of a number of different positions, held by different groups and others' positions are excluded, as discussed in this chapter's section 'Message from The Texts.

Exclusive pronouns are used, in the texts, to 'separate' participants, into what equates to groups of 'those who have already recognised the need for change, implemented the recommendations, and achieved (or are at least further down the road than others towards) professionalization' and 'those who have not'. (This is reinforced by the Guide comprising examples of the activities and achievements of the stakeholder group, with regard to their progress towards professionalization).

Its purpose is to support all employers in the sector in implementing their own workforce plans to ensure the delivery of excellent learning provision (LLUK, 2009, p.3).

To have a workforce of professionals who drive forward their own levels of expertise (LLUK, 2009, p.5).

This Strategy helps employers to formulate their own plans to achieve the priorities and themes and support their workforce through the changes that will make the vision attainable (LLUK, 2009, p.14).

This serves to 'separate' the clause's subjects, and those not named in that group – so author/s, stakeholders, national partners and reader/s become gathered into an (implied) group which is not subject to these requirements to 'change' – implying a presumption that this could be because they have already met them.

The implications of being positioned either inside, or external to, the grouping of 'having already progressed toward professionalization', examples power working through language-use. For participants positioned as 'not yet engaging with the professionalization agenda', this public separation of them, from those 'who have', facilitates a positioning of them as 'failing, not keeping up with their sector peers'. This in turn creates the possibility for 'competition', between or within these groupings, by pressuring the 'have nots' to catch up to the achievements of the 'haves', with the additional NPM agenda oriented factor, of 'being accountable', for why this has not yet, or does not happen, as below:

This provides the means to: identify and manage gaps in training, skills and resources; expose under-representation within the workforce; help the sector to be more accountable to government, community and learners; and allow a reliable assessment to be made of how successful the sector is in achieving the vision (LLUK, 2009, p.10).

Thus the power working through the texts' language use, to influence, shape, change and manage the behaviours of others (the have nots), together with the techniques used to exact it and to achieve the desired outcomes, is so subtly constructed it becomes 'taken and accepted' as the given; the norm; common-sense; matter of fact. Thus those subjected to

the power at play, become self-regulating – indeed, why would ‘we’ *not* want to be professional, to have an expert workforce, to have plans that means we can respond to the changing environment and needs of learners? This is not to suggest that everyone simply complies through self-regulation, even though this may be the hope of the Strategy author/s, as Foucault’s ‘model’ of power also offers opportunity for resistance, as shall be seen later.

Deconstruction of the texts highlighted an additional separation (noted earlier) when it was identified that requirements for ‘new’ qualifications and entitlements to register with an appropriate professional body, implicitly includes teaching staff, with no overt reference to the inclusion of support staff in this. What started as an all inclusive ‘we’, now features four sub-groups, the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ with regard to undertaking professionalization activities and similarly the ‘are’ and ‘are nots’, with regard to being included in the Strategy provisions made for the achievement and securing of said agenda.

This separation holds significance with regard to two sets of implications – one being that the Strategy preferences a specific model of ‘re-professionalization’, as the model teaching staff are ‘required’ to work to; the other being that, by absencing non-teaching staff from this, they sit externally to the provisions and requirements it entails.

Starting with the positioning of teaching staff – my initial interpretation was that this was then positioned as the privileged, preferred subject-position, with regard to the professionalization agenda. Teaching staff have their qualification framework; their continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities and entitlement; their registration body, indeed their professional status enshrined within this suite of policy texts (see below). The same could not be said for non-teaching staff and this felt as though a significant cohort of the FE sector were being overlooked, marginalised, or possibly, deliberately excluded.

The drive to improve the skills of, and to professionalise, the existing workforce has moved forward with a large number of initiatives offering continuing professional development and specialist skills training. The success of the Institute for Learning, the professional body for teachers and trainers across the sector, shows a real enthusiasm for raising the professionalism and standing of the practitioner workforce (LLUK, 2009, p.14).

However, subsequent readings facilitated an alternative interpretation. These entitlements and provisions come at a price – this re-modelling of what counts as ‘professional’ is externally imposed upon teaching staff, as are the benchmarks and criteria against which their professionalism will be measured. The Strategy author/s and other interested parties have directed what qualifications teaching staff should have, how much CPD they should undertake each year, what body they should register with and who they are accountable to (seen above). Thus, a key element of traditional professionalism, that it entails levels of autonomy for the profession and its members, has been restricted here. This re-professionalising of FE teaching staff, and the erosion of their professional

/ academic autonomy, replicates experiences of school teachers following the introduction of the National Curriculum. As Gillard (1988) noted, “The word 'delivery' has entered the educational vocabulary and seems to sum up the role of the teacher in the age of the National Curriculum...”, the implication being the de/re-professionalization of teachers, particularly with regard to their professional autonomy, highlighted by his observations that:

... that the teacher is to have a very limited say in the design and content of the curriculum and will not be trusted to effect arrangements or procedures for testing and assessment. His/her role will be to *deliver* what has been handed down from on high. (Gillard, 1988, no page).

Furthermore, through the creation of a quasi-market, within the FE sector - both in terms of educational provision and within and across staff - as exemplified in the analysis of NPM agenda oriented terminology – teaching staff are also positioned as being in ‘competition’. This includes being in competition with: existing colleagues, as seen by the IFL (2011) encouraging teaching staff, in-post prior to the September 2007 qualification changes, to also attain the ‘new’ teaching qualifications which had been introduced. Also with new sector recruits, as the Strategy calls for the sector to “... to attract new entrants and those recruited from within and outside the sector” (LLUK, 2009, p.6) and shifting customer requirements, in the shape of “... the changing needs of learners and their employers” (LLUK, 2009, p.1). Many of these factors are connected with addressing underlying concerns at the UK’s ability to compete globally, such as stressing “The further education sector needs to be able to respond to the many economic and social challenges that this country

faces” (LLUK, 2009, p.3). So the pressure on teaching staff to meet, or fit into this model of professionalism, postulated as a means for securing sector change and competition in a quasi-marketplace, is significant – which also limits the space for teaching staff to exert or employ levels of autonomy, as part of their professional status.

A final question regarding the ‘separation’ of the positioning of teaching staff links to a key issue for a CDA/critical theory approach to research would be to ask what opportunities or limitations, the imposition of this model of re-professionalising teaching staff, would bring with regard to benefitting a wider societal good or interest, as well as those of the group’s members.

Where then, does this leave those positioned outside this grouping – while not the subject of overtly expressed entitlements and requirements, they are also not subject to externally imposed benchmarks and criteria, against which their professionalism will be measured. Neither is there a stipulation about which professional bodies they should be registered with. The absencing of this group offers a potentially radical space for the development and directing of alternative approaches to defining and performing professionalism, incorporating the benefits for wider social good, raised above.

This notion is a key tenet of critical theory oriented approaches, which position personal development as being inexorably coupled with social



development, that is, change is not just about the individual person, but is also about social change. This is an important theme; that an inclusive professionalization agenda will have important *wider* benefits - for example here going beyond individual support staff, to a more inclusive system – which has featured in the alternative approaches to ‘professional’, considered throughout this piece. The critical theorist argument being that its approach goes further than positivist or interpretivist approaches, as it investigates and exposes, understands and considers interpretations, but then *seeks to be transformative* (emancipatory). This emancipatory, overtly active, factor is aligned with CDA’s ethos as the *critical* element of CDA is vital – for more than being descriptive, CDA approaches enable the identification of language-use where it is employed to promote and perpetuate certain interpretations of a matter, or ‘how things are’, while marginalising other interpretations that may resist or challenge these. Gee (2011) highlights how Critical Discourse Analysts “... want to speak to and, perhaps, intervene in, social or political issues, problems, and controversies in the world. They want to apply their work to the world in some fashion” (p. 9). By facilitating or signposting the possibility for intervention CDA takes research beyond the identification, description, exploration and communication of phenomena, into offering opportunities for addressing any inequalities or injustices which the research identifies (although not necessarily by that researcher, or by them alone or within the scope of the identifying study). For me, this is a crucial element of CDA in that having enabled the identification of the effects, that ‘language-in-use’ in the Strategy may have, together with facilitating an

understanding of how the language-use actually achieves these effects, there is a political/social change characteristic to CDA which promotes the addressing of the identified issue. It is to a consideration of this radical space and the possibilities it offers non-teaching staff, and conclusions drawn with regard to my research questions, that I now turn.

## Chapter Six: Conclusion

### 6.1 Reconstruct – How might things be done differently?

This study has adopted a CDA approach, the foundations of which are built on the premise that access to societal *and* resources capital is both inequitable and managed by those already 'in power'. Hyatt argues this institutional control of discourse is fundamental to CDA and its "... role is to uncloak the hidden power relations, largely constructed through language, and to demonstrate and challenge social inequities" (A.E.R.S., 2008). Smyth's four stage model for reflexive practice, proved a useful structure for revealing the powers and influences which impede and constrict practice, and enabled the identification of steps for challenging these. The final stage, which will be employed here, (having already explored the describe, inform and confront stages), echoes the tenets of CDA and critical theory approaches, aiming to "4. Reconstruct ... [ask] how might I do things differently?" (Smyth, 1989, pp. 5-6).

Revisiting the study's research questions, offers an opportunity to summarise the main conclusions reached and to create a foundation for exploring the reconstruct stage, to ask how things might be done differently.

## **6.2 My primary research question - To what extent does The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012 include college support staff in the professionalization agenda?**

Analysis showed that the Strategy states its scope, aims and requirements are applicable to all who work in the FE sector (LLUK, 2009, p3). Predominantly, when referring to FE 'staff', rather than using nomenclature like teaching or support staff, terms such as the workforce, employers, professionals, experts or practitioners, were used. Terms which arguably could be applied to teaching, training *or* support staff, strengthening the appearance that the Strategy encompasses and provides for all staff. However, deconstruction of the Strategy and its sister texts, revealed that in the elements expressly setting out the requirements of, and provisions made for, the professionalization of the FE sector workforce, there was an absencing of non-teaching staff. That said, the findings do not concretely, specifically include *or* exclude non-teaching staff from the professionalization agenda – they are just not directly referred to: they are absent.

The position adopted by this study argues that this absencing, when read with other contradictions in the text, could serve to evoke different readings and understandings, for different readers, dependent upon their context, experience and ontological, epistemological and methodological position. For example, the naming of CPD and qualification requirements for teaching staff could be read as overlooking, marginalising or concretely

excluding non-teaching staff. Equally it could be read as simply naming the details for one specific group of sector staff, as an example of what provision and requirements could be, or have been, established. My initial engagement with the Strategy, (prior to embarking on this investigation) evoked a powerful interpretation of non-teaching staff being excluded from the professionalization agenda.

However one value of deconstructing text is that it enables consideration of a new 'reality' – that rather than being overtly excluded, if support staff were just absent in the text and consequently from its recommendations, provisions and model of re-professionalism - could offer a radical space for non-teaching staff. A space that could, for example, facilitate development of a model of professionalism in line with the notion of contributing to a wider societal good (further discussion to follow). That is not to say, that because support staff are absent does not mean that they will escape measures, structures, or practices of new professionalism. As, for example, seen by my institutions' Staff Development plan, imposed on all staff (teaching or non) and which was significantly influenced by the agenda underpinning The Strategy.

Complementary questions were:

### **6.3 What elements within this policy text serve to include/exclude support staff or to subordinate their professionalization, to the professionalization of teaching staff?**

CDA analysis facilitated the identification of various language-use techniques, which evoked the interpretation here, of them 'othering or absenting' (rather than excluding), the professionalization of support staff. These included the use of items such as adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and verbal processes and devices such as absenting and contradiction.

While acknowledging the possibility for varied interpretations of language-use, Laugharne and Baird (2009), when considering their analyses of policy text, also maintain that "Studying the differential use of such words has the potential to demonstrate attitude or perspective in a text" (p.227).

So while these texts may evoke differing interpretations, it is worthy to note that this ambiguity over the inclusion of support staff may be intentional, on the part of the Strategy author/s and may stem from a number of reasons. For example, not directly naming a group of staff, when setting out the entitlement for CPD provision, may be indicative of an ethos of financial prudence, (saving costs by not directly including non-teaching staff in the 'need' for additional training). As Laugharne and Baird also note, "Although words are not absolute and can usually be interpreted in several ways, frequencies of reference and reference gaps tell us something about not only policy, but also the context in which policy is created" (Laugharne and Baird, 2009, p.238).

#### **6.4 Are inclusionary/exclusionary elements replicated in related college policy texts?**

To contextualise these findings and issues, within a lived example of current practice, I considered them in relation to my institution's Staff Training and Development Plan 2009/10. Here professionalism is depicted as the process of conducting oneself in line with specific college guidance, stating "Professionalism is the focus upon working to professional standards and developing professional practice in the framework provided by college policies and procedures" (Anon, 2009, p.3). Adopting one aspect of 'traditional models', this approach to professionalism incorporates elements of specific (privileged) knowledge, "... development of the College is dependent on ensuring that all staff build on and enhance their existing skills and expertise" (Anon, 2009, p.2). However, it concurrently departs from traditional approaches in expecting compliance to (externally) set standards rather than facilitating professional autonomy, stating "Professionalism is the focus upon working to professional standards and developing professional practice in the framework provided by college policies and procedures" (Anon, 2009, p.3). These contradictory portrayals of the composite elements of 'doing professional' resonate with Randle and Brady's (1997) suggestion, that for some, the emergence of the NPM agenda stimulated the development of new hypotheses with regard to the tensions encountered by 'professionalism'. That the conflict, between attempts to retain 'traditional' interpretations of professionalism and the drive to secure the market oriented demands of new managerialism, found some authors couching the struggle in terms of a "...

‘de-skilling’ or ‘de-professionalisation’ thesis to describe the undermining of the professional paradigm” (Randle and Brady, 1997, p.134).

During the process of this study, the college has undergone a significant restructuring, which is entailing the review and updating of college wide policies (this specific policy is now three years old), which impacted on the ability to consider the study’s findings, with regard to college texts. The upshot of this is that, there is now the potential, as part of the college management team, to employ the awareness created by this study, when re-drafting policy texts. To really consider language-use techniques and devices and the potential outcomes and consequences they may herald.

### **6.5 Why might support staff be excluded from the discourse on professionalism?**

This research question reflects the original concern that influenced the starting point for this study – that support staff were being excluded from the discourse on professionalism. Yet as the research developed the focus shifted from the original question above, to consider not just support staff exclusion but also the underlying messages in the text and the implications of these, in light of the discovery that support staff were not being *overtly* excluded.

I have touched on some possible grounds for the ‘absenting’ of this group, including issues such as cost implications, but there is another significant possible explanation for this absenting, linked to the NPM agenda and



marketization of the education sector. That is, Strategy themes are underpinned by the notion of competition, of being accountable, of working to meet the changing needs of learners (customers) and their future employers. This marketization theme is a key feature of the Strategy's messages - and the implied perception of a there being a national skills shortage which is impacting on the UK's ability to compete globally - and that the answer lies (in part) within FE sector reform. At its most basic, the perception instigating these messages is that learners are leaving FE without the skills and capabilities their future employers 'want/need' to compete. Furthermore, this perception lends weight to subsequent Strategy arguments of needing to address the issues within FE which are suspected to be perpetuating this position – arguably being that, if learners leave FE without what is 'needed', questions should be asked of FE 'teaching'. Consequently, locating the 'problem' within a specific element of the sector, provokes responses aimed at intervening in this specific element – hence the focus on professionalizing teaching staff and also on making them more accountable for any future failures. Conversely being able to quantify the contribution non-teaching staff make to learner outcomes, is problematic, preferencing the focus on elements that can be quantified and linked to measurable outcomes.

**6.6 The workforce professionalization agenda is rooted in an assumption that professionalism (or a specific model of professionalism) is a good thing: is the approach adopted by this agenda beneficial to those it targets for professionalization?**

The Strategy's approach is premised on the assumption that the professionalization agenda for FE sector staff is socially useful and desirable.

Traditional models of professionalism feature a number of positive and beneficial aspects, such as; the attainment of specific qualifications and levels of expertise; levels of professional autonomy and freedom; the potential to foster a sense of long term commitment and service within individuals, to their profession, field and possibly also their individual institutions and the retention of knowledge and expertise within the field, which then remains 'available' for society to access and benefit from.

However the Strategy's approach is more a model of re-professionalism, which is promoted (implicitly) throughout the policy and its sister texts, which lacks or limits the possibility of autonomy for practitioners. The Strategy stipulates new requirements for teaching qualifications, together with laying down the expectation for raising standards across the sector. This compels professionals to attain certain eligibility criteria, to be considered 'professional', and portends negative connotations. Forcing professions into compliance to such (externally) set standards may impact negatively upon their sense of commitment and the likelihood of fostering long service. It may also limit any developments or advances that could have occurred 'organically', within the sector, as a result of professionals' autonomy and academic freedom, both of which also have the potential to impact upon societal benefits.

So on balance, the approach adopted by this agenda, is less beneficial for those it targets for professionalization, than traditional (or alternative) models. It stipulates new qualification requirements, imposes a regime of measurable standards and targets for achievement and performance and is founded on facilitating maximum answerability to external 'inspectors' (for example Ofsted and the general public). All of which is inflicted on a field of practitioners whose existing expertise, experience and professionalism is sidelined and where the benefits proffered by professional autonomy are forgone, all in the endeavour to ensure standardised accountability.

Having identified how various roles are positioned in relation to, within and through the Strategy's devices and techniques, resulted in a sense of dismay, as initial engagement with the policy had evoked an interpretation that non-teaching staff were overtly being excluded from the provisions laid out within the professionalization agenda. This initial interpretation had long fostered a sense of resistance to and resentment at, what I considered my 'professional group', being 'excluded' from this agenda and its provisions. So with deconstructive analysis highlighting an ambiguity about the extent to which support staff are included and provided for by this professionalization text, rather than being overtly excluded, resulted in a sense of needing to stop and step back and reflect.

This process of reflection created a deeper understanding of the narrative surrounding and informing my research journey (discussed earlier) and

also stimulated acknowledgment that my 'original' perception of the positioning of support staff in the professionalization agenda (held even when starting this study) had been challenged and re-configured by the research process.

This 'new' understanding of and re-defining of my interpretation of the positions proffered by the Strategy text, combined with the revelation and re-positioning inspired by discussions with my supervisor, offered a radical space to move forward again.

What this space offers is the opportunity to use this different vantage point to really see the gaps in my old ways of understanding the situation and to take advantage of support staff not being overtly subjected to the Strategy's model of re-professionalisation. It enables consideration of the elements of personal and professional significance to me – being the opportunity to model or perform a style of professionalism that incorporates opportunity for using support staff expertise for the common good and wider public benefit. It also affords opportunity to work on the overtly political aim of achieving social change, which CDA and critical theory approaches preference as important components of any study. This is combined with having developed an understanding of how the Strategy 'does what it does', how devices and techniques of language-use can evoke varying effects and implications for audiences, which offers the possibility to 'avoid', or at least more readily identify these in future 'texts'. This understanding also offers the possibility for consideration of how such

devices may be at play, in the process of re-drafting college policy texts, as mentioned earlier. As part my college's 'new' management team, I am able to employ the awareness created by this study, when tasked with re-drafting the policy texts for which I am responsible. For example, when recently updating the Student Services Statement of Services, I conducted a 'mini' CDA analysis of the text, combined with asking a range of teaching and support staff colleagues and students to give feedback on the draft, to assess whether the language-use was clear to understand; was inclusive, encompassed the policy's varied audiences and achieved its aims.

This 'new' vantage point also offers the possibility for understanding the subject-positions constructed through the Strategy, as an enabling factor, rather than a limiting one. Adopting Foucault's suggestion, "Where there is power, there is resistance..." (Foucault, 1976, p.95), finds that what was once perceived as a 'tool' of repression (a means for excluding support staff from the professionalization agenda) can become re-positioned as an opportunity for resistance. If those in power seek to achieve the (re)professionalization of the FE workforce, through the imposition of a specific model, via the Strategy, which overlooks or absents support staff, this absencing offers support staff a number of resistance opportunities. At its most 'radical' this could mean support staff actively disengaging with the professionalization agenda, as arguably the policy does not (overtly) include them in its target group/s. Similar responses were found by Randle and Brady (1997) as they considered lecturers' responses to changes heralded by the emergence of new managerialism, which "... met

resistance from staff in the form of both covert and overt action. The former includes non-cooperation with official surveys and a failure to return questionnaires. Overt resistance can be seen in the dispute over new contracts...” (Randle and Brady, 1997a, p.231). Conversely given Evetts’ (2005) assertion that “... the discourse of professionalism can be analysed as a powerful instrument of occupation change” (p.3), support staff could use their absencing in the Strategy as the opportunity to drive, or contribute to dialogue and/or action on their own occupational change – to push to secure the development of a suitable model of support staff professionalism (given they sit outside the model dictated, for non-support staff, by the Strategy).

## **6.7 What Next?**

In terms of what the next step of this journey could be, this radical space and re-positioning of my interpretation and understanding, has stimulated fresh impetus to ‘champion’ the professionalism of non-teaching staff, certainly within my own institution, and hopefully beyond. Here, Smyth’s (1989) final, reconstruction, stage, prompts the asking of ‘... how might I do things differently?’ (Smyth, 1989, pp. 5-6) and is particularly useful, given CDA and critical theory’s political element – that of driving social change.

The intention for undertaking this study had long been to position it as a ‘starting point’, facilitating a thorough exploration of the various Strategy texts, their messages, the techniques employed to convey these, and the

interpretations the language-use evoked in my readings of them. The future aim then being to progress by exploring others' interpretations and readings of them, while using these various comprehensions to help inform the development of a model for understanding, 'capturing' and evidencing how support staff perform 'professional'. The restructuring in my institution holds significant potential for these aims, with a new Principal keen to celebrate and build upon the personal and professional achievements of the college's staff, and open to exploring future research possibilities. Sitting alongside this are considerations of CPD provision for this group and explorations of how, or whether, it is possible, for a group comprising a diverse and disparate range of 'roles', to develop an inclusive model of professionalism that is developed and owned by those *inside* the group. This aim echoes with Briggs' work exploring middle managers in FE colleges, which indicated:

... there is not only a need to understand professionalism but also a need for professionalism to be shared throughout the organisation ... [and] ... should comprise a shared understanding of the issues, values and principles underpinning college operation, and a valuing of each of the college's constituent parts... [and] ... Further research, which directly investigated the differing perceptions of professionalism and the extent of shared identification with the concept, would provide valuable insight into these issues (Briggs, 2004, p.598).

The difficulty comes when trying to formulate the practical steps that could be undertaken to start this process. Discussions or attempts to envisage the shape or component elements of a 'new' model keep returning to 'associating' professional with existing factors. That is the role of

qualifications, experience, knowledge, demonstrating professional behaviours and the matter of autonomy - factors common to the various models considered throughout this study – are a persistent feature of analysing or trying to capture ‘what it means to do/be professional’. To what extent though, would setting these criteria, *within* the group, be an advance on their being externally set, as with the Strategy’s model of re-professionalization. In addition, how would the political element be satisfied – how could the wider societal good, be benefitted through the professionalism of FE support staff? Furthermore, promoting an approach of setting criteria within/inside the group (as a means of moving away from externally imposed governance) might suggest a professionalism that is a bit inward looking and cut off. Consequently I would argue for an approach that echoes Nixon’s arguments for a ‘new professionalism’ based on dialogue with stakeholder groups (Nixon *et al* 2001).

Researching ‘models’ or understandings of professionalism evoked a sense of arguments about the ‘struggle’ to balance a desire to retain (elements of) the ‘traditional’ characteristics, while working in/with an increasingly ‘marketized’ environment and being subject to externally imposed benchmarks and accountability, seemed locked in a form of dichotomy – positioning ‘professional’ as being a matter of state-control versus self-determination, with little middle ground. However, Gleeson and Shain offer the space for an alternative reading, arguing:

If at one level, market and managerial reform in FE is seen to have undermined professionalism and collegiality, at another, it has paradoxically exposed anomalies and myths



surrounding the very existence of such values. That being the case what new constructions of professionalism are emerging from a system acknowledged by many to be in crisis? If there was no 'golden age' of FE how are we to make sense of what is happening now? (Gleeson and Shain, 1999, pp.486-487).

Suggesting that a 'golden age' of FE self-determined professionalism and autonomy was perhaps an 'exaggeration' enables the arguments, and potentially future models, to be positioned on more of a continuum, moving from state-control to self-determination, with perhaps the most suitable, and attainable 'compromise', being a position somewhere in the middle. If support staff can utilise this interpretation, it may facilitate an easier dialogue with the various FE stakeholders (e.g. employers, governors, students) when working to develop a 'new' model, rather than the entrenched positions of a dichotomy. As Gleeson and Shain suggest:

... by drawing on residual elements of public sector professionalism and reworking these values within the context of an incorporated and marketised model of FE, strategic compliers present a challenge to managerialism suggesting that professionalism is not a fixed or static concept but is rather subject to social, political and cultural definition ... [one] ... possibility is to see it as a basis for rethinking professionalism in the FE sector and for raising new questions about the way in which professionalism can be reworked and pursued in *preferred* way (Gleeson and Shain, 1999, p.488).

With regard to this study, when starting out I (perhaps like many lone research students) envisaged a piece that would change my field and emancipate my fellow support staff. Realistically, perhaps more significantly, deconstructing the Strategy that brought about various actions to professionalise the FE workforce, radically changed my interpretation of support staff's position in this agenda. The literature

review also emphasised the shifting nature of defining, understanding and 'doing' professionalism – which arguably benefit from the contribution to and ownership by the 'group' being/doing professional. The radical space offered by this changed position also prompted me to recognise that in some small way, FE support staff are potentially already engaged in the process of positioning their own professionalism 'on the continuum' - in that the group, by being absented in the Strategy's agenda, is not having its professionalism externally imposed. So valuable next steps could be to explore other support staff's interpretation of the Strategy and to explore their interpretations of professionalism and the ways in which they demonstrate and perform this. My intention is to strive for the opportunity to explore this within my own institution and with Student Services colleagues, working in other colleges, to understand, evidence and ensure, the professional behaviours and values of this group, together with how these behaviours are employed in contributing to the benefitting of learners, colleagues, the institution and wider societal good. And while I may need to acknowledge, that the ability of a lone research student to wholly change the face of support staff professionalism is over ambitious, my work may affect social change in my own institution and may also provoke others to action in theirs, and thus development may take the form of gradual osmosis, rather than overnight explosion.

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## Appendices





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## **The Workforce Strategy** for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012

Revised version: 2009-2010

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This document has been produced by Lifelong Learning UK in consultation with, and on behalf of, partners and providers within the further education system.

Lifelong Learning UK would like to thank all the partners and providers who have contributed to this document.

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## Preface



I am delighted to introduce the revised version of the first *Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012*, and I would like to

thank the many people who have contributed to this document.

The first strategy, designed to help shape the future further education workforce, was published in 2007. This revised version, refreshed with the help of individual providers, their national representatives and national partners, summarises the original workforce strategy priorities and themes and explains why, following consultation, two new themes have been added.

The development of the first strategy was an ambitious aim for all of us working in the sector. Identifying the four priorities for workforce development was a first step towards helping focus work at national level and supporting providers across the further education sector to implement the strategy.

We need a workforce who can embrace change and respond positively to the opportunities and challenges it brings. The world we are operating in has changed dramatically over the last six months and, more than ever, providers need to understand the changing needs of learners and their employers.

It is vital for us all in England to ensure that the entire further education workforce is appropriately trained, has the flexibility to respond to these changing needs and is recruiting the best people from a wide talent

pool. The two new strategic themes around leadership and management; and a flexible, fair and supportive working environment will help to further shape and enhance our work towards achieving the aims of the strategy.

In 2008, we produced a companion implementation plan to the workforce strategy. This year, we have worked with providers and national partners to create a guide for providers to implement the workforce strategy (*Implementing the Workforce Strategy: A Guide for Learning Providers*) and a national partner discussion document (*Implementing the Workforce Strategy: An Overview of National Partner Contributions*). We are also working with national partners to develop further accessible resources to use for their own workforce planning and development and to help make links with the national improvement agenda for the sector.

I would like to congratulate you for all your work in the last year and hope that you will continue to work with us to achieve our vision for the further education workforce.

David Hunter  
Chief Executive, Lifelong Learning UK

**'National Partners'** describes those organisations within the sector that are working with Lifelong Learning UK at a national level to support the implementation of this strategy. They include: government departments; sector organisations such as the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, the Institute for Learning, the Learning and Skills Improvement Service and the Learning and Skills Council; and unions, professional bodies and provider representative bodies.

## Introduction

The *Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England* was designed to help shape the future workforce in the sector. Its purpose is to support all employers in the sector in implementing their own workforce plans to ensure the delivery of excellent learning provision.

This strategy has been designed not only to equip staff to meet today's demands on the further education sector, but also to look ahead and anticipate what employers, communities and learners will want from the sector over the next five years. The further education sector needs to be able to respond to the many economic and social challenges that this country faces. The strategy needs to build on the existing strengths of the workforce, and to enhance the development of a highly professional and expert workforce for the future. This requires highly skilled staff that are ready to seize opportunities for ongoing personal and career development, and are able to adapt to new and challenging roles that will develop as the range and nature of provision changes.

The strategy covers the whole workforce of the sector. As such it is applicable to all employees in:

- further education colleges
- sixth form colleges
- specialist colleges
- publicly funded work based learning providers
- local authority or voluntary and community sector learning providers (also known as adult and community learning providers)
- offender learning providers.

**'Employers'** describes learning providers in the sector who employ the workforce encompassed by the strategy and implementation guide.



This will include some third sector provision in receipt of public funding.

Everyone in these organisations, together with Lifelong Learning UK and other national organisations in the sector, has a role in fulfilling the vision for the workforce in the sector. Everyone affects, and is affected by, the strategy.

*Pursuing Excellence*, the National Improvement Strategy for the sector developed by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, sets out in Aim 3 that: "The further education system continuously improves so that colleges and providers aspire to and achieve excellence, and no provision is unsatisfactory". The *Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector* contributes to this aim.

## The future of the further education sector workforce

### A clear direction: strategic context

The Government has established a clear direction for the future of the education and skills sector. By 2020 the sector needs to provide 14 to 19 learners with a greater choice of high standard academic and vocational programmes. The sector needs to provide adult learners with access to excellent provision for basic skills, training for work and learning for personal development, including locally delivered accessible higher education through further education colleges. Businesses need to have a direct and productive relationship with a transformed and responsive network of providers committed to meeting regional and sub-regional skills needs.



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## Responding to change

As a response to changes in the machinery of government, government policy directives, learner demands, technological change and increasing global competition, the further education sector has identified five changes that are required in developing the sector for the future:

- 1 Increase the quality of provision.
  - 2 Establish flexibility in the design and delivery of learning and skills programmes – including exploiting existing and emerging technologies – for the workplace and the community.
  - 3 Promote the benefits of learning and skills development, and of qualification achievement.
  - 4 Develop a range of partnerships to stimulate and respond to demands for learning.
  - 5 Increase participation from learners of all ages and backgrounds.
- 

## A vision for the further education workforce

To support these far-reaching changes, the further education sector has developed a shared vision for the workforce and a strategy to achieve it. The vision and strategy have been developed through consultation within the sector, facilitated by Lifelong Learning UK.

## The vision is:

To have a workforce that is highly skilled, qualified and committed to continuing professional development

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To have a workforce of professionals who drive forward their own levels of expertise

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To have a workforce that is flexible enough to meet the changing needs of learners and their employers

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To have a workforce that is excellent at designing, delivering and supporting learning including making effective use of the potential of technology to deliver improved outcomes for learners

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To have a workforce that can provide learning effectively in a variety of physical and technological settings including both educational and workplace environments

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To have a workforce that reflects the diversity of the sector's customer base.

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## A strategy for success

Underpinning the following priorities are ten categories, or *themes*, of workplace development activities to be carried out by the stakeholders. The priorities and themes contained in the strategy support the achievement of the vision.

**'Stakeholders'** includes national partners and learning providers in the sector.

### Priority 1

#### Understanding the nature of the workforce

The sector vision for the future includes a step change in the professionalism and quality of the sector's workforce. This can only be achieved by having a thorough understanding of the current and future workforce, gathered in a systematic way at regular intervals throughout the implementation of the strategy.

##### Why is this a priority?

- Reliable information on the workforce and its diversity supports forecasting, policy development and decision making at national and local level.
- Reliable assessment of workforce skills enables employers to predict the specific needs of their workforce as the environment changes.
- High-quality information about the sector workforce and context enables the strategy itself to be developed as circumstances change.

### Priority 2

#### Attracting and recruiting the best people

In order to provide a first-rate experience for all learners, it is essential that the sector identifies, attracts and recruits outstanding individuals from a diverse talent pool. The sector needs to attract new entrants and those recruited from within and outside the sector need to be adaptable and committed to developing their careers and skills.

##### Why is this a priority?

- Providers need to meet the changing needs of the 14 to 19 curricula and the learning requirements of the increasing numbers of 16 to 19 year olds staying on in education.
- As the environment becomes increasingly demand-led, it is vital that providers can respond with flexibility to the changing requirements of learners and their employers.
- The workforce needs to reflect and understand the diversity of its learner base and the local communities it serves so that it provides an inclusive and responsive approach to meet needs more effectively.



### Priority 3

#### Retaining and developing the modern, professionalised workforce

As the sector faces a changing environment, it is vital that the skills and knowledge of the workforce remain comprehensive, relevant and current and that staff are confident in the use of digital technology. This requires an effective professional development system for all levels of the workforce. The sector also needs to retain experienced staff who can provide this professionalism.

##### Why is this a priority?

- To support staff in a changing and challenging environment, sector employers need to be committed to the personal and professional development of their workforce.
- The sector requires a workforce that can adapt to the changing needs of the business environment and society. This ability to adapt can be achieved through professional development and building on experience.
- Professionals need to continually reflect on and develop their skills and expertise towards excellence.



### Priority 4

#### Ensuring equality and diversity are at the heart of strategy, policy-making, planning and training

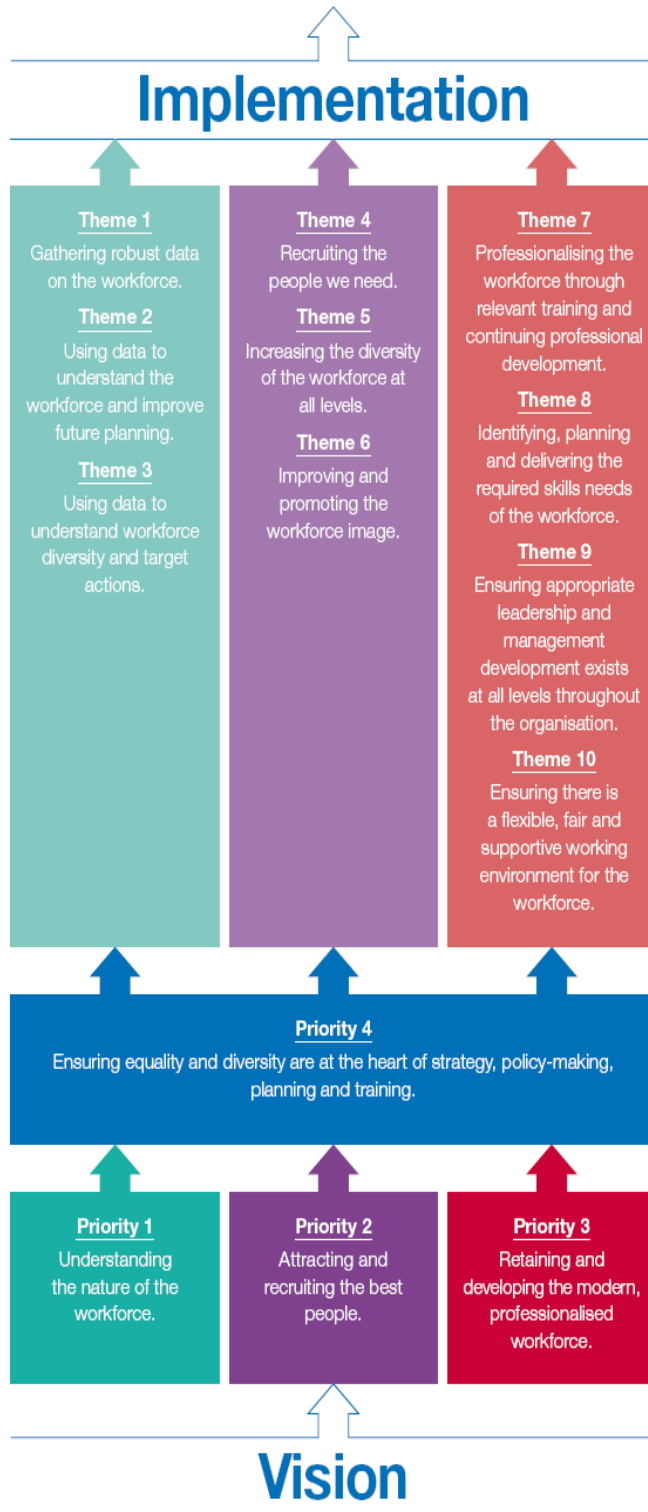
One advantage of the British workforce is its diverse nature but it is only an advantage if individuals can participate on an equal basis. The influence of the sector on individual learners, their employers and their communities can be profound. It is important therefore that the sector presents a workforce that reflects and understands the diverse communities of which it is a part.

##### Why is this a priority?

- Ensuring equality of opportunity and outcome within the sector enables employers to draw on the widest talent pool possible.
- The promotion of equality and diversity results in social and economic benefits and is a legal requirement.
- Active promotion demonstrates fairness within the further education sector workforce and sets a model for others.



## The journey from vision to implementation



## 04: A strategy for success

### Strategic themes

The strategic priorities will be achieved by a series of workplace activities grouped into ten categories or strategic themes.

When achieved, these will ensure that the sector has realised its vision for the future. Everyone involved in the achievement of these themes needs to understand the aims of each and their own role in implementation.

Last year's strategy was based around eight themes. In the consultations with the sector to review the workforce strategy this year, it was felt by employers and national partners that the addition of two further themes would enhance the achievement of priority 3. These are included as themes 9 and 10.

### Priority 1 themes

#### Understanding the nature of the workforce

##### 1 Gathering robust data on the workforce

Data required for producing current, reliable and robust intelligence on the whole workforce, and on sector workforce needs, is being defined and collected by Lifelong Learning UK in consultation with, and supported by, the Information Authority, employers and other stakeholders in the sector. Making links with data available from other sources regarding parts of the workforce, such as those registered with the Institute for Learning, will help strengthen the overall understanding of the sector workforce. This provides the means to: identify and manage gaps in training, skills and resources; expose under-representation within the workforce; help the sector to

be more accountable to government, community and learners; and allow a reliable assessment to be made of how successful the sector is in achieving the vision.

##### 2 Using data to understand the workforce and improve future planning

Lifelong Learning UK is analysing and interpreting data, policy and market information to produce and disseminate intelligence that can be used for planning at local and national levels. At the same time, this allows the provision of information to inform national policy-making and provide information on workforce effectiveness.

##### 3 Using data to understand workforce diversity and target actions

In gathering and analysing workforce intelligence, particular attention needs to be paid to improving capacity to identify and manage under-representation within organisations. Such intelligence enables the identification of necessary actions and provides evidence to justify targeted interventions to promote diversity within the workforce.



## 04: A strategy for success

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### Priority 2 themes

#### Attracting and recruiting the best people

##### 4 Recruiting the people we need

A key part of the vision is to build a fully professionalised workforce and ensure that professional behaviours are evident across the workforce. Stakeholders are working to improve the supply of suitable candidates by providing flexible opportunities for entry by 'non-traditional' candidates such as those from industry, and by improved career progression across post-14 learning providers. The individuals who are recruited need to be professionally qualified, and registered with an appropriate professional body.

##### 5 Increasing the diversity of the workforce at all levels

The diversity profile of the workforce needs to be representative of the learners and communities it serves. National partners are committed to supporting ways of increasing the numbers of staff from groups that are currently under-represented, particularly within senior management and leadership roles. Employers have the primary role in recruiting staff. In addition, employers contribute to workforce diversity by engaging in national pilots or direct action.

### Priority 3 themes

#### Retaining and developing the modern, professionalised workforce

##### 6 Improving and promoting the workforce image

The sector fulfils a vital role in educating young people and providing skills development for young people and adults. In this regard, employers and other stakeholders in the sector need to work to promote a positive professional image and a greater appreciation of the high levels of skills and knowledge of the workforce amongst the public and industry. The profile of a career in the further education sector in England needs to be raised.

##### 7 Professionalising the workforce through relevant training and continuing professional development

Staff need to be supported through initial training and qualifications, induction and professional formation to achieve professional status. The whole workforce should be encouraged to undertake continuing professional development to ensure skills stay current and relevant. Skills needs in relation to new technology and wider employability skills such as communication, team working and problem solving need to be met. Employers and individuals need to have a continuing professional development strategy.

##### 8 Identifying, planning and delivering the required skills needs of the workforce

Sector employers need to anticipate and meet the workforce requirements to satisfy changing learner needs and social,

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economic and technological changes at both national and local level. They need to work closely with industry and learners to plan and deliver courses that meet the identified skills needs. They need to develop the capacity of the workforce to deliver the new 14 to 19 curricula to increasing numbers of learners. A more flexible workforce is needed to accommodate these changes.

Themes 9 and 10 are the new themes that have been introduced following consultation with employers in the sector. It was felt that these new themes would emphasise some important elements of the strategy that were previously inferred within other themes.

**9 Ensuring appropriate leadership and management development exists at all levels throughout the organisation**

This is a new strategic theme this year, recognising that the achievement of the strategy is highly dependent on management and leadership skills and expertise, particularly in times of change. Employers and other stakeholders in the sector must continue to make commitments to invest in training and development in order to raise the management skills and ability of staff throughout organisations and the sector. At national level, partners need to identify opportunities to maximise support including leadership of professional development for all staff.

**10 Ensuring there is a flexible, fair and supportive working environment for the workforce**

This is another new strategic theme. By supporting staff and offering flexible and fair working, employers help to ensure continued commitment and good retention of staff, and may facilitate greater diversity within the workforce. Employers establishing

a supportive environment with a strong focus on development opportunities for their workforce may also benefit by attracting people who might not have previously considered a career in the sector. Again, national partners need to identify ways of supporting this theme.

## **Priority 4**

### **Ensuring equality and diversity are at the heart of strategy, policy-making, planning and training**

Promotion of equality and diversity is an important part of workforce planning. Sector employers need to ensure that the diversity of their workforce reflects local and national demographic profiles, as well as learner backgrounds. Priority 4 is an integral tenet of the strategy and its impact can be seen within the other priorities and themes described above. As such, it has no specific themes. Its relationship to the other priorities and themes is illustrated graphically in the diagram on page 9.



## What next?

In the last year, stakeholders have overwhelmingly shown their support for the strategy through developing and implementing plans and undertaking projects that move towards the vision of excellence in the workforce. Together, we have all begun to address the priorities highlighted by this strategy.

As a result of consultation with the sector, the transformation of workforce data collection is underway. The resulting data and its analysis will give all in the sector a more complete understanding of the workforce on which to build future planning.

Through a variety of projects and initiatives, Lifelong Learning UK and national partners are working to assist organisations to attract and develop new talent and to promote diversity in the workforce that reflects the communities in which they work.

The drive to improve the skills of, and to professionalise, the existing workforce has moved forward with a large number of

initiatives offering continuing professional development and specialist skills training. The success of the Institute for Learning, the professional body for teachers and trainers across the sector, shows a real enthusiasm for raising the professionalism and standing of the practitioner workforce.

A number of national partner organisations have addressed issues of equality and diversity with conferences, workshops and bulletins designed to support employers in this area. With the publication of the *Annual Workforce Diversity Profile 2008*, Lifelong Learning UK can now give access to better data than ever before regarding diversity in the workforce. This will help inform employer planning and target setting.

The workforce strategy is ambitious but employers and national partners alike have taken on board the challenges and have moved the strategy forward. Stakeholders continuing to work together in this way will bring the vision within reach.

National partners are both continuing existing work and planning new initiatives designed to promote and implement the strategy with employers in the sector. This strategy helps employers to formulate their own plans to achieve the priorities and themes and support their workforce through the changes that will make the vision attainable.





In order to support employers and national partners, Lifelong Learning UK has produced the following suite of publications and tools available from [www.lluk.org/feworkforcestrategy.htm](http://www.lluk.org/feworkforcestrategy.htm)

**For Employers:**

- The provider guide *Implementing the Workforce Strategy: A Guide for Learning Providers* gives employers an overview of the changing context within the sector and sets out the initiatives being undertaken by national partners to support the work of employers in the sector.
- The 'toolkit' being developed by Lifelong Learning UK in consultation with sector employers will provide more detailed support such as case studies, templates and frameworks. Visit the website for more information.

**For National Partners:**

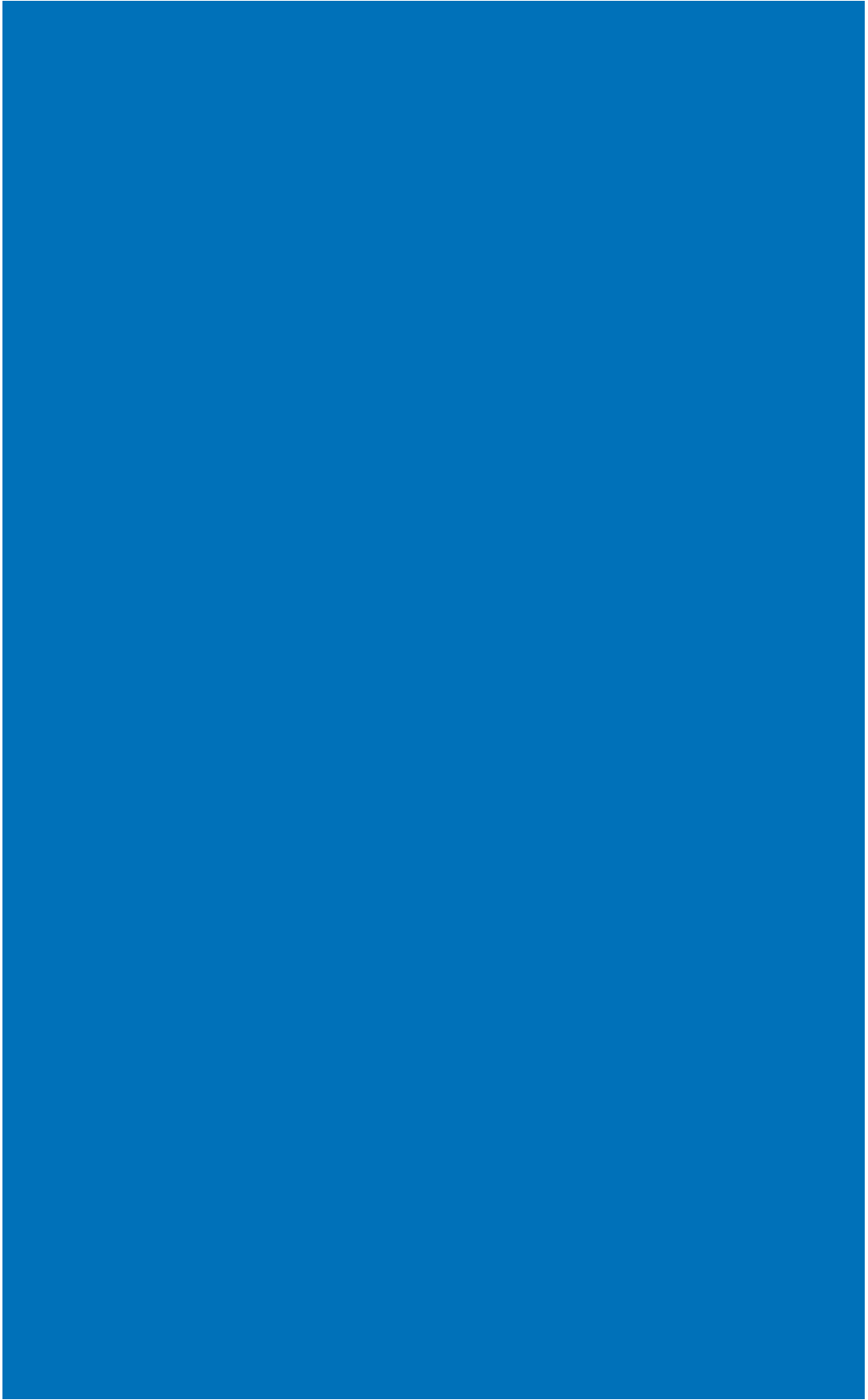
- *Implementing the Workforce Strategy: An Overview of National Partner Contributions* will be a working document to support national partners in the co-ordination, management and design of projects and activities that support the achievement of the strategy and vision.

The strategy and guide for learning providers are refreshed each year and Lifelong Learning UK welcomes your comments on the usefulness of these tools and documents. Please contact us via the website to send us your comments.

An evaluation of the first year of *The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector, 2007-2012* can be found at [www.lluk.org/feworkforcestrategy.htm](http://www.lluk.org/feworkforcestrategy.htm)

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## Notes







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Skills for Learning Professionals

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## **Implementing the Workforce Strategy**

for the Further Education Sector  
in England, 2007-2012

### **A Guide for Learning Providers**

Revised version: 2009-2010

## Contents

This document has been produced by Lifelong Learning UK in consultation with, and on behalf of, partners and providers within the further education system.

Lifelong Learning UK would like to thank all the partners and providers who have contributed to this document.

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## Preface



I am delighted to introduce the first *Guide for Learning Providers* to implement the *Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012*.

Lifelong Learning UK facilitated the development of the first strategy to shape the future of the further education workforce during 2007 and early 2008. This was an ambitious task for all of us working in the sector. Identifying the four priorities for workforce development was a first step towards helping focus work at national level, and towards supporting providers with frameworks and resources they could use at a local level.

Working with individual providers, their national representatives and national partners, we have reviewed and refreshed the first workforce strategy. We have included two new themes around leadership and management; and a

flexible, fair and supportive working environment. A copy of the 2009 refreshed *Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England* is available at: [www.lluk.org/feworkforcestrategy.htm](http://www.lluk.org/feworkforcestrategy.htm)

In 2008 we produced a companion implementation plan to the workforce strategy. This year we have worked with providers and national partners to produce this document, *Implementing the Workforce Strategy: A Guide for Learning Providers*. The guide has been designed to provide information that will support you in the planning and development of your own workforce, based on discussion with providers.

Working with national partners and your colleagues in the sector, we are also developing accessible resources that you can adapt and use for your own workforce improvement needs. At national level, partners are working to ensure connection with the national improvement agenda within the context of a self-improving and self-regulating sector.

Whether you make extensive use of the resources listed or just dip into them, I hope this *Guide for Learning Providers* will be useful for you and your colleagues and that you will use it to reflect on how the workforce strategy priorities and strategic themes can be implemented in your organisation.

David Hunter  
Chief Executive, Lifelong Learning UK

An evaluation of the first year of the *Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012* can be found at [www.lluk.org/feworkforcestrategy.htm](http://www.lluk.org/feworkforcestrategy.htm)

An online, searchable database of this information will be available on the website from summer 2009.

## Introduction

*Implementing the Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England 2007-2012: A Guide for Learning Providers* has been compiled following consultation with sector employers and national partners. You can find out about these consultations on page 8. The guide is designed to support you in your own workforce planning and development by:

- providing sources of information and help in implementing the strategy in your workplace; and
- providing information about how you can become involved in national projects that will take the strategy forward.

The guide will also tell you about the progress that has been made in the last year and the changing environment in which the strategy needs to be implemented.

The strategy covers the whole workforce of the sector. As such it is applicable to all employees in:

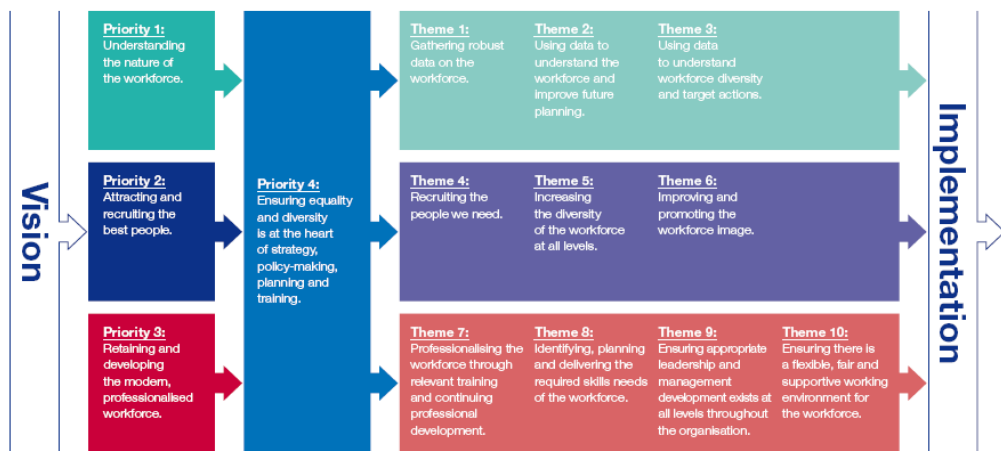
- further education colleges
- sixth form colleges
- specialist colleges
- publicly funded work based learning providers
- local authority or voluntary and community sector learning providers (also known as adult and community learning providers)
- offender learning providers.

This will also include some third sector provision in receipt of public funding.

**'National Partners'** describes those organisations within the sector that are working with Lifelong Learning UK at a national level to support the implementation of the strategy. They include government departments; sector organisations such as the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, the Institute for Learning, the Learning and Skills Improvement Service and the Learning and Skills Council; and unions, professional bodies and provider representative bodies.

**'Employers'** describes learning providers in the sector who employ the workforce encompassed by the strategy and implementation guide.

### The journey from vision to implementation





National partners: progress in the last 12 months

## National partners: progress in the last 12 months

The last 12 months have provided a consolidating period for the further education workforce strategy and plan which were published respectively in December 2007 and March 2008. Since then, employers in the sector have been able to consider the priorities and themes alongside their own business plans and identify actions and projects that take their own workforces forward to meet the vision for 2012. Aligning business plans to the strategy in this way provides a basis for the sector to move forward together towards the achievement of a joint workforce strategy.

The period has been one of familiarisation and reflection. National partners and employers have been able to gain an understanding of the contribution that different organisations will make to the achievement of the strategy. They have been able to consider this in the light of their current projects and future organisational aspirations. In the future, this should lead to co-operation and co-ordination of resources and initiatives that will help the sector improve its efficiency and its support structures.

In addition, new and ongoing projects in the sector are beginning to address some of the priorities and themes.

This first annual review of the workforce strategy and plan has allowed us to share the successes and milestones of the past year and revisit the strategic priorities and themes to ensure their appropriateness in a rapidly changing environment. This in turn will support setting the agenda for the next 12 months and beyond.

The following sections look at some of the achievements and successes, which have marked our first year of working with the workforce strategy and plan.

### Priority 1: Understanding the nature of the workforce

Projects to transform data collection and analysis are moving forward. Lifelong Learning UK has collected intelligence, via the Staff Individualised Record (SIR) data collection process for 2007-2008, about the whole workforce in further education colleges in England. Data has also been collected from work based learning providers and adult and community learning providers in England for the first time. Though less detailed than the SIR data collection from further education colleges, this will provide a basis for future

data collection and analysis across the whole sector. Data collection is ongoing.

Results of the data collection have been published and are available for employers to access, together with an online database that allows employers to use data for benchmarking and workforce planning. In addition, Lifelong Learning UK has published separate *Annual Workforce Diversity Profile* reports for 2007 and 2008. These interrogate in detail the diversity trends of the further education college workforce, and provide recommendations for providers on improving workforce diversity in the future. Results are published annually.

#### Highlights

- 93% of further education colleges returned SIR data in the 2008 data collection.
- The Institute for Learning (IfL) has collected practitioner data through registrations.
- Over 187,000 professionals have registered to date and the number is growing. This data will form the basis of a report in 2009.

### Priority 2: Attracting and recruiting the best people

The Catalyst programme is working to support recruitment in the sector. Catalyst is made up of four projects. It is managed by Lifelong Learning UK and fully supported by the professional bodies representing the sector workforce and other key partners in the sector. 'Pass on Your Skills', part of the Catalyst programme, has attracted and trained individuals from outside the sector for sector shortage areas. 'Make a Difference' identifies and trains leaders from outside the sector and is now offering support to employers to recruit suitable leadership candidates.

The registration of practitioners by IfL, as well as programmes such as Catalyst are working to promote and improve the workforce image in the sector and practitioners' status.

#### Highlights

- 'Pass on Your Skills' aimed to offer 300 'Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector' training places to those outside the sector. There were 8,500 applications of which 2,500 met the criteria. 350 individuals have completed the 'Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector' qualification and are ready to start work in the sector.
- The Learning and Skills Improvement Service has offered six workshops to employers in the sector to improve skills in safe recruitment to protect learners. The workshops train facilitators who can pass on skills within their organisations.

### Priority 3: Retaining and developing the modern, professionalised workforce

All new teachers entering the further education sector from September 2007 and teaching on Learning and Skills Council funded programmes must achieve the Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) award within one year of appointment. PTLLS can be taken on a stand-alone introductory basis or as an integral part of either the Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS) or Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) or equivalent. The (minimum) level 5 Diploma (DTLLS) or level 3 or 4 Certificate (CTLLS) or equivalent, must be completed within five years of appointment. Endorsed Certificate in Education, Professional Graduate Certificate in Education, and Post Graduate Certificate in Education awards meet these requirements.

Professional bodies and organisations representing the workforce have a variety of projects in place that provide training and development for the workforce and opportunities for continuing professional

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development (CPD). The Institute for Learning successfully launched its online continuing professional development tool, with over 31,000 members using it to plan, review and record their CPD.

New national programmes commissioned for continuing professional development will specifically address skill shortages in areas such as e-learning and the STEM initiative, which tackles development issues in science, technology, engineering and maths. With the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), Becta have introduced a leadership development programme for technical and support personnel working in further education.

#### Highlights

- 'Business Interchange', part of the Catalyst programme, supports practitioners in finding industry placements to update skills. Placements already completed number 32 from adult and community learning, 285 from further education colleges and 26 from work based learning.
- LSIS Skills for Life programmes engaged 600 sector organisations in developing 'whole organisation approaches' to skills for life.

- Over 350 providers contributed to the development of Generator, a technology improvement leadership tool ([www.generatorfeandskills.com](http://www.generatorfeandskills.com)) which was launched in March 2009.

### Priority 4: Ensuring equality and diversity is at the heart of strategy, policy-making, planning and training

Throughout all projects and work contributing to the workforce strategy, equality and diversity has been a key driver. Lifelong Learning UK's published data on equality and diversity gives employers an opportunity to benchmark their own workforce data against national and regional data. The Network for Black Professionals (NBP) is working to ensure that equality and diversity are at the heart of workforce planning. Other professional organisations regularly provide updates and advice to sector employers about equality and diversity issues.

#### Highlights

- Lifelong Learning UK published its *Annual Workforce Diversity Profile 2008* in March. This provides employers with detailed regional and national profiles with regard to the age, gender, ethnicity and declared disability of staff working in further education colleges.
- The Disability Equality Implementation Group has provided training to senior managers on disability equality and promoted the Disability Equality Commitment ([www.lluk.org/disability-equality-commitment.htm](http://www.lluk.org/disability-equality-commitment.htm)).
- The Network for Black Professionals (NBP) has conducted research on workforce diversity and will publish its findings in April 2009.
- The Association of Colleges (AoC) held their Equality and Diversity Conference for member colleges in March 2009. Sessions included Impact Assessment, Gender Equality, Equality Monitoring, Promoting Disability Equality, Race Equality and Equality and Diversity in Ofsted Inspections.

## The review process

### Annual review of the strategy

The first annual review of the workforce strategy has brought together national partners and sector employers to review the strategy, evaluate progress over the last year and consider its validity for the future. National partners and sector employers have given their full support to the review process and made it a valuable exercise.

The review has been achieved by consultation events held over the review period and online questionnaires and consultations. Employers and national partners have been invited to take part and give their views on the strategy and how it should be taken forward.

In response to these consultations, the format and content of the documents provided to employers has changed to better meet the requirements of their own workforce planning towards the achievement of the strategy. In place of the *Implementation Plan* that was produced last year for providers, this *Guide for Learning Providers* has been developed.

The review also identified two new themes that will support the achievement of the strategy and these are included in the strategy and guide for the coming year. These are described below.

**Theme 9** 'Ensuring appropriate leadership and management development exists at all levels throughout the organisation'. This links to the National Improvement Strategy concern about the quality of leadership and management in the sector and provides for these skills to be developed throughout organisations. It will: ensure that these skills are continuously improved within the sector; ensure that management and leadership is understood and effectively implemented at all levels; and, enhance the career prospects of those wishing to move into leadership and management positions.

**Theme 10** 'Ensuring there is a flexible, fair and supportive working environment for the workforce'. This new theme recognises that to attract and retain high-quality staff within the sector, and to be leading employers with



a modern and flexible workforce, it is essential to create an environment and culture where employees are able to attain an appropriate work-life balance. Flexibility may also increase the diversity of the workforce by removing potential barriers for some existing and potential employees.

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## The profile and context for the further education sector

### The profile and context for the further education sector

The workforce strategy and guide for learning providers have been developed taking account of the profile of the sector and the environment in which further education organisations operate. An understanding of these provides a context for their development.

#### Profile of the sector

The further education sector includes a wide variety of organisations ranging from small training providers to multimillion pound colleges employing hundreds of staff. The sector workforce includes teachers, trainers and other professionals; leaders and managers; and staff in essential support functions. The workforce vision and strategy supports all of these constituents which include almost a quarter of a million employees.

#### Environment for further education

The UK is a society characterised by diversity and change, and education is at the heart of both shaping and coping with such changes. If our society is going to continue to thrive, then we need truly world-class education and

training services. This is why the Government has tasked our sector to achieve a standard of quality and excellence equal to, or better than, any in the world.

The consultation on the revised National Improvement Strategy for the sector *Pursuing Excellence* sets out in Aim 3 that: 'The further education system continuously improves so that colleges and providers aspire to and achieve excellence, and no provision is unsatisfactory'. Aim 4 specifically addresses the workforce as 'Every single member of staff is a professional – they own what they do and take pride in it', recognising that the foundation of a quality culture lies with the workforce. This vision for the future requires a professionalised workforce; greater levels of access for all learners; and a system that works with employers and communities to shape all our lives for the better. This is the backdrop against which this workforce strategy for the further education sector has been shaped.

In the wider economy, the collapse in access to financial backing and consequent recession

risks unsettling established relationships between industry, communities and the education and training sector. The Government are looking to the further education sector to provide support for those who are threatened with redundancy or require new skills. This presents opportunities on a variety of fronts such as: widening the pool of talent from which the potential workforce can be recruited; making use of current workplace experience; and, exploring new roles and new ways of doing things. It also increases the numbers of learners looking for individualised learning programmes to help re-train and develop new skills.

With the 14-19 agenda, the accountability of the sector to government is increasingly divided along the lines of those under, and those over, 19 years of age. Development needs have been created across the whole workforce as some staff come into contact with younger learners for the first time. For many employers the new diplomas and the transition to local authority-routed funding may require different approaches to workforce planning and development.

## The profile and context for the further education sector

In 2008, consultation took place on the frameworks and mechanisms that will support self-regulation in the sector. The elements of the consultation prospectus for self-regulation were:

- a Framework for Performance Management and Improvement, setting out individual and collective provider responsibilities;
- a Framework for Accountability, setting out the sector's responsibilities;
- a 'Further Education Authority', with a Further Education Code, licensing system and a system of intervention and support for tackling underperformance;
- a Further Education Accord, setting out an agreement on regulatory matters between government and the sector; and
- a single Common Performance Assessment Framework, with new Key Performance Indicators.

The results of these consultations show strong support for self-regulation but also highlighted the need to address details in the light of radical changes in the machinery of government since the project started. The full report *Single Voice: Analysis of Responses* can be accessed at [www.feselfregulation.org.uk](http://www.feselfregulation.org.uk)

The new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) will replace the existing National Qualifications Framework during December 2010 for vocational qualifications. This will mean that qualifications will offer credit which can be accumulated incrementally, using core and optional units which can be combined to create demand-led qualifications, designed to represent the different elements of specific work roles. The realisation of the Qualifications and Credit Framework will bring with it changes to qualification structures and awarding powers. Leaders and managers will need to fully appreciate challenges and opportunities associated with a unit-based and credit-based model for qualifications, including new funding mechanisms and potential implications for delivery and assessment.

Alongside the new qualifications framework, the increasing pace of the move to demand-led, adult funding will require a further education workforce that is fully trained and developed, to meet the changing needs of employers in other industry sectors. Employees in the lifelong learning sector will need to develop skills and knowledge that are transferable across sectors and curriculum areas.

From a national partner perspective, the increasing volume of adult funding through 'Train to Gain' may require significant recruitment of trainers, tutors and assessors, which can only be addressed through national campaigns.

The revised Ofsted inspection approach within the sector will help support professionalisation and an improved reputation for the sector as well as identifying good practice and areas for development. However, the workforce will need support to adjust to the new inspection regime. The consultation on arrangements for inspection in the sector was completed in January 2009 and the new approach is to be introduced from September 2009.

These are some of the challenges that the sector and its workforce must meet, and which this strategy is designed to anticipate.

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## Provider guide to partner activities





## Provider guide to partner activities

The table on the following pages sets out what is happening in the sector to support sector employers in working towards the achievement of the workforce strategy. The table describes special projects and ongoing work that may be of interest to employers; how employers need to respond to this work; and the support and help available to employers. The table is organised under the priorities and themes that form the strategy. Projects and ongoing work will sometimes cross themes and so may have been included more than once.

The table is intended to support employers in their own workforce planning by identifying areas where work is being done and from which they could benefit, and in providing direction to further information sources.

Different aspects of workforce planning may involve selecting support elements from across different themes. For example, succession planning might include:

- looking at data available on equality and diversity and the profile of the national and regional workforce (themes 2 and 3);
- considering how diversity can be promoted within the workforce (theme 5); and
- ensuring that staff at all levels have the appropriate leadership and management skills (theme 9).

Further information on any projects and ongoing work is available from Lifelong Learning UK or national partners as appropriate.

The roles of national partners and their contact details are provided at the end of this guide. National partners are referred to in the table by their preferred acronym. These can be checked in the notes about national partners at the end of this document.

The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) is working with national partners in the system to transform the sector into a more responsive one with a focus on skills, employability and social mobility. DIUS and other government departments seek to:

- raise participation and attainment by young people and adults in post-16 education and learning;
- tackle the skills gap amongst adults, particularly equipping people with literacy and numeracy skills; and
- increase the number of people, with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills.

DIUS and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) are working together on the development and introduction of the 14–19 Diplomas, amongst other activities. These departments support many of the initiatives in the plan that are being led and managed by other organisations.

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The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is another key national partner not directly included in the table. In the *Government Investment Strategy 2009–10*, *LSC Grant Letter* and *LSC Statement of Priorities* the LSC highlights its national priorities which can be accessed via the following link: [www.lsc.gov.uk/aboutus/lscstrategy/statementofpriorities/](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/aboutus/lscstrategy/statementofpriorities/)

With a changing landscape, and as the demand for learning amongst other sector employers, adults and young people increases, the further education system will need to be transformed to meet this demand. Workforce development is an important element of this transformation.



## Provider guide to partner activities

## Priority 1 Understanding the nature of the workforce

## Theme 1: Gathering robust data on the workforce

Employers need to collect data on their own workforce and submit this to the appropriate national partner organisations who can then analyse and report on the data.

What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>LLUK data collection</b></p> <p>LLUK are improving data collection and research capacity, and carrying out annual data collection. This is funded by DIUS and supported by the unions and professional bodies. It will help to develop a full understanding of the workforce. Data is collected across all parts of the sector.</p>	<p>Employers to provide data in response to requests. Data collection goes live from 1 August to 1 November 2009.</p> <p>Employers can also help to define what data should be collected by commenting on data specifications and signing into discussion forums at: <a href="http://sirdatacollection.lluk.org/consultation/">http://sirdatacollection.lluk.org/consultation/</a></p>	<p>LLUK produce guidance and support on how to submit information and offers a helpdesk service to support providers during the collection process.</p> <p>There is also an online portal for providers to benchmark themselves against the 2007/08 Staff Individualised Record (SIR) return.</p>

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What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Practitioner qualifications information</b></p> <p>IfL are collating information about practitioner qualifications and continuing professional development (CPD) as part of their practitioner registrations.</p> <p>IfL also have data from members on employment status, subject specialism, equality and diversity, roles and a range of employer perceptions from surveys. This information will be shared with employers. This information will be analysed and shared with LLUK.</p>	<p>Employers to ensure all practitioners to register and respond to requests for data about workforce qualifications.</p>	<p>IfL provide dedicated data and information support. (<a href="http://www.ifl.ac.uk">www.ifl.ac.uk</a>)</p>
<p><b>Support staff information</b></p> <p>The AoC will be conducting a survey, developed in collaboration with support staff unions, to identify terms and conditions of employment for support to staff across colleges.</p>	<p>FE college AoC members to complete the survey, November 2009.</p>	<p>AoC and unions will provide support as appropriate for completion of the survey. Data will be available from January 2009.</p>
<p><b>Sixth form college information</b></p> <p>SFCF carry out an annual salaries and numbers survey covering all staff in sixth form colleges. The survey has an October census date.</p>	<p>Sixth form college employers to complete the survey.</p>	<p>Information about the survey is available from SFCF. (<a href="http://www.sfcf.lge.gov.uk">www.sfcf.lge.gov.uk</a>)</p>

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Provider guide to partner activities

Priority 1 Understanding the nature of the workforce

Theme 2: Using data to understand the workforce and improve future planning

Employers can access information available for benchmarking and to improve own workforce planning.

What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>LLUK data analysis</b></p> <p>LLUK produces a number of reports on further education Staff Individualised Record (SIR) data; work based learning data; adult and community learning data; and equality and diversity. An online analytical processing (OLAP) system is available for sector employers to access.</p>	Use data for identifying skills gaps, under-representation, benchmarking and workforce planning.	Reports and OLAP will support these activities.
<p><b>LLUK research into specific elements of the sector</b></p> <p>LLUK are carrying out research across the sector but specific projects look at areas where there are knowledge gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult and community learning workforce</li> <li>• Work based learning workforce</li> <li>• Skills for Life issues.</li> </ul>	Use data for benchmarking and workforce planning.	Information will be made available when research is complete via the LLUK website. ( <a href="http://www.lluk.org">www.lluk.org</a> )
<p><b>Practitioner data analysis</b></p> <p>IfL are developing a dedicated area of their website enabling employers to analyse their teaching and training staff profile in terms of compliance and to benchmark themselves against similar local or national employers in the sector with these and other factors.</p>	Employers can use data for benchmarking and workforce planning.	Data made available to support employers in planning and benchmarking.

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What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Support staff data analysis</b></p> <p>The results of the support staff survey, conducted by AoC and the unions, will help colleges to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• benchmark their support staff terms and conditions of employment</li> <li>• highlight recruitment and retention issues that need tackling.</li> </ul>	Employers to use the survey results to benchmark their support staff terms and conditions against those of comparable corporations.	<p>A report summarising the findings of the support staff survey will be published in January 2010.</p> <p>UNISON keeps a database with information on terms and conditions of employment across education and the wider economy.</p>
<p><b>Sixth form college data analysis</b></p> <p>SFCF analysis of sixth form college staff survey results are reported in spring.</p>	Employers can use report to inform workforce planning and local strategy.	Report sent out to sixth form colleges.
<p><b>Surveys on recruitment and retention, remuneration for senior staff, and staff absences</b></p> <p>The AoC carries out annual surveys of its members in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recruitment and retention – annually in September and results published for members in October;</li> <li>• remuneration for managerial staff and senior post-holders – carried out in October and results published for members in January; and</li> <li>• staff absences – carried out August – October 2009 and results published for members in November.</li> </ul>	Member colleges to complete surveys as requested.	Results are published on the AoC website and made available to members with the exception of results of the remuneration survey, which will be published in hard copy for participating colleges. ( <a href="http://www.aoc.co.uk">www.aoc.co.uk</a> )

Provider guide to partner activities

**Priority 1 Understanding the nature of the workforce**

**Theme 3: Using data to understand workforce diversity and target actions**

Employers need to access data on workforce diversity and benchmark own workforce against national and local communities.

What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Equality and diversity data</b>                      LLUK, funded by DIUS, have analysed the SIR data in depth according to the age, ethnicity, disability and gender profile of staff working in further education colleges, and published a report. Employers will also be given access to interrogate the database, which will allow them to carry out benchmarking exercises.</p> <p>As well as supporting LLUK, the NBP independently collects and analyses data about workforce diversity.</p> <p>IfL holds data on diversity for teachers and trainers and will share this with employers. IfL is setting up interest groups on equality and diversity which will provide rich, qualitative information.</p>	<p>Use databases to identify under-representation, benchmark and inform workforce planning.</p> <p>Sector employers to take part in interest groups as required.</p>	<p>Analysis will be made available for workforce planning.</p> <p>Results of research will be made available to sector employers by the NBP.</p> <p>Support and information available from IfL. (<a href="http://www.ifl.ac.uk">www.ifl.ac.uk</a>)</p>

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Provider guide to partner activities

**Priority 2 Attracting and recruiting the best people**

**Theme 4: Recruiting the people we need**

Employers need to target appropriately skilled individuals when recruiting to the sector.

What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Catalyst programme</b> The Catalyst programme led by LLUK, funded by DIUS and supported by national partners, is working to attract individuals to the sector to address skills shortages and to attract new leaders and managers from outside the sector.</p>	<p>Sector employers to sign up to the Catalyst programme.</p>	<p>Resources to support recruitment of leaders and managers and to bring in new practitioners for areas where there are shortages.</p>
<p><b>National pay recommendations</b> AoC and the unions negotiate annually on national recommendations on pay for FE colleges.</p>	<p>Employers should consider the national pay recommendations when budgeting annual awards.</p>	<p>UNISON and UCU can provide guidance on best practice and information about the recommendations.</p> <p>AoC offers specific training for college management and union representatives on the Further Education Job Evaluation (FEJE) scheme.</p>

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What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Safeguarding learners</b> LSIS provide training in safer recruitment for employers in the sector, including governors, to ensure learners are safeguarded.</p> <p>AoC represents colleges' interests to Government in developing safeguarding policy.</p>		<p>Details of workshops offered are available on the LSIS website. (<a href="http://www.lsis.org.uk">www.lsis.org.uk</a>)</p> <p>Member colleges may contact the Employment Team at AoC for advice.</p>
<p><b>Recruitment and selection</b> LSIS are providing workshops as required on recruitment and selection and effective career discussions at work.</p>		<p>Workshops are available on a bespoke basis. Details available on the LSIS website. (<a href="http://www.lsis.org.uk">www.lsis.org.uk</a>)</p>
<p><b>Executive Resourcing</b> AoC Management Services are working to attract individuals for leadership positions from within and outside the sector and are designing assessment procedures to support the sector in recruiting the best people.</p>	<p>Employers to contact AoMS should they need support in attracting and assessment.</p>	<p>AoMS offers specific recruitment support, including executive search, advertising design, skills testing, assessment centre design, post selection management development and coaching.</p>

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#### Other projects relevant to this theme

Projects	Led by	Detail included under
Skills for Life	LSIS	Theme 8
Employment law and HR issues	AoC	Theme 10

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### Provider guide to partner activities

#### Priority 2 Attracting and recruiting the best people

##### Theme 5: Increasing the diversity of the workforce at all levels

Employers need to create environments that support a diverse workforce and adopt equality and diversity compliant recruitment practices.

What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Catalyst programme</b> The Catalyst programme led by LLUK, funded by DIUS and supported by national partners, uses equality and diversity compliant recruitment practices. The NBP is specifically involved in the delivery of the 'Make a Difference' element of the Catalyst programme.</p>	<p>Sector employers are encouraged to sign up to Catalyst.</p>	<p>Resources are available via the Catalyst programme to support recruitment and development of leaders and managers, tutors and trainers. (<a href="http://www.catalystprogramme.org">www.catalystprogramme.org</a>)</p>
<p><b>Disability Equality Implementation Group</b> This advisory group, supported by LLUK, has developed guidance for directors and managers responsible for recruitment on how to attract disabled people into the further education sector. Accompanying guidance on disability disclosure will be published alongside.</p> <p>In addition, LLUK has commissioned research on the barriers disabled people face when wanting to work in the sector.</p>		<p>All related documents are published on the LLUK website as they become available. (<a href="http://www.lluk.org">www.lluk.org</a>)</p>

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What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Succession planning for diversity</b>                      Lsis are supporting the development of leaders from all backgrounds across the FE system and increasing the diversity of sector leadership at all levels with a particular focus on black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, disability, gender and age. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishing a senior management development programme targeted at BME staff in middle management roles;</li> <li>• work with disabled workforce to identify leadership/management programmes to support their development;</li> <li>• monitoring progress of all BME participants on Lsis programmes in the last 3–4 years, and promoting/celebrating achievements;</li> <li>• developing an age equality programme;</li> <li>• developing bespoke positive action programmes; and</li> <li>• delivering seminars on succession planning and diversity.</li> </ul>	<p>Sector employers need to consider whether there are strategic needs that these programmes can help to address and identify potential participants.</p> <p>Sector employers should also take part in planned events and activities.</p>	<p>Details of all programmes and events are available on the Lsis website. (<a href="http://www.lsis.org.uk">www.lsis.org.uk</a>)</p>
<p><b>Good practice guide</b>                      ACM-AMIE will publish a good practice guide on equality and diversity issues for managers. This will support managers in considering the diversity issues relevant to their work. It will be published spring/summer 2009.</p>		<p>Guide available to ACM-AMIE members. Details available from the website. (<a href="http://www.acm.uk.com">www.acm.uk.com</a>)</p>

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What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Ofsted inspection</b>                      Ofsted's new inspection methodology, to be introduced in September 2009, will give equality and diversity a higher profile. A grade will be given for equality and diversity during inspection that will have the potential to limit the overall grade given for effectiveness.</p>	<p>Respond to Ofsted findings and improve equality and diversity within organisations.</p>	<p>Handbooks and information to be made available by Ofsted.</p>
<p><b>Development and delivery of equality and diversity qualifications and units</b>                      The NBP is developing and delivering units and qualifications that fit in with other generic professional development products.</p>		<p>Information available from NBP.</p>

Other projects relevant to this theme

Projects	Led by	Detail included under
Race equality workforce programme	LLUK	Priority 3
Recruitment and retention of people with disabilities	LLUK	Priority 3

Provider guide to partner activities

**Priority 2 Attracting and recruiting the best people**

**Theme 6: Improving and promoting the workforce image**

Employers need to support the promotion of the workforce image and support practitioners in gaining professional status.

What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Raising the profile of practitioners</b></p> <p>IfL are working to raise the profile and status of teaching professionals, establishing teaching in further education and skills as a career of choice, recognising and supporting the stages of a teacher's journey. IfL is also raising the profile and standing of professional teachers and trainers in the public eye.</p> <p>IfL will celebrate awards of QTLS and ATLS* and work with other agencies on mutual recognition for QTLS and QTS.</p>	<p>Support practitioners in gaining qualified status.</p> <p>Recognise QTLS and ATLS status as a critical factor in the future recruitment and in-service training of teachers.</p>	<p>Online guidance on professional formation and routes to QTLS and ATLS conferral.</p>
<p><b>Promotion of the further education teaching profession</b></p> <p>IfL are aiming to place further education teaching professionals on a par with other professions, achieving parity of esteem and mutual recognition of status. The work involves developing case studies to promote the profession in the press and media.</p> <p>IfL offers professional status and a range of benefits for practitioners.</p>	<p>Support practitioners in gaining qualified status. Upholding Code of Professional Practice.</p>	<p>Dedicated advice and guidance on organisational approaches to supporting members and using professional membership as an attraction for recruitment.</p>

\*Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) and Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS)

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What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Promoting the importance of the sector and the professionals that work in it</b></p> <p>LLUK is leading campaigns that promote the sector image, building on current activities such as Colleges Week and VQ Day, highlighting the importance of the further education sector and the professionals that work in it, and its contribution to communities and the economy.</p>	<p>Employers are encouraged to support the messages and promote the campaign to their own publics.</p>	<p>Campaign specific promotional toolkits and guidance will be available for employers.</p>
<p><b>Recognising outstanding contributions to the sector</b></p> <p>LSIS publicly recognise and reward individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the sector with their STAR awards.</p> <p>Becta with their 'Next Generation Learning Awards – Technology Excellence in FE and Skills' recognise providers and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to harnessing technology in teaching, learning and business processes.</p>	<p>Nominate individuals who deserve recognition in the sector.</p> <p>Register interest in the awards and nominate entries.</p>	<p>Details are available from LSIS. (<a href="http://www.lsis.org.uk">www.lsis.org.uk</a>)</p> <p>Details available from Becta. (<a href="http://www.becta.org.uk">www.becta.org.uk</a>)</p>



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**Priority 3 Retaining and developing the modern, professionalised workforce**

**Theme 7: Professionalising the workforce through relevant training and continuing professional development**

Employers need to support the professionalisation of the workforce by supporting training and continuing professional development for all staff.

What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Leadership of e-learning</b></p> <p>LSIS are working to develop leadership capacity and capability through the development of knowledge and understanding of e-learning and the Harnessing Technology agenda. LSIS will also build the skills of the change agents who will be responsible for the implementation of this agenda. Work includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>programmes aimed at individual and organisational development; targeting leaders at all levels in FE colleges; work based learning; and adult and community learning;</li> <li>eQuiP, eXplorer and Leading Change for Digital Dividends, plus a pilot programme, Collaborative Leadership Skills for IT managers for FE colleges and adult and community learning; and</li> <li>Connect, Realise, WBL eXplorer and Leading Change for Digital Dividends for work based learning.</li> </ul>	<p>Sector employers should ensure that appropriate individuals attend programmes and use their knowledge to support the implementation of e-learning.</p>	<p>Details of programmes and other support is available from LSIS and on the LSIS website. (<a href="http://www.lsis.org.uk">www.lsis.org.uk</a>)</p>

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What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>CPD for technology enabled learning</b></p> <p>Becta is working with LSIS, LLUK and IfL to expand the national prospectus for technology focussed CPD to include offer to staff employed in the support of technology-enabled learning. This will be scoped by September 2009.</p>	<p>Work with Becta in reviewing and updating the CPD prospectus. Respond to consultations, focus groups and surveys.</p>	<p>CPD Prospectus to be available to all FE and skills providers.</p>
<p><b>Use of technology in further education</b></p> <p>Becta will continue to develop the international benchmark in the use of technology by the further education workforce. Research to be completed by December 2009 and metrics agreed by March 2010.</p> <p>Becta is developing guidance on safeguarding FE learners in a digital world.</p>	<p>Work with Becta in reviewing and updating benchmark. Respond to consultations, focus groups and surveys.</p>	<p>Benchmarking is a core feature of Generator, the technology improvement leadership tool. <a href="http://www.generatorfeandskills.com">www.generatorfeandskills.com</a></p> <p>Guide to Generator – to be published and distributed to all FE and Skills providers.</p> <p>Guidance on 'Safeguarding FE Learners in a digital world' to be available September 2009.</p>

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What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>CPD for practitioners</b></p> <p>IfL gives guidance to teachers and trainers on the range of effective CPD and disseminates findings on CPD to employers. IfL are promoting the use of a personal online CPD tool. All practitioners are given access to REFLECT. IfL will also facilitate the sharing of practice between individuals through online communities and local networks. IfL will increase from 31,000 the number of members benefiting from using REFLECT to plan, review and record their CPD.</p>	Support practitioners in use of online support provided.	Dedicated advice and guidance on organisational approaches to CPD and support for the integration of personal learning spaces and e-portfolios into management systems.
<p><b>CPD information and support</b></p> <p>ATL is working with both LLUK and IfL to provide ATL FE representatives with USB sticks containing key information about workforce progression.</p> <p>ATL, in partnership with DCSF and LSIS, is developing a CPD package which communicates 14–19 reforms.</p> <p>ATL is developing an agreement with a number of FE colleges to engage in learning and training by hosting events on CPD opportunities.</p>	Share with colleagues and use to inform CPD planning.	USB sticks are available. Contact ATL for further information.
<p><b>CPD for teachers in post-16 settings</b></p> <p>NIACE are offering training and support for teachers in a wide range of post-16 settings, including adult and community learning and voluntary sector as well as colleges and workplace trainers.</p>	Support development programmes.	Programme details on the NIACE website giving full event and course descriptions, with details of booking process.

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What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Benchmarking for college leaders and managers</b></p> <p>In April 2009, ACM-AMIE will publish <i>Reflections on performance: Best practice benchmarks for college leaders and managers</i>. The publication will support leaders and managers in benchmarking performance and includes the publication of self-assessment exemplars.</p>		Hard copies of publication available from ACM-AMIE and self-assessment exemplars available on the website.
<p><b>Ofsted inspection</b></p> <p>Ofsted have implemented a change in the inspection methodology so that inspectors will be spending more time in the classroom and will be placing more emphasis on the quality of the whole learner experience. Strong emphasis on the professional development of staff will be an important part of the inspection methodology.</p>	Support shift in emphasis and respond to inspection findings.	Handbooks and information to be made available by Ofsted.
<p><b>Catalyst programme</b></p> <p>The LLUK led Catalyst programme offers 'Business Interchange' which supports industry placements for practitioners to update their skills. They are also producing case studies from last year's programme.</p>	Register for the programme and support practitioners in industry placements.	Information available on the Catalyst website. ( <a href="http://www.catalystprogramme.org">www.catalystprogramme.org</a> )

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What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Training and CPD opportunities</b></p> <p>Natspec offer a range of training and CPD opportunities to their member colleges.</p> <p>NIACE offer a variety of training and CPD opportunities to practitioners.</p>	Use training and CPD programmes to support professionalisation of workforce.	<p>A programme of events is available for member colleges.</p> <p>A programme of planned events is available on the website.</p>
<p><b>Teacher training</b></p> <p>LSIS leads a number of projects and programmes under its 'Teaching and Learning' initiative that support the improvement of teacher training and support across the sector.</p>	Engage with the improvement of teacher training and support.	Details are available on the Excellence Gateway website. ( <a href="http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk">www.excellencegateway.org.uk</a> )

### Other projects relevant to this theme

Projects	Led by	Detail included under
Qualification for senior information technology managers in further education	Becta	Theme 9
Development and delivery of equality and diversity qualifications and units	Network for Black Professionals	Theme 5

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## Priority 3 Retaining and developing the modern, professionalised workforce

### Theme 8: Identifying, planning and delivering the required skills needs of the workforce

Employers need to support the workforce in gaining required skills and work with national partners to identify and address skills shortages.

What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Diploma workforce professional development framework</b></p> <p>Guidance on professional development and resources to support practitioners on diploma programmes.</p>	Employers to support diploma practitioners to gain skills required.	Guidance and resources on the LLUK website and the Diploma Support website. ( <a href="http://www.diploma-support.org">www.diploma-support.org</a> )
<p><b>National occupational standards</b></p> <p>The review and revision of national occupational standards for the sector is ongoing. This year will see the completion of new learner involvement standards and learning delivery standards and refreshed community development standards.</p> <p>Projects in the next 12 months include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>looking at assessment strategies for working with family network learning;</li> <li>review of learning and development standards; and</li> <li>looking at the areas of business development and employer engagement, and planning a way forward to support improvement of skills in these areas.</li> </ul>	<p>Use national standards to measure and develop skills.</p> <p>Employers can become involved in consultations – register interest on the LLUK website.</p>	Standards made available to sector.

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What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Connections Network</b></p> <p>The IfL led CPD 'Connections' is working regionally and nationally to promote innovation through professional development. The National Connections conference will bring together CPD champions from colleges and providers (August 2009).</p>	Champion professional learning, supporting organisational IfL Connections as the main point of focus for communicating and promoting CPD.	Dedicated information and guidance on CPD and national networking/support for IfL Connections.
<p><b>Identifying practitioner needs</b></p> <p>IfL is using the voice of its members to identify the learning needs of practitioners and provide information to the sector to support those delivering professional development. The <i>CPD Annual Report</i>, available from December 2009, will showcase good practice.</p>	Champion professional learning.	Report provided for planning and development purposes.
<p><b>Future of Lifelong Learning Inquiry</b></p> <p>NIACE are hosting an independent Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning. Chaired by Sir David Watson, the Inquiry was launched in September 2007 and will report in June 2009.</p>	Engage with the Inquiry and register for bulletin briefings.	Results of the Inquiry will be made available.
<p><b>14-19 Diploma workforce</b></p> <p>The Diploma support programme provides flexible, localised development based on the analysis of data collected about numbers of teachers required for delivery of Diplomas and numbers of learners on programmes. Target is to prepare 2,450 teachers for Diploma delivery.</p>	Completion of returns on learner numbers.	Diploma support programme. ( <a href="http://www.diploma-support.org">www.diploma-support.org</a> )

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What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Skills for Life</b></p> <p>LSIS Skills for Life programmes and projects are concerned with increasing the number and skills of Skills for Life tutors and with developing 'whole organisation approaches' to embedding skills for life. The projects include delivery of CPD programmes and recruitment and training of family learning professionals.</p>	Engage with the Skills for Life agenda.	Details of programmes and projects are available on the Excellence Gateway. ( <a href="http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk">www.excellencegateway.org.uk</a> )
<p><b>Responsiveness to the market</b></p> <p>The LSIS World Class Skills Programme identifies and delivers programmes to improve workforce skills in being responsive to the training needs of industry.</p>	Identify and address own skills needs in this area.	Details are available on the Excellence Gateway. ( <a href="http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk">www.excellencegateway.org.uk</a> )
<p><b>Functional skills support</b></p> <p>LSIS are supporting the development of individuals who will deliver functional skills as part of the 14-19 agenda. Current support is available to pilot centres. Support materials and bespoke training are also available.</p>	Identify individuals who will benefit from functional skills support products.	Details are available on the Excellence Gateway. ( <a href="http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk">www.excellencegateway.org.uk</a> )

## Other projects relevant to this theme

Projects	Led by	Detail included under
Development and delivery of equality and diversity qualifications and units	Network for Black Professionals	Theme 5

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**Priority 3 Retaining and developing the modern, professionalised workforce****Theme 9: Ensuring appropriate leadership and management development exists at all levels throughout the organisation**

Employers need to develop leadership and management skills at all levels within the organisation.

What is happening?	Actions required	Support available
<p><b>Qualifications for senior information technology managers in further education</b></p> <p>Becta and LSIS are developing a leadership qualification for senior information technology managers in further education. This will include a review and update of leadership programmes to provide suitable qualifications. The review will be completed by December 2009 and updates initiated and completed by March 2010.</p>	<p>Work with Becta and LSIS in reviewing and updating leadership programmes. Respond to consultations, focus groups and surveys.</p>	<p>Generator, the technology improvement leadership tool, can be accessed via: <a href="http://www.generatorfeandskills.com">www.generatorfeandskills.com</a></p> <p>Guide to Generator – to be published and distributed to all FE and Skills providers in June 2009.</p> <p>CPD Prospectus to be available from June 2009.</p>

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What is happening?	Actions required	Support available
<p><b>Generator – technology improvement leadership tool</b></p> <p>Becta has developed a sector wide e-maturity framework and tool to enable organisations to conduct a self-assessment of their technology adoption and develop improvement plans to fully maximise the benefits of technology.</p>	<p>Respond to consultations, focus groups and surveys.</p>	<p>Generator, the technology improvement leadership tool, can be accessed via: <a href="http://www.generatorfeandskills.com">www.generatorfeandskills.com</a></p> <p>Guide to Generator – will be distributed to all FE and Skills providers in June 2009.</p>
<p><b>Teacher-leadership journey</b></p> <p>IfL are promoting the teacher-leadership journey, using case studies to exemplify the routes to middle and senior leadership roles for teachers. Also signposting leadership development through REFLECT and website.</p>	<p>Use information available for planning leadership and succession planning.</p>	<p>Case studies and signposting.</p>
<p><b>Leadership and management best practice</b></p> <p>ACM-AMIE will publish good practice guides to support leaders and managers. Up to three guides to be published in 2009/2010 and then on an ongoing basis.</p>		<p>Details of best practice guides available from the website. (<a href="http://www.acm.uk.com">www.acm.uk.com</a>)</p>

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What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Ofsted inspection</b></p> <p>Leadership and Management form part of the Ofsted inspection framework.</p>	Demonstrate leadership and management development to inspectors.	Handbooks and information to be made available by Ofsted.
<p><b>Black Leadership Initiative</b></p> <p>The Black Leadership Initiative is designed to introduce practical measures that improve career development opportunities for individuals within the further education sector.</p>	Support individuals in career development opportunities.	Information available from NBP.
<p><b>Leadership development</b></p> <p>LSIS offers a range of leadership development programmes to develop capacity at all levels across the sector, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14–19 leadership and management development programme</li> <li>• Principals' qualifying programme</li> <li>• Leading change programme to develop coaching skills</li> <li>• Strategic leadership development</li> <li>• Leadership skills for governance</li> <li>• Leadership of work based learning</li> <li>• Leadership of adult and community learning</li> <li>• Leadership of e-learning</li> <li>• High quality managers' programme</li> <li>• Positive action programmes.</li> </ul>	Employers are encouraged to consider the scope for inclusion of these programmes in staff development plans and to take up programmes as appropriate.	Full details are available on the LSIS website. ( <a href="http://www.lsis.org.uk">www.lsis.org.uk</a> )

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What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Talent management</b></p> <p>The LSIS 'Building Future Talent' programme supports succession planning, capacity building and the recruitment of leaders from within the sector through programmes to support strategic talent management and to increase the supply of leaders to take up leadership roles at all levels.</p>		Details of these programmes and how to access them are available on the LSIS website. ( <a href="http://www.lsis.org.uk">www.lsis.org.uk</a> )
<p><b>Support for science, engineering and mathematics</b></p> <p>Under the STEM programme LSIS support managers and promote appropriate professional development and subject updating opportunities. IfL provides data to support this work.</p>	Nominate coaches to attend professional development programmes.	Details available from LSIS. IfL supports employers on the subject specialisms taught and provides links with demographics of the teaching workforce.
<p><b>Leadership and Management Programmes customised for college management teams</b></p> <p>AoC Management Services, in partnership with the Chartered Management Institute, offers a suite of management qualifications tailored to college needs. The AoC programme offers professional recognition and a wide range of support and resources, which will aid managers' development throughout their career.</p>		Details available from AoC Management Services. ( <a href="http://www.aoc.co.uk">www.aoc.co.uk</a> )

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Other projects relevant to this theme

Projects	Led by	Detail included under
Succession planning for diversity	LSIS	Theme 5

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**Priority 3 Retaining and developing the modern, professionalised workforce**  
**Theme 10: Ensuring there is a flexible, fair and supportive working environment for the workforce**

Employers need to create working environments that will support all staff within organisations.

What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>The Disability Equality Commitment</b>                      The commitment includes practical recommendations for employers to achieve disability equality within the workplace.</p> <p>A toolkit to support the promotion of equality for disabled staff has been developed by the Disability Equality Implementation Group. This toolkit builds on a series of disability equality training activities for senior managers that have taken place across the UK.</p>	<p>All employers to endorse and implement these recommendations.</p>	<p>Related information and access to the toolkit is available on the LLUK website. (<a href="http://www.lluk.org">www.lluk.org</a>)</p>
<p><b>Twelve Steps to Tackling Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination and Promoting Equality</b>                      The Forum on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Post-School Education has developed this equality checklist. It builds upon research which identified the existence of homophobic bullying in the further education sector and the Forum's publication of guidance on trans equality.</p>		<p>Related information and access to the trans equality guidance is available on the LLUK website. (<a href="http://www.lluk.org">www.lluk.org</a>)</p>

## Provider guide to partner activities

What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Race equality workforce programme</b> This joint LLUK-UCU project, in consultation with the Workforce Race Advisory Group, has consolidated and updated guidance for employers on the Race Equality Duty and related policies, monitoring and publishing requirements, and impact assessments. In addition, a series of practical case studies have been developed to aid employers in the promotion of race equality.</p>		The guidance and case studies are available on the LLUK website. ( <a href="http://www.lluk.org">www.lluk.org</a> )
<p><b>Bullying and harassment – Joint agreement on guidance</b> Promotion of the adoption of the AoC and further education unions' (UNISON, UCU, UNITE, GMB, ATL and ACM) bullying and harassment joint agreement on guidance.</p>	All employers should have bullying and harassment policies in place.	AoC, UNISON and UCU can offer guidance to those employers planning staff training on dealing with, and preventing, workplace bullying and harassment.
<p><b>Working hours – Joint agreement on guidance in regulating working hours</b> AoC and further education unions (UNISON, UCU, UNITE, GMB, ATL and ACM) are to agree a joint agreement on guidance on regulating working.</p>	Use the guidance to inform working hours policy and practice.	Information from AoC, UNISON and UCU.
<p><b>Sixth form college conditions of service</b> SFCF produce a <i>National Conditions of Service Handbook</i> for staff in sixth form colleges and update this as required.</p>	Use handbook to inform college practice.	Handbook issued to all sixth form colleges.

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What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Employment law and HR issues</b> The AoC holds an annual Employment Law Conference and also manages regional and national human resource groups to look at issues. A regular human resources briefing paper is also produced.</p>		Details are on the AoC website. ( <a href="http://www.aoc.co.uk">www.aoc.co.uk</a> )
<p><b>Creating a culture of professionalism</b> IfL has created a model of professional development for individual teachers and trainers which will help to support whole organisation approaches to a professional working environment.</p>	Use appraisal systems to support CPD.	Information about membership and CPD for practitioners available from IfL website. ( <a href="http://www.ifl.ac.uk">www.ifl.ac.uk</a> )

## Other projects relevant to this theme

Projects	Led by	Detail included under
Recognising outstanding contributions to the sector – STAR awards	LSIS	Theme 6

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## Provider guide to partner activities

**Priority 4 Ensuring equality and diversity is at the heart of strategy, policy-making, planning and training**

All work by partners in the sector involves the consideration of equality and diversity issues. Therefore in this section we identify only projects and work that has specific relevance for this priority.

What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Equality and diversity advisory groups</b></p> <p>LLUK support 3 advisory groups to bring stakeholders together:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce Race Advisory Group (further education)</li> <li>• Disability Equality Implementation Group (lifelong learning sector-wide and UK wide)</li> <li>• Forum on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Post-School Education (lifelong learning sector-wide and UK wide).</li> </ul>	Engage with group activities as appropriate through consultations and data collection.	Relevant information, published guidance and reports will be made available via the website.
<p><b>Ofsted Inspection</b></p> <p>Ofsted's new inspection methodology, to be introduced in September 2009, will give equality and diversity a higher profile. A grade will be given for equality and diversity during inspection that will have the potential to limit the overall grade given for effectiveness.</p>	Respond to Ofsted findings and improve equality and diversity within organisations.	Handbooks and information to be made available by Ofsted.

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What is happening?	Actions Required	Support Available
<p><b>Work of the Network for Black Professionals</b></p> <p>NBP's core activities involve the promotion of equality and diversity in the sector workforce.</p>		Information can be found on the NBP website. ( <a href="http://www.nbp.org.uk">www.nbp.org.uk</a> )
<p><b>Equality and diversity views from practitioners</b></p> <p>IfL will facilitate the sharing of teacher and trainer views on equality and diversity as experienced 'on the front line'.</p>	Employers should encourage practitioners to share views.	IfL will support employers to strengthen equality and diversity in practice.

## Moving forward

During this year's review of the workforce strategy, your representatives have indicated that, whilst a current list of national partner resources which support individual employer workforce development is helpful, it is only a first step. As workforce development is influenced by local and/or national factors, each provider has their own unique approach and so different resources need to be available to suit these different needs.

During consultations, sector employers have told us that some resources are more useful than others and that 'one size won't fit all'. Some requested downloadable checklists and templates for use in their own organisations; some would prefer an overview about the changing nature of the sector and reflections on the potential impact that this may have on the workforce and development needs; others are interested in national workforce data information against which they can benchmark their employees. Working with national partners and colleagues from your representative organisations, Lifelong Learning UK are developing accessible resources that you can use and adapt for

your own organisational self-improvement needs. Our starting point for development of these resources is that they must be:

- easy to access and use
- developed with you and your colleagues' use in mind
- adaptable to suit local organisational requirements
- linked explicitly with other self-improvement resources in the sector
- able to demonstrate how workforce development contributes to Framework for Excellence and Ofsted self-assessment inspection
- easy to update and renew by national partners, and as comprehensive as possible
- linked explicitly with the revised National Improvement Strategy
- flexible in format e.g. provided for on-line or hard copy use.

Other suggestions have included the provision of case studies, and news about regulation changes and initiatives which affect your workforce, with access through our website.

These and other ideas are in development and we plan to start releasing resources later in the year. We would welcome your help to shape these developments: please visit [www.lluk.org/feworkforcestrategy.htm](http://www.lluk.org/feworkforcestrategy.htm)

An online version of the *Guide for Learning Providers* will be available on the website from summer 2009.



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## National partners and contact details






## National partners and contact details




This section contains details about the role of national partners and their contact details.

Organisation	Role	Contact details
	<p><b>The 157 Group</b> is a group of larger colleges who have achieved at least a grade 2 on their last Ofsted inspection on leadership and management.</p> <p>157 Group college principals are committed to furthering the aims and objectives of the Group which are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop and practice a leadership paradigm for further education colleges;</li> <li>• enhance the reputation of further education colleges;</li> <li>• play a leading role in shaping and delivering a quality improvement agenda for the further education system;</li> <li>• work towards, and once achieved, if appropriate, to administer, self-accrediting and self-regulating status for members; and</li> <li>• develop projects or enterprises on behalf of the members.</li> </ul>	<p>157 Group 5th Floor, St Andrew's House 18-20 St Andrew Street London, EC4A 3AY <a href="http://www.157group.co.uk">www.157group.co.uk</a></p>
	<p><b>The Association of Colleges (AoC)</b> aims to promote the interests of further education colleges in England and Wales. It provides a broad range of services to its subscribers and represents their interests locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.</p>	<p>AoC 2-5 Stedham Place London, WC1A 1HU 020 7034 9900 <a href="http://www.aoc.co.uk">www.aoc.co.uk</a></p>




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Organisation	Role	Contact details
	<p><b>Association of Learning Providers (ALP)</b> represents independent learning providers throughout England. It influences the education and training agenda in order to: influence and secure a national skills strategy; secure the 14-19 learning curriculum opportunities for learning throughout life and demonstrate a government-supported learning market open to all providers offering high quality learning.</p>	<p>ALP Colenso House 46 Bath Hill, Keynsham Bristol, BS31 1HG 0117 986 5389 <a href="http://www.learningproviders.org.uk">www.learningproviders.org.uk</a></p>
	<p><b>Association of Managers in Education (AMIE)</b> is the trade union and professional association for leaders and managers in colleges and schools. AMIE is a partnership between the Association for College Management (ACM) and Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL). AMIE is a student focused, values led organisation whose primary aim is to offer excellent trade union and professional support to its members.</p>	<p>ACM-AMIE 35 The Point Market Harborough Leicestershire, LE16 7QU 01858 461 110 <a href="http://www.acm.uk.com">www.acm.uk.com</a></p>
	<p><b>Association of National Specialist Colleges (Natspec)</b> is a membership association for independent specialist colleges that provide further education or skills training for learners with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Natspec supports its members through regular briefings, lobbying on strategic and policy issues, offering training events and promoting partnership working with a wide range of organisations and agencies.</p>	<p>NATSPEC Derwen College Oswestry, Shropshire SY11 3JA 0117 923 2830 <a href="http://www.natspec.org.uk">www.natspec.org.uk</a></p>

## National partners and contact details


Organisation	Role	Contact details
	<b>The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)</b> is the professional organisation and trade union for teachers, lecturers and other education professionals in further education and schools across the UK. It promotes and protects the interests of its members and champions good practice across the sectors via social partnership. It has the unique position of serving members in all sectors and levels of staff.	ATL (London Office) 7 Northumberland Street London, WC2N 5RD 020 7930 6441 www.atl.org.uk
	<b>British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta)</b> is the government agency leading the national drive to ensure the effective and innovative use of technology throughout learning. Its ambition is to utilise the benefits of technology to create a more exciting, rewarding and successful experience for learners of all ages and abilities, enabling them to achieve their potential.	BECTA Millburn Hill Road, Science Park Coventry, CV4 7JJ 024 7641 6994 www.becta.org.uk
	<b>The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)</b> is one of three new government departments set up by the Prime Minister in June 2007. It focuses on raising standards so that more children and young people reach expected levels, lifting more children out of poverty and re-engaging disaffected young people. In addition to its direct responsibilities, DCSF leads work across government to improve outcomes for children, including work on children's health and child poverty.	DCSF Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street London, SW1P 3BT 0870 000 2288 www.dfes.gov.uk

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Organisation	Role	Contact details
	<b>The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS)</b> is one of three government departments set up by the Prime Minister in June 2007. Some of its responsibilities include raising participation and attainment by young people and adults in post-16 education and tackling the skills gap amongst adults, in particular by equipping people with basic literacy and numeracy.	DIUS 66-74 Victoria Street Kingsgate House London, SW1E 6SW 020 7215 5555 www.dius.gov.uk
	<b>The Institute for Learning (IfL)</b> is distinctive as the independent professional body for teachers, trainers, tutors and student teachers in the learning and skills sector. IfL's three strategic priorities are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing valuable benefits to members;</li> <li>• raising the status of practitioners; and</li> <li>• facilitating the contribution of practitioners to policy issues.</li> </ul> IfL's focus is on individual practitioners and their professionalism and status.	Institute for Learning 49-51 East Road London, N1 6AH 0844 815 3202 www.ifl.ac.uk
	<b>The Learning and Skills Council (LSC)</b> is a non-departmental public body which aims to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to ensure we have a workforce of world-class standard. They are responsible for planning and funding high-quality education and training for everyone in England other than those in universities.	LSC Chelyesmore House Quinton Road Coventry, CV1 2WT 0870 900 6800 www.lsc.gov.uk

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## National partners and contact details




Organisation	Role	Contact details
	<p><b>The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)</b> is the new sector owned body, formed from the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) and the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) to develop excellent and sustainable further education provision across the sector. LSIS will work in partnership with all parts of the sector to provide vision, leadership, clarity and high-quality support; practising and enabling continuous self-improvement and capacity-building. LSIS will take a comprehensive approach to whole organisation improvement, offering a range of programmes and services which are based on leading-edge practice from within the sector and further afield, and building and sustaining capacity for self-improvement across the sector. These programmes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tailored organisational consultancy;</li> <li>commissioning and disseminating relevant research and policy updates;</li> <li>CPD for staff leaders, managers and governors;</li> <li>a programme to help providers improve their self-assessment processes by working in peer review and development groups;</li> <li>programmes to improve teaching and learning and develop sector coaches and mentors through the development of networks and resources; and</li> <li>programmes that recognise and reward excellence and innovation in the sector.</li> </ul> <p>LSIS aims to be a national and international centre of expertise and innovation for excellence; and to become the focal point for enabling innovation by the sector, supporting it to be ever more effective in responding to the needs of learners, employers and the community.</p>	<p>LSIS Coventry Friars House Manor House Drive Coventry, CV1 2TE 0870 211 3434 www.lsis.org.uk</p>

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Organisation	Role	Contact details
	<p><b>Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK)</b> is the independent employer-led sector skills council responsible for the professional development of all those working in community learning and development, further education, higher education, libraries, archives and information services and work based learning across the UK. It represents the interests of the 1 million+ individuals working in lifelong learning in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and is the voice of employers in this sector on skills issues. LLUK provides the strategic perspective for workforce planning and development and influences and shapes relevant policy across the four UK nations.</p>	<p>Lifelong Learning UK 5th Floor, St Andrew's House 18-20 St Andrew Street London, EC4A 3AY 0870 757 7890 www.lluk.org</p> <p>Information and Advice Service 020 7936 5798 advice@lluk.org</p>
	<p><b>The Local Education Authority Forum for the Education of Adults (LEAFAEA)</b> is the national network of local authority adult learning officers and represents the local authority voice in national forums. It plays a key role in identifying the workforce issues of local authority adult learning provision.</p>	<p>LEAFAEA c/o Municipal Buildings Church Road Stockton, TS18 1XE 01642 526422</p>
	<p><b>National Network of Local Adult Learning providers (HOLEX)</b> exists to facilitate network and information sharing between member organisations; to offer briefings and information updates to members; and to represent the views of members to national and regional bodies involved in overseeing learning and skills provision in England.</p>	<p>HOLEX (National Office) PO Box 145 Childswickham Broadway, WR12 7ZQ 0138 644 3550</p>

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#### National partners and contact details





Organisation	Role	Contact details
	<b>The Network for Black Professionals' (NBP)</b> purpose is to address the under-representation of Black Staff in the further education sector, particularly the small numbers of managers, senior staff and principals.	NBP Wolverhampton Science Park Wolverhampton, WV10 9RU 01902 715309 <a href="http://www.nbp.org.uk">www.nbp.org.uk</a>
	<b>The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)</b> is a non-governmental organisation aiming to increase the number of adults in formal and informal learning and to improve opportunities and widen access to learning for those communities under-represented in current provision.	NIACE Renaissance House 20 Princess Road West Leicester, LE1 6TP 0116 204 4200 <a href="http://www.niace.org.uk">www.niace.org.uk</a>
	<b>The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)</b> is the government department responsible for reviewing and monitoring the standards of education and training.	Ofsted Royal Exchange Buildings St Ann's Square Manchester, M2 7LA 08456 404045 <a href="http://www.ofsted.gov.uk">www.ofsted.gov.uk</a>

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Organisation	Role	Contact details
 Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency	<b>Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA)</b> works closely with government and other agencies. QCDA lead the reform of education and training programmes that equip learners, teaching professionals and employers with the skills and support they need to meet the demands of the 21st century. Core responsibilities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing and reviewing the national curriculum so that pupils in every school have access to the same high-quality curriculum content;</li> <li>• working with stakeholders and national partners to develop innovative education initiatives, such as the 14-19 Diploma and the Qualifications and Credit Framework; and</li> <li>• providing guidance and support, helping to build an education and training system that benefits all learners throughout their lives.</li> </ul>	QCDA 83 Piccadilly London, W1J 8QA 020 7509 5555 <a href="http://www.qca.org.uk">www.qca.org.uk</a>
	<b>The Sixth Form Colleges' Forum (SFCF)</b> lobbies on behalf of sixth form colleges' interests and provides them with advice and information. All sixth form colleges are members of this organisation.	SFCF Local Government House Smith Square London, SW1P 3HZ 020 7187 7349 <a href="http://www.sfcf.lge.gov.uk">www.sfcf.lge.gov.uk</a>

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#### National partners and contact details

Organisation	Role	Contact details
	<b>The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)</b> was established to raise standards in schools by attracting able and committed people to teaching and improving the effectiveness of the school workforce.	TDA Buckingham Palace Road London, SW1W 9SZ 0845 6000 991 <a href="http://www.tda.gov.uk">www.tda.gov.uk</a>
	<b>UNISON Public Service Union</b> is the largest public service trade union representing support staff working in further education and sixth form colleges throughout the UK.	UNISON 1 Mabledon Place London, WC1H 9AJ 0845 355 0845 <a href="http://www.unison.org.uk">www.unison.org.uk</a>
	<b>The Universities' Council for Education of Teachers (UCET)</b> acts as a national forum for the discussion of matters relating to the education of teachers and professional educators, and to the study of education in the university sector and contributes to the formulation of policy in these fields. Its members are UK universities involved in teacher education, and a number of colleges of higher education in the university sector.	UCET Whittington House 19-30 Alfred Place London, WC1E 7EA 020 7580 8000 <a href="http://www.ucet.ac.uk">www.ucet.ac.uk</a>
	<b>The University and College Union (UCU)</b> is the largest trade union and professional association for academics, lecturers, trainers, researchers, and academic-related staff working in further and higher education throughout the UK.	UCU Carlow Street London, NW1 7LH 020 7756 2500 <a href="http://www.ucu.org.uk">www.ucu.org.uk</a>

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## Notes



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# CHANGES

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## A Critical Literacy Frame for UK secondary education contexts

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### Abstract

This paper presents a pedagogical, analytical and heuristic tool for the critical analysis of texts, the Critical Literacy Frame, developed through a critical textual and discourse analysis of the genre of broadcast adversarial political interviewing, further informed by questionnaires and interviews with key informants. It is grounded in a social-constructionist orientation to language, and is underpinned theoretically by insights from Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Literacy. The potential for such a frame, in the context of UK secondary education, particularly with reference to A level English Language and Citizenship, is considered and recommendations for pedagogy, curriculum, teacher-education, policy and further complementary research are offered.

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### Key words

*Critical discourse analysis, critical literacy, UK Secondary education, Citizenship, A level English Language*

### Introduction

The way in which people make sense of the world is through language - it is a discursive process. This perspective argues that language and social reality are related and challenges the argument that language is a neutral reflection of society and social reality. Rather, it argues that language, instead of drawing meanings passively from pre-existing knowledge of the world, plays an active role in classifying the phenomena and experiences through which individuals construct, understand and represent reality. The way in which

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people make sense of the world is therefore discursively mediated. Over the past 20 years, concerns with this perspective have been growing as to how this can be reflected in a range of classroom contexts through an emphasis on notions of critical literacy.

In terms of pedagogy and practical classroom application, this paper will look at how critical literacy tools can be incorporated into A level English and Citizenship teaching. My aim will be to emphasise the value of being able to 'unpack' various texts/genres/discourses as a tool to understanding how language is employed to make meanings, and specifically how this can be introduced into these secondary education contexts. Through such critical understanding, the aim is to help learners to make representations, agendas and positionalities more lucid, and to be aware of the opaqueness and provisionality of language use. I will attempt to locate this discussion in the context of UK secondary education aware that there is an on-going debate around the reconfiguration of the relationship between English and Literacy represented, as Pope (1998) comprehensively outlines, by a shift from a focus on literature to a focus on a wider range of texts and genres; from considering texts in isolation to considering texts in their social contexts; by a move from a reliance on a literary canon to the understanding that all texts are part of social and historical processes; and by a shift from a monocultural version of cultural heritage to a recognition that students need to be aware of a wide variety of regional, national and global cultures and their associated myths and belief systems. Indeed Kress (1996) has argued that alternative terms such as Communications might better fit the study of language, textuality and multiliteracies in an increasingly global and multimodal world.

### **Why a Critical Literacy Frame?**

In education, texts are one of the central tools of our trade. Yet there is evidence that we still fail to address these texts critically in many instances. For example, Grady (1997) offers a critique of how textbooks can operate to perpetuate the economic social and political status quo that privileges certain groups over others. There has been a long and valuable history of critical literacy theorisation and practical classroom application, particularly in the Australian context. Whilst there have been differing varieties of and developments in critical literacy (Shor 1992, Morgan 1996, Luke and Freebody 1997, Janks 2002), all share a concern with the inter-relationships between language, power, and social practices. Whilst the classroom potential for these concerns to be aired has received extensive treatment in the Australian context (Morgan 1996, Luke et al. 1994) I would contend there is a parallel need for considering how this debate can be extended to the UK secondary classroom for both learners and learner-teachers. How can we claim to be language teaching professionals if we don't understand the ways in which language operates to construct meaning, and the fact that this operation takes place on a number of levels?

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### **The Frame in secondary education.**

Arguably, one of the best contemporary opportunities for exploiting the potential of a Critical Literacy Frame as a conduit for engagement with these issues, has arisen through the incorporation of notions of Citizenship within the National Curriculum.

The notion of citizenship education in the UK has a long history with some commentators (Lawton 2000) tracing this back to the 19th century, though a very different notion of citizenship was entailed then, subsuming such notions as patriotism, nationalism, colonialism and even racism. The most recent incarnation of Citizenship within UK education was initiated with the 'Education for Citizenship' report (QCA 1998). This was viewed as a response to disaffection, alienation, 'delinquency' and cynicism regarding politicians, resulting in low political engagement of young people as evidenced by the fact that in the 2001 election, there was a turnout of only 30% of young people between 18 and 25. The Crick Report advocated 'no less than a change in political culture...' encouraging within young people 'critical capacities to weigh evidence before speaking and acting... and to make them individually confident in finding new forms of involvement and acting among themselves.' (QCA 1998: 1)

The Crick Report (QCA 1998) divided its conception of Citizenship into 3 component parts:

- Social and Moral Responsibility, covering 'social virtues' and individual responsibilities;
- Community Involvement, encouraging active participation in the community to revitalise civic networks, and;
- Political Literacy, defined as promoting effective participation in public life and the public sphere.

From a critical perspective, such a citizenship agenda could be seen as playing the role of reinforcement of the status quo in terms of the dominant values, dispositions and cultural capital of a society, but does offer the potential for a resistant space at the same time. I would contend that the introduction of a notion of Citizenship Education into the National Curriculum offers such a space and the introduction of the Critical Literacy Frame, either in single subject areas, or in a cross-curricular mode, would encourage a wider engagement with critical rather than prescriptive perspectives. The frame also fits well with stated aims for assessment in A level English Language Syllabus, with its emphasis on 'application of linguistic frameworks for analysis - identifying/describing/interpreting significant language features', interpreting 'variation in the meanings and forms of spoken and written language according to context' and 'engagement with text's meaning purpose and effects' (AQA 2003). It also goes some way to

addressing concerns raised in a context of larger class sizes and a concern to encourage independence and to allow students to take ownership of their study through allowing them to be creative and to use their analytical skills in a range of beneficial ways.

### **Theoretical influences on the Frame**

Throughout this paper, it is important to remind ourselves of the centrality of context to the use of language and that context is fundamental to a view of language as 'social semiotic' (Halliday 1978) - it is social in that it is a system of communication shared and mutually intelligible by its particular speech community and semiotic in that it is a system of signs that convey meaning about a particular culture of its users. Any analysis of meaning in language, therefore, needs to consider both linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. Drawing on this conceptualisation of language and on the post - modern social theorising of Foucault (1981), Pêcheux (1982) and Bourdieu (1991), Fairclough (1992:28) notes that language cannot be seen as being divorced from its social relations. Language constructs and is constructed by society. If language is invested with power relationships, then an understanding of power is central to an understanding of language use, particularly in the way in which the control of this shaping power can be used as a tool for influence and authority. Of particular relevance here is the process of 'naturalisation' (Fairclough 1989) in which language acts as a social control agent, through which members of society are conditioned to accept conventions and practices that may not be in their best interests; these language practices and conventions being represented as 'common-sense', inevitable and beyond challenge. However, the key aim of a critical approach to language teaching resides in attempts to uncover the process of naturalisation in any discourse, and through the problematization of the accepted conventions and practices, seek to show how meaning, '... because it is socially constructed, can be deconstructed and reconstructed' (McKenzie 1992: 226). As Fairclough (1992: 9) notes:

*'dominant practices and conventions may be confronted with alternative and oppositional ones, with different valuations of languages and varieties, or different ideological investments.'*

This move to a more critical notion of pedagogy, then, is the principal aim of the textual 'unclinking' of language.

It is the intention of this article to provide a practical classroom tool, and so I have opted for a set of criteria that will allow learners and teachers to look at elements of the text at both a 'micro' lexicogrammatical level, as well as consider the impact of such choices at more 'macro' semantic and societal levels. The work is largely grounded in my own research on this area (Hyatt 2003), which itself was informed by key work in the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1995a) and Critical Literacy (Luke and Freebody 1997).

My criteria for the Critical Literacy Frame, to be applied to texts and discussed with learners, are outlined in the table below:

<b>Critical Literacy Frame</b>
1. Pronouns
2. Passive / Active Forms
3. Time - Tense and Aspect
4. Adjectives, Adverbs, Nouns, Verbal Processes - Evaluation and Semantic Prosody
5. Metaphor
6. Presupposition / Implication
7. Medium
8. Audience
9. Visual Images
10. Age, Class, Disability, Gender, Race / Ethnicity and Sexuality Issues
11. Reference to other texts, genres, discourse and individuals.

Teachers and learners could and should supplement these criteria according to their contexts, the context of the text(s) under examination and the needs and interests of the learners. As well as offering a brief general gloss as to how I feel these aspects are relevant to such an analysis, I will then offer some examples from a corpus of political interviews (Hyatt 2003) for illustrative purposes.

#### 1. **Pronouns**

This aspect of the Critical Literacy Frame considers the way in which pronouns are used in the text, whether they are inclusive (our, us, we, etc.) or exclusive (they, their, them, he, she, it, you, your etc.). It also considers how the reader and other participants are positioned as allies or in-group members with the author, thus assuming shared knowledge, beliefs and values, or how readers and other participants are marginalised as 'outsiders' with different beliefs and agendas. Pronouns are central to the way individuals and groups are named and so are always political in the way they inscribe power relations.

Further detailed analysis of the use of pronouns (including I, we, they, it and one) to evoke certain constructions can be found in Pennycook (1994) and Hyatt (2003). It is important to note that I am not suggesting that the use of such pronouns is inevitably sinister in intention but can in certain contexts serve as part of a construction that reinforces particular agendas and positions.

## 2. **Activation/Passivisation**

Transformations of active constructions into passive forms can be motivated by the desire to elide agency and therefore systematically background responsibility for actions in some instances or to foreground responsibility in others. The manipulation of agency transparency serves to construct a world of various responsibilities, and power, e.g. 'The present perfect is used to ...'. By removing the agent, the use of a particular grammatical form is given an unquestionable, universal function, in spite of its context of use and the political dimensions I am raising here. Such an analysis is almost always absent from textbooks and grammar reference books using these definitions.

I feel, however, that it is important to note that to assume that such a basic transitivity shift as passivisation or activation would lead to a complete shift in the understanding of the reader would be an over-simplification and patronising to the reader. However, as noted earlier, the construction is effected through a layering of strata of representations and the claim for relevance of this aspect of the Critical Literacy Frame is as one of these myriad strata.

## 3. **Time - tense and aspect**

This relates to the way in which tense and aspect are used to construct 'understanding' about events. For example, the use of the present simple tense constructs an event as reality or fact; the use of the present perfect simple constructs a past event as being of relevance at the moment; the past simple tense can represent a past event as no longer being important or relevant. The effect of tense choices can be demonstrated by converting the past simple tenses to present perfect and vice versa and noting the different semantic effects.

It is therefore important to understand that choices made in terms of tense and aspect are not merely concerned with the time frame of an action or process but also impact clearly on the representation of that action or process as true, relevant or significant.

## 4. **Adjectives/Adverbs/Nouns/Verbal Processes**

The use of loaded, dramatic, and stereotyping adjectives, adverbs and nouns are central to the construction of an event or a person, whether or not that construction is evaluating its object positively or negatively. Also the use of non-hedged adverbs, such as *surely, obviously, clearly* and so on, position a contention as being incontrovertible 'fact'. The use here of overgeneralisation and overstatement is worthy of note. All-inclusive expressions (*all, every, none, no-one, always, never* etc.) are rarely accurate, but can be used to construct a generalising, stereotyping or over-simplifying evaluation. Other comment adjuncts expressing the authors attitude to the whole proposition, such as '*constantly, totally, entirely, absolutely, wholly, utterly*', etc. fulfil the same purpose.

The concept of evaluation is useful here. Hunston and Thompson (2000:5) define evaluation as 'the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about'. Evaluation can further be divided into two main categories, *inscribed* and *evoked* (Martin 2000). In the inscribed category the evaluation is carried by a specific lexical item, overtly displaying the attitudinal judgement of the text producer e.g. *excellent, terrible, etc.*

In addition to *inscribed* evaluation, it is also important to consider what Martin terms *evoked* evaluation. This type of evaluation uses superficially neutral ideational choices but which have the potential to evoke judgmental responses, in those who share a particular set of ideological values. These evoked evaluations, in themselves do not denote the text producer's attitude to the content overtly, but leave the value judgement to the reader/listener. However, they are mechanisms through which evaluation is covertly constructed. For example, in food promotional text terms such as 'natural' and 'organic' operate in a similar way. Negative evaluation can also be constructed by terms such as 'suspected asylum seeker'. Such mechanisms can be seen as powerful devices in a hegemonic view of language construction in the role they play in projecting a notion of 'common sense'.

### **Semantic prosody**

For Hunston and Francis (2000: 137):

*a word may be said to have a particular semantic prosody if it can be shown to co-occur typically with other words that belong to a particular semantic set.*

These semantic sets are often positive or negative. For example, Stubbs (1995) illustrated that more than 90% of the words collocating with the word *cause* were negative, e.g. *accident, cancer, commotion, crisis* and *delay*. Stubbs also gives an example of positive semantic prosody - *provide* - which has amongst its typical collocates words such as *care, food, help, jobs, relief* and *support*. A powerful illustrative example of these differences comes if one collocates both *provide* and *cause* with the word *work*, and the outcome is clearly one of positive associations with the former and negative associations with the latter.

### **5. Metaphor**

Metaphor is more than just a literary device - it plays a fundamental part in the way people represent social reality. The use of metaphor is central in the way it positions what is described and the reader's relationship to this. This is starkly seen in the description of individuals or the personification of entities, e.g. Saddam Hussein is a 'monster', Margaret Thatcher was the 'Iron Lady', the English Language is an 'octopus' (Prodromou 1997) or a



'hydra' (McCarthy and Carter 1997). It is also significant to realise that the metaphor and its alternative congruent or literal form do not express exactly the same meaning - indeed the purpose of metaphor is functional in that it serves to construe a differently foregrounded meaning than its alternatives. Metaphors are neither better nor worse than their congruent counterparts - they are simply performing different functions.

It is significant to note that metaphors need not only be lexical but can be grammatical as well (Halliday 1985: 319-345), whereby the meaning is expressed 'through a lexico-grammatical form which originally evolved to express a different kind of meaning.' (Thompson 1996: 165).

One clear example of grammatical metaphor is nominalization, or presenting as a noun or noun phrase something that could be presented with other parts of speech, e.g. *her understanding* as opposed to *what she understood*. This has the effect of making a text more 'lexically dense', a feature commonly noted with 'written' texts. Characteristic of this are more 'packed' texts: texts that are more information heavy. Nominalisation can make these texts appear more prestigious, academic, and serious. It can construct an argument as significant and well thought through. Ivanic (1997: 267) notes that through the process of nominalisation '...writers identify themselves with those who engage in such knowledge compacting, objectifying and capturing practices' and so can represent themselves as 'intellectual' or those who use 'reasoned thought'.

## 6. Presupposition/Implication

Presuppositions help to represent constructions as convincing realities and there are a number of lexico-grammatical means by which this can be achieved:

- the use of negative questions and tags which presuppose a certain answer - *isn't it the case that...?*, *wouldn't it be fair to say that...?*, *you're in even more trouble, aren't you?*;
- the use of factive verbs, adjectives and adverbs; verbs that presuppose their grammatical complements; adjectives and adverbs that describe entities and processes they presuppose and therefore represent them as facts - we now *know*..., we *realize*..., we *discovered* that..., you *forget* that... I *believe* that..., as you will be *aware*..., *odd*..., *obvious*..., *previously*... and so on. Factive verbs have been noted in Hoey (2000) as a form of embedded evaluation;
- the use of change of state verbs which presuppose the factuality of a previous state - when did you stop *beating* your wife?, their policy on Europe has *changed*..., this school has *improved*...; *transform*, *turn into*, *become*, and so on;
- the use of invalid causal links presupposing that if one fact is true then the next is also true - *'90% of my class passed FCE this year, 80% of my class passed last year, therefore my teaching is getting better...'*;

- rhetorical questions, which pre-suppose the answer implied by the questioner in open questions - *Is it not reasonable to ask the PM such questions?* - or in the case of closed (wh-) questions provide the questioner with the opportunity to answer their own question, the question they have framed and therefore presuppose the self-response as 'true' - *What did they do to British manufacturing industry? They destroyed it, that's what.*

### 7. Medium

The conversationalizing of a text is a form of interdiscursivity, which goes beyond the ways in which texts borrow from, steal from and interpenetrate each other, to the ways in which genres and discourses do this. Examples of interdiscursivity can be seen in the way in which the discourse of business has penetrated the discourse of higher education (Fairclough 1993), with the perception of students being addressed more explicitly as customers and the attendant implications of this managerialist discourse - value for money and accountability being positively associated with this change, and the changing perception of teachers as being in need of scrutiny (Smyth 1995, Hargreaves 1994) being the negative aspect. In the same way the presentation of advertising copy in a conversational style serves to imply a close social relationship between the copywriter and the reader, which does not exist. This 'masquerade' (Hyatt 1994) of friendship, a shared communication with a trusted confidant, an individual projected as someone you can believe in, who wouldn't lie to you, who has your best interests at heart, can predispose the text receiver to believe what the text producer is communicating.

Typical characteristics of the medium of spoken discourse in political interviews include:

#### ***Use of a narrative present tense***

This tense usage suggests the narrative progression that is often associated with day-to-day conversations.

#### ***Representation of the talk of others, including the interlocutor***

This is a technique for offering an antagonistic proposition without direct face-risk to the propositioner. It is also a feature in the simulation of the voice of others, again representing the 'talk' as a conversation.

#### ***Use of present continuous with narrative, verbal processes***

As discussed in Carter and McCarthy (1995) this is a grammatical feature of spoken discourse, and can be used to emphasise the act of saying, as opposed to the substantive content of what is being said. Logically, therefore it is a feature of spoken discourse.

#### ***Conversational language - discourse markers***

Again there are myriad examples of functional discourse markers, such as *so, anyway, I mean...*, *Well, OK*, etc. which also contribute to the reading of these exchanges as spoken discourse.

#### **8. Audience**

Central to the notion of language as a social semiotic is the idea that language is utilized for some form of communication, and therefore a party or parties at whom communication is aimed, in other words, the audience. Any analysis would therefore be inadequate if it did not focus some attention on who is perceived as being the audience, and how they are projected in terms of social distance - relationship to and familiarity with the text producer - and status. Because there is no way that the author can know exactly who the audience is, the notion of audience can be read as an idealised, projected construction. In this idealisation and projection, clues can be found as to the ideological presuppositions of the text producers.

#### **9. Visual images**

Significant work in these visual and multi-modal areas has been conducted by Barthes (1997), as well as Kress and van Leeuwen (1990, 2001). Historically, the association of the camera recording 'a set image' and as such being associated with 'truth' and 'objectivity', has impacted on the way visual images are read. Despite the potential for the manipulation of images, and the potential for displaying an image with a constructed impression of its contextual setting, visual images do play a powerful role in the construction of truth and reality. In this respect there are clear relationships with notions of hegemony in presenting a picture of 'this is how it is'. As Fairclough notes (1995b:7) images have primacy over words.

#### **10. Age, class, disability, gender, race/ethnicity, and sexuality issues**

Within a text it can be revealing to note any comment regarding individuals who may be projected as less socially valued, as a result of these issues, in order to legitimize the assertions of those who hold power, or to identify any pejorative or stereotyping presentation or labelling of such people as being a 'normal', naturalised and commonly-shared viewpoint. Whilst such concerns are central to any approach concern with the relationships of language to power, I feel it is justified in directing teachers and learners to consider the impact these issues have on marginalised groups. Cole (2001) has noted the impact that labelling has had in the area of educational inclusion, noting Ballard's (1995) argument that the language of Special Educational Needs, and in particular the term 'special', ensures continuing segregation, as well as Corbett's (1996) use of the term 'bad mouthing' to represent the type of labelling which lays the blame for barriers to inclusion on individual 'deficit' rather than systemic failures, such as the cultures, practices and policies of educational institutions.

#### **11. Reference to other texts, genres, discourses and individuals**

One consistent way in which texts from all genres seek to establish the legitimacy of their claims, their common-sense assumptions and their world views is through reference to other texts, genres, discourses and individuals. Fairclough (1992) offers the terms interdiscursivity (or

constitutive intertextuality) for the wider appropriation of styles, genres and the ideological assumptions underpinning discursive practice. Interdiscursivity operates on a more macro level than intertextuality and refers to the diverse ways in which genres and discourses interpenetrate each other, as exemplified with the examples of the co-penetration of the discourses of advertising, science and medicine, and the discourses of academia and consumerism (Fairclough 1993). Intertextuality is perhaps better viewed as the identifiable (either clearly or more indistinctly) borrowings from other texts. Quotation from, citation of and reference to other texts are lucid examples, whereas the use of phrasing, style and metaphor originating in other texts may be more opaque, yet equally revealing.

The impact of intertextuality, where used as a technique for particular construction, representation and projection of preferred meanings, can be to support, reinforce and legitimize the argument of the writer. Careful selection and editing of 'borrowed' texts, and the utilization of other genres and discourses, can achieve required evaluation, yet reference to other texts, directly through quotation or indirectly, retains projected links to 'reality' and, hence, claims for the truth-value of the assertion. Key figures are often used as their status implies a legitimising respectability and again supports the claim to the truth content of the writer's assertions, (note the way academic writing uses quotation and citation of key research literature).

### **Pedagogical aspects**

The Critical Literacy Frame is not meant to be a fixed framework, but can and should be adapted by teachers depending on the contexts, needs and interests of the learners. The choice of texts to examine also does not need to be viewed as prescriptive - it can equally well be used on a whole range of texts and genres, embracing a range of discourse types. Prior to the actual textual analysis, I feel it is useful to engage and orient learners with a series of macro-questions, aimed at fostering a critical outlook toward text in general. The following are the questions that I have used, but again alternatives could be used depending on the context, needs and interests of the learners, so this list of orientation questions needs to be viewed as a starting point for the critical orientation to and consideration of texts, and the list could be supplemented, edited or adapted on the texts considered or the pedagogic context of the consideration of the texts. The list as presented is not intended to suggest any particular order of priority:

**The Orientation Frame**

- Is this a typical text of its type?
- Who produced this?
- Who will read it?
- Will everyone understand this text in the same way?
- Why was it produced?
- What other ways could it have been written?
- What is missing from this text?
- How does this text reflect the wider society?
- What could we do about this text if we disagree with it?

After these questions have been addressed, a more detailed analysis of the text along the themes suggested in the frame could be employed.

**Recommendations**

**Pedagogy**

This paper advocates the critical engagement with texts, therefore also entails a critical engagement with the contexts of that text's production and reception, its audience and its purpose, as well possibilities for interpretation. The research also suggests an orientation to working with learners to demonstrate that ideologies are represented through contexts of cultures and these contexts of cultures are construed through registers, themselves ultimately realised by particular choices in language. These ideologies can therefore be unmasked by acts of analysis moving from the lexico-grammatical, through register and genre back to the ideologies that underpin the choices made at linguistic and extra-linguistic levels. Language analysis is then, by its nature: social, political and cultural analysis.

The learners are central to pedagogy in this context. My concern is not that they should mirror my, or other educators', political stances and beliefs. What this approach advocates is open, enquiring stances, a criticality of thought and an awareness of social, political and cultural implications and responsibility for their actions. The pedagogical approach aims at providing pedagogical conditions in which they can become social agents able to take issue with, challenge and understand mechanisms of governance, and be aware of how these are mediated within society through discourse. The aim is self-sustaining in that they can then challenge the pedagogy of their own development, albeit in relation to others, and so move beyond instrumentality towards criticality.

**Curriculum**

The value of a critical literacy frame as an aid to personal deconstruction and 'unclanking' of texts and discourse as a reflective and reflexive act lies in its potential to enhance teachers' abilities to become more aware and, through interaction with others, develop their own notions of curriculum, so becoming more autonomous professionals. The challenge for education then is to create spaces and opportunities for reflection that allow a continual interplay between thought and action, involving a commitment to achieving social justice through transformatory processes.

The understanding of language advocated in this paper is one that doesn't promote a language awareness that leads to 'proper' or 'correct' language use in the way that many proponents of a tradition, prescriptive, standard view of language promote. A clear example of the latter stance would be the rejection of the LINC (Language in the National Curriculum) project, by the UK Ministry of Education, in the project's emphasis on language in its socio-cultural context, as one variety among many. The ministry's view was that this did not fit with the government's view of equating 'standard' forms of language with ideological conceptions of discipline, patriotism and law-abiding behaviour (Carter 1992). This paper advocates an understanding of language, and its inseparable inter-connection with society, as a tool for promoting critical thought and decision-making.

**Teacher education**

The first steps towards my development of a critical literacy frame have been enhanced by collaborative classroom analysis and discussion with learner-teachers during my work with groups of PGCE English students on Initial Teacher Education courses in the UK, and groups of M.Ed. students both in the UK and in Dubai, Hong Kong, and Singapore, as well as work with groups of teachers and teacher educators in Singapore and Spain. The Critical Literacy Frame can, and has, been used, therefore as a tool through which teachers can critically reflect upon textual practices within their own areas of education. It has proved a valuable deconstructive tool in my own teaching and research.

Hargreaves (1994) has argued that teachers in the UK face growing and contradictory pressures in that which they are expected to do. Despite a continuing context of financial pressures and constraints, they have been expected to address issues of literacy and numeracy (as defined in instrumental terms by the government's National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies), to address issues of how education can contribute to the economic well-being of the country (largely through instrumental emphases on a 'skills-based' approach and vocational education), as well as to address issues of rebuilding national identities. For Hargreaves, this partly represents a reality of 'ideological compliance' (1994: 5). For teachers to address such policy constraints and pressures, an awareness of how these

policies are constructed and how their underlying ideological implications are inscribed and evoked within the text as a precondition of challenging them, is crucial. Again the potential of the use of a critical literacy frame in the deconstruction of policy statements and documents represents a possible opportunity within teacher education and development programmes.

### **Policy**

The challenge evoked in this paper is to make a space for an engagement with policy and policy-makers, whilst avoiding appropriation by the mechanisms and constructions of policy. This involves the duality of creating simultaneous spaces for engagement and resistance. For me, this can be achieved at a local level by teachers. Rather than either simply following curricular imperatives, or refusing to be bound by them in totality, teachers need to seek opportunities to change and develop policy from within. I would contend that the implementation of a Citizenship element within the National Curriculum offers such an opportunity and the Critical Literacy Frame a mechanism for critically investigating and challenging the language, and the substance and ideology this inscribes, of policy statements. An example of seeking opportunities to utilise openings within policy and curricular prescriptions to implement aspects of critical orientations to pedagogy, might involve efforts to deconstruct the notion of Citizenship, itself not an unproblematic concept. Does this construct a picture of a homogenised group of citizens or provide an opportunity for differing and disparate voices to emerge? In what ways can individuals challenge notions of Citizenship so that they represent the latter rather than the former? And how do these challenges allow individuals to critically engage with the dilemma of the construction of a dichotomy between structure and individual agency? In Whitty's words, the challenge is to:

*...reinscribe in discourse the notion of collectivism as distinct from either atomised consumers or homogenised citizens. That collectivism is one that recognises commonality and difference...*  
(Whitty 1998 in Torres 1998: 25)

### **Final thoughts**

Within this paper, I have sought to focus on encouraging awareness of the ways in which systems of power affect people by the meanings they construct and represent. It has sought to investigate and elucidate how textual practices are social practices, taking place within social, historical, and political contexts. As Farahmandpur & McLaren assert:

*'Preparing students for critical citizenship through critical literacy deepens the roots of democracy by encouraging students to actively participate in public discourses and debates over social economic and*

*political issues that affect everyday life in their own and neighbouring communities. In this way, students can acquire the civic courage and moral responsibility to participate in democratic life as critical social agents, becoming authors of their own history rather than being written off by history.*' (Farahmandpur & McLaren 2001:3)

This paper represents one step along a pathway to encouraging the critical decoding and analysis of powerful texts and discourses that can facilitate a critical social agency, and as such, augment notions of critical pedagogy.

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**Appendix 5**  
**Table 1 - Exclusive Pronoun Use In The Strategy and The Guide**

Group Referred to In Pronoun Term	Source Text	Reference to Example of This Pronoun Term Being Used			
		They	You / Your	Their	Own
National Partners	Strategy	LLUK, 2009, p. 1		LLUK, 2009, p. 1	LLUK, 2009, p. 1
	Guide	LLUK, 2009a, p. 2		LLUK, 2009a, p. 5	
FE Sector Employers	Strategy	LLUK, 2009, p. 13		LLUK, 2009, p. 2	LLUK, 2009, p. 3
	Guide	LLUK, 2009a, p. 5	LLUK, 2009a, p. 1	LLUK, 2009a, p. 5	LLUK, 2009a, p. 1
FE Organisations / Learning Providers	Strategy	LLUK, 2009, p. 14			
	Guide	LLUK, 2009a, p. 1			
FE Workforce / Staff	Strategy			LLUK, 2009, p. 5	LLUK, 2009, p. 10
	Guide	LLUK, 2009a, p. 9		LLUK, 2009a, p. 6	LLUK, 2009a, p. 9
Inanimate items such as documents, publications or resources	Strategy				
	Guide	LLUK, 2009a, p. 23		LLUK, 2009a, p. 23	
Other organisations / groups	Strategy				
	Guide	LLUK, 2009a, p. 31		LLUK, 2009a, p. 7	

Group Referred to In Pronoun Term	Source Text	Reference to Example of This Pronoun Term Being Used			
		They	You / Your	Their	Own
Reader/s	Strategy		LLUK, 2009, p. 1		
	Guide				LLUK, 2009a, p. 1
Learning Providers	Strategy			LLUK, 2009, p. 1	
	Guide			LLUK, 2009a, p. 1	LLUK, 2009a, p. 46
Learner's Employers	Strategy			LLUK, 2009, p. 1	
	Guide				
Professionals	Strategy			LLUK, 2009, p. 5	LLUK, 2009, p. 5
	Guide			LLUK, 2009a, p. 7	
Learners' Communities	Strategy			LLUK, 2009, p. 7	
	Guide				
Stakeholders	Strategy			LLUK, 2009, p. 14	
	Guide				

Table 2 – Examples of The Use Of Adjectives, Adverbs, Nouns, Verbal Processes – Evaluation and Semantic Prosody, In The Strategy and The Guide

Group of Term Used	Source Text – The Strategy	Source Text – The Guide
<b>Terms Relating To My Research Focus</b>	Entrant Fully Professionalised Practitioner Professional(s) Professionalise  Professionalising  Professionally Professionalism  Strategy  <b>Repetition:</b>  Professionalised  Strategy	Practitioner(s) Professional(s)  Professionalised Professionalising  Professionalism Professionalization Strategy  <b>Repetition:</b> Practitioner Practitioners Professional Professionalised Professionals Strategy
<b>Terms Relating to Overgeneralisation</b>	All Everyone Overwhelming Whole  <b>Repetition:</b> All	All Everyone  Whole  <b>Repetition:</b> All Whole
<b>Terms Which Seem Oriented to The New Public Management Agenda (Discussed in Literature review)</b>	Accountability Attract Consultation Customer base  Equip Implement Inclusive (&) Responsive Intelligence Maximise Profile	Accountability Attract(ed)(ing)(ion) Consultations  Drive(r) Equip(ping)  Intelligence Maximise Profile

	<p>Promote Recruit(ed)(ing)</p> <p>Skills Stakeholders Stimulate (&amp;) Respond Strategic Suite (&amp;) Tool Supply of Suitable</p> <p>Candidates Target Actions</p> <p>Team Tool</p> <p>Vision Workforce</p> <p><b>Repetition :</b> Attract(ing) (s) Consultation Diverse(ity) Equal(ity) Implement(ation) (ing) Promote</p> <p>Skills Stakeholders Strategic</p> <p>Vision Workforce</p>	<p>Promote(d)(s) Recruit(ed)(ing) Recruitment Respond(ing) Responsive Responsiveness Skill(s)(ed) Stakeholders</p> <p>Suite Supply</p> <p>Target Actions Target(ed)(ing) Team/s Tool Toolkit Vision Workforce</p> <p><b>Repetition:</b> Attracting Consultation</p> <p>Promote Recruiting Recruitment Respond Skills</p> <p>Strategic Tool Vision Workforce</p>
<b>Inscribed Evaluation</b>	<p>Accessible Adaptable Advantage Appropriate Aspire Best Better Change(s) Committed Confident Continuously improves</p>	<p>Accessible Adaptable</p> <p>Appropriate(ly)(ness) Aspire Best Better Change(s) Committed</p> <p>Continuously improves</p>

	<p>Effective Ensure Essential Excellence Excellent Expert</p> <p>Exploit Expose</p> <p>Fair First Rate Flexible Gap Good Greater / Large / More</p> <p>Heart Of High(Iy)</p> <p>Important Improve Improvement Increase Local Must Necessary Need(s) Non-traditional Outstanding Positive</p> <p>Primary Role Priority(ies) Problem Profound Quality Raise Real</p> <p>Relevant Reliable Robust</p> <p>Specialist Strong (Widest) Talent Theme Transform Under-Represented</p>	<p>Effective(ly)(ness) Ensure Essential Excellence Excellent</p> <p>Expertise</p> <p>Fair</p> <p>Flexible Gap(s) Good Greater / Larger / Largest / More</p> <p>Heart Of High(er) High-Quality Important Improve(d)(s) Improvement Increase(s) Local Must</p> <p>Need(s)</p> <p>Outstanding Positive Primary Aim</p> <p>Priority(ies)</p> <p>Quality Raise</p> <p>Realisation Relevant</p> <p>Robust Self-Improvement Specialist Strong Talent Theme Transform</p>
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	<p>Under-Representation Unsatisfactory Useful Vital</p> <p><b>Repetition:</b> Adapt(able)</p> <p>Commit(ed) Ensure(ing) Excellent(ce) Flexible(ibility)</p> <p>High(ly) Improve(ed)(ment) Increase(ing)</p> <p>Need(s) Priorities Priority</p> <p>Relevant</p> <p>Theme(s)</p>	<p>Under-Representation Unsatisfactory Useful</p> <p><b>Repetition:</b> Appropriate Best</p> <p>Ensure(ing) Excellence Flexible Good Heart Of High Improve(ment) Increase More Need(s) Priorities Priority Quality Relevant Self-Improvement Theme(s)</p>
<b>Semantic Prosody – Collocated / Co-Occurring Terms</b>	<p>Equality and Diversity Learning and Provider/s Learning and Provision Learning and Skills Self and Improvement</p> <p><b>Repetition:</b> Learning and Provider Learning and Skills</p>	<p>Equality and Diversity Learning and Provider/s Learning and Provision Learning and Skills Self and Improvement</p> <p><b>Repetition:</b> Learning and Provider Learning and Skills</p>



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Appendix 7  
Analysis of Additional Visual Images From The Strategy

The future of the further education sector workforce

A clear direction: strategic context



This Strategy section's theme is The Government's long term aims for education, training and for the nationals skills development and these equal size images, appear at the bottom of the first page of this section. This first image is shot from above, giving the impression of looking down on this group, while the second is shot close up, to the point where only a small portion is actually visible in the frame. Both images feature individuals 'doing' activities which arguably require a certain level of training or experience, linking with the section's theme. The minimal visible facial expression is of convivial concentration, of working collaboratively with others. The individual holding the hairdressing scissors is using both

hands to hold them, which is suggestive of someone not deeply experienced in cutting hair (in my experience most practised hairdressers hold combs or the hair with one hand while controlling the scissors with their other). So perhaps this is a shot of a trainee hairdresser.

The 'message' conveyed is that of 'students' engaged and training in activities, which may be useful for their future employment or career aspirations, or of individuals who are engaged in employment activities, who are at varying stages of their professional development within that career. I am also cautious that much of this 'reading' is influenced by the content of the text surrounding it – taken out of this text and viewed as two images, free of any other contextualising information, they could represent other possibilities.

### **Strategy for success**



Section four introduces the Strategy's four priorities, these images are positioned after the first two priorities and before the third, side by side above the headings 'Priority 3: Retaining and developing the modern,

professionalised workforce; Priority 4: Ensuring equality and diversity are at the heart of Strategy, policy-making, planning and training'. The parties in both of these images are clearly visible and essentially face on to the audience. The group shot is framed around a table in a library or reading room, with individuals working on, viewing or reading a shared, central item. The group features mixed genders, ages and ethnic backgrounds and all are dressed smartly but casually. The right-hand image features a lone female, painting at an easel, her facial expression is happy and engaged and she is focused on the item she is working on. Like the left-hand group she appears older than most of the other individuals featured in preceding images.

The group image appears over text stating:

... it is vital that the skills and knowledge of the workforce remain comprehensive, relevant and current" (LLUK, 2009, p. 7).

The image of the individual appears over:

One advantage of the British workforce is its diverse nature... (LLUK, 2009, p. 7).

Hyatt (2005) cautions about the 'staged nature' of images included in texts, yet even knowing that and being cautious of this in 'reading' these, the combination of these images and their accompanying texts serves to add weight to the messages conveyed by each - the words and pictures reflect and bolster each other. The textual messages, calling for a

professionalised workforce, through training and development, are mirrored within the image of a group undertaking training. Similarly messages about diversity being at the heart of the Strategy, policy-making, planning and training are mirrored through in the use of an image of an older female (student?). This approach of combining the means of conveying messages, through text and image, could prove even more powerful with those who are not cautious of their 'staged nature'.



This image is found at the bottom right corner of section four, in subsection 'Priority 4: Ensuring equality and diversity are at the heart of Strategy, policy-making, planning and training'. Similar to other images, part of the content is blurred, but there is sufficient detail to identify an individual with his back to the audience, facing a large group of people, who are seated, either at or on tables, facing toward him. The group appears to comprise a mix of sexes, ages and ethnicities, dressed mainly casually and the overall image seems light, bright and colourful.

The text focus of this section is 'Ensuring equality and diversity are at the heart of Strategy, policy-making, planning and training'. This image could be intended to portray a training event, yet the link to policy-making or planning is less obvious. This may be because images which would categorically portray 'policy-making' happening could be more problematic to design. They may need to feature a direct reference to convey the message categorically (but a 'sign' with 'policy-making team' on it would be too obvious and potentially disengaging through its staged nature). Less obvious portrayals, perhaps groups of individuals in suits, engaged in serious focussed office-oriented activities, may marginalise the Strategy's audience rather than align them with its aims.

### **What Next?**



This image appears at the bottom left of section five, 'What Next?' with the text 'The drive to improve the skills of, and to professionalise, the existing workforce has moved forward...' appearing above it.

The group is of mixed gender, ethnicity and age and the people are seated, engaged in an activity involving the use of a laptop computer and the male leaning over this appears to be directing the females to something on the screen. They are in a room which is similar in its construction, to the style common to classrooms; lecture rooms; meeting rooms or training centres. Similar to preceding images, these elements combine to create the impression of some form of instruction / guidance / lecture / training taking place. This is reinforced by and also reinforces the message in the text immediately preceding the image - regarding professionalising the existing workforce - as the image could be read as a group of professionals engaged in their own skills development, or as a lecturer demonstrating his professionalism in the classroom.



These two images appear on the last page of text, in section five, above the text 'In order to support employers and national partners, Lifelong Learning UK has produced the following suite of publications and tools'.

Both images feature an older and younger male, with one pair engaged in an activity in what appears to be a bakery and the others in a discussion or meeting. Both images could be read as sessions where either of the individuals is guiding the other, or where they are working together on an activity. The text highlights various resources available to support the implementation of the Strategy and perhaps these images are meant to depict the Strategy aims being implemented. However, similar to observations made when considering how an image could readily depict policy-making taking place, designing an image that depicts a sub-standard FE workforce, engaged in improving their own professionalism, could be difficult to portray in a single shot. This is especially given that the Strategy's author/s seem to be trying to encourage the workforce to align themselves with these aims rather than overtly marginalise them through negative connotations and messages conveyed through imagery – trying to achieve two 'aims': aligning the workforce with the drive for professionalization, while simultaneously stressing the need for them to 'improve'.

The University of Sheffield, EdD 2008, Appendices, Kirsty Arkinstall  
Appendix 8  
KA Email to LSIS ref LLUK

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**Sent:** 26 September 2011 10:10  
**To:** lluk advice  
**Subject:** Enquiry

Dear Sirs,

I am a Research Student, in the final year of completing my Doctorate in Education (EdD), who works as a Student Services Manager in a Sixth Form College.

My research topic focuses on the - The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-2012: Revised version 2009/2010, London, Lifelong Learning UK (Lifelong Learning UK, 2009).

I understand that, with the closures of LLUK in March 2011 that LSIS and IfL took on elements of the work and responsibilities the LLUK previously undertook.

I am trying to following the trajectory of this workforce reform strategy from March 2011 - given the timescale the revised version covered runs up to and includes 2012. Given this strategy includes references to the implementation of the new CPD entitlement and qualification standards for teaching staff; I can see that elements of it may be included in your remit? Indeed I have located two news articles on your website that reference the closure of the LUUK -

(<http://www.lsis.org.uk/AboutLSIS/MediaCentre/NewsArticles/Pages/LSIS-welcomes-expertise-and-insights-of-its-new-Qualifications-and-Skills-team.aspx>)

(<http://www.lsis.org.uk/AboutLSIS/MediaCentre/NewsArticles/Pages/LSIS-welcomes-expertise-and-insights-of-its-new-Qualifications-and-Skills-team.aspx>).

I wondered if you could advise me further on the current position of this strategy? Or which organisation has the remit for the professionalization and development of the FE Sector – any further signposting or information would be greatly appreciated and of incredibly valuable significance to my own studies and my work as a Support Staff Manager n the FE Sectors.

Many thanks  
Kirsty Arkinstall  
[kirstyark@googlemail.com](mailto:kirstyark@googlemail.com)



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## **RE: Enquiry**

**From:** lluk advice  
**Sent:** 26 September 2011 10:16  
**To:** Penny Bance  
**Subject:** FW: Enquiry

Dear Penny

Please could you respond to this?

Thanks

Carole

**Education Adviser**

**Information and Advice Service**

**UK Qualifications and Skills Team**

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**LSIS - Learning and Skills Improvement Service**

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w: [www.excellencegateway.org.uk/320142](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/320142)



28 September 2011 15:01

### **Penny Bance**

<Penny.Bance@lisis.org.uk>

To: "kirstyark@googlemail.com" <kirstyark@googlemail.com>

Cc: lluk advice <lluk.advice@lisis.org.uk>

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Hello Kirsty, I think the simplest answer is that this work did not transfer over the LSIS when LLUK closed. This was work that BIS funded and which LLUK project managed on behalf of the sector. The strategy is therefore still current and relevant and for the sector to act on and implement. There are many organisations operating in this arena, with different remits but all relating to the professionalization of the workforce, whether they work with individuals, organisations, providers, unions etc.

Kind regards,

Penny

#### **Penny Bance**

Director of UK Qualifications and Skills

#### **LSIS - Learning and Skills Improvement Service**

Tel: 020 74205174 or 07725 203222

Email: [penny.bance@lisis.org.uk](mailto:penny.bance@lisis.org.uk)

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29 September 2011 09:20



**Kirsty Arkinstall**

<kirstyark@googlemail.com>

To: Penny Bance <Penny.Bance@lsls.org.uk>

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Thank you Penny for making the time to help me, it really is appreciated and has helped me direct my writing. I was just discussing with a colleague how kind and professionally impressive it is that a lone reserach student's question received such an informative, helpful and personalised reply. Many thanks

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<Penny.Bance@lsls.org.uk>

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