‘Practice Architectures’; ‘scholarship’ and ‘middle leaders’ within an established community of HE practitioners in FE.

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Biographical Note

The author has over 20 years’ experience as a Further Education (FE) teacher, teaching science subjects that range from ‘O’ Level to GCSE, ‘A’ Level Biology, BTec Health and Social Care, BTec Sports Science, ‘A’ Level PE through to GNVQ Science amongst other vocational areas such as Medical Laboratory Science, Catering Science and Hairdressing Sciences. Since 1994 she has been involved in teacher education with both awarding body and university based courses and in 2010 she entered a higher education institution and remains involved with post compulsory teacher education where she has maintained a research interest in the role and place of knowledge within vocational subjects. Publications include ‘Here’s the iPad’, The BTEC. Philosophy: How not to teach science to vocational students in Research in Post Compulsory Education, Volume 22 (2017); Vocational pedagogies: The Science of Teaching or the Teaching of Science in Journal of Education and Training Studies Vol.3, No.2: March 2015 and *The Shoebox activity: a powerful tool for learning.* Journal- Teaching in Lifelong Learning: a journal to inform and improve practice. Volume 3, Issue 2. pp. 39-48. In addition she has contributed to a book edited by Fawbert, F. (2003) Teaching in Post-Compulsory Education: Learning Skills and Standards. Continuum and is currently developing the notion of practice architectures for other teacher educators of vocational tutors.

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Abstract

Drawing on the concepts of practice architecture, middle leader and scholarship, this research uses narrative analysis of interview data drawn from a ‘community of practice’ of HE in FE practitioners at one HE institution. Whilst being a ‘community of practice’ for a number of years, the university changed the collaborative provision framework of support and it is this new framework that was of interest in researching the practice architecture of the HE in FE staff particularly in terms of their scholarship. Tutors at three local colleges were interviewed to establish their journey into HE in FE, as well as their views on being an HE in FE practitioner. HE Managers at each college were also interviewed in order to present a alternative perspective of the management of HE in FE. The data indicates that in terms of practice architecture, the tutors are firstly early years practitioners but with very different journeys into FE and hence HE in FE teachers. In terms of scholarship the staff defined it as an ‘intellectual gym’ and all noted the ‘lack of understanding of HE’ by their FE managers. HE Managers reinforced this notion and made useful comments that allowed a more holistic view of the position of HE in FE and its relevant longevity. Overall conclusions are that the new arrangement set up by the university is useful in allowing the HE in FE staff time and space to reflect on their work and to devote some time to scholarship within a new professional learning space that is vital to their development as HE in FE practitioners.

Key words: Practice architecture; middle leader; scholarship; ecologies and frameworks of practice.

Introduction

In the spirit of a conference attended in June 2016 entitled 'Reimagining Further Education', that called for a 'participatory model of discussion' and one that was designed to allow the delegates a 'voice' in critically reflecting on issues within the further education sector, this research study involved an established community of practice of Further Education (FE) teachers teaching Higher Education (HE) courses within a University Faculty of Education and Early Childhood Studies. It was hoped that by collaborating in a joint research project, their voices could be heard about what it was like to work within these two different educational worlds and as a means of exploring their practice in terms of their own professional development as researchers. In past years the professional development of these practitioners relied on the way that individual colleges funded FE staff through study at higher academic levels. As part of the collaborative provision with FE colleges, the University has members of HE based academic staff allocated to a role as Liaison Manager (LM) with a remit of 'management' for a particular collaborative provision of HE in FE. This role is complex and varied but basically requires visits to the college concerned to ensure that students are satisfied, research sessions taught at the college in collaboration with FE staff, but above all, a large role in ensuring that all assignments assessed by each college are cross moderated in accordance with HE 'levelness' prior to external examination, in essence one of quality assurance of collaborative provision. At present there are three college partners involved in the teaching on four different courses ranging from Foundation Degrees in Early Years and Educational Practice and two different BA degree

programmes that relate to both Childhood Studies and Education and Training. For the past three years this community of practice has had one university member of staff, an LM or Senior Lecturer, managing all the colleges and all courses with a respective workload allocation that was deemed appropriate. However in 2016 it was considered necessary to reconfigure this arrangement within the faculty, with a new framework that had as its intention, improved practice in terms of developing FE staff. This involved the introduction of two new LM roles and the 'upgrading' of the existing LM to 'FE Advisor', with a lessened allocation of hours but with a redefined role of staff development rather than the visits and moderation activities that had previously been part of the role. As highly qualified staff in terms of professional expertise in Early Years as well as being established FE staff with experience of teaching a range of courses, the team had come together through collaboration and sharing of practice over three years that had resulted in a shared understanding of HE in FE practice. Hence in theory there existed firm 'practice architectures' that related to this role and status. With the development of the new framework what was perceived was a possible lack of 'scholarship' skills and opportunities for research within the community of FE staff that an academic in HE can acquire through participation within a research based environment. Hence it was anticipated that by raising the scholarship of the FE staff through a collaborative research project, these newly acquired 'practice architectures of research' would also have some impact on the staff experience of scholarship. The aim of this research therefore is to look at the concept of practice architecture as it exists at present in terms of established HE in FE practitioners, the role of the middle leader, or FE Advisor in developing scholarship in FE staff through a collaborative research project and the implications of 'position' and middle leadership with an HE framework of practice for the HE in FE staff development. It is these changes in practice

architecture of both HE staff as well as the FE staff that makes for an innovative and interesting research project using some theoretical concepts drawn from the literature.

Theoretical concepts

Practice architectures

A fundamental principle for Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) is that the "*educator's practices are also the product of other practices* –they are shaped and conditioned by circumstances and prior histories" (pg.39). In addition they build on established notions of 'learning architectures' they define practice architectures as developing ways of establishing "particular kinds of sayings, doings and relatings" (pg.57) that allow educators to engage in different communities of practice that they find themselves in. To them, 'sayings' relate to the 'cultural-discursive' environments that exists within that community and as examples they use the world of doctors, teachers and social workers to indicate how all these differing environments and language used within that community can affect the actions and knowledge of any individual. They argue that the 'relatings or 'social aspects' of that community, that is the political and power relationships that exist as well as the personal construct of individuals within it, also play a vital part in developing socially developed practice architectures. A teacher, they argue is involved in many different social interactions that can develop aspects of their practice; teacher to teacher relationships, student –teacher as well as increasingly managerial relationships that shape more formal practice and interactions of individuals and communities. In the case of this community of practice the FE staff have several relationships within their own colleges and classrooms and now within the realms of HE in FE. In terms of social practice, the FE staff have been working together within an established community of practice for the last three years. Finally, for Kemmis and

Grootenboer ‘doings’ arise from the “material-economic formation of action” (pg.49) which relate to the materialistic aspects of teaching such as pay and conditions of work, right down to the classroom environment that impacts on practice. In the case of the HE in FE staff concerned this was one aspect to be explored as some of the staff were working across the sectors whilst others were teaching HE only.

Goodyear et al (2016) provide a diagram that illustrates the interdependency of practice architectures, that shows how cultural-discursive, material economic and the social political interact independently but which “‘hang together’ to create ‘working conditions’ to enable or constrain particular practices.” (pg.4). Within the context of this research therefore, the cultural-discursive aspect is apparent in that the two cultures of FE and HE are distinct in terms of curriculum, student type and level**.** For example, in FE the learners can be as young as fourteen, but in the main are sixteen to nineteen year olds who wish to progress onto employment or university. The curriculum comprises therefore of a mix of ‘A’ Level courses, GCSE resits and vocational qualifications for a number of different courses such as construction, hairdressing and sport ranging from Level 1 to 3 with ‘A’ Levels being level 3 qualifications. HE on the other hand has older learners who have just left school, a number of adult returners and overseas students who are studying for higher level degree courses at level 4 and above. In addition, given the ‘disposition of episteme’ which Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) refer to as “attaining truth” (pg.40), it may be that the two sectors differ significantly in terms of scholarship. It could be argued that what is missing from the literature is the notion of ‘scholarship and vocational expertise’ within the community of practice of HE in FE practice.

HE has an established culture and discourse of research whilst FE is acknowledged as a culture where research "is *done to* rather than *done by* (Jameson and Hillier 2003, pg. 7), hence they are the objects of research rather than researchers. It may be that FE staff lack specific practice architecture about scholarship through this impoverished relationship with gaining knowledge rather than disseminating knowledge that FE is well known for. Feather (2010) supports this concept through his research by identifying that FE staff preferred the concept of being 'interpreters' of knowledge and 'modifiers of curriculum (pg. 193) rather than being 'knowledge gatherers'. The staff may be willing to engage with scholarship at one level but the FE culture in which they exist is inhibitory in relation to providing opportunities to enable this in practice. This is in direct opposition to the culture of HE where scholarship is a vital aspect of the practice. Clearly there is a dilemma between practice, research and culture within the context of HE in FE and the next section looks at the notion of scholarship of FE in HE as a means of conceptualising this in terms of developing practice architectures.

HE in FE: a need for practice architectures of scholarship?

Creasy (2013) claims that HE in FE is 'problematic' in that research shows that HE staff within FEC's (Further Education Colleges) do not engage in research or 'scholarly activity' (pg. 49) and that it is this that reflects a key difference between the sectors. Feather (2012) goes further to examine practice architectures together with 'scholarly activity' and pertinently asks 'What is scholarship?' (pg. 244). Later he answers his own question by stating that it involves learning as an on-going process, not an acceptance of what has been written and one of seeking meaning and exploration of other avenues.

Within this scholarship is ‘dynamic’ (pg. 246) but that FE practitioners ‘lack the skills, training and experience to undertake research themselves’ (pg.247). It could be argued therefore that FE staff have no ‘foundation knowledge’ themselves of what academic research means and hence it follows that they have no framework or practice architecture within which to immerse themselves into**.** Later Feather suggests that FE staff are capable of ‘research’ but that the time and resources within the sector do not support a research rich culture. This sector has seen numerous government ‘cuts in spending’ which have resulted in austerity measures that have resulted in increasing demands on the time of FE staff. In recent years these measures have increased and the conditions of work within this sector does not allow any extra time to be spent other than in teaching and assessing learners. The concept of scholarship gets more complex as Feather also suggests that FE staff wish to update themselves in order to ‘improve their knowledge’ (pg.257) and bring this to the classroom and possibly see ‘research and scholarship’ in different cultural ways than an HE practitioner.

In support, Child (2009) notes that one difference between HE and FE is that FE is ‘researched’ through observation etc. whilst in HE research is undertaken as “instigators (or creators) of research” (pg.334) which leads to the generation of new knowledge. This provides an interesting duality between the two sectors into the concepts of research and scholarship in FE and this is echoed by Creasy (2013) who defines the difference succinctly as “HE pursuing the unknown and FE seeking to master what is known” (pg.43). Nevertheless the practitioners or FE staff in this study all are involved in research through the teaching of their own learners who undertake a research module. In the case of the BA degrees the students go onto to undertake research into their practice. Staff are therefore involved in assessing, supervising research activities whilst

not actually '*doing research'*. They clearly must have some research skills contrary to what Feather's work indicated, however what appears to be lacking often is that concept of 'self' as a research practitioner and through being 'collectors of knowledge' as is the case with an HE perception of scholarship and research.

It is these concepts which give rise to questions about research identity within the context of this particular community of practice. But what is also of interest is the scholarship role of the HE middle leader, the FE Advisor, who sees a role for collaborative research within this community. Questions then arise as to how this role fits with research, self, leadership and practice. In order to formulate these, the notion of middle leadership needs unpicking and the following section looks at the literature pertaining to this concept.

Middle leaders

Grootenboer et al (2015) focus their work on the concept of 'middle leaders' by which they mean teachers who also have a leadership role in an institution. They use the concept of practice architecture to consider relations that exist within a community and focus their work on these 'critical agents' in developing practice of their colleagues. They argue that these individuals as middle leaders, whilst not a focus of much research into leadership, are 'in a powerful position' in terms of professional development. From this perspective they argue that in order for middle leaders to change practice, they need to change the 'spaces' in which teachers encounter professional development and that the focus on 'sites' in professional development is important. They provide a set of characteristics of the middle leader and argue that each one is an important factor in enabling the changes in space and sites. These are:

- The position
- The philosophy
- The practice

Position refers to the unique place that middle leaders have between management and teaching staff. As a result, middle leaders have a distinct philosophy in that they are 'with' their colleagues in a collaborative way which drives their practice as leaders. In terms of practice a middle leader exists within what Edwards-Groves and Ronnerman (2013) define as 'ecologies of practice' (pg.122), a term used in other contexts as well (Stengers, 2005). For Edwards-Groves and Ronnerman teacher learning is developed in a 'dynamic ecological relationship' (pg.123) and some analogies can be made with the position, the philosophy and practice elements of middle leaders that Grootenboer et al (2015) define as important concepts of leading professional development. Edwards-Groves and Ronnerman also conclude that it is important for teachers to develop 'leading' capacities within an ecology of practices in order to establish effective professional learning programmes.

This role of a middle leader has similarities with the concept of a 'hybrid teacher leader' (Margolis, 2012) who defines this role as one of promoting "classroom level-change-orientated professional development". (pg.292). Margolis also refers to 'ecological networks' that emerge between teachers and lead teachers and he uses the notion of a framework of interconnected ecologies that exist through the multiple roles of a hybrid teacher leader. He concludes that role confusion as well as 'mismanagement of time and tenuous relationships' can reduce the impact of the hybrid teacher or middle leader to improve colleagues' learning. By simply changing things without clear roles and responsibility, gives rise to what he describes as 'an albatross in the developing of

teacher leader's roles and puts educational organisations at risk for entropy due to blurry…boundaries' (pg. 313). One participant in his research, a hybrid teacher leader, indeed grappled with what his exact role and purpose in leading teacher development was. In support of the 'blurred' boundaries, Inman (2009) cautions that the lack of formal training and preparation for leadership is common in HE establishments and provides an answer through more formal frameworks for integrated leadership. Inman also refers to 'people wisdom' which involves getting to 'know' through observation, listening and generally working with individuals to get through difficult issues and argues this aspect of leadership is critical for effective leadership.

Grootenboer et al (2015) use the same concepts of saying, doings and relatings as premised by Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) but here they direct these to the position of the middle leader in shaping professional and practice development and their research gives rise to the 'voice' of the middle leader as a means of theorising this distinctive group of teacher leaders. Concepts arising here are ones of 'relational positioning' (pg.552) and their work claims that this power relationship can actually establish a middle leader's practice architecture. Set against this is the middle leader role as teacher who engages with practice, and the authors acknowledge that the practice of middle leaders can be either supported or constrained by a "complex network of relationships they operate within the nexus of their dual roles of teacher and leader." (pg. 523). It is this complex framework and juxtaposition of roles within a new 'ecology of FE in HE community of practice' that is the focus of this study.

As noted before the HE institution has a framework for HE in FE staff development, but as the literature shows the pillars for this framework are as yet unclear. As a means of

investigating this further the next section turns to the concept of frameworks of practice and professional learning and development.

Frameworks of practice

Lowrie (2016) develops the concepts of practice architecture further by creating an 'Educational Practices Framework'. He too acknowledges the 'connected, dynamic and progressive' (pg.43) nature of a professional learning space and the concept of ecological systems is repeated through in his work as well. His framework has resonance with this research as it could be argued that the new FE Advisor could be a means by which the university is creating a new 'professional learning space' of scholarship. By using this as a framework for research, it may be possible to use the 'sayings, relatings and doings' of each participant within the existing community to inform further practice architectures such as scholarship as well as the power moves within the developing framework. As Lowrie (2016) argues, a framework as represented above allows professional learning goals to be developed by the individuals themselves rather than one led by those with power.

Interestingly the 'new professional space' could also be considered as a 'third space' (Whitchurch (2013) or a way of conceptualising the knowledge, relationship, authorities and language that characterise those who come together to work from different cultural areas with less clear boundaries and roles. She argues that this new working space gives rise to a series of 'paradoxes and tensions' in which individuals struggle to perceive the 'Third Space' as not only a potential safe haven for experimentation and creativity but also a space that is likely to be problematic, risky and uncertain. Feather (2016) also uses this concept of 'third space' to describe instances where groups may go through

stages of group dynamics, “forming, storming, norming and performing” (pg. 104) but who may also reach an ‘adjourning’ stage in which issues are not fully resolved until several stages of group activity are completed. Lowrie on the other hand conceptualises the new professional learning space as a ‘conduit’ or space where power relations are dismantled and in which professionals have a “shared sense of responsibility” (pg.43) in which they can “generate their own knowledge and organise their learning goals …..in a self-monitoring manner” (pg. 44). He cautions, however that these professional learning opportunities “need to be carefully managed” (pg. 36) with consideration of the social and political arrangements of the new space.

Finally, Kemmis, Edwards-Groves, Wilkinson and Hardy (2012) return to the concept of ‘ecologies of practice’ and they describe these as “networks with other practices with which they are interdependent” (pg.47). They see the balance between and among these ecologies as important aspects of learning however what they fail to recognise is that ecological systems can be upset if one of more part of it becomes lesser or greater. These concepts all interplay within the current developing framework of HE in FE staff under study, the following section interrogates the research questions that emerge.

Research questions

The literature review and the context of the study give rise to the following general research questions:

- Can the theory of practice architecture be used to guide HE in FE staff development in a strategically and theoretical way?
- Are lecturers in FE allowed to undertake scholarly activity at a level which expands their knowledge and how does this show in practice architectures?
- What is the role of the middle leader in developing scholarship of FE staff?
- How does the 'site' of the HE establishment and framework for FE in HE staff development support this?
- How does the new framework develop scholarship in HE in FE staff?

The current situation at the university presents an opportunity to research these general questions through a process of narrative inquiry.

Methodology

Chase (2005) defines narrative inquiry as "revolving around an interest in biographical particulars by the one that lives them" (pg.651). She goes on to describe the different lenses that a researcher can view narrative, as discourse, as verbal action, as stories, as socially situated interactive performances and as narrators themselves in the way that they interpret ideas about narrative. As the notion of practice architectures relates to an individual's practice, this type of qualitative research methodology is most applicable to gaining data relating to practice. Hence this new role of FE Advisor provides an opportunity to undertake some in depth interviews with the FE staff teaching HE. Interview questions, appendix one, were developed around the different aspects of practice architecture that Kemmis and Grootneboer (2008) present and allowed participants to reflect on their experiences of teaching HE in FE as well as their role as vocational experts in early years.

The interviews took place over two months followed by a focus group at the university during one of the new development days planned. As a result of these it was clear that there was a need to interview some HE managers in order to provide a alternative perspective of the position and management of the HE in FE staff practitioners.

As well as these interviews the role of the middle leader was investigated through a personal reflective diary that was completed at intervals over the year. This second layer allowed the participants an opportunity to hear the researcher's voice as 'middle leader' and participant in the research itself. The diary was shared with the college staff as part of the data analysis. This is an interesting dual approach to interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) that allows participants an insight into how "they construct selves within specific institutional, organizational, discursive and local contexts (Chase, pg. 658). This is similar to the approach taken by Wood et al (2016) who interviewed a group of HE lecturers, however in this study the questions will relate to work that spans two educational genres with different cultures and contexts. In this way the work will enable participants to capture and reflect on practice in the same way that Green et al (2013) claims "makes implicit aspects of our saying, doings and relating visible for interrogation and analysis" (pg.263).

Data analysis

Wood et al (2016) use IPA as a means of considering shared experiences and as "biographically situated researchers" (pg. 230) who share aspects of past experiences with each other. The community of practice under study has been established with a shared vision for the last three years and the research, through personal narrative, will use individual constructions of reality that tries to make sense of "'situated relational and textual structures' of the narrative accounts of both the participants and the

researchers" (pg. 230) As noted previously, of interest here are not only the practice architectures of the FE staff, but also of the HE staff concerned with middle leadership of the professional development framework. Like Wood et al, the participants' data was anonymised except for the reflective diary of the FE Advisor. Each set of narrative data was then first analysed by the FE Advisor and then an overview of emerging themes was sent to the FE staff for a second scrutiny and opportunity to comment in order to add a dimension of 'meta-analysis'. In addition, the college staff were asked to analyse the reflective diary generated by the FE Advisor.

The data analysis used the categories of cultural-discursive; social-political and material-economic that characterise the theory of practice architectures. As Goodyear et al (2016) suggest there are commonalities that "*'hang together'* to pre-figure and pre-define practice" (pg.3) and as in their research a process of analytical induction was used which involved the coding of the interview data as well as the FE Advisor's reflective diary according to categories based on practice architecture and then to find themes and 'commonalities' (pg.7) across the data.

Results

Analysis of interview and focus group data

In terms of sayings or ways that the 'cultural-discursive' environments can affect the actions and knowledge of any individual, the HE in FE staff concerned in this research had all come from a background that was rooted in some form of childcare. For example, one had been a Montessori teacher, two had SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) experience, one was a daughter of a foster mother and hence surrounded by fostered children from an early age. Another had been and still was a Girl Guide Leader and finally one had considerable experience in community youth

work. All had entered FE through a variety of routes either as students on the courses themselves or as teachers on several different childcare courses and hence had the same language that they could relate to. They therefore knew the world of FE and its language, culture and each one had several years of FE teaching experience before becoming involved in teaching on the HE courses.

As the interviews and focus groups continued, a common theme emerged from each participant, that of a 'lack of understanding of HE by management' and this was repeated several times in relation to their current HE teaching. As this seemed an important concept it was felt that the words 'lack of understanding' needed unpicking further and the following comments arose from this discussion in terms of what the FE managers did not 'understand':

- the distinction between level 4 and 2 in terms of preparation and planning
- the length of time needed to assess Level 5/6 dissertations
- the need to research to keep up to date undertaken in own time
- the need for scholarly hours
- development time for new modules as dictated by the HE institution
- the semester timetable of HE rather than terms
- the need for external deadlines and exam boards.
- The difference between FE assessment tracking and HE practices.

As many of these issues could be perceived as 'doings' on the part of the managers within the colleges, it was at this point that it was decided to interview the HE managers in order to see how they perceived the lack of 'understanding of HE' in particular in relation to these specific comments made by the staff. These issues are therefore explored further in relation to that specific data.

During the interviews, in terms of scholarship, the HE in FE staff reported that two of the colleges were supporting their staff through higher qualification degrees, however that there were varying amounts of remission time allowed ranging from three hours per week to none. Two colleges were supporting staff to study for PhDs in related Childhood Studies courses and a Master's in Education, however one college was not supporting the staff to do any further study. When the notion of scholarship was unpicked further, for the HE in FE staff the meaning of scholarship was seen as 'doing research, a love of research' and one teacher described it as an "'intellectual gym' which sets the seeds of exploring new concepts, posing questions and critical thinking". Whilst she was doing this herself through study for a PhD, she also made her own HE students buy into this concept as a way of engaging with study at HE Level. Interestingly what is seen here is a culturally discursive language about scholarship.

Another important aspect of 'sayings' discussed was the way that the environment allowed HE staff to mix with other HE in FE staff in different curriculum areas. At the time of the interviews none of the colleges provided any opportunity to mix with other HE staff. As a result of the separation these staff were unable to share their 'research and scholarly activity' with others in the field. As noted before, this aspect of scholarship could also be related to the aspect of 'doings' which for Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) arise from the "material-economic formation of action" (pg.49) which relate to materialistic aspects of teaching such as pay and conditions of work, right down to the classroom environment that impacts on practice. For the HE in FE staff this related to the actual working environment within the college. Only one college had dedicated space for HE staff although this was described by the HE in FE staff as a

'cupboard', nevertheless they were separate from the FE staff. In the two other colleges the staff were in the same staffrooms as FE staff but this was not seen as an issue. It must be noted that the college with separate space was also the largest provider of HE courses. Similarly in terms of teaching, this larger college and one other had their staff delivering HE work only, most had FE experience as well but now concentrated on HE only. The third college had their staff doing a mix of HE and FE and interestingly this college also had the largest work load per year, 864 as opposed to 800 hours. Another key feature here was that at this college not only were staff teaching FE and HE but they were also expected to teach English and Maths GCSE wherever possible. This was also the only college not supporting higher level courses as part of staff development.

Finally in terms of 'relatings' the HE in FE staff noted tensions between FE and HE staff in terms of Quality Assurance systems and the different HE and FE approaches to this. Comments made here were:

- Being forced into the FE model
- Do not fit the HE system

However despite these tensions staff at one college had managed these situations themselves by changing their timetabling at certain periods of the year with the help of a supportive HE manager. Another person noted how she was left to "manage herself" within the department although some aspects of quality assurance remained problematic.

The interviews with these staff overall revealed a community of practice who were all without exception dedicated to the teaching of HE courses even when the environment went against the ethos of HE. Each one was battling against FE managers who did not

'understand' the way that HE operated or the extra pressures that working at this level involved. In terms of research and scholarship each one was dedicated to developing this ethos in their own students and only one college was not providing support for higher study.

Analysis of HE manager interview data

The interviews with HE managers were interesting in that they supported what the HE in FE staff were saying and also provided a wider perspective of the college view of HE in FE. In terms of 'sayings' the managers commented on the way that they had become HE Managers and each one had previous experience of FE teaching with some responsibility for quality assurance within their curriculum area. They all had become involved in HE when the existing HE coordinators left and a position of HE Manager came about. They all noted their primary role as one of managing the operational aspects of HE in FE which included the HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council) returns and checking of data for quality assurance, partnership liaison, mitigating circumstances procedures and validation of new courses. None of these managers had direct line management of the HE in FE staff.

The managers concurred with the comments made by the HE in FE staff regarding the 'lack of understanding' of HE and one manager in particular highlighted a recent QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) review that revealed that the Senior Management Team (SMT) had the 'worst practice in things such as the language of HE'. One interesting comment made here was that the managers did not understand "why the students are in

college rather than going to university" but that the HE in FE staff did understand the specific needs of these students as they were "involved in the life of it". Another issue that arose from the interviews with the HE Managers was the longevity of the HE provision within the college. In certain areas the managers were very up to date on HE practice whilst where the HE courses were small and of less longevity, there was less 'understanding' and again this related to lack of knowledge about HE practices such as level 6 marking, curriculum development and the time needed for research.

In terms of scholarship this issue of longevity was also a key factor in developing research practice as the well-established HE courses were 'research active' with staff acting as reviewers of student work in the same way that articles are peer reviewed for academic journals. This college was developing HE development days to encourage this in other curriculum areas and they were also developing their own internal journal for student publications. The college with the largest HE delivery noted that there were tensions when staff were timetabled when HE courses were run internally and that this affected attendance. The third college did fund staff but these were considered on a case by case basis with some help provided as deemed necessary, however the HE in FE staff at this college were not doing higher level courses. Here the HE Manager talked about a 'minefield' between recruitment of suitable staff and utilization of existing staff. She also noted that the curriculum manager needed to 'balance the books' between gaps in the timetable and availability of staff, hence the need for staff at this college to teach in other curriculum areas apart from HE work.

In terms of 'doings' each manager agreed that most of the SMT were very FE focused but as this was the core business and the funding driver this was not unexpected.

However the colleges differed in their approach to HE development. One noted the need to 'balance the books' between building new courses and used the example of investment in developing apprenticeships which was not costly, whilst the development of HE required considerable work. An important factor here was the fact colleges do not get the money to run these courses until they are up and running and this presented tensions between timetabling staff on FE and allowing curriculum development without immediate reward. In this college it seemed that the Principal would like to see HE as a separate centre mainly due to local changes in the area which would, in his view, involve 'staff with Ph.Ds. doing research with top notch facilities'.

Finally in terms of 'relatings' each manager commented on the tensions between HE and FE procedures with different drivers, the FE Ofsted model or QAA. One HE manager noted how she had tried for years to make the two fit but was a 'lone voice' in trying to get the two systems together. Another manager described it as a "big machine with few HE specialists trying to fit into a cog" with the HE department being an "unknown entity, part of the college but isolate"'. It was also noted that there was a shift towards employment driven provision such as Events Management degree courses.

Analysis of the reflective diary FE Advisor

The analysis of this data was viewed through the lens of the middle leader, an aspect of this research that was important from the HE institutions point of view. Early on the diary reflections comment that "it could be argued that in this case study, the previous collaborative relationship that has developed over three years could be upset by the 'blurry' nature of the new role." Although a new framework exists for HE in FE staff development, at present it could be that this framework has no 'pillars of architecture'

upon which to stand. It could be argued that whilst the intent of the university was initially one of a developmental role in terms of the FE Advisor, there were early signs that this approach may be have been upset by a more 'positional authority' of management that tried to control staff development more formally within the HE institution. These observations do support Grootenboer et al (2015) who point out that middle leaders are 'between senior management and teaching staff' (pg. 524). Whilst the intent of this new role as perceived by the middle leader was to lead the development of the FE staff through 'themes' of scholarly research on a number of days throughout the academic year, the diary records that the "structure of the day has been taken over by a more senior member of staff and hence higher status than that of the so called middle leader".

The diary also records that the new arrangements have a feel of 'imposed training' that was still related to university wide 'initiatives' and which seem to have little directional relationship to scholarship and research. The diary reveals that the role of middle leader had changed from one of manager to one of observer of the unfolding events. The diary records that the session was good overall with collaboration about level 4 and 5 marking and that some time was allowed for the FE advisor to outline the framework of the research and to suggest ideas for implementation. However it notes that in the afternoon the "FE staff sat in rows while the HE in FE staff were introduced to new marking procedures using online marking. Here the diary records an approach that is "directive and non-collaborative with college staff being told to use the university system". In terms of the role of middle leader therefore the events at this time seemed to be out of the FE Advisor's control with events being managed by others.

Regarding the next planned development day it appears that correspondence took place between the line manager and the FE Advisor about the content. The diary records that it had been the intent of the FE Advisor to use some time to look at the data collected so far by interview and to share these reflections with the college participants. However the diary records some indication that this event may have been cancelled by the line manager and that the advisor is "somewhat frustrated as it feels as if the new role is a complete waste of time". However the day did go ahead and was successful in collecting some useful focus data about the concept of Practice architectures. Overall the diary notes a lack of role structure of the new post with tensions between more senior management and a change from the collaborative approach to a more directed one.

Conclusion

In terms of practice architectures this research has gone some way to support how important this notion is in developing communities of practice. As the data shows this particular HE in FE community has similar 'pillars of interest' in early years childcare that had led them to be teachers in FE. As practitioners they had developed the 'sayings' and language of FE but since becoming HE in FE staff it appears that this language had shifted towards that of HE. As such it could be argued that they spoke a 'hybrid language' that encompassed the two educational genres. To link back to the reason for the research, that of 'voice with a clear vision' as advocated by the conference on 'Reimagining Further Education' that initiated this research, this hybrid voice is an important one. One recommendation suggested therefore is that HE in FE staff are given an opportunity to collaborate more with other 'hybrid voices' from both within their own college or through cross college projects as a means of sharing practice. This

research did reveal distinct silos of HE in FE staff in varying departments with little opportunity for collaboration and the ability to mix with the other HE staff. The University involved does hold an annual conference which allows some meeting of staff but it could give greater consideration to allow the HE in FE voices to be heard as well as a means of developing a professional learning space.

The recurring 'lack of understanding HE' was a common theme that when unpicked identified that it was the FE managers who did not understand the language and practices of HE since their main focus was on the FE curriculum and the quality procedures that go with that terrain. The HE in FE staff, as a result of having 'lived it' now spoke that language and were semi-immersed in the culture of HE. The most interesting point that did arise from the analysis of the 'sayings' data was of that of scholarship. Whilst the HE managers talked of hours and remission for higher study, the HE in FE staff themselves spoke of a culture of research, an 'intellectual gym' and critical thinking. This research does reveal that HE in FE staff have a distinct language about research that fits with Feather (2012) who defines scholarship as the "expanding of one's mind" (pg. 252) that is "dynamic". In this research, it seems that scholarship has indeed adapted to new environments as Feather discusses and that these staff have developed definite ideas about what scholarship and research entailed. It is also apparent that in FE colleges where there has been a long history of HE the notion of scholarship through publication was common place. However, it must be noted that this was encouraging students' publications rather than those of the staff. Further opportunities could be provided by the University for establishing more joint research projects that are led by HE in FE staff themselves as well as workshops on writing for research and publication that would support these early researchers.

In terms of ‘doings’, it seems that this is dependent upon the amount of HE that the college has. One manager spoke of a ‘critical mass’ and the notion of ‘balancing the books’ was frequently referred to. Where HE was a large part of that critical mass it appears that the material aspects improve in terms of space and to some extent workload. There are also some indications that as the critical mass moves further towards HE, the two may begin to separate as one HE manager indicated.

Finally, in terms of ‘relatings’ tensions do exist between HE and FE staff as comments such as ‘unknown entity’ reveal. Fundamental aspects of pedagogy differ as the levels change and the data does show that when the manager has an FE focus he or she does not allow time for assessing work at level 5/6 or recognise the need for developmental hours. As long as the ‘books are balanced’ the FE culture dominates. More overt activity through collaboration and joint research as noted before would go some way to changing this perception and hegemony of one culture. To conclude therefore, key aspects emerging in terms of the ‘sayings’ of practice architectures are the ‘lack of understanding of HE’ on the part of FE managers as well as the way that HE in FE staff perceive scholarship themselves. In terms of ‘doings’ there are differences between the colleges but all the staff had similar issues with the difference between HE teaching and FE delivery in terms of Level 5/6 marking and assessment; timetabling issues and what students actually do on HE courses that is different from FE. Finally, the relationship to the amount of HE the college provides as well as the longevity of the HE provision seems an important one in terms of research and scholarship.

In terms of the new university framework, and the role of the middle leader, there is evidence that over this year this role has been 'blurry' with no clear direction in terms of function. Signs of a higher 'positional authority' appear that created tensions with the collaborative aspects of the partnership. To relook at the defining characteristics of middle leading advocated by Grootenboer et all (2014), it does appear that in this case the 'position' of the middle leader is still unclear with no real aims for improving practice in spite of the university intent for this. However in this particular community of practice it is believed that the 'philosophy' of collaboration was strong and that as described by Grootenboer et al, the middle leader was "leading……alongside ……with their colleagues" (pg. 524). Finally in terms of 'practice', in this community the 'sayings' of all concerned were similar in that each member had experience of HE and FE which allowed a dialogue of 'understanding' about the nature of FE, the need to establish a research profile with scholarship and of how important collaboration was in developing practice. Over the year the role of FE Advisor has been one of managing and facilitating through leading some development sessions and facilitating others. However as the diary notes there were aspects of managerial discourse as the exact role was being defined. This highlights in some measure the 'relatings' of the role within the framework.

However what is very encouraging is seen in the possible 'doings' of this new role. Both Grootenboer et al (2014) and Lowrie (2014) comment on the importance of 'professional learning space' and this research does highlight to some degree that the new framework that has been established for the professional development of partner staff has allowed space for the development of research and scholarship. The new framework provides an opportunity for HE in FE staff to engage in a '*network* of

practice' (Edwards-Groves and Ronnerman, 2013 pg131) that strengthens and connects. It also enables the HE in FE staff to connect with other HE in FE staff and this is something the university may wish to consider with other curriculum areas. As Edwards-Groves and Ronnerman comment, when the principles of ecologies of practice develop and strengthen so other areas of professional learning evolve and develop. With further refinement of the role of the middle leader in professional development it is possible to envisage how the framework advocated by Lowrie noted earlier can aid 'deep learning and theorising' (pg. 44) through a practice architecture framework, Personalised Learning Journeys within a new learning space where communities can design learning in relation to their needs as well as the settings in which they are placed**.** To return once again to the reason for this research, the 'Reimagining Further Education' conference last year, the process of collaboration with HE in FE staff has allowed the aim of communities of practice to explore creative and collaborative ways to connect vision to policy and to rethink some positive ways forward such as more joint research projects that span both educational institutions involved in teaching and learning.

Word Count: 7742 excluding abstract

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Appendix 1 Interview Questions:

1) Considering the notion of practice architectures, how far do you feel that this relates to your:

a) Sayings as a FE teacher/HE lecturer ie the cultural-discourse

b) Doings as a FE teacher/HE lecturer ie the material-economic

c) Relatings as a FE teacher/HE lecturer ie the power-social

2) The place of scholarship in HE is of great importance. How much can you rate this in your:

Sayings as a FE teacher/HE lecturer ie the cultural-discourse

b) Doings as a FE teacher/HE lecturer ie the material-economic

c) Relatings as a FE teacher/HE lecturer ie the power-social

3) How far does the role as early year's expert impact on each of these?

a) Sayings as an early year's expert ie the cultural-discourse

b) Doings as an early year's expert ie the material-economic

c) Relatings as an early year's expert ie the power-social

3) Do you think there are any tensions between these roles?

4) Given the new framework and role of the FE Advisor, how do you see this role developing in terms of your FE in HE role in particular to the practice architecture of scholarship?