

Chapter 1: Researching further education, professional and occupational landscapes (1165 words)

Simon (1981) questioned the lack of pedagogy in England. He meant that there was no identifiable systematic approach to teaching and learning that was based on theoretical ideas. In a sense, this pedagogical vacuum might apply to the post-compulsory education sector in England, otherwise also known as Further Education (FE) (and Skills) or lifelong learning sector. Through the various nomenclature of the sector, to an extent, highlight the diversity and issues of the sector. The diversity might be viewed from the provisions from the academic to the vocational, the academic levels from the pre-university to higher levels, and the age groups of the learners from 14+ and beyond. Furthermore, the sector is also known for offering learners with diverse learning requirements opportunities to continue their education. Perhaps, the diversity of the sector might also be the cause of its lack of distinctiveness compared to the compulsory and higher education sectors. This lack of a distinct characteristic might also have hampered carrying research in the sector. Coffield (1998) was critical of the cosy arrangements of research findings in the sector where terms such as pedagogy and vocational education and training were not clearly defined nor contested with the tacit notion that there were common agreements amongst the academic fraternity. If the research findings do not offer a distinct perspective of the sector, one, perhaps, cannot blame the policymakers' lack of understanding of and, crucially, establishing workable policies for implementation.

To an extent, this research monograph is a result of the above questionings. As a researcher, I am conscious of my role, and this includes providing empirical evidence for potential stakeholders such as policymakers, teachers, managers, learners and researchers to develop sound and implementable pedagogic strategies, curriculum and policies may it be in this diverse sector or beyond.

This research monograph is a collection of unpublished articles or chapters, which is based on empirical research. Its common themes are work or occupation-related, pedagogy, knowledge and experiences, hence the title of the monograph. Each contribution can also be read as a standalone chapter. The main work-related theme covers the further education sector, higher and professional education and the knowledge economy.

Following this chapter, the next four chapters reflect my research interests and teaching experiences in the FE sector. Chapter 2 was a result of a remark from one of the research participants where she mentioned her emotional investment in her learners and the empathy she had for them. The initial version of this chapter appeared as a British Educational Research Association (BERA) conference paper in 2013 at the University of Brighton, England. The chapter is based on the FE teachers' emotional narratives concerning their professional and personal lives, pedagogic practices, and past professional/occupational experiences. It uses Zembylas's (2007) definition of emotional knowledge and conceptual framework of emotional ecology to examine the participants' pedagogic, life and occupational experiences.

Chapter 3 focuses on the professional identities of teachers in the FE sector. The inspiration for this research article was from my own experiences as an FE teacher who had previous occupational experience as a Chartered Accountant with a decade of work experience in the private sector before entering teaching. The earliest version of this paper was at the BERA Conference at the University of Warwick in 2010 and with a subsequent presentation at the Learning and Skills Research Network (LSRN) Conference in London in the same year. This chapter is based on the relationships between teaching knowledge of qualified FE teachers who have occupational experiences and their professional identities via their symbolic representative articulations.

The next contribution – Chapter 4 – relates to the previous chapter. It is based on a systematic review of literature relating to the FE sector and staff identities. The publications are analysed based on two research questions regarding the characteristics of professional selves/identities of those working in the FE sector, and the extent the vocational dimension is included in such studies.

Chapter 5 offers the final contribution to the FE sector. Its inspiration came from the ongoing quest to widen participation to as many learners as possible. This has been one of the main characteristics of the sector. The research emphasis to date had been on the students and their specific pedagogic and social needs. The chapter focuses on the import of teachers and teaching in assisting widening participation (WP). It uses concepts of multimodality and reflective peer review to argue that quality teaching and the appropriate curriculum can add to the WP equation. The initial presentation of this idea was at the BERA Conference at the University of Leeds in 2016.

Chapter 6 focuses on teaching professionals in the higher education sector. As an academic who is involved in the delivery in the higher education sector, this is also an area of my research interests, which sits neatly with professional education. These are deliverers on professional training programmes in clinical practices such as general practice and emergency medicine. Like the FE lecturers from the earlier chapters, these deliverers teach and some practice alongside the two professional activities. The aim of this contribution is to create a conceptual framework for understanding how they utilize their know-how in the two activities and consider the pedagogic implications for the teaching institutions. This contribution is an off-shoot of my earlier research monograph, *Teachers and Teaching in Vocational and Professional Education* (Loo, 2018).

The penultimate chapter – Chapter 7 – deals with the work-related theme of creative workers in the knowledge economy. The knowledge economy and the other academic areas the other areas reflect the spectrum of my research interests. The overarching theme is work or occupation-related that is related to teachers, learners and workers. These workers use their creative talents and know-how to create products and services in the digitally-driven economy. The types of know-how and the application of their creative talents have teaching and learning implications for the programme deliveries in higher education institutions (HEIs). It offers insights into how HEIs may act as a bridge between work organisations and the creative workers before and while at work. This contribution is a spin-off from an earlier research monograph, *Creative Workers in the Knowledge Economy* (Loo, 2017).

Chapter 8 provides a reflection of the above standalone contributions, which covers the sectors of further, higher and professional education. It also delineates the knowledge economy and areas relating to teachers, curriculum, learning, knowledge and experiences.

References

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