FE Sports Lecturer Professionalism: 'Freedom to Play', or 'Do as I Say?'

NARRATIVE ACCOUNTS OF FURTHER EDUCATION (FE) SPORTS LECTURER PROFESSIONALISM FROM FE INSTITUTIONS IN THE SOUTH WEST OF ENGLAND.

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Abstract

The primary aim of this research was to investigate how Further Education (FE) Sports Lecturers defined their sense of professionalism with reference to the jobs they did and the environments in which they worked. Individual narratives were written for the academic years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 for five Sports Lecturers from FE institutions in the South West of England. Eight Sports Lecturers from four different FE institutions took part in the research through completing an online questionnaire and five of these lecturers from two different FE institutions undertook a series of semi-structured qualitative interviews to answer the research questions. Individual narratives were constructed, analysed and discussed. Findings showed that there remained high levels of performativity and accountability in FE institutions and these caused a great deal of pressure and stress for the Sports Lecturers. There were similarities to school-based research where the Sports Lecturers experienced significant gaps between what they were teaching and what they perceived society needed. The Sports Lecturers often had to adapt their methods of delivery to work effectively in their contexts and consequently, they mainly saw their professionalism as an externally imposed, articulated perception of what lay within the parameters of their profession's collective remit and responsibilities. This research also uncovered a new area of research entitled 'competitive mediation' which reflected how the professional practice of the Sports Lecturers was heavily influenced by structure and compliance, but they operated in ways which matched their own values and therefore they were mediating these tensions (strategic compliance). It was found that the Sports Lecturers who had played competitive sport, felt that their sporting experiences helped them to develop skills which complemented their professional practice in their FE environments. However, the Sports Lecturers narrowed their curriculum delivery and they taught to the test to achieve good results which they then were happy to compare with their colleagues. These methods of delivery were seen to be a negative consequence of the structures which were determining their practice. Consequently, this research found that the FE sector might be moving further away from proposed democratic models of education and it was predicted that this would be compounded in the future with recent political developments.

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Chapter One – Introduction

Aims and Justifications for Study

Further Education (FE) or General Further Education (GFE) can be defined as the 'everything else' (James and Gleeson, 2007) sector located in the middle of secondary and higher education sectors. It is argued that FE is characterised as the 'everything else' sector because of the sheer breadth of its provision (Panchamia, 2012). Indeed, FE colleges today remain the majority provider of adult learning, despite falling numbers of students over recent years (Howard, 2009). The Department for Education (DFE) (2017) state that the proportion of 16-18-year olds attending GFE colleges has fallen slightly in recent years compared with participation trends in schools, sixth form colleges and higher education (DfE, 2017). However, James and Gleeson (2007 p. 9) reinforce that because of the '…historical Cinderella-like image, the sheer scale of FE can be easily overlooked'. According to the Association of Colleges (AOC) (2018), there are 257 GFE, 70 sixth form and 16 specialist designated colleges in England (AoC, 2018). Specifically, there is a wide diversity of provision across FE colleges and across the range of activity within individual colleges (James and Gleeson, 2007). As a definition of FE, Finlay (2009 p. 2) provides a useful, albeit, general overview of the purposes of the sector:

> 'It {FE} comprises all post-compulsory education and training for 16 to 19-year-olds and adults that is not delivered in higher education institutions. This includes basic skills, A Levels, NVQs, foundation degrees, diplomas, apprenticeships, work-based training, and personal and community learning'.

The experience of FE practitioners is a relatively under-researched area generally and with specific regard to research relating to 'professionalism', it is argued that what constitutes professionalism in FE is an elusive concept.

This forms the basis of my research and my research investigates this point, but from the perspectives of Sports Lecturers in FE colleges in the South West of England. However, before investigating the perspectives of professionalism of the staff who work in the sector, I want to position myself at the start of this research because I similarly believe in what Sikes (2010 p. 13) stated which is that it is unethical '…to offer a version of someone's life…without making clear the nature of the gaze that is being brought to bear upon it'. This is because our own beliefs and values are implicated (Stanley, 1993).

I have continuously worked in the FE sector since 2007, after completing a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and specifically the Post Compulsory Education Training (PCET). I undertook the PGCE in South Wales having already completed a Bachelor's Degree (BSc Hons) and a Master's Degree (MA) in the fields of Sport Studies and Physical Education. I always knew that I wanted to work with young people in the sports industry, but I was not sure whether this was going to be in a teaching capacity, or in a coaching capacity. After having played rugby since the age of six, I was considering a professional coaching career, but a rugby injury at the age of 23 (dislocated knee leading to a full knee reconstruction) meant that I had to re-think my options. At the end of my MA year, I decided to undertake a PGCE (PCET) because I could do the qualification locally and there were bursaries available from the Government, which meant that I could earn a wage whilst studying. This appealed to me greatly and in 2006, I enrolled onto the PGCE. I chose the PCET route because I knew that I wanted to work with older students who had a genuine interest in their post-compulsory education and I anticipated that there would be very few behavioural issues to deal with. I also felt that working in the post-compulsory sector would enable me to further research and teach in detail, the academic area in which I had a deep interest. You could say that I wanted to 'win the hearts and minds' of my learners (Hayes, 2007).

I wanted to help them to not only gain employment in their chosen field, but I wanted to support them in understanding the skills and qualities they have, or require, to meet the demands of their futures (Claxton, 2010; Coffield and Williamson, 2011).

I entered full-time employment in a GFE institution in Wiltshire as a Sports Lecturer; mainly delivering BTEC National Diploma qualifications. However, whilst completing my day-to-day tasks at this institution, I started to grow sceptical regarding the activities I was undertaking and who they were specifically benefitting. I found that I had to do a huge amount of paperwork which seemed to ensure that any student under-achievement was accounted for and justified, I experienced a high level of funding strains in terms of buying of resources, I experienced behavioural issues with learners which was surprising as I had previously expected there to be very few of these and I felt a significant pressure from external agencies and especially Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) because of a perceived looming inspection. Ultimately, I started to question the role of the FE sector and the role of the lecturer. It appeared to me that there was an increased focus on gaining funding from success rates and retention, compared to enhancing the life opportunities of the students I taught. I saw these as contrasting and non-complementary features of the sector and felt that an economic focus was detrimental to the experiences of my learners. You could say that there appeared to be a disconnect for me between the rhetoric of FE as a high-skill vocational route and the experiences I was having 'on the ground' (Gleeson *et al.* 2005).

It became apparent later in my career that the area of research of most interest to me was specifically focused on professionalism and how lecturers interpreted their professionalism in the contexts they worked and how they worked in these contexts (their strategies). As I continued my career in FE I began to progress into different roles. After leaving the college in Wiltshire in 2008, I was employed as a Course Leader for Sport at another college in the South West region.

I remained in continuous employment in this institution until 2015 when I was made redundant from my role as the Head of Maths and Science because of funding constraints, which led to a management re-structure.

In 2010, I enrolled onto a Professional Doctorate in Education (EdD) at the University of the West of England to further develop my critical understanding of the FE sector and specifically, the professionalism of FE lecturers. This was because there appeared to be a difference between what I was under the impression I would be doing as an FE lecturer, and what I was doing on a day-to-day basis. I always wanted to ensure that my students could contribute to lifelong learning for the benefit of themselves, their families and society in general. I always believed that as a society, we had many skills and abilities but some of those skills were left undiscovered and not utilised. I long believed that the systems, which existed within my education institutions, were not fully benefitting all the learners that encountered them. For example, regarding exam success, in my experience, this only revealed what knowledge individuals displayed on particular days after plenty of revision, it did not illustrate about '...more abiding interests, understandings or capabilities that students may have developed' (Claxton, 2010 p. 19). However, despite this, there appeared to be significant pressures on staff to achieve good results in assessments including from students, parents, FE institutions and external agencies like Ofsted. It appeared to me that teachers were rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' if they achieved good results in their subjects. As previously stated, this was contrary to what I believed the point of education in FE institutions to be.

Because of some early research I conducted, it soon appeared that I was not alone in such understandings and some researchers argued that education embodied a contradictory tension because of its relationship with the economy (Mulderrig, 2002); a consequence of this being '…an intensified codification and regulation of teachers' working practices, alongside an increased emphasis on standards, targets, quality and delivery' (Mulderrig, 2002 p. 4).

I argue that this is also the same for lecturers in FE colleges as well. Also, regulation in the form of performance management – '…a process originating in the private sector which has been subsequently adapted by the public sector (including FE) into an audit mechanism for improving the performance, productivity, accountability and transparency of public services' (Forrester, 2011 p. 5), appears to have turned students into customers and then into inputs and outputs and eventually into 'bums on seats' (Coffield and Williamson, 2011).

For the basis of this research thesis, the terms 'teacher' and 'lecturer' will be used interchangeably as it is argued that much of the past research conducted on teachers is relevant to the experiences of lecturers in FE colleges in the South West of England also. However, by focusing on FE lecturers specifically, it is hoped to clarify this or to find out if the experiences of FE lecturers are unique in comparison to the experiences of education practitioners in other sectors.

With specific regard to my research methods, and as discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis, all my research participants possessed teaching qualifications in the form of Post Graduate Certificates in Education (PGCE) and had deliberately chosen to work with older students in post-16 environments. Therefore, it is argued that these individuals are teachers who work within post-16 contexts. As will be discussed later in Chapters Three and Four, it is also argued that lecturers also have similar characteristics to those which define 'teachers' in other sectors and they experience similar pressures to those individuals who work in publically funded education systems. With specific regard to educational policy, Ball (2017 p. 3) states that '…almost all of the policy 'levers' and 'technologies'…can be traced through the specifics of policy in these other sectors'. However, a recent article on the BBC website from the Head of Ofsted Amanda Spielman in October 2017, stated that she is concerned that some teachers in schools in England are 'teaching to the test' and this is proving to be detrimental to the future understanding of students.

'In the worst cases, teaching to the test, rather than teaching the full curriculum, leaves a pupil with a hollowed-out and flimsy understanding' (Spielman, 2017 P. 1). She went on to say that, a lack of a rounded education has consequences for social mobility. Even though this is an article focused on the behaviour of some teachers in schools, I witnessed similar practices happening in my FE institutions and I believe that the consequences are still the same for the learners in FE institutions as well. Specific research associated with the FE sector will be discussed later in this chapter.

Because of my documented experiences above, I decided to undertake specific research into investigating lecturer perceptions of their own professionalism in reference to their working contexts. I decided to frame my research around FE Sports Lecturers in FE institutions in the South West of England. The reasons for these will be further justified below and specifically in Chapter Five of this paper. My study contributes to the work done in James *et al.*'s (2007) Transforming Learning Cultures (TLC) Project.

The TLC Project focused on 19 learning sites and this was deemed to be statistically close to the national picture of FE in England (James and Gleeson, 2007). However, none of the selected learning sites focused on the teaching and learning on sports courses. It was therefore my objective that my research thesis would go some way to filling this gap in research by focusing on how five Sports Lecturers from two different FE colleges in the South West of England defined their sense of professionalism in reference to the environments in which they worked and the jobs they did. I wanted to understand the experiences of the Sports Lecturers in contemporary FE institutions and to analyse if their experiences matched the experiences documented in previous research, or to find out if their experiences were unique.

It is now the objective to introduce some of the concepts surrounding lecturer professionalism.

Contemporary Definitions of Teacher Professionalism

As previously stated, much of the education research conducted on professionalism has focused on the professionalism of teachers in schools. Some of this work is used to inform my discussions in this thesis because it appears that there are similarities with the work that FE lecturers do as well.

Indeed, a decision was made by the coalition Government in 2010 to recognise the transferability of professional status of teachers between the school and college sectors, permitting career crossover between the two sectors (Stoten, 2013). In addition, from preliminary research into the factors which influence the professionalism of education practitioners generally and FE staff specifically, it does appear that a significant factor is performance management and therefore, a contemporary definition of professionalism within FE might be one of managerial professionalism (Coffield and Williamson, 2011). This is where there has been a preoccupation with control, accountability and effectiveness and is implemented via the use of very rigorous performance management regimes as in other educational institutions, like schools. '…Any boundary between the professional and the manager has become blurred, with managerialism dominating the vocabularies and thinking within the sector' (Plowright and Barr, 2012 p. 3). Demirkasimoglu (2010) similarly states that contemporary teacher professionalism means meeting certain standards in education and is related to proficiency. Ball (2017 p. 57) defines this as performativity and refers it as a 'culture or a system of terror'. He goes on to refer to it as a regime of accountability that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of control, attrition and change' (Ball, 2017 p. 57).

It might be argued that this performativity occurs because of the political pressures, which exist on institutions (including FE institutions) to do well. This is because of the overall relationship which exists between education, the state and the economy, and this necessitates the close management of individuals involved (Ball, 2017). Indeed, the 'ecology of education, what it looks like, when and where it happens and who does it has changed and is being changed and, as a result, so too are the learner and the teacher' Ball (2017 p. 7). In light of the close links that FE institutions also have with the pressures detailed above, I also propose that it is sensible to investigate how such factors influence the lecturers who work within these FE systems. Robinson (2015 p. 9) similarly reinforces that 'Governments everywhere are now yanking firmly on the reins of public education, telling schools what to teach, imposing systems of testing to hold them accountable, and levying penalties if they don't make the grade'. Indeed, Ball (2017) refers to education as being a crucial factor for ensuring economic productivity and competitiveness. He refers to this as the 'knowledge economy' (Ball, 2017 p. 2). He goes on to state that 'education policy is increasingly thought about and made within the context of pressures and requirements of globalisation and within a particular framework of political rationality' (Ball, 2017 p. 2). Taubman (2015) specifically states that the professionalism of FE lecturers is under attack from a culture of managerialism and ever-increasing workloads and is because of a lack of respect for the expertise, views and commitment of FE lecturers (Taubman, 2015).

These managerialist pressures have been perceived to have a devastating impact on the professionals that work in the different sectors and it has been very disempowering (Coffield and Williamson, 2011). Teacher morale and student engagement are impacted because of education establishments trying to adhere to the standards movement which supresses individuality, imagination and creativity (Robinson, 2015). Ball (2017) similarly explains that such performativity can lead to damaging practices, which nonetheless satisfy performance requirements.

An example, as already discussed, is teaching to the test. O'Neill and Adams (2012) are critical of performativity specifically regarding the educational experiences of students as they understand that focusing on outcomes and targets have very little to do with genuine student-centred education. They state:

> 'Official 'targets', 'outcomes' and 'priorities' have very little to do with a genuinely child-centred education. The child at the centre of this 'outcomes' view of education is a cipher or avatar, not a person, while the performative teacher is required to view pedagogy as the science of continuously improving student outcomes and is employed merely to ensure the Ministry can efficiently deliver its core business functions. The interests being served by this sterile vision of learning of Governments, not those of children, families and communities'.

(O'Neill and Adams, 2012) In Ball (2017 pp. 59)

Consequently, Robinson (2015 p. 21) refers specifically to teacher attrition rates in the United States and states that '…more than a quarter of a million teachers leave the profession every year, and it is estimated that more than 40 percent of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years. This scenario is especially bleak in high-poverty schools, where turnover is approximately 20 percent every year'. This pattern also exists in the UK according to a recent Times Educational Supplement article which stated, 'almost two-fifths of teachers drop out within a year after finishing their training, as "bright-eyed" trainees realise teaching is "no career to enter"' (TES, 2015 p. 1). Patterns are also similar for FE lecturers. Avis argued in 2003 that audit and inspection regimes have undermined trust among public professionals and as a result, they are experiencing casualisation, low morale and are engaging in some industrial action.

It would appear that very little has changed because according to a questionnaire conducted by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) in 2015, 77% of FE staff felt their workload was not manageable and nearly 80% said they did not have time to update their subject knowledge or skills.

'Heavy workloads and stress are nothing new, but the current situation is affecting the health of staff, making many want to leave the profession' (Bousted, 2015 p. 1). There is a constant pressure for FE institutions to increase income and reduce costs (Hodkinson *et al.*, 2007). James *et al.* (2007) similarly understand that the funding, management and curricula policies and practices are likely to reduce the quality of learning of students in individual institutions; however, lecturers are routinely expected to improve learning in such ways. However, it appears that modern day FE institutions remain financially 'squeezed' because of funding cuts implemented by the Government (Bousted, 2015). These cuts have consequently put pressure on FE staff, who must keep re-planning what they are doing to keep up with curriculum changes (Bousted, 2015). These themes will be further discussed in Chapter Three of this paper.

It does appear that there is still a gap in literature that clearly documents the experiences of lecturers who work within modern FE institutions.

> '…Although professional work in FE has been subjected to a plethora of initiatives in recent years, little is known about its practitioners, their dispositions and how they define their sense of professionalism in the changing context of their work'.
>
> (James and Gleeson, 2007 p. 126-127)

I argue that this is still the same as today and therefore, this is why I believe my research study was an important one to undertake.

There is however, an alternative model to the one implemented in contemporary publically funded education and the next part of this Chapter will introduce an alternative approach and how my research might be used as a starting point for a possible change in dynamic in the future.

An Alternative Approach…

Coffield and Williamson (2011) consequently describe that a shift is needed from the current 'market model' of education, to one which focuses on the democratic rights of enhancement, inclusion and participation, peer-moderated self-regulation and an expansive learning environment where experimentation is encouraged from teachers. They call their model 'Communities of Discovery' and state that 'knowledge, learning and understanding emerge in a social process in which people discuss, write and share ideas and expertise; they learn in the course of tackling a real problem together' (Coffield and Williamson, 2011 p. 27). As will be discussed later in this thesis, Coffield and Williamson are not the only researchers who promote such an alternative.

With regard to the democratic model proposed by Coffield and Williamson (2011), for this type of learning and understanding to develop, individual FE institutions need to undertake democratic audits of the quality of their provision. These institutions need to assess if the educational experiences their learners receive enables them to experience democratic ways of working, and whether they feel they are engaged in the social and political life of their communities (Coffield and Williamson, 2011). It does therefore appear that there is an argument for a re-formation of the professionalism of educators towards a more democratic process. Robinson (2015) agrees and suggests that the old systems of education are not designed to meet the needs we now all face. He goes on to state that 'improving them by raising conventional standards will not meet the challenges we now face' (Robinson, 2015 p. xv). Coffield and Williamson (2011 p. 72) additionally propose that a democratic model of education will better meet the needs of students in the future:

> 'Its core emphasis on cooperation between teachers and all the other partners in education – students, parents, and business and community leaders. Democratic professionals exercise wider responsibilities than simply being in charge of the education of groups of students, which include working with others to improve the institution they work in, the educational 'system' and their local community. Professional educators also have collective responsibilities – to contribute to the formation and evaluation of policy (both local and national), and to the initial and continuing education of new and experienced members of their profession'.
>
> (Coffield and Williamson, 2011 p. 72)

A shift to 'Communities of Discovery' would also require a new definition of professionalism from the lecturers who work within FE so that they can define what they feel is educationally desirable. Coffield and Williamson (2011) argue that this new definition of professionalism should be far removed from the current managerialist perspective of professionalism, towards a more democratic understanding. Taubman (2015) similarly refers to the need for FE workers to reclaim their professionalism from the neoliberal grip which is exerted on all aspects of education. Coffield and Williamson's (2011) criteria for this new definition is presented in Table One below. However, it is recognised that for lecturers to define what they feel is educationally desirable, this would involve some form of value judgements and this is because education is a value-laden practical activity and cannot be distinguished from values (Whitehead, 1989). The concept of Living Theory (Whitehead, 1989) will be discussed further in Chapter Four of this thesis. It is additionally understood that value judgements raise issues regarding validity and generalisability. These issues surrounding validity and generalisability will also be further discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

With regard to establishing a new definition of professionalism, Plowright and Barr (2012) also argue that a new concept of professionalism is required which unites the FE sector rather than fracturing it.

They state that this new concept of professionalism should be based on practical reasoning, judgement and wisdom (Plowright and Barr, 2012). They similarly state that their definition of professionalism would also include a value-based professional code of ethics as opposed to a managerial and prescribed focus. They refer to their definition as 'integrated professionalism' (Plowright and Barr, 2012 p. 2). Robinson (2015) additionally advocates revolution in education, which is different from the traditional standards model. 'It is based on a belief in the value of the individual, the right to self-determination, our potential to evolve and live a fulfilled life, and the importance of civic responsibility and respect for others' (Robinson, 2015 p. xvi). Sachs (2014 p. 3) similarly argues that 'a new approach requires that teachers collectively and individually address those in power to make it clear that a top-down approach is simply not working, nor, in principle, is it likely to work'. Robinson (2015) agrees with this, however, he believes that a revolution is already underway.

> 'Although education is now a global issue, it is inevitably a grassroots process. Understanding that is the key to transformation. The world is undergoing revolutionary changes; we need a revolution in education too. Like most revolutions, this one has been brewing for a long time, and in many places, it is already well under way. It is not coming from the top down; it is coming, as it must do, from the ground up'.
>
> (Robinson, 2015 p. xx)

Robinson (2015) goes on to state that the key to improving education is to focus on the quality of teaching in educational institutions. 'The heart of educational improvement is inspiring students to learn, which is what great teachers do' (Robinson, 2015 p. 100). This is in stark contrast to the traditional understanding of the role of the FE lecturer, which is to adhere to top-down efforts by Governments to change teaching in schools and colleges. These efforts '…divert teachers away from their experience and instincts, deliberately forcing them to bypass the teaching intelligence they have learned and nurtured' (Thomas, 2013 p. 42).

Indeed, 'the data suggest that school staffing problems are rooted in the way schools are organised and the way the teaching occupation is treated and that lasting improvements in the quality and quantity of the teaching workforce will require improvements in the quality of the teaching job' (Ingersoll, 2003 In Robinson, 2015 p. 22). As is discussed in Chapters Two and Three of this thesis, similar patterns of lecturer recruitment appear to exist in FE institutions as well.

Table One – Coffield and Williamson's (2011) Market Model to Communities of Discovery

	THE MARKET MODEL → COMMUNITIES OF DISCOVERY	
System Level	1. Government stress on performance management, targets, competition. 2. Regulation is punitive, disproportionate and poor value for money. 3. The learning environment is restrictive and only the 'core' staff are trained. 4. The main driving force is fear.	1. Emphasis on the democratic rights of enhancement, inclusion and participation. 2. Self-regulation, moderated by peers, directed towards improvement. 3. The learning environment is expansive and develops the abilities of all. 4. The main driving force is trust.
Institutional Level	5. Institutions are seen as the 'providers' of skills and qualifications. 6. All-important learning takes place in formal settings. 7. Dissent is treated as disloyalty to senior management. 8. Teachers are seen as agents of Government policy who teach what and how Government tells them to. 9. Students are seen as 'consumers' of 'products' who should be 'streamed' by ability.	5. Learning is the central organising principle of our institutions. 6. Informal learning is prized as a vital form of learning. 7. Dissent is positively encouraged for organisational learning. 8. Educators are lifelong learners who improve for the sake of doing a better job. 9. Learners are citizen educators, all of whom are capable of improvement.
Classroom Level	10. Teaching seen as the transmission of skills and information from tutors to students, whose minds are 'empty buckets'. 11. Learning seen as the individual acquisition of knowledge, skills and qualifications. 12. Knowledge is capital to be turned into profit.	10. Teaching and learning seen as one process, as two sides of one coin. 11. Learning is collaborative; dialogue plays a central role, and helps create more equal power relations between educators and learners. 12. Knowledge is a collective resource.

In summary, recent debates on education have neglected to consider the voices of educators who are the only people who can enact reforms, but their involvement '…has been reduced to the empty ritual of a consultation exercise' (Coffield and Williamson, 2011 p. 46). This disables teachers (including FE lecturers) and prevents them from acting and reacting as they see fit as reasoning professionals and instead '…substitutes a set of routines and procedures for professional understanding and acumen' (Thomas, 2013 p. 44). Therefore, the main objective of my research is to understand this relationship further by researching how FE Sports Lecturers in the South West of England define their own sense of professionalism in reference to the contemporary contexts in which they work and the jobs they do. I will further investigate where their ideas of professionalism come from and how they work in their contexts, identifying any strategies that they employ. It is hoped that my research will contribute to the construction of a new definition of professionalism through understanding and considering the 'voices' of Sports Lecturers from the South West of England. I will use qualitative questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to construct individual narrative accounts of five Sports Lecturers in the South West of England. The goal of the narratives is to identify their reasons for wanting to work in the FE sector, to interpret the contexts in which FE lecturers work, to highlight any strategies they employ for working in their contexts and finally to understand how they define the sense of professionalism regarding the above. Further details of my methodological design can be found in Chapter Four of this thesis. It is hoped that such an approach to research will also help to justify and appreciate the values which Sports Lecturers hold, and how these influence their professional lives (Whitehead, 2009).

Research Questions

1. **What were the contexts in which FE Sports Lecturers in the South West of England worked?**

2. **How did the Sports Lecturers work in their contexts and how did they define their sense of professionalism with reference to the contexts they worked in and the jobs they did?**

Where this Study Fits

Whilst my research focuses primarily on the experiences of FE Sports Lecturers, research does exist which illustrates how contemporary educational contexts impact the learners who attend specific educational institutions. Claxton (2010) understands that students also suffer because of the pressures that are placed on them to gain the results from assessments to progress on from their studies. He states that '…government concerns with standards and accountability have led to teenagers being tested virtually to destruction' (Claxton, 2010 p. 9). This has had a profound impact on the learners that are being tested because they add another dimension of worry to the already stressful environments of schools and colleges in the first place (Claxton, 2010). Claxton (2010) further proposes that the stress of school is greatly compounded by the fact that students do not see the point to it: '…schools are seen by young people as failing to equip them with the ability to learn for life, rather than for exams' (Claxton, 2010 p. 11). Student responses have also reiterated this point: 'The things you learn in school…you're not really using them in actual real life…' (Eighteen-year-old man, Leicester cited in Claxton, 2010 p. 11). 'While you're in school you're expanding your brain. Outside of school and in work you're learning about life…' (Twenty-three-year-old man, London cited in Claxton, 2010 p. 11).

Claxton (2010) therefore argues that education has lost its focus and it urgently needs to recover its core purpose. This however will not be achieved through tiny tinkering with the syllabus or the examination systems. Claxton (2010) argues that politicians claim to put education at the top of their priorities, but they lack the courage to go deeper into the problems with the systems we have at present. The current education system is dangerous (Claxton, 2010) in the sense that our young people are at risk as they are prone to becoming anxious, insecure and acting in self-destructive ways (Claxton, 2010) as the result of the pressures to achieve government set targets and statistics.

> 'In thrall to content and qualifications, we have forgotten the deeper purpose of education. In the rush to make young people into successful exam-passers, we have overlooked their deeper need to become successful people, eager to learn and grow in the real-life world of work, leisure and relationships – and to become successful people they need a rich set of useful, general-purpose habits of mind that will stand them in good stead whatever they want or need to turn their hand to'.
>
> (Claxton, 2010 p. ix)

Schools appear to be in a state of crisis because they are not adapting to their changing environments. I similarly argue that FE Colleges are also not adapting to their changing environments and it is proposed that they '…have become locked in delivery systems that are more salient to an older economic, social, and political order' (Hughes, 2010 p. 398).

Robinson (2013 p. 1) additionally states that learning should be the fundamental purpose of all educational institutions. He contrasts this understanding to the contemporary understanding of teaching in the USA where 'the dominant culture of education has come to focus on not teaching and learning, but testing. Now, testing is important. Standardized tests have a place. However, they should not be the dominant culture of education. They should be diagnostic. They should help'. Robinson (2013) states how the education systems in the USA now restrict curiosity and creativity of learners and because of this; teachers operate in a culture of compliance. 'Our children and teachers are encouraged to follow routine algorithms rather than to excite that power of imagination and curiosity' (Robinson, 2013 p. 1).

It is therefore hoped that my research will go some way to understanding this complex relationship and specifically understanding the implications of forgetting this deeper understanding of education (Claxton, 2010), but through understanding how this impacts the professionals who work within the FE sector. My research adds to the body of research, which has been conducted over the last thirty years or so.

Much of this research has been concerned with investigating the lives of teachers (Blake *et al.*, 2000). Ball and Goodson (1985) were concerned with how the previous careers of secondary school teachers and their life experiences shaped their views of teaching and their practice. Woods' (1986) research argued that the early experiences of secondary school teachers could influence later teaching. Elbaz (1990) used biographical experiences to explain the opinions of secondary school teachers and their theories about education. Kelchtermans (1993) specifically investigated if the life cycle of a secondary school teacher provides insight into the mechanisms that determine qualitative changes in teachers' behaviour (Blake *et al.*, 2000). Whitty (2002) argued that whilst the world's governments have wanted to increase the effectiveness of teachers, there is a reluctance to trust them to manage their own affairs and relinquish their control over the outcomes that schools should achieve.

I situate my research within the contexts that my research participants worked so that I could greater understand the structures that they had to deal with, how these impacted the individual lecturers and the strategies they employed for working in these structures. My research contributes to the existing research on teacher's lives through undertaking narrative investigations of Sports Lecturers, thus understanding the assumptions and dispositions (James *et al.*, 2007) that Sports Lecturers had regarding their sense of professionalism in relation to their backgrounds. This research also adds to learning culture literature 'through the eyes' of the practitioners, thus, understanding how the assumptions and dispositions of Sports Lecturers corresponded with their working environments and any strategies they employed for working within them. My research could be considered a starting point for a move away from a market driven model, to more democratic means like Coffield and Williamson's (2011) 'Communities of Discovery'. It was an attempt to clearly illustrate the contexts in which FE Sports Lecturers worked and how these contexts influenced their understandings of their professionalism.

My thesis provides Government officials, educational managers and curriculum designers (James *et al.*, 2007) further insights into the working lives of Further Education practitioners. It was hoped to communicate and recognise the value of what FE Sports Lecturers do and supports their efforts to reflect on and improve their ability to advance teaching, learning, scholarship and research from their perspectives (UCU, 2012).

Further Chapters

Chapter Two provides a historical and contemporary context for the study where the historical developments of Further Education in Britain will be discussed to illustrate clearly the structures that have shaped the industry in the last century. Chapter Three presents the arguments associated with defining the concept of 'professionalism' and its role in changing educational contexts, including state funded provision and will offer an interpretation of what professionalism might look like in the future. Chapter Four comprises the Methods and Methodology section and will clearly illustrate the issues associated with this research thesis. The narratives are presented in Chapter Five which clearly describe the experiences 'as lived' of the lecturers in this research. Chapter Six is the analysis and discussion sections where the main findings from the coding procedure are highlighted, analysed and discussed. The discussion is where the main findings from this research are further discussed in comparison to existing literature. Chapter Seven comprises the conclusion section and this is where the final findings are presented regarding the research questions set out at the start of this research thesis. In addition to the main findings from this research, this section also includes reference to limitations of the study and recommendations for further work. The appendices provide various pieces of information including, the stages and findings from the coding process, including some of the raw data and the ethical approval letter for this research.

Chapter Two – Historical and Contemporary Contexts of Education

Introduction to the History of Education in Britain

It is the primary aim of this chapter to describe the developments that have occurred in the Further Education (FE) sector from their beginnings, right up until modern day. It is hoped that through undertaking this historical analysis of the developments in FE in England, 'causal explanations for changes which punctuate the political and social timelines of educational development' (Bartlett and Burton, 2007 p. 6) can be further investigated regarding understanding the professionalism of educators. It is my aim to use a historical analysis of Further Education to understand the educational systems and structures that have existed in the past and how they have contributed to the systems and structures that exist in contemporary Further Education today. It is my further aim to understand the key dates and events that have contributed to the development of the English Further Education system and how these 'reflect the significant political and social issues of the time' (Bartlett and Burton, 2007 p. 6). I argue that through undertaking this historical analysis of Further Education, the pressures that act upon the practitioners within individual FE institutions can be greater understood.

Historically the provision of education in Britain has been organised based on a diagnosis of what that society requires at that time.

> 'For the Victorians, it was the threat of social disorder that had to be met through a strict schooling of the working classes to learn the three 'R's' and to respect the authority of their social 'superiors'. In the twentieth century, education changed gradually to meet the need for a better educated labour force for a changing economy…Today, educational policy is framed by a concern to promote international competitiveness and economic growth in a globalised economy'.
>
> (Coffield and Williamson, 2011 pp. 16-17)

From their formal introduction in 1944 to incorporation in 1993, FE has undergone many significant changes, and this is mainly because of the three interest groups whom FE is supposed to serve, these being the Government, employers and learners (Panchamia, 2012); the impacts of these interest groups will be discussed later in this chapter. Prior to 1944 however, following legislation in the 1880s, Technical Colleges emerged as part of the new state education system, which formally introduced a new generation of post-16 publically funded vocational education. Colleges at this time provided vocational education and support for adults in apprenticeships or young people in part-time work as well as attending school (Howard, 2009). Moving into the early twentieth century, colleges became part of local authority provision and apprenticeships and vocational qualifications continued to be delivered in these institutions.

The 1944 Education Act and Onwards

The 1944 Education Act meant that FE colleges became a formal alternative to schools for school-leaving-certificate resits and A Level programmes, alongside their employment-related tradition. Also, around this time, the technical colleges that developed HE and industry and business-related applied research functions, were re-categorised as higher education institutions. This left FE colleges as the providers of lower level learning, with vocational education still at their core (Howard, 2009).

FE has often been pivotal for adapting to changing environmental, political and economic pressures. An example of the adaptation of FE was in the economic downturn of the 1970s. In the 1970s, FE colleges provided specialised programmes for unemployed young people/adults and were encouraged to target specific social groups as the labour market changed (Howard, 2009). In the 1980s, competency-based qualifications were developed and delivered in FE institutions. Employers and leading employer-led bodies again drove these competency-based qualifications. There were other key developments in FE during the 1980s one of which was that as HE provision grew, so did HE provision within FE in the 1980s.

There was a new demand from adult learners for access and foundation courses to be offered in local FE provision so that adult learners could progress into HE. This new developing relationship between FE and HE '…strengthened colleges' role in academic as well as vocational programmes and their credentials as a comprehensive education service' (Howard, 2009 p. 55). Towards the end of the 1980s the curricula offered in FE institutions was diverse because of FE having to continuously respond to policy reform (Howard, 2009).

Incorporation (1993) and the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC)

One of the most significant changes to occur in FE was in 1991 when it was announced that FE colleges would be 'incorporated' as organisations (from April 1993), independent of the local education authorities which they had been part of for almost a century (James *et al.*, 2007; Howard, 2009). FE colleges became independent 'corporations', with college governors as the members of the corporation. 'Lines of democratic accountability locally were weakened, and local autonomy within a national compliance framework became the model' (Howard, 2009 p. 56).

The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 provided a clear remit for FE colleges and sixth form colleges and the curricula they were funded to provide. A dedicated Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) was established who had a skeletal but expert professional staff at regional and national level, with representation by college leaders at all levels (Howard, 2009). This also meant that the FE colleges and sixth form college were removed from local authority control and were open to the demands of competition (Stoten, 2013). The main roles of the FEFC were to lead and manage the new system including developing and managing a college inspectorate and also, they were concerned with the achievement of qualifications, teaching and learning quality, management, and governance (Howard, 2009).

The FEFC was also responsible for funding colleges and administering inspections (Stoten, 2013). They developed a new funding methodology which included '…core funding, growth funding and an open-ended element of demand-led funding' (Howard, 2009 p. 57) that were mainly focused on changing behaviours within FE institutions to increase efficiency by driving funding levels down, in search for greater efficiency and 'value for money' (James *et al.*, 2007; Howard, 2009). James *et al.* (2007 p. 9) state that incorporation meant that '…all state funding depended upon recruitment, retention and achievement of individual students'. Because of this, FE colleges were dominated by what (Avis *et al.*, 1996) refer to as 'new managerialism' and 'audit cultures' – indeed, no other education sector has been so frequently audited (The Guardian, 2002). As a result, 'sometimes, they (Governments) punish schools for not making the grade. Sometimes, they fund remedial programs to get them back on track' (Robinson, 2015 p. xiv). As will be discussed later in this paper, this audit culture creates problems and 'many of these problems are being caused by the system itself' (Robinson, 2015 p. xiv). With specific regard to the practitioners that worked within FE at this time, these were treated as trusted servants rather than empowered professionals (Avis, 2003).

The FEFC compiled the most comprehensive collection of learner data ever undertaken – the Individualised Student Record (ISR), now known as the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) (Howard, 2009). '…Colleges {now} acted like the businesses they were asked to become… {and they} underwent painful years of conflict' (Howard, 2009 p. 57). James *et al.* (2007 p. 10) state that the FEFC '…was…supported…by the imposition of a national inspection service, which laid down detailed criteria against which FE provision was to be judged'. They go on to describe that this audit trend continued from 1997 onwards, after the Labour Government came to power.

However, their new additional focus was to '…meet every student's personal learning needs and to increase social inclusion through widening participation' (James *et al.*, 2007 p. 10), alongside their original focus to target the underachievement of colleges, particularly A Level results and Level Three, and the poor quality of literacy and numeracy provision (Howard, 2009). Consequently, the Government now had a tough contract with FE as it offered significantly more money in return for better results (Howard, 2009; James *et al.*, 2007). The relative autonomy of FE colleges at this time led to some excellent adult learning and community-based work, but 'bad practices (extreme risk-taking, poor financial management and even misuse of public funds) were exposed, and the independence of the whole sector suffered, with a significant tightening of accountability and FEFC funding systems' (Howard, 2009 p. 57), which consequently led to tensions between autonomy, flexibility and innovation on the one-hand and rigidity, regulation and top-down leadership on the other (Howard, 2009). Again, these tensions will be discussed later in this chapter and in Chapter Three.

The learning and Skills Council (LSC) (2000)

Towards the end of the nineties, the Government proposed to abolish the TECs and the FEFC and to create a new funding and planning body. Following the Learning and Skills Act 2000, a new funding body called the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) was created which replaced the FEFC and this elevated the profile of FE especially '…in relation to Government policy on lifelong learning, social inclusion and economic regeneration' (James *et al.*, 2007 p. 7). However, this change contributed to colleges losing their distinctive identity as they too became 'providers' of education alongside an array of education and training organisations (Howard, 2009). Stoten (2013 p. 366) consequently states that 'ironically, although the formal state had appeared to have been reduced, in practice its influences remained, and with it the rise of a bureaucratic technical-rationalist mind-set that determined the value of education'.

This framework changed again in 2010, with the removal of sixth form colleges from the FE sector and tentatively placed back within local authority control (Stoten, 2013).

> 'Throughout this period of flux, the power of Government agencies over colleges has been clear, even to the point of engineering the closure of institutions that were viewed as being unviable because of either performance or financial health'.
>
> (Stoten, 2013 p. 366)

The aim of the policy developments described above has been to firm up FE colleges' economic mission, strengthen their 14–19 provision, and give colleges a primary if not exclusive focus on vocational and employer-led provision for young people (Howard, 2009). 'The sequence of policy initiatives has challenged colleges to be 'contestable in an increasingly competitive marketplace for employer-led and work-based learning' (Howard, 2009 p. 60). What is abundantly clear, however, is that FE has had to continually swap and change its purposes and delivery because of the varied and ever-changing factors that have pressured FE from the outside.

> 'The lack of consensus about the main goals of FE has translated into somewhat chaotic policy making over the last two decades…The Government has frequently shifted back and forth between centrally planning provision so that it reflects national skills priorities and devolving more choice to local employers and learners. Alongside this policy churn, a number of institutions, geographical tiers and arm's-length bodies have been set up and abolished creating a complex and highly unstable system'.
>
> (Panchamia, 2012 p. 2)

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) (2012)

FE has had to serve many different purposes; meaning that it has always been in a constant state of change (Howard, 2009). This is because this sector is not only influenced by changes in political administrations and the different phases within these (Hodgson and Spours, 2004), but also because of the 'variety of provision and organisational arrangements and the sheer number of players involved' (Hodgson and Spours, 2004 pp. 1) in the sector. The closure of the LSC in March 2010 occurred because the then Labour Government concluded that the council had failed to achieve the goals that were set in 2000. The Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) succeeded the LSC. The YPLA were responsible for 16 to 19 education, and the SFA were responsible for adult provision.

> 'Before Labour went out of office, the YPLA was mandated to support local authorities in commissioning 16 to 19 education and the SFS was to route public money to providers following the purchasing decisions of learners and employers through Train2Gain and Skills accounts'.
>
> (Panchamia, 2012, p. 6)

However, the Coalition Government closed the YPLA soon after they came to power. This demonstrated a strong proposal by the Government to make significant and long-term improvements in skills and employment (Panchamia, 2012). The Education Funding Agency (EFA) replaced the YPLA and had a larger remit of funding three to 19 education in England. In 16 to 19 provision however, the reforms put in place, pointed in two different directions:

> 'On the one hand, the Government will largely remove any role for central planning and fund providers on the basis of student demand and outcomes alone – specifically according to the number of students enrolled from the previous year and individual qualifications passed…'

> '…On the other, the Coalition will continue to ring-fence a certain proportion of funds around the delivery of 100,000 apprenticeships over the next five years'.
>
> (Panchamia, 2012 p. 5)

Indeed, The Department for Business Innovation and Skills' (BIS) Vocational Qualification Reform Plan (2014) laid out their plans for an apprenticeship reform which would focus on developing apprenticeship standards instead of frameworks. They detailed that the new 2017/18 apprenticeships would have 12-month minimum duration regardless of age or prior experience, more assessment at the end, and the introduction of grading (BIS, 2014).

2014 to Present and 'Brexit'

The Government's approach to upper secondary education (USE) has been characterised as an 'extreme Anglo-Saxon model' since the last General Election (Hodgson and Spours, 2014). This is because of the international comparison of UK education provision with other countries around the world. Hodgson and Spours (2017 p. 5) refer to the '…dominance of a standardised curriculum and testing regimes; top-down accountability measures; and institutional competition and choice' because of this relationship with other countries. They assert that England employs an extreme version (Hodgson and Spours, 2017) based on the series of policy developments which have occurred over the last seven years. Regarding educational reforms in general, they state:

> 'In terms of curriculum and qualifications, reforms have included changes to the national curriculum towards a more 'traditional' content and pedagogy; a focus on 'the English Baccalaureate' for 14-16-year olds focused on the acquisition of so called 'facilitating' academic subjects and a decisive shift towards linear and summative approaches to assessment in GCSEs and A Levels'.
>
> (Hodgson and Spours, 2017 p. 6)

They go on to refer specifically to vocational qualifications and how these have also been reformed into Applied General and Technical qualifications. These qualifications will contain greater numbers of external examinations, but as Hodgson and Spours (2017 p. 7) state here has been:

> '…a shift away from the 'academicism' of the Gove reforms (but not the curriculum division), towards vocational and technical education…which proposes the development of 15 new Technical Routes (T Levels) and the new standards-based apprenticeships that are to be funded via a UK-wide apprenticeship levy'.

In 2016, the Department for Education, under the control of the Secretary of State for Education (now Damian Hinds) announced that it would take over responsibility for FE, skills and HE from BIS (Robertson, 2016). This meant that the governance of this provision became more centralised '…with the formation of a single ministry and funding body, with a powerful role for the inspectorate (Ofsted) and the new Institute for Apprenticeships' (Hodgson and Spours, 2017 p. 6). Their main reasoning for this was that it would allow the Government to have control over the education of young people from early years through to post-graduate stages. Their main reforms for FE focused on boosting competition between institutions, improving the quality of education that students receive and to deliver more apprenticeships. There has since been increased support from the Government for a range of new education providers (Free Schools, University Technical Colleges [UTCs], Studio Schools) and autonomous schools all of which are in competition with the traditional providers of post-16 education, including FE colleges (Hodgson and Spours, 2017).

It is argued, however, that the factors supporting the Anglo-Saxon model of education are weakening because market-led competition has been shown to fuel inefficiency and ineffectiveness (Hodgson and Spours, 2017). An example of this could be the introduction of the Area Based Reviews (ABRs).

HM Government (2016 p. 6) detail that the purpose of the ABRs was to '…establish the best institutional structures to offer high quality provision based on the current and future needs of learners and employers within the local area'. They primarily listed five criteria for the ABRs:

1. Institutions which are financially viable, sustainable, resilient and efficient, and deliver maximum value for public investment.
2. An offer that meets each area's educational and economic needs.
3. Providers with strong reputations and greater specialisation.
4. Sufficient access to high quality and relevant education and training for all.
5. Colleges well equipped to respond to the reform and expansion of the apprenticeship programme.

It might be argued that austerity forced the Government to implement post-16 ABRs in England as they primarily focused on the financial viability of colleges alongside other areas. Also, it is not unforeseeable that Brexit (the UK leaving the European Union in 2019) also impacted the decision to review Government spending in education. Hodgson and Spours (2017) are somewhat optimistic regarding the role of FE colleges in the post-Brexit era as they argue that one outcome could be to FE provision on the skills development of young people in order that they are able to replace some sections of migrant labour. Another role could be for FE colleges to enhance their relationships with employers to greater develop work skills to boost industry. However, they do state that at present:

> '…policy on FE in England remains predominantly based on a marketised institutional autonomy model; the qualifications system has become more selective and exclusive; the sector continues to be pushed around by policy and starved of funding and, critically, negative behaviours of other potential social partners (e.g. school-based selection, employer absence and HE indifference) remain relatively unchallenged'.

(Hodgson and Spours, 2017 p. 7)

The Standards Movement

The reasons for the previously discussed changes appear to be because of a need by the Government to have a stronger classification and stronger framing of school knowledge towards a curriculum defined by 'tight boundaries…and the sequencing and pacing of knowledge' (Ball, 2017 p. 113) and consequently the impact on teachers is that they have less control over their professional practice. This therefore means a shift back to traditional 'authority structures' (Ball, 2017 p. 113). An alternative understanding is that managerialism was introduced because FE workers could no longer be trusted to do their jobs efficiently and effectively (Robson, 1998), and so this led to the introduction of accountability systems to monitor output and performance (Ball, 2003).

Gleeson and Knights (2006) argue that few professions can avoid the erosion of their independence from external agencies like the state because of industrial growth, globalisation and expansions of Government interventions. A specific example of this is Ofsted because all education institutions including FE colleges have their education provision closely monitored by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). Hayes (2007 p. 63) refers to the power that such a control has over individual institutions because she argues that '…a poor inspection outcome results in the worst cases in school or college closure'. This implication will be specifically discussed later in this chapter.

It is argued that the way in which institutions interpret the meanings of teaching and learning (T and L) influences the ways in which professionalism is understood. It is argued that for democratic models of education like Communities of Discovery to flourish, FE institutions need to look at the ways in which they interpret teaching, learning and the role of the teacher within their institutions. Coffield and Williamson (2011 p. 2) describe how currently 'politicians of all parties...talk about 'raising standards', but by this term they mean nothing more than raising the test scores of students in a limited number of subjects'.

Thomas (2013) and Robinson (2015) both refer to the contrasting educational system in Finland where the knowledge of teachers, their skill and their professionalism are greatly valued.

Robinson (2015 p. 12) specifically states that:

> 'In terms of teaching, the standards movement favours direct instruction of factual information and skills and whole-class teaching rather than group activities. It is sceptical about creativity, personal expression, and non-verbal, nonmathematical modes of work and of learning by discovery and imaginative play, even in preschool…When it comes to assessment, the standards movement emphasises formal, written examinations and extensive use of multiple-choice tests so that students' answers can be easily codified and processed. It is sceptical too of coursework, portfolios, open-book tests, teacher evaluation, peer assessment, and other approaches that are not so easily quantifiable. This is partly why students spend so much time sitting at desks, working on their own'.

Such approaches to learning have profound negative impacts on students and on their teachers. It exists because of a focus by Governments to enhance the economy through having a well-educated workforce. However, as will be discussed later in this thesis, 'there is an ever-widening skills gap between what schools are actually teaching and what the economy actually needs… (Robinson, 2015 p. 16).

'The standards movement is not meeting the economic challenges we face. One of the declared priorities is to prepare young people for work. Yet, youth unemployment around the world is at record levels' (Robinson, 2015 p. 14). Indeed, The Prince's Trust and HSBC published a report in 2017 entitled 'The Prince's Trust Results for Life Report', which further illustrates the contemporary context in which FE lecturers and teachers work in the UK.

Their main headline finding was that soft skills were valued by young people, teachers and workers alike, '…but there is an alarming gap between how proficient young people are in these skills and how much more they have to learn to be truly effective in the workplace' (Simoes, 2017 p. 5).

With specific regard to the research referring to teachers, The Prince's Trust Results for Life Report stated that 92 per cent of teachers thought that supporting students to develop soft skills could help to improve their overall academic performance, 45 per cent of teachers thought that a lack of soft skills was one of the most likely factors to hold students back in life and crucially with regard to this research thesis, 91 per cent think that schools and colleges should be doing more to help to develop soft skills. These findings are contextually significant regarding this research thesis, because they further emphasise the tensions, which exist in contemporary education institutions for teachers and other members of society.

The Impact of Standards Movement on Teachers

Models of good practice in education cannot possibly be implemented on a macro level because circumstances are so diverse from school to school and from class to class (Hayes, 2007; Coffield, 2008). Frowe (2005) highlights the consequence of this dilemma when stating that '…while the amount of money invested in education necessitates accountability and monitoring of practice, the over-regulation of the profession is corrosive of many of its most valuable elements'.

Hayes (2007 p. 63) states that '…it is difficult to justify a policy that is so utilitarian that it takes little account of the immediate choices and decisions that all teachers have to make every working day'. With specific regard to FE lecturers, funding, recruitment, retention, accountability, workload demands seem to affect all colleges and staff experience stress as a result (Holmes, 2018). According to research commissioned by the Education Support Partnership (2017):

> '…An overwhelming majority of the UK's education professionals say they have suffered physical and mental health issues as a result of their jobs. Further, three quarters of 1,250 school and college staff and leaders surveyed said that they had experienced "psychological, physical or behavioural symptoms because of work" School and college staff, it seems, have lost the capacity to create balance in their lives, such is workload and associated stress'.
>
> (Homes, 2018 p. 1)

Consequently, it appears that a situation has emerged where teacher professionalism is being transformed from one of autonomy to one of compliance (Hayes, 2007) based on the 'structures' which shape professional practice (James *et al.*, 2007) and this has had negative impacts on the staff which are supposed to enact specific measures.

Teacher Impact Research – 'Football Manager Syndrome'

This research aims to add to the research above and seeks to find if FE Sports Lecturers also interpret their professionalism as having to comply with external standards. It is the aim now to further illustrate the contemporary contexts in which lecturers and teachers in the UK work. Firstly, however, it is thought important to illustrate some of the news headlines which have influenced this research, and which illustrate the contexts in which teachers and lecturers work. Whilst this research isn't from academic sources initially, the aim is to illustrate some of the popular opinions surrounding the work of lecturers and teachers in the UK.

One publication in the Times Educational Supplement (TES) (August 15th, 2012) supports some of the points made by Hayes (2007) above as it describes how exam results periods can be a very stressful time for teachers and managers in schools because of the pressures to meet standards, be it funding standards, or student entry requirements for further or higher education.

With specific regard to my own practice in FE institutions, I have sympathy with these notions because I have experienced significant pressures to obtain good results on my courses to maximise funding and also to advertise positive outcomes to recruit more learners in the future. The article further describes this stress as 'football manager syndrome' and it goes on to describe how '...school leaders being fired after just one set of bad results is one of the main reasons why heads and their staff get so stressed in the build up to A-level and GCSE results day' (TES, 2012 p. 1). I find this to be especially apt regarding my proposed research as it also focuses on lecturers from sports backgrounds. It is the aim of my research to investigate if FE Sports Lecturers also perceive their job roles to be vulnerable because of pressures to achieve positive results in formal assessments.

It does appear that some educational researchers do support some of the ideas illustrated in the TES article above. One such researcher describes that educational institutions (schools, colleges and universities) have become providers of learning opportunities and quality in education has come to mean conforming to Government policy, as enforced by Ofsted (Coffield and Williamson, 2011). Education is not a market and it should not follow a market model because it suffers if it is treated as such (Coffield, 2008). Consequently, Ball (2017 p. 163) additionally states that because of the highly prescriptive systems of accountability:

> '…teachers, schools and countries are rated and compared in terms of achievements measured by tests and examinations, for which students are carefully prepared. Institutional and national increases or reductions in test scores are then taken to be indicators of rising or falling standards of schooling. The question that is avoided in the heat and noise of performance management is whether these indicators actually 'stand for' and thus 'represent' valid, worthwhile or meaningful outputs'.

This system has enabled the Government, rather than the school staff, to have the most influence over the curriculum to be taught, the teaching methods to be employed and the assessment criteria to measure success (Hayes, 2007).

However, when referring to one of their findings from the Transforming Learning Cultures Project (TLC Project) in 2007, Hodkinson *et al.* (2007 p. 402) state that '...some tutors found themselves closely in tune with many forces in the site culture...others found themselves in situations that they disliked and found alienating'. Gleeson *et al.* (2005) liken this relationship to a pair of balance scales and state whilst there are structural frustrations with the working in FE, there are other compensatory factors which FE lecturers experience in their job roles. They specifically state that '…working with colleagues and students' (Gleeson *et al.,* 2005 p. 452) are examples. The goal of my research is to investigate such issues from the perspectives of Sports Lecturers. The next part of this chapter will summarise the key historical developments which have occurred in the FE sector and the next chapter will progress to discuss the issues with regard to defining professionalism for teachers.

A Summary of Historical Developments in FE

In Summary, Panchamia (2012) proposes that the historical analysis of choice and competition in the FE sector exposes three lessons for those applying market mechanisms in public services. I will refer to each of these three lessons as Coherence, Quality and Stability.

Coherence – There have been disagreements by Governments, employers and learners regarding the main objectives that Further Education is supposed to serve.

> 'Instead of reconciling these various objectives or gradually recalibrating the emphasis of the FE system, the Government has shifted back and forth between policy extremes – yo-yoing between a centrally planned system and one where choice is devolved to local employers and/or learners with little oversight'.
>
> (Panchamia, 2012 p. 6)

As a result, radical overhauls rather than managed processes of learning and adaptation have occurred. It might be argued that there is a clear need for future Governments, employers and learners to build upon strengths from previous policies and address the weaknesses that have previously been exposed (Panchamia, 2012).

Quality – Panchamia (2012) also refers to the institutional churn, which prevents Governments from building the information capability necessary for the effective use of market mechanisms. The debilitating mix of policy and institutional instability has impeded the Government's ability to effectively monitor and measure providers.

> 'As a result, there are no performance or quality assurance measures that cut across the whole sector. The Coalition has proposed paying providers on the basis of the numbers of students they attract, but does not yet have reliable information to monitor provider performance or help users make informed choices between them'.
>
> (Panchamia, 2012 p. 6)

Stability – In parallel with the 2nd lesson, major reorganisations of FE policy have further led to instability across the sector and this instability makes it very difficult to implement lasting reforms (Panchamia, 2012). In fact, there have been five major reforms in Further Education in the last twenty years. '…No institution has survived for longer than a decade…has made it difficult for any of them to build the necessary experience and skills to learn, adapt and become more effective over time' (Panchamia, 2012 p. 6). The LSC's closure in 2010 is an example of one of the major reforms in Further Education. Anderson (2003) consequently argued that little is consistent in FE except constant change. They went on to refer to the sector as having IADHD (institutional attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder). Consequently, pleas for periods of stability have often been ignored due to the politically motivated climate within FE to innovate and make changes (Bush and Middlewood, 2005).

Indeed, questionnaires of teachers conducted in the 1970s illustrated that politicians were the least influential people in school-life; compared to today where the situation is almost the exact opposite 'as political priorities are imposed, promoted, scrutinised and complied with' (Hayes, 2007 p. 63). Wrigley (2003) similarly noted that '…improvement by command from above results in the problematic implementation of macro initiatives by teachers who feel unable to question or even fine-tune them'.

Chapter Three – Defining Teacher Professionalism

A History of Professionalism in FE

Running parallel to the historical developments in the FE sector is the changing understanding of the concept of professionalism within the sector. The next part of this chapter will investigate the factors that have influenced the professionalism of FE practitioners to date and it will allow for a greater appreciation of where understandings of professionalism are positioned now and where they could be positioned in the future.

According to Baggini (2005) the word 'professionalism' developed from the Latin word 'profess' which means to be professional, or to be a professor or expert in a field of knowledge. Demirkasimoglu (2010) refers broadly to the scholarly debate associated with defining professionalism of teachers and states that two versions of professionalism are defined in historical texts – old professionalism and new professionalism; both of which are influenced by the social, cultural and political circumstances in which they exist (Sachs, 2003). Bathmaker and Avis (2005) further refer to professionalism as having two tiers and Feather (2014 p. 113) calls this a 'Janus Identity' where there is a clear dichotomy between managerialist perspectives of professionalism on the one hand and more democratic understandings on the other. Harris (2005 p. 425) further reinforces this idea when referring to professionals as being caught between the 'economy of performance' and the 'ecologies of practice'.

Findings from James *et al.*'s TLC Project (2007) illustrated the various ways in which FE practitioners came to be employed in their FE job roles and their project confirmed that many FE practitioners begin their careers without any formal training or background in teaching. Indeed, up until the 1990s, FE lecturing staff were often qualified in their respective professions, but only 40% of them had taken a formal course of teacher training (Lucas, 2004).

Lucas and Nasta (2010) refer to how this was like universities where teacher training was viewed as something that lecturers picked up through their experiences and with the support from colleagues. James and Gleeson (2007) cite the experiences of 'Rachel' and how she 'slid' into FE teaching '…following a divorce and a wish for a fresh start. Once teaching, she gained both a City and Guilds 730 and the Certificate in Education (FE) qualifications through part-time study' (James and Gleeson, 2007 p. 127).

More recently, Grummell and Murray (2015) similarly state that the FE sector is 'staffed by tutors with high levels of vocational and experiential knowledge as practitioners, rather than formal teaching or academic qualifications' (Grummell and Murray, 2015 p. 7). Traditionally therefore, it could be argued that FE lecturers came from two distinct tracks – initial teacher education (ITE), or direct from industry (Robson, 1998; Hardiman, 2012). It appears that up until the 1990s, teacher training for FE lecturing staff was largely unregulated by Government (Lucas, 2004). However, as FE became viewed as being more crucial to the economic prosperity of the country, government intervention grew and changed the way in which FE practitioners were viewed by the key players involved in the development of FE. In 1999, the Labour Government introduced employer-led occupational standards (FENTO) for FE lecturers. In 2001, regulations were set which required all FE lecturers to gain a nationally recognised teaching qualification and in 2003, Ofsted produced a report entitled 'The Initial Training of Further Education Teachers' where they were very critical of the FENTO standards concluding that they did not clearly define the standards required of FE lecturers, but they did provide a useful outline of the capabilities required of experienced FE teachers. The Ofsted report clearly stated the shortcomings of the current arrangements for teacher training in FE, these included a lack of professional development, not learning how to teach their subjects, and there being a lack of mentoring of trainee teachers.

It therefore appears that there has been another shift in thinking away from formal university teacher training to in-house teacher education. Indeed, regarding formal teacher education, there is currently no formal requirement for FE lecturers to have formal teaching qualifications. However, programmes like Teach First and School Direct were introduced by the Coalition Government and in 2016, the White Paper Education Excellence Everywhere '…signalled the intention to take further the shift away from university-based teacher education and to abolish Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and replace it with school-based accreditation' (Ball, 2017 p. 112). Consequently, 2016 statistics relating to the above show that 50% of training places for new teachers were through the School Direct Programme and 5% were through Teach First (Ball, 2017). Even though there is no formal requirement for FE lecturers to have a teaching qualification, they do seem to experience less secure working conditions and status if they do not (Grummell and Murray, 2015).

Grummell and Murray (2015) additionally argue that the dual pathway (Initial Teacher Education or industry) into the FE teaching profession creates tensions for practitioners because their 'unique biographies, broken careers, deflections and diversions…are all passed over in favour of the singular and progressive sense of a cognitively conceived vertical and linear-based career progression' (Gleeson and Knights, 2006 p. 282). Esmond and Wood (2017 p. 230) define this dual pathway as 'dual professionalism' - a model which combines, '…classroom-based teaching, which introduces fundamental concepts and technical knowledge, with the practice of occupational and craft skills in workshops that simulate workplace environments…'. It is argued that certain structures have promoted insecurity and weakened FE lecturer individual identities because of a narrowing of the vocational curriculum so that there has been increased emphasis on generic skills and a reduction in contextual knowledge (Wheelahan, 2015). Robson (1998) consequently notes that some FE lecturers fear that their vocational expertise is eroded over time and that they will lose credibility for working in their FE institutions.

In 2002, the Institute for Learning (IfL) published an article on Professionalism for post-16 lecturers. In the article the IfL refers to the need for practitioners to keep up to date with both teaching and training methods and with developments in their specialist fields. This is evident when the report explicitly states:

> 'They (FE lecturers) must be afforded opportunities to update and refresh their own vocational skills, have an acute awareness of developments and advances in technology and have an understanding and appreciation of related social and economic developments'.
>
> (The IfL, 2012 p. 4)

The IfL (2012) recommended that FE lecturers should be given time to reflect on and improve their teaching practice, but also, they asked that FE lecturers be given time and space to develop their subject area and any technological developments relating to this subject area. However, in their qualitative study of recently qualified teachers employed substantially in workshop settings, Esmond and Wood (2017 p. 242) found that:

> '…earlier work experience shapes the practices and identities described in these accounts, but with far less clarity and in far less favourable circumstances than the policy discourse suggests. Neither industry skills nor vocational pedagogies have been identified with the degree of specificity suggested by notions of 'dual professionalism'.

In their research, Esmond and Wood (2017) found that one of the vocational lecturers was unable to name specific practice related to their occupation. They went onto refer to how this reflects a level of genericism (Esmond and Wood, 2017) in vocational teaching, meaning that some of their respondents were in a 'middle ground' between advances in vocational subject knowledge and in teaching pedagogy.

Therefore, it appears that '…all of these elements combine to ensure that Further Education is not only marginal to the hierarchy of professions, but also lack{s} a well-bounded, unifying culture…moreover, issues of pedagogy and professional autonomy have been an absent presence in this sector' (Colley *et al.*, 2007 p. 176).

However, as previously discussed in Chapter Two, FE colleges could enhance their relationships with employers to greater develop work skills to boost industry (Hodgson and Spours, 2017). It could be argued therefore that there could be another shift in the way that dual professionalism is understood within further education contexts and vocational experience will be potentially regarded as more important than it currently is, in the future.

Grummell and Murray (2015) contrast the working conditions of FE practitioners with those who work in higher education and secondary sectors – where they have clearer professional structures, working conditions and pay scales, a secure funding and governance structure, centralised curriculum and accreditation systems, strong representative bodies, and a clear process for public recognition of their staff as teaching professionals. Lloyd and Jones (2018) additionally investigated impacts of such structures detailed above when they documented their experiences of undertaking post graduate research whilst working in the Further Education (FE) sector. They state that the turbulent policy environments, combined with an audit culture policed by inspection creates barriers to sustained research in FE. They argue that administrative duties create barriers which have major impacts on the motivation of lecturers to develop knowledge and to undertake research (Lloyd and Jones, 2018). This is especially important to note because, as will be discussed later in this chapter, one of the criticisms for why teaching is not regarded as a profession is because teachers do not have total control over their own work, they do not have control over set standards for entry and they do not have a freedom over their establishment (Snoek, 2010).

It is however argued that teachers do require a level of academic knowledge to teach their subjects, but some researchers argue that this is limited, especially because very few teachers undertake post-graduate studies (Erixon *et al.*, 2001). It is my assertion that if the conditions were conducive to such practices, then perhaps this would raise the profile of teaching in comparison to other professions.

Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) provide a useful summary of the factors that have shaped the professionalism of educators in Britain since the 1960s. They describe 'three ways' in which policy and practice have shaped education around the world from the 1960s to the present but they conclude by stating that the old ways for effecting social and educational change are no longer suited to what is required from education today. This corresponds to Sachs' comparisons in Table Two below and therefore Sachs' (2003) understanding of 'new professionalism' are understood to be aspirational.

In the 'first way', State support, innovation and professional freedom existed in education alongside inconsistency of economic/political confidence, uneven school performance and leadership and educational improvements informed by intuition and ideology, rather than by evidence (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009).

The 'second way' was dominated by competition and educational prescriptions in which professional autonomy was lost and innovation gave way to standardisation, uniformity and inequity. This was perceived to be harmful to teacher motivation, leadership capacity, and student learning (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009). The 'third way' was characterised by trying to establish a balance between professional autonomy and accountability. However, this was turned into the gathering of endless quantities of achievement performance data to meet short – term solutions instead of transforming teaching and learning and bringing it into the 21st century (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009).

As a result, this orientation towards modernisation meant less interest in the specific content of the curriculum and was instead more focused on delivery methods and performance tables (Ball, 2017). Consequently, Evans (2007) argued that 'de-professionalization' occurred within state-funded education in Britain because there was a shift in power away from the teachers and instead managers and politicians called the shots in education, and therefore power was taken away from the teachers. Performance management and managerialism greatly influenced this situation and Coffield *et al.* (2014) consequently highlighted that lecturers increasingly described the atmosphere in the FE sector as toxic. Such ideas are discussed later in this chapter. With additional specific regard to teacher recruitment and retention, Blower (2012) stated that a combination of pension cuts, pay freezes, increasing workloads and continual inspection and criticism from Government at every turn, made the retention of teachers increasingly difficult. Hargreaves and Shirley (2009 p. x) further stated that '...educational standardisation…dumbed down our curriculum and burdened our schools with bigger Government and overbearing bureaucracy and…not enabled us to adapt flexibly to the future'.

Because of the negative impacts of the 'third way' detailed above, Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) call for a 'new way' of educational change that is more suited to the fast, flexible and vulnerable new world of the 21st century. Sachs' (2003) similarly illustrates a comparison of the two common approaches to defining professionalism is outlined in Table Two below.

Coffield and Williamson's (2011) idea of 'Communities of Discovery' is related to Sachs' (2003) New Professionalism and might be an effective 'new way' of educational change and this would need to be supported by a move away from a managerialist perspective of professionalism towards more democratic means. Such ideas will be further discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

It is therefore the aim of my research to focus on FE so that the experience of practitioners in this sector can be greater understood. It is however important to further investigate the meanings of the term 'professionalism' and how educational contexts affect how they understand their sense of professionalism. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

Table Two - Characteristics of Old and New Professionalism (Sachs, 2003)

Old Professionalism	*New (Transformative) Professionalism*
Exclusive membership	*Inclusive membership*
Conservative practices	*Public ethical code of practice*
Self-interest	*Collaborative and collegial*
External regulation	*Activist orientation*
Slow to change	*Flexible and progressive*
Reactive	*Responsive to change*
	Self-regulating
	Policy-active
	Enquiry-orientated
	Knowledge building

Problems with Defining Professionalism

Professionalism might be defined as the competence or skill expected of a professional and therefore defining FE Sports Lecturer professionalism could be assumed relatively straightforward, because it would just be a case of finding out which competencies and skills are expected of lecturers to do their jobs and then compiling a definition based on this information. This has previously been defined as a job description enacted through performance management. However, this simple definition raises an interesting question, which is, who has the capacity for deciding which competencies, skills and behaviours are suitable or required by an individual in a certain job role; and more specifically, to teachers and lecturers?

As will be discussed later in this thesis, defining professionalism is very complex and contested (Demirkasimoglu, 2010); and focusing purely on the skills and qualities which teachers and lecturers should have to do their job effectively, negates other factors which have a significant impact on their professionalism; namely the impact of context, policy, employers, personal assumptions and dispositions, life experience etc. However, focusing purely on context negates personal factors, which might be important for defining an individual's professionalism. Demirkasimoglu (2010) refers to professionalism as a dynamic concept where multiple interpretations lead to different definitions, all with different functions.

Wilkinson (2012) cited in CMAJ (2012 p. 1129) refers to the problems of defining the professionalism of medical doctors and states that in their research 'there did not seem to be a clear definition…on the one hand, it could include everything you need to know to be a good doctor…then there were some who said you just had a to be reliable. We tried to find a middle ground of what are the core elements'. This is an important point to make because complexities surrounding definitions of the professionalism of teachers could also prove problematic. Indeed, medical literature has been very useful regarding investigating the professionalism of teachers. For example, Snoek (2010) compared attributes of classical professions such as doctors or lawyers and discussed the similarities and differences of these professions with the teaching profession, the five typical characteristics of these professions were identified. Snoek (2010) distinguished between professions and non-professions and identified the following attributes that should be present for a profession to be classified as such:

- Professional autonomy – Having control over own work;
- Control over entry requirements – Judge or exclude members that do not meet set standards;
- Ethical code – Win trust of public that license members in profession; a code of conduct;
- Strong academic knowledge base – Formal and technical knowledge possessed by members within profession;

- Freedom of establishment – Members are self-employed.

Snoek (2010) later added that conduct, demeanour and standards were important as well. These simple definitions of professionalism are more aligned to a trait understanding of professionalism (Millerson, 1964), and Brock (2012) identifies and uses the trait approach when investigating the professionalism of a group of Early Years educators by creating a typology of their professionalism that represented the complexity of their roles from their perspectives. Seven inter-related dimensions were identified, and these were: 1) knowledge, 2) qualifications, training and professional development, 3) skills, 4) autonomy, 5) values, 6) ethics, and 7) rewards. Brock (2012) used various methodological techniques that enabled her to record the voices of the Early Years practitioners in her study. Some of these techniques included semi-structured interviewing, the use of questionnaires, questionnaires and focus groups.

Such an approach to investigating professionalism has been criticised, for example, Eraut (1994) criticises the use of typologies to understand professionalism because any traits identified by an individual will be their own perspectives only and therefore not applicable to anyone else. However, it is for this very reason that other researchers have found them to be valuable because of wanting to understand how individual practitioners interpret and engage with their own working environments. I also agree with this and this was why I perceived my research study to be an important one to undertake.

Based on Snoek's (2010) earlier attributes teaching is not regarded as a profession because teachers do not have total control over their own work, they do not have control over set standards for entry and they do not have a freedom over their establishment.

It is however argued that teachers do require a level of academic knowledge to teach their subjects, but some researchers argue that this is limited, especially because very few teachers undertake post-graduate studies (Erixon *et al.*, 2001). Demirkasimoglu (2010) identifies that some authors including Leiter (1978) and Samuels (1970) have referred to teaching as being semi-professional because teacher decision-making and autonomy is limited. Etzioni (1969) regards teaching as semi-professional alongside nursing, social work and librarianship. However, according to Werler (2016) in general, one can describe a profession as an academically high-qualified group of people working on the practical social problems of clients. He states that:

> 'In practice, we find doctors working with patients in order to heal them, lawyers working with clients and contributing to a democratic society, and teachers working with those who have to (or wish to) learn something… Teachers provide a professional service for the public good: they generate the intangible public good of schooling; not because the service is funded by the public, but rather because it serves the public to improve the student's life'.
>
> (Werler, 2016 p. 64)

Crook (2008) criticises approaches to classifying professions/non-professions, such as in Snoek's (2010) research and describes it as an artificial construct. Whitty (2008) therefore suggests it to be more useful to explore teaching in modern contexts as opposed to comparing it to some sort of ideal. Such a sociological discourse of professionalism can go some way to help in understanding the contemporary condition of teachers as professionals (Whitty, 2002).

This is because sociologists see professionalism as a shifting phenomenon 'a profession they suggest, is whatever people think it is at any particular time, and rather than asking whether the teaching profession lives up to some supposed ideal, such an approach encourages us to explore the characteristics of teaching as a profession in the present' (Whitty, 2002 p. 3). It might be argued therefore that my research is focused on trying to establish a sociological definition of professionalism.

Additionally, to a sociological definition of professionalism, is what Lester (2011) refers to as a more phenomenological way that professionalism is constructed. This definition refers to professionalism as a set of values enacted by a practitioner in a work situation (Lester, 2011). These might include, at a general level, things such as behaving in a civilised manner, conscientiousness, taking responsibility for one's actions, making ethical rather than easy choices, confidentiality, and standard of work or service; they will also include occupationally-specific aspects, such as acting in the best interest of the learner, and they can also extend to include things such as commitment to advancing practice and to contributing to the profession. However, what is not clear from Lester's (2011) definition of professionalism is who has the power to assess what is required of professionalism. Such ideas will be further discussed later in this chapter.

Whether or not teaching is regarded as a profession, I argue that an understanding of professionalism is fundamental regarding teacher practice. Therefore, my research makes explicit reference to the contexts in which my participants work and the strategies they employ for working in these contexts. I argue that there is a need to pay attention to the practitioners that work in FE so that they can define what is educationally desirable (James *et al.*, 2007) and so that they can have a voice in educational policy and strategy; this would include having a voice in defining their own idea of professionalism so that their experiences can be greater understood.

Defining Professionalism

With specific regard to a definition of my own professionalism, it might be argued that the traits I need to exhibit in my job role and which impact my professionalism; are customary to the pressures that are placed upon me in my institution. Indeed, it might initially be argued that my experience reflects a definition of professionalism that is externally imposed {and an}, articulated perception of what lies within the parameters of a profession's collective remit and responsibilities, a sort of code of practice, or service level agreement. However, Gleeson *et al.*'s (2005) study entitled 'On the Making and Taking of Professionalism in the Further Education (FE) Workplace' explored two contrasting notions of the FE professional - as the recipient or as the agent of change (Gleeson *et al.*, 2005). Gleeson *et al.* (2005) define the former as issues of structure that explain how professionals are framed by external factors; the latter is explained as agency where professionals construct meanings out of the contexts in which they work (Gleeson *et al.*, 2005). Gleeson *et al.* (2005 p. 4) state that consequently:

> '…this has led to two polarised camps of theorists: between those that subscribe to a voluntaristic perspective that privileges subjective agency, and those that follow a deterministic stance that elevates structure over action in the way external conditions of the market, work and organisational reform impact on professional practice'.

Regarding my experiences, I do not fully support the idea that structures are fully deterministic regarding my practice, because at times, some of my practice is autonomous and not because of structural constraints. For example, I often design tutorial resources, which better meet the needs of my tutees because of recent developments, so that they have more meaning to the learners. This is not prescribed, and I choose to do this in my own time. In addition, I often research contemporary examples, which are relevant to my sport learners, which might help them to gain a greater insight into a specific sport topic; originally defined by the awarding body.

Similarly, some researchers do not agree that professionalism is externally imposed and define professionalism as a concept that embraces agency, where people who work within, shape their own professions.

Structuration Theory – Anthony Giddens

Following Incorporation of FE Colleges in 1993, Gleeson *et al.* (2005) argue that two interconnecting policy settlements emerged regarding FE provision. The focus on funding and market reform (the first settlement) has been the main driving force of FE institutions compared to the implementation of a national Learning and Skills Sector (LSC) policed by inspection (the second settlement) (Gleeson *et al.*, 2005). Consequently, Gleeson and Knights (2006 p. 277) state that:

> 'Sociological interests in such impact has tended to focus on professionals as subjects of reform: as either de-professionalised 'victims' who feel oppressed by the structures of control or strategic operators seeking to contest the spaces and contradictions of the market, managerial and audit cultures'.

Therefore, based on the above discussions and for the purposes of this thesis, structures are regarded as the cultural rules which shape and are shaped by social practices, and agency is the capacity to engage with these rules to create new contexts and practices (Varelas *et al.*, 2015).

With specific regard to FE lecturers, 'quasi-market interventions have radically altered democratic accountability in favour of government, business and corporate interests' (Gleeson *et al.*, 2005 p. 4). This has meant that its professionals are treated as trusted servants rather than empowered professionals (Gleeson *et al.*, 2005). With specific regard to definitions of professionalism, as previously stated, many interpretations of the term seem to focus on it being an externally imposed, articulated perception of what lies within the parameters of a profession's collective remit and responsibilities. This would infer that it is a sort of code of practice, or service level agreement.

In relation to the work of Anthony Giddens, it would appear therefore that professionalism in these contexts conforms to the idea of a virtual order of differences, or rules (King, 2010), which are governing the behaviour of the education professionals – the actions of the individuals are determined by the structure (King, 2010). Giddens' structuration theory 'referred to the active process by which individuals, informed by (virtual) structure, acted in the world to reproduce (or change) the social structures which confronted them' (King, 2010 p. 1). With specific regard to the action of FE lecturers, Taubman (2015) suggests that specific market forces and competition drive the current further education system and these systems are backed up by powerful state tools such as funding and inspection, which emphasise compliance and regulation from the lecturers which work within them. It would therefore appear that external agencies (structures) have the capacity for designing and delineating professions and therefore professionalism may be interpreted as what is effectively a representation of a service level agreement, imposed from above. Therefore, when FE lecturers respond to the contexts in which they work, they simultaneously affirm the duality of structure between the structure of rules within their institutions and the further education system as a whole (Giddens, 1984).

Indeed, the University and Colleges Union (UCU) argue that the professionalism of its members is '…under attack from a culture of managerialism, a lack of respect for the expertise, views and commitment of professional staff and the imposition of ever-increasing workloads' (UCU, 2012 p. 1). Whitty (2006 p. 1) similarly reinforces the structures which exist for FE lecturers and describes that 'contemporary educational reform – including both marketisation and centralisation, but also a new emphasis on the involvement of a wider range of stakeholders – has resulted in a period of significant change for teachers'. Whitty (2006) therefore argues that the characteristics of a profession have been largely determined by the state, which is the main stakeholder for defining professionalism.

However according to this structural understanding of lecturer professionalism, he questions: 'who has the right to be involved in decisions about education? And how should we understand the role of the teacher?' (Whitty, 2006 p. 1). Evans (2007 p. 1) also describes how '…many public-sector professions in the UK have been subject to increased Government control over nature and organisation of work policy and practice'. Hayes (2007) further argues that such insistencies from Governments for schools and teacher training institutions to follow their agendas can lead to sanctions for these institutions if their requirements are not met. For example, Rouxel (2015) refers to the Halesowen dispute of 2013. In this dispute four members of Halesowen's mathematics department were dismissed after it was concluded that some students within their classes failed to achieve expected levels of attainment and that this was because of the teachers who were responsible for the groups. The evidence to inform these dismissals was based exclusively on statistical comparisons of outcomes for these learners in comparison to national benchmarks. Rouxel (2015) states that this approach exposed an assumption that education is quantifiable and teacher performance can be measured by using learner outcomes. As previously stated, this is not an uncommon understanding, and the TES article published in 2012, referred to this as 'Football Managers Syndrome' where teachers genuinely feared for their employment following a poor set of exam results. Rouxel (2015) goes onto explain that actually some expected standards are inconsistent and at times, impossible for some courses to achieve.

The UCU (2012) refer to this understanding of teacher professionalism as part of a narrow-instrumentalist perspective which views learners as consumers and education as a tool for gaining employment; all of which are accompanied by a culture of audit and inspection '…driven by the use of targets and accompanied by intrusive and oppressive styles of management' (UCU, 2012 p. 1). Consequently, this has undermined and devalued the professionalism of teachers (UCU, 2012).

Evans (2007) additionally argues that 'de-professionalization' is occurring within state-funded education in Britain is and this is because there has been a shift in power away from the teachers and now managers and politicians are in charge in education, and therefore power has been taken away from the teachers. Christine Blower, of the NUT, added that a '…combination of pension cuts, pay freezes, an ever-increasing workload and continual inspection and criticism from Government at every turn will make retention of teachers increasingly difficult'.

In relation to the above, the Transforming Learning Cultures Project (TLC), James and Gleeson (2007) also highlighted that there was:

> '…a great deal of complaint and disillusionment around some of the key attributes associated with professional status – with pay, regimes of audit and inspection, a perceived decline in resources, lack of recognition of expertise, reduced autonomy through performance management…'.
>
> (James and Gleeson, 2007 p. 130)

These complaints from the teachers in the TLC project arose from their strong commitments to teaching, to fostering student learning and development, to attending to learners' needs, and to self-development or learning as a professional (James and Gleeson, 2007). They also reinforce the conflicts that FE practitioners face regarding their professionalism. On the one-hand, practitioners are routinely expected to deal with audit, inspection and decline in resources etc., but on the other hand are trying to foster student learning, attend to learner needs and undertake self-development. Ball (2003) further similarly explains how the marketisation agenda has consequently placed competition between peers and colleagues at the centre of professional identity. Such a theme will be discussed later in this thesis.

In summary, Whitty (2002 p. 2) states that 'many commentators...have argued...for what is in effect a return to the supposed 'golden age' of teacher autonomy…'. However, he does propose that failure (real and perceived) of teachers in the past has caused increased state intervention leading to organisational professionalism, which denies a return to the 'golden age'.

Criticisms of Giddens' Structuration Theory – Margaret Archer

Margaret Archer recognizes a contradiction at the heart of structuration theory. Giddens (1976 p. 75) originally states: '…since conditions are no more than internalised rules, an individual is free at any point to follow the rules differently: the individual could have acted otherwise'. Archer sees this as contradictory because '…he (Giddens) fails to maintain a distinction between the individual and social reality' (King, 2010 p. 1) and therefore, there appears to be an unresolved element surrounding voluntarism and determinism (King, 2010). Regarding Archer's sociological theories, she always situates the agent in a social context, therefore 'social reality exists independently of the individual' (King, 2010 p. 1) and therefore, '…the self emerges' (Archer, 2000 p. 152). King (2010 p. 1) summarises the main distinction between Archer's work and Giddens' structuration theory:

> 'For Archer, humans are distinctive because implicit in their doings are conscious intention and, in the course of their activities from birth onwards, they begin to develop self-consciousness; they become reflexive. As they engage in practice, humans develop emotions and a personal identity. This personal identity is not forced on them from outside, however. It is an emergent property of individual human action'.

With specific regard to definitions of teacher professionalism, some researchers do not agree that professionalism is externally imposed and define professionalism as a concept that embraces agency, where people who work within, shape their own professions. Indeed, Boyt *et al.* (2001 p. 322) define professionalism on the basis that individuals have the capacity to shape their own meanings.

'Professionalism consists of the attitudes and behaviour one possesses towards one's profession. It is an attitudinal and behavioural orientation that individuals possess towards their occupations'. With specific regard to teachers, if their notion of professionalism is socially constructed then they have the power to choose to accept or resist external control and to assert or deny their autonomy (Helsby, 1995). However, James *et al.* (2007) cite Gleeson and Shain's (1999) research referring to strategic compliance, and Wallace and Hoyle's (2005) research referring to compliance, non-compliance and mediation regarding the agency of teachers. Wallace and Hoyle (2005) argue that whilst all staff within institutions act differently towards set policy, their responses can be ultimately categorised into compliance, non-compliance and mediation (James *et al.*, 2007). 'Compliance can be willing or reluctant, and non-compliance can run from mere retreat into current practices through to outright resistance' (James *et al.*, 2007 p. 133).

As previously discussed in this thesis, following Incorporation of FE Colleges in 1993, Gleeson *et al.* (2005) argue that two interconnecting policy settlements emerge regarding FE provision. The focus on funding and market reform (the first settlement) has been the main driving force of FE institutions compared to the implementation of a national Learning and Skills Sector policed by inspection (the second settlement) (Gleeson *et al.*, 2005). Bathmaker (2001) states how research has developed in recent years, which focuses on identifying the ways in which performance management impacts on the professionalism of staff within educational institutions and complimentary to the structure and agency debate; refers to 'devils' and 'dupes' as a way of explaining the ways in which FE practitioners are caught between the two different settlements (Bathmaker, 2001). 'Devils' refers to the practitioners whose performance needs to be controlled and regulated and 'dupes' reflects Wallace and Hoyle's (2005) ideas of compliance, where staff succumb to managerialism without resistance (Bathmaker, 2001).

The concept of mediation might be viewed as being more useful because '…it does not oversimplify, and it recognises the ambiguity and irony of the situation while also giving due regard to the sincerity of the endeavour among many professionals as they try to work round externally imposed requirements' (James *et al.*, 2007 p. 133). Gleeson and Knights (2006) similarly argue that public professionals are neither simply de-professionalised because of structures, nor are they strategic operators seeking to challenge structural constraints. They instead argue that professional practice is mediated and are co-produced outcomes of structure and agency. Gleeson (2001) also suggests that practitioners filter policy messages in various ways at institutional level and this would infer that practitioners mediate regarding the demands that are placed upon them (James *et al.*, 2007). 'Recent research indicates that practitioners think strategically, mediate tensions in their work and often invent creative solutions out of contradictory policy-practice messages' (Gleeson *et al.*, 2005 p. 11).

> 'Rather like the actions of people in a nation-state that is occupied by a foreign power, these tutors are playing along with (and sometimes excelling in the terms of) the oppressor's game, while at the same time, keeping alive a separate idea of who they are and where their heart is'.
>
> (James *et al.*, 2007 p. 134)

With specific regard to my own practice, I do believe that what I do in work is in-line with my contract, which is defined by my employer to achieve externally set targets. This would reinforce a structural definition of professionalism as described previously by Giddens (1976). I however, prioritise what I do each day and I often focus on learner issues before I focus on any institutional requirement. Therefore, it might be interpreted that I mediate in my professional practice, because I do eventually achieve what I am meant to achieve, but I do it in a manner that reflects my own personal values and dispositions (James *et al.*, 2007).

It might therefore be interpreted that my understanding of professionalism is also mediated in the sense that it includes both structural, agentic and mediation perspectives. Whilst the structures are clearly present for FE lecturers, they do have the choice of whether to accept them, or to resist them (Helsby, 1995). This is important to reinforce because Giddens' and Archer's viewpoints on structure and agency also seem to end up being in alignment with each other and so this would ultimately lead me to question that it is about what happens between them which is important. Therefore, the concepts of compliance, non-compliance and mediation seem to be highly relevant regarding Sports Lecturers because all three can occur. I consequently agree with King (2010 p. 1) when he states that:

> 'From an original advocacy of ontological dualism, in which structural conditions seemed to have been given the primary weight, they have moved to the other dimension and now prioritize the autonomous self'.

In summary, Atkins and Tummons (2017) refer to there being three discourses of professionalism within the FE sector and they refer to these as being managerialist, emancipatory and utilitarian. The managerialist paradigm of professionalism is described as emphasising audit and performativity through the application of professional standards (Shore and Wright, 2000) and measured through inspection regimes and quality assurance processes. The emancipatory model is described as more democratic in the sense that members of the profession have an influence on the regulatory methods and professional standards employed in their institutions (Atkins and Tummons, 2017). The utilitarian understanding is described as distinct from the previous two notions of professionalism in that it is understood as a product of new managerialism where they understand that there has been:

> '…a simultaneous de-skilling and intensification of labour amongst the FE workforce…'

> '…Professionalism is positioned entirely in terms of acceptance of and adherence to working practices that position the FE teacher as a technician, ignoring the importance or value of subject expertise and instead focusing on generic teaching skills'.
>
> (Atkins and Tummons, 2017 p. 356)

They go on to explain that all three can exist at the same time. '…It is possible to find traces of all three of these discourses at work at the same time, during the last 20 years' (Atkins and Tummons, 2017 p. 356). I understand that the terms professionalism and professionality have historically been used interchangeably with professionalism being synonymous with assumptions relating to managerialism, structure, inspection and audits (structure) (Gleeson and Knights, 2006) and professionality relating to more agentic means such as enterprise and self-regulation (agency) (Gleeson and Knights, 2006). For the basis of this research, I will be using the term professionalism which is assumed to be encompassing of both structural and agentic interpretations.

Through capturing the 'voices' of FE Sports Lecturers in the South West of England, I hope to understand the ways in which they interpret their professional lives according to their individual values (Whitehead, 1989). I want to understand if it is structure, in the form of managerialism, compliance and non-compliance, or agency, in the form of more democratic practices, which determines how they define their own professionalism. However, if they mediate with the pressures placed upon them, I want to know how they do this and how it influences their understandings of their professionalism. James and Gleeson (2007) refer to 'underground working' and Gleeson *et al.* (2005) refer to several other strategies that the FE lecturers in their study (the TLC Project) employed for dealing with specific demands.

By focusing on the professionalism of Sports Lecturers in the South West of England, it is also hoped that this will provide a useful way for understanding how FE practitioners understand the contexts in which they work and the expectations that their institutions have regarding their professionalism and if they have conflicting views regarding these.

Summary – The Future of Teacher Professionalism?

I agree with Gleeson *et al.* (2005) and James *et al.* (2007) when they infer that literature which engages with the professional experiences of practitioners within specific contexts, is under-researched. Much of the work done surrounding professionalism and indeed in this thesis so far, has focused on the organisational, administrative and policy issues rather than on pedagogy and professionalism (Gleeson *et al.*, 2005). Gleeson *et al.* (2005 p. 15) liken teacher experiences to a pair of balanced scales:

> '…On the one side are the structural frustrations with the job and, on the other, the compensatory aspects of working with colleagues and students. There are times when one side will weigh heavier than the other, and also times when the two sides will be in balance with one another'.

With specific regard to the structure and agency debate described earlier, it does appear that lecturers in FE are frustrated by the structures that affect the contexts in which they work, but at the same time, are optimistic regarding the more agentic elements of their work such as working with colleagues and students (Gleeson *et al.*, 2005). I also agree with Hodkinson *et al.* (2007 p. 24) when they say that:

> 'Actors always operate within systems of expectations: the expectations they bring to the situation and the expectations that others have about their activities and practices…'

> '…Teachers engage with their tasks on the basis of ideas about what it means to be a teacher, just as students do not come to college as tabula rasae but with ideas about what appropriate student behaviour consists of'.
>
> (James *et al.*, 2007 p. 2)

For FE institutions to succeed educationally and financially, they should operate firstly as centres of excellence in education and secondly as businesses (Coffield, 2008). As Coffield (2008 p. 1) states:

> '...The most likely consequences of a shift in priorities are that we would maximise...the professionalism of tutors...the agency of learners, but also the relationship between tutors and learners...'.

James *et al.* (2007) state that the solution to the question of improvement is to change the learning cultures within FE institutions. Coffield (2008) similarly describes the need for every FE institution to improve the cultures of learning within them. Learning cultures are described as the social practices through which people learn and they are closely linked to understandings relating to cultural learning (James *et al.*, 2007). Hodkinson *et al.* (2007) similarly argue that there needs to be a change in current educational practice; especially regarding understanding learning, and they urge institutions to think about the relationship between how people learn, and the contexts in which they learn. This is reflected by Robinson (2013) who states that:

> '…Curiosity is the engine of achievement…this is because one of the effects of the current culture …has been to de-professionalize teachers. There is no system in the world or any school in the country that is better than its teachers…But teaching is a creative profession. Teaching, properly conceived, is not a delivery system…but what great teachers also do is mentor, stimulate, provoke, engage...'

> '…You see, in the end, education is about learning. If there's no learning going on, there's no education going on. And people can spend an awful lot of time discussing education without ever discussing learning. The whole point of education is to get people to learn'.

(Robinson, 2013 p. 1)

Learning should be the outcome of relations between social partners (Hodkinson *et al.*, 2007) and Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) introduce the concepts of legitimate peripheral participation and communities of practice as useful conceptual tools that provide useful insights into participatory aspects of learning. Vygotsky also believed in bringing everyday activities into the classroom and focusing on the importance of social context in learning (Glassman, 2001). Coffield (2000) distinguishes cultural learning from the more traditional view of learning when he describes that the social-cultural approach presents a holistic understanding rather than a narrow focus. He goes on to state how a socio-cultural approach to learning also addresses issues such as inequality and power relations.

Coffield and Williamson's (2011) recommendation is that institutions should individually assess the needs of their learners on a local basis and they should make contextualised judgements regarding appropriate action.

> 'If we want to improve teaching and learning...we must change our present cultures of learning and that calls for contextualised judgements {of particular learning sites} rather than for general recipes'.

(Coffield, 2008 p. 25)

Coffield and Williamson (2011) recognise that democratic renewals of educational institutions, almost never result from top down initiatives. Therefore, a democratic shift would need to come from the professionals who would implement such strategies at 'ground' level.

There would need to be a re-formation of the professional identity of educators towards democratic professionalism where the core emphasis is on teachers at the centre of an educational partnership involving parents, business and community leaders, and active engagement in institutional improvement and community engagement (Coffield and Williamson, 2011); all of which is regarded to be problematic to implement because of the heavy lifting that is already required to be done by hard-pressed teachers (IfL, 2011). There is a need for individual educational institutions to ask whether the education they offer enables citizens to meet future threats to their way of life such as environmental damage; intensified global competition; corrosive social inequalities in and between nations in the world; and the need for a new, just and sustainable economic model (Coffield and Williamson, 2011). In order for true 'Communities of Discovery' to develop, we all need to ask ourselves three questions:

1. Are the policies of the three main parties in England adequate responses to the problems we face?
2. What are the problems for which our current arrangements for learning are the solution?
3. Do they provide a basis for building the kind of society and global order we would wish to be part of in 30 years' time?

(Coffield and Williamson, 2011 pp. 14)

These are far more important questions to drive the education of our young people, rather than forcing them to needlessly follow the failing economic model (The Institute of Education, 2012).

A shift from the current 'market' model of education, to a model like Communities of Discovery would involve an emphasis on democratic rights of enhancement, inclusion and participation, peer-moderated self-regulation and an expansive learning environment where experimentation is encouraged.

'Knowledge, learning and understanding emerge in a social process in which people discuss, write and share ideas and expertise. They learn in the course of tackling a real problem together' (Coffield and Williamson, 2011 p. 27). In order for this type of learning and understanding to develop, individual FE institutions need to undertake democratic audits of the quality of their provision. These institutions need to assess if the educational experiences their learners receive enable them to experience democratic ways of working, and whether they feel they are engaged in the social and political life of their communities (Coffield and Williamson, 2011).

The 2011 summer riots might be interpreted as an example of retaliation by our young people because of the oppression they have experienced, partly due to our unequal education system. These are much larger issues to acknowledge and address rather than forcing individuals to conform to social processes, such as the formal education we have at present, which seems to foster inequality and where the roles within these institutions are forced to conform to such practices:

> 'In all the plans to put learners first, to invest in learning, to widen participation, to set targets, to develop skills, to open up access, to raise standards, and to develop a national framework of qualifications, there is no mention of a theory (or theories) of learning to drive the whole project…It is as though there existed in the UK such widespread understanding of, and agreement about, the processes of learning and teaching that comment was thought superfluous'.
>
> (Coffield, 1998 p. 4)

Whatever the definition of professionalism, the scope for further investigation into the professional experiences of teachers in contemporary state funded education, and how they define their sense of professionalism in these contexts, does seem to be there, and this is why I purport my research thesis to be an important study to undertake.

Therefore, as previously stated, it is the aim of this research thesis to explore these themes so that the lives of the Sports Lecturers who work within contemporary FE institutions in the South West of England can be greater understood. In defining their own sense of professionalism, it is hoped that the Sports Lecturers will describe the factors that influence their day-to-day practice and how these influence the ways in which they understand their professionalism. It is the aim to find out the extent to which Sports Lecturers in FE colleges in the South West of England comply (or not) or mediate regarding the tasks that they are required to do. On a deeper note, my research additionally aims to investigate the strategies that Sports Lecturers employ and how these reflect their understandings of their professionalism.

The next chapter of this thesis will be the Methods and Methodology section and will lay out clearly and concisely the methodological approach undertaken in my research and the analysis tools used to answer my earlier-proposed research questions.

Chapter Four – Research Methods and Methodology

Introduction – My Ontological and Epistemological Position of Research

There are two broad and contrasting approaches to the nature of knowledge and they both have differing epistemological and ontological assumptions (Gratton and Jones, 2010). These are referred to as positivism and interpretivism. For the basis of this research thesis, it was understood that ontology referred to the philosophy of the existence and nature of phenomena – the biases brought into the research, and epistemology referred to how knowledge of such phenomena was acquired and understood (Gratton and Jones, 2010).

As previously stated in this thesis, at commencement of this research I was employed as a further education (FE) Sports Lecturer in a medium-sized college in the South West of England. After ten years of working in the FE sector as a Sports Lecturer, I found myself starting to question the role of the FE sector in comparison to the other education sectors and I started to specifically question the role of the FE Lecturer. It appeared to me that there was a greater focus on gaining funding from success rates and retention, compared to enhancing the life opportunities of the students I taught. I saw these as contrasting and non-complementary features of the sector and felt that an economic focus was detrimental to the experiences of my learners. I therefore started to question who/what was defining my professionalism. I found in my research that the experience of FE practitioners was a relatively under-researched area generally and with specific regard to research relating to 'professionalism', it was argued that what constituted professionalism in FE was an elusive concept. From my research into the factors which influence how I perceived my own professionalism, I found that it might be argued that the traits I needed to exhibit in my job role and which impacted my professionalism were, to some extent, customary to the pressures that were placed upon me in my institution.

Indeed, it could have been argued that my experiences reflected a definition of professionalism that was externally imposed, and which lay within the parameters of the profession's collective remit and responsibilities. However, further research into professionalism within FE found two contrasting notions of the FE professional - as the recipient or as the agent of change (Gleeson *et al.*, 2005). Gleeson *et al.* (2005) defined the former as issues of structure that explained how professionals were framed by external factors; the latter was explained as agency where professionals constructed meanings out of the contexts in which they worked (Gleeson *et al.*, 2005). Like James and Gleeson (2007) and Wallace and Hoyle (2005), I questioned this simplistic notion of structure and agency. Further research uncovered that staff behaviours could be categorised into compliance, non-compliance and mediation (James *et al.*, 2007), where compliance referred to a willingness to follow instructions and non-compliance (resistance) meant that staff outright resisted what they were required to do (James *et al.,* 2007). In-between this compliance and non-compliance was a middle-ground (mediation) which seemed to fit with my understanding of my professionalism. It was this which became the focus of my research as I wanted to find out how other Sports Lecturers in similar contexts to me interpreted their own professionalism.

The main objective of this chapter is to discuss and justify the methods used to investigate the perceptions of FE Sports Lecturer professionalism from FE colleges in the South West of England. A qualitative questionnaire and a series of semi-structured interviews were used to investigate the core assumptions of eight FE Sports Lecturers, where these came from and how these corresponded to their professional experiences. These were then used to construct individual narratives of five of the eight lecturers who completed the questionnaire. The narratives were subjected to a deeper fine-grained analysis to enter, interpret, verify, represent and illustrate (Cook *et al.*, 2008) the responses of the five Sports Lecturers regarding the research questions.

In this chapter I will describe the characteristics of the Sports Lecturers who took part in my research and I will discuss how they were selected to take part. I will then discuss research literature associated with the selection of qualitative and quantitative methods and I will justify which method was chosen in this study and why. I will then progress to describe and justify the use of questionnaires and interviews in this research, including the perceived advantages and disadvantages of each method. I will then address some of the complexities associated with undertaking and analysing narrative research, which was the main methodological tool used to answer my proposed research questions. The chapter will then end with a detailed analysis of the ethical considerations and implications associated with completing this research project.

The Interpretivist and Positivist Research Paradigms

It was understood that in the positivist research paradigm, researchers operate from a perspective where independent realities or truths exist and where researchers and their subjects were separate to each other and interacted in scientifically-controlled and regulated environments. Douglas (1973) states that the positivist (normative) paradigm contains two major orientating ideas: first that human behaviour is governed by rules, and second, that natural scientific methods are the best way to investigate them. The positivist paradigm clearly complements logic-deducing hypothesis testing and involves operationalising, manipulating and analysing of scientific variables associated with the research (Jacobson et al. 2007). Therefore, it appeared that such approaches were more relevant to quantitative methodologies and did not relate to my proposed qualitative research outcomes.

It was therefore argued that the research stance associated with this research was interpretivist in its nature as opposed to positivist.

This was because it was understood that in interpretivist research, the realities of research are socially situated and therefore researchers and subjects (the Sports Lecturers) are all engaged in a process of constituting knowledge (Jacobson *et al.* 2007) and therefore this paradigm is characterised by a concern for the individual (Cohen *et al.* 2009). Regarding individual knowledge, Packard (2017) further states that interpretivists find sources of individual knowledge from two sources: one external and one internal. They refer to the external sources as human experience and state that humans learn from their interactions with their realities and these are therefore individually distinct. They then refer to individual imagination as the second internal source of knowledge. The endeavour of this research is therefore subjective in its nature and as Packard (2017 p. 541) states:

> 'For interpretivists, there is no 'social reality', because the reality we each perceive, experience, and understand is individually interpreted through the lens of a unique mental representation of reality…Even if two individuals were to somehow experience the exact same phenomena throughout their lives, they would by no means necessarily ascribe the exact same causal interpretations to those experiences, thereby leading to different concepts of causal reality'.

This was one of the reasons why I wanted to complete a research project based on the experiences of FE Sports Lecturers. I thought that being a Sports Lecturer myself will help me to greater understand the experiences of the Sports Lecturers because of being part of that community. However, I was aware that any generalisations I made regarding the experiences of the Sports Lecturers would only be based on my view of their causal realities. It was for this reason that I employed respondent validation into my research to ensure that my assertions were accurate to them. Debates surrounding insider research are discussed later in this chapter.

I wanted to follow an interpretivist methodology because in such methodologies the researcher begins with individuals and sets out to '…understand their interpretations of the world around them' (Cohen *et al.* 2009 p. 22).

Regarding this research, I wanted to start with Sports Lecturers in FE colleges and I wanted to understand how they perceived their own professionalism in reference to their environments (worlds) in which they worked. Therefore, any theory generated was emergent and arose from their individual and particular-situations (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

In rejecting a positivist approach to research, I was asserting that education is a social phenomenon and therefore teachers are acted upon by external social forces, 'but also have free will to respond to such forces in an active way, and are not inanimate objects, whose behaviour can be understood in terms of causal relationships' (Gratton and Jones, 2010 p. 28). With specific regard to my chosen methodological approach, I was attempting to uncover meanings, values and explanations for how Sports Lecturers defined their sense of professionalism and I was seeking to 'understand' their experiences, as opposed to gaining 'truths' (Gratton and Jones, 2010).

I was aware of some of the limitations associated with this research paradigm, especially when referring to reliability, validity, trustworthiness, credibility and authenticity (Gratton and Jones, 2010). I understood that a common criticism of this approach was that I could have interpreted my findings through given lenses as previous research undertaken in the literature review, for example, could '...prematurely close off or determine what one sees in the data; it may cause one to read data through given lenses rather than anew' (Cohen *et al.*, 2009 p. 492). (Cohen *et al.*, 2009). Indeed Rex (1974) in Cohen *et al.* 2009 p. 25) state:

> 'While patterns of social reactions and institutions may be the product of the actors' definitions of the situations there is also the possibility that those actors might be falsely conscious and that sociologists have an obligation to seek an objective perspective which is not necessarily that of any of the participating actors at all…'.

It appeared therefore that subjectivity was a potential issue regarding my research as they could have been incomplete and misleading (Bernstein, 1974). Bernstein (1974) further argued that the very process of a researcher interpreting and defining situations is problematic on the basis that the researcher is also a product of the circumstances in which they are placed, and so power is an important concept to justify on the basis that researchers could impose their own definitions of situations onto their research subjects (Cohen *et al.* 2009). This draws into question issues of structure and agency as it has been argued that interpretive research often neglects the power of external-structural-forces which shape behaviour and events due to being narrowly-focused regarding micro-sociological perspectives (Cohen *et al.* 2009).

Power Dynamics in Interpretivist Research

Understanding power dynamics in interpretivist research methodologies was of high importance to me because of previous well-known atrocities involving human experiments (Jacobson *et al.* 2007).

> 'The violations that led contemporary ethics review to its current form—well-known atrocities like the human experiments performed by Nazi doctors or the Tuskegee study—featured powerless and profoundly marginalized individuals and groups in contact with powerful and high-status professionals. The power differential meant that research subjects had no real choice about participating and no means of finding out what would be done to them'.
>
> (Jacobson *et al.,* 2007 p. 1)

In my interpretivist research design, I was already part of the social environment because I was also a Sports Lecturer at an FE institution at commencement of the research. Therefore, I was already in a position where I was immersed in the Further Education environment and so I felt that I was able to represent the 'voices' of my research subjects in a sympathetic manner.

I do however understand that there could have been issues with the validity of my research findings and with power relationships because of wanting to impose my way of thinking onto my research subjects.

To address any inequality in dealings with my research participants, I tried to provide them with means of expression with which I thought they would be comfortable with (McGarry, 2017). I also overtly communicated with them the level of time commitment required, and the themes I was looking to explore in the research. I therefore tried to be as open as possible with my participants. Following further research into power dynamics in qualitative studies, I developed a greater appreciation of the complexities surrounding power relationships. McGarry (2017 p. 341) recognised this when she stated that strategies like the ones above lead to:

> '…Insufficient reflexive awareness of the influence of the researcher on the research process, with the input of the researcher often being minimised in an attempt to make research data seem more reliable'.

Foucault's theorisation of power as action appeared therefore to be a good place to start in order to understand research involving social interaction (McGarry, 2017). It was clear from initial research into power dynamics that Foucault understood that power consisted of actions which affect other actions and therefore, in any social interaction, '…the actions of one individual affect the (re)actions of others, creating an intricate web of power relations' (Foucault, 1982, p. 789). With specific regard to my research methods, the actions of me asking Sports Lecturers to fill out my questionnaires, attend interviews, and to then openly and honestly reflect on their professional experiences were all part of this power dynamic. Therefore, '…a failure to understand the power relations characterizing the research process…lead to a misconception of the knowledge generated through the process' (McGarry, 2017 p. 341).

Therefore, even though my research methods allowed active participation by my research participants, I was prepared that the interviews and questionnaire responses could have been different to what I was hoping to collect. I was also highly aware that any research data collected was contextually situated (McGarry, 2017).

My overall goal was to establish a neutral power relationship with my research participants because I agreed with Thapar-Björkert and Henry (2004) when they referred to the fluid and adaptable nature of positionalities within research interaction, and that these interactions are often constructed by research participants and not the researcher. Regarding this, at the start of the interviews with my research participants, my communication always started with an explanation that I was a Doctoral student alongside my job role as a Sports Lecturer in an FE college in the South West of England. The conversations then progressed to discussing the aims of the research. The research participants had the freedom to choose where the interviews would take place and they were encouraged, by use of open questions, to lead the discussions. My role was very much as a Sports Lecturer interviewing other Sports Lecturers. I therefore tried to establish a non-dominant relationship with my participants, so that they were encouraged to participate in the research on their own terms and so that I could learn from their experiences and perceptions (Holt, 2004; Warming, 2011). I argue that being a Sports Lecturer meant that I was able to establish a strong level of rapport with my research participants. This high level of rapport enabled me to uncover detailed and honest accounts of perceptions of the Sports Lecturers' professionalism. I believe that this was because I had a higher level of credibility with the research participants (Jacobson *et al.* 2007). I was aware that I had to be careful with the way I represented the findings from my research and I ensured I offered honest accounts which could be and were backed-up with examples from the raw data from the interviews and surveys.

I chose not to include the transcripts in this thesis to protect the identity of my research participants, but any responses used to inform my narratives, discussion and conclusion were verbatim. As will be discussed later in this chapter, I also established a degree of triangulation to ensure validity by using both a qualitative questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

In addition to the above, Gratton and Jones (2010 p. 28) suggest that the findings from interpretivist research are 'less likely to be generalisable to other settings, and the overall time and resources required to collect such information tends to be greater'. Details of the specific methodological tools used for data collection are discussed later in this chapter. However, regarding generalisability, Whitehead (1989) states that researchers should endeavour to communicate true propositions in their research and they should argue generalisability on the basis that the participants in the research share similar forms of life (Whitehead, 2018). Whitehead and Lomax (1987) further argue that research responses generated from the practice of individuals, have the capacity to relate directly to those practices. With specific regard to this thesis, it is argued that the methodological discussions associated with Whitehead's (1989) Living Theory were relevant to this qualitative research as well, because the values underpinning the practice of the Sports Lecturers and the ways in which they interpreted their professionalism were often shared assumptions within this research community. Further research would need to be carried out with larger samples and across multiple institutions to ascertain if the experiences of the Sports Lecturers were generalisable across all FE institutions. However, as will be discussed later in this thesis, the findings from this research did also arise in research carried out by other researchers in other FE institutions.

Characteristics of Research Participants

My research initially focused on eight Sports Lecturers from four different FE institutions in the South West of England. Eight Sports Lecturers completed an electronic questionnaire, but only five of these lecturers agreed to take part in the additional interviews and these lecturers were from two different institutions. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the identities of all participants were protected, and this was achieved by using pseudonyms. The chosen pseudonyms for the five interviewed Sports Lecturers were Jack, James, Justin, Bethany and Elsa.

Since three of the original participants chose not to be interviewed, their questionnaire results were used to inform some of the discussions, but their identities remained hidden and they were not allocated a pseudonym and were instead referred to as Lecturer 1, 2 and 3.

Table Five – Characteristics of Research Participants and Institutions

Male	6
Female	2
Age Range Male	26 - 46
Age Range Female	30 - 45
Had PGCE	6
Working Towards PGCE	1
No PGCE	1
Years Teaching (0 – 5)	2
Years Teaching (6 – 10)	1
Years Teaching (10 +)	5

Jack, James and Justin were all from the same institution which was a medium-sized GFE college. The college was graded as at least good in its last Ofsted inspection and offers a variety of courses from Foundation Level through to HE courses. Jack and James had experience of teaching across all levels of the sports courses offered at the institution (up to Level 3 only). Justin mainly taught on the Vocational Sport courses, including adult Gym Instructor qualifications. Bethany and Elsa taught at a different GFE institution. The institution was also graded at least good in its last Ofsted inspection and both Bethany and Elsa had extensive experience of teaching on Level 3 and HE courses. Table five above details the main characteristics of the Sports Lecturers in this research.

Of the eight lecturers who completed the questionnaires, two were female and six were male. Six of the eight were qualified lecturers with PGCE qualifications and one was working towards a PGCE. One of the lecturers did not have a teaching qualification. Six of the eight lecturers described that they were Sports Lecturers, whereas the two who did not, only taught small units on sports courses in their institutions and taught Public Services qualifications alongside their Sports teaching. Two of the lecturers had taught for less than two years in FE when they completed the questionnaire. One lecturer had been teaching for between seven and ten years and five of the lecturers had been working in FE for more than ten years as Sports Lecturers. Of the five Sports Lecturers who agreed to be interviewed, two were female and three were male. Four of the lecturers had PGCE qualifications and one male was working towards completing one. The four males were aged between 26 and 46 years old. The females were 30 and 45 years old respectively.

Insider Research

Coghlan and Brannick (2005) refer to insider research as research conducted by people who are already members of the communities or groups in which they wish to investigate and regarding my research, it was argued that I was an insider researcher for two reasons:

1. I was a Sports Lecturer who worked within the FE community.
2. Some of the respondents within my research were from the institutions in which I was working at the time.

Costley (2010 p. 1) states that researchers are insiders if they '…draw upon the shared understandings and trust of their immediate and more removed colleagues with whom normal social interactions of working communities have been developed'.

Regarding my relationship with the participants in my research, I had a more removed connection with some of them (Costley, 2010), because some of the research participants were from institutions in which I was working at the time, but it is important to note, however, that whilst some of the Sports Lecturers were from the same institution as me, they were not in the same departments in which I was working, and I did not have day-to-day contact with them.

All ethical requirements were adhered to whilst conducting this research and approval was granted from the Ethics Committee at my University (see Appendix A). To protect the identities of my research participants, I have chosen not to disclose the lecturers who worked at the same institutions as me.

Insider versus outsider research is often presented as an argument about opposites where debates about positive and negative impacts of both are discussed (Lor *et al.* 2018). With specific regard to the positive aspects of insider research, some arguments are about researchers being able to establish higher levels of rapport with research subjects because of having established relationships with that community (Lor *et al.* 2018). Researching as an insider was an important decision to make regarding this research. It was hoped that through being an insider, I would be in a unique position to study Sports Lecturer perceptions of professionalism because I was also a Sports Lecturer and because I worked in similar institutions to some of the research participants. As will be discussed later in this chapter, I believed that this gave me a degree of authenticity regarding my relationship with the Sports Lecturers. It was hoped that this would lead to more detailed responses being collected, because of the higher levels of rapport which had been established with my participants. Also, regarding researching participants in my own institutions, it meant that I had easier access to these Sports Lecturers (Costley, 2010). Other recognised benefits to insider research were also considered. Lor *et al.* 2018 p. 223) state that there are additional benefits to being an insider researcher. These include:

> '…having an established relationship with the community, being able to establish rapport with study participants, being sensitive to the community's culture and needs and dealing effectively with ethical concerns'.

It is these final points which I feel need to be discussed further. I argue that my ethical considerations would have been the same for any research participant in which I was researching. As previously stated, my main goal for my research was to investigate the ways in which the Sports Lecturers perceived their professionalism. In doing this, my goal was to illustrate an honest account of their experiences and so, I would have done them a dis-service should I have represented their perceptions in a way in which they did not mean. To this end, I ensured that I went back to my participants at the end of the development of their narratives so that they could validate their responses.

Regarding Lor *et al's* (2018) point regarding being sensitive to the community's culture, this raises questions of validity and I was aware of these at the start of my research. It is argued that objectivity and validity could have been lost since there was a level of familiarity with the research participants. I was mindful of this and so I only presented narrative accounts which were reinforced by raw data from the interviews and questionnaires and I also employed respondent validation into my research. As already stated, this is discussed further in this chapter.

Gaining Access to Research Participants (Sports Lecturers)

For all research participants, I originally contacted the individual Department Heads for the Sports Lecturers, outlining the purposes of my study and the benefits of taking part. As my participants were FE Sports Lecturers, there was a requirement that FE lecturers undertook a certain amount of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) per academic year.

At the commencement of this research study, the Institute for Learning (IfL) was the Professional Body for FE lecturers in the Further Education and Skills Sector (IfL, 2013) and required their members to formally document a minimum of 30 hours of CPD each academic year. In 2014, the Society for Education and Training (SET) took over from the IfL and continued some of the work that the IfL completed. From 2014, the Society for Education and Training were the professional membership organisation for practitioners working in post-16 education and their mission was to '…build and promote the professional status of…members, helping them progress in their careers through wider recognition of their expertise' (SET, 2016). In 2012, it was no longer a requirement for members of the IfL and SET to formally document a minimum number of hours of CPD, but members were required to commit to undertaking some relevant CPD. The IfL and SET both referred to CPD as activities which demonstrated practitioners were improving relevant knowledge and skills in their subject areas, teaching or training. They also described that a wide range of formal and informal activities could count as meaningful professional development. CPD was regarded as any activity that contributed to learning and development, and there was a diverse list of recommended activities that counted. So much could count as CPD if lecturers reflected on the learning they gained from the activities and it had an impact on their practice (IfL, 2013).

With specific regard to my thesis and the involvement of the Sports Lecturers in my research project, the activities in this research were relevant to the 'having a conversation with a colleague' criterion. Through participating in the electronic questionnaire and interviews proposed in my methodology, practitioners could reflect on their own professional practice and were able to analyse their professional practice in comparison to the contexts in which they worked. They could then use their participation hours to count towards their recommended CPD activities for their IfL and SET memberships.

It was hoped that practitioners would specifically be able to reflect on their own dispositions regarding why they entered the FE sector and whether their contemporary practice reflected or met their dispositions. The IfL (2013) asked the following questions for practitioners to think about regarding undertaking CPD activities:

- Have you undertaken professional development activities this year?
- Have you reflected on the learning you have gained from these activities?
- Have the activities and the reflection made a difference to how you teach or train?
- Can you show evidence of this difference and the impact it has made to learners, colleagues or the organisation in which you work?

This research was still promoted as a positive CPD activity to the Heads of Department and the individual lecturers on the basis that it would enable the FE Sports Lecturers to reflect on and enhance their professional practice. It was hoped that above all, the questionnaire and interviews would provide a platform for practitioners to reflect on their own professional practice and that these data collection methods would enable the practitioners to develop their own practice. The FE practitioners were able to evidence their participation in my research according to their own institutional requirements.

I was aware that such reflections could have ethical implications, and these are discussed in more depth later in this chapter. I was aware that such reflections for the Sports Lecturers could have adverse consequences because of reflecting negatively on their own professional practice and consequently causing them to question their employment, or possibly causing them to leave their profession altogether etc. To avoid such implications, I was completely honest about my research from the outset and was completely transparent about the methods being proposed. As will be discussed later in this chapter, I also made each Sports Lecturer aware that they could withdraw from this research at any time and that they could review their narratives before the submission of my results. This will be discussed further toward the end of this chapter.

To gain access to Sports Lecturers in different institutions, I sent selected Heads of Department of Sports courses the link to my electronic questionnaire via email and I asked them to forward this onto their staff. I received eight responses in total and once they had completed the questionnaire, I was then able to contact the individual lecturers directly to ask them to undertake the interviews.

Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies

It was understood that there are a set of debates surrounding the validity and rigour of qualitative research compared to quantitative research. On the one hand, qualitative data is presented as more illustrative than quantitative data, but at the same time, is often dismissed as being too subjective. This is because assessments are not made in terms of established standards (Dey, 1993) as in quantitative research. Therefore, the solution appears to be to select the paradigm that is most suitable to represent the intended research, so that the data reflects the interests of the researcher, and the uses they want to make of them (Dey, 1993).

Qualitative research appeared to have an unrivalled capacity to constitute compelling arguments about how things work in particular contexts (Mason, 2002) and it seeks to understand the meanings of experiences to participants in specific settings (Thomas *et al.*, 2005), to obtain in – depth and detailed information. This is because researchers interact with participants and are sensitive and perceptive in procuring and processing the observations and responses. These above points were especially important regarding my research and they influenced my decision to undertake a qualitative research study. This was because I wanted to gather in-depth information from my participants to understand in detail how they perceived and worked with their FE institutions. I also understood that the ways I managed my responses during data collection and analysis would influence the quality of the data and subsequent conclusions (Thomas *et al.*, 2005).

I was aware that qualitative research required a highly active engagement from its practitioners (Mason, 2002) and examples of qualitative research techniques include: participant/non–participant observations; structured/semi–structured/unstructured interviewing; group interviews and the collection of documentary materials, among others; with data produced from these being in the forms of; field notes, interview transcripts, documents, photographs, sketches and video/tape recordings (Dey, 1993; Holliday, 2002; Thomas *et al.*, 2005).

I selected a qualitative methodology to obtain rich and in – depth information regarding the research title (Mason, 2002; Thomas *et al.*, 2005). It was understood that there was no one kind of qualitative research, but rather a variety of approaches related to different purposes of research (Dey, 1993; Flick, 1998). In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. I firstly utilised qualitative questionnaires to gather initial responses from the Sports Lecturers and these findings were developed further by using semi-structured interviews. Each of these methods will be discussed in greater detail now.

The Questionnaire Process

I used a questionnaire as a set of standardised questions to gain information from my participants (Gratton and Jones, 2010). Although they are normally associated with quantitative research designs, I used them to collect qualitative information.
Questionnaires generally fall into four categories which are: postal questionnaires; online questionnaires, telephone questionnaires and face-to face questionnaires (Gratton and Jones, 2010).

My electronic questionnaire was constructed, managed and interpreted online via the Survey Monkey electronic resource which was the world's leading provider of web-based survey and questionnaire solutions at the time, and the tools they utilised were deemed to be powerful enough for professional researchers (Survey Monkey, 2012). It was hoped that the questionnaire would generate topics for discussion in the semi – structured interviews. The questionnaire was selected over other methods of initial data collection, such as semi-structured interviewing, because it was perceived to be less time consuming to carry out and it would be easier to analyse and interpret the information gathered (Gratton and Jones, 2010).

Indeed, the questionnaire was deemed to be an appropriate method of data collection because it allowed me to collect the information I wanted, it was suitable for gathering information remotely and it was time-effective (Gratton and Jones, 2010). I deemed my questionnaire to be advantageous over other methods of data collection because it allowed me to access my participants remotely (I did not need to be present). I was aware that they are generally used to generate information from large samples, but I did not receive responses from all the Sports Lecturers I tried to contact. I only received eight responses, but because they were detailed responses, I then used these as a tool for highlighting themes which were explored later at interview. As will be discussed later in this chapter, only five of the lecturers agreed to be interviewed based on the time pressures they were experiencing at the time in their job roles. The questionnaire also allowed me to minimise any bias in the responses from the Sports Lecturers. Gratton and Jones (2010 p. 128) state that a well-designed questionnaire reduces the '…opportunity to introduce bias into the results as can be the case with interviews'. This is because results are less-likely to be influenced by having a researcher present when asking the questions.

I was very aware of not leading my respondents and so I provided them with lots of space in the questionnaire to explain their responses as I wanted to gather valid responses from the Sports Lecturers.

I was also aware that by using a questionnaire, this would provide a little flexibility for the respondents as they would be able to answer the questionnaire when it was convenient for them to do so (Gratton and Jones, 2010). They did however need to do the questionnaire in one go and so I provided them with a rationale explaining that they would need to have a maximum of thirty minutes free to complete the questionnaire. However, this was not long enough for one of the respondents because they did not provide a detailed explanation on the final question and instead wrote 'Sorry, no time - off to a meeting' (Survey – Respondent 8). In hindsight I should have recommended more time to complete the survey, but I needed to balance this with not putting the Sports Lecturers off from completing the questionnaire in the first place. Questionnaire topics were both retrospective and contemporaneous as they explored themes from each participant's past where participants had to reconstruct past events from the present, and they required the participants to comment on their daily life in progress (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989). An example of the questionnaire used in this research can be found in Appendix 3.

The Survey Monkey electronic resource provided a simplified analysis of results from questionnaires. Initial quantitative data was analysed into simple graphs and tables for further analysis. It was the objective to utilise this facility to analyse initial results from the questionnaires that were sent out. Following the completion and analysis of the questionnaires, I was able to interview based on the responses. I then arranged with each participant suitable times to carry out the semi – structured interviews.

I was familiar with the disadvantages of using interviews, but the advantages outweighed the disadvantages, because they mainly provided a level of flexibility for the Sports Lecturers to fill in the questionnaire in their own time.

From my prior research (documented in the previous chapters of this thesis), I was aware of the significant pressures placed upon lecturers in FE institutions and I did not want to add significant additional pressures to their free time.

Gratton and Jones (2010) state that there are four common disadvantages associated with using questionnaires in research. These are:

1. ***Complex questioning*** – there is a need for questions to be clearly written so that participants understand what is being asked of them. Thus, questioning needs to be relatively simple (Gratton and Jones, 2010).

Regarding this research, this was a consideration and therefore my questions asked for opinions about subjects and this allowed for participants to answer that they did not understand any questions if relevant. I also utilised simpler language in the hope that participants understood what I was asking them.
Overall, I believe that my questioning was good because the responses I obtained were what I was hoping for.

2. ***Having no control over who completes the questionnaire*** – It is not possible to control who completes the questionnaires and some might be completed by inappropriate parties (Gratton and Jones, 2010).

This was not a problem for my research because I purposely targeted respondents through individual Heads of Department on the basis that they worked in FE Colleges in the South West of England and that they taught on Sports courses. I did not have any control over who completed the survey (Gratton and Jones, 2010), but I did try to minimise this by ensuring I emailed the Survey Monkey link directly to the identified lecturers.

My questions also allowed me to identify who completed the surveys by asking them to provide their job roles, qualifications, years teaching, gender etc.

3. ***Having no opportunity to probe*** – A limitation of questionnaires is that once the respondents have answered, there is no opportunity to get them to expand on their points made (Gratton and Jones, 2010).

I did provide spaces on the questionnaire for lecturers to expand on their answers, but I also utilised semi-structured interviewing to further explore the themes that emerged from the questionnaires.

4. ***Potentially low response rate –*** Gratton and Jones (2010 p. 129) state that 'response rates from questionnaires are notoriously poor and can range from as little as 5 per cent…'.

I am not aware of how many individual lecturers worked in the departments I targeted, but my response rate was poor. I only received eight responses on the questionnaire from the five sports departments I targeted. I did follow-up on numerous of occasions, but it was very challenging to get responses from the individual Heads of Department. I also did not want to push too hard in case I managed to upset individuals and bring my research and my institution into disrepute. Frankfort-Nachimas and Nachimas (1996) cited in Gratton and Jones (2010 p. 147) illustrate that having an introductory letter in the form of an '…altruistic appeal seems to produce the best result' regarding increasing response rates in questionnaires. Therefore, I ensured that my questionnaire was accompanied by an introductory letter which laid out the purpose of my research and the fact that it provided a platform for Sport Lecturers to reflect on their individual practice (see Appendix 2 for the accompanying letter). Having a low response rate also meant that there was the possibility of not gathering the responses of some groups of people (Gratton and Jones, 2010).

Regarding my research I managed to gather the opinions of a wide range of Sports Lecturers in terms of gender – I obtained male and female responses, experience of teaching – this varied from less than one year through to more than twenty years.

This was important because it was hoped that these responses would contain links to longitudinal impacts of Government policy. I also obtained responses from a trainee teacher and this was important because I wanted to question their reasons for entering the profession, to see if there were any disparities which existed. If all my respondents were older, it could have meant that some respondents might have forgotten their reasons for entering the profession in the first place. As it turned out, this was not a problem for my respondents.

Selection of Participants for Interview

I received eight completed questionnaires from four different FE institutions in the South West of England. Due to the limited number of responses, I wanted to originally interview all the respondents. Participants were therefore automatically selected for interview based on their responses to the questionnaire. It was my aim to interview participants so that I covered the widest range of responses from the questionnaire (Harris and Brown, 2010). Whilst there was a lower than expected response from the questionnaire, I did not perceive this to be problematic because my intention was to use the questionnaire to highlight potential themes for interview. Also, due to the previously documented pressure placed upon teachers in FE colleges, it was anticipated that gaining access to lecturers would be difficult.

The Sports Lecturers were asked in the questionnaire to provide their names and email addresses for being contacted after the completion of the questionnaires. Once I had been notified by the automatic Survey Monkey facility that a questionnaire had been completed, I emailed the Sports Lecturers directly to see if they would mind taking part in an interview based on their responses.

Ethical considerations for this research are detailed later in this chapter, but all the Sports Lecturers were asked to consent to completing the questionnaires and were emailed directly regarding consenting to the interviews (see Appendix 3 for examples of consent emails that were sent to the lecturers).

I also further asked for consent from each lecturer at the start of each interview and this was recorded via a Dictaphone. Three of the respondents from the questionnaire did not respond to my requests to be interviewed and this was due to the time constraints in their work and this was deemed to be contextually significant regarding this research, because of the perceived pressures on FE lecturers in general.

The overall aims of the questionnaires and interviews were to understand what it was like to be an FE Sports Lecturer in contemporary FE institutions in the South West of England; and to understand how Sports Lecturers defined their sense of professionalism in these contexts. Any responses, therefore, were valid to my study because they were the 'voices' of the practitioners that worked in the FE institutions in the South West of England and they were statements relating to what they felt was educationally desirable or conflicting (James *et al.*, 2007).

The Interview Process

I used the interview technique in this research to openly search and probe into relatively new areas of inquiry (Orlick and Partington, 1988) regarding the professionalism of Sports Lecturers. The interviews occurred in a person–to–person format and they were semi-structured in nature with mainly open questioning. The reasons for this were that structured interviews were perceived to be pre–determined with questions already established before the interview. This would have meant that the questioning would have remained the same for each person interviewed. This would have been problematic in this research because I wanted my interviews to take a conversation format where data gathered would be different for each respondent. I did use interview prompt sheets (see Appendix 5 for an example) with each participant to ensure that the same topics were covered, but this meant that there was more flexibility regarding the order in which these topics came up during the interviews.

This also meant that I had more control regarding choosing to develop any issues that arose, and I could spend more time developing a rapport with each participant (this will be discussed later in this chapter).

I interviewed all the respondents who agreed to be interviewed. In total, I completed five one-hour interviews with the participants in total. These all took place in their respective lunch hours and so were constrained by having a time limit. By the time the participants were comfortable and settled, this only left 60-minutes of quality time to complete the interviews. None of my participants were unable to understand verbal explanations or written information in English, but if there were a need to adapt my approach strategy, I would have tailored these to meet the needs of the research participants e.g. providing verbal explanations via the telephone for individuals that did not understand the written elements of my method.

I understood that in – between the structured and unstructured interview techniques, there existed semi–structured interviews. This is where the interviewer pursues the same lines of enquiry with all interviewees but is flexible with regards to deciding which areas to explore based on the individual responses. This was the chosen style of questionnaire that I utilised regarding my research. The main advantage of this type of interview technique was that it allowed me to be adaptable as questions could be re – phrased and further probed to clarify and expand upon responses (Thomas and Nelson, 1990).

As described previously, the type of research method employed depends on what a researcher wishes to find out (Dey, 1993; Holliday, 2002; Thomas *et al.*, 2005) and this therefore included the selection of semi-structured interviews compared to the structured/unstructured formats.

Veal (1997) describes several criteria for the suitability of interviewing in a study: where there is only a low population, making the quantitative approach of a questionnaire inappropriate; where it is expected that responses will vary greatly from each participant and therefore dismisses the use of other research methods; where the research topic is exploratory, and interviews are used to develop key themes and ideas to generate information for further study. Whilst I utilised semi–structured interviewing to gather information regarding the professional practice of Sports Lecturers, this was not the result of a process of elimination concerning other qualitative techniques, rather it was selected for the benefits of interviewing and for the requirements of this research.

Gratton and Jones (2010) illustrate four main advantages of using interviews and a data collection method in a research project and I will now demonstrate how I took these into account regarding my research design.

1. ***Interviews enable participants to talk about their own experiences*** *– they allow respondents to elaborate on areas of interest and they provide data from their own perspectives (Gratton and Jones, 2010).*

This was the main reason for why I wanted to use interviews in my research because I wanted to gather the personal perspectives of Sports Lecturers and what their perceptions were of their professionalism in reference to the contexts they worked in. This also complemented the qualitative nature of my research because I wanted to gather the 'voices' of the Sports Lecturers in this research so that they could define what they saw as desirable in their professional practice (James *et al.*, 2007). However, the interviews were used to develop key themes and to generate information for further study (Veal, 1997).

2. ***Interviews allow unexpected data to emerge*** *– Semi-structured interviews allow the emergence of important themes that might not have developed during structured formats or during questionnaires (Gratton and Jones, 2010).*

This was especially pertinent to this research as a new area of research emerged which did not come from the structured questionnaires, nor from the prepared interview prompts. This new theme (competitive mediation) is discussed in Chapter Seven of this thesis.

3. ***By using interviews, the interviewer can establish more of a rapport with the participants*** *(Gratton and Jones, 2010).*

I believe that a good level of rapport was established with my participants and this was mainly because of the data collection methods I employed.

Data from the interviews was recorded using a Dictaphone and the qualitative information collected from the interviews was analysed using Content Analysis and Coding (Cohen *et al.*, 2009; Gratton and Jones, 2010). The Dictaphone recordings were transcribed following each interview (see appendix 6 for an example of part of an interview transcript) and were typed up using Microsoft Word ready for analysis. The reason for using a Dictaphone as the primary method of data collection was that it was perceived to be less intrusive than using other methods such as a video camera (Thomas *et al.*, 2005). Whilst I did not gather information regarding body language and eye contact, it was hoped that the participants would open-up more because of feeling more comfortable than if they were in front of a camera. Regarding writing the responses of the participants instead of recording via an electronic means, I decided not to do this because, although it may have been a more reliable method regarding not being affected by faulty equipment or human error, I perceived that this might affect the rapport I was seeking to establish with my participants.

4. ***Interviews allow researchers to develop a sense of time and history, rather than providing a series of static responses from surveys etc.*** *(Gratton and Jones, 2010).*

This was especially relevant to my research because the detailed responses I gathered from the Sports Lecturers allowed me to question specific policies and initiatives which shaped their professional practice. Some of the more experienced lecturers were able to reflect on their whole teaching career and the structures which shaped their professional practice. The format of the interviews also enabled some flexibility regarding revisiting earlier discussions.

Gratton and Jones (2010) further list two additional benefits of interviewing to research projects. These are the collection of additional information such as body language, and the targeting of groups who might be excluded from other methods such as elderly people filling in online surveys (Gratton and Jones, 2010). These were not deemed to be relevant to my research project.

Regarding the disadvantages of using interviews in research projects, these are mainly associated with the increased pressures on resources and time, and the enhanced techniques required to effectively gather the information. I was aware that the interviews required more time and travelling compared to other data collection methods, but my objective was to gather the 'voices' of FE Sports Lecturers. As previously discussed, I wanted to develop individual narratives for each of the Sports Lecturers in this research and so I wanted to collect detailed responses to do this. I also wanted to use the interviews to follow-up on findings from the questionnaires and so it was also used to validate the findings. Gratton and Jones (2010) also state that interviewing can result in samples being unrepresentative of the wider population. This was understood from the outset and it was understood that the findings in the research were only relatable to the experiences of the lecturers in this research and were not able to be generalised to all Sports Lecturers in the country. However, as will be discussed later in this research, it was found that the research findings were like previous FE research undertaken in other areas of the country.

Another limitation of interviewing is that the method relies on the researcher having accomplished skills to not add bias through verbal and non-verbal communication and it requires the researcher to ensure that interviewees do not dominate conversations (Gratton and Jones, 2010). I was very aware of these limitations and I tried to ensure that I did not communicate in ways which led the responses of the Sports Lecturers.

The interview prompt sheets really helped with this as I was able to use them as a checklist to ensure that all topics were covered with each lecturer and I was able to guide interviewees back to the interview prompt sheets if they moved the interview in unwanted directions. The main issue with my respondents was that due to the limited timeframes for conducting the interviews, I sometimes had to refer to the prompt sheets to get through everything that I wanted to. This further reinforces the benefits of using the semi-structured format in this research because I could allow the interviewees to talk about what they wanted and providing this was on the prompt sheets, or relevant, this did not matter what order this occurred in and it helped with maintaining rapport and with enabling a conversation format.

A final weakness of interviews is with the analysis of the information collected. This is because of the levels of ambiguity which can result in the responses of interviewees (Gratton and Jones, 2010). I was very conscious of this and therefore I wanted to use two levels of data collection (questionnaire and interview) so that I could follow-up on responses and probe where relevant. I also utilised respondent validation after the questionnaires and the interviews to ensure that the data I collected matched the experiences of the lecturers in this research. All the Sports Lecturers were emailed their survey after they completed it to make additional comments if they wanted to.

The Sports Lecturers who were interviewed were each also emailed their individual narratives to see if they were agreeable that these matched their experiences and they had an opportunity to amend anything if they wanted to. Evidence for these additional processes can also be found in Appendix 3 of this research and it is discussed further later in this chapter.

This chapter will now progress to discuss the main methodological design of this research and how the questionnaire and interview data was used to build individual narratives of the experiences of the five Sports Lecturers in this research.

The Narrative Approach

Narrative research was chosen as the selected methodological tool for investigating my research participants because I understood that the perspectives and interpretations of my Sports Lecturers in their individual educational settings were significant and pertinent (Cohen *et al.*, 2009), and I hoped that such perspectives and interpretations would provide valuable insights into the ways in which these educators understood the environments in which they worked (Goodson, 1983). I understood that narrative research was a distinctive way of conceptualising such social activity (Miller, 1999). Miller (1999) provides three outlines of three main approaches to analysing biographical research:

- The realist, focusing upon grounded-theory techniques;
- The neo-positivist, employing more structured interviews;
- The narrative, using the interplay between interviewer and interviewee to construct narratives.

I utilised the interplay between interviewer and interviewee to understand the experiences of my research participants and although a qualitative questionnaire and qualitative interviews were used as the primary methods for generating the narratives, these were not structured as the goal was for the research participants to generate the data in their own way and not in a prescribed way by me, but they were semi-structured as this provided a way of exploring similar themes with each research participant. I understood that narrative research demanded a range of interview techniques and strategies to get research participants to tell their stories (Cohen *et al.*, 2009).

As previously discussed, narrative research was the chosen methodological tool for investigating the perspectives and interpretations of the five FE Sports Lecturers in this research study. To achieve this, I utilised a structured qualitative questionnaire to identify prompts for discussing in a series of semi-structured interviews with each of my research participants afterwards. Regarding the semi-structured interviews, I used the responses from the questionnaires as prompts to have general conversations with each Sports Lecturer to determine how they viewed their professionalism within their role. It was my goal for them to 'talk' and for me to 'listen' and therefore this was why a structured interview format was not appropriate, because each session was different and so required different behaviours/actions. I understood that interviews were social, interpersonal encounters and not merely a process of collecting data (Cohen *et al.*, 2009) and as such, I aimed to establish a strong rapport with each of my participants and I aimed to make them feel comfortable and safe. It was only through doing this that the participants 'opened up' to describe their experiences and how these affected them.

My research was ultimately attempting to investigate if pre-existing theories associated with defining professionalism were relevant to Sports Lecturers, or if their experiences were unique and un-documented.

I used historical and contemporary theory from other research studies regarding professionalism and professional experiences of teachers and I then applied this research to the research participants in my study. Bathmaker (2010) describes that the connections between personal and public concerns may be understood and interpreted as important questions for narrative research. Waller (2010) similarly describes how the exploration of the interplay between social structure and individual agency as influences upon lives, is why he found biographical narrative research to be the most useful way of capturing the data he wanted in his study into changing identities through re-engagement with education.

The reason for why Waller (2010) wanted to utilise narrative research, was paralleled in my selection of appropriate methodologies in my study for the reasons above. Waller (2010 p.66) concludes that '...the best narrative and life history research demonstrates how lives are led under the dual influence of social structures'. Waller (2010) cites Whitty's (2002) perceptions of micro-research to examine social phenomena as looking through the eyes of a vulture. 'The vulture's lens enables it to 'zoom in' upon a small area in its field of vision, whilst simultaneously maintaining a coherent image of a wider landscape' (Waller, 2010 p. 66). Waller (2010) similarly uses semi-structured interviewing as his primary data collection tool for constructing his narratives and I similarly likened my methodology to that of a 'vulture's lens'. I intended to use them as a method for exploring the general as well as the more specific aspects of FE lecturer's working lives. I also subscribed to Wright Mills' (1959) idea of private troubles highlighting public concerns, '...demonstrating the value of knowing an individual's personal history to better understand their social situation' (Waller, 2010 p. 67). I feel this was especially relevant to my research study as through understanding the experiences of individual FE Sports Lecturers, this helped to understand the more generalised environments in which the Sports Lecturers worked.

I was however cautious to refer to my narratives as being 'biographies' because I did not feel that I collected enough qualitative information to fully present individual biographies of the lecturers in my research. This did not however detract from the importance of this research, as the main objective was to produce a wide account of lecturer perceptions of their professionalism in their contemporary working contexts. I understood that narrative research was important because it reveals ambiguity rather than tidying it away (Bathmaker, 2010). Similarly, I wanted to use narrative research because 'good narratives typically approach the complexities and contradictions of real life' (Flyvbjerg, 2006 p. 237). Regarding this research, I wanted to further understand the complexities and contradictions experienced by FE Sports Lecturers in the South West of England; especially regarding the contexts they worked in and the strategies they utilised for working in these contexts. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001 p. 4) state that 'individual cases retain more of the noise of real life than many other types of research' and because of this they can help us to understand complex interrelationships. This was important for my research because I wanted to understand the individual pressures which impacted the professional practice of the Sports Lecturers and I anticipated that these would be varied and complex. Bathmaker (2010) states that narrative inquiry can call into question dominant narratives that do not match the experience of life as lived. I therefore felt that my chosen methods were highly relevant because I wanted to investigate if existing research findings on professionalism of teachers, and specifically FE lecturers, corresponded to the 'lives lived' by Sports Lecturers in FE institutions in the South West of England. This appeared to be an under-researched area and I wanted to understand if Sports Lecturers interpreted their working lives in different ways to what has been found in previous research. I wanted to investigate if there was something about the ways Sports Lecturers understood and interpreted their professionalism that was different to what other researchers and FE practitioners had found and documented.

Riessman (2008 p. 9) provides a useful summary for the use of narrative methodologies in research:

> 'A significant and important feature of narrative and life history research is that they provide a means of getting closer to the experience of those whose lives and histories go unheard, unseen, undocumented – ordinary, marginalised and silenced lives...Narratives invite us as listeners, readers, and viewers to enter the perspective of the narrator'.

Therefore, narratives enabled me to understand the perspectives of the Sports Lecturers that worked in FE colleges in the South West of England.

Denzin (1999) proposes several varieties of narrative research methods including: biography; autobiography; story; discourse; narrative writing; personal history; oral history; case history; life history; personal experience and case study. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) further illustrate the approaches to undertaking narrative inquiry including oral history; stories; annals and chronicles; photographs; memory boxes; interviews; journals; autobiography; letters; conversations and documents. As previously stated, I used a series of semi-structured interviews and an electronic questionnaire to generate my narrative accounts of five FE Sports Lecturers from the South West of England.

Analysis of Data Methods

The data collection instruments captured the 'rich descriptions' of accounts from each participant, as well as ensuring the validity and trustworthiness of the data collected (Punch, 2009 p. 249). The interviews took place in settings chosen by the participants' workplaces, to ensure that each interviewee was as comfortable with the interview process as possible. 'Interesting' information in the interview transcripts was highlighted in red using Microsoft Word ready for further analysis. The interview transcripts were then summarised into single narratives for each of the five Sports Lecturers.

These narratives summarised similar information for each participant. The Sports Lecturer narratives and the interview transcripts were then further analysed using coding.

Coding was understood to be the organisation of raw data into conceptual categories, 'each code is effectively a category…into which a piece of data is placed' (Gratton and Jones, 2004 p. 219). Regarding this research, the coding method was used as the first stage to providing some form of logical structure (Patton, 2002) to the questionnaires and interview transcripts. The stages of the coding process and examples of some of the raw data are presented in the appendices of this research.

The first stage of the data coding process was the categorization stage, and this entailed the sorting out of the raw data into categories called open codes relating to the research questions. This stage was the foundation stage before the interpretation stage (Patton, 2002). The interview transcripts and the narratives were analysed to look for common categories. The criteria for the open coding was like the criteria published by Gratton and Jones (2004 p. 219). They state that:

> 'Codes should be valid, that is they should accurately reflect what is being researched, they should be mutually exclusive, in that codes should be distinct, with no overlap and they should be exhaustive, that is all relevant data should fit into a code'.

The open codes that arose from the questionnaires and transcripts were exclusive, there was no overlapping between categories and they were exhaustive (Patton, 2002; Gratton and Jones, 2004; Hardy and Bryman, 2004), as all the highlighted information was sorted into relevant categories.

Following the categorization stage, the next stage of the coding process was to identify relationships (called axial codes) between the open codes from the raw data (Gratton and Jones, 2004).

This was achieved by using a table (see Appendix 7), where the open code information was inputted, followed by examples of each from the raw data. Any relationships were highlighted from the examples under the open codes (Gratton and Jones, 2004).

The third stage of the coding process was the interpretation or the analysis stage. This was when the main findings from the research were presented in simplified figures (see Appendix 8) where findings were related to past research to enable present the main findings from this research. Conclusions were then able to be made regarding the research questions. From these codes, it was the objective that any patterns could either be backed up using existing research, or, open-up new avenues of future research. They both optimally led to conclusions regarding the research questions.

Ethical Considerations

Three ethical guidelines are often proposed in the world of social science and these are; informed consent, deception, and privacy and confidentiality (Ellen, 1984; Kimmel, 1988; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). The British Educational Research Association (BERA) published the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research in 2011. These guidelines were adhered to regarding my study. Some of the key themes from the BERA guidelines are discussed below.

As stated in Chapter One of this thesis, Sikes (2010 p. 13) states that it is unethical '…to offer a version of someone's life…without making clear the nature of the gaze that is being brought to bear upon it'. This is because our own beliefs and values are implicated (Stanley, 1993). I also applied this rationale to my relationships with my participants. I made it clear with all my participants what my research aims were and what my experience was regarding this research study, i.e. that I was also a Sports Lecturer and that I was also a Postgraduate student undertaking a research study as part of a Professional Doctorate in Education.

I was honest and transparent right from the start and I felt that this knowledge really helped to establish strong levels of rapport with all my participants and it made them feel that they were working with someone who had an appreciation of their working contexts. I also felt that through researching a topic which I was also immersed in, this enabled me to become '…conversant with the formal and informal rules governing the webbing of the human interaction under investigation so that its innermost secrets can be revealed' (Sugden, 1996 p. 201). Thus, I was able to record a greater level of detail in my narratives because I was able to question my participants more thoroughly as I was also aware the complexities of their work. I was concerned at the outset that such an approach might hinder my data collection as the Sports Lecturers might have felt a sense of caution regarding discussing their working practices, I felt that the opposite was true, and the participants opened-up more because of a sense of shared understanding. However, Sikes (2010) states that it is not sufficient to completely take refuge in the protection of ethics review procedures and ethical codes because they do not allow for individual circumstances. She states that the most important thing in representing someone else's story is to: '…do all that we can to ensure that we re-present lives respectfully and that we do not use our narrative privilege, or…our narrative power, to demean, belittle or take revenge' (Sikes, 2010 p. 16).

To this end, I employed respondent validation into my method to ensure that the participants were happy with how I portrayed their narratives, whether the information was accurate and whether they were happy that they were not identifiable within my research. I understood that this was the most descent way of ensuring that the information I had was a true account of the topic.

Due to the interpretivist nature of this research, literature associated with gaining informed consent did prove to be problematic because much of the ethical literature associated with research designs seemed to focus on ethical procedures used in positivist research (Jacobson *et al.,* 2007).

It was understood that informed consent was where research subjects are fully informed about the nature and consequences of experiments they are involved in (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003) and that research subjects should not be physically or psychologically coerced into participating and their agreement should be based on full and open information (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). McNamee *et al.* (2007) describe that it is more than a mere box-ticking exercise and at times, research projects have fallen short with regards to ensuring that participants are provided details of the exact requirements of research projects.

Regarding my research, I obtained informed consent from my participants before undertaking the questionnaires and before undertaking the semi-structured interviews. However, this did lead me to question a couple of things; to what extent could the participants give their full consent if work is to be in the public domain after the research is concluded (Ellen, 1984; Waller, 2010)? Moreover, who owns the information (the participant, the institution, me) (Sikes, 2010)?

Because of the above, it was my aim to let participants make an informed decision based on all this information as to whether to participate in my study or not. Electronic consent was requested via the electronic questionnaire that was sent out to the participants. The participants consented to taking part in this research by completing and submitting the electronic questionnaire. It was assumed that if they did not complete a questionnaire then they did not consent to taking part in the research.

The questionnaires clearly stated the aims of my research, the commitment required of the participants and the usage of the information collected.

Separate levels of consent were also obtained from the participants regarding the interview process. As previously discussed, the participants were emailed directly following the completion of the questionnaires and were asked if they would like to participate in a single one-hour interview based on their responses from the questionnaire (see Appendix 3). Details for the interviews were then arranged as per the information discussed previously in this chapter. Participants were also asked to verbally consent to taking part in the research based on the information I had provided them with. These responses were recorded via the Dictaphone and in the interview transcripts.

All steps were taken to ensure that all participants in the research understood the process in which were to be engaged, including why their participation was necessary, how it will be used and how and to whom it will be reported (BERA, 2011). Participants were instructed to read the statement of research thoroughly before consenting through completing and submitting the electronic questionnaire. BERA (2011 p. 5) further states that 'researchers must therefore avoid deception or subterfuge unless their research design specifically requires it to ensure that the appropriate data is collected or that the welfare of the researchers is not put in jeopardy'. I fully complied with the above and was very transparent regarding the aims of my research and the requirements of the participants. I understood that this could have limited the amount of honest information I received from the participants, but I did communicate to the participants that all attempts would be made to conceal their identities and the identities of their institutions so that there would not be any negative consequences to the participants. I also spent time building rapport with the participants by being flexible in my approaches to contact them and with arranging the interviews. I saw this as the best way to not bring my research or my university into disrepute.

Even though the participants completed the questionnaires, they were still free to withdraw from further interviews if they so wished. All participants were told that they had a right to withdraw from my study at any time up to the writing-up of results and subsequent submission of my research for assessment and any resulting publications.

I adhered completely to the Data Protection Act (1998) throughout my research project and during the writing up phase of the thesis, I did consider any changes to data protection legislation in the form of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR, 2018) recommendations. The BERA (2018 p. 24) guidelines recommend that '…citizens are entitled to know how and why their personal data is being stored, to what uses it is being put and to whom it may be made available'. To this end, the data I recorded for my participants was electronically stored on my password protected laptop and this was made known to the research participants. They were also informed that the electronic survey information was saved onto the secure space on the Survey Monkey website and was also password protected. At the time of collecting my responses I was not aware of the potential Data protection risks associated with using the Survey Monkey resource. If I was to do a similar project again, I would use an online survey collection facility recommended by my university. Regarding the Survey Monkey resource, I kept my survey information stored on the Survey Monkey database, which was protected by a password, until the completion of this research and then I planned to delete this survey and all the data contained within it. The interview recordings were saved onto my personal computer at home and were deleted from the Dictaphone's internal memory.

I did not collect any other personal information from my participants apart from those detailed in this thesis, and as previously discussed, I used pseudonyms instead of their real names and I hid their institutions in which they worked. I also never discussed any of my findings other than in the formal write-up of my research and with my university supervisors.

Participants were made aware of all this information prior to the commencement of this research. They were informed about how and why their personal data was being stored, to what uses it was being put and to whom it was being made available (BERA, 2011; BERA, 2018). I also informed them that they had the right to access the information stored in relation to them. All the written transcripts and questionnaire data collected for this research will be deleted following the completion of this research.

As previously discussed, I concealed the identities of my participants so to protect their privacy and confidentiality. I understood that privacy and confidentiality referred to the safeguards that the codes of ethics insist on to protect people's identities, those of the research locations, and it must be assured as the primary safeguard against unwanted exposure (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Regarding my research, this included hiding their institutions in which they worked so that they could not be identified through their job titles.

Ellen (1984) further illustrates that through not conforming to confidentiality and anonymity, research can pose a threat to informants, persons named therein and to the researcher and of course, it was not my intention to pose a threat to anyone and I feel that the measures I took to conceal identities and to securely store the sensitive information ensured that the participants were not at risk during this research, or in subsequent publications.

Deception refers to the deliberate misrepresentations in conducting research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003).

Regarding undertaking social research which requires the use of other citizens, Ellen (1984 p. 138) states that the participants should '…be informed about the methods and aims of the study, its anticipated consequences and potential benefits, risks and disadvantages, to be fairly remunerated for time and assistance, to be given feedback on the results and where practicable, to be consulted over publications and to have their legal or contractual rights in data respected'. I did follow these guidelines; however, it was understood that such obligations could have presented problems, as there was a need to balance full disclosure against my research interests (Ellen, 1984, Gratton and Jones, 2004).

I did not deliberately put my participants at risk during my research and they were informed on a regular basis about the objectives of my research and their right to withdraw from it. I aimed to be honest in the hope that I received honest responses. Whilst I did not remunerate my participants for taking part in my research, I did make the impact on their lives as minimal as possible as I allowed them to choose days/times for carrying out the interviews and I also tailored my questionnaire to be filled in electronically via email and to be as simple to fill in as possible, so that this reduced any adverse consequences in terms of time for the participants.

Additionally, the BERA Guidelines (2011 p. 5) state that 'individuals should be treated fairly, sensitively, with dignity, and within an ethic of respect and freedom from prejudice regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, cultural identity, partnership status, faith, disability, political belief or any other significant difference. This ethic of respect should apply to both the researchers themselves and any individuals participating in the research either directly or indirectly'. To this end, I ensured that all my research participants were treated according to the criteria listed above.

Overall, I believed that participation in my study would be beneficial to my participants and indeed, some of the Sports Lecturers in this research saw this research process as being quite therapeutic for them as it offered them an '…outlet to reflect on experiences and share feelings with a neutral, interested party' (Rossetto, 2014). This was not really considered before undertaking the research, but, on reflection, this was an interesting factor to consider regarding the contexts in which the Sports Lecturers worked. A questionnaire response from Justin, for example, highlighted his frustration with the lack of positive feedback provided to staff at his institution. This was also reinforced by James who referred to the pressures he experienced regarding hitting retention benchmarks in his institution. James stated that he thought his management saw things as:

> '…black and white…below that retention benchmark, you must have done something wrong, what are you going to do right? When you are above it, it's not 'what are you doing, that's brilliant can we share stuff', it's 'you are above it that's good' end of story'.
>
> (James, 2016)

In a later interview response, Justin consequently stated that he found the interview opportunity to be therapeutic for him as it was an opportunity to reflect on his professional practice. It was argued that this was indicative of the context in which FE Lecturers like Justin worked and further discussions about the contexts in which Sports Lecturers worked are discussed later in this thesis. However. It was thought important to illustrate a response from Justin which really highlighted his justification for taking part in the research:

> 'Well, it's nice to talk about it because it's just, you know, it's nice to…give your views and stuff like that really. It's stuff that, you know, you might do on a day-to-day basis and don't ever really think about because it's just, you know, you are doing it automatically aren't you?…'

> '…You know…it's quite nice to…it's that reflective sort of process again isn't it? It's quite nice really'.
>
> (Justin, 2016)

This was an interesting dynamic to emerge from the research. It was clear that the opportunity to reflect on their practice was really appreciated by the Sports Lecturers. This was like Rossetto (2014 p. 484) where she stated that the participants in her research stated that they found her research to be '…positive, therapeutic, and relieving. Some also felt they gained self-awareness and could help themselves and others through participating'. It therefore is argued that the experience of participating in this research was cathartic for the Sports Lecturers as it offered a space to share their experiences (Rossetto, 2014).

I did consider that there could have been negative implications for the Sports Lecturers for taking part in this research, but I tried to alleviate these risks by being honest and open about the aims and objectives of the research and their role as research participants within it. I would have been responsive to any feedback the research participants had regarding the research process. As it turned out, and as documented above, the Sports Lecturers in this research did indicate that participating in this research was beneficial to them as it provided an opportunity to reflect on their practice. I was highly aware, however, that I was not a qualified therapist or counsellor, and so should any issues have arisen in my meetings with the Sports Lecturers, which I believed warranted additional support and guidance, I would have brought this to the attention of the research participants (BERA, 2018) and I would have referred them to such professionals (Rossetto, 2014). If participation in the research was questionable because of adverse consequences of research, I would have reminded the research participants about their rights to be able to withdraw and I would have sought an additional level of consent before continuing with the research. However, overall, I saw my role as a '…listener, learner and observer, not counsellor or therapist' (Rossetto, 2014 p. 485).

In summary, I subscribed to the recommendations that were made in the BERA (2018 P. 29) guidelines where it states:

> 'All educational researchers should aim to protect the integrity and reputation of educational research by ensuring that they conduct their research to the highest standards. Researchers should contribute to the community spirit of critical analysis and constructive criticism that generates improvement in practice and enhancement of knowledge'.

What follows are a series of narratives of the research participants used in this thesis. All narratives were written following a series of questionnaires and interviews with each participant. The transcripts were typed up manually using the Dictaphone. No electronic software was used to analyse the collected data as I wanted to maintain authentic accounts of the interviews and this helped with analysing the information later. All the narratives utilised direct quotes from the interview transcripts and from the questionnaires. This raw data is included in the appendices of this thesis for reliability and validity purposes. The narratives were fully referenced according to the raw data and were presented in descending chronological order with the most-recent biography being presented first. I endeavoured to communicate my findings, and the practical significance of the research, in a clear, straightforward fashion and in language judged appropriate to the intended audience (BERA, 2011; BERA, 2018). As previously stated, the names of the lecturers were changed to ensure privacy and confidentiality. They were referred to as Jack, James, Justin, Bethany and Elsa. For the participants who did not wish to be interviewed, they were referred to as Lecturer 1, 2 and 3 as their questionnaire responses were still deemed to be important and relevant.

Chapter Five – Sports Lecturer Narratives – (2014 to 2017)

Introduction

Table Six – Characteristics of Interviewed Participants

Male	3
Female	2
Age Range Male	26 - 46
Age Range Female	30 - 45
Had PGCE	4
Working Towards PGCE	1
Years Teaching (0 – 5)	2
Years Teaching (6 – 10)	1
Years Teaching (10 +)	2

What follows are five short narratives of the experiences of five Sports Lecturers working in FE institutions in the South West of England. All of the institutions which the Lecturers worked in were graded as at least 'good' according to their last Ofsted inspections. This information comes from their responses to a short Survey Monkey questionnaire and a series of semi-structured interviews that took place at their individual institutions between 2014 and 2017. The narratives cover the following: family views of education and personal school experiences; their routes into teaching; their prior expectations for working in the FE sector together with any disparities they experience in their current roles in comparison to their prior expectations. Finally, each narrative will reflect on lecturer perceptions of performance management and professionalism together with lecturer perceived impacts of their sporting experiences on their professional practice.

Narrative One – (Jack – Summer Term, 2017)

Jack was a PGCE student at a medium sized FE college in the South West of England and he taught on the A Level Physical Education and BTEC Sport courses.

Family View of Education and Personal School Experience

Jack stated that he thought education was '…in like a very basic sense, just the transfer of knowledge from one person to another' (Jack, 2017).

He went on to add that it was also about preparing young people holistically, a sort of 'whole development' (Jack, 2017).

With specific regard to his family's view of education, Jack stated that it was very mixed. He referred to his three brothers and how they all had different experiences of formal education:

> 'My older brother is very academic; he thinks education is great. My two younger brothers, one very similar to me, played a lot of sport. Went to school to essentially play sport. And then my youngest brother, sort of, was a bit of an outcast I guess. So, he almost detached himself from education; did quite well academically, but wasn't interested in, sort of, the school environment. So yes, a very missed opinion'.
>
> (Jack, 2017)

In relation to his parents, neither of them went to university. He referred to how his mother was separated from his father and that she emphasised the importance of formal education, but did not have the expectation that he should go to university; her main emphasis was for her children to gain employment:

> 'I think in terms of making sure that we were set for at least some form of employment. I don't think she wanted to see any, or either of us, or any of us, sort of, not succeed to the point where we weren't able to get a basic job. So, I think it was more employment based than furthering your education experience'.
>
> (Jack, 2017)

Regarding his own view of education, Jack stated that the main purpose of education was to prepare students for life beyond the classroom. Jack went on to state that education was about building '…the whole student, so that not only will they be able to go onto Further Education, but go into employment and develop them socially so that will be able to interact with people and to develop them emotionally' (Jack, 2017).

Jack went on to state that '…it's this general development of the student, rather than just the transfer of knowledge and statistics and numbers' (Jack, 2017).

Route into Teaching

Jack stated that his decision to teach was not as the result of any parental influence and instead was an internal decision. He went on to state that he '…always wanted to work in education in some form. But from working in different jobs, this led me to wanting to work in Further Education' (Jack, 2017). Jack started a PGCE in primary education and after working there, he realised very quickly that was not what he wanted to be doing. This was because that although he was very passionate about his own subject, he was not prepared to teach, plan and evaluate a bunch of other subjects that he was not that passionate about. '…everything. Maths, science, English, literacy, phonics, yes, a bit of everything, history and geography. Yes, I soon realised that I wasn't cut out for primary school education' (Jack, 2017). Jack stated that he then wanted to work as a PE teacher in the secondary sector, but because of some work experience, he decided that he would prefer to work in the Further Education sector instead:

> 'So, I have worked in a secondary school and a sixth form…It was good. I was a learning support assistant and, so I have worked with students of different ability ranges and ages. Through year seven through to the end of sixth form. But that kind of put me off working in secondary education'.
>
> (Jack, 2017)

Jack further explained that the sixth form students he encountered in his secondary experience had a clear focus about what they wanted to achieve and, so they seemed to be more motivated to achieve in those subjects.

He explained that this helped to reinforce that he wanted to work in a post-16 environment, because of having a pre-conceived idea that students would have higher levels of motivation to study their subjects.

Expectations of Working in the FE Sector and Perceived Disparities

Because of Jack's route into teaching, he developed some expectations of what teaching in FE would be like. Jack stated that he thought the:

> '...the motivation of students, through experience and through my own experience of being a student, would be higher (motivation) once you could specify one subject which you would like to learn...Students are a bit more mature usually. So, they are more prepared. They have a better idea of what education is about. Yes, just their motivation levels really'.
>
> (Jack, 2017)

However, Jack went on to refer to how his experience of teaching in an FE institution was different to his prior expectations. He referred to how he thought the FE environment was a lot more marketised compared to what he was expecting and although some of this was covered during his PGCE lectures, '…it is so much more intense than I could have imagined it was' (Jack, 2017). He went on to state that '…there is so much more of an emphasis placed on grades, retention numbers, as opposed to the development of the student (Jack, 2017). Jack was surprised by this emphasis on results, but he went on to state that '…I don't think it's put me off teaching. I still want to teach, and I have still got that for education. It just surprised me a little bit to see how much of an emphasis there are on performance' (Jack, 2017).

With specific regard to teaching in FE, Jack referred to how this also surprised him because the focus appeared to be to get them to pass their qualifications and not to support them in succeeding in their next steps.

Strategies Employed for Dealing with Disparities

Because of the above, Jack stated that he felt his teaching changed to meet the demands that were placed upon him. Jack specifically referred to how he focused less on student development, but instead focused on preparing his learners for their assessments:

> '…it's more focused towards preparing them for an assignment, preparing them for an exam, making sure they are progressing towards their target grades and succeeding them. It's all about assignments and retention numbers even'.

(Jack, 2017)

Jack reinforced that he did this because of job security:

> '…I need to be showing that I can work to certain standards. In terms of having students meet their grades, their showing that I am doing a good enough job to get them through college targets and, yes, I guess, job security'.

(Jack, 2017)

Performance Management, Professionalism and Impact of Sport Experience

In reference to the above, Jack stated that he felt this was just part of the job. He went on to state that he thought every place was going to have some expectation of its staff. 'And those expectations are that you abide, or that you adhere, to the standards. I think that if you are not prepared to then, either there's a big internal issue, or you are in the wrong profession' (Jack, 2017).

When asked what he thought performance management was, Jack referred to this as serving two purposes.

He explained how performance management was useful for teachers to monitor the performance of their students and he stated that it was used by the institutions to monitor the performance of their staff. Jack stated that essentially, performance management was '…that process of making sure that you are doing what you are supposed to be doing, I guess' (Jack, 2017). Jack stated that there was a clear expectation within his institution to monitor student progress. He went on to refer to how specific systems were used to manage performance of students by teachers and staff by their managers.

Regarding how Jack understands his own professionalism, Jack stated that he thought there was a difference between what he called 'general professionalism' and other forms of professionalism. Jack stated that he thought general professionalism was '…having unwritten professional standards which are just general etiquette…being on-time, dress code, being polite, being punctual' (Jack, 2017). He went on to state that there were then professional standards which had to be adhered to as a teacher. He stated that these professional standards were about demonstrating teacher competence.

Jack did state that he did have an affiliation somewhat for the performance management in FE, even though he was surprised by the emphasis on achieving good results by FE institutions. He referred to his sporting experience and how he was very results-driven and competitive, and this competitiveness related well to teaching in FE:

> '…I mean by no means do I think being results driven is a bad thing. I was just surprised to learn that there is this big disparity between what we're told on the course, that it's about the development of students, and results. I am very results driven as well. I do enjoy seeing that I have done a good job. So, in terms of working in Further Education and being competitive, seeing my students attain better grades would be rewarding'.

(Jack, 2017)

Specifically, Jack stated that performing under pressure, presenting to people, working towards outcomes/assessments were a big part of his sports career and therefore he felt that this experience complemented his teaching in an FE environment. He specifically referred to teaching observations; '…but yes, I feel that if I hadn't played sport, my ability to, I guess I'd feel more anxious being observed if I hadn't gotten that experience through sport' (Jack, 2017). He went on to state that when playing sport, he enjoyed having clear results of progression and he could see that he was improving in certain aspects. He went on to refer to his competitiveness and stated that '…I think it's more a result of competitiveness being developed as an athlete, which has then transferred into most things that I do' (Jack, 2017).

In conclusion, Jack referred to his satisfaction with his career choice. He stated that he had not had any days where he thought that it wasn't what he wanted to be doing:

> 'There is nothing that has put me off teaching in a Further Education setting. In terms of each morning, I look forward to coming in and teaching. Yes, nothing at this point, throughout the placement I have done, has made me go home and re-evaluate what I want to be doing.
>
> (Jack, 2017)

He stated that despite the highly results-driven environment, he thought that:

> '…if you want to teach, you have a passion for others succeeding. So, as long as I am teaching in an environment where I can enable students to progress and enable students to be successful, whether it is just in an exam, or generally, then that's rewarding in itself as a teacher'.
>
> (Jack, 2017)

Narrative Two – (James – Summer Term, 2016)

James worked at a small general Further Education college in the South West of England. James was the Course Leader for the BTEC Level 3 qualifications in the institution.

Family View of Education and Personal School Experience

James's father used to be a lecturer and prior to this he was in the Army for 25 years where he did Army-equivalent O Levels. 'He did army equivalents that don't count to anything in the real world but were O Level equivalents' (James, 2016). Because of his father's experiences in the Army, James stated that his father was very supportive of him going to college and then onto university. He specifically stated that 'I think he just wanted me to take my education as far as I could. Really to a) look at an opportunity that did not have, but b) to get better life chances…'. In comparison, on his mother's side of the family, James was the second family member to go to university as his cousin trained to be a doctor. Most of his other family members occupied skilled jobs but did not really have any formal qualifications outside of those gained from school or college. With specific regard to his mother, he referred to her as a 'traditional house wife' who similarly did not achieve formal qualifications outside of school. Consequently, James stated how his mum was 'happy' when she heard the he wanted to go to university and this was probably because of the missed opportunities of her own brothers and sisters. Consequently, because of his family's experiences of education, James stated that he thought his parents could see the value of education, and if they had not, he thought he might have left school at 16 to get a job tennis coaching, although he did state that there were not many coaching jobs around in those days. In summary, James stated that '…their input was key, I think, to me being able to go to university and the support that they gave' (James, 2016).

He went on to state that he would fully encourage his children to go to university also. 'And my expectation for my kids is that realistically I would like them to go to university, if they're able to and if they want to. But I would whole-heartedly encourage them to go to university really' (James, 2016).

With specific regard to his own personal experiences of education, James commented on two significant teachers who had a profound impact on his learning. He commented how, at school, previous maths teachers had written him off, but this specific teacher mapped out in a realistic and honest way which he could achieve:

> 'Just his approach really. It's the way he, sort of, I had been written off by other maths teachers and he, sort of, he never said 'you are going to be an A*, and give me all that 'you could do whatever, you could get an A', but he, sort of, mapped out realistically and said, you know, 'you can do this, you can do this, you struggle on this, we can help with that, you really struggle on this, we almost need to write that off'. He was almost, he did not say you were rubbish at maths, but he said focus on your strengths, those areas of weakness you need to focus on, those one's don't bother because you are not going to be able to do it, it's just the, you are not wired up to be able to cope with that. And he was right, and I focused on strengths, worked on the weaknesses that he suggested I could be better at and I managed to get a C so. There was, the plan that he saw was right. You know, there was no way I could get an A, no way. And, you know, people, 'you cannot get an A, I'm writing you off, you know, you are no good'. And he saw enough in me to be able to get a C which is what you needed to get, which was fine'.

(James, 2016)

James also commented on a teacher that he had during his A Levels who supported him well to achieve his A Level in English:

> 'I had an English teacher during my A Levels that was really good. Sort of sat me down, really whispering, quiet, softly spoken and just took me aside and said, 'look you are in danger of underperforming, you need to do x, y and Z and again, quite clearly mapped out what you needed to do and that saved me with English Literature'.
>
> (James, 2016)

He referred to these teachers as role models and stated that he could relate well to them. When asked if he tried to emulate their practice into his own delivery, James responded 'I suppose the answer to that would be no because I try to be me, but realistically yes. You take bits of all those people that you think actually 'that was good, that was good, that was good'' (James, 2016). He made the link to his current practice and said that he similarly enjoyed observing teachers in his current job role as a Teaching and Learning manager as he used elements of their practice in his own delivery. He referred to this process as contributing to his 'teaching jigsaw' (James, 2016). He went on to comment on how sometimes he got frustrated with a reluctance of some staff in his institution to share their good and outstanding resources with others.

James would like to see more sharing of good practice in his institution. He does go on to state that a major barrier for why this does not happen is because of a lack of time and support from the institution. 'Probably, we just don't have enough time to do that is the answer, and sometimes the forum to do that as well' (James, 2016).

Route into Teaching

James started doing a BEd at university, but transferred onto a BA with some Education units, because of a negative work experience placement at a secondary school:

> '…in Hounslow and I had a really bad experience in a summer term doing athletics and I thought 'my goodness, this is not the job for me', having seen the behaviour of the kids, the way the PE teacher at the time dealt with it, and I thought 'this is not the right environment for me and I cannot see myself enjoying that'.
>
> (James, 2016)

Following the completion of his BA, James decided not to enrol onto a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and decided instead to go into tennis coaching. He was a professional tennis player but struggled to make this endeavour financially viable and so he decided to go into tennis coaching instead. 'When I, sort of, finished coaching was the natural, playing tennis and then coaching was the natural route onto having done a sports degree. And I think deep-down that he knew I would probably end up teaching PE at some stage, from the background of doing sports throughout my whole life' (James, 2016). This coaching experience eventually motivated him to pursue a career in teaching, but it was important to him that this would be with older students and not in the primary or secondary sectors. 'I made a conscious choice that it would be with older kids…I was…enticed by kids that had made a definite choice to further their education and allegedly wanted to be there…' (James, 2016). Soon after, he was appointed as an associate lecturer and he completed his DTTLS (Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector). He did, however, go on to state that he regretted his decision to drop out of the BEd, but he would not have been happy if he would have ended up teaching in the secondary sector because of his previous experiences.

Expectations of Working in the FE Sector and Perceived Disparities

Because of James's previous work experience, his expectation of the learners he would encounter in the FE sector was that they would be more mature in terms of their approaches to learning, almost in preparation for them going on to study at university.

James also stated that he perceived the FE environment to be less formal in terms of '…bells, sir, miss, hand up' (James, 2016). He was very much looking forward to working in this kind of environment.

With specific regard to his expectations of teaching in the FE sector, James stated that he had a naïve idea that the students would be well-behaved and keen to learn '…you think that you are in the front of the classroom and you are going to deliver to these students, they're going to learn something, hopefully either produce a piece of work, or sit an exam and beyond their, sort of, one year if they're doing a Level 2, or two-year journey if they're doing a Level 3 course and then leave' (James, 2016). As will now be illustrated, his experience was quite different to this expectation.

James's main disparity seemed to be with the learners he encountered. He felt that whilst some learners genuinely wanted to attend an FE institution to gain a qualification, which would set them up well for their futures, he did feel that some learners were 'forced' to attend and this gave him the impression that it was compulsory for them to attend:

> 'Yes, I think in recent years a lot of kids, if I go back my experience, you know, it's 18 years I think initially the people that stay on, you can argue that there's a decline in demographics, but initially students stayed on because they wanted to gain a qualification, or they had a real passion for a subject and I think now they are forced to have to stay on in education. So I think, even though we have students, the vast majority fall into that category wanting to be here, I still think there are some through information, IAG, or through their own pig-headedness or through things that we cannot control like parents in the background have forced them into 16+ education and I'm saying it's not necessarily the right environment for them, but they have to do something, particularly those in recent years that haven't passed Maths and English to a C, so I think there's been a small change in terms of, you know, it's almost compulsory now isn't it'.
>
> (James, 2016)

Because of this, he strongly felt that significant pastoral care issues had arisen, and this negatively influenced his time:

> 'I think in terms of pastoral care I think it's impacted it enormously in that…I would say that in my tutor group 25% of my students take up 75% of my time, it's disproportionate and the sad thing is that those that are really good students who probably deserve more of my time actually are self-sufficient and get less of my time and it is the people that are sometimes genuinely struggling for a variety of different reasons, or those that are slack and need the pastoral support in terms of not attending classes, falling behind with deadlines, might be getting, there are a variety of reasons for why that might happen, but they take up a disproportionate amount of my time and it should be the other way round, so I'm a slave to the 25% of those that don't do what they should do. It's not always their fault, but I do spend a disproportionate amount of my time with them than the good kids'.

(James, 2016)

Strategies Employed for Dealing with Disparities

Coming from a sports background, and in particular, a single-sports background, James felt that his experiences made him initially approach his teaching in a more selfish manner. When specifically referring to when he started out on his teaching career, James stated that '…you become selfish and I think initially, you know, you do it my way and this is the only way and if you cannot do it, that's your own fault' (James, 2016). Now however, he felt that his approach to teaching had changed. He felt like he had become more tolerant in his teaching and now he appreciated that there was '…more than one way to skin a cat and I think you open your mind to there are different ways of doing it and not everyone can do it' (James, 2016). He referred specifically to his teaching presentations and how he felt like he was a visual learner and he used to try to make his lessons as visually appealing as he could, sometimes forgetting about the learners who might prefer a different approach.

James went on to state that he had '…probably got a bit more in-tune with trying to help learners for the way they are, rather than 'this is the way I do it, this is the way you must do it' (James, 2016).

James felt like his sports experiences had benefitted his teaching as well. He also played many team sports outside of his tennis and he felt that this had greatly benefitted his teaching practice. He specifically referred to the fact that as he got older, he had to adapt the way he played his sports in order to deal with the younger players '…you have to use your knowledge if you want to beat somebody that is considerably younger than you, that might be better in terms of being able to cover the court, you have to think about different ways, different strategies in which to deal with their threat' (James, 2016).

James went on to refer to how he had learnt from his experiences from playing sport and how he had transferred this into his teaching practice. He stated how he had become more flexible and reflective in his teaching because of his sports experience. James further explained how he felt his role had changed over time from being initially focused on teaching learners about their academic subjects, to now being more focused on developing their skills for their futures. He went on to describe how he wanted to inspire his students and to help them progress in whatever they chose to do, but it was important to him that they were able to contribute fully to the communities in which they lived. 'Now I would say yes, I want to inspire them to be involved in sport, have sports careers and seriously look after themselves in terms of fitness, but now I look at it more as being to help them on a journey to be a decent citizen and maybe not working in the sport and leisure industry, but actually being able to contribute to society…' (James, 2016). In addition to the above, he also commented that he hoped that his learners achieved a certificate in their subject, which '…says they have reached this educational level and therefore they have got a certain level of understanding' (James, 2016).

However, he felt that there had been a change in emphasis in his teaching because of external pressures. 'I suppose everyone wishes for that, if I could just focus on producing material, resources and everything for my teaching, it seems that nowadays the supporting paperwork and trail has to be there, the teaching is almost a bolt-on' (James, 2016). This pressure to produce supporting paperwork added additional pressure onto James's time and so this meant that he had to adapt his preparation in order to deal with the additional time constraints. He referred to lecturers as being 'time-poor'. 'Because you are short of time and if you had that time to find three other case studies, it would be more enriching, more varied and probably a better experience for the students potentially. But yes, we are time poor now I think as lecturers' (James, 2016).

Because of being 'time-poor', James also commented on how he had to use his holidays in order to catch up with work, or to complete paperwork. He referred to how people often commented how teachers got a lot of holiday, but he found himself having to mark in the evenings when he was on holiday. 'I still go on holiday, don't get me wrong, but in the other week I will be doing marking in the evenings, to make sure I am up together with where I need to be for when I come back, or preparing material' (James, 2016). He definitely felt that the workload had increased in recent years and this had serious impacts on his personal time. 'I think in terms of workload, you know, when I first started you probably had to produce a scheme of work, you did your assignments probably throughout the year as you were going along when you saw it was fit. Now, all the schemes of work have to be in place before you leave' (James, 2016). This meant that he had to spend more time at home marking. He did state that he could be more time-efficient in work and complete more marking in work, but he felt that his working conditions were not conducive to him being able to mark effectively because he quite likes '…quiet and most team rooms don't afford you that quietness to do my marking properly' (James, 2016). James had to develop further strategies for dealing with this increase in workload.

He started, for instance, setting deadlines for his assignments the week before half-term holidays because this gave him an additional week to mark the work on top of the set college deadline of two weeks.

James summarised the constraints on his time by detailing the specific time pressures, which had resulted from awarding body changes to the BTEC courses that he managed:

> 'It's just the time pressure that increases, increases year on year. I've got to find that time. We're looking at, I deliver, 14 units. So, if you, my maths isn't great Jake, but if you times 14 by 5 that's 70 pieces of work that I have got to change, to convert over. And we're just talking about assignment briefs. So, 70 time 20 so that in minutes, so it's just finding, and that's just one aspect. And I know everyone else is the same unless you change exam boards, but that's just one aspect where I have had to increase the amount, and that information exists still on a piece of paper that I've got this year that can be printed out with the dates changed and looked through, but I have got to put it into the new format. And that's just one thing'.
>
> (James, 2016)

James specifically referred to the recent changes to the BTEC framework which had profound impacts on his time. He strongly felt that the policy changes were not thought out properly. 'I think someone comes up with this good idea which is great on paper, but no one looks to the long-term implications what it's like…'. James went on to voice his frustrations with the way in which the finer details of policy changes were not investigated:

> 'Our specifications change this September if you go on the new NQF framework, but we don't need to take that up, we have another year's grace, so we are not moving to it. And the exam is the new BTEC thing they are changing, or examined units or sampled units. And work experience is one of the massive things they are looking at, which is great because work experience is important particularly on vocational courses…'

> '…And I went to Exeter in December and they were saying 'work experience brilliant, brilliant what we need you to do is involve external agencies. They should be delivering 50, 60% of a unit like work experience, they should be delivering it. So, someone asked the question 'well, what delivery as in coming in and delivering it?' and they said 'yes', 'so what about payment?'. They sort of said… 'So, you are expecting them to deliver it for free?'. 'Well we haven't really thought about that'. Someone put their hand up and said 'what about, you are asking external agencies to come in and deliver to students, to a) not be paid and b) they haven't got a teaching qualification. What happens if you are in an Ofsted inspection and they go to that lesson where you are at the back with, not a guest speaker, but someone who is delivering a massive chunk of your unit because of their vocationally relevant experience, but isn't qualified? And they went 'we'll get back to you on that'. This is what seems to happen with a lot of the educational changes, particularly in specifications'.
>
> (James, 2016)

He was not completely against the changes to the BTEC framework. He actually felt that some of the changes might be beneficial to his learners, for example, he did feel that having exams added to BTEC qualifications would actually benefit the learners that progress to university. 'Yes, there are pieces that need to be changed and tweaked, and I understand the need for exams because a lot of universities are saying BTEC students are really good in terms of research, really good in terms of meeting deadlines, but they really blow up in exams…' (James, 2016). However, James was very frustrated that the awarding body had made:

> '…sweeping changes to all these units, you know, they have changed the names of the units, condensed two units into one, why not just take out a few units that they don't want, which is fine, change the process in terms of A and P becomes an examined unit, we can deal with that, Exercise, Health and Lifestyle becomes a unit that is done by remote sampling, I understand. But they are making whole sale changes when they don't need to'.
>
> (James, 2016)

In addition to the above, James had very little faith in the system because he had been in the job for over twenty years and he felt that in three years '…they'll change back to what we're doing now again, I expect, or fairly similar. It might not be three years, but five years' time. And the wheel seems to go around' (James, 2016). He referred to when he first started teaching and he delivered AVCE qualifications, which were endorsed by the Government at the time. '…going to be the new qualification, the Government endorsed it, you know, it was basically going to be the end of BTEC, it was going to sweep it all away, it was the equivalent to A Levels, it was academically rigorous, it lasted two years' (James, 2016). He went on to refer to how the qualification lasted only a short period and then it disappeared. James stated that '…it does seem that every single Government wants to make massive changes to the system that they inherit from their predecessors'. James appealed that his wish was for all of the main political parties to sit down and come up with educational policies which last, in his words, '…20 years, 10 years that doesn't matter who's in power, that's what they'll do' (James, 2016).

Performance Management, Professionalism and Impact of Sport Experience

Initially, when referring to his own professionalism and the educational contexts that he found himself working in, James stated that he was now target driven and his aim was to:

> '…retain as many students as possible that at some stage you have to draw a line under it that I've deem are fit to pass the course or complete the course, and sometimes along the way you have to let students go and there is a story behind every single student, but at the end of the day, they are a number and what is seen at the end is a number 'how many did you retain, how many were successful, the value added, the high grades that you achieved and, my professionalism is that I am aiming to achieve those targets'.
>
> (James, 2016)

However, he went on to refer to how he wanted '…every say child, every young adult in my care to do the best that they can…'. He went on to state that he felt his professionalism meant directing his learners to achieve beyond their minimum target grades (MTGs) and to provide them with skills for employment.

With specific regard to performance management in his job role, he referred to how he was judged against benchmarks. He also stated how he did not achieve results for his own glory, but instead for his own protection from negative actions from senior management. James referred to his own experience of course manager meetings with members of his senior management team (SMT):

> 'But yes, I mean I don't want to be below the national benchmark if I can avoid it because I have to go to a meeting where it might be quite uncomfortable with the principal and if you are close to benchmark or above it, it's a much nicer experience than it is if you are below the benchmark. So, you know, for your own, sort of a, it's not for my own glory, I think it's for my own protection when you go up and meet with him in October/November, that if your stats look better than the national benchmark you are ok'.
>
> (James, 2016)

James went on to say that if he had micro-control over his students, he would like to beat the national benchmark by 0.5% and then the Principal would not have high expectations leading to a high degree of pressure. He stated that 'it's about managing that expectation for him isn't it' (James, 2016). When referring to teaching observations, he stated that he thought teaching observations were key, as he wanted to be seen to be doing a good job. With specific regard to grading of teaching observations, James stated:

> '…I cannot speak for everyone else in the department, but there seems to be that realistically as long as you avoid a four and a three, then that's ok…'

> '…I would always try and aim to get a one. If you don't get a one there's maybe a reason behind that. But certainly, yes, I would not want to be a three or a four. And you would aim for a one and if it doesn't work out, it doesn't work out for whatever reason that might be'.
>
> (James, 2016)

When asked if there was a competitive element of achieving higher grades in teaching observations compared to his colleagues, James stated that '…in terms of trying to beat the people next to me, no' (James, 2016). He went on to state that he understood '…that we get set targets and MTGs, matching high grades and being there, but ultimately the cohort of students, you get, ok you've interviewed them, but how they work, you have no control over that really' (James, 2016).

In further reference to the learners on his courses, James stated that there was a difference to learners who attend a sixth form and a general FE college. 'I think the fact is that because we are in tertiary education and realistically no one is said 'no' to here, are they really? If they want to do a course, unless there is a really, really serious reason why they cannot, they are accepted' (James, 2016). He went on to refer to how he felt that learners who were applying to colleges were more in-tune with the requirements for college interviews and therefore they knew what to say in order to not raise suspicions regarding their suitability to the courses they are applying to:

> 'We don't interview every single student that we take, you know, if the IAG might happen on open evenings, parents briefing evenings, when we have taster days, but I think the students we receive are better grounded because they are going to more colleges to have a look, they're having more interviews, they can often say the right thing in interview that makes no alarm bells ring'.
>
> (James, 2016)

This led on to the main conflict that James experienced on a regular basis. One of his main concerns was with the use of data to drive his performance management. One of the issues he had was with the idea of being selective with regard to the learners that he accepted onto his courses. James strongly felt that focusing on data success went against the fundamental reason for why he felt he was doing his job; that being to give his learners a 'leg-up in life' (James, 2016). James gave a specific example of a good student he taught in the previous year. He said that the student was '…a lovely lad, really nice, doing all the right things, coaching, you know, he stayed on and did his coaching beyond his academic career finishing here, will do well, you know, is going to Southampton and will do well with whatever university he does' (James, 2016). His main frustration was that:

> 'I would have liked to spend more time with Ben, but I knew he was self-sufficient, was meeting all his deadlines and everything like that, but I have spent most of my time with the other people in his group…that have struggled because they're not on the same academic wavelength and work ethic as he's got. And that's what I think is a bit perverse about it really, a lot of my, actually goes with the waifs and strays and not being able to celebrate the really good kids'.
>
> (James, 2016)

James felt like he got a discrepancy like this because his institution was not selective in comparison to other institutions. He referred to how his principal used data on a regular basis on staff training days and at the start of academic years to justify the position of the institution in comparison with other colleges in the local vicinity. James stated:

> 'I know **** (a college) down the road, particularly with AS, if you did not get a C you could not carry on with that subject. Well realistically if you got a C at AS you are going to have a hard job to fail aren't you. And therefore, that means that their A2 is 100% in every single subject…'

> '…Well that's being selective'.
>
> (James, 2016)

In comparison, James stated how his institution took students onto A2 subjects who had only achieved E grades at AS. He referred to how his institution was therefore not selective, but then would be penalised if these students went on to fail at A2 if their grades looked worse compared to other local institutions. He referred to gains and losses when referring to this particular situation because on the one hand it would really benefit the learners if they managed to improve their grades, but on the other it would mean that the learners went on to fail, which was not good. As a result, league table results for James were an issue because:

> '...You know, with those risks, come greater gains, but you know, greater losses. And I think because we aren't selective, we have to deal with those marginal students a lot more and therefore league tables can either be brilliant for us, or it can look like a pile of absolute rubbish'.
>
> (James, 2016)

He therefore often found himself in conflict with the performance management he experienced, and he often asked himself '…that's the trade-off, should we be more selective?' (James, 2016). James summarised by stating how he would use the data to better improve his grades, but this would mean that he would not take a chance on the learners that had borderline grades and therefore this would go against the fundamental reason for why he was doing his job in the first place; that being to give them a 'leg-up in life' (James, 2016):

> '…I expect there's, you know, there will be some anomalies that don't and therefore what happens is realistically, if we're going to be really focused by league tables, is do I take a chance on those kids that haven't got C's, or have got one C and not the other one and their timetable is going to have functional skills or maths and English. But I know realistically their going to be MTG match at best or below…'

'…If I am looking to have ALPS 1, I am going to get rid of them aren't I and bin them straight away'.

(James, 2016)

Narrative Three – (Justin – Summer Term, 2016)

Justin worked at a small general Further Education college in the South West of England. Justin was the Course Leader for the BTEC Level 2 qualifications in the institution.

Family View of Education and Personal School Experience

Justin initially stated that his parents had a high regard for formal education. His mother was an art teacher '…she was an art teacher and so obviously, went through, went to boarding school and then went onto university and then at that time, a woman going to university was quite unusual, so, you know, quite a big thing' (Justin, 2016). His father went to Cambridge University. 'So, in terms of both parents really, really saw the importance of education massively' (Justin, 2016). However, Justin went on to explain how the pressure exerted by his parents caused both him and his sister to rebel against the views expressed by his parents.

When referring to his own experience at school, Justin stated that it was good and his interest in sport began because of the experiences he had throughout his school years. He grew up in New Zealand and so his education was very outdoor based and as a result, he formed '…a love for outdoor sports especially' (Justin, 2016). When he returned to the UK, he attended a small village primary school where the head master '…was an ex-professional footballer and this had a great impact on sport for me' (Justin, 2016). This pattern continued into his secondary school experience where his tutor was a sports master, and this lead to him having '…a brilliant relationship with him' (Justin, 2016). As a result, Justin was very motivated to play sport, and this influenced his decision to gain employment in the leisure industry when he left school.

'…When I left school, I got, I went into work…I worked at various leisure institutions and organisations…Got a fitness instructor qualification which led onto a personal training qualification and various studio class qualifications' (Justin, 2016).

Whilst in employment, he referred to one of his own fitness instructors who used to train him each week. Justin referred to how this individual had a wealth of vocational experience in his field, because of him being an SAS civilian fitness instructor and having worked in Motor GP. Justin found this individual to be very motivational and inspirational. He continued to work in the fitness industry in various roles before ending up in his current role at his institution. It could be said that he fell into teaching.

Route into Teaching

Justin detailed how he '…did a block of work at the University of East London with personal training, doing a diploma. And then just went into industry, self-employed. Ended up at **** (his current institution)' (Justin, 2016). During working at this institution, he was offered the opportunity to work on a project called the Increased Flexibility Project, which aimed to engage disengaged 14-16-year-old pupils. Because of Justin's work on this project, he was offered the opportunity to teach on a more permanent basis:

> 'Obviously the people I was working with, the sort of management team behind me, saw what I was like as a teacher and, sort of, talked to me, had conversations with me about going into teaching on a more permanent basis and then I was lucky enough to be given 'drips and drabs' of teaching each year until it, sort of, got more and more and more and the sports development job got less and less and less, and they basically turned over'.
>
> (Justin, 2016)

When asked if he kept up-to-date with his vocational experience, Justin stated that he delivered on the fitness instructor qualification at his institution and this was working with adults, which he found to be very different to 16-19-year-old learners.

Expectations of Working in the FE sector and Perceived Disparities

Before entering employment in the FE sector, Justin had specific expectations of what teaching would be like in this institution. 'I felt that if you were tackling a subject then the subject that you would be tackling would be quite in depth and quite broad' (Justin, 2016). He was disappointed to learn that the subjects he would be delivering, were specifically driven towards criteria that needed to be achieved in order for learners to complete their qualifications. Consequently, Justin felt that this meant that the students were '…possibly missing out on a much broader outline or subject matter' (Justin, 2016).

He further explained that his prior expectations of the students would be that they had decided to attend college and that they would have a more mature approach to their learning and therefore, the consequences for, for example, poor attendance, would be the responsibility of the learner. He was disappointed to learn that '…I look at FE now and it's like herding sheep isn't it' (Justin, 2016). Justin understood that this conflict was because of the need of his institution to have positive statistical outcomes such as, high retention figures. Consequently, he felt like his job role was more as a social worker than a lecturer:

> 'You know, we are getting these pupils and we are trying to hold onto every single student because retention figures are key, and we are doing our upmost, if someone said to me, 'right, you know, explain what a teacher is', before going into FE, and I would say, you know, it's someone that educates and it's someone that does this and this, I think it's almost like being a social worker'.
>
> (Justin, 2016)

Because of this pressure by his institution to get good results, Justin felt like he is '…producing candidates that might not know the industry particularly well, does it get them ready for the industry in a good way? Probably not. You are scratching the surface of quite a deep puddle' (Justin, 2016). When asked how he dealt with that, he responded by stating that there was a conflict between what was expected of him as a teacher and what was expected of him as a vocational expert in his field. Justin understood that it was not really the fault of his institution, but '…maybe…the people that are writing the assessments are endemic and maybe not industry driven. I mean you can see the way the paper is going, the awarding bodies are going, that it is more academic, and you are losing the vocational side of things…' (Justin, 2016).

Strategies Employed for Dealing with Disparities

When asked about his level of compliance with regard to the above, Justin stated that he just did it:

> 'Honestly, you just do. And in terms of what you've got, the process of how you are trying to teach is that you look at the specifications don't you. You look at the specs and then you, the teacher, design the assignment criteria, the assessment, around those specifications. So realistically, because of your past experiences you know what they take in and what they don't take in, what type of learners they are and that sort of thing. Specifically, you are teaching them towards that sort of criteria. But again, you are almost becoming a victim of the system. You are having to drive towards hitting certain criteria, so statistically your grades don't suffer. And that's very clear with course management meetings and things like that. They are looking at making someone accountable aren't they'.
>
> (Justin, 2016)

With regard to specific strategies that Justin employed to deal with the context in which he worked, he referred to the way in which he used the experiences he gained as an elite cyclist and how this drove his professional performance. He referred to the skills he developed when working as a personal trainer and how he transferred these skills into his teaching. 'And I think my lessons are quite, you know, although sometimes they are very dry subjects or whatever, I think they are delivered in a positive way, in an upbeat sort of way, as opposed to just going through the motions. If that makes sense' (Justin, 2016). He went on to reflect on his own competitive experience and how there was a crossover between his competitive experience and his professional career. He stated that:

> '…This is me because I really want to do well at cycling, I want to be the best I can be in cycling. So, what I try and do is that I try to apply everything I do with training and with racing and all that, and try to apply that to my professional career as well. I try and spend extra time preparing resources, getting my marking done as soon as it's in, and these types of things. I think that to be good at sport, you have to be logical, you almost have to be bordering on obsessive and it's about, you know, these little things that you are going to be doing and I think if you can apply those to your professional life, which is what I try and do, that's how the cross over happens'.

(Justin, 2016)

Justin referred to how he often communicated this to his learners in order to motivate his students who were not necessarily achieving what they should do:

> 'I would say to my sports students that if you want to do really well at your sport, how do you get good at sport?' You train don't you. You put in extra time and extra effort, you have extra sessions. So how can you expect to do well in your work if you are not putting in the extra time, you are not doing the extra sessions, you are not doing that extra bit of work at home?'

(Justin, 2016)

Performance Management, Professionalism and Impact of Sport Experience

Justin referred to how staff were sometimes scared about getting poor results and therefore he personally worked hard to ensure that his results were positive. He reinforced this when he referred to the good results he had received on his courses and the impacts that these have had. However, because of this direct intervention, he believed that some of the independent studying skills required by his learners for university study were lost and therefore, he believed that a large proportion of his students would struggle at university compared to A Level students:

> 'But in terms of, what I am trying to say with the league tables and things like that, that are produced, you know, like Strode is, I mean when you see those in the, at the end of the year, or at the beginning of the new year and you see where you are on the, you know, I sort of think, 'ok I've got, I've had a grade one observation and I've had subsequent grade one's throughout my career', they've either been grade one's or two's and I sort of think, I know I am conscientious, I know that I spend lots of time doing it, so I sort of think actually the league table, it doesn't, I don't care because I know I've done my best, or I care enough to think about 'well if I've done my best, why aren't I up near the top', so then I would start thinking about doing something about it, but actually we're producing really good results and things, so perhaps if it was the other way, we weren't at the top of the leagues, then perhaps I would start worrying about it, but at the moment I don't give it any thought because we are at the top'.

(Justin, 2016)

Because of the consistently good results, which the learners on his courses achieved, he stated that this meant his managers would feel like he was doing a good job because his results were positive:

> '…if your students are high performing students, then, sort of the management systems in place can say well they are meeting their statistics, they are high achieving students, the people in charge of them must be doing a fairly decent job'.

(Justin, 2016)

With reference to how Justin defines his own professionalism in the contexts he works, he stated that because of the time constraints placed on his managers, he was often left to his own devices and this had positive and negative impacts. 'I think ultimately it is the people that are in control of us. But having said that, I think they have massive time constraints and things like that, so you are left to your own devices' (Justin, 2016). As a result, he stated that his professionalism was driven by himself and in terms of that:

> '…that's why you get some very good teachers and some very bad teachers don't you. You know, no one checks if you, seemingly, there is not that many checks on the types of work you do, the types of work you do outside of your working hours. And having one observation a year to check if your teaching's good. I don't know if that's the best idea either'.

(Justin, 2016)

Finally, with specific regard to teaching observations, Justin referred to how he actually quite liked them, and this was because he liked '…to get some feedback, I like to get, I certainly like to know if I need to do something right, you know, that's not right. So, I quite like that feedback and that sort of thing' (Justin, 2016).

Narrative Four – (Bethany – Summer Term, 2014)

Bethany worked at a medium sized FE college in the South West of England. Bethany was the Course Leader for the A Level Physical Education course in the institution. She also taught on all levels of the BTEC qualifications in the department.

Family View of Education and Personal School Experience

Bethany initially stated that she thought her views of education were definitely shaped by the views of her parents and by her own experiences. 'I think a lot of that came from, sort of, some of it came from my parents and what they thought of education. I think some of it came from your schooling and what they, sort of, viewed education' (Bethany, 2014). Bethany also commented that some of her negative experiences from attending school influenced her professional career. She referred to how she always tried to ensure that her learners had positive experiences so that they did not look back on their schooling and think that she was a bad teacher. 'So, I think that's changed in the way that I want to give them something good, their learning experience, I want it to be good because maybe I did not have a great learning experience at high school and I want them to kind of remember what I've done for them in a nice way' (Bethany, 2014).

Route into Teaching

Bethany originally trained as a physiotherapist alongside playing international rugby. She stated that:

> '…after three dislocated wrists, I thought that actually 'what happens with Physio?' and 'will I be able to run around a pitch until I am 50'? So, it just so happened that a PGCE place came up and I went for it and before I completed the whole of my PGCE, I was offered a job and I kind of just thought 'why not take it and run with it…'
>
> (Bethany, 2014)

Bethany referred specifically to how she fell into teaching and there '…wasn't something earlier on in life where I said, 'I am going to be a teacher'. That definitely wasn't on the cards' (Bethany, 2014). She completed her PGCE in Post Compulsory Education (PCET), but she did not feel like her PGCE suitably prepared her for what teaching was going to be like in a Further Education college and she stated that she learnt a lot more when she was actually doing the job. She stated that she thought her PGCE gave her a '…little bit of a tool box, but I think I learnt more…being on the job, being around others, their work ethic, what was done, policies and procedures' (Bethany, 2014). She specifically referred to how her PGCE taught her to teach 'from the front' (Bethany, 2014), but her teaching practice changed her professional practice. She did however state that she thought the work done on Bloom's Taxonomy on her PGCE, was very relevant to her teaching practice.

Expectations of Working in the FE Sector and Perceived Disparities

Prior to training as a teacher, Bethany thought education was what everyone had to do to be somewhere, or get to do something in life. She went on to state that '…without an education you'd be nothing inevitably, so it's kind of your stepping stone, your pathway that everyone had to take in order to get to a greater status and to be able to earn money' (Bethany, 2014). With regard to Further Education, Bethany stated that she thought this was about giving people an '…insight into a specific subject area, maybe so they'd want to take it up further level so take it up at HE' (Bethany, 2014).

When referring to her expectations of teaching, she mentioned her own experiences of the teachers she encountered in her life. She stated that:

> '…I, kind of, had expectations of my teacher. You think that you would not see them out on a Friday night, or you would not, you know, I don't know, it's like they don't have a life, but you, kind of, expect them to mark your homework and they do this and they do this, so I thought that's what I, kind of, expected when I was their age so now I'm that person I've got to respect what I thought in my 16/17-year-old self'.

(Bethany, 2014)

With regard to her day-to-day practice, Bethany referred to how she was a little surprised by some of the staffroom antics she experienced. These were contrary to the expectations she had of the professionalism of teachers:

> 'So, my expectations were that, you know, everyone sits at their desk and does their work and does this and that, and it might just be that the office that I'm in, but it's, kind of, like a party sometimes in there and you think, if someone walked in from management, what the hell would they think right now because this isn't right to me, it's not professional in the slightest. There's swearing going on, there's people name-dropping other people, they're slating students, saying students are this and students are that. You know, I don't think that that is professional at all'.

(Bethany, 2014)

With specific regard to pay, Bethany felt that she did not get rewarded for the work she did. She went on to compare what she got paid to that of primary school teachers in her local area. 'There was a local article in a local newspaper of what local primary school teachers get and I was absolutely disgusted… the average wage for the North Somerset primary school teacher was £41K' (Bethany, 2014).

Overall however, Bethany was happy that she chose to work in the FE sector because she really did not see herself teaching in the secondary or primary sectors because she expected behavioural problems in the secondary sector and she thought that she would lose her vocational identity in the primary sector.

Strategies Employed for Dealing with Disparities

As a result of the disparities experienced above, Bethany employed some strategies for dealing with them. One of the main strategies she employed was to utilise her negative experiences from her own school experience to ensure that she gave positive experiences to her learners. Bethany stated:

> '…I would not want my students or my learners to go away in ten years' time and look back and think 'oh Becky was an awful teacher because she did this, and she'd make us copy out of a text book'. So, I think that's changed in the way that I want to give them something good, their learning experience, I want it to be good because maybe I did not have a great learning experience at high school and I want them to kind of remember what I've done for them in a nice way'.

(Bethany, 2014)

As a result of this motivation to give her learners a positive experience, Bethany devised an innovative method for capturing student feedback:

> 'I probably don't have a specific measure, but I always, so every two weeks in every lesson, and this is what's kind of, an idea given to the institution is that I take a post-it note and a number 1 to 10, something that was good about the lesson and something I could improve on, so I have constantly got a file of feedback and improving, so hopefully they get what they want rather than what I want to be'.

(Bethany, 2014)

In addition to this, she also referred to how she sometimes had to work over the weekends in order to complete the tasks which she had been set by management. Additionally, Bethany stated that she used the college systems effectively and that she kept a diary in order for her to manage her time effectively. She stated that she did this because '…I think if you just go in and you don't have that in place, then that's when you can be left at home doing things in hours that you are not meant to be doing them' (Bethany, 2014). She also referred to how she was often firm with students so that this reduced the impact on her at home. When she was asked why she did these things, Bethany stated that she used the systems so that she covered herself in case anything came back on her at a later date. She referred to this specifically as 'having her bacon covered' (Bethany, 2014). She additionally stated:

> 'So, I just think time management, planning time effectively and using the systems to the way they are so that you are not accountable, you know, you've got a learner that comes out with a U, you've got 37 comments on a system, or your manager is clearly aware that's going to happen, so you are not held accountable, so, well 'I met you at points X, Y and Z and said that so', what you are expecting'.
>
> (Bethany, 2014)

Performance Management, Professionalism and Impact of Sport Experience

When asked for her definition of professionalism, Bethany responded that there were different definitions of professionalism according to the roles of individuals within her institution. 'So, if I am saying professionalism, if someone said, if my boss said...I would probably say it is an expectation of you. What someone's expectation is of you in a certain situation' (Bethany, 2014). When specifically referring to her manager's view of professionalism, she stated that:

> 'I think that their idea of professionalism is that you work, sort of, to a high standard all of the time. That you are consistent…'

> '…That you sort of do everything by their guidelines and by their policies and procedures and you don't, there's no flexibility in them, and you should not step over the line, you know. I think it's, you've got to do everything by the book, there's no flexibility of going in or out of that. You've got to do X, Y and Z'.
>
> (Bethany, 2014)

As a result of the above, Bethany stated that her version of professionalism had more flexibility in it:

> 'I think that my version of professionalism is, the only probably difference is that I think there should be some flexibility within those and professionalism, you know, they may not what, in certain situations - Safeguarding situations for example, there might be a certain book to follow, but I don't necessarily think that that is going to always lead to the best outcome, so I think that sometimes you have got to be flexible'.
>
> (Bethany, 2014)

She additionally stated that she would like managers to allow their teaching staff to work from home when they are not teaching.

As a result of the managerial professionalism detailed above, Bethany referred to how tasks within her job made her worry. 'Generally underperforming students, kind of, make you worry, Ofsted make you worry, management make you worry' (Bethany, 2014). One of the reasons she worried was because of the high expectations that were placed upon her and the limited time she had for getting her work done in work time. Bethany went on to refer to the levels of accountability in her job and how she was required to target underperforming students to ensure they achieved their target grades. 'I think about students that are possibly underperforming, what am I going to do? I've got a, if I'm accountable to my line manager, what they're going to do if they don't get their, like, target grade' (Bethany, 2014).

Bethany added that '…sometimes you can, kind of, get pulled over for certain things that you may, or may not, have done' (Bethany, 2014).

When defining performance management, Bethany stated that it was '…knowing where I am and making sure you are, sort of, hitting a certain criterion' (Bethany, 2014). But she did say that from her manager's perspective it was:

> '…someone looking over you and making sure you are accountable for certain things and making sure you are working towards key performance indicators and things like that and measuring you against whole college or whole South West systems and key performance indicators and just, sort of, having scores of you backed-up. Not necessarily for judgement, but how you perform against...A lot of it is KPIs I think and how you are performing against them, and someone above you going 'oh you are doing this and you are not doing this', and so you have then got to improve or do something else'.
>
> (Bethany, 2014)

However, despite the fact that she worried about certain aspects of her job at times, Bethany actually quite enjoyed the pressure to achieve good results in her teaching and she used this performance management to motivate her to improve:

> 'I think it's good for me, I think, it's probably because of my sports background, I probably want to be better than an indicator, so it probably gives me the motivation to move on, but I think that sometimes that in itself, having this performance management, I think that I am guilty sometimes because I want to be the best, is going above that and then there being a higher expectation of you. So actually, when you do something that is seen as just being good, it's actually not good enough…'.
>
> (Bethany, 2014)

Bethany further reinforced that she always wanted to be viewed as the best teacher by her students.

When questioned as to why she felt this, she responded that she did not like losing and that because she played rugby at an elite level, she had to work hard to get there and because she worked as hard in her teaching, she wanted to be viewed as the best:

> 'I would probably say that I don't like losing. I don't like coming 2nd best and that's probably because I have been to an elite level and I've worked hard to get there. So, in the same way that, you know, if I've put the hours in on another teacher, you do want to be viewed as better. So, the sports relate to the teaching that I used to put quite a lot of time into my sport and I do put a lot of time into my teaching, so I'd like to be viewed as the better, kind of, person for doing that'.

(Bethany, 2014)

With specific reference to her day-today practice and in relation to the above information, she stated that she was:

> '…constantly probably looking at how I'm performing against local institutions and I think, last year was my first year of A Level results and I had looked at all the marks analysis and where everything was going wrong and where we were performing against local institutions. And because I knew I was taking it over myself this year and I wanted to be better'.

(Bethany, 2014)

Narrative Five – (Elsa – Summer Term, 2014)

Elsa worked at a medium sized FE college in the South West of England. She was the Course Leader for the HND in Sport and Exercise Science course in the institution. She also taught on the Level 3 BTEC qualifications in the department and she had previously taught on the A Level Physical Education course as well.

Family and Personal View of Education and Personal School Experience

Elsa stated that it was instilled in her by her parents that having good attendance to school was very important. She could not recall any specific instances where her parents sat her down to discuss this, but she did state that they '…must have seen that fact that I was going to attend and do my work, without them, sort of, you know, chasing me around or anything' (Elsa, 2014). Elsa stated that she was a good student and '…did not like missing or anything like that, skiving, or bunking as we used to call it, so I pretty much attended school, you know, from the first, right to the end' (Elsa, 2014). She referred to her older brother who did well at school and progressed to university and this inspired her to do the same.

When reflecting on her personal experience at school, Elsa stated that she passed her O Levels, got three A Levels and she got a degree. She went on to state that she came '…out of it at the other end and I've got a relatively good job, which I'm relatively happy with' (Elsa, 2014). With specific reference to her teachers, Elsa stated that she could remember her teachers and there were some she liked and some she did not like. With regard to the teachers Elsa liked, she said that this was because they appealed to her on a personal level:

> 'So, they said something, or they did something that made me think that maybe I wasn't just like a number to them and I was someone who was worth spending an extra five minutes with, or, you know, worth reading what they had written a bit more thoroughly, or something like that. I just got on well with them and their personalities more than anything'.
>
> (Elsa, 2014)

With regard to the teachers she did not like, Elsa referred specifically to a PE teacher she had at school. The main reason she did not like her was because she was a netball coach and she did not like netball. Elsa stated that therefore she was 'guilty by association' (Elsa, 2014). Elsa also referred to a recently qualified teacher she had who she referred to as being 'hopeless' (Elsa, 2014). When asked why he was hopeless, she stated that he had a '…lack of organisation, lack of class control, lack of crowd control, lack of discipline, that sort of thing really. The whole class played up in his lesson. So, there was no, he had no authority really' (Elsa, 2014).

Route into Teaching

When Elsa finished her A Levels, she went straight to university. She stated that this was just what you did in those days. She studied for a year at university before dropping out 'I did a year in university and I did not get on with the course, so I finished university and I had a year out and I worked and then I went back to university in Cardiff then and did my degree' (Elsa, 2014). Following the eventual completion of her degree, Elsa stated that a lot of her contemporaries went on to complete a PGCE, but she did not. 'And looking back on that now, I cannot think why I did not. Perhaps I just did not think I was ready for it then. Because, I was, when you are 24-25, you know, to start being a teacher and stuff like that, it's, I maybe thought it was a bit early in my life really' (Elsa, 2014).

Following this, Elsa worked, and she started a master's degree.

However, she did not complete her master's degree because '…various things happened, and I fell out of love with studying a bit, I was too busy, sort of, studying other things in life at that time' (Elsa, 2014). It was when she was 30 and she was working as a lifeguard at her local leisure centre when Elsa realised that she wanted to undertake her PGCE:

> '…I got to 30 and, I discovered that where I was working… I was a full-time lifeguard and I discovered that they weren't going to progress me any further, because I would not work on a Sunday. So, it's very natural for a full-time lifeguard, to train up to be, sort of like, a shift supervisor and then onto, sort of like, an assistant manager. But I discovered that they weren't going to offer me that because I would not work on a Sunday because I attended church. So, that sort of kicked me then and sort of said right you've got to do something now because you cannot be a lifeguard for the rest of your life, it's not going to buy you a house or a car'.
>
> (Elsa, 2014)

She initially applied to do the PGCE at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, which all of her contemporaries had done, but she did not get onto the course. She then applied to do her second option which was to do the PGCE (PCET) at another Welsh institution. Even though the PGCE (PCET) was not her first choice, she did think it was the better choice. 'Looking back on it now, I think it was probably the better choice because I don't know if teaching thirty screaming eleven-year-old girls' netball, is really who I am. I would have probably progressed a lot further and would be earning more money, but there you go' (Elsa, 2014). Now that Elsa is working in the FE sector on a full-time basis, she did not feel completely happy with her job because of the commuting distance from her home in South Wales. As a result of this, she was always looking to leave her current role in order to find an FE teaching job closer to her home.

Expectations of Working in the FE Sector and Perceived Disparities

Elsa thought that because she was slightly older when she started her teaching career in comparison to teachers who come straight out of university at the age of 22, her view of education was different in the sense that her schooling was much more disciplined, structured and rigid. In comparison to her current job role, Elsa felt that there had been a decrease in the levels of respect lecturers received from their students. Elsa was surprised by some of the behavioural issues she had experienced because she thought that the students would be more mature because of their choice to attend their FE classes. Similarly, prior to working in the FE sector, Elsa was expecting that the learners she would teach would be working at A Level equivalent standard. She was not expecting to teach on Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications. She referred to the learners on these courses specifically and stated that '…they're a different kind of person because they have been through school and they still haven't made any progress' (Elsa, 2014). In addition to the disparity above where Elsa referred to the lack of respect from learners, EW stated that she felt that more and more had been added to the workload of FE lecturers:

> 'Well, I think over the years more and more has been added to what you do, and it seems that every few years we adopt another system, or something like that and we settle down with it and then they change again, like, things like ProMonitor and Columbus and stuff like that. It's always changing, and I think sometimes that I wish one year they would just leave us alone to get on with it'.
>
> (Elsa, 2014)

When asked about the reasons for this increase in workload, Elsa responded that it was mainly as a result of the pressures from Ofsted and to achieve good data results. Consequently, she strongly felt that FE lecturers were expected to do a lot more than was being reflected in their rewards:

> 'I think some of that is the financial position, but then some of that is, maybe, TOIL, you know, because I live far away, I would rather have TOIL, time off, rather than pay because of the way I, you know, my travelling and everything. And, you know, in the holidays, I begrudge coming in, all the way in, 70 miles, to sit at a computer, or to do marking, when I can just as well do it at home. And that's really, that really gets my goat that. So, I wrote and asked the Union guy about it and he went to the Human Resources department and he came back, and he said that you should do it with, arrange it with your line manager and I'm like oh great. Pathetic answer isn't it; you know'.

(Elsa, 2014)

In addition to the above, the other disparity that Elsa had experienced had been with her development of teaching resources. Elsa stated that she underestimated the level of research required of FE lecturers to develop good lesson resources:

> 'Maybe the researching potentially because maybe I thought that having done a degree, I would know it all, but you don't. And sometimes you are given units to teach that you haven't taught before, so you have to do that. Particularly on the HND level, I mean, I have been teaching the nutrition unit for the last five years, I'm still researching it because I'm, you know, I'm still trying to understand it myself, some of it'.

(Elsa, 2014)

Even though she stated that her job role was mainly based mainly based on outcomes, she did state that:

> '…some of it is also based on developing the learner as a person, you know, not teaching them to tie their shoe laces, but you know, what I'm hoping to do is, or what I hope would happen is that in four or five years' time they might come back and think 'oh yes', you know, '**** said something about that', or you know, or, 'now I wish I had listened to her', or something like that'.

(Elsa, 2014)

Strategies Employed for Dealing with Disparities

As a result of the disparities which Elsa had experienced in her teaching career to date, she developed some strategies for working with these disparities. The main strategy she referred to was in reference to the increased workload she experienced over her teaching career. Elsa stated that she tried to complete as much of the work as she could in work time and not at home, and this was so it did not impact her personal time at home with her husband. Elsa went on to state that this was very different to how she behaved a few years ago:

> 'I used to stress a lot on a Sunday night about Monday morning. I think, I've, sort of, given up on that now, I've become more adapted. And I think, well I will get it done will not I. Because I used to, like, five or six years ago, I used to really worry about my timetable, what it would be when I got back after the summer. But I've, sort of, matured and thought well that's a bit silly to work about, think about that – you have got a job haven't you'.
>
> (Elsa, 2014)

She rationalised this by referring to the fact that some people did not have jobs and she was lucky to be in a '…fairly well-paid job' (Elsa, 2014). Elsa went on to also state that if she was to make too much fuss about her workload, then her Head of Department would not be happy, and this could impact her other colleagues as well. In addition to this strategy, Elsa stated that she also tried to engage with learners on a personal level in order to get the best out of them:

> 'In some ways because I do like to, I do like to try and engage with the learners, like on a personal level. So, even though I'm teaching them something, it's nice to go around and talk to them about things. So, I teach like a lot of 2nd years, so now is the time of year when you go around and ask them what they are doing next and where are they going, and have they done their UCAS and stuff like that…'

> '…You know, and then you ask about if they played on the weekend, or something like that, or you comment on something they are looking at and you try to engage with them like that'.
>
> (Elsa, 2014)

She found that by engaging with her learners, she was able to get them to produce their best work and this took a little pressure off her. When asked how the learners responded to this approach, Elsa stated that most of her learners responded well. With specific reference to her more challenging learners, Elsa stated that she just got '…on with it really. It's your job really so you cannot, sort of, ignore them, you just need to be professional and deal with them on an academic level really. And try and find some sort of connection with them, whatever that might be…' (Elsa, 2014).

Performance Management, Professionalism and Impact of Sport Experience

When referring to performance management, Elsa stated that this was inevitable and expected in any business environment. She specifically stated '…that is the way work is structured isn't it. In any type of work, unless you are self-employed, you are going to have somebody who is in charge of you' (Elsa, 2014). She did however go on to state how she was fairly self-driven, and she was aware of what needed to be done and, so she often self-managed her way through certain tasks:

> '…I am fairly self-driven, I've thought about this before, the fact that I have, like, a nagging conscience, I will do what I need to do because I know it needs to be done and I don't want to not to do it because I don't want to get into trouble. So, I am very self-managing and I like self-managing myself, you know, because, you know, I, it's just the way I am'.
>
> (Elsa, 2014)

When asked therefore if she thought performance management was necessary in education, Elsa stated that:

> '…I think if **** (the HoD) abandoned us for a year, we would probably do it and probably somebody would need to take charge if he wasn't there. So, I think it might work in other industries, but I suppose in education, because you have got targets and you are accountable and things like registers and stuff, you need to have somebody making sure you are doing that. I suppose there are various laws as well which we need to ascribe to'.

(Elsa, 2014)

She went on to refer to what teaching was like before the introduction of the National Curriculum and commented '...before they brought the National Curriculum in, everybody could, sort of, do their own thing and it was all pretty, sort of, lax'. She stated that having less performance management would greatly depend on the professionalism of the staff in the institution to get the work done which needed to be done. With specific regard to the mechanisms of performance management which she experienced, Elsa stated that her:

> '…HoD and the team leaders don't manage us on an individual basis, unless there is something they particularly need to talk to us about. So, we have a team meeting once a week and we get told what's happening, or we discuss things what to do, and then we, sort of, we are, very much, it's given over to us, sort of, to manage ourselves. It's more to do with the fact that we know we need to get it done. We have got to get it done really'.

(Elsa, 2014)

When prompted to refer specifically to the daily tasks that she had to complete as a teacher, Elsa stated:

> '…preparation, delivery of lessons as per the timetable, marking, tidying, registers, ProMonitor, research, eating, socialising, supporting…we have a syllabus, we have a scheme of work and we have got our schedule and we work to that. And we have our assignment criteria and we work towards that really…'

> '…That's the way it is. It's what I have always done'.
>
> (Elsa, 2014)

When asked why she did these activities, she stated that she completed them because she did not want to be disciplined by her manager '…I don't want to be told off. I don't like being told off, being told I've done something wrong, or I've failed or something like that. Or be spoken to officially, I don't want that' (Elsa, 2014). Therefore, when asked specifically to define professionalism, Elsa stated that this meant '…standing up in front of a class and doing what you should be doing and, in some cases, looking how you should be looking…to be professional' (Elsa, 2014). She went on to state how the sports staff in her institution had sports kit which identified them to their learners. She also stated that 'our names are on the timetable to say we are the teacher, you know. So, we have got to turn up and do it' (Elsa, 2014). With specific regard to teacher professionalism, she stated that a teacher was 'somebody that can progress a learner. You know, from a starting point to however far they want to go' (Elsa, 2014).

In summary, Elsa referred to the positive aspects of her job. She referred to how she appreciated the flexibility of her HoD in some respects. She also valued his appreciation for when she did a good job:

> '…It's fairly flexible, I mean, we have got a head of department who is flexible in what time you start and what time you finish, as long as you are not stupid, you know. He appreciates that you are working hard and as long as you get the work done, you can go, or we'll work hard now and then there will be a little down-time at certain times of the year and stuff like that. I am very lucky because I have ended up in a fantastic team of people who I don't want to leave really, that's the problem'.
>
> (Elsa, 2014)

She also referred to her teaching and how she enjoyed teaching at HND level because she was able to learn as well '…You know, it is always a real challenge to, sort of, learn it. And I feel I am not stagnating then, so to speak' (Elsa, 2014).

Chapter Six – Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The following chapter summarises the main findings from the interviews and questionnaires for the Sports Lecturers in this study. Examples of the coding process for the information from the questionnaires and interviews in this research can be found in the appendices of this paper.

Research Questions (RQ) Re-visited

1. ***What were the contexts in which FE Sports Lecturers in the South West of England worked?***
2. ***How did the Sports Lecturers work in their contexts and how did they define their sense of professionalism with reference to the contexts they worked in and the jobs they did?***

To answer the above research questions, this analysis and discussion is presented in the following order. Initially, the contexts of working for the Sports Lecturers in this research are discussed alongside their initial motivations for teaching their courses in the FE sector. After this, the chapter progresses to illustrate the disparities which existed for the lecturers in comparison to their previous expectations for working in the FE sector. This then leads on to the specific strategies which the lecturers employed for working in their contexts, including an original contribution to this area of research entitled 'competitive mediation'. The final area of this analysis and discussion highlights the ways in which the lecturers defined their professionalism with reference to their prior expectations and regarding the contexts in which they worked.

RQ1. What were the contexts in which FE Sports Lecturers in the South West of England worked?

Before entering the FE sector, the Sports Lecturers in this research understood that education was an area of society which would enable learners to make positive contributions to their communities. As previously discussed in the earlier chapters of this thesis, Coffield and Williamson's (2011) proposed model of Communities of Discovery focused on the democratic rights of enhancement, inclusion and participation, peer-moderated self-regulation and an expansive learning environment where experimentation was encouraged from teachers. In this model of understanding, 'knowledge, learning and understanding emerge in a social process in which people discuss, write and share ideas and expertise; they learn in the course of tackling a real problem together' (Coffield and Williamson, 2011 p. 27). As a result, they should be able to engage with the social and political lives of their communities (Coffield and Williamson, 2011). The Sports Lecturers in this research thought that education would enable future employment, would help learners realise future opportunities and would enable the development of holistic (transferable/employability) skills. Some of the lecturers also saw their FE teaching as being similar to Secondary teaching and this was specifically emphasised in the questionnaire response from Jack who stated:

> 'My understanding was that teaching and lecturing in a secondary and FE institution would be based around balancing educational progress and a holistic approach to ensure students experience physical, social and emotional growth as well as meeting education standards'.
>
> (Jack, 2017)

James (2016) also referred to teaching sport specifically and stated that his purpose as a sports lecturer was to:

> '…inspire them to be involved in sport, have sports careers and seriously look after themselves in terms of fitness, but now I look at it more as being to help them on a journey to be a decent citizen and maybe not working in the sport and leisure industry, but actually being able to contribute to society, you know, knowing what's right and what's wrong, having decent morals, being supportive, being able to function in communities'.

(James, 2016)

Performance Management and Accountability

However, it appeared that the current models of education experienced by the Sports Lecturers in this research were far removed from this proposed democratic model of education. The lecturers referred to the working environments in which they operated and how these were different to what they were expecting before working in the sector. The lecturers referred to how there were high levels of performativity and accountability in their job roles and how these caused a great deal of pressure and stress for them. They also referred to how changing governmental and institutional policies caused uncertainty in the sector and instability in their working practices. This reflected what was previously stated by Ball (2017 p. 7) where he stated that the '…ecology of education, what it looks like, when and where it happens and who does it has changed and is being changed and, as a result, so too are the learner and the teacher'. One of the Sports Lecturers specifically referred to their vocational BTEC Sport teaching and stated that there were often:

> '…sweeping changes to all these units, you know, they have changed the names of the units, condensed two units into one, why not just take out a few units that they don't want, which is fine, change the process in terms of A and P becomes an examined unit, we can deal with that, Exercise, Health and Lifestyle becomes a unit that is done by remote sampling, I understand. But they are making whole sale changes when they don't need to'.

(James, 2016)

He further stated:

> '…it does seem that every single Government wants to make massive changes to the system that they inherit from their predecessors'.
>
> (James, 2016)

This was very similar to what was presented earlier in Chapters Two and Three of this thesis.

The description from James above reinforced the points made by Robinson (2015 p. 9) when he states that 'Governments everywhere are now yanking firmly on the reins of public education, telling schools what to teach, imposing systems of testing to hold them accountable, and levying penalties if they don't make the grade. Ball (2017) similarly referred to education as being a crucial factor for ensuring economic productivity and competitiveness. He called this the 'knowledge economy' (Ball, 2017 p. 2). He went on to state that 'education policy is increasingly thought about and made within the context of pressures and requirements of globalisation and within a particular framework of political rationality' (Ball, 2017 p. 2). From this finding, it would appear that the FE lecturers in this research experienced similar circumstances to those documented for teachers in schools, and in this research, this has been perceived to have had a devastating impact on the professionals that work in the sector and it has been very disempowering (Coffield and Williamson, 2011).

A couple of the Sports Lecturers additionally referred to how they fully conformed to what they are asked to do in order to not get into trouble from their managers. Discussions relating to compliance and non-compliance will be discussed later in this chapter. Bethany specifically referred to how she tried to have her 'bacon covered' (Bethany, 2014) to ensure she did not get in trouble from her managers:

> 'So, I just think time management, planning time effectively and using the systems to the way they are so that you are not accountable, you know, you've got a learner that comes out with a U, you've got 37 comments on a system, or your manager is clearly aware that's going to happen, so you are not held accountable, so, well 'I met you at points X, Y and Z and said that so', what you are expecting'.

(Bethany, 2014)

Another lecturer similarly stated that she often did what she was told because she was worried about being told off by her managers:

> '…I don't want to be told off. I don't like being told off, being told I've done something wrong, or I've failed or something like that. Or be spoken to officially, I don't want that'.

(Elsa, 2014)

These responses mirror the findings from Gleeson and Shain's research into assessing the impact of shifting policy frameworks on FE lecturers' working practices. They found that a strategy of compliance was linked to job security, it also anticipated the changing `new realism' of FE. They further described how such a strategy of compliance often constitutes part of a conscious strategy of `not rocking the boat' (Gleeson and Shain, 1999 p. 455).

Consequently, Hayes (2007) described how exam results periods can be a very stressful time for teachers and managers because of the pressures to meet standards, be it funding standards, or student entry requirements for further or higher education.

A TES (2012) article described this stress as 'football manager syndrome' and described how school leaders are being fired after just one set of bad results and this is one of the main reasons why heads and their staff get so stressed in the build up to A-level and GCSE results day' (TES, 2012 p. 1).

This was also clearly demonstrated in one of the responses of Bethany who stated, 'generally underperforming students, kind of, make you worry, Ofsted make you worry, management make you worry' (Bethany, 2014). This culture of terror (Ball, 2017) seemed to have turned Bethany and Elsa into trusted servants rather than empowered professionals (Gleeson *et al.*, 2005) and consequently they were required to follow routine algorithms instead of exciting the power of imagination in their learners (Robinson, 2013).

Another theme to arise from this research was that some of the Sports Lecturers commented about a perceived lack of focus on developing skills for work and in place are required to deliver qualifications for achieving good statistical outcomes for their institutions. One of the lecturers specifically found this to be frustrating and referred to how the high levels of pressure regarding statistical outcomes meant that his learners were not ready for the world of work:

> 'As an institution we are now statistically driven as are the schools from which the students' progress from. This means there is little time to explore topics/subjects broadly and teaching becomes assignment driven. This also impacts on the essential skills needed for higher education and even employment as time becomes a premium and something has to give.
>
> (Justin, 2016)

This same lecturer was frustrated with the ways in which the assessments were written and stated:

> '…maybe…the people that are writing the assessments are endemic and maybe not industry driven. I mean you can see the way the paper is going, the awarding bodies are going, that it is more academic, and you are losing the vocational side of things and that sort of tells you that the people that are writing papers are more academic aren't they. How do they know what's going on in industry? They don't'.
>
> (Justin, 2016)

This was similar to the findings from the 2017 Prince's Trust Results for Life Report which stated that 45 per cent of the teachers in the research thought that a lack of soft skills was one of the most likely factors to hold students back in life and 91 per cent thought that schools and colleges should be doing more to help to develop soft skills. These points were further detailed by Jack who said that his reality in the classroom as a PGCE student, was different to what he was being taught at his university:

> 'The underlining message delivered by my university, as well as the lecturers that run the course, is that as teachers we are expected to educate students in a way that develops them in areas that go beyond passing exams and meeting assignment criteria. However, the importance of exam results, course grades and retention numbers are continuously stressed and are almost held in higher regard than student development'.

(Jack, 2017)

Justin similarly stated that he felt that he was a victim to the system because of the need to achieve good statistical outcomes:

> '…Specifically, you are teaching them towards that sort of criteria. But again, you are almost becoming a victim of the system. You are having to drive towards hitting certain criteria, so statistically your grades don't suffer. And that's very clear with course management meetings and things like that. They are looking at making someone accountable aren't they'.

(Justin, 2016)

These points were similarly reflected in the academic literature and Hayes (2007 p. 63) referred to the power that such a control has over individual institutions because she argued that '…a poor inspection outcome results in the worst cases in school or college closure'. In relation to these statements, the Head of Ofsted in October 2017, detailed the consequence of such practices.

She stated that 'in the worst cases, teaching to the test, rather than teaching the full curriculum, leaves a pupil with a hollowed-out and flimsy understanding' (Spielman, 2017 P. 1). She went on to say that a lack of a rounded education has consequences for social mobility. Despite this serious consequence, it was apparent that some of the Sports Lecturers in this study continued to teach to the assessments to deal with the time constraints they experienced in their working environments. These lecturers referred to how they narrowed their teaching methods to prepare students for passing their specific assessments. Jack specifically referred to how he thought his teaching had changed to prepare students for passing their assessments:

> 'As I put down in the questionnaire, my approach to teaching has changed. Rather than focusing on the student development, it's more focused towards preparing them for an assignment, preparing them for an exam, making sure they are progressing towards their target grades and succeeding them. It's all about assignments and retention…'.
>
> (Jack, 2017)

Justin similarly commented:

> 'Currently the awarding body allows a three-tier grading system for some assignments, this allows an element of development to be demonstrated by the students, usually I deliver what the student will need to know to access the pass criteria, I will provide examples and explanations of the higher-grade criteria, but this is usually backed up by the student having to research principles and put them into context themselves. I will also explain to the students that realistic expectations mean that if they do not put the required amount of time and effort into their work then they will be unable to access the higher-grade criteria'.
>
> (Justin, 2015)

These responses clearly reflected a high level of frustration for these Sports Lecturers with the changes in curriculum design and assessment discussed in Chapter Two of this paper. Hodgson and Spours' reference to an 'extreme Anglo-Saxon model' and the competitions between institutions nationally and globally since the last General Election (Hodgson and Spours, 2014), does seem to be relevant to the experiences of these lecturers.

Indeed, Gleeson and Knights (2006) argued that few professions can avoid the erosion of their independence from external agencies like the state because of industrial growth, globalisation and expansions of government interventions. It was clear from the responses from the Sports Lecturers that they were experiencing erosion of their independence due to specific institutional pressures. For these Sports Lecturers, this relationship greatly impacted their ability to suitably prepare their learners for their working lives outside of their formal education and consequently, it appeared that for these lecturers, their institutions had forgotten the deeper purpose of education because '…in the rush to make young people into successful exam-passers, they have overlooked their deeper need to become successful people, eager to learn and grow in the real-life world of work, leisure and relationships' (Claxton, 2010 p. ix). However, these experiences were similar for lecturers in different institutions, and so it is argued that these are not institutional pressures and so they also reflect the common pressures which impact FE institutions generally.

In addition to the above, because of the perceived high levels of performance management and the focus on outcomes by their FE institutions, some of the Sports Lecturers felt that the high levels of performance management in their institutions had perceived positive and negative impacts. Justin specifically referred to how he though performance management negatively impacted his performance because:

> '…it creates a less flexible curriculum and it minimises the opportunities on a course of study. Positively, it makes the people involved in that course accountable, potentially creating a more conscientious teacher'.
>
> (Justin, 2016)

Similarly, and as documented previously, some of the lecturers in this research felt that increased performance management caused them to worry about their performance, which caused increased levels of stress. Ball (2017 p. 57) referred to this as a '…regime of accountability that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of control, attrition and change' (Ball, 2017 p. 57). He further argued that because of the overall relationship which exists between education, the state and the economy, this necessitates the close management of individuals involved (Ball, 2017). For the Sports Lecturers in this research, this relationship was perceived to have mainly negative implications for their professional practice.

In addition to performance management and accountability pressures, some of the Sports Lecturers also discussed that there were additional time pressures in the form of pastoral support which they were required to do alongside their teaching responsibilities and these had negative impacts on their lesson resources. One of the lecturers specifically described the fact that FE lecturers are now 'time poor' because of these additional constraints on their time:

> 'Probably, we just don't have enough time to do that is the answer, and sometimes the forum to do that as well…It might be the difference between having four case studies to use in a lesson and just one. Because you are short of time and if you had that time to find three other case studies, it would be more enriching, more varied and probably a better experience for the students potentially. But yes, we are time poor now I think as lecturers'.
>
> (James, 2016)

Another lecturer commented how they perceived their job role to have changed in recent years to take on more of a role as a 'social worker' and this is because of their institution's pressure to retain as many students as possible for financial reasons:

> 'You know, we are getting these pupils and we are trying to hold onto every single student because retention figures are key, and we are doing our upmost…explain what a teacher is', before going into FE, and I would say, you know, it's someone that educates and it's someone that does this and this, I think it's almost like being a social worker'.

(Justin, 2016)

For the Sports Lecturers in this research, their responses reflected that there was a dilemma regarding performance management due to a need to justify public spending on the one-hand, and over-regulation on the other, which corroded some of the more valuable aspects of their lecturing (Frowe, 2005). Consequently, a situation emerged for these Sports Lecturers where they had little autonomy in their job roles and instead were required to comply with what they were instructed to do (Hayes, 2007).

However, as documented in the previous chapters, it was expected that the Sports Lecturers in this research would therefore feel demoralised and feel that they were incapable of effective change (Coffield and Williamson, 2011). It was also expected that some of the Sports Lecturers would have indicated that they wanted to leave the profession, as illustrated in the previous statistics documented in the previous chapters. For example, Blower (2012) specifically argued that a combination of pension cuts, pay freezes, increasing workloads and continual inspection and criticism from Government at every turn, made the retention of teachers increasingly difficult.

A similar survey conducted by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) in 2015 found that 77% of FE staff felt their workload was not manageable and nearly 80% said they did not have time to update their subject knowledge or skills. Therefore, it was thought important to investigate job satisfaction levels for the Sports Lecturers in this research.

It was surprising to find that despite the high levels of performance management, similar pay freezes, pressures from external agencies including Ofsted; the lecturers remained quite positive regarding their job roles. One lecturer specifically stated:

> 'There is nothing that has put me off teaching in a Further Education setting. In terms of each morning, I look forward to coming in and teaching. Yes, nothing at this point, throughout the placement I have done, has made me go home and re-evaluate what I want to be doing…if you want to teach, you have a passion for others succeeding. So, as long as I am teaching in an environment where I can enable students to progress and enable students to be successful, whether it is just in an exam, or generally, then that's rewarding in itself as a teacher'.

(Jack, 2017)

It was very apparent for this lecturer that it was the interactions with the learners which were important and seeing his students succeed was rewarding for him. This was echoed in the response of another lecturer who stated in his questionnaire that he enjoyed working with his students:

> 'I feel that the best part of the job is working with students. I enjoy supporting them and helping them to make decisions which are going to have an impact on the rest of their lives'.

(Lecturer 3 – Questionnaire, 2016)

Whilst there were different levels of experience of working in FE between Jack (less than a year) and Lecturer 3 (teaching for ten years), the sentiment was the same.

And so, based on these responses, these Sports Lecturers enjoyed these aspects of their jobs and wanted to remain in them. In fact, the only lecturer who was contemplating leaving their job was doing so because of financial pressures regarding traveling to and from work from her home in Wales. This lecturer would not have been contemplating leaving her job if the financial rewards at her institution were better. This Sports Lecturer compared the working conditions for lecturers in her FE institution, with the working conditions in schools and reasoned that they do very similar jobs and therefore she should be rewarded in a similar way. She stated: 'I am a lecturer or a teacher. Pay me accordingly. Do I work in a school or a college? Why cannot I have holidays like schools?' (Elsa, 2014).

It does appear from this research that FE colleges continue to be inadequately funded and resourced compared to secondary and higher education and therefore there is a constant pressure in FE institutions to increase income and reduce costs (Hodkinson *et al.*, 2007). It does also appear that the experiences of the Sports Lecturers in this research were similar to those that Hodkinson *et al.* (2007) found in their Transforming Learning Cultures research project. They stated that '...some tutors found themselves closely in tune with many forces in the site culture...others found themselves in situations that they disliked and found alienating' (Hodkinson *et al.*, 2007 p. 130). James and Gleeson (2007 p. 130) further referred to the TLC project and stated that they found:

> '…a great deal of complaint and disillusionment around some of the key attributes associated with professional status – with pay, regimes of audit and inspection, a perceived decline in resources, lack of recognition of expertise, reduced autonomy through performance management…'.

They stated however that these complaints came from teachers who had strong commitments to teaching, to fostering student learning and development, to attending to learners' needs, and to self-development or learning as a professional (James and Gleeson, 2007). These points were clearly reflected in the responses of the Sports Lecturers in this research project.

RQ2. How did the Sports Lecturers work in their contexts and how did they define their sense of professionalism with reference to the contexts they worked in and the jobs they did?

Asides from teaching to the test, which was discussed in the previous section, the perceived high levels of performance management that the Sports Lecturers commented on in this research meant that they had to develop other strategies for working in their contexts.

All the Sports Lecturers commented that they had to engage with their individual college systems and their statistics to complete their work effectively. One lecturer specifically referred to how she constantly analysed her own course performance to see how she compared to other institutions and to national benchmarks. She used this information to promote improvement in her own performance and, as previously stated, she wanted to ensure she had 'her bacon covered' (Bethany, 2014). Another Sports Lecturer described how she tried to engage with her learners and often utilised student feedback to try and find ways to maximise student motivation and consequently, the levels of retention and achievement on her courses:

> 'In some ways because I do like to, I do like to try and engage with the learners, like on a personal level. So, even though I'm teaching them something, it's nice to go around and talk to them about things. So, I teach like a lot of 2nd years, so now is the time of year when you go around and ask them what they are doing next and where are they going, and have they done their UCAS and stuff like that…'

> '…You know, and then you ask about if they played on the weekend, or something like that, or you comment on something they are looking at and you try to engage with them like that'.
>
> (Elsa, 2014)

Some of the lecturers also stated that they strongly complied with the performance management systems which existed to 'protect' themselves from any backlash from their managers. One of the lecturers specifically felt that they needed to 'protect' themselves in case of bad results:

> 'But yes, I mean I don't want to be below the national benchmark if I can avoid it because I have to go to a meeting where it might be quite uncomfortable with the principal and if you are close to benchmark or above it, it's a much nicer experience than it is if you are below the benchmark. So, you know, for your own, sort of a, it's not for my own glory, I think it's for my own protection when you go up and meet with him in October/November, that if your stats look better than the national benchmark you are ok'.
>
> (James, 2016)

Therefore, as discussed in previous chapters, it appears that the current 'market model' of education has enabled the Government, rather than these Sports Lecturers, to have the most influence over the curriculum to be taught, the teaching methods to be employed and the assessment criteria to measure success (Hayes, 2007). Coffield and Williamson (2011) previously stated that regulation in the form of performance management – '…a process originating in the private sector which has been subsequently adapted by the public sector into an audit mechanism for improving the performance, productivity, accountability and transparency of public services' (Forrester, 2011 p. 5), has turned students into customers and then into inputs and outputs and eventually into 'bums on seats'.

As a result of political priorities being imposed, promoted, scrutinised and complied with (Hayes, 2007 p. 63), the consequence for these Sports Lecturers was that they felt unable to question or fine-tune initiatives as a result of the imposition from managers (Wrigley, 2003). Therefore, it could be argued that such environments were quite restrictive in their nature for the Sports Lecturers.

Following the discussion of the contexts in which the Sports Lecturers in this research worked, this chapter will now progress to discuss how they defined their sense of professionalism in these working contexts.

Whitty (2008) suggested that a more useful way to view professionalism is to look at it as a sociological discourse as this would allow researchers to explore teaching in modern contexts as opposed to comparing it to some sort of ideal. Such a sociological discourse of professionalism would go some way to help in understanding the contemporary condition of teachers as professionals (Whitty, 2002). This is because sociologists see professionalism as a shifting phenomenon 'a profession they suggest, is whatever people think it is at any particular time, and rather than asking whether the teaching profession lives up to some supposed ideal, such an approach encourages us to explore the characteristics of teaching as a profession in the present' (Whitty, 2002 p. 3).

It was argued therefore that my research focused on trying to establish a sociological definition of professionalism and from the research presented previously, it was apparent in the findings from this research that a dominant interpretation of professionalism for the Sports Lecturers was that they saw professionalism as being competence-based where they had to adhere to models of expected teacher practice. For example:

> '…standing up in front of a class and doing what you should be doing and, in some cases, looking how you should be looking in order to be professional'.
>
> (Elsa, 2014)

> 'Professionalism to me means carrying out your job role to required standards'.
>
> (Justin, 2015)

> 'The expectation or competence of an individual towards a certain matter or person'.
>
> (Bethany, 2015)

> 'Trying your hardest and following all policies and procedures. Treating and helping everyone equally'.
>
> (Lecturer 1 – Questionnaire, 2014)

These responses inferred that these Sports Lecturers thought that professionalism was a sort of code of practice, or service level agreement because of the working conditions they were expected to operate within (Evans, 2007). This complemented the previous research undertaken, where many interpretations of the term seemed to focus on professionalism being an externally imposed, articulated perception of what lies within the parameters of a profession's collective remit and responsibilities. The response below from Jack typifies this understanding:

> 'My understanding of the term professionalism is based around the conduct of an individual within the institution or setting that they work and involves demonstrating competency within that role…'

> '…This includes adhering to the principles and standards (including frameworks or professional standards) set by the institution or organisation as well as using your own initiative to make decisions on moral or ethical matters'.
>
> (Jack, 2017)

When defining their own professionalism, the lecturers in this research mainly saw professionalism as the competence they demonstrated in accordance with their job descriptions and contracts. They referred to these as their 'professional standards'. They went on to define their professionalism based on the environments in which they worked. They mainly referred to a restricted environment where externally imposed standards are implemented, and stringent performance management mechanisms are employed. This was similar to Gleeson and Shain (1999 p.446) who stated that `public sector' concepts of teacher professionalism…which find expression in notions of service to community and teacher autonomy, are being challenged by market liberal reform committed to privatization and deregulation…'.

Gleeson *et al.* (2005 p. 4) stated that consequently:

> '…this has led to two polarised camps of theorists: between those that subscribe to a voluntaristic perspective that privileges subjective agency, and those that follow a deterministic stance that elevates structure over action in the way external conditions of the market, work and organisational reform impact on professional practice'.

According to Gleeson *et al.*'s (2005) definition, these Sports Lecturers chose to accept external control and to deny their autonomy (Helsby, 1995). Wallace and Hoyle (2005) additionally argued that whilst all staff within institutions act differently towards set policy, which would reflect Archer's understanding of structure and agency, their responses can essentially be categorised into compliance, non-compliance and mediation (James and Gleeson, 2007).

'Compliance can be willing or reluctant, and non-compliance can run from mere retreat into current practices through to outright resistance' (James and Gleeson, 2007 p. 133). Some of the Sports Lecturers referred to how they had to comply with external pressures and so their definitions of professionalism included reference to compliance and non-compliance.

In addition to this definition of professionalism, some of the lecturers also referred to an idea of general professionalism which included skills which are required in all jobs such as punctuality and wearing suitable clothing and some referred specifically to teaching standards, for example:

> 'My professionalism is based around expectations, from both professional standards and general expectations (time keeping and punctuation etc.) that ensure my effectiveness and efficiency as a lecturer are maintained and allow me to establish an appropriate learning environment. And then professional standards in terms of the sector you work in. QTS, making sure that not only you meet these standards, but you are competent in those standards. Like, you are able to showcase that you can do something well and that's part of professionalism, like showing that you are a competent teacher, meeting each of those standards'.

(Jack, 2017)

This also reflects a structural definition of professionalism and therefore, fits with Giddens' understanding of structuration where structures are regarded as the cultural rules which shape and are shaped by social practices. This is in direct contrast to agency which is where individuals have the capacity to engage with these rules to create new contexts and practices (Varelas *et al.*, 2015).

However, Demirkasimoglu (2010) referred to professionalism as being a dynamic concept where multiple interpretations lead to different definitions, all with different functions and therefore, professionalism was understood to be very complex and contested with multiple interpretations leading to different definitions, all with different functions (Demirkasimoglu, 2010). It would appear from this research however that the definitions of professionalism for the Sports Lecturers in were stable and consistent. Reasons for this understanding of professionalism were discussed previously in this thesis. Following the Incorporation of FE Colleges in 1993, Gleeson *et al.* (2005) argued that two interconnecting policy settlements emerged regarding FE provision.

The focus on funding and market reform (the first settlement) has been the main driving force of FE institutions compared to the implementation of a national Learning and Skills Sector (LSC) policed by inspection (the second settlement) (Gleeson *et al.*, 2005). Atkins and Tummons (2017) additionally referred to there being three discourses of professionalism within the FE sector and they referred to these as being managerialist, emancipatory and utilitarian.

The managerialist paradigm of professionalism was described as emphasising audit and performativity through the application of professional standards (Shore and Wright, 2000) and measured through inspection regimes and quality assurance processes.

It is argued that the definitions of professionalism for the Sports Lecturers in this research were closely linked to Atkins and Tummons' (2017) managerialist professionalism detailed above. However, the emancipatory model is described as more democratic in the sense that members of the profession have an influence on the regulatory methods and professional standards employed in their institutions (Atkins and Tummons, 2017). This did not appear to be a common definition regarding the experiences of the Sports Lecturers in this research.

Whilst at times, the Sports Lecturers felt that had a little autonomy in their practice, this was often dominated by additional internal and external pressures. Lecturer 3 in the questionnaire typified such a response as he referred to his understanding of his professionalism as being 'mixed' and made explicit reference to the levels of autonomy he experienced in his day-to-day practice:

> 'At times, I feel autonomous in my teaching and feel that I have the freedom to do what I want…At other times, I feel that I always must answer to my managers…I feel that I know my students better than them and if they enjoy their lessons and I support them with making their next steps, surely, I have done my job properly? I also feel skilled enough to look at what is happening around me and to adjust my teaching accordingly. I always endeavour to undertake training to improve me as a teacher and I always share my good practice and I am receptive to innovations from other staff…'

(Lecturer 3 – Questionnaire, 2016)

This lecturer went on to state how he was a reflective practitioner and often assessed his own performance. He further emphasised a conflict which existed with his managers and questioned their suitability to make judgements on his practice. This is an area for further work and to discuss how professionalism is understood by individuals in management posts and in senior leadership posts.

The utilitarian understanding is described as distinct from the previous two notions of professionalism in that it is understood as a product of new managerialism where they understand that there has been:

> '…a simultaneous de-skilling and intensification of labour amongst the FE workforce…Professionalism is positioned entirely in terms of acceptance of and adherence to working practices that position the FE teacher as a technician, ignoring the importance or value of subject expertise and instead focusing on generic teaching skills'.

(Atkins and Tummons, 2017 p. 356)

However, as Gleeson and Knights (2006) argued, public professionals are neither simply de-professionalised because of structures, nor are they strategic operators seeking to challenge structural constraints. They instead argued that professional practice is mediated and are co-produced outcomes of structure and agency. Gleeson (2001) also suggested that practitioners filter policy messages in various ways at institutional level and this would infer that practitioners mediate regarding the demands that are placed upon them (James and Gleeson, 2007).

It was clear from the responses from the Sports Lecturers in this research that whilst, on the surface, structuration (Giddens, 1976) was determining how the Sports Lecturers defined their professionalism, this was not always clear-cut, and therefore mediation was much more accurate in terms of understanding the relationships between their perceived structures and their agency. '…Research indicates that practitioners think strategically, mediate tensions in their work and often invent creative solutions out of contradictory policy-practice messages' (Gleeson *et al.*, 2005 p. 11). Therefore, the concept of mediation was referred to by James and Gleeson (2007) as being more useful because '…it does not oversimplify, and it recognises the ambiguity and irony of the situation while also giving due regard to the sincerity of the endeavour among many professionals as they try to work round externally imposed requirements' (James and Gleeson, 2007 p. 133).

According to the previous quote from Jack, it did appear that some practitioners did mediate some of the tensions which they experienced. Gleeson (2001) additionally suggested that practitioners filtered policy messages in various ways at institutional level and this was further reflected in the responses of the Sports Lecturers in this research. However, it is argued that these responses do support James and Gleeson's (2007) research when they stated that practitioners mediate regarding the demands that are placed upon them (James and Gleeson, 2007).

'Recent research indicates that practitioners think strategically, mediate tensions in their work and often invent creative solutions out of contradictory policy-practice messages' (Gleeson *et al.*, 2005 p. 11). A new theme to emerge from this research is now discussed below and is referred to as 'competitive mediation'.

Competitive Mediation

This new area of research links previous sporting experiences with professional practice. This was a significant finding from the Sports Lecturers in this research, but of course it is expected that this is not unique to Sports Lecturers because other lecturers in different disciplines might also play competitive sport and so this finding might also apply to their professional experiences as well. Indeed, it might be that lecturers emanating from any competitive situation, might also demonstrate these characteristics. What was especially interesting was that female lecturers also demonstrated this competitive characteristic and therefore this is contrary to what previous research has stated where women are viewed as less competitive compared to men in specific contexts (Hanek *et al.*, 2016; List, 2013; Mara, 2014). Much of the research conducted on gender differences and levels of competitiveness has been conducted in business settings and it appears that more work is required on this topic in educational institutions.

With specific regard to the participants in this research, it was found that all the Sports Lecturers who had played, or play, competitive sport felt that this experience complemented their professional practice in their FE institutions. These lecturers referred to their FE environments and how they were expected to perform under pressure and referred to how they were used to operating in such conditions, because of doing so in their competitive sporting careers. The lecturers also commented how they had high levels of motivation and pushed themselves to be viewed as the best by their colleagues.

This meant that the Sports Lecturers almost embraced the idea that they were going to be observed in formal teaching observations and they also always tried to ensure that their course outcomes and statistics were better than their peers'. One of the Sports Lecturers referred to how he had to adapt his strategies when playing football, as he got older. He found that when playing senior level football, some of his opponents were a lot younger and fitter in some respects. This meant that he had to adapt his style of play to compete with the younger players. He referred to how he 'used his head more' as opposed to trying to compete physically. The lecturer made the link to his professional practice and referred to how he used the experience he had gained over time to ensure he was successful in his job:

> 'And that's probably come from sport in that the older you get, I think, particularly out playing football and tennis, as you get older you realise that you have to use a bit more experience, you have to use your knowledge if you want to beat somebody that is considerably younger than you, that might be better in terms of being able to cover the court, you have to think about different ways, different strategies in which to deal with their threat. I mean, you know, I've played football properly up until 43 and I knew that I did not have the legs to be running past people, so I started using the ball more effectively. You know when it's time to go all out, but you also know when it's better to conserve your energy, that there's a wasted battle that you are not going to win. And I think that experience that, you know, you cannot buy experience can you'.

(James, 2016)

It was apparent that some of the Sport Lecturers in this research were sometimes 'in-harmony' with the performance management aspect within their institutions and, as a result, felt that their competitive sporting experiences benefitted them in these circumstances. I refer to this new understanding of professionalism as 'competitive mediation'.

It is clear that the professional practice of these Sports Lecturers is heavily influenced by structure and compliance, but they do it in a way which matches their own values and therefore they are mediating these tensions. This was also complemented in previous research:

> 'Rather like the actions of people in a nation-state that is occupied by a foreign power, these tutors are playing along with (and sometimes excelling in the terms of) the oppressor's game, while at the same time, keeping alive a separate idea of who they are and where their heart is'.

(James and Gleeson, 2007 p. 134)

What follows is an account of how this understanding of professionalism was demonstrated by some of the Sports Lecturers in this research. The idea of competitive mediation was typified by Bethany who was a senior international rugby player before entering the lecturing profession. She stated that she thought that the high levels of performance management in her institution were probably beneficial to her because her previous sporting experience compliments this type of context:

> 'I think it's good for me, I think, it's probably because of my sports background, I probably want to be better than an indicator, so it probably gives me the motivation to move on, but I think that sometimes that, having this performance management, I think that I am guilty sometimes because I want to be the best, is going above that and then there being a higher expectation of you. So, when you do something that is seen as just being good, it's actually not good enough. So, I think that kind of has an influence'.

(Bethany, 2014)

She went onto state:

> 'I would probably say that I don't like losing. I don't like coming 2nd best and that's probably because I have been to an elite level and I've worked hard to get there…'

> '…So, in the same way that, you know, if I've put the hours in on another teacher, you do want to be viewed as better. So, the sports relate to the teaching that I used to put quite a lot of time into my sport and I do put a lot of time into my teaching, so I'd like to be viewed as the better, kind of, person for doing that'.

(Bethany, 2014)

She was not the only lecturer in this research to refer to the complementary relationship between competitive sporting experiences and lecturing in the FE sector. Jack also referred to the relationship between his experiences as an elite basketball player and his FE experiences. He specifically referred to how the competitive nature of being an athlete transfers into his professional career as well.

> '…I mean by no means do I think being results driven is a bad thing. I was just surprised to learn that there is this big disparity between what we're told on the course, that it's about the development of students, and results. I am very results driven as well. I do enjoy seeing that I have done a good job. So, in terms of working in Further Education and being competitive, seeing my students attain better grades would be rewarding'.

(Jack, 2017)

This was an unexpected finding from this research as for Bethany and Jack, they appeared to be happy to accept external accolades in order to feel that they were doing well in their jobs. As previously discussed in this research, such a focus has been deemed to have negative consequences, such as teaching to the test, but it did further reinforce the structures which existed within these institutions. It also further reinforced the competitive environments in which institutions operate and therefore, it is argued that this institutional competitiveness has transferred into the individual practice of these Sports Lecturers.

With specific regard to the skills required of an elite athlete, Jack stated that these skills transferred very well to lecturing in FE institutions:

> '…I mean, performance under pressure has always been something I have gradually got used to. I think playing sport has prepared me for observations, assessments than if I hadn't done sport. Along with other things as well. Sort of, like being able to stand in front of a crowd and talk clearly, I think, has been developed as an athlete, as being part of a team…'.

(Jack, 2017)

Another lecturer who was an elite cyclist and often competes in senior cycling events, similarly referred to how he was always motivated to be the best cyclist he could be and how he tries to transfer this into his professional career:

> '…This is me because I really want to do well at cycling, I want to be the best I can be in cycling. So, what I try and do is that I try to apply everything I do with training and with racing and all that and try to apply that to my professional career as well. I try and spend extra time preparing resources, getting my marking done as soon as it's in, and these types of things…'

(Justin, 2016)

This lecturer went on to specifically compare the personal qualities required to be an elite competitive cyclist and how these transfer into his professional career:

> '…I think that to be good at sport, you have to be logical, you almost have to be bordering on obsessive and it's about, you know, these little things that you are going to be doing and I think if you can apply those to your professional life, which is what I try and do, that's how the cross over happens'.

(Justin, 2016)

It does therefore appear that despite the negative implications associated with managerialism within FE, having competitive experiences outside of their FE lecturing, appeared to significantly help these specific Sports Lecturers to operate in their job roles.

The concept of competitive mediation also matches Gleeson and Shain's understanding of strategic compliance where it is understood that teachers do not just receive policy as empty vessels (Ball, 1994), rather they filter this information through their professional ideologies and perspectives (Gleeson and Shain, 1999). Therefore, regarding the Sports Lecturers in this research, they clearly felt comfortable with working in the performance-driven cultures within their FE institutions as this experience matched their competitive ideologies from their sporting experiences. It was clear that the primary objective of the Sports Lecturers was to ensure that their learners received a quality education, 'but the notion of quality is subject to competing definitions that are reflective of a tension between the `new' official managerial discourse of professionalism and `old' public sector professionalism' (Gleeson and Shain, 1999 p. 456). This was typified in the response of Jack who stated that he felt his teaching changed to meet the demands that were placed upon him and he referred specifically to how he focused less on student development, but instead focused on preparing his learners for their assessments. This reinforces Gleeson and Shain's discussion on the tensions between a contemporary managerialist focus and an older public sector understanding of professionalism.

> '…it's more focused towards preparing them for an assignment, preparing them for an exam, making sure they are progressing towards their target grades and succeeding them. It's all about assignments and retention numbers even'.
>
> (Jack, 2017)

Atkins and Tummons stated that '…It is possible to find traces of all three of these discourses at work at the same time, during the last 20 years' (Atkins and Tummons, 2017 p. 356), however, the findings from this research appear to show that a managerialist perspective of professionalism was the dominant understanding of professionalism for these Sports Lecturers.

At the outset of this research, the objective was to find out how Sports Lecturers defined their sense of professionalism in their working contexts, in the hope that such understanding would help to move education provision in the UK closer to a democratic model of education. The proposed Communities of Discovery model by Coffield and Williamson (2011) was compared to traditional education models.

The findings from this research do appear to suggest that performance management and managerialism structures still dominate discussions surrounding the professionalism of the Sports Lecturers in this research. This was surprising and the findings from this research and the discussions had in the previous chapters, indicate that democratic models of education are perhaps still a way away.

In fact, it might be argued that competitive mediation might be damaging to these proposed democratic models and therefore we might be moving further away from such a model. Indeed, recent political pressures in the form of ABRs, greater restrictions on funding allocations on FE colleges through the need to introduce more apprenticeships and the economic uncertainties of the UK leaving the European Union (Brexit), might further compound this situation.

Robinson (2015) stated that the key to improving education was to focus on the quality of teaching in educational institutions. 'The heart of educational improvement is inspiring students to learn, which is what great teachers do' (Robinson, 2015 p. 100). This is in stark contrast to the traditional understanding of the role of the FE lecturer, which is to adhere to top-down efforts by Governments to change teaching in schools and colleges. These efforts '…divert teachers away from their experience and instincts, deliberately forcing them to bypass the teaching intelligence they have learned and nurtured' (Thomas, 2013 p. 42).

Such approaches have little to do with student-centred education (O'Neill and Adams, 2012) and from this research, focusing on outcomes and targets can lead to practices which are actually damaging to student development (narrower curriculum delivery, teaching to the test etc.). Consequently, 'the data suggest that school staffing problems are rooted in the way schools are organised and the way the teaching occupation is treated and that lasting improvements in the quality and quantity of the teaching workforce will require improvements in the quality of the teaching job' (Ingersoll, 2003 In Robinson, 2015 p. 22). My research findings further supported this need to greater improve the working conditions for FE Sport Lecturers.

In addition to the factors already discussed, some of the lecturers in this research stated that they would like to see additional changes in their job roles and institutional management, to increase their levels of job satisfaction.

With specific regard to enhancing their professionalism, one lecturer stated that institutions should be a little more flexible about their procedures and lecturers should be trusted to act according to what they see as best:

> 'I think that my version of professionalism is, the only probably difference is that I think there should be some flexibility within those and professionalism, you know, they may not what, in certain situations - Safeguarding situations for example, there might be a certain book to follow, but I don't necessarily think that that is going to always lead to the best outcome, so I think that sometimes you have got to be flexible'.
>
> (Bethany, 2014)

This same lecturer further stated that she would like to see more flexible working conditions in terms of working from home:

> 'For example, it's like the whole being...there's a contracted time, people say there's a contracted time for being in in the morning is 9 o clock and going home is 5 o clock, but actually if you are working at home and working doing work, it's just a better environment, then you should be allowed to work from home. It might not be seen as professional by your boss, but actually I am a lot more productive at home than I am here'.

(Bethany, 2014)

Finally, another lecturer stated that she would like to see some institutional policies surrounding time off in lieu (TOIL) clarified:

> 'I think some of that is the financial position, but then some of that is, maybe, TOIL, you know, because I live far away, I would rather have TOIL, time off, rather than pay because of the way I, you know, my travelling and everything. And, you know, in the holidays, I begrudge coming in, all the way in, 70 miles, to sit at a computer, or to do marking, when I can just as well do it at home. And that's really, that really gets my goat that'

(Elsa, 2014)

As Ball (2017 p. 164) summarises in his education debate:

> 'Education policy articulates technocratic 'solutions' to practical 'problems' represented by and enacted through performance, and thus education is depoliticised, in the sense that there is no debate about values and purpose, and 'repoliticised' at the same time in the sense that a particular vision of education in established in practice'.

The findings from this research further suggest that there is a continuing need to further discuss the values and purpose of education generally and Further Education specifically and to develop policies at national and institutional level that greater meet the needs of the students and teachers who operate with these institutions. Another call for democratic audits of education provision, as previously illustrated by Coffield and Williamson (2011), could be a useful starting position.

Chapter Seven – Conclusions

Research Questions (RQ) Re-visited

1. ***What were the contexts in which FE Sports Lecturers in the South West of England worked?***

2. ***How did the Sports Lecturers work in their contexts and how did they define their sense of professionalism with reference to the contexts they worked in and the jobs they did?***

The following paragraphs will answer each question in order.

Regarding the contexts in which the FE Sports Lecturers worked, the lecturers referred to the working environments in which they operated and how these were different to what they were expecting before working in the sector and vastly different to any proposed democratic models suggested by researchers such as Coffield and Williamson (2011) and Robinson (2015). The FE Sports Lecturers referred to how there remained high levels of performativity and accountability in their job roles and these caused a great deal of pressure and stress for them and these were not expected prior to working in the FE sector. This stress was likened to a sort of 'football managers syndrome' where the Sports Lecturers were almost afraid of getting bad results because of potentially losing their livelihoods, which appeared to be like what happens with top-flight football managers after a string of bad results. The Sports Lecturers also referred to changing governmental and institutional policies and how these caused uncertainty in the sector, and instability in their working practices. The Sports Lecturers in the research additionally commented about a perceived lack of focus on developing skills for work and in place are required to deliver qualifications for achieving good statistical outcomes for their institutions.

This was found to be mirrored in the findings from the 2017 Prince's Trust Results for Life Report and from other educational researchers like Robinson, (2015 p. 16) who stated 'there is an ever-widening skills gap between what schools are actually teaching and what the economy actually needs… (Robinson, 2015 p. 16). This research also highlighted that the Sports Lecturers similarly felt the same and so school-based research was applicable to the experiences of these FE Sports Lecturers as well.

Due to the perceived contexts for working, the FE Sports Lecturers highlighted many strategies for working in these contexts. They referred to how they narrowed their teaching methods to prepare students for passing their specific assessments and therefore they taught to their tests. This finding was surprising, but it reflected the contexts in which the Sports Lecturers worked. They felt that they had to teach to the test to achieve good statistical outcomes. This was found to be contrary to what was recommended by the Head of Ofsted in October 2017, where she stated that this approach leaves pupils with hollowed-out and flimsy understandings (Spielman, 2017). Other strategies included setting coursework deadlines before college holidays to give the Sports Lecturers extra time to assess work outside of institutional assessment policy guidelines, utilising student feedback to find ways to maximise student motivation and the levels of retention and achievement on their courses and using institutional systems to ensure robust assessment management and reporting.

Some of the Sports Lecturers recognised in this research that having high levels of performance management in their job roles enabled lots of feedback for them to use to develop their own practice.

This was a minority point however, as the overriding feedback from this research was that the high levels of performance management caused a high degree of stress for the Sports Lecturers and this consequently caused them to change their working practices to fit with such structures. This was found to reflect a culture of terror being present in their institutions (Ball, 2017) and was typified in some of the responses from the Sports Lecturers who stated that they often complied with what they were being asked to do, so that they did not 'rock the boat' (Gleeson and Shain, 1999 p. 455). Therefore, the dominant response regarding their professionalism was that the structural constraints within the individual FE institutions, were influential regarding the ways in which the Sports Lecturers defined their own professionalism. Consequently, the Sports Lecturers thought that their professionalism was a sort of code of practice, or service level agreement (Evans, 2007) and it complemented the previous research undertaken, where many interpretations of the term seemed to focus on it being an externally imposed, articulated perception of what lay within the parameters of their profession's collective remit and responsibilities. However, a new area of research emerged from this study and this was 'competitive mediation'. This also further reinforced the contexts in which the FE Sports Lecturers in this research worked and therefore, suggested that the previous understandings of the impact of structures on teacher professionalism, need to be revisited.

This research argued that the Sports Lecturers from competitive sporting backgrounds, possessed the necessary skills and experiences to function in the imposed structures within their FE institutions. As previously stated in the discussion, this was a significant finding from the lecturers in this research, but it was not thought to be only applicable to Sports Lecturers, because other lecturers in different subject areas might also play competitive sport and so this finding was thought to apply to them also. Indeed, it was stated that lecturers emanating from any competitive situation, might also demonstrate these characteristics.

Female Sports Lecturers also demonstrated this competitive characteristic and therefore this was found to be contrary to what previous research stated where women were viewed as less competitive compared to men in specific contexts (Hanek *et al.*, 2016; List, 2013; Mara, 2014).

With specific regard to the participants in this research, it was found that all the Sports Lecturers who played competitive sport felt that these experiences complemented their professional practice in their FE institutions. These lecturers referred to how they were expected to perform under pressure in their profession and referred to how they were used to operating in such conditions, because of doing so in their competitive sporting careers. The Sports Lecturers also commented how they had high levels of motivation and pushed themselves to be viewed as the best by their colleagues. This meant that the Sports Lecturers embraced being observed in formal teaching observations and they always tried to ensure that their course outcomes and statistics were better than their peers'. They achieved high levels of results by utilising the previously documented strategies – mainly, narrowing the curriculum delivery and teaching to the test. These were seen to be a negative consequence of the structures which were determining their practice and were linked to Gleeson and Shain's (1999) understandings of strategic compliance, where it was understood that the Sports Lecturers did not receive policy as empty vessels (Ball, 1994), rather they filtered this information through their professional ideologies and perspectives (Gleeson and Shain, 1999). Therefore, they were comfortable with working in the performance-driven cultures within their FE institutions, because this experience matched their competitive ideologies from their sporting experiences. Whilst it was clear that the Sports Lecturers wanted to ensure their learners received a quality education, the notion of quality was subjected to competing definitions that were reflective of a tension between the `new' official managerial discourse of professionalism and `old' public sector professionalism' (Gleeson and Shain, 1999 p. 456).

As documented in the previous chapter, this was a surprising finding from this research and indicated that competitive mediation as a strategy is damaging to proposed democratic models of education, like the one suggested by Coffield and Williamson (2011) entitled 'Communities of Discovery'. This was because the democratic models of education were understood to involve an emphasis on democratic rights of enhancement, inclusion and participation, peer-moderated self-regulation and an expansive learning environment where experimentation is encouraged. As previously stated, this new model for further education would also have a new concept of professionalism which would be based on practical reasoning, judgement and wisdom (Plowright and Barr, 2012) of the lecturers within the institutions. Robinson (2015) additionally advocated for a revolution in education, which was different from the traditional standards model. 'It was based on a belief in the value of the individual, the right to self-determination, our potential to evolve and live a fulfilled life, and the importance of civic responsibility and respect for others' (Robinson, 2015 p. xvi). Finally, Sachs (2014 p. 3) similarly argued that such a new approach would require teachers to '…collectively and individually address those in power to make it clear that a top-down approach is simply not working, nor, in principle, is it likely to work'.

It is clear from the responses from the Sports Lecturers in this research that we are still a long-way from more democratic models of education in the FE sector and therefore, managerialist structures are still highly influential regarding the ways in which the Sports Lecturers in this research understood their professional experiences and how they perceived their professionalism. In fact, this research proposes that the FE sector might be moving further away from such a model. Indeed, recent political pressures in the form of Area Based Reviews (ABRs), greater restrictions on funding allocations of FE colleges through the need to introduce more apprenticeships and the economic uncertainties of the UK leaving the European Union (Brexit), were highlighted as potential compounding factors moving forward.

Consequently, this thesis joins the growing amount of research which argues for governments and individual FE institutions, to undertake democratic audits of the quality of FE provision, to assess if the educational experiences their learners receive enable them to experience democratic ways of working, and whether they feel they are engaged in the social and political life of their communities (Coffield and Williamson, 2011). This was further reinforced by Robinson (2015) who suggested that the old systems of education are not designed to meet the needs we now all face and 'improving them by raising conventional standards will not meet the challenges we now face' (Robinson, 2015 p. xv).

Whilst it was perceived that this paper answered the proposed research questions in detail, there were several limitations to this research. There were only eight responses from the questionnaire and only five of these were able to participate in the interview process. It would have been preferable to have more respondents in the hope that focus groups could be utilised to further probe the responses of the participants and to carry out quantitative methods in addition to the qualitative methods used, to increase levels of validity and generalisability. Only two female lecturers were interviewed and, so it is not possible to confirm if gender played a significant part regarding how males and females compared whilst defining their sense of professionalism. This research was only focused on the experiences of Sports Lecturers in FE colleges in the South West of England and so the findings cannot be generalised, or applied, outside of this area. Also, only Sports Lecturers from four different institutions agreed to take part in this research and so the findings cannot be generalised to all institutions in the South West either. It was deemed important to focus on the experiences of Sports Lecturers only in this research and this means that there is a further gap in research to focus on how individuals define their sense of professionalism in higher management roles within their institutions as well. It would for instance be interesting to see if Heads of Department define their professionalism in different ways compared to Heads of Faculties and Senior Managers.

This research also omitted to gather responses from students and how they defined what was important from their lecturers. Further work could also be conducted with comparing the experiences of Sports Lecturers to those of Physical Education Teachers in other education sectors, to enable comparisons to be made in terms of the pressures which influence how they define their sense of professionalism. In addition to the above, another area of further work could be to investigate if the outcomes of Sports Lecturers from competitive sporting backgrounds are better compared to other lecturers from non-competitive backgrounds. This would enable conclusions to be made regarding the traits that are desirable from FE institutions to maximise outcomes and whether these outcomes outweigh possible limitations in their delivery. A final suggestion for further work is to build on this research going forward and to assess the degree to which the UK leaving the European Union (Brexit) impacts the roles of FE colleges going forward and the working practices of the lecturers, including Sports Lecturers, in the future.

Having completed this thesis, the recommendations I would make for the future are:

1. ***All FE institutions should undertake democratic audits of their provision to ensure that they are meeting the needs of their learners and not just from a statistical point of view to gain funding (Coffield and Williamson, 2011). The comparison between the Market and Democratic Models of Education (detailed in Table 1 of this thesis) could be used as a starting point.***

2. ***Principals and finance managers of FE institutions should be encouraged to operate their institutions firstly as centres of excellence in education and secondly as businesses (Coffield, 2008). Such a shift in priority would '…maximise...the professionalism of tutors...the agency of learners, but also the relationship between tutors and learners...' (Coffield, 2008 p. 1). James et al. (2007) similarly state that the solution to the question of improvement is to change the learning cultures within FE institutions.***

3. ***Staff within further education institutions should be encouraged to discuss some of the larger philosophical and sociological concepts associated with education broadly, and further education specifically, such as: what is learning? What is the relationship between how people learn and the contexts in which they learn? What is the role of a teacher/lecturer in this relationship? What is professionalism and what impacts perceptions of professionalism? What are the impacts on staff and students of managerialist structures within education and what are the solutions? What are the strategies for effectively working in managerialist structures?***

4. ***New lecturers entering the sector should undertake induction programmes which also critically discuss the context of contemporary further education and the role of a lecturer within that context. Resources like this thesis could be used to facilitate such discussions. These new members of staff could also be allocated mentors which, not only offer advice regarding working effectively in the contexts, but who are also a point of contact to have these critical discussions with.***

5. ***All staff should be aware of the negative impacts of teaching to the test, as in Amanda Spielman's article cited in this thesis. Such an approach to teaching offers a hollow experience to learners. In addition, teacher morale and student engagement are impacted because of education establishments trying to adhere to the standards movement which supresses individuality, imagination and creativity (Robinson, 2015).***

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Appendices

1. Research Ethics Approval Letter

University of the West of England
BRISTOL

Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries and Education
Frenchay Campus
Coldharbour Lane
Bristol BS16 1QY
www.uwe.ac.uk

Jacob Bacon
35a The Deans
Portishead
Bristol
BS20 6EG

14 November 2013

Dear Jacob,

Application Title: Do FE Sports Lecturers Feel That They Are Working In 'Exam Factories'? *Narrative Accounts Of FE Practitioner-Professionalism In The South West Of England*

Thank you for your response to my earlier letter asking for clarification of your original application. Your response has been considered by the Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries and Education Research Ethics Committee (ACE FREC). I am pleased to inform you that your application has now been approved.

This approval is subject to the following standard conditions:

- You must notify ACE FREC in advance if you wish to make significant amendments to the original application;
- You must notify ACE FREC if you terminate your research before completion;
- You must notify ACE FREC if there are any serious events or developments in the research that have an ethical dimension;
- Any changes to the study protocol, which have an ethical dimension, will need to be approved by ACE FREC. You should send details of any such amendments to ACE FREC with an explanation of the reason for the proposed changes. Any changes approved by an external research ethics committee must also be communicated to the relevant UWE committee.

Please note: The University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) is required to monitor and audit the ethical conduct of research involving human participants, data and tissue conducted by academic staff, students and researchers. Your project may be selected for audit from the research projects submitted to and approved by the UREC and its committees.

We wish you well with your research.

Yours sincerely

PP

Matthew Partington
Chair Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries & Education
Research Ethics Committee

CC John Cook

bettertogether

University of the West of England, Bristol
Vice-Chancellor Professor Steven West

2. Blank Electronic Questionnaire/Consent Form – Survey Monkey

Link: https://www.questionnairemonkey.com/r/DV2JACKCF

Purpose of Questionnaire:

My name is Jacob Bacon and I am undertaking a research study as part of a Professional Doctorate in Education at the University of the West of England (UWE). The aim of my research is to answer the following three research questions:

1. ***What are the contexts in which FE Sports Lecturers in the South West of England work?***

2. ***How do Sports Lecturers work in their contexts and how do the Sports Lecturers define their sense of professionalism with reference to the contexts they work in and the jobs they do?***

It is the aim of my research to explore these questions through undertaking questionnaires and interviews with Sports Lecturers in the South West of England, so that their lives can be greater understood. If you consent to taking part in my research, please fill in the electronic questionnaire. I will utilise respondent validation in my research where you will have access to my findings and have an opportunity to comment/discuss these prior to the submission of my work. A copy of my thesis will also be offered to you to keep should you so wish. At all times during your participation in this research, your welfare will be of paramount importance and your dignity and personal privacy will be respected. Your participation in my research will be completely voluntary, you will be at liberty to withdraw at any time prior to the submission and publication of my research, without prejudice or negative consequences, and non-participation will not affect you in any way. Whilst your names and responses will be included in the draft of my research project, your identity, and the identity of your institution, will be hidden prior to formal submission. If you have any complaints on ethical grounds, you can contact my Research Ethics Coordinator – Lesley Brock at the following email address: lesley.brock@uwe.ac.uk.

Many thanks,

Jacob Bacon
University of the West of England

3. Example Emails Sent to Sports Lecturers Regarding Research Process

Jake Bacon University Research

Jacob Bacon

To: [redacted]

12 November 2015 17:00

- You replied on 19/11/2015 16:11.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DV2JWCF

[redacted]

I was wondering if you would be willing to take part in a research project which I am currently undertaking for my Professional Doctorate in Education? It is investigating professionalism within a Sports lecturer context.

Of course all responses will be kept completely confidential and identities will be hidden throughout.

If you are willing, please complete the attached survey link. Interviews could follow at a later date.

Many thanks,

Jake.

Jacob Bacon
Subject Leader Physical Education and GCSE Biology
Strode College
Street
Somerset
jbacon@strode-college.ac.uk

Interviews

Jacob Bacon

To: [redacted]

20 June 2016 18:39

[redacted]

Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed for my EdD. Just wondering when would be good for you? I will email your survey results out to remind you what you said. Interviews will be based on these responses.

Many thanks again.

Jake.

Jacob Bacon
Subject Leader Physical Education and GCSE Biology
Strode College
Street
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jbacon@strode-college.ac.uk

Thesis

Jacob Bacon

To: [redacted]

Attachments: Chapter Six - Justin.docx (18 KB) [Open as Web Page]

02 March 2018 17:16

[redacted]

Once again, thank you for giving up your time to take part in my research.

Please see the attached personal account of your experiences from the survey and interview process.

If there is anything else you would like to add or amend, please let me know via email and I will add in/take out what you suggest.

As you can see, I have changed your name so you won't be identified when I submit my work. I hope to submit my final thesis at the end of this month (March, 2018).

If you have any queries or questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes,

Jake Bacon.

4. Blank Electronic Survey Monkey Questionnaire

1. Please tick all statements which are relevant to your professional circumstances.

- ☐ I am female
- ☐ I am male
- ☐ I have a PGCE qualification
- ☐ I have another teaching qualification
- ☐ I am working towards a PGCE/teaching qualification
- ☐ I currently work in an FE institution as a sports lecturer
- ☐ I have been teaching in FE for less than 3 years
- ☐ I have been teaching in FE for 3 to 6 years
- ☐ I have been teaching in FE for 7 to 10 years
- ☐ I have been teaching in FE for more than 10 years
- ☐ I have been teaching in FE for more than 15 years
- ☐ I have been teaching in FE for more than 20 years

Name and Email Address

2. How would you describe the institutional context in which you work?

3. Prior to becoming a sports lecturer, what did you think were the purposes of education generally and lecturing specifically?

4. Have you experienced any disparities between your prior expectations of education/lecturing and your current practice?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

Please explain your answer.

5. Have you developed any strategies for dealing with these disparities?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

Which strategies have you developed and why?

6. What do you think is meant by the term 'professionalism'?

7. What do you think is meant by the term 'performance management'?

8. How does performance management impact your job role?

9. How would you define your sense of professionalism in reference to your professional practice in your current job role?

10. Overall, do you feel satisfied in your current job role?

- ☐ Completely Satisfied
- ☐ Slightly Satisfied
- ☐ Neither Satisfied or Unsatisfied

☐ Slightly Unsatisfied

☐ Completely Unsatisfied

Why have you responded as you have?

End of Questionnaire.

5. Example of Questionnaire Response and Interview Prompt Sheet

CURRENT VIEW

+ FILTER | + COMPARE | + SHOW

No rules applied

Rules allow you to FILTER, COMPARE and SHOW results to see trends and patterns. Learn more »

SAVED VIEWS (1)

Original View (No rules applied)

+ Save as...

EXPORTS

SHARED DATA

No shared data

Sharing allows you to share your survey results with others. You can share all data, a saved view, or a single question summary. Learn more »

Share All

RESPONDENTS: 10 of 10

Export All | Share All

Question Summaries | Data Trends | Individual Responses

Respondent #9

#9

COMPLETE

Edit | Delete | Export

Collector: Web Link (Web Link)
Started: Monday, November 16, 2015 1:15:31 PM
Last Modified: Monday, November 16, 2015 1:35:32 PM
Time Spent: 00:20:00
IP Address: 212.219.116.29

PAGE 1: Purpose of Survey

Q1: **Please tick all statements which are relevant to your professional circumstances.**

I am male

I have a PGCE qualification

I have been teaching in FE for more than 15 years

Name and Email Address [redacted]

Q2: **How would you describe the institutional context in which you work?**

[redacted] a range of Level 2 and 3 courses and a sprinkling of HE provision. The main bulk of the work is around Level 3 with a focus on A-Levels.

Q3: **Prior to becoming a sports lecturer, what did you think were the purposes of education generally and lecturing specifically?**

To gain relevant qualifications and broaden depth, detail and understanding of specific subject areas. Develop more adult inquiry skills.

Q4: **Have you experienced any disparities between your prior expectations of education/lecturing and your current practice?**

Yes

Please explain your answer. Limitations of curriculum on both Vocational and A-Level courses where students are now only concerned about what appears in an exam or assignment.

Q5: **Have you developed any strategies for dealing with these disparities?**

Yes

Which strategies have you developed and why? Background reading and incorporating sections in lessons where students have to take responsibility for areas that are not examined/assessed.

Q6: **What do you think is meant by the term 'professionalism'?**

Being a role model and enabling all students to maximise their potential.

Q7: **What do you think is meant by the term 'performance management'?**

Making sure that you are aware of retention/success/achievement rates that are compared against 'national norms'. Identifying areas that you need to develop and setting realistic targets to achieve them.

Q8: **How does performance management impact your job role?**

Not sure it does as middle/upper management don't really enforce performance management issues. I think that it depends on the grades and ALPS scores that you are producing.

Q9: **How would you define your sense of professionalism in reference to your professional practice in your current job role?**

As before being a role model. All standard elements being punctual, openness, honesty, approachable, treating all people equally, preparing all lessons (theory based or practical) appropriately, keeping up with CPD.

Q10: **Overall, do you feel satisfied in your current job role?**

Slightly Satisfied

Why have you responded as you have? The constant amount of changes to specifications and awarding body procedures and the last minute ratification of these creates a constant state of flux. Huge amounts of paperwork and paper trails in order to show/justify that you have actually done the job properly.

Thanks for completing survey.

Go through survey responses.

Focus of interview around question 1 of thesis - How do sports lecturers define professionalism, what were their expectations regarding the professionalism of sports lecturers and where did these expectations come from?

Themes for Interview:

- General feelings about education – purpose?
- Where do ideas about education come from?
- Families experience/views on education?
- Personal experience of education?
- What qualities of teaching were good/bad?
- Has this shaped own practice?
- Route into teaching?
- Why teaching?
- Why FE Lecturing?
- Good and bad points about FE?
- Expectations before?
- Anything different?
- What does professionalism mean?
- Why?
- What did you think about professionalism before going into teaching?
- Has this view changed? What does professionalism mean to you now?
- How do you know what you should be doing?
- Where does this come from?
- What about performance management?
- Does this impact your professionalism?
- How?
- Was this what you expected?
- Description of weekly tasks?
- What you expected?
- Anything not expected?
- How does this impact you?
- Impact of job out of hours?
- Opportunity for further comments?

General Notes:

6. Example of Part of Interview Transcript (Real Identity Hidden)

Jake – Right, so first interview with Jack. Jack, thank you very much for agreeing to do the questionnaire. I read through your questionnaire and it was very detailed, so thank you very much for your detailed answers. I just wanted to draw on a couple of things. You are currently doing a PGCE.

Jack – Correct.

Jake – Can I just ask you what your motivation was for being a teacher?

Jack – I have always wanted to work in education in some form. But from working in different jobs, this led me to wanting to work in Further Education. So, I wanted to work teaching physical education in secondary education when I was younger, I kind of, from working in different environments, decided that Further Education was what I wanted to teach in.

Jake – So what environments had you worked in previously?

Jack – So I have worked in a secondary school ad a sixth form.

Jake – What was that experience like?

Jack – It was good. I was a learning support assistant and so I have worked with students of different ability ranges and ages. Through year seven through to the end of sixth form. But that kind of put me off working in secondary education.

Jake – What was it that put you off?

Jack – I think the students did not know, did not have a direction about what they wanted to learn about at that point. Whilst the sixth form students that I worked with all knew what, or had a rough idea about what they wanted to be doing. They were more motivated to work towards those subjects. But then I also started a PGCE in primary education and after working there, I realised very quickly that wasn't what I wanted to be doing.

Jake – What was it about the primary PGCE that you did not like?

Jack – A very similar thing to secondary school. Although I was very passionate about my own subject, I wasn't prepared to teach, plan and evaluate a bunch of other subjects that I wasn't that passionate about.

Jake – What did they have you teaching?

7. Example Coding Grid for Coding of Interview and Questionnaire Data

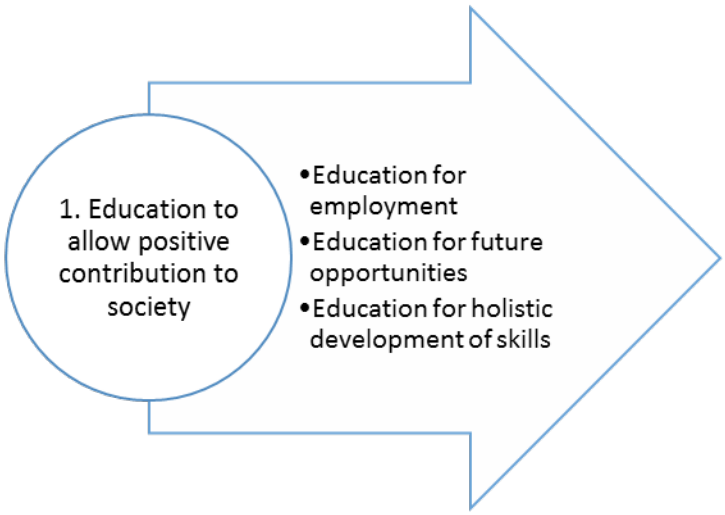
Open Coding (Categorisation)	Axial Coding (Distinct Relationships)	Examples from raw data
Family view of education	1. Supported to gain employment 2. Supported for future opportunities and life chances 3. Family members were teachers 4. Pressure caused children to rebel 5. Being a good student 6. Copying siblings	**Raw data from interview transcripts taken out to protect identities of participants.**
Personal view of education	1. To transfer knowledge 2. To prepare people (holistically 3. To send own children to university 4. Influenced by teachers 5. To get you 'somewhere' in life 6. Link to employment	
Personal school experience	1. Only really enjoyed sport at school 2. Influential teachers as role models 3. Model own teaching on role models 4. Grew up in New Zealand and developed a love of outdoor sports 5. Negative experience at school influences own practice 6. Personal approach by teachers 7. Poor teacher attributes	
Personal views of the purposes of education (taken from questionnaire)	1. Dual purpose – Prepare students for their futures and meet institutional requirements 2. Holistic delivery with highly motivated students 3. Imparting knowledge to enable learners to gain qualifications 4. Imparting knowledge to enable learners to gain qualifications to boost their career prospects	
Route into teaching	1. Always wanted to work in education in some form 2. Negative impact of primary school work experience 3. Negative impact of secondary school work experience 4. Links to vocational experience (coaching) 5. Links to vocational experience (instructing) 6. Poor income from coaching 7. Role models in industry 8. Positive work experience 9. Right place, right time 10. 'Fell' into teaching because of injuries and vocational experience 11. Negative PGCE experience for preparing for job 12. Initial negative university experience 13. Initially thought too early to be a teacher 14. Fell 'out of love' with studying 15. Religious commitments impacted job and influenced career change	

	16. Improve material prospects 17. FE teaching not first choice	
Prior expectations for working in FE	1. High motivation of students and maturity levels 2. Students made a choice to attend FE 3. Students would be adults 4. Good behaviour of learners 5. Teachers would be respected 6. Bad behaviour of students in own school experience influenced choice to teach in FE 7. High standard of subject knowledge required 8. Specific subject delivery in preparation for university 9. Personal reflections on own experience and how this shaped expectations 10. Productive work environment 11. Expecting a higher level of learner	
Disparities	1. Emphasis on performance through use of statistics 2. Frustrated with non-sharing of resources 3. Institutional time constraints 4. Time constraints because of pastoral support 5. Students forced to attend 6. Increases in workload 7. Awarding body changes 8. Consistent policy changes from Government 9. Recruitment of learners 10. Students performing well in interviews 11. Narrow curriculum 12. Curriculum doesn't match industry requirements 13. Learner behaviour and attitude to their studies 14. Vocation suffers 15. Behaviour of staff 16. Lack of rewards for lecturers in comparison to other sectors 17. Constant changing of systems 18. Underestimated level of research required for preparing teaching resources 19. Have to teach a variety of skills on-top of individual subject 20. Students attend to claim benefits	
Performance management understanding and impact	1. Job security 2. Part of the job 3. Monitoring performance to ensure you are doing what you are supposed to be doing 4. Accountability to managers 5. Achieving positive statistical outcomes in-line with institutional requirements 6. Self-reflecting process 7. Protection from senior managers 8. Role of teaching observations 9. Enjoys teaching observations due to getting feedback on performance	

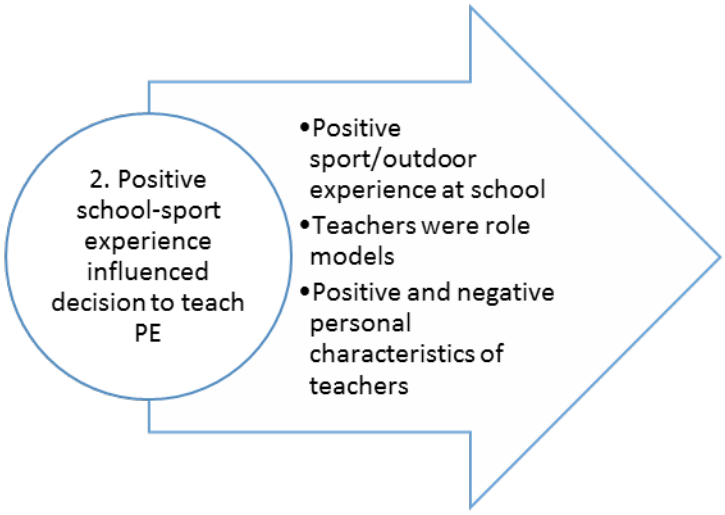
	10. Results are positive and so do not really think about this 11. Negative results, Ofsted and management cause staff to worry 12. Self-managing	
Impacts of performance management on job role (taken from questionnaire)	1. Monitoring and improving student performance and teacher performance 2. Top-down? Frustrating 3. Positive – Accountability and Negative – Lack of flexibility 4. Depends on outcomes 5. Conflicts with management over decision making 6. Increases pressure and stress levels 7. Gives structure 8. The responsibility of a manager	
Understandings of professionalism	1. General professionalism 2. Professional standards 3. Demonstrating competency in a role – linked to professional standards 4. Compliant in accordance with management and policy 5. Develop skills for employment 6. Develop holistic skills of learners 7. Autonomy due to time constraints of managers 8. Negative behaviour of colleagues 9. An external expectation 10. Flexible professionalism 11. Flexible management 12. Personal stress levels are high 13. The role of a teacher 14. Mixed understanding 15. Negative professionalism demonstrated by other people 16. As a role model 17. Positive in comparison to colleagues 18. Changes depending on role 19. Depends on time constraints 20. Working to the best of your abilities	
Strategies employed for disparities	1. Narrower teaching methods to meet specification and examination demands 2. Flexibility with teaching methods 3. Working from home 4. Creative assessment timings 5. Fully conform to external pressures 6. 'Upbeat' delivery of lessons 7. Motivating students through linking to sport 8. Using negative experiences from past to shape learning experience 9. Gaining learner feedback 10. Utilising good skills to avoid taking work home 11. Using the systems are used effectively to 'protect' self from poor student outcomes 12. Analysing statistics	

	13. Building strong personal relationships with students 14. Dealing with negative learner behaviour	
Impact of own sporting experience	1. Competitive experience and being rewarded for success 2. Performing under pressure 3. Lack of control over students 4. Using knowledge over ability 5. Motivated to be the best	
Job satisfaction	1. Happy with career choice 2. See students' progress and be successful 3. Travel pressures to get to work impacts job satisfaction 4. Flexibility of job 5. Always learning 6. Support of work colleagues 7. Lack of feedback to aid professional development 8. Awarding body changes 9. Professional comparisons to other sectors including pay, holidays, time and staff training 10. Performance management and bureaucracy 13. Pressures on time	

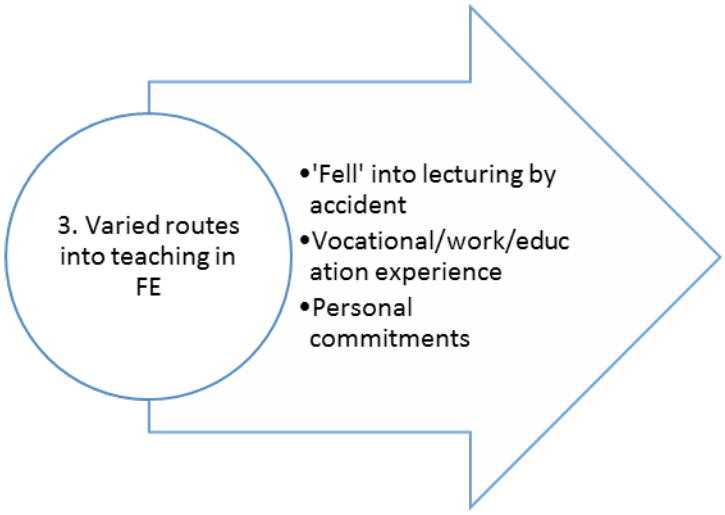
8. Final Coding of Interview and Questionnaire Data



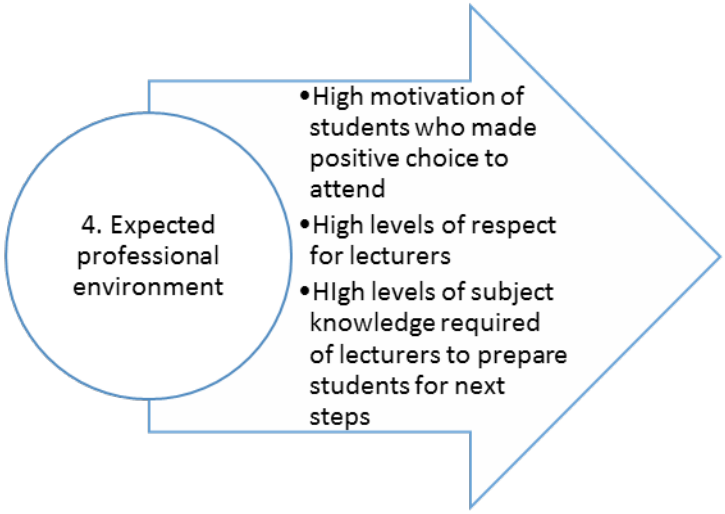
Open Codes and Axial Code referring to lecturer views on the purposes of education.



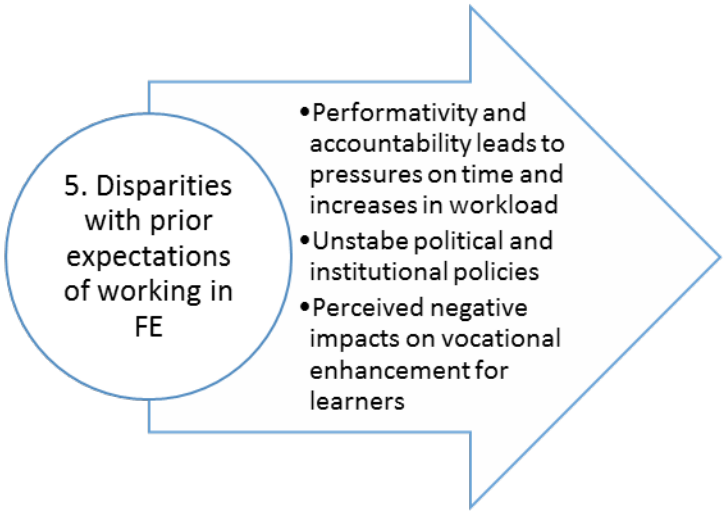
Open Codes and Axial Code referring to lecturer choice of subject to teach.



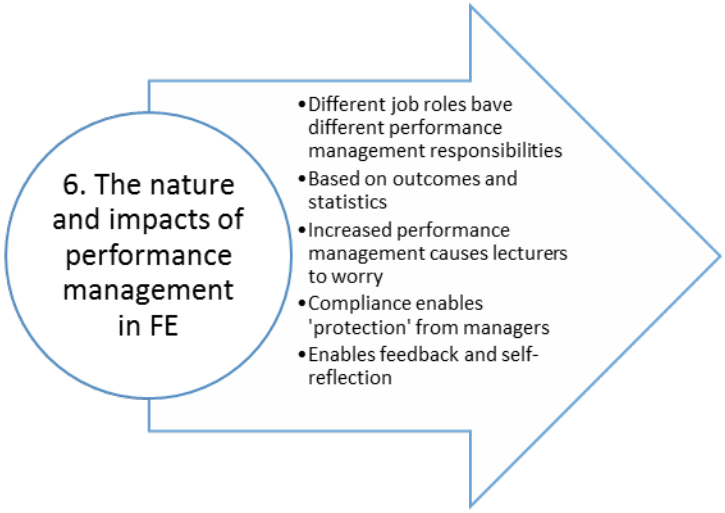
Open Codes and Axial Code referring to routes into working in FE for lecturers.



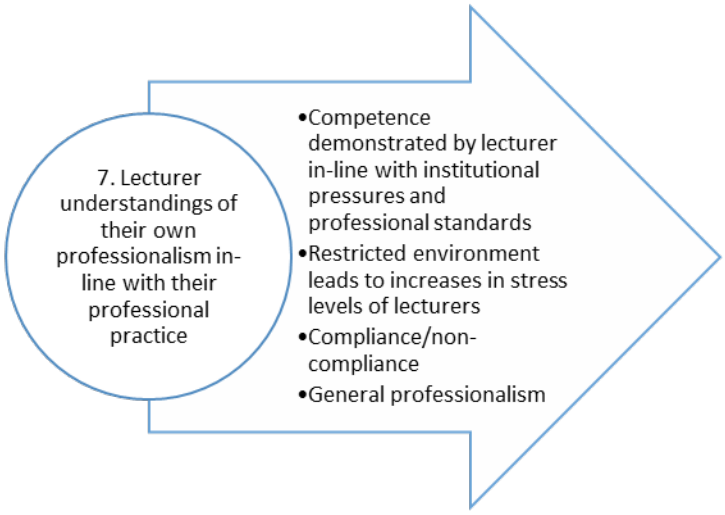
Open Codes and Axial Code referring to lecturer expectations of working in FE sector.



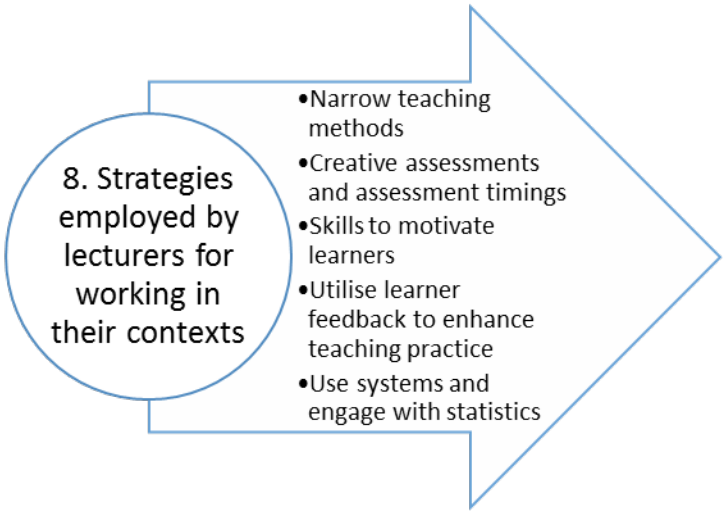
Open Codes and Axial Code referring to lecturer perceptions of disparities with current practice in comparison to prior expectations.



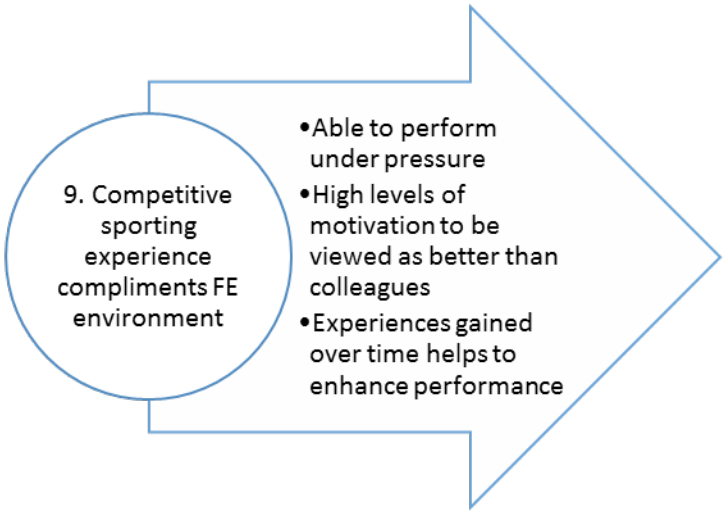
Open Codes and Axial Code referring to lecturer perceptions of the role of performance management and the impacts on their practice.



Open Codes and Axial Code referring to lecturer perceptions of their professionalism.



Open Codes and Axial Code referring to the strategies which lecturers utilise to deal with disparities.



Open Codes and Axial Code referring to lecturer perceptions of the impacts of their own sporting experience on their professional practice.