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FELLOW 2015

'It's that two-way process isn't it?' Perceptions of leadership behaviour by Further Education and Skills teachers employed part-time to work in outreach locations.

ABOUT FETL

FETL is the sector's first and only independent think-tank and was conceived to offer sector colleagues the opportunity to spend time thinking, on behalf of us all, about the concerns of leadership in today's complex education and training system and to do so in order to advance knowledge and ideas for the sector's future.

As an independent charity and think-tank, FETL works to build and promote a body of knowledge, to inspire thought and to help prepare the FE and Skills sector for the challenges it faces now and in the future.

Our vision...

...is of an FE and Skills sector that is valued and respected for:

- Innovating constantly to meet the needs of learners, communities and employers
- Preparing for the long term as well as delivering in the short term
- Sharing fresh ideas generously and informing practice with knowledge

Our mission...

...is to provide via opportunities, research grants, Fellowships and other opportunities, building the evidence base which the FE and Skills sector needs in order to think, learn and do, to change policy and to influence practice.

Our value proposition

We are loyal to the future, focused on developing the leadership of thinking in FE and Skills, as well as making a difference through scholarship that adds value for the sector as it moves forward.

Our values

As an organisation we strive to be:

Bold
We encourage new ideas to improve all aspects of FE and Skills leadership

Valued
We are creating a body of knowledge to transform both leadership learning and learners' lives

Expert
We use evidence, networks and resources sensibly and impartially

Proactive
We provoke new ways of working to deliver excellence in learning within FE and Skills

Responsible
We use our voice and assets wisely at all times

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Ann Creed is an experienced researcher with strong roots in community education. She describes herself as 'an enthusiastic advocate of lifelong learning who has seen the positive impact learning can have on individuals, families and communities'. Recently this has included working as part of the national quality team for the Workers' Educational Association and undertaking field research in India for Seva Mandir, an educational charity. Her research examines how different leadership styles and behaviours affect the attitudes and wellbeing of part-time teachers in outreach locations – and what impact this has on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Introduction

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This research examines relationships between part-time[1] Further Education (FE) and skills teachers employed in outreach settings and their leaders; an interest that reflects my own previous experience as a teacher and leader. It uses a qualitative approach to explore teachers' experience and perception of leaders in order to identify the styles and behaviours they prefer and recognise as having most impact on their practice and personal wellbeing. A research focus on the views of FE teachers is under-developed and, in the contested area of leadership, minimal reporting 'from the ground' limits sector perspective to critically appraise the efficacy of current approaches (Collinson & Collinson, 2009; Tian, 2015). The identification of any unexpected teacher attitudes may prompt sector reflection about how practice can maximise the contribution of all staff in challenging economic times.

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3

1. See Appendix 1 for definition of terms.

Context

FE, with an ill-defined public profile but instrumental in providing a link between compulsory and Higher Education, is a crucial element of the Government's skills strategy (The Skills Commission, 2015), with skills acquisition used as an instrument to drive development of the economy and promote social inclusion and mobility (BIS, 2015a). The approach, a response to Leitch's (2006) wake-up call to England's lack of competitive edge in the global economy, recognises shared responsibility for skills between individuals, employers and the state; focuses funding on training for demand-led, economically transferable skills and embedding agile responsiveness (rather than mere flexibility) into sector delivery.

Concurrent with changes to skills FE, re-positioned within the new enterprise policy culture (Ball, 2013) to help fill the vacuum of a reduced public sector, is the vehicle of choice to interconnect public and private enterprise with communities to promote social value and digital inclusion (Buddery, 2011). Squeezed by funding cuts (Wolf, 2015) sector organisations' commercial and reputational success increasingly relies on the ability to demonstrate 'resilience' (BIS, 2015c). The immediate future promises another cycle of change as colleges are required to re-structure into more disciplined fiscal units to support local and regional productivity and economic growth (BIS, 2015b).

The range and quality of skills and adult education the sector offers in colleges, community and workplace settings is as diverse as the complex web of public and private organisations who access multiple funding streams to deliver it. National quality standards (Ofsted, 2015) focus on achievement of student learning outcomes and recognise specific teacher and leadership behaviours, the latter broadly defined as the collective accountability of all leaders at all levels of the organisation.

The Government devotes funding to workforce development activities to support organisations to achieve its policy priorities (BIS, 2014). The Education and Training Foundation (ETF), a 'sector-led' body responsible for professionalism, is the main conduit for funds. They commission national activities which include scoping teacher standards (ETF, 2014); developing a professional body for post-16 practitioners and offering a range of support for leadership and governance (ETF, 2015).

One of the sectors' recognised 'wicked problems' (Schuller & Watson, 2010) is to recruit, retain and develop teachers to embrace and overcome the challenges posed by multiple roles, interactions and professional identities (Morton, 2006). The lack of teacher diversity in gender, ethnicity, disability and age is an acknowledged issue for the sector (LSIS, 2012) and, because of the 'grow your own' approach to recruitment (AoC Create, 2014), may link to a lack of diversity in leadership.

National FE and skills workforce data[2] (HOLEX and TSNLA, 2015; AELP, 2015; Frontier Economics, 2015) provides a snapshot of teacher characteristics: overwhelmingly white British and female; over 45 years old; usually part-time, and increasingly employed on short-term contracts with limited job security. Teacher casualization (UCU, 2015); long hours with limited remuneration and a perception of not being valued by leaders are consistently linked to reported high stress levels that compare unfavourably to other FE staff (UCU, 2015). Small-scale sector activity related to sickness absence, presenteeism and wellbeing instigated by Healthy FE and Skills (Healthy FE and Skills, 2015) suggests the scope of the problem is currently under-reported.

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2. The data is collected by sub-sector membership bodies: AoC (colleges); HOLEX (representing adult and community learning) and AELP (work-based learning). It is not fully standardised and relies on inconsistent self-reporting (HOLEX and AELP) or incomplete returns (AoC using SIR data).

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4

Literature Review

A keyword search of the Institute of Education library and ERIC confined to the last five years identified no directly comparable study and only a handful examining FE teacher attitudes to preferred leadership styles. The literature survey ranged beyond these core texts and included a background study of current FE and selected NHS and private sector thinking.

Sector research analysis of the desirability of particular leadership styles and behaviours is broadly consistent. FE leaders need the ability to create a clear sense of direction and a culture where risk-taking is possible; develop teaching; manage people and build relationships within and across organisations (CfBT Education Trust and 157 Group, 2011; Institute for Learning, nd). Leadership skills are distributed across teams and leaders need financial, political and entrepreneurial knowledge and skills (157 Group and ETF, 2015). FE leadership is devolved rather than heroic and based on collaboration and empowerment of staff, students and employers (ETF, 2015). Middle managers, who are usually responsible for leading teachers, need particular skills related to team building, dealing with people and solving problems (NHS, 2013; Evans, 2008, AELP, 2013).

A culture where teachers and leaders focus on pedagogic improvement develops a climate for outstanding learning (Lucas & Claxton 2013). To transform FE culture to meet the future needs of learners, employers and local community leaders need to recruit, retain and develop diverse talent (Greany, T. et al, 2014). Leaders also need to assess the impact of more technology-driven self-organised and self-directed learning and appreciate "the changing role of the teacher and the support needed to strengthen their engagement" (Cole & Donahue, 2014, p. 9). "All management is the management of scarce resources" so the ability of leaders to inspire trust is a form of social capital which "creates conditions where people can be vulnerable and be more creative with one another and where they can learn from experience. It creates opportunities, flexibility in how things are done" (Krantz, quoted by Stanistreet, 2015, p.78-9).

Collinson and Collinson's (2009) two and a half year study of leadership perspectives in FE colleges explores respondents' own definitions of leadership and the effectiveness of different leadership qualities. Whilst endorsing the findings of an earlier large scale study which identifies four significant leadership behaviours: honesty, competence and the abilities to inspire and look forward; they suggest much more complexity and highlight:

'Employees' preference for subtle and flexible practices that we have termed 'blended leadership': a way of understanding and enacting leadership in which apparently separate and incompatible dichotomies are re-evaluated as inter-related and mutually necessary'
(Collinson & Collinson, 2009, p. 376).

They observe a contradiction at the heart of FE leadership: the need for formally regulated structures and practice to satisfy external assessment and organisational perceptions of consistency and fairness and a dominant FE workforce culture of informality, usually described by respondents as leader 'approachability'. Leaders need to be versatile enough to accommodate a mixture of heroic and post-heroic leadership styles to appeal to employees' differing perspectives.

The complexity of the teacher/leader relationship is conceptualised by Kemmis et al (2014), extending Weaver-Hightower's (2008) policy ecology framework. He defines learning 'practices' as depending on the people who enact them and observes significant traces of interconnection and interdependence between the practices of student learning, teaching, professional learning, leading and researching. Connections and interactions between practices cannot be "reduced to a set of capabilities and competences" (Kemmis et al, 2014, p. 176) that ensure student success. Leaders act within shifting practice architectures and what they do can be open to misinterpretation. Leadership itself is a practice-changing practice, not focused on technique but interconnected to practices of professional learning and teaching.

Do these teachers see themselves as emergent leaders within ecologies of practices? The reluctance of a teacher to be formally labelled as a leader, however cognizant he or she is of undertaking tasks broadly commensurate with leading, may reflect a sustained sense of identity characterised by egalitarian values and significant motivation to 'make a difference' (Liebermann & Friedrich, 2010). More prosaically, like FE middle managers (Gleeson & Knights, 2008) they may recognise the value to health of clear boundaries between life and work and characterise formal acceptance of a leadership role as potentially diminishing control.

Leading teachers in a way that encourages autonomy and assumption, over time, of formal leadership roles is linked to the promotion of teacher self-efficacy and confidence (Marshall, 2012; Page, 2013). Teachers can gradually absorb the identity of leadership by pursuing practical opportunities to lead:

collaborating with other teachers in research-based practice; observing colleagues within the workplace or by changing their workplace; and undertaking duties beyond their expected role to move learning forward in their organisation, the sector and the wider community (Baecher, 2012; Collinson, 2012; Hunzicker, 2012). For some part-time outreach teachers paid development time is an essential component of promoting leadership (Naz, 2008).

The impact of relationships with leaders on teacher attitude and wellbeing and any consequent impact on the quality of learning is under-researched. Nash et al (2008, p. 16) report the 'emotional labour' of an FE teacher in community outreach "supporting fragile and uncertain learners" and negotiating a balance between the informality of the setting and the formality of FE requirements which "puts pressure on the tutors". A literature review focused on teachers in compulsory education (Bajorek et al, 2014) concluded although relationships with leaders and the support they offer are two of the most significant factors influencing a teacher's quality of work there is no conclusive evidence of a causal link between wellbeing and student outcomes. However leaders who exert a positive influence on staff motivation, commitment and teaching practices can, indirectly, affect pupil outcomes (Day et al, 2009).

Research Rationale

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The research question, unpicked by the literature survey and interviews, was do leadership styles and behaviours impact on the attitude and wellbeing of part-time teachers in outreach locations and the quality of teaching and learning that takes place?

The theoretical framework for activities was an anti-positivist approach, embedding an ontological assumption that individuals construct meaning which they share and interpret through language and recognising constructed knowledge from situated experience has potentially complex interpretations (Mack, 2010).

"Illuminative instances can be single fragments of data" (Holliday, 2012, p. 85) and can offer deeper understanding of the complexities of everyday practice. Research design that is opportunistic in the context of practical constraints helps reflect reality and "focuses on expanding rather than controlling variables" (Holliday, 2012, p. 28). The research approach, informed by the knowledge researchers are never value-free, recognised a process of negotiation with, and learning from, interviewees which enabled exploration of ways of facilitating a '"hick "description" (Denzin, 1994, p. 505).

Recruitment of teachers was confined to the North West region as defined by the Skills Funding Agency and Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training based in the North East and the North West. In the absence of reliable data sets[3] identifying NW regional workforce characteristics, purposive sampling (Creswell & Piano Clark, 2011), with an invitation via regional portals of FEsector bodies and Unions specifying teacher profile and inviting self-selection based on these criterion, was interesting to test and reflected best value in terms of researcher time. Most FE practitioner research takes place within organisations where the researcher culture and research setting culture are aligned. Asking participants to self-select guarantees interviewees have strong feelings about the topic (Saunders, 2012); inviting them to choose the venue and time for the research event supports the potential for calm reflection in a safe environment and heightens the ability of the researcher to establish relationships quickly and encourage disclosure.

3. Headline indicators (Office for National Statistics, 2015) suggest the region's labour market profile for professional employment (18.6%) and education (8%) is within a percentage point of the UK average.

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

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Information was transcribed from 10 face-to-face interviews with teachers; basic contextual data was collected using an online or hard copy questionnaire (Appendix 6). A semi-structured interview script (Appendix 5), and a card sort activity (Appendix 3) helped prompt interviewee discussion. Notes from face-to-face interviews with two strategic leaders and two operational leaders leading part-time teachers in outreach locations provided additional background information (Yin, 1989).

Teacher interviews were listened to, transcribed and re-read several times to identify natural division into key themes and then refined to specific behaviours (Gilham, 2005). Other data collected, including photographs of the interview venue, the researcher's reflective diary and drawings by teachers of their relationship to leaders, set interview transcripts into context and helped reconstruct the social interactions that framed the event. The emerging findings were triangulated with the literature review and leader comments to identify congruence and disparities.

All activities took place within the ethical framework, linked to BERA guidelines, of the UCL Institute of Education (Appendix 4). Particular care was taken to preserve the confidentiality and anonymity of the teacher volunteers: individuals are referred to by a letter/number combination when quoted in the text and only selected details of the sample have been disclosed.

Limitations

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The research offers insights from a purposive sample of FE teacher attitudes to leadership; it does not suggest this might be reflective of all attitudes in the sector or seek to draw any wider inference.

Key Findings

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Teacher attitudes

Interviewees were broadly representative of the sector (Appendix 2) in terms of gender, ethnicity, disability, age, and contractual arrangements. They held views on current leadership practice influenced not only by many years of observation in sub-sectors of FE (colleges, Local Authorities, Adult and Community Learning, independent providers and Third Sector organisations) but non-teaching employment in the private sector.

Interviewees described being motivated by a passion for teaching that helps transform lives; some spoke of wider goals linked to a vision of community transformation and social equality. They perceived their relationship with learners and the ability to help facilitate personal growth as the focus which sustains their career:

> *"Quality is not just about bums on seats but making a real difference to the learners' lives. What keeps me going is the feedback I get from some of my learners'"*
> *P4:2*

The teacher/learner relationship was of primary significance in outreach: students offered respect and recognition for teachers' professionalism which reinforced confidence and self-efficacy which compensated partly, and in some instances, wholly, for perceived leadership inadequacy.

In the last few years teachers observed organisations re-prioritise funding and commitment to younger and mandated learners with multiple barriers to engagement. They perceived a lack of understanding of the complex needs of these learners and saw a widening gap between the assumptions leaders made about teaching and learning outcomes and the reality of some outreach settings.

Respondents recognised teaching off-site as professionally isolated and more challenging with several describing the leap in professional skills needed to bridge the different approach required. However the flexibility and autonomy of an outreach role is stimulating and practical challenges related to the venue and preparing teaching resources are mitigated by the diversity of the communities and people teachers met. Those who had previously worked on a fixed site acknowledged the congeniality of collegiate support and the benefit of having resources to hand but described debilitating staff cultures, including cliques, competition for job roles and rigid accountabilities:

> *"Other workplaces, lots of politics…trying to control.*
> *I didn't feel the flexibility, I didn't feel the empowerment,*
> *I feel suffocated at times."*
> *P4:1*

Part-time working was a positive choice for the majority of the sample; interviewees described themselves as 'working for myself' (P11:4); 'having more freedom' (P9:4); 'balancing work and leisure' (P5:3). They specified the negative impact of their choice as related not just to job security and workload but the uncertainty of some community outreach learning:

'The challenge is doing way over your paid hours. When I was working [for two employers] I would wake up and think where am I going today? And working every evening at home…You may spend quite a lot of time getting something going and you go along to the first session and there are maybe six people there… that's the difficulty of not being in control of it, so, you've done all that work and it's come to nothing.'
P13:4

Organisational change, whilst accepted as inevitable given funding cuts, caused confusion and extra work with frequent modification of IT, quality or data collection systems and re-structuring of staff job roles. Two interviewees reported the long-term absence of line managers; others a churn of senior leadership. One had been made redundant without warning with all the colleagues in her team the day before the research interview took place; two others described the de-motivating impact of seeing colleagues and leaders leaving in tears following dismissal.

Teacher/leader relationships

In response to the query 'Can you sketch me a rough diagram of the leaders you observe in the context of your work as a part-time teacher in outreach?' half drew hierarchical structures and others democratic circles indicating shared or distributed responsibilities. In most instances the closest relationship cited was with the organisational line manager who was also an operational manager although, as Figure 1 illustrates, a close relationship with learners was embedded in thinking. Nearly two-thirds reported to multiple leaders in different curriculum or geographic areas within an organisation or several part-time jobs in different organisations. Interviewees acknowledged and valued the influence of strategic leadership in defining the organisational culture but usually saw the impact of senior leadership on their everyday experience as remote.
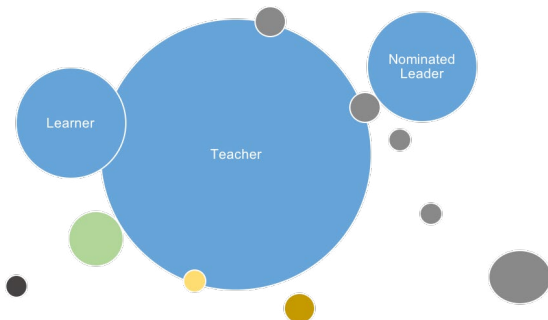

Figure 1 Teacher/leader relationships

Other perceived leaders might be assigned to the unlabelled circles but teacher-learner- nominated leader relationships are crucial to outreach teachers.

All expected to invest time in forging an effective relationship with one leader who supports them best. A misalliance, which caused difficulties for interviewees over time, was resolved by teachers changing Line Manager or leaving the organisation (P4, P6, P7, P10, P11, and P15).

The word 'leader' resonated differently:

"I think the best leaders are seen as enablers… enablement and sentences that don't come to crescendos are best."
P9:7

"There are some [venue staff] called leaders but I tend to get on really well with them so I think of them more as colleagues"
P7:6

"I see X as a proper leader, I don't need another manager…he tells you of the 24% cut in funding, he tells us we will make it, it's not a problem and that inspires me because I trust him."
P10:5

These perceptions of leadership were explored further in the card sort activity. Interviewees selected the leadership styles and behaviours they currently observed in the workplace (sort 1) and perceived as significant (sort 2) from a list of twenty. The attributes selected most frequently as preferred behaviours by all interviewees are reproduced in table 1.

Table 1: Card sort – most selected leadership styles and behaviours, all interviewees

Leadership is…..
- Focused on students their progress and outcomes
- Understanding teaching and learning so you can engage with the personal development of staff
- Inclusion, valuing diversity and respect
- Empowering staff to innovate and take risks
- Working outside your organisation to create and develop networks and partners
- Developing people
- About trust
- Co-created by everyone and based on collaboration
- The ability to shape shift to meet changing contexts
- Thinking 'outside the box'

However the leadership qualities observed, whilst congruent on the majority, were divergent in four areas: 'trust'; 'co-created by everyone and based on collaboration'; 'the ability to shape shift to meet changing contexts' and 'thinking outside the box'. This dissonance was explored in further discussion and two 'deal-breaker' leader attributes emerged which diminished the influence of other challenges teachers faced: trust and co-operation. Interviewees defined trust as their belief in the honesty, veracity and moral courage of a leader and his or her implicit confidence in their personal values and professionalism. They expected leaders to show appreciation of their knowledge, ability and experience by letting them work autonomously and flexibly and a level of belief in their capabilities which gave them the freedom to exercise their own judgement and be respected rather than reprimanded for taking the initiative. They wanted leaders to share their values, motivation and ability to develop and sustain effective relationships with students, colleagues and partners but offer complementary skills:

> ''I don't need a manager to have the skills I've got, I need a manager to have different skills really because what's the point of having a manager?"
> P7:8

Co-operation, also described as consistent support, was identified as leaders employing a range of practical skills to enable interviewees to meet the needs of learners. Specifically, interviewees wanted leaders to demonstrate respect for the multiple challenges of a part-time outreach role. This included being as flexible as they were if personal circumstances temporarily affected their ability to work, and responding quickly to a specific query since it would only ever be significant given their day-to-day autonomy.

> "You never know what you are going to get [on outreach] until you get there"
> P13:3

They preferred leaders to be decisive and delegate authority with clear instructions, motivate them by taking a problem solving, 'can do' approach, and help mitigate the impact of organisational change.

Interviewees decisively identified a link between leader attitude, the impact on their personal wellbeing and the quality of the student experience. Leader effectiveness in promoting high quality learning was not just about practical resourcing but how leader behaviour impacted on teachers' personal self-esteem and confidence and the development of their professional practice. Individuals had different perspectives on what this might mean in practical terms:

> "What managers need to know is that if their staff are happy, mentally and physically, then they can only work well"
> P11:8

> "Well, it would be nice to have a role model wouldn't it? Lovely to observe a good quality session, lovely to be inspired. I absolutely just lose my heart every time they start talking about numbers."
> P10:3

> "Giving me advice as necessary, you know, perhaps they can turn a light on in my head"
> P8:3

> "Communication is not regular, it's when it's needed…I have a lot of confidence in X which I think has been built by her confidence in me. It's a two-way thing"
> P15:2

Feedback about teaching was valued if the leader could offer specific recommendations for improvement; teachers' resented uncritical formal observation which failed to identify how they could improve practice. But leaders keeping in touch with pedagogy by teaching themselves was not always as significant as their ability to listen to teachers' experience, respect their professionalism and offer praise and encouragement:

> "Because sometimes you are alone in the community and you may feel that no-one really knows what you are doing, no-one else to see the good work you are doing, and just like positive comments like 'well done' and 'you can do it' that kind of just lifts you and that makes a big difference."
> P6:2

Reported disengagement of some leader roles from pedagogy to a focus on 'data crunching' and ensuring teacher compliance with organisational requirements was routinely criticised. Some leaders were described as implementing organisational policy without question, regardless of potential impact on staff or students, because they were frightened of losing their job or the competitive ranking of their team or department. The focus on student recruitment and retention was regarded as much keener than that on workforce management practice and some de-motivating and contradictory leadership behaviours were observed:

> "They've made those cuts, saying there is no money for the course however [stress in voice] they are still employing numerous agency staff… paying extreme fees to agencies when they should be prioritising us permanent positions and slotting us into those roles."
> P7:2

Interviewees were usually ambivalent about their own role as leaders. They acknowledged they led learning for students, mentored colleagues and demonstrated self-awareness of the extent to which they used leadership skills in activities both in and outside the workplace but formal leading was about taking a management a job role:

> "Hmm. They've got a title haven't they…we [teachers] don't have a title but we do the same job in fact, in fact sometimes you find you are the leader of your leader in a way you know."
> P4:4

The implication of being a formal leader was a loss of control over workload, which would be stressful, and an increased remoteness from the reality of the learning experience. The disruption to a carefully calibrated work/life balance would not necessarily be worth the chimera of job security although the pay and recognition of their expertise would be welcomed. However everyone found it hard to understand why leaders could not see reciprocal trust and co-operation, which involved differentiated knowledge of individuals, was essential to their job role and not an optional extra:

> "It's that two-way process isn't it? She values me and I value her. She respects me, I respect her"
> P4.4

> "As a leader you should be keeping an eye out on your team, you should know them inside out to make the best use out of them. If you don't take that interest your team is not going to be as effective as it could be"
> P6:7

Discussion

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Recruiting a vibrant, responsive workforce is essential for the future of FE and effective leadership of teachers plays an integral role in realising this. The rich descriptions of working life the interviewees shared highlight how acutely observant teachers are of leader practice and, because of their own varied experience of leading and leadership in and outside the FE workplace, how much teachers could add to organisational understanding of leadership development.

Teachers who work autonomously in outreach locations develop and sustain self-efficacy through interaction with students and the leader they select to complement the 'two-way process' that satisfies their professional values. This relationship varies in significance to individuals but is fundamental to teacher wellbeing. The physical environment and other leadership roles are tangential to the ecologies of teacher-learner-leader interactions. This is not to suggest virtual or face-to-face peer interaction is insignificant, but highlights how, in outreach locations where that dimension is absent, teachers perceive leader behaviour as crucial.

Preferred leadership attributes identified in this study reflect the literature but it is the confirmation of 'deal-breaker' behaviours which is significant. A drift towards operational leadership focused on instrumental outcomes is not sustainable because it ignores the complexity and developmental nature of professional practice and the potential for leadership pipeline activities.

As Krantz (quoted in Stanistreet, 2015) suggests, to inspire trust leaders need to be able to interpret and communicate change. Outreach teachers, who have expert knowledge and understanding of local communities, are sometimes frustrated by the discrepancy between organisational and learner priorities. Changes in focus are rarely explained in pedagogical terms so some strategic and operational decision-making looks irrational and ill-conceived.

FE's distributed leadership style, highlighted as a preferred model in the literature, does not always support leader co-operation and accountability to part-time teachers. In theory it devolves decision-making and consultation to ever-widening numbers of staff but in practice may load extra duties onto existing leaders who perceive time and resource constraints in collaboration with part-time teachers. Although the majority of the FE workforce has been reported as part-time for years leaders continue to demonstrate limited recognition of the impact of sessional contracting on equality of opportunity. Long-standing issues such as paying for development time or ignoring the delicate balance of competing employer claims which preclude unexpected additional work are routinely ignored. This appears short-sighted given the sector's ageing profile and need to retain and develop talent.

Sector research which reflects perception of FE leadership as attached to a formal job role, both demanding and divorced from the challenge of learner interaction, was confirmed by interviewees; they also recognised a lack of opportunity to gain recognition and status as informal leaders. Surely this also reflects the sector approach to thinking about leadership which rarely considers Kemmis' (2014) premise of leading as emergent from situated practice and a reflection of the interactions that drive incremental educational development. Collinson (2012) and Hunzicker (2012) identify the benefits of critically examining teacher practice which develops self-efficacy in order to understand how leaders can best support teachers as both formal and informal leaders.

FETL Fellows 2015 | Ann Creed | 'It's that two-way process isn't it?'

10

Interviewees reported that any breakdown in the informality and goodwill which characterises FE leader/teacher relationships has a direct impact on their personal wellbeing and performance. It is challenging to identify the direct or indirect significance of this to learner outcomes, organisational efficiency and best value because of the absence of consistently rigorous workforce data or research related to these areas published either nationally or by individual FE organisations. As FE is incentivised to grow larger it may be harder to achieve consistency in the quality of learning 'on the ground' without increased understanding of the comparative effectiveness of different leadership behaviours and their impact on all teachers, not just those selected for this study.

Recommendations

FE leaders of part-time teachers and leaders of teachers who work off site should be aware of the styles and behaviours that offer teachers most support identified in this research and embed them in practice.

Given the rigid fiscal framework the sector will work in over the coming years the need to maximise the potential of *all* staff is imperative. FE providers should recognise how the culture of organisational leadership and individual leader behaviour has direct impact on teacher wellbeing and performance. Identifying organisational issues and influencing change in leadership culture is a transformative, developmental process and there are no quick fixes but in order to sustain quality in teaching and learning strategic leaders must develop a culture where trust and co-operation between leaders and teachers thrives.

More research related to teacher leadership in the context of FE and FE teacher wellbeing could test and progress the findings of this report and further inform decision-making about sector job roles, competences and skills.

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FETL Fellows 2015 | Ann Creed | 'It's that two-way process isn't it?'

12

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13

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14

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Appendix 1 – Definition of terms

Leader

Any job role which 'maximises the efforts of others towards the achievement of a goal' (157 Group & ETF, 2015, March 3).

Outreach location

A venue where learning takes place which is not owned by the teacher's further education employer e.g. a community centre, Third Sector partner, school, hospital, Early Years or Sure Start Centre or in the workplace.

Part-time

Employment which offers less hours than a tutor employed on a full-time contract. The number of hours regarded as a full-time teaching contract varies between employers.

Teacher

Any job role responsible for delivering learning to students is described in this research as a teacher. This includes lecturers, trainers, tutors and assessors.

Wellbeing

A positive state of mind and body, feeling safe and able to cope, with a sense of connection with people, communities and the wider environment. (http://www.healthyfe.org.uk/glossary/3#letterw)

Appendix 2 – Selected analysis of research sample

____

Type of organisation(s) where you currently work

Adult and Community Learning	90%
General FE College	30%
Third Sector	20%
Independent Training Provider	10%
Students enrol locally	90%
Students enrol regionally	60%

Age profile

30-39 years	20%
40-49 years	10%
50-59 years	50%
60+ years	20%

Declaring a disability

Yes	20%
No	80%

Type of school(s) attended

Non-selective, state	70%
Selective, state	30%
Independent, fee paying	20%
Outside UK	20%

Qualifications achieved

O-levels (up to 4, below C	10%
O-levels (5 or more, A-C)	70%
NVQ L1 or L2	20%
A-levels (2 or more)	50%
NVQ Level 3	10%
Undergraduate degree	70%
Masters	30%
Doctorate	10%
NVQ Levels 4-5	30%
Professional qualifications	70%
Non-UK qualifications	10%

Approximate teaching hours a week during contracted period

Less than 5 hours	10%
6-15 hours	50%
16-25 hours	30%
26-30 hours	10%

Geographical spread of learning delivery

covers Cheshire and Warrington, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Liverpool City Region, Newcastle and Northumbria.

Urban area	73%
Rural area with sparse settlement	13%

National identity

British	80%
English	10%
Welsh	10%

Ethnicity

Asian/Asian British	30%
White English	50%
White Welsh	10%
Other white background	10%

Years a teacher

Less than a year	10%
2-10 years	20%
11-20 years	20%
21-35 years	50%

Years teaching Further Education and skills

2-10 years	40%
11-20 years	20%
21-35 years	40%

Years teaching part time in outreach locations

Less than a year	10%
2-10 years	40%
11-20 years	30%
21-35 years	20%

Contractual term

Annual contract, fixed hours	50%
Permanent contract for PT work	20%
Separate contract each course	60%
Termly contract for fixed hours	10%

Appendix 3 – Card sort activity statements

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These statements reflect findings to date from an on-going literature review 2011 to 2015.

Leadership is...

co-created by everyone

about working outside your organisation to create and develop networks and policies

about being a follower as well as a leader

has the ability to shape shift to meet changing contexts

being charismatic and leading from the front

focused on students, their progress and outcomes

developing people

about inclusion and valuing diversity

about knowledge of the sector including expertise related to data and funding

understanding teaching and learning so you can engage with curriculum and the professional development of staff

maximising the potential of technology

creating a climate where staff feel empowered to innovate

"...knowing what to do when there is nothing to do and no precedent to learn from"[4]

creating a climate for outstanding learning

supporting people so they can see where they fit into the bigger organisational picture

restless

courageous

offers hope for the future

Appendix 4 – Interviewee consent form

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About the project

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. As you will have read on the briefing sheet this research is being undertaken in my role as a Fellow of the Further Education Trust for Leadership.

I will include the things you tell me in my research report. Your information will be reported anonymously. The information I collect from you today will be stored securely and only I will have access to it.

Ann Creed

Consent

We need your permission to interview you and use the information for the research.

Please read the following statements carefully.

If you agree with the statements, please sign the form.

- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary
- I agree to take part in the interview
- I agree to the interview being audio-recorded
- I know I can withdraw from the interview at any time, or choose not to answer a specific questions, without giving any reason.
- I give my permission for Ann Creed to use my information in the research report and sector resource produced for the project without using my name.
- I give my permission for Ann Creed or the Further Education Trust for Leadership to use the things I say in other resources without using my name.

Name:
Signature:
Date:

4. Quoted from p. 24. CfBT Education Trust & 157 Group (2011) Leading learning in further education. London: 157 Group.

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17

Appendix 5 – Interview script

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. As you will have read on the briefing sheet this research is being undertaken in my role as a Fellow of the Further Education Trust for Leadership. [Review the research briefing sheet with participant and run through the title and purpose of research].

I will include the things you tell me in my research report. Your information will be reported anonymously; no names of individuals will appear. The information I collect from you today will be stored securely and only I will have access to it.

The interview should be no more than an hour.

Do you mind if I record our interview? I'll store the recording in line with the Data Protection Act and only I will have access to it. The recording will be deleted once the project is finished. By recording what you actually say I have a more accurate record of your views but if you prefer me not to record I will take notes and send you a copy of the transcript of them to approve before I use them in research.

Can we review and sign the consent form sent you via email before the interview?

Do you have any questions before we start?

Interview text

I am speaking to you today to gain a better understanding of your views on leadership in your job role as a part-time teacher who works in outreach locations.

You completed the pre-interview questionnaire which has given me a range of factual information about your background as a teacher and the organisation(s) you work for. You currently work as a part-time teacher in an outreach location…. [briefly refer to questionnaire and any further queries arising to identify context of participant].

This research interview is semi-structured. This means I will ask you a question from the standard list which is being used with each participant but, depending on your response, there may be follow-up questions I will ask to find out more about what you think.

Question 1

Why did you volunteer to take part in this research project?

Question 2

Can you explain what 'attitude' and 'wellbeing' mean to you?

2a – Can you draw me a diagram of where you are in relation to the leaders in your workplace – if this is you, who are the people around you you think of as leaders?

Question 3

Literature published in the last five years has identified a range of leadership styles and behaviours in the sector; some of them are summarised on the cards in front of you.

Pick out any cards that you recognise as leadership you have observed as a part-time teacher working in an outreach location.

Question 4

What particular leadership styles or behaviours do you think have a positive influence on your attitude and wellbeing in your role as a part-time teacher working in an outreach location?

Why?

How?

Does outreach make a difference? How?

Does being a part time tutor make a difference? How?

Questions 5

What particular leadership styles and behaviours do you think have a positive influence on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment you deliver?

Why?

How?

Question 6

Imagine your job role and the organisation(s) who employ you in 5 years' time. Imagine there are no constraints which might influence leadership styles and behaviours. What sort of leadership would you like to see in place? Why?

Question 7

Is there is anything else you would like to add to what you have said about your perspective of leadership?

7a – What would you like to see in a leader – re-arrange cards and review if not all have been observed.

7b – Are you a leader?

Thank you very much for participating in the interview.

Would you be interested in commenting on the draft report and final resource developed for the sector from the research findings? If so do I have your permission to keep in contact with you during the lifetime of the project (end of August)?

Appendix 6 – Participant questionnaire

1. Which type of education and training organisation(s) do you work for? Please select all that apply.		2. Where does each organisation recruit students? Please select one for each organisation you work for.		
		nationally	regionally	locally
Adult and Community Learning	☐			
General FE College	☐			
Independent Training Provider	☐			
IAG/National Careers Service	☐			
Land-based College	☐			
OLASS provider	☐			
Sixth-Form College	☐			
Specialist College	☐			
Specialist Designated Institution	☐			
Third Sector	☐			
Other, please specify:	☐			

3. In which geographical area of the North West region do you work in an outreach location? (A-Z order) Please select all that apply. An **outreach location** is a venue where learning takes place which is not owned by your employer organisation; for example a community centre, Third Sector partner premises, school, hospital, Early Years or Sure Start Centre, in the workplace.

Cheshire and Warrington	☐
Cumbria	☐
Greater Manchester	☐
Lancashire	☐
Liverpool City Region	☐
Stoke and Staffordshire	☐
Other, please specify:	☐

4. What is your current job/role? (A-Z order). You may have more than one job/role so please select all that apply.

Administrator ☐

Governor/Trustee/corporate Board member ☐

Head of department ☐

Information and Advice/Careers officer ☐

Learner/student/apprentice/trainee ☐

Learning support worker ☐

Line Manager ☐

Manager/co-ordinator of learning ☐

Teacher/tutor/trainer/lecturer ☐

Trainee teacher ☐

Other, please specify: ☐

5.1 How many years have you been a teacher?
(Enter zero for less than 1 year)

5.2 How many years have you worked in the education and training sector?
(Enter zero for less than 1 year)

5.3 How many years have you worked as a part-time teacher in outreach locations for the education and training sector? (Enter zero for less than 1 year)

6. What is your age?
Please select one.

20-24 ☐

25-29 ☐

30-34 ☐

35-39 ☐

40-44 ☐

45-49 ☐

50-54 ☐

55-59 ☐

60-64 ☐

65+ ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

7. How do you prefer to describe your national identity? (A-Z order). Please select one.

British ☐

English ☐

Northern Irish ☐

Scottish ☐

Welsh ☐

Other, please specify: ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

8. What is your ethnicity? Please select one (the selection continues on pages 7 and 8). The ethnic origin categories below are taken from the 2011 Census. They are not about nationality, place of birth or citizenship and they are most definitely not about 'race'. They are about the heritage group to which you as an individual consider you belong. From time to time the Office for National Statistics (ONS) adds to/changes the descriptors, for example when Cornish became a recognised minority ethnic group in 2014.

Asian/Asian British

Indian ☐

Pakistani ☐

Chinese ☐

Bangladeshi ☐

Any other Asian background ☐

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British

African ☐

Caribbean ☐

Any other Black/ African/Caribbean background ☐

Mixed/multiple ethnic groups

White and Black Caribbean ☐

White and Black African ☐

White and Asian ☐

Any other mixed background ☐

White

English ☐

Welsh ☐

Scottish ☐

Northern Irish ☐

Irish ☐

Gypsy or Irish Traveller ☐

Other White background ☐

Other ethnic group

Arab ☐

Cornish (given minority ethnic status in 2014) ☐

Any other ethnic group ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

9. Please describe your gender identity. Please select one. 'X' and 'other' are intentional internationally recognised options to enable anyone who wishes to do so to choose a gender identity that is different to the traditional gender binary of male and female.

Female (including male to female trans women) ☐

Male (including female to male trans men) ☐

X (see note above) ☐

Other, please specify: (see note above) ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

10.1 Do you consider yourself to be deaf or disabled or to have physical or mental health problems? Please select one.

Yes ☐

No ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

10.2 If you have selected 'yes' to the last question please select all that apply (A-Z order).

Deaf ☐

Blind/partially sighted ☐

Facial disfigurement ☐

Hard of hearing ☐

Learning difficulties ☐

Long-term illness/medical condition ☐

Manual dexterity difficulties ☐

Mental health problems ☐

Mobility difficulties ☐

Progressive medical condition ☐

Speech difficulty ☐

Other, please specify: ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

11. What type of school did you mainly attend between the ages of 11 and 16? Please select all that apply.

A non-selective state-run or state-funded school ☐

A selective (on academic, faith or other ground) state-run or state-funded school ☐

Independent or fee-paying school ☐

Attended school outside the UK ☐

Didn't attend school ☐

Don't know ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

12. Which of the following qualifications do you hold to date? Please select all that apply.

1-4 O levels/CSEs/GCSEs (any grades), Entry Level, Foundation Diploma ☐

NVQ Level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic Skills ☐

5 or more O level passes/CSEs (grade 1)/GCSEs (grades A* to C), School Certificate, 1 A level/ 2-3 AS levels/VCEs, Higher Diploma ☐

NVQ Level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First/General Diploma, RSA Diploma ☐

Apprenticeship ☐

2 or more A levels/VCEs, 4or more AS levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression/Advanced Diploma ☐

NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds advanced craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National RSA Advanced Diploma ☐

Undergraduate degree (e.g., BA, BSc) ☐

Master's degree (e.g., MA, MSc) ☐

Doctorate degree (e.g., PhD) ☐

NVQ level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher Level ☐

Professional qualifications (e.g. teaching, nursing, accountancy) ☐

Other vocational/work-related qualifications ☐

Non-UK qualifications/qualifications obtained outside UK ☐

No qualifications ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

13.1 How many part-time teaching hours are you contracted to deliver in the academic year 2015/16. (Enter zero for less than 1 year)

13.2 What is your flexible working arrangement? Please select all that apply.

Annualised hours

Compressed hours

Flexible shifts

Flexi-time

Homeworking

Job share

None (e.g. full or part time but with no flexible working)

Staggered hours

Term-time hours

Other, please specify:

Prefer not to say

13.3 What are your contractual terms? Please select all that apply.

Annual contract for a fixed number of hours

Permanent contract for part-time work

Separate contract for each course delivered

Termly contract for a fixed number of hours

Zero hours contract

Other, please specify:

Prefer not to say

14.1 Have you taken part in a research project before? Please select one.

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

14.2 Have you taken part in a research project in the education and skills sector before? Please select one.

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

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23