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College Based Higher Education and its Identities

History, Pedagogy and Purpose within the Sector

Edited by
Karima Kadi-Hanifi
John Keenan

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Foreword

College-Based Higher Education and New Hope

This book makes a very strong case that college-based higher education is an arena of hope for those concerned with more inclusive educational patterns. College-based higher education is often the only higher education open to certain learners because they are unable to travel due to family or work ties, because the university takes them out of their comfort zone or simply because they prefer to continue to progress in their educational journey in a familiar, supportive and safe environment. This argument fits well with all we know about the reasons why students from disadvantaged homes do not prosper well in conventional university environments, particularly those of Oxbridge. This is not surprising since these environments have been created in the image of the people they are meant to serve and hence are alien territory for people from homes outside the especially privileged arenas. As Raymond Williams famously said, when he arrived at Cambridge: 'I realised very soon it was not my Cambridge.' And later on, he added: 'I realised I was in enemy territory.' This is familiar to anyone from the margins who ventures into these reserved territories. They are basically not designed for many of us ordinary people.

Some of the changes made by elites and neo-liberal vested interests have had paradoxical effects, nonetheless. The book notes that 'We have seen over the last couple of decades an incremental dismantling by government of the infrastructure for higher education, reflecting wider free market ideology driven reforms throughout higher education and the wider public sector.' This is true, and the intention of course was to create a

closer fit between elite destinies and elite clienteles. But actually by opening up the university sector to smaller and private institutions who are now eligible to apply for university status there has been an opportunity for more inclusive educational styles to come to the fore: 'Colleges have thus become adroit in balancing their HE course offer to meet employer, local and national skill shortages on the one hand, and the learning and personal fulfilment needs of their students on the other.' This is an arena of hope which is substantially played out in the articles that follow. As one of the writers stated, 'Meanwhile FE colleges, which as we have seen inherited a long tradition of advanced level work began to replace the Polys as the go-to local provider of Higher Education, predominantly offering a part-time and sub-degree courses for a highly diverse range of learners, often in subjects meeting the specific skills and training needs of local employers.' This is the paradox of market-driven reform—it has opened up a whole arena of educational experience which by closely relating to needs of the economy is hard to disvalue in conventional ways.

Into the then paradoxical space have entered staff and students who share, at their best, a passionate vocationalism, a commitment to a community of learning. There is an idealistic sense of mission at the heart of this book and one it exhorts us to cherish and nurture. As they say, communities of learning could grow a third space sector that enables all students to flourish. One day maybe we will have a government that understands this, but for sure it will not be a government peopled by entitled elitists from the reserved territories of privileged universities. It will be a government drawn from the wider margins inclusively represented by the CBHE and supported by many others communities of learning and by people of goodwill and humanistic values in all sectors.

Rodmell, UK Ivor Goodson

Preface

College-Based Higher Education (CBHE)—Higher Education (HE) based in institutions other than universities—is important. It accounts for around 10% of total HE provision in England and has done so for many years with over 187,000 students.

This vital sector does not even have one established name. We have opted for the term CBHE as used by the Higher Education Association (now Advance HE) as the initialism seems to be a wider term than 'HE in FE', the preferred label of academic literature. We also acknowledge that the term College Higher Education (CHE) is sometimes used, such as by the Association of Colleges (AoC) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). CBHE as a term used in this book encompasses all kind of arrangements that are currently in place in England for a higher education that includes partnerships, franchises and federations, as well as the stand-alone provision for this non-university-based higher education. The book provides a guide to this HE-level education sector which is flexible, open to all, localised, economical, personalised and student-centred.

In this edited volume, we offer eight writers from CBHE backgrounds, framed by commentary from leading educational researchers Ivor Goodson and John Lea. The opening chapter by Geoffrey Elliott gives a historical overview of CBHE. This is followed in Chapter 2 by John Keenan's appraisal of how students and lecturers gain identity from being part of the sector. Chapter 3 by Alex Kendall and Stuart Mitchell tackles learning and teaching in CBHE. In Chapter 4, Karima Kadi-Hanifi examines the state of research in the sector and advocates for the growth of a research culture—one that will impact on the policy. Craig Tucker, Sarah Pedder and

Gemma Martin provide the view from the 'chalk face' of lecturing and managing CBHE life, in Chapter 5. The complexity of the CBHE landscape is explored by Iain Jones in Chapter 6 as he delineates the institutional varieties the sector encompasses.

The past and current position of CBHE is explored in the book to give the central case for CBHE having a particular identity, pedagogy and mission. The sector provides a new hope for education in the twenty-first century but this perspective is not taken without seeing the barriers, conditions and tensions which affect it adversely. The book is a clarion call for the education sector and its policy makers to recognise CBHE's importance and value and to see how it could provide a new hope for HE-level study which is affordable, regional, organic and personal. The book is hopefully accessible, critical and supportive to its many audiences including those researching the sector.

Birmingham, UK

Karima Kadi-Hanifi
John Keenan

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Abbreviations

AFE	Advanced Further Education
AoC	Association of Colleges
ARPCE	Association for Research in Post-Compulsory Education
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CBHE	College Based Higher Education
DfE	Department for Education
DipHE	Diploma in Higher Education
ETF	Education and Training Foundation
FD	Foundation Degree
FDAP	Foundation Degree Awarding Powers
FE	Further Education
FEC	Further Education College
FEI	Further Education Institution
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HND	Higher National Diplomas
HNC	Higher National Certificates
LSRN	Learning & Skills Research Network
MEG	Mixed Economy Group
NAFE	Non-advanced Further Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OfS	Office for Students

ONC	Ordinary National Certificate
OND	Ordinary National Diploma
PCE	Post-compulsory Education
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
POLAR	Participation of Local Area
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RPCE	Research in Post-compulsory Education
RSA	Royal Society of Arts, Commerce and Manufactures
SEDA	Staff and Educational Development Association
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Maths
TELL	Teacher Education in Lifelong Learning
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admission Service
UCU	University and College Union
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WEA	Workers Educational Association

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CHAPTER 1

College Based Higher Education: Provenance and Prospects

Geoffrey Elliott

Abstract This chapter introduces College Based Higher Education (CBHE) in England. It explains what CBHE is and provides a social and historical perspective on the formation of the Further Education (FE) sector in which most CBHE is located. Early CBHE is seen to have developed out of post-war industrial rebuilding. The twin drivers of economic competitiveness and social inclusivity, although frequently in tension, are each shown to have helped to propel CBHE to the important and prominent position it now enjoys, and the chapter concludes with an appraisal of its future prospects.

Keywords CBHE • FE • Post-war economics • History of FE

I am grateful to my colleague in the Association for Research in Post Compulsory Education, Dr Sally Issler, for her insightful comments and suggestions on an earlier draft of this chapter.

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Chapter Overview

This opening Chapter attempts to answer the question: 'What explains College Based Higher Education (CBHE)?' Higher education in Further Education Colleges (FECs) is a particular and important form of educational opportunity. With its roots in post-industrial revolution England, CBHE represents a valuable income stream for colleges today, with some getting up to a quarter of their income from HE work. For learners, CBHE is often the only form of higher education open to them, because they are unable to travel due to family or work ties, because a university takes them out of their comfort zone, or simply because they prefer to continue to progress in their educational journey in a familiar, supportive and safe environment. Colleges are engines of social justice and they bring a distinct perspective and set of values to their work. They are known for their inclusiveness, diversity and equal opportunities ethos. The higher education they offer is often aligned closely with their own Level 2 and Level 3 work in particular vocational subjects, which mainly reflect local employment sectors. Much of the provision is vocational, with Higher National Diplomas and Foundation degrees particularly prevalent and popular. The chapter presents an outline of the historical framework designed to place further education and college based higher education in their social and policy contexts and explains how CBHE came to be a mainstream part of government policy for higher education expansion and widening participation. It then moves towards an analysis of the current picture of CBHE and some reflections on the affordances and hindrances for its future flourishing. The chapter concludes with the hope that future government policies and interventions at least give CBHE a chance to fulfil its real potential to transform the lives of learners and their families whilst recognising its invaluable social and economic impact.

What Is College Based Higher Education?

Just over 10% (ETF 2016) of higher education students study for their diplomas and degrees through CBHE, including private providers, making it a highly significant feature of the current English higher education landscape. CBHE has developed in many forms, most notably through partnerships with higher education institutions (Elliott and Gamble 2001). These range from franchise arrangements in which the university validates the course, resources and staffing, leaving the college to

undertake all of the teaching, to fully collaborative provision under which teaching is shared between the university and the college and may take place in either or both institutions. Many colleges have developed higher education courses themselves, most commonly offering Higher National Diplomas and Certificates (HNDs and HNCs) awarded by Edexcel/BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council). Since 2001, Foundation degrees (FDs), often developed with local employers, have become popular. FDs, that are specifically linked to local skills and employment needs, have formed an important part of the efforts of colleges to widen participation, often appealing to non-traditional students including those from social groups under-represented in HE, mature students, women and those without formal qualifications (Lillis 2001; QAA 2015; Mason 2018). The award was introduced in England specifically to meet the needs of students wishing to combine academic and vocational higher education courses, with the curriculum often tailored to a single profession or occupational area. It is equivalent to two-thirds of an Honours degree and is often studied part-time to enable students to combine earning and learning. So what explains CBHE?

Colleges have for many years been sites of educational imagination and innovation (NIACE 2009), committed to providing both liberal and vocational educational opportunities (Hodgson and Spours 2015), principally for the communities in which they are located and reflecting, like those communities, a diverse heterogeneity (Ainley and Bailey 1997; BIS 2012). For many colleges, particularly those in larger metropolitan areas, this mission included developing a broad higher education portfolio, often specifically designed to provide vertical progression from their own BTEC National and A level courses (see Eaton 2015). A strong access and outreach mission underpinned these arrangements. For many further education (FE) students, participating in a university higher education experience is highly problematic—inability or unwillingness to travel, diverse social and cultural capital, family and parenting ties, the need to work full-time or part-time (Bathmaker 2016), amongst the barriers to their engagement. On the other hand, colleges have routinely developed locally accessible higher education, with flexible attendance requirements to fit around childcare arrangements, learning opportunities and environments adapted to suit student needs, characteristics and capabilities (Elliott 1999), and a generally supportive and highly committed workforce, 'more likely to be around for most of the day and ready to offer that support, in contrast to a typical HE environment, where an academic (often for good reason) may not be so readily available' (Lea and Simmons 2012: 187).

We will see in the next section how the formation and development of FE Colleges in the last century laid the ground for CBHE. This history is important because it helps to explain the complex reality of the contemporary FE sector. As Coffield et al. (2008: 163) have persuasively argued, FE lies in the space between two contradictory narratives. On the one hand, there is the government rhetoric of 'rising investment, increasing participation and substantial achievements'; on the other hand there is the practitioner reality of 'frustration, of constant struggles to keep services going and of increasing concern for the future of the sector'. At the heart of this tension, and fuelling it, is the increasing 'symbiosis of performativity (that) has evolved from government reforms, which indicates how the gap between national initiatives and local practice is perpetuated' (Orr 2009: 480).

It wasn't until the election of the Labour Government in 1997 that FE became a prominent part of government policy for education (Lucas 2004). As Rapley (2012) notes, 'Since Dearing and the advent of Foundation degrees, HE in FE has developed from a peripheral sub-group of HE to one with a strategic and widely recognised function and purpose'. In fact, FE became the focus of two binary government policies: social justice through widening participation in education; and enhancing national economic competitiveness through improving workforce skills (Orr 2008). This illustrates a fundamental tension that has shaped the sector and it is one that is significant in informing our understanding of the character and future opportunity of CBHE.

Just as the early colleges met a range of educational needs, that tradition continues today; furthermore, there has never been such a golden opportunity for colleges to extend their higher education portfolio. We have seen over the last couple of decades an incremental dismantling by government of the infrastructure for higher education, reflecting wider free market ideology driven reforms throughout education and the wider public sector. The notion of what a university is has changed, with smaller and private institutions now eligible to apply for university status. Colleges, for the first time, have been eligible to award their own degrees under clearly defined regulations issued by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2010). The raising of higher education student tuition fees to a maximum of £9000 in 2012 (at the time of writing increased with inflation to £9250) provided an immediate opportunity for FE colleges to compete for HE students on price. Without many of the buildings and other resource infrastructure and staffing costs of much

larger universities, many colleges could charge half as much or less for a diploma and degree course and yet still offer an outstanding student experience and high quality education.

The lifting of the government cap on HE student numbers in 2014/15 and its removal in 2015/16 (Osborne 2013), except in certain professional subjects, again provided FECs with opportunities to develop and grow their locally responsive and high value HE courses, often with the cooperation and collaboration of key employers and public sector partners in the area. However, employer involvement in VET has always been on a voluntary basis, with little or no obligation to train staff except where licensing of organisations or individuals is a requirement of the regulatory framework (Cedefop 2015). Colleges have thus become adroit in balancing their HE course offer to meet employer, local and national skills shortages on the one hand, and the learning and personal fulfilment needs of their students on the other. Some recent studies have explored this nexus, especially in highlighting the student experience of Foundation degrees in CBHE (Smith 2017; Walker 2017; Elliott 2019).

Formation of the FE Sector

The formation and growth of the English further education sector has taken place in an uncertain and challenging policy environment. One of the principal reasons underlying this confusion is that there has never been a single determining policy that has driven the formation of FE colleges. Neither has there been a linear historical direction of development, since FECs have both vocational and liberal arts origins. Their vocational origin can be traced back to the Mechanics' Institutes of the early nineteenth century, which provided technical and vocational courses for working men, a need driven by the technological changes brought about by the industrial revolution. Mechanics' Institutes were accordingly located in the major urban centres of the country, as well as towns and villages, and 'provided education for the working man through lending libraries, lecture theatres, class rooms and laboratories and often included in the mix of courses and technical material, wider opportunities for learning and betterment' (West 2017). Thus we can see that even in their vocational origin, FECs can legitimately point to an historical tradition of 'wider opportunities' that have been a continual feature of their development.

The liberal arts origins of FECs also lie in the working class self-help movement of the later nineteenth century, which were partly a ground up

response to the highly managed and to a degree middle class direction taken by the Mechanics' Institutes. Many of these were closely associated with churches, especially the non-conformist chapels. Their programmes ranged from elementary education in reading and writing to essays and discussions on history, science, literature and philosophy that we would recognise today as a characteristic of a university extramural or adult education institute curriculum. The Mechanics Institute curriculum was often at advanced levels, especially when supported by the patronage of the Livery Companies. The Worshipful Company of Dyers and Clothworkers Company supported the Yorkshire College of Science department of Textiles and a department of Tinctorial Chemistry and Dyeing, which became Leeds University in 1904.

Birkbeck, University of London (formerly Birkbeck College) dates from 1823 as a Mechanics' Institute. It admitted women in 1830 and provided access to University of London degrees through its examination system in 1858. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, government recognised the need for a more coordinated approach to technical education. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 began the process of introducing free compulsory education for all children, though it would take many years and a number of Education Acts for this to become a reality. The Report of the Royal Commission on Technical Instruction was published in 1884. As Walker (2012: 38) notes:

> The Report led to the passing of the Technical Instruction Act of 1889 which gave local authorities the power to levy a penny rate in order to fund technical courses, appoint teachers and provide grants to schools and Mechanics' institutes. In 1890, the government, in support of the Temperance Movement, which itself had been heavily involved in the Mechanics' institute movement, put a tax on wines and spirits ('whisky money') and it was decided that the money raised should be used for supporting technical education.

Key to the growth of technical education was the emergence of dedicated technical qualifications, nationally recognised and standardised by accredited awarding bodies. The Royal Society of Arts, Commerce and Manufactures (RSA) launched its national examinations in 1856, followed by the City and Guilds of London Institute for the Advancement of Technical Education in 1879.

Two seminal institutional influencers are still in existence today—the WEA (Workers Education Association) and Ruskin College. The WEA, founded in 1903, saw itself as a successor to the Working Men's Institutes, the Working Men's Colleges and the University Extension programmes, which aimed to ameliorate class conflict. It was at its high point the precursor of the CBHE provision and ran into earlier forms of social, political and intellectual challenges. It also attracted as governors or lecturers many prominent public intellectuals like R.H. Tawney, E.P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, Harold Laski and the Labour politician Bessie Braddock. This is partly due to its ethos of Edwardian style fellowship, support by Oxford University, and the promotion of liberal learning, which at that time was of course familiar to the ruling class (Rose 1989).

It was not until after the First World War that art and technical colleges for post-school age students were established, when a 'combination of civic pride and the demand for technically skilled workers lead to the construction of a number of "showcase colleges" during the 1920s and 1930s' (Simmons 2014: 59). However, despite this emerging infrastructure of technical education institutions and a national qualifications structure, technical education remained:

> intellectually narrow and institutionally marooned between school and work, it never acquired a status comparable with that achieved in certain other continental states. Its form became characterised by an historical absence – the lack of any legitimised notion of general culture and general education with which to frame technical skills. FE colleges would find it hard to break out of this mould and to rectify this absence. (Green and Lucas 1999: 14–15).

The twin movements of self-improvement and skills training can thus be traced through from the first organised post-school non-university educational institutes to the FE colleges of today. Likewise, the broad range and academic level of educational provision on offer in those nineteenth century institutes can similarly be said to be reflected in today's colleges. In this sense, CBHE can trace its history back through many generations, from the nineteenth century industrial economy through to the contemporary knowledge economy.

FECs have thus ever been subject to the push and pull of the industries, professions and vocations for which they were set up to provide a skilled and qualified workforce, as well as providing broader educational

opportunities, a range of qualifications, short courses, and extensive provision for those with special needs. This history has, to this day, strongly influenced and shaped the character of colleges, situated, as they are, at the heart of the communities from which they draw for their students. Inclusion and diversity are cornerstones of modern day FE colleges. FECs are the principal providers of new apprenticeship programmes, have extensive employer engagement, and continue to be proactive in developing and extending their activities, including in CBHE.

This brief historical summary must suffice to demonstrate that there has never been a set of clear and unambiguous government policy directions for further education, which has led many to describe FE as the Cinderella sector when compared with schools and universities (Hyland and Merrill 2003). As Carol Dennis eloquently puts it,

> There is no such thing as FE in any abiding sense. What governments want, who students are, and the way colleges are resourced mean that these institutions are constantly changing. As a sector, we have simply not developed a strong sense of identity in our own and the public's imagination – unlike schools and universities. Complex, amorphous, adaptable – FE is the middle child who, unlike her younger and older siblings, is yet to achieve a sense of responsibility. (Dennis 2015: 145).

If this is true of the general and vocational education provided by the colleges, it is even more so with respect to CBHE. As Parry (2016: 86) has argued, 'The part-time, local, and highly distributed character of much of this higher education was among the reasons, at various times, for its low priority and profile in national policy'. In addition to this, we should recognise the importance of the lack of awareness of most in government about what FE colleges do. Put simply, in an elite English education system in which the standard progression route was (private) school to university, very few Member of Parliament offices and even fewer government departments are populated by those who have participated in the FE sector.

Early CBHE

With `the legislation (DES 1992) which created a larger university sector by absorbing the former polytechnic institutions (the 'polys'), there was a double shift in higher education provision. The former polys, which like FE colleges, had developed and grown by supporting a predominantly

local/regional employer community, began to extend their horizons by developing comprehensive research and knowledge transfer activity and grew their undergraduate course offer to compete with the other ex-polys and universities on a national and international scale. Meanwhile, FE colleges, which as we have seen inherited a long tradition of advanced level work, began to replace the polys as the go-to local providers of higher education, predominantly offering part-time and sub-degree courses for a highly diverse range of learners, often in subjects meeting the specific skills and training needs of local employers.

The origins and development of English CBHE in the second half of the twentieth century can be traced back to the policies of a post-war government that was concerned to re-build the country's skills base especially in advanced technical education. The investigation into technical education (Percy Report 1945) was, like the one that produced the Education Act of 1944, designed to prepare for the post-war world. There was a concern at the time that 'the position of Great Britain as a leading industrial nation is being endangered by a failure to secure the fullest possible application of science to industry' (Percy Report 1945). In due course, the then government recognised the need for greater push and co-ordination of higher level mainly technical education, and, in line with the broad recommendations of the Percy Report, the Ministry of Education created a four-tier system of colleges, with local colleges providing mainly foundational and pre-HE courses, area colleges additionally providing mainly part-time HNCs, regional colleges providing full-time and sandwich courses, and colleges of advanced technology 'whose conditions of recognition included a broad range and substantial volume of technological and allied work exclusively at the advanced levels (including research and postgraduate education)' (Parry 2016: 92).

At that time there were far fewer universities than currently, and these were primarily engaged in teaching full-time students on three year Bachelor's degree courses. Some of these courses were available as franchises, with perhaps the best known being the University of London External degrees, which could be taken part-time and typically taught at evening classes. However, in the same period, local authorities, which were at that time responsible for the planning and infrastructure of further education, specifically designated a category of higher education known as 'Advanced Further Education' (AFE) that was to sit alongside the NAFE (non-advanced further education) that was the core of the colleges' course offer. AFE students were generally either studying towards a variety of

professional qualifications, or for a Higher National Certificate (HNC) typically in a business-related or technical subject. These qualifications were administered jointly by the Ministry of Education and the professional institutes. Progression routes to these new qualifications were possible from the ONC (Ordinary National Certificate), broadly equivalent to today's Level 3 qualifications (e.g. A Levels, BTEC National Certificate). Both the ONC and HNC were designed to be studied part-time by those in work, made extensive use of work-related assignments and projects, and can therefore be thought of as early attempts to incorporate work-based learning into higher education qualifications. Full-time versions of both awards were also developed, the OND (Ordinary National Diploma) and HND (Higher National Diploma); however, these were considerably less popular given the practical need for an aspirational workforce to earn as they learn.

It was not until the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act (DES 1992) that government formally attempted to create clear and distinct further and higher education sectors, with dedicated funding councils that would apportion government funding and have responsibility for the regulation of quality and standards. Despite the intention that FECs would focus distinctly on NAFE, the creation of a quasi-market in the whole of post-compulsory education led to many colleges grasping an opportunity to continue to develop AFE, and to go further by offering higher education courses up to honours degree level and beyond.

At the same time, the potential contribution of FECs to access and widening participation in HE had begun to be recognised in government and by the colleges themselves, and this resulted in a flourishing of HE opportunities offered by FECs, especially for the increasingly high demand sub-degree programmes. The largest proportion of courses were HNCs and HNDs administered by Edexcel/BTEC. However, the policy of allowing uncapped growth in undergraduate student numbers encouraged many universities to enter into a range of partnerships for collaborative provision, effectively franchising their most popular courses to FECs. Often these courses were jointly taught between the higher education institution and FEC, with funding for teaching from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) apportioned by the HEI directly to the FEC. This proved a cost-effective way for many universities to expand the range and scope of their undergraduate provision without placing added pressure on their own physical and human resources. At the same time, many universities recognised the particular strengths of many

FECs in understanding their local markets, looking after their predominantly part-time mature students, and carrying out effective and efficient teaching and student support.

However, the government policy emphasis remained driven by the economic directive, and was the primary remit in the terms of reference for the Committee responsible for the Dearing Report (1997). Its recommendations were not implemented in full by government; however, its recommendations on the particular role of FECs in the future growth of higher education were to become highly influential and remained an important plank of New Labour, and subsequently Coalition and Conservative government thinking: 'In many cases, local requirements for sub-degree higher education can be met particularly well by further education colleges, whether as direct providers or in a partnership with a higher education institution' (Dearing 1997: 259). For the first time the important and distinct role of FECs in widening participation in HE was not only recognised but actively encouraged and endorsed through policy enactment.

The introduction of Foundation degrees in 2001—the first new higher education qualification since the Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE) highly popular in the polys in the 1970s—was an important indicator of this policy shift. The HEFCE allocated additional student number funding for institutions to develop and roll out Foundation degrees, and many FECs were involved in partnerships with universities to do just that. Additional government grant funding was allocated to these HE/FE partnerships in the form of Lifelong Learning Networks, most of which were predicated on collaborative provision of higher education, especially Foundation degrees, for which valuable additional student number funding was available through open competition. Further, some larger FECs were enabled, through new legislation, to apply for Foundation degree awarding powers in their own right, another significant recognition of the increasing status and prevalence of CBHE.

Post-2010 Map of College Based Higher Education

FE colleges are the largest providers of post-compulsory education; they currently educate and train 2.2 million people annually and deliver 82% of HNDs and 58% of Foundation degrees (AoC 2018a, 2018b). Within the last decade or so, there have been a number of policy directions that have proved helpful for colleges wishing to expand their CBHE offer. We have

seen in our discussion of the emergence and development of CBHE that it has expanded and thrived in a fragmented and confused English post-compulsory education (PCE) policy environment. Government policies appear to have been ambivalent towards PCE in general and CBHE in particular. On the one hand, successive governments since the Blair era have invested strongly in increasing participation, with close on half of 18–30 year olds embarking upon a significant HE programme (DfE 2018); considerable government funds have been applied to increasing access and outreach through Lifelong Learning Networks (Little and Williams 2009), regional aspiration raising programmes such as Aim Higher (Thomas 2011), and contingent grant funding for a range of WP projects (Bowes et al. 2013). Many of these initiatives have given rise to or supported existing CBHE provision, especially via partnerships between universities and FE Colleges (Elliott 2012). On the other hand, the policies of the 2010–2015 Coalition government, continued to date by the minority Conservative government that replaced it, have combined to increase barriers to study by reducing financial support for part time and mature students seeking to return to learn (Shaw 2014).

These contradictory policy directions are a reflection of a continuing absence of centralisation of responsibility for the post-compulsory education sector. The current arrangements stem from the 1995 merger between the Department of Employment and the Department of Education, eventually resulting in 2010 with the separation between the Department of Education and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills. This did much to contribute to the lack of cohesion in relation to policy making. An aspect of applying its market model to higher education has been the government's preference for diversifying HE providers (Palfreyman and Tapper 2014). So we have seen a growth in the number of for-profit HE providers alongside a loosening of the criteria for university title and encouragement of more work based routes to advanced level qualifications (Boud and Soloman 2001) such as the Higher Apprenticeship (Anderson et al. 2012). Following the logic of a neoliberal 'free' and competitive market, these directions are likely to continue, with a further blurring of the boundaries between further and higher education. However, it is an equally valid reading of this last development to consider this last development as educationally progressive, in breaking down elitist models of higher education towards a more distributed, diverse and accessible set of arrangements that provide affordance rather than hindrance to HE progression. Indeed, an undoubted benefit of CBHE is the extent to which it

has established robust progression pathways from academic and vocational courses at Level 3 into a range of HE options, especially Foundation degrees (McKenzie and Schofield 2018).

It is also important to recognise the important contribution of Access to HE courses that provide thorough going academic and personal support for mature, women and part-time students, who often cannot travel out of their local community to engage with HE (Reay et al. 2002). Many of these were initially designed collaboratively between the colleges and their local poly, and were either generic leading to undergraduate arts, humanities and social science courses, or profession specific, with Access to Teaching, Nursing and Social Work featuring prominently. They became extremely popular, especially with the mature, part-time learners for whom they were principally designed, and they played a significant role in increasing the numbers of women entering higher education. Central to Access courses was that they could be studied part-time alongside caring or work commitments, with the majority of class teaching taking place during the school day to accommodate mothers with young families. In this way, Access courses became a key driver for widening participation in higher education.

CBHE students are more likely to be mature, part-time and from low-participation neighbourhoods than students at universities, and more likely to be occupationally focused (ETF 2016). Much CBHE is carried out through partnership arrangements with universities that approve and validate the provision. The benefits and drawbacks of these arrangements have been extensively researched (e.g. Macbeth et al. 1995; Parry 2009; Colley et al. 2014; Elliott 2017) charting the varying levels of collaboration and competition that characterise such arrangements. Many colleges have developed a robust mixed economy HE portfolio, with home grown Higher National Diploma courses validated by Edexcel/BTEC alongside university validated diplomas, Foundation and Honours degrees. The introduction of Foundation degree awarding powers (FDAP) in 2007 (BIS 2010) for colleges has enabled larger FECs with greater resources to validate and offer their own FDs. Many of these build upon the existing employer engagement and community links that are a particular feature of many colleges (Hyland and Merrill 2003).

By the end of the last decade, FE had become a more mainstream locus for higher education. Government policy to expand higher education encouraged universities to partner with FECs, which would add capacity and extend their footprint into often disadvantaged communities. FECs

became regarded by government as a natural home for Foundation degrees (DfES 2003) and college principals welcomed the addition of HE work as a valuable alternative income stream, with some FE colleges getting a quarter of their income through higher education (UCU 2010).

The Immediate Future of CBHE

Undoubtedly, one of the greatest challenges facing CBHE is identity and contextualisation. Given the many and various understandings and interpretations of CBHE as perceived by policy makers and practitioners it is crucial that CBHE becomes confident in its provenance and prospects. For it remains the case that CBHE is 'caught up within an unequal system of education, fast-changing policies and lack of funding, and therefore unable to even have the flexibility to do what is has always done very well which is to provide a flexible, multifaceted, modern and empowering education to the communities that have had (and still do have) faith in its ability to meet their needs' (Kadi-Hanifi and Elliott 2016: 7).

As we have seen, CBHE has a rich past but its future success will be dependent on establishing a clear and compelling rationale as well as affordances that will enable it to flourish. Key to this, in the context of the predominantly vocational curriculum environment in which CBHE operates, will be understanding how theoretical and practical knowledge can co-exist with mutual benefit. This will involve addressing three key dimensions, as John Lea (2017) has described, 'First, a chance to demonstrate how a professional and technical curriculum seeks to bridge the academic-vocational divide; how it promotes forms of practical wisdom (or phronesis, to use Aristotle's term); and how staff and students can be provided with curriculum time to enhance their scholarly engagement in these contexts'.

It is vital that the particular contribution of CBHE, as amply evidenced in this volume, is understood and disseminated through discussion, advanced scholarship and research. To this end, a number of networks have evolved that aim to encourage and support scholarship and research across the wide spectrum of PCE and especially in FE Colleges. These include the Association for Research in Post-Compulsory Education, Learning & Skills Research Network, British Educational Research Association Post Compulsory and Lifelong Learning Special Interest Group, Education and Training Foundation (ETF), Edge Foundation and FE Research Meet. The Association of Colleges (AoC) launched its

Scholarship project in 2015; it ran for three years and one of its aims was to develop a community of college higher education practice (AoC 2018a, 2018b). The Learning and Skills Network's 'Networking the Networks' initiative is a recent attempt to enhance the work of practice-led research networks (LSRN 2018). The ETF's report (ETF 2016) on the local impact of CBHE is a useful starting point for further scoping work. The Institute of Policy Studies is an important Think Tank engaging in and promoting debate on many policy areas that are highly relevant and influential to the current context. The coordination and consolidation of advanced scholarship and research in CBHE is essential not only to ensure the quality of CBHE but also to embed an institutional culture of scholarship in college HE (Lea 2017), sustain CBHE practitioners and help to reinforce their 'research identities' (Lea and Simmons 2012: 189), and 'overturn the dominant paradigm of "performativity"' (Anderson et al. 2003: 507).

Perhaps the greatest hindrance to the further flourishing of CBHE is that of infrastructure—the extent to which it can be successfully enacted in such challenging conditions as experienced by the college lecturer (Feather 2012). College staff rarely gain access to research leave or time to engage in advanced scholarship in the same way as do their university counterparts (Solvason and Elliott 2013). On the contrary, a typical CBHE tutor will be teaching a number of FE classes alongside their HE work, and these can be substantial up to a total contact workload of 550 hours a year (Steward 2006). As Rebecca Turner and her colleagues found in their study in the south west of England, the need for CBHE lecturers to switch between teaching FE and HE 'often left college lecturers feeling there was limited support from the college to specialise in their subject area, … (and) the impression that there was a lack of recognition from the institution of the wider implications of being an HE lecturer (Turner et al. 2009: 362). Although acknowledging these tensions, Tummons argues, in the introduction to his collection of articles on professionalism previously published in the journal 'Research in Post-Compulsory Education', that college lecturers' ethic of care drives them towards an ethos of 'emotional labour', a form of 'supererogatory professionalism', whereby

> they attend to the bureaucratic, managerial demands of their workplaces, sometimes more-or-less willingly, invariably strategically, whilst simultaneously ring-fencing their pedagogic practice as a locus for autonomy (Tummons 2019: 11)

Given that 'in English education there can be few revolutions, only changes in tempo and direction' (Maclure 1969: 17), we can only hope that future government policies and interventions at least give CBHE a chance to fulfil its real potential to transform the lives of learners and their families whilst recognising its invaluable social and economic impact.

Chapter Summary

This opening chapter has set the historical, policy and educational context for college based higher education in England. It has been extensively referenced, reflecting the increasing interest in CBHE in the research community; this will allow the reader to follow up whichever themes and strands are of interest. There are two important messages to emerge from the development of CBHE. The first is that CBHE has benefited from a coalition of interests, which has propelled it towards the significant position it now occupies in the educational architecture of higher education in England. These interests have been fleshed out in the chapter, principally that (a) CBHE has channelled government policy for expanding and widening participation in higher education; (b) CBHE has provided a powerful and life-changing route into higher education for thousands of learners who would otherwise not have been able to engage with HE; (c) CBHE has provided a valuable additional income stream for FE colleges that have experienced continuing significant cuts in the funding of their FE work; the second message is that as well as these affordances, there are also important hindrances which provide the biggest threat to the flourishing of CBHE from here on. Foremost of these is the extent to which it can be successfully enacted in such challenging conditions as experienced by the college lecturer— including the lack of recognition; lack of professional identity; lack of salary equity with school teachers; lack of time due to very heavy FE teaching loads; lack of research culture in FE colleges; lack of job security in an increasingly casualised sector of education; competition from universities and private providers. And yet— CBHE continues to account for more than 10% of English higher education. Whether it continues at this level will depend on many social, political, economic and educational factors; there will however be no shortage of professional commitment, care, enthusiasm or skill on the part of CBHE practitioners.

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CHAPTER 2

The CBHE Lecturer and Student

John Keenan

Abstract The factors affecting how College-based Higher Education (CBHE) students and lecturers develop self-identity are explored in this chapter. It covers the marketisation of education, a need to justify education by future job prospects and concerns about HE sustainability. The chapter explores the ramifications of CBHE in an HE market as well as the power the individual has to refract or alter the social realities presented. In this way, what it means to be a CBHE student or lecturer is negotiated by the individual who will, anyway, take the given identity and add it to others already possessed.

Keywords CBHE students • CBHE lecturers • Self-identity • Marketisation of education • HE sustainability • Refraction

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Chapter Overview

College-based higher Education (CBHE) lecturer Gail Hall (2016) reflected on her blog:

> professional identity is influenced by organisational culture…these are clearly exciting times for college HE professionals…we all have a role to play in helping to forge a clear, distinct, and valued professional identity for everyone working in college HE.

This chapter investigates CBHE's organisational culture and identity agreeing that this is the key time to determine what it means to be lecturer and student in the sector—a defining moment. In order to conceptualise we need to contextualise so this chapter positions CBHE in a consumer-led context of university-level education, driven by a government trying to maximise human capital. All such social-economic contexts can be negotiated with so the chapter also shows how lecturers and students may, through the dynamic of refraction (see Rudd and Goodson 2016), reinterpret their roles and given identities. It is argued that there are detrimental meanings associated with CBHE which can transfer to students and lecturers when they join CBHE but that it is possible to make belonging to CBHE a positive identity-giver. This is especially so given that CBHE has a mandate to provide local, accessible, vocational and flexible education which are strengths to be celebrated and may provide a way forward to improving the sector's meaning, status and power.

The Framework of Viewing Education: Branding and Ranking

Since the 1992 Further and Higher Education Framework, most established universities have maintained their funding and dominance but the sector has opened up to 'new players' threatening their status and role. This included FE which had, prior to 1992, been 'marginal' to government concerns (Parry 2009; Scott 2009) often seeing itself as a 'poor relation' (Mason et al. 2010: 118) or a Cinderella sector (see Norton-Grubb 2005) which was overlooked and put-upon. With governmental desire to increase HE student numbers to 50% of school-leavers in 10 years (Labour Manifesto 2001) and, in response to The Dearing Report (1997), doubling the proportion of people from disadvantaged backgrounds entering HE, universities could not meet the needs and the FE sector was called, to

extend the Cinderella metaphor, to sweep up. In 2000, £9.5 million was paid by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in its first phase to support expansion and raise quality and standards of CBHE learning and teaching (HEFCE 2001; see NICHE 1997). In 2016, the rules were further relaxed so that, 'any high quality predominantly degree-level provider' can apply for degree awarding powers (DBIS 2016) though by 2018, this had numbered nine with only two having full degree awarding power (AoC 2018) and the rest allowed to award foundation degrees (Levels 4 and 5).

The governmental support for CBHE can be understood better if we examine neoliberal policies which have guided British and Western policies for the last 40 years (see Harvey 2005; see Avis and Orr 2016). As part of the neoliberal agenda of private enterprise, freedom and competition, FE colleges in England and Wales which were funded by local authorities:

> 'became businesses, academic principals became chief executives and…college governors were made responsible for financial management, strategic direction and getting their institutions 'competition-ready" (AoC 2015).

While the 1992 Act was heralded, as 'a defining moment of liberation' (Foster 2005)—it repeated the phrase that FE colleges 'may do anything'—these privatised companies still needed public funding from government bodies such as the Office for Students (OfS). This puts CBHE in 'quasi-market relations' (Avis and Orr 2016: 51) where they have to justify their provision to external funding bodies. This is typical of the contradictions within the neoliberal experiment (see Harvey 2005)—the new 'freedoms' brought new controls. Another key tenet in the rhetoric of neoliberalism is 'equality' which is measured in neoliberal terms as 'how free people are to improve their position in society' (Cabinet Office 2011). Widening participation at the university level and the merger of HEFCE and the Office for Fair Access into the OFS are measures towards what the government see as a 'level playing field for all providers' (OfS 2018: 15). Those cynical of the neoliberal rhetoric of equality and meritocracy see it as an 'opiate of the masses' designed to give the illusion that HE is available to all while masking the reality that high status education which leads to powerful positions is still for the ruling elite. For some, such as Avis and Orr (2016, 53) neoliberal thought has a 'narrow understanding of social mobility (and)…a restricted conception of tackling inequality, which

entails society's divisions remaining in place while a few enterprising and deserving individuals may climb over them.'

CBHE's expansion can also be understood when it is viewed as part of a global trend to support a tertiary sector which 'is a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy' (OECD 2018: 8). One problem with global comparison of education as seen in the Programme for International Comparison (PISA) is that it treats four devolved nations as one (see Hodgson et al. 2018 for a comparison of FE across the nations). While the realities of FE are different in the countries of the UK (for example, Scotland is still funded by the Local Education Authorities and Northern Ireland has no sixth form provision) pressure, policy and funding comes from the UK Parliament which 'maintains unilateral control over the bulk of decision-making and funding choices' (Ewart 2016: 9). So, when PISA reports that the UK is 16th out of 20 OECD countries for support of tertiary education (2017: 38) it seems, to the government, that 'we are standing still while others race past' (DfE 2010). International economic pressure is nothing new—the UK's tertiary sector was born from poor comparison at the Paris Exhibition of 1867 (see Evans 2007)—but today, there is a new necessity from this being 'the age of human capital' (Becker 1994) and 'it' is seen to need investment.

The expanded CBHE sector can be seen as a contributor to 'mass higher education' (see Gallacher and Parry 2016) bringing to fulfilment the Trow (1973 in Trow 2006) prediction that the middle-classes would see HE first as a right and then as an obligation if they were to maintain their more privileged position in society but that this did not always bring status because, as Chang (2011 in Bathmaker 2019) imagined, it became like a theatre where some stand so others behind have to stand and in the end no-one is any better off. In truth, to extend the simile, the theatre has a range of seats and some are in the balcony as differentiation comes in the branding and ranking of universities. As with all markets, there is a stratification of the status and value of 'products' and CBHE 'has traditionally been relatively low status' (Gallacher and Osborne 2005: 195). Today, there is a complex picture where it is more universally available to become an HE student (at a cost) but there is a stratification of what this means. Universities position themselves in the market (see Molesworth et al. 2011; Hanna-Mari et al. 2015) to increase the 'cultural capital' (see Bourdieu and Passeron 1990) the university brand gives—Warwick University even used the tagline 'The Cultural Capital' in 2008. Rather

than relying on the academic reputation or provision of education there is a 'growing importance…to slick marketing approaches and practices' (Zaffwan and Whitfield 2014: 342). Universities also gain extra funding from government bodies (Marginson 2008) which allows them to build 'statement architecture'. There has been a 'boom time' in the past 20 years (*Financial Times* 2016) with income from students at £10.7bn (*The Economist* 2018) added to loans of around £12 billion (HEFCE 2017). This 'largesse that has embarrassed higher education in recent years' (UCU in The Independent 2016) has even allowed them to re-shape city centres in some cases, spending £27.9 billion on improving their physical infrastructure since 2006 (HEFCE 2018: 28). Universities are investing to maintain dominance in the 'marketplace' and this position is revealed in HE league tables—in which CBHE is not even included, making it, to use football terminology, non-league. As Gale (2012) noted:

> 'While university student recruitment departments focus on 'bums on seats', equity advocates draw attention to which bums, in what proportions and, more to the point, which seats, where. But if the counting of 'bums' is crude, so is the differentiation of seats.'

Self-concept of the CBHE Lecturer and Student

Into this marketized and stratified version of education, the student enters a situation which will help form the view of her/his self. Self-concept is a 'conviction in our own unity' (Freeman 1992: 16), summed up as 'what a person believes about himself, or a map that each person consults in order to understand himself, especially during moments of crisis or situations in which he makes a choice' (Zlatkovic et al. 2012: 378). Education is partly about the students gaining identity—something which also comes from a range of personal, experiential, familial, social factors which becomes a 'situated, role-specific self-concept' (Reitzes and Burke 1980: 45; McCall and Simons 1966). University-level education, in particular, has been seen as a critical time of identity development (see Chickering and Reisser 1993). This might be simplified as the 'meanings of the college student' (see Reitzes and Burke 1980: 45) or further simplified in the term 'doing being a student' as opposed to 'doing education' (Attenborough and Stokoe 2012: 100).

If we consider the semiotics of being a student and how various socially made connotations fix on the individual who appropriates it (see Butler

1990) the CBHE student will be offered the meaning and may become interpellated into both 'HE student' and the sign-qualities of the FE college as part of their given identity. Signs gain meaning through contextual and paradigmatic factors including the other sign-choices available so a CBHE student will also be given meaning through being an HE student and the possible other options which include being at university, being a student at a particular institution, being a non-student and other 'counter-roles' (see Lindesmith and Strauss 1999). The CBHE student is, then, subject to the 'discursive practices' (see Foucault 1991) through which individuals are formed, regulated and positioned. Such subjectivity should not be taken uncritically as it is in the formation of such discourses we see the 'exercise of power' (Jenks 1995 in Atkinson 2002: 104) where 'the constellation of interests inherent in and protected by any social order of signs….(and) the consensus world view that they seek to promote.' However much the CBHE student negotiates with the given signs of CBHE and the institution, the 'outside view' on her/his status will become apparent as 'discourses constitute truths' and the 'subject becomes subject through the agency of the signifier' (Atkinson 2002: 105–106). In other words, by not being at university the CBHE student may be viewed more negatively not least in how s/he has to explain how it is possible to study at HE level while being in an FE institution. We can observe through the language used to explain and explore FE the way it impedes the value of the CBHE student. Panchamia (2012) called FE the 'everything else' sector while Sir Michael Wilshaw (Chief Inspector of Ofsted 2012–16) called it a 'mess' in which pupils "head off towards the FE institution which is a large, amorphous institution...and do badly" (TES 2016). However misconstrued these ideas are, they articulate a view that FE provides a lower-level of education; possibly because it is seen as being for and by those from a lower class.

The identity the CBHE student gains from being part of CBHE and an FE institution is just one of the many ways of gaining identity and forming self-concept. The example of Allen-Collinson and Brown (2012) about being a Christian student shows how 'relational and multi-faceted' (Daniels and Brooker 2014: 65) identity is. The same can be true of seeing the self as belonging to a working-class identity while a university student, which, for example may impose the perception of being alienated (Reay et al. 2009). Identity can be 'personal, professional and academic' (see Chickering and Reisser 1993) so student identity is only part of who the person is and there is always the ability to negotiate with it (see Hall 1997)

and embark in the power-struggle of meaning (see Foucault 1999). Being a CBHE student is, after all, like many belongings—to an 'imagined community' (see Anderson 1983) which can be re-imagined.

Belonging to a community such as an FE college or in CBHE generally becomes merely a 'reference point' for identity (see Sarbin and Allen 1968) but nevertheless one which the student has to negotiate. Belonging to an elite institution leaves the student with the chance to belong to a powerful identity which, in the long term, can lead to powerful positions in society. While CBHE may be fulfilling one of its traditional roles of widening participation it does not lead to the eventual riches and rise in economic prosperity university-level education should bring as those at CBHE level, had very different destination profiles to those who attended universities (see Zipin et al. 2015). The proportion of graduates from FE colleges in 2010–11 employed full time in professional occupations in the year after graduating was 8%, compared to HEIs, which was 23% (HEFCE 2013). The average starting salaries for CBHE graduates was 16% lower than those from universities (HEFCE 2013) and in the long-term, CBHE graduates earn less than university graduates (see DfE 2011). For some, it might be seen that the expansion of university education is no more than a 'hope-goading gloss' (Zipin et al. 2015) for those from lower-income families which has failed to narrow income inequality (Brown et al. 2008) and 'mistakenly conflates the concepts of widening participation and social mobility and elides the difference' (Avis and Orr 2016). While the benefits of HE education are multifarious—improving wellbeing, social skills, self-image and wisdom to name merely some—economically, as Gorard (2010) noted, 'Education can compensate for society – a bit'.

This idea of being able to partially compensate for society is made clearer when the demographic profiles of CBHE students are placed in comparison to universities. While there is a range of students in CBHE among the 149,000 studying in CBHE (AoC 2018), a study of student profiles show certain trends and they link to the issues in the previous section with students who are local to the institution, reflective of a multicultural society, from lower-income families, and studying a vocational course. This picture is a familiar one in college-based HE in English speaking countries: vocational higher education which widens access to HE and has close ties with local business (see Gallacher and Osborne 2005: 196). Seventy-eight per cent of students in CBHE come from the region local to the college (ETF 2016: 8–9). CBHE students are more likely to study part-time and be older than those in other HE sectors—most part-time

students and just over a third of full-time students studying at HE in FE colleges were aged 25 or over (ETF 2016: 6). Despite a reduction in part-time study in HE generally, CBHE continues to be an important provider of flexible education patterns. Vocational study is another trend in CBHE with the number of higher-level apprenticeships increased from 7600 in 2013/14 to 16,300 in 2015/16 as is the provision of Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects. In 2015–16, 16% of students were studying for either Higher National Certificates or Diplomas (ETF 2016) the vast majority in core STEM subject areas. CBHE students tend to have lower-income backgrounds. According to Participation of Local Area (POLAR) figures, 60% of young people in the highest fifth of the country's income groups went to university in comparison with 20% in the least privileged fifth—a figure remaining roughly the same for a decade (HEFCE 2014). Those in this 'lowest' fifth are twice as likely to be in CBHE (see Harrison and McCaig 2014) so it is serving its purpose to widen participation for those who could be otherwise disenfranchised from HE.

There is also a very different demographic profile of FE lecturers in comparison to university. While CBHE-only lecturer data profiles are difficult to find as while there are statistics on FE employment (ET Foundation 2010) and those in HE employment (HESA 2020) those working at HE level can be done on an 'ad hoc' basis within an FE college (BIS 2012). 204 colleges provide HE education with 57,000 lecturers (AoC 2018) so we might expect the lecturer profile to reflect the FE ones of 61% female staff, 16% from BAME backgrounds and 5% having a learning or other disability; in other words, a socially inclusive one, certainly in comparison with universities which, to exemplify the level of inequality, had 14,385 professors of whom 50 are identified by the ethnic category 'black' (see Kadi-Hanifi 2013).

For CBHE lecturers, within the confines of the institution, there may be status (if not power) as it is teaching at a higher level and indicates the level of education of the lecturer. Sasha Pleasance, a CBHE lecturer at South Devon College reflected that:

> 'These words teacher, trainer and lecturer are imbued with meaning. It's quite subtle but I think it has a huge impact on how we see ourselves. The desire to improve the way an individual is viewed by teaching at HE level might partly because there is an idealised perception that unlike HE lecturers, FE lecturers have a low professional status'.

Outside the institution, however, as lecturer Sarah Simmons blogged, 'To the outside world I'm an FE teacher'—and whatever this means will be conferred on the individual and, as Gleeson et al. (2005) showed the erosion of autonomy in the job has negatively impacted not only the conditions of the profession but also the way it is viewed by others. This erosion has meant a reframing of what it means to be a professional in FE from one which means autonomy, trust and status to meaning 'doing what you are told to do'. This is a trend seen in other education systems and is part of the neoliberal drive for control through 'performativity'—'A drive for efficiency which assumes that it is possible to precisely gauge and make transparent the performance…through the use of audit technologies.' (Trotman et al. 2018). While universities are constituted by Royal Charter (see Privy Council 2018) FE colleges are owned by corporations and often have a 'managerialist' (see Randle and Brady 1997) approach, obsessed with business concerns (see Robson 1998) with a focus on benchmarks and 'best business practice' with a commitment to the brand values or 'mission statements' of the organisation (Gleeson et al. 2015; Hodgson and Spours 2019). CBHE lecturers, 'first and foremost…will be judged by their ability to meet targets' (Simmons and Lea 2013) and must fulfil performativity targets (see Brown et al. 1996). As Lea and Simmons (2012) conclude, 'It is our contention that these dimensions have so permeated (FE) that it has had the effect of constituting a serious barrier to their ability to produce a culture of HEness'. This culture has penetrated the universities as well as the FE colleges but in the former it might be better described as more of an 'incursion' (Deem and Brehony 2005) rather than a colonisation.

While there is an inter-institutional struggle to find identity, there are also intra-institutional comparisons with HE. The CBHE lecturer may contrast the self with equivalents in universities. While CBHE are in their offices during working hours and able to give much more to students, university lecturers might be on sabbaticals or study leave (see HEFCE 2003). Some university lecturers may see themselves as primarily researchers but CBHE lecturers see themselves more as 'practitioners than as researchers or scholars' (Feather 2011). There are also marked comparisons with working hours (for details, see Chap. 5). This heavy workload may make them less inclined to do the other acts university lecturers are free to do such as be open to new ideas and research (Feather 2011) with 'professional updating' (King and Widdowson 2012) all that is possible. Equally, CBHE lecturers may release themselves from the discursive

practices in and outside of their working institution and focus on their own values in order to form identity. Kadi-Hanifi and Keenan's (2015 and 2016) studies showed how CBHE lecturers focus on a moral purpose in educating the working class and becoming what Elliott (this volume) called, 'engines of social justice'. Their studies of the narrativised self showed how CBHE lecturers identified key traits of value in FE such as its working-class roots, its power as a second-chance education route, the value of vocationalism and the importance of what Tummons called an 'ethic of care' (see also Noddings 1995). In this way, they made sense of the way they were positioned by outside forces and changed or refracted their given identities (see Rudd and Goodson 2017). This led them towards a form of 'supererogatory professionalism', whereby 'they attend to the bureaucratic, managerial demands of their workplaces, sometimes more-or-less willingly, invariably strategically, whilst simultaneously ring-fencing their pedagogic practice as a locus for autonomy' (Tummons 2019: 11).

Most FE colleges do not have provision to be able to employ staff on solely HE teaching contracts, so lecturers end may end up teaching from Entry Level 1 to Level 7 so the CBHE lecturer will be occupying a range of positions and roles. This may mean, as Sarah Simmons reflected:

> 'in college I'm a lecturer, though I have never given a lecture in my life. My manager is also a lecturer unless she's having a one-to-one session with a student, addressing targets or pastoral issues, then she's a tutor. When she's delivering CPD to the rest of us in a formal setting she's a trainer, but if we're discussing how we can improve our practice individually, she's a coach. For many practitioners in the FE and skills sector, what we do depends on our diaries and we often assume a different role (and corresponding job title) on the way to the next meeting.'

Here, the idea of multiple identity (more fully considered in this volume by Jones) within an institution becomes clearer. Hilary Read, director of Readon Publications believes your identity in FE also depends on your route into teaching 'if you've come up through the vocational ranks, then you believe that you're an assessor.' The term, 'borderland discourse' is a useful one as it 'reflects a view of CBHE lecturer identity as holistic – 'inclusive of the intellectual, the corporeal and the inclusive aspects of human selfhood' (Alsup 2005: 6). It is, as Gail Hall (2016) noted, 'unsurprising that college HE lecturers can feel frustrated, under-valued and uncertain of their professional identity'.

The Argument for a Unique Identity of CBHE Lecturer and Student

CBHE students and lecturers work within the given meanings but these are open and liable to change. Because CBHE is relatively new and in a position of growth this is a time to work to define what it means to be a lecturer and student and focus on its positive values such as being local, inclusive and affordable. One reason for the greater affordability is that it does not include what for some became a 'rite of passage' of the student moving away from home with 15 miles being the average distance between home and college in comparison to the university average of 53 miles (AoC 2018). CBHE contributes to what Hodgson and Spours (2013) have called 'local learning ecologies' which reflect the communities they serve and a diverse heterogeneity in both their staff and student bodies who may have diverse or even 'divergent' social and cultural capital, maturity in age and outlook, family and parenting ties (including caring responsibilities) (see Bathmaker 2009). CBHE provides flexible attendance requirements, supported learning opportunities in environments adapted to suit student needs, characteristics and capabilities. Locality might be the new 'pulling power' of CBHE and become something of value, particularly with the concerns about funding and perceptions of the unsustainable environmental effects of travel.

Another value of CBHE which can help form its identity is the way it works to ensure that students are 'job-ready'. The courses provided are often specifically designed to provide vertical progression from their own BTEC National and A level courses (see Eaton 2015). Many students are working through their degree from financial necessity and CBHE, in particular, is aware of the need to provide 'graduate attributes' (see Yorke 2004) which prove the student has gained the necessary skills and knowledge for the chosen workplace. The marketisation and commodification in education has encouraged the HE student to be an 'investor in self' (see Tomlinson 2010) with value on how the course is 'shaping future identity' (Holmes 2013). There is pressure on HE generally to create courses 'because of labour market demand' (Wolf 2015: 76) and an educational context in which many graduates question what they got for their investment. FE has 'always focused strongly on connecting learning with work, now universities, too, are increasingly encouraging students to prepare for their future employment in a global environment' (Daniels and Brooker 2014: 65; see Green et al. 2009). In this way:

> 'the developing student is seen as a work in progress, not yet complete, not yet successful' and success is now viewed from an 'emergent identity' - 'to be successful, an individual must become a graduate' (Holmes 2013: 550).

It is through the work CBHE providers do to make the learning purposeful and focused on a successful future that it can gain a greater sense of purpose and meaning.

Chapter Summary

Drawing on the tradition of emancipatory adult education from which FE emerged, there should be no reason that a high-quality university provision across all subjects cannot be provided in CBHE—one that is inclusive, local, purposeful and provides an environment for critical dialogue and change. It would take investment in highly qualified lecturers and an infrastructure which could give access to knowledge but otherwise, universities, however impressive they look, can provide a limited and sometimes impersonal educational experience for the individual. CBHE could fit in a 'seamless' (Smith and Bocock 1999; Young 2006) way into the HE landscape. Instead of viewing itself as what it is not or replicating a university appearance (see Lea and Simmons 2012) there is the opportunity for it to form into its own culture which is 'discernible in how lives are lived through actions and social relationships' (Geertz 1993). A CBHE culture could evolve in the way James and Biesta (2007) suggest: 'a dialectical process that accounts for how both cultures and individuals can form and evolve through interaction.' A conscious evolution by CBHE providers might form the common ground to find an identity and celebrate the way it serves the local community (Rami and O'Leary 2017) and fosters local and regional level partnerships with employers (Hodgson and Spours 2017).

CBHE can celebrate the way it individualises learning and provides socially inclusive HE learning spaces for adults with an 'ethos of support, encouragement, choice and challenge' (Pleasance 2016: 13). There is a growing recognition of the position and importance of the CBHE lecturer by the Teaching Excellence Framework which awarded 14% of FE colleges Gold status and 52% Silver status for the quality of CBHE provision (AoC 2018) and by SEDA (Staff and Educational Development Association) which now offers a post-graduate Award for Teaching and Learning in CBHE, leading to recognition and eventual fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. This could encourage a 'grown-up' approach to

learning not only in the amount of autonomy expected from the students but in the style of delivery which should be dialogic, inclusive to all with 'strong bonds with disadvantaged groups and communities' (Duckworth 2014: 6). CBHE can bring 'transformatory empowerment' (Duckworth and Smith 2017) to individuals and communities and, where necessary, act as a second-chance sector to support disaffected and demotivated students 'let down' by the compulsory system. It has an important role to continue to play and with the wind of government support behind it, could grow as a powerful force in its own right rather than an alternative one.

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CHAPTER 3

Learning, Teaching and Assessment in CBHE

Alex Kendall and Stuart Mitchell

Abstract This chapter pays attention to micro-encounters in teaching and learning in CBHE. It explores discourses of knowledge-making, identity building and student becoming. The chapter re-frames teaching and learning as socio-cultural practices deeply embedded in the wider discourses of HE: vocationalism, employability and skills acquisition. These discourses tend to play out particular ways of 'being' and 'doing' for teachers and students which create an 'institutional habitus.' It considers implications for social justice and impacts for students with little family experience of HE and explores the potential of CBHE as a uniquely 'between'/other/third space.

Keywords Micro-encounters in teaching and learning • Knowledge-making • Student becoming • Discourse • Institutional habitus • Between/other/third space

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Chapter Overview

This chapter pays attention to a series of micro-encounters in teaching and learning in the CBHE sector to explore discourses of knowledge-making, identity building and student becoming. We bring together research vignettes drawn from collaborative and participatory research work we have undertaken with students and colleagues in CBHE contexts over the last decade to explore the themes and concepts about teaching and learning in CBHE that emerge when setting them side by side. Rather than attempting to characterize CBHE we draw attention to the ways in which teaching and learning in CBHE is best seen as a set of socio-cultural practices deeply embedded in wider discourses of HE. These are often framed by ideas about social and cultural capitals, vocationalism, employability and notions of skills acquisition and expertise. We argue that these discourses tend to play out particular ways of being and doing (paradigms and ontologies) for teachers and students to create an 'institutional habitus' that structures 'the possible field of action' (Foucault 1982: 221) and patterns (and limits/curtails)—'what might be played' (Foucault 1982: 221). We consider the implications for social justice and the potential impacts and affects for students with little family experience of higher education. As an alternative framework we explore the potential of CBHE as a uniquely between/other/third space within which new possibilities for the being and doing of teaching and learning (new paradigms and ontologies) might be imagined. Towards a conclusion we consider the conditions of possibility required to imagine new ways of 'playing.'

Conceptual Frameworks

In this section we sketch out the key ideas theories that we have plugged in to our research material and that opened up our thinking and provided the thinking tools for our analysis. Here we sketch out an account of Bourdieu's concepts of 'field' and 'habitus' and how they have been taken up to develop nuanced ideas about 'vocational habitus,' 'institutional habitus,' and 'educentricity.'

Bourdieu's key concepts of 'field' and 'habitus' provide useful conceptual strategies for exploring the environment of CBHE. A Bourdieusian field constitutes '… a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense or with value …' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 127). Bourdieusian fields often embody rules or taken-for-granted practices that are imposed

(without necessarily being explicitly identified) on those who seek to enter or remain within them. They, therefore, structure social and professional practices by defining the range of possible and acceptable actions and behaviours available to those operating within any given field (Grenfell and James 2004). Bourdieu (1984) argued that the artifice of social practices then become invisible because they are, 'obscured by the realities of ordinary sense-experience' (Bourdieu 1984: 22). Bourdieu used the classic metaphor of 'a fish in water' to describe the embodied experience of living with practices that are appropriated as 'common sense.' As we suggest later in the chapter for example, a student's identification with a particular type of academic HE institution may be reinforced or marginalised by own, familial or community experiences of learning and membership of educational institutions and networks, so they may feel more or less like a 'fish in water.'

Within the context of this chapter, what affects this identification is often due to the positioning of CBHE as a field between HE and FE. This presents students with a particular type of capital that is relevant to the environment which, in turn, produces particular ways of thinking, being and doing (Bathmaker 2015). It is this position within a particular field—that of CBHE, between HE and FE—that is of importance in terms of the wider field of power, that is, the influences, choices and restrictions that might apply to such students, and the way in which they interact with their environment. Such personal learning experiences and identification with different educational communities are constituting of what Bourdieu calls 'habitus' (1985) the collection of ways of being, doing, thinking and acting that comprise our 'social inheritance' (Grenfell and James 2004). For Reay, habitus is both inward and outward facing: 'a person's individual history is constitutive of habitus, but so also is the whole collective history of family and class that the individual is a member of (Reay 2004: 434). This manifests as an interplay between past and present that is not only thought but embodied, as present in how we move and hold ourselves, as it is in the ideas we express about our commitments and our 'people like us' affiliations. However, habitus is for Bourdieu more than simply a reproducing impulse as Reay (2004: 439) explains:

> 'While it is important to view individuals as actively engaged in creating their social worlds, Bourdieu's method emphasizes the way in which 'the structure of those worlds is already predefined by broader racial, gender and class relations' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 144). Habitus, then, is a means of viewing structure as occurring within small-scale interactions and activity within large-scale settings.'

As such habitus might be described as a 'system of dispositions.' These dispositions emerge out of participation in and exposure to wider social settings and discursive environments. They are, moreover, characterised by a 'vagueness...the more-or-less, which define(s) one's ordinary relation to the world.' (Bourdieu 1990: 54). Within Bourdieu's theory of dispositions, there are potentially limitless individual 'possibilities and impossibilities, freedoms and necessities, opportunities and prohibitions' (1990: 54).

Reay's (2004) nuanced take on habitus suggests that it can function to exclude some practices as unthinkable, whilst predisposing individuals towards other 'certain, predictable ways of behaving' (2004: 432) producing 'an internalised framework that makes some possibilities inconceivable, others improbable and a limited range acceptable.' (2004: 434) Crucially, for this discussion, habitus provides us with a way in to theorising individual responses to, and choices about, HE transition that are not 'free' but expressive of habitus as a 'complex, internalized core from which everyday experiences emanate' (Reay 2004: 435). As indicated within McKenzie and Schofield's (2018) discussion on transition from Foundation Degree to Top-Up, transitioning between CBHE and HE, 'students prefer the continuity of educational experience that the college offers, rather than moving on to pastures new. Continuity of place, being close to home, but also the familiarity of staff and facilities' (2018: 321). These factors are hugely influential in decision making, operating as an 'internalized framework' of how students consider their progression.

Through her work on prison education Wilson (2007) provides a nuanced account of the way habitus orientates an individual towards a particular 'world view' about education, which she calls 'educentricity.' For Wilson educentricity captures:

> 'the way in which certain groups or individuals position education within the parameters of their own personal and professional experiences which then go on to influence the opinions, perceptions and understandings of the education of others – who are of course doing the same thing! From this position each group or person compares and contrasts, judges and assesses the position and meaning of education in other worlds, using their own experience as a yardstick by which to measure others.' (2007: 192)

Thinking with educentricity enables an exploration of how habitus plays out more precisely within the contexts of education by illuminating the ways in which prior experience can impact on students' perceptions of

their experience and their decision as well as the ways in which educational contexts work to constitute educentricities through (re)production of institutional habitus. Reay et al. (2001) define institutional habitus as 'the impact of a cultural group or social class on an individual's behaviour as it is mediated through an organization' (127) drawing attention to the idea that 'organisations, like individuals, internalise the social world and form powerful dispositions which are shared by those working within the organization' (Walker 2015: 52). Institutional habituses are, moreover, linked and indexed to wider socio-economic and geographical/demographic communities and discourses through schools/colleges shape and inform their pupil/student communities (Reay 2012).

Colley et al. use the term 'vocational habitus' to describe an active process of orientation towards the dominant identities of the workplace or vocational group which may be equally important in educational contexts that have a vocational focus. They describe, by way of example, a vocational habitus of 'loving care' in Early Years practitioner education programmes to which students must orientate themselves in both idealised and realised ways: 'without aspiring to the idealized habitus, students might become too harsh and the student may become 'unsuitable.' Without the tempering effects of the realized habitus, students might be overwhelmed by the emotional demands of the work.' (Colley et al. 2003: 489). Rejection of, or resistance to, the vocational habitus is likely, they suggest, to result in exclusion. Vocational habitus, they continue, 'does encourage 'a reflexive project of the self' but…this…is often tightly bounded, both in relation to one's existing habitus and in accordance with a disciplinary discourse about the self one has to become' (Colley et al. 2003: 489). While CBHE students are often academically able and well prepared for higher study, courses focused around a more vocational subject area, often attract students 'for whom the transition to an HEI with a different institutional ethos has been shown to be problematic' (Mckenzie and Schofield 2018: 317). Thus, the orientation towards vocational habitus affects how students might perceive their potential opportunities in choice of course and location.

It is important to note that concepts like institutional and vocational habitus are not uncontested and critics such as Atkinson (2011) and Walker (2015) draw attention to institutions as sites of discursive dissonance as well as convergence. This dissonance might also affect more than the students themselves, relating as it does to lecturers whose provision within CBHE courses is required to fit in to systems developed to cater for

FE provision, having inadequate resources to teach and feeling misunderstood in their role—'not supported in their role' (McKenzie and Schofield 2018: 318). While libraries and study spaces may assert the HE environment within the FE setting, along with their connections between HE courses on offer, this may only offer an outward appearance of the HE experience which may themselves contribute unknowingly to the dissonance of the institutional habitus it attempts to represent (Lea and Simmons 2012). For the purposes of this chapter, however, we use the idea simply as a way of opening up for exploration the institutional context as a structuring site for the organization of discourse about being and doing in both educational and vocational ways that impacts on students' meaning and decision making and thus their educentricities.

Crucially, the nature of interactions between educentricity and institutional habitus can have tangible, material affect with research indicating that students from 'non-traditional' backgrounds often experience HE as a hostile environment which uses unfamiliar language, requiring disorientating practices informed by tacit expectations that many students find bewildering and alien (Askham 2008). McGivney's (2003) work on 'non-traditional' students' experience of academic writing draws attention to what she calls the 'mystique of unfamiliarity and remoteness' experienced as they encounter a new social world (institutional habitus) of which they are not a product causing them to feel, to borrow Bourdieu's words, not like 'fish in water' but instead to feel the weight of the water around them (Bourdieu in interview with Wacquant in Bourdieu 1989: 43).

Exploring Habitus in Context: Micro-encounters in CBHE

In this section we share two research vignettes that look back at some of the teaching and learning research work we have done in two quite different CBHE teaching and learning contexts. We put to work the ideas about habitus and set the findings from each project alongside each to mobilise new opportunities for looking forwards and thinking about CBHE as a unique, pedagogical 'third space' of possibility between FE and HE. By 'third space' we mean a hybrid space that sits productively betwixt and between the more easily recognizable and describable spaces of college and university. Elsewhere in this book Eliot describes (see Chap. 1) the paradox between CBHE as a significant vehicle for both personal

transformation, and massification of HE and the absence of a clear exterior structural identity that generates a lack: of recognition; professional identity; salary equity with school teachers; time; job security and research culture. We draw on the combined analysis of the empirical material generated through our two vignettes to wonder whether this paradox, in fact, creates potential for a productive opportunity to re-frame CBHE, to mobilise the 'un-structure,' of 'absence,' towards a purposeful and self-conscious third space learning and teaching environment that generates a uniquely dynamic, dialogic ('productively between') environment for students and teachers.

Vignette One: Developing Research Capability on an Early Years Foundation Degree

Our first vignette draws on work undertaken as part of an HEA funded project 'Creative Research Methods in a College Based Higher Education Setting.' This project aimed to generate new starting points for research in practitioner education in CBHE by putting student practitioners' stories at the centre of teaching about research processes. Taking an Early Years foundation degree as a context for the work the project drew on auto-ethnographic, investigative approaches to pedagogy. This approach engaged students in a range of data collection, including visual and sensory approaches, analysis and presentation activities to position themselves thoughtfully and reflexively in relation to their field of study. This means that students learned about research through doing rather than as a set of abstracted concepts, as such learning was embodied and experiential. This approach facilitated easy access to primary data for novice researchers since they came to see themselves as 'data' worthy of study, opening opportunities for tutors and students to co-construct meanings around identity, purpose and processes. Development of research skills, such as writing development were organically embedded in the process as the production of early personal narratives liberated new researchers from impersonal writing, enabling them to build confidence as they worked to find their 'academic voice.' Through an on-going process of reflection and refinement this approach helped students and tutors expand their understanding of qualitative research in a way that is practical, accessible and creative. At the same time through sharing of the texts and artefacts generated students as novice researchers are introduced to the complex processes and dynamics of peer review in the social sciences.

Two workshops were undertaken with second year students studying a Research Methods module on the second year of their programme. In this phase we introduced the project, taught key concepts, generated data and undertook analysis process. We introduced the idea that learning about research would be experiential and structured around a piece of collaborative research about becoming an early years practitioner. We explored the idea of turning research in on 'ourselves' as students/subjects always already entangled in practice and 'becoming' and auto-ethnography as a strategy for the production of empirical material. A qualification of how we want auto-ethnography to mean in this context is important here. We turn in on itself the criticism from writers like Delamont (2007) that auto-ethnography is too experiential, cannot fight familiarity, and that it focuses on the wrong side of the power divide (2007: 3) and instead positively embrace these characteristics as driving motivations for putting it to work. Autoethnography, here, is mobilized as an act of subjective story-telling through which the student constructs an autobiographical personal narrative—'a petit récit.' This narrative is not understood to be 'truthful' in any totalising sense but is of interest because it represents a temporary projection or moment of textualised identity. Taking post-structuralist notions of 'self' as a starting point where 'self identity is bound up with a capacity to keep a particular narrative going' (Gauntlett 2002: 54) these narratives articulate the expressed trajectories of 'individual identities' in relation to the possible textual field. What is important here is not the realities or truth of experience or action but the process, the selection and mobilisation of particular discursive positions to do particular sorts of identity work. Through our discussion of autoethnography we opened up and expanded definitions what might be 'counted' as data and the curatorial, productive role of the researcher as an agent of, rather than conduit or receptacle for, meaning making and taking. We would, we suggested: make objects; tell stories; listen to stories; discuss our object and story making; curate and share symbolic objects; take pictures and audio recordings; and discuss our thoughts and feelings uninhibited by research conventions, interviews, structure or systematization, along the way. We would 'count' all of this as empirical material offering ways in to grappling with our own entanglement.

In the workshop, we read Nutbrown's (2012) A Box of Childhood: small stories at the roots of a career and explored the work of a range of academics and practitioners that plays self-consciously/reflexively with issues of identity and representation. We also read Gauntlett's (2006)

work on the use of 'identity boxes,' and Bennett, Kendall and McDougall's work (2011) on the use of artefacts in professional education. We then held two workshop sessions. These gave a context to the workshops and explained the methods used. In the first, the group produced and shared identity boxes to explore their trajectory towards the foundation degree programme and becoming an academic. This was followed by face to face discussion about conceptualizing and doing research and being researched and was followed up by further discussion on the (pre-existing) group blog. In the second workshop students chose symbolic objects around/through which to assemble their own stories of/about becoming a practitioner. Again, this was followed by face-to-face reflection and discussion and a consideration of how these methods could be put to work in the project proposals they were producing for their module assessment and the projects they would go on to do in the BA 'top up' most were going on to complete. The final 'writing about' stage of the project was voluntary and an open invitation was issued to students and teachers to come together to 'plug-in' theory to the amassed empirical material. A full account of this process and the outcomes of the work is offered in the project report 'Creative research methods in a CBHE context', (Kendal and Perkins 2014) and follow up paper 'Listening to old wives tales: small stories and the (re)making and (re)telling of research in HE/FE practitioner education' (Kendall et al. 2016). Here we select key moments that focus upon the nature of the CBHE experience for students and teachers.

Colley contends that vocational habitus in the early years is infused with a commitment to motherly love arguing that in such conditions the education of early years workers is an act of 'symbolic violence…likely to continue as long as capitalist edubusiness has an interest in making profits by offering motherly love for sale in the nursery' (2006: 6). Skeggs argued that 'the institutional organisation of the caring curriculum provides frameworks, hierarchies and subject positions which bear specific ideological and cultural meanings associated with femininity and household structures' (1988: 132) and that, as a consequence, take-up of courses leading to caring occupations such as Early Years work, is most likely to be by women. Skeggs observed that many women 'had previous experience of caring, either through their own families, similar courses at school or through paid caring such as babysitting…[and]…therefore feel caring is something they are capable of' (1988: 138). Osgood (2005) suggests that

a combination of this sort of notion of work-of-the-home with a National Childcare strategy designed to enable women to re-enter the labour market works to position childcare as 'not real' work but a mechanism to enable others to participate in careers that are afforded status, prestige and relative wealth' (Osgood 2005: 290). This dimension to childcare work is, she argues, largely absent from public debates.

However, Osgood refuses to accede to the oppression of structuration, the regulatory gaze, and draws on Francis' (2001) notion of 'new agency', which 'incorporates both deterministic structural arguments and human agency' (Francis 2001 in Osgood 2006) and contends that we are not only positioned within structures that are beyond our control but also simultaneously positioning ourselves and others. This complex dialectic, Osgood (2006) suggests, opens up space for alternative ways of understanding identity construction within the context of an increasingly highly regularised working context drawing on Butler's (1990) notion of identity and performance to describe a more active, agentive professionalism that is performatively constructed. This reading allowed her to recognise a mobile, strategic ambitious and confident Early Years teacher who mobilises Early Years work advantageously to achieve particular personal, social, economic and cultural functions. She noticed 'the self-assured and wise [Early Years]…professional who challenges the status quo…can muddy the water and offer the chance of a reconfigured professional identity and counter-discourse' (Osgood 2005: 12). Osgood's (2005) analysis opens up the opportunity to imagine the subversive worker able to confront and resist 'prevailing and dominant understandings of professionalism' towards a 'transformative agency' (2005: 14) that might imagine new possibilities for the being and doing of early years work.

What emerged for us from our readings is the significance of the dialectic of structure and agency to interpretations of Early Years workers' experience—the constant push and pull against which childcare becomes both 'a site of agency and a site of boundaries' for workers (Vincent and Braun 2010). What was obscured for us was the entanglement of the writers in the being and doing of their work. Whilst we glimpsed momentary surfacings of 'secret selves' (see Skeggs 1988: 133), the material, affective 'I's that wrote, interacted, saw, felt and noticed, were rapidly obfuscated by the illusory, yet seductive, appeal of the systematic and scientific. 'Indefinite triangulation' fixed the meaning tight and the authority of 'the study' replaced the fluidity of 'I.' In this respect, empirical analysis provided the means for firstly, capturing the structural and cultural phenomena at the

level of everydayness (Apple 1982); secondly, by researching the students within a college, the study was able to analyse the structure and dynamics of the institutional parameters of FE (see Skeggs 1988: 133).

Our empirical material yielded easily, passively even, to the dominant codes that emerged through our reading. We were able to count examples of, to us by now familiar narratives of mothers and grandmothers retracing the patterns of moving tentatively from private, un-paid caring responsibilities in to the casualised but more formal context of 'third sector' voluntary work and finally in to the public sphere of care as paid work. We were able to interpret the role of different actors, agents and networks, personal, social and educational, that played in our journeys of 'becoming,' in Colley's (2003) sense, 'professional.' And, we recognised the familiar contours of the structural barriers that seemed to frustrate or play against aspiration, commitment and ambition—metaphors of physical barriers, walls, staircases and caves standing in for institutions, classed and gendered positionings and the intricacies and contingencies of everyday life, relationships and experience.

We looked for 'hot spots' (MacLure 2013: 172) in our readings and materials. That is to say moments of recognition, 'movement, singularity, emergence' (MacLure 2013: 171) 'gut feelings [that] point to the existence of embodied connections with other people, things and thoughts.' (MacLure 2013: 172). The first was the acknowledgement of our very visceral response to our own entanglement in research processes. We no longer saw research as a 'surface' activity and described new sensitivities towards 'the researched,' expressed by one of us as 'honour' and 'respect,' that prompted a new disquiet about our own positionality within the reading we had done. We were, in the words of one of our colleagues, 'humbled' by listening to the sometimes 'very intimate stories' of others and interested in the differences as well as similarities in the stories we told. We shared 'phases of emotions' in our stories, visualised shades of light, dark and colour in our own stories and noticed them in the stories of others. We were part-perplexed, part-stimulated by how 'making and doing enabled stories to be shared without just words.' We paused at length to consider the differences in telling stories 'cold' through identity boxes, we'd come to this activity without advance warning other than 'bring a box' to the session, and what we perceived as the more measured, considered, rehearsed stories we told through the objects we had selected and charged as we made them with our projected meanings and those pressed and infused by others. We wondered about the different kinds of

performances we were giving and the different reactions and responses (annoyance versus honouring; respect versus mistrust) we had to them. For us, the physical, embodied, material experience of telling our stories and listening to our stories opened up an important 'hot-spot,' a point of wonder in our material. The second 'hot-spot' in our material was the description by one of us of what it felt like to read Nutbrown's A Box of Childhood. She'd read, enjoyed and felt she'd 'got it' but had begun to mistrust its worth and value because of its perceived accessibility: 'if you read something hard you feel you're reading something academic…this felt less academic because it was easier to read.' It seemed like a number of ideas were at play here about relationality, positionality but also about the grappling nature of 'becoming' (again in Colley's 2003 sense).

These 'hot-spots' marked points of departure in our conversation, points at which we wondered not what does academic professional in CBHE education mean but what does it do? How does it work with a sense of the rational/irrational and how does it make us 'know' and 'feel'? What kind of 'human' subject (Braidotti 2006) does it make of us? We began to wonder how do contemporary discussions about Early Years teachers—the what 'they' do, what 'they' know, how 'they' mean, that we have noticed in the literature. What, we asked, if instead professional education stopped listening to conversations and instead was constituted and constituting of conversation? A conversation that we might imagine moving us beyond the dialectic of structure and agency towards something more nebulous, entangled and provisional?

Vignette Two: Re-imagining FE to HE 'Transitions' as Collaborative Identity Work

The Transitions West Midlands project aimed to offer new insights into the first-hand experiences of students who had made the move or were preparing to make the move from FE to HE within the West Midlands region. Working with one FE college the study followed the 'diaspora' of the college's students planning to move, or reflecting back on a move, into higher education either at the college or at one of three modern universities within the region. The project, which sought to build new knowledge about transition within the locality and to produce practical outcomes for the partnership of participating institutions, was driven by three key questions:

- How do prospective students from under-represented groups in higher education understand/perceive their support needs prior to transition?
- How do HE students from under-represented groups self-define the enablers and barriers to effective transition?
- How do HE and FE institutions best support students from under-represented groups as they progress through the various different stages of transition from further to higher education?

Students were invited to participate in a cross-institutional e-survey and attend focus groups at each location. In total 270 students participated in the e-survey, 82% were female and 18% male. Of these 5% were studying an FE course in an FE college, 15% were studying an HE course in an FE college and 80% were studying HE in HE. Although the bulk of participants (41%) were aged between 20 and 25, the whole group varied significantly in age from 16 to 19 (15%) and 50+ (3%). Only 256 participants self-reported ethnic group (in a free text box) of these the majority, 59%, identified as 'white' with the next largest groups Black African, British Asian and 'multiple ethic group' all at 4% and Black British and Black Caribbean at 3% and 2.7% respectively.

Two semi-structured focus groups and two paired interviews were undertaken with self-selecting e-survey participants. In all 19 students participated in the focus groups, 15 female and 4 male. They were grouped as follows: FE students preparing for next steps into HE or employment; HE students studying in an FE institution; HE students who had progressed from FE studying in an HE institution. The outcomes of this work are explored comprehensively in Kendall et al. (2016, 2018). For the purpose of this vignette we focus particularly on encounters between individual and institutional habitus as transition narratives are played out within an FE context noticing students' projections of their own habitus and the characterisations of the institutional habitus that framed their encounters with their courses.

Thinking with field, habitus and educentricity helped us to understand that 'transition' is a complex phenomenon that might be more helpfully described as a spectrum of experiences that play out differently for different students joining different institutions. As such it is a highly contested idea (Gale and Parker 2012). What researchers do agree on, however, is that flexible and responsive strategies where 'exporting' and 'importing' institutions work collaboratively to support transition are likely to be most

effective (Knox 2005). Crucially, it is argued, transition models need to challenge the kinds of deficit models or 'derogatory discourses' (Burke 2009) that often inform discussions around non-traditional students' transition by contextualising some of the ways in which choice about HE institution and programme are influenced and framed by wider considerations and discourses. This re-conceptualisation of transition requires it to be reinterpreted as the means by which first year undergraduates negotiate the 'local spaces' within which they operate as learners and how they exercise 'choices' around their learning in the knowledge economy of HE (Ball 1998).

In the Transitions project we explored FE students' talk about 'confidence' and 'risk' to explore concept making about transitions. These moments draw attention to points in our material where we encountered most tension and contradiction as the apparently resilient, resourceful 'juggling' identities that students brought to their transition experience were back-grounded and diminished by their encounters with institutional habitus. Institutional habitus manifests through a notion of 'readiness' and what we want to draw attention to here is the striking role that teachers play as projectors, protectors and perpetuators of institutional habitus.

It was clear from the data that for many participants 'being a student' is one aspect of a complex load of personal responsibilities and priorities. Many participants (47%) reported that they worked part-time in addition to their studies. Time spent in paid work varied significantly with for example 8% of these working in excess of 20 hours per week, 13% working 11–15 hours and 13% working 6–10 hours per week. Time spent in work also varied considerably between the three groups of students (FE, CBHE, university). Students following FE and HE programmes in college were more likely to work part-time than their university counterparts and were significantly more likely to work longer hours, over 40% of CBHE students reported working in excess of 16 hours a week, compared with 23% of FE students and 13% of university students with a rather staggering 30% undertaking in excess of 20 hours of paid work per week in addition to their course of study. A significant number of respondents also had caring responsibilities with 34% reporting that they cared for a child/ren and 6.5% for an adult or adults. Those identifying as carers of adults were also more likely to also have a part-time job than non-carers or carers with children. Those who identified as 'carers' were generally older than those who did not. However, it was notable that just under 44% of those who reported caring for an adult were in the 20–25 age range.

Although our data bears out Hutchings and Archer's (2001) and Reay et al's (2008, 2009) assertion that 'non-traditional' students transition experience is characterised by difficult choices and conflicting responsibilities, as one participant shared:

> I actually split up with my boyfriend to come and do this

participants presented themselves as competent and adept negotiators and time managers, accepting complexity and the necessity of learning to 'juggle' efficiently as an inevitable, sometimes difficult, aspect of their everyday experience as students who needed to work or care as well as study:

> It's [attending FE college] like putting a different head on it, my learning head hopefully…If I've got to pick the kids up from school and I've got an hour or so before I've got to pick them up…it's a different head and you just switch between it…

However FE participants' narratives suggested that the complexities of their lives and the capacities they developed in response did not always find recognition within the frame of institutional habitus as it surfaces through interactions with their tutors:

> *Tutors do not appreciate the step we have made*
>
> *Teachers in college, they sometimes forget that we have a life outside college. We all have jobs to do and we've got families and they just see it as coursework full stop and they don't see the bigger picture.*
>
> *Yeah, they don't see that sometimes you might actually go and do family stuff rather than sitting and doing coursework 24/7.*
>
> *Sometimes the tutors will be like 'well you know you need to put your coursework first', but no, if you're living on your own…*

Working with an artist to explore metaphorical representations of these tensions produced a rather startling account of what was at stake for students with commitments to college weighing heavily and singularly against more fundamental needs as this focus extract from the focus group illustrates:

> We need scales!
>
> On one side you can have coursework, so loads of paper, and then on the other a house…

…and money
...yeah, and money
And a heart
Artist: Why a heart?
Because that represents family and friends…people that you love.

However these responses also drew out 'educentric' assumptions about participants' self-perceived other-ness to a projected idea of the 'proper student':

because you've got more responsibilities you can't be a proper student

with the proper student being free to prioritise their studies above other commitments and dedicate time, energy and focus. This notion of the 'correct' way to be a student was not just confined to time and activity management but also manifested, through the idea of 'ready-ness,' which was seen to be a feature of academic aptitude/capability.

The need to be diagnostic, flexible and adaptable in order to succeed were taken for granted ways of being (or habitus) that FE students were unselfconscious, non-congratulatory and matter of fact about, hence their surprise at what they saw as the realities of their lives not always being recognised or valued,

sometimes college forget that we have a life outside college, they see it as just being about coursework

or

if I don't work, I don't eat

within the prevailing habitus of the institutional environment. And, interestingly, it is the teacher, 'they' as agent (of 'college') who is implicated as (re)producer of this viewpoint.

As such, many students felt the 'risk' of pursuing their studies very keenly:

you're taking a risk;
you're betting aren't you…literally it is a gamble;
if you have children think very carefully.

It was such moments of dislocation in the narratives that animated the most fervent accounts of struggle beyond the more tangible (physical, practical, emotional) labour of 'juggling' per se as one HE student remarked in retrospect:

> my college made it sound impossible like I wasn't ready, which made me scared. I've fitted in [at university] quite well.

Once again, the choice of the term 'college' to infer a personal message about individual performance is an interesting one, whilst evoking the pervasive nature of institutional habitus, it simultaneously takes for granted the tutor as message carrier.

Ideas about 'ready-ness' surfaced an educentric perspective on HE identities that worked to background capability (managing complexity for example) and foreground a deficit discourse. We noticed that references to ideas about, and discussions of, 'readiness' permeate participants' narratives, with 'readiness' a proxy marker, a sort of 'identity tipping point', signalling that the student is primed and poised for successful transition. 'Readiness' seemed to represent an idealised point of complicity or coming together of institutional habitus and educentricity, but it is simultaneously a site of antagonism, prompting feelings of lack and deep felt anxiety:

> you need to know that you're ready;
> they think you're ready but what if you're not ready?

For these participants 'readiness' although an apparently fixed, and crucially desirable, point, a 'something' tangible that one needed to become, remained entirely opaque and elusive, a something ill-defined, externalised and endowed rather than a way of being they might choose to take up or take ownership of (or not).

With FE participants' educentricities often developed outside of first-hand experiences of HE the risk of falling short of 'ready-ness' for university life has significant implications. Ball (2003) and Lingard (2005) argue that a lack of proximity to HE knowledge economies impedes the non-traditional student's access to limitless 'choice' about their higher education entry options. As such these FE students feel that the pressure of making a 'correct' choice of HE course is both unavoidable because the decision they are confronted with is entirely a binary one (right or wrong)

and solely their responsibility and that, as such, they singularly 'owned' the risk:

> It's the risk of, if you do it and you only do it for half a year, and here you don't have to pay nothing, but there you lose out on nine thousand pounds…that's why I'm leaving a gap, to make sure…there's no way of doing a trial thing either.

I am nervous about it because everyone says it's going to be different.

> Pressure.

What is absent from participants' reckonings is a counter-narrative offering any kind of alternative to the fixed, apparently pre-determined dilemmas they must wrestle with as some form of necessary 'rite of passage'. As such, we see that Institutional habitus works through the micro-interactions between teachers and students to naturalise the grammar of a limiting paradigm, in which transition is mono-dimensional, individualised, one-off, high stakes—and consequently immensely high risk.

Re-imagining CBHE Teaching and Learning as a Dynamic 'Third Space'?

Reading these vignettes together helps us to see how institutional and vocational habitus are mobilized across quite different dimensions of CBHE to pattern the way students self-identify and understand themselves in relation to both their learning experiences and the wider context of Education as a socio-cultural space. In Vignette One our work drew attention to the ways in which Early Years practitioners become the object of both the researcher's gaze and the curriculum as an instrument or technology of institutional and vocational habitus that understands, clarifies, marks and shapes students. In Vignette Two the version of 'HE student' projected by institutional habitus, that is to say, the common sense or grammar of what it means to be, do, think, feel as an HE student, serves not only to pattern self-identification and expectation but also paradoxically to diminish the value of the non-traditional assets and resources (financial management, complex juggling of responsibilities and priorities) that first in family higher education students bring to their learning. Crucially, what our vignettes also help to illuminate is the ways in which

teachers (and of course researchers) are implicated in the work of institutional habitus: as gatekeepers of epistemology and ontology, how knowledge about and knowledge of are represented and organized through curriculum design and structure; and gatekeepers of 'ready-ness' through the (re)production and assessment of 'ready' identities.

As identified through the vignettes, notions of a caring curriculum (see Skeggs 1988) are strong within the CBHE environment, linking to Webber's (2015) description of the transformative impact of higher education for mature females as impacting upon their wider self-confidence and self-image. Stoten (2016) found that CBHE students emphasised the high levels of support and small class sizes within college settings, offering a more personalized and caring environment for learning and identity formation. This notion of extended support is furthered through Feather's (2010) findings from teachers delivering HE within FE settings, while identifying the high levels of teaching required within the FE curriculum where teachers 'exhibited a high degree of loyalty towards these students and their learning' (2010: 200). While this does not suggest HE tutors are not equally loyal to students, it comes from a position of understanding that CBHE lecturers work to an FE timetable schedule, with limited time (in comparison to HE) and support from FE management structures (McKenzie and Schofield 2018).

A further example of this connection to the unique third space suggested within this chapter, is positioned within the suggestion that CBHE tutors operate as dual professionals, operating within liminal spaces (Winstone and Moor 2017) of professional and academic (Wood 2016), between HE and FE cultures (Springbett 2018). This indicates a difference in provision offered by FE and HE delivery, a difference that relates to the perceived needs of students and the environment in which interaction with tutors occurs. However what we would like to suggest here is that the positionality of CBHE as a space that is neither FE or HE, means that it is uniquely based to 're-set' the reproducing effects of institutional habitus by working the dialogic possibilities of the 'between-ness' of its 'third space'.

We draw on Bhabha's (1994) characterisation of third space as 'interruptive, interrogative, and enunciative.' More than just reflective, Bhabha's third space is a 'space that engenders new possibility….new forms of cultural meaning and production, blurring the limitations of existing boundaries and calling into question established categorisations of culture and identity' (Meredith 1998). McDougall and Potter (2019) see such spaces

existing with fluid hierarchies where there is potential to be more open to learner skills and dispositions arising out of practices which are representative of wider culture and lived experience allowing learners to build new social identities that are both meaningful to, and useful for, them. For the purposes of this chapter we would like to open up a conversation about the possibilities that CBHE offers teachers and learners because of its third space identity squeezed as it is between the institutional orthodoxies of higher and college education, 'that can and do transform lives by opening up fields of knowledge that may explain and enhance experience' (Avis and Orr 2016: 61).

This third space environment offers flexible modes of study, adding opportunities for part-time study and distance learning, often features that attract students that would not traditionally follow the three year traditional university route. This allows for study to often fit around work and family commitments, offering flexibility that meets the needs of widening participation for students and offering social justice in providing those often excluded from the more traditional HE route. This flexible approach attracts often more female, mature and ethnic minority students, who may have lacked confidence to enter an HE environment, contributed to by the importance placed on 'the locality and familiarity of the institution' (Mckenzie and Schofield 2018: 323). Teachers also demonstrate this interest in the development and delivery of social justice within CBHE, in spite of restrictions commented on earlier in the chapter around the constraints of delivering HE within the FE setting, illustrating their 'concern to provide enhanced opportunities for non-traditional learners' (Avis and Orr 2016: 51).

What could it mean to 'play differently' in CBHE as the third space to create space, for students and teachers to work in partnership on a curriculum that is 'interruptive, interrogative, and enunciative' (Bhabha 1990)? We begin to imagine this space as a 'becoming' space, a space within which students are in-the-making rather than made, the subjects rather than the objects of learning and teaching experiences. Within this dynamic student as subject becomes 'fluid… ambivalent and polyvalent, open to change, continually being made, unmade and remade' (Lather 2006: 43), educentricity and institutional habitus become objects of study, open to investigation and interrogation rather a taken for granted common sense of 'the way things are'. This approach has much in common with Neary's student as a producer which

> 'emphasises the role of the student as collaborators in the production of knowledge. The capacity for Student as Producer is grounded in the human attributes of creativity and desire, so that students can recognise themselves in a world of their own design.' (Neary 2010)

This approach welcomes a new paradigm of teaching and learning that requires both a shift in ontology, what it means to be and do, and epistemology, what it means to know. Elsewhere we have referred to this as 'rhizo-curriculum' (Kendall et al. 2016), a learning and teaching experience that is process orientated and where 'truths are always partial and provisional' (Maclure 2010: 1).

Table 3.1 begins to articulate the shifts we might see in a third space approach to CBHE.

Table 3.1 Orthodox versus third space approaches to CBHE

Orthodox CBHE	*Third space CBHE*
Objective/neutral	Ontological
Student prior experience is contextual	Student prior experience provides empirical material for study and analysis
Teachers are subject experts	Teaching is becoming
Students are inexpert	Learning is becoming
Teaching and learning are distinct from research	Curriculum is enquiry led, teachers and students are collaborators in meaning making
Knowledge is fixed and universal	Knowledge is fluid, in flux and situated
Teaching and learning are a-historical, situated, gendered, classed, racialised	Teaching and learning are historically situated, gendered, classed, racialised
Teaching and learning imagine a naturalistic, humanist subject	Ontological subject
Neoliberal driver	Social justice impulse
Critical incidents	Hot spots
Linear	Rhizomic
Quality led	Experiential
Product focused	Process based
Norm referenced	Relative
Individual	Social
Generic	Context-bound
Individual	Collaborative
Reflective	Reflexive

Provocations

And so, we finish with a series of provocations that might be posed as starting points for the kind of conversations we might imagine in third space CBHE with which students might engage through a range of representational methods (making/talking/writing/performing).

How did you come to be in this CBHE space?

What representations of higher education have you encountered along the way? How have you positioned yourself/been positioned in relation to these?

What are the markers or 'hot spots' in your narrative?

How does your narrative compare to the narrative/s of others? What are the points of difference? Consensus?

What does it mean to be a researcher, teacher, student in your context? Where are the boundaries? Who occupies these different positions? Who decides? Whose interests do these definitions serve?

What different kinds of spaces, places and opportunities are there for making and taking meanings about what it means to be a higher education student in your area?

What does it mean to be a producer or consumer of meanings in these spaces and places?

What different kinds of associations and affiliations do you make? With whom?

For what purposes?

What does it mean to be a rule-maker or rule-breaker in higher education practice? What relationships with risk do learners have? Teachers have?

Who or what does higher education serve in your context? How do you feel about this?

What different identities do you take up in different spaces and places? What role/s do these perform? How are they similar? Competing?

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CHAPTER 4

Research In, On and for CBHE

Karima Kadi-Hanifi

Abstract This chapter introduces research in, on and for CBHE. It covers aspects of academic/scholarly research in CBHE providing a critical perspective on barriers for conducting research in an unequal HE system. Research in CBHE is argued to have value even though it can be disparaged by some other HE providers. Research in CBHE is growing through innovative learning, teaching and assessment projects, purposefully aligned to the provision of student-centred pedagogy and gaining recognition through research forums, conferences and journals. There is a call for more collaborative research between universities and CBHE. The chapter provides an opportunity for CBHE colleagues and others to reflect on research by focusing on a special issue of the RPCE journal dedicated to research in CBHE.

Keywords Research in CBHE • Academic research • CBHE scholarship • Student-centred pedagogy • Collaborative research • HE inequality

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Chapter Overview

The chapter foregrounds on-going research work begun in 2016, when Kadi-Hanifi and Elliott decided to dedicate a double special issue of the international peer-reviewed journal Research in Post-compulsory Education to an appraisal of exactly what CBHE research looks like and the impacts that it is starting to have on policy, scholarship and practice. The 12 articles that appeared in the special issue illustrated three main themes. These are reformulated as questions in section "Case Study: A Collection of Articles to Stimulate Discussion About the Rising Importance of CBHE and its Possible Impacts as an Academic Field of Stud" to be in line with what a chapter dedicated to CBHE research could be tackling and to engage readers in a reflective research exercise at the end of the section. These three questions are firstly: the nature of CBHE research and how it could be crystalised in terms of policies that ought to re-evaluate current inequity between two sectors through research; who the subjects and agents currently impacting at grassroots level are; the latest innovations and powerful pedagogical practices in CBHE are celebrated along with the researchers who are creating impact.

This chapter extends the debate begun in 2016 and includes work undertaken since by the College Higher Education project of the AoC (Association of Colleges) and in particular John Lea's work and commitment to developing a vision for CBHE scholarship and research. The chapter also relates to outcomes from the annual standing conference, 'Re-imagining FE' (Further Education), launched by colleagues at Birmingham City University, in 2016, and including seminal positions about the need to re-invent the FE sector and inject much needed research into it. Such positions are those of Coffield's (2018), Petrie's (2018) and O'Leary and Smith's, as well as the ideas promoted in research papers published in the ARPCE conference issue of the journal Research in Post-compulsory Education published in 2019. In so doing, this chapter shows how the CBHE sector is gaining a research culture of its own that is particularly student-centred, innovative and collaborative; this being also compared to the sector outside of the UK, such as in Australia (Wheelahan et al. 2012), and to earlier calls for scholarship, such as Young's (2002). In an influential HEA (Higher Education Academy) report, Healey et al. (2014: 4) argue that: 'Higher education is in a period of significant change and we are beginning to see some of the traditional distinctions and differences between CBHE and the rest of the higher

education sector break down.' The chapter focuses on scholarship and research in this sector and compares the nature of such key functions of an HE system across the range of HE institutions. The changing financial and reputational benefits of research for CBHE are explored, as well as emerging impacts on policy both nationally and internationally. Just as the chapter starts with a thematic case study of research inviting readers to partake in a reflective exercise, encouraging research in the sector, it ends with a further look at promoting research successfully in CBHE and how research cultures emerge and can be supported.

Case Study: A Collection of Articles to Stimulate Discussion About the Rising Importance of CBHE and Its Possible Impacts as an Academic Field of Study

The case study of a single-source collection of research articles about CBHE, detailed below, provides a thinking space about how on-the-ground research is yielding possibilities for what exactly the future of the CBHE sector may look like in the not too distant future. It also appraises some of the empowering 'goodness' that characterises CBHE research at present. Such characteristics include powerful transformative pedagogies and a careful link with the local communities that have helped to shape CBHE, including those students who attend and succeed from being there. Research is a tool that practitioners can use to influence policy at all levels, but more urgently too, to improve, not only their own understanding of a diverse sector, but also their own practice through pragmatic and critical evidence-based enquiry.

This section assembles a range of illustrative articles that look deep into the sector of CBHE and, in particular, provide evidence for critical experiences of the current CBHE lecturer workforce and student body. The result of such analyses could be targeted at CBHE providers and their stakeholders, documenting shared concerns and practices to promote greater understanding of the lecturer and learner experience, and used as a guide, continuing policy and professional development in areas of need. The CBHE sector is thereby defined as a space that is organic, shaped by experience, vibrant and systematically able to recreate itself in an age of competing agendas.

In that vein, in 2016, Kadi-Hanifi and Elliott decided to dedicate a special double issue of the international peer-reviewed journal Research in Post-compulsory Education to an appraisal of exactly what CBHE research looked like. The 12 articles that appeared in the special issue illustrate the three themes stated as questions below:

These were:

- *What is the nature of CBHE and how could it be improved in terms of policies that ought to recognise current inequity between two sectors?*
- Who are the subjects and agents that are currently impacting at grassroots level on the CBHE interface?
- What are the latest innovations and powerful pedagogical practices that are making a difference?

A flood of articles was submitted for the special issue of March–June 2016 (some were not published in the double issue but showed how passionate scholars were about CBHE). Individual submissions tackled more than one of these questions, but for convenience are grouped below to illuminate in turn the particular foci of the overall debate around policy/ies, human impacts and pedagogies of practice, still ongoing, within CBHE research. This collective case study begins with the key question about the nature of CBHE, framed within a discourse of inequality (compounded by systemic errors of judgement) as to what should more precisely be provided for the education and up-skilling of its target students.

The 12 articles of the double issue used to illustrate the themes of this case study are all to be found in: Kadi-Hanifi, K. and Elliott, G. (Eds) Appraising and reconfiguring CBHE through research and critical perspectives. *Research in Post-compulsory Education*, Volume 21, Numbers 1–2, March–June 2016. The year will not be repeated for each author for the sake of cohesion as the case is made for this specific volume to be read as a whole.

What Is the Nature of CBHE and How Could it be Improved in Terms of Policies that Ought to Recognise Current Inequity Between the Two Sectors of Universities and CBHE?

Under this theme, the nature of the CBHE sector, anchored in a neoliberal policy system that constrains rather than encourages it to be what it should be (i.e., a vocationally-focused sector), seems to be at the heart of

a lot of debate. This is illustrated below from articles in the special issue by authors who are specifically interested in examining the differentiated and often unequal status it holds compared to universities. The background and destination of the students attending CBHE is singularized within this theme as is a distinctive institutional HE strategy (or lack of it) within the FE sector.

For example, David Stoten writes about the trends seen within cohorts of students studying CBHE, confirming an imbalance in socio-economic profiles between those who attend higher education institutions (HEIs) and those who attend general further education colleges (GFECs); the latter being mainly drawn from the lower-middle or skilled manual classes of British society. Stoten asks on page 16, 'Why is it that so few applications are received from the independent sector to study for HE programmes at GFECs?' and suggests further research to unpick the complexity behind the contested term of 'student choice'. The question of course is whether there is really a choice in a society that conditions people. Is this conditioning creating more inequality or is it that students are attracted by the employability prospects that FECs can more readily provide?

This presents the CBHE sector with noticeable inequality that not only affects student choices but student destinations too, as is shown in Ann-Marie Bathmaker's article. She reports how graduates from FECs earn a lot less than graduates from HEIs, after having studied similar programmes. Comparing the UK with the United States, where similarities abound in terms of the current focus on the restructuring of this sector, Bathmaker concludes (page 28) that CBHE seems to be at the bottom of the HE hierarchy and argues for there being more focus on developing and finally realising a 'distinctive higher *vocational* education' or even a return to the concept of 'polytechnics'. The recent austerity measures, however, are probably likely to undermine this realisation and CBHE, or college-based education (as there are many other terms used to describe CBHE) can be kept as a low-cost way of educating those who cannot afford universities.

There is perhaps more of this distinctive vocationally oriented curriculum in the Australian vocational education and training (VET) system, which is very similar to the English FE sector—an 'applied curriculum'—as Leesa Wheelahan states. Indeed, the 'college for all' that she writes about (and that she compares with the UK, the United States, Canada and New Zealand) has also given rise to the need to address 'sectoral divides'

emerging from her Australian data and resonating with the situation in England. The conclusions from the Australian perspective are about how more superior 'elite' institutions of HE prepare students by recognising different types of knowledge, such as disciplinary knowledge versus everyday knowledge, which more applied institutions do not necessarily do well and therefore are not, paradoxically, helping the disadvantaged overcome inequalities and social hierarchies.

A further interesting point made by Wheelahan is about the system of the community college in the United States, when she states on page 38, that 'unlike further education colleges in England and TAFE [technical and further education] institutes in Australia, community colleges are explicitly considered to be HEIs in the United States'. This resonates with ongoing debates about the construct 'CBHE', particularly in light of differing international understandings of what we might assume is a universal term. The situation of market-driven education remains however the same within the United States as it is in most Anglophone countries.

The inequity that accompanies such market-driven policymaking is examined in detail by James Avis and Kevin Orr. They provide a comprehensive review of the literature that has been produced about the area of CBHE. They argue that the neo-liberal framework has meant that CBHE policy initiatives have not closed the inequality gap. They demonstrate how inequality still persists despite all the rhetoric and the politics about widening participation. It is a piece that challenges our thinking about the wider implications for policies that perpetuate inequality in education and should instil in us the urge to do more to redress the balance.

At the level of the institution, or the FEC, the strategy for CBHE is often one of moulding around 'HEness' in delivery models and forgetting about 'FEness in HE' as Gary Husband and Michael Jeffrey's article suggests. There is consequently within this sub-theme about the nature of CBHE a tackling of the ongoing ontological debates about the term CBHE. Their intention is to show that there are distinct differences between FE and HE in how they support students and the curriculum and in how they respond to industry, communities and learners. They argue for a need to focus more on what FE can do best, which is to develop provision that delivers on the skills needs of higher-level vocationally orientated education. Their argument reflects the inequality often experienced and reported (including by the lecturing workforce) as regards HE taught in FE, and how the latter (FE) is currently made to follow the former's HE culture, instead of complementing it by focusing more upon vocational education and meeting economic needs for both the student and society.

Who Are the Subjects and Agents that Are Currently Impacting at Grassroots Level on the FE/HE Interface?

Another very revealing theme that has emerged from the analysis of the research in the special 2016 issue is situated around the nature of the CBHE lecturers and their students and how they experience complex institutional practices which, sometimes, might lead to stress. At the same time, the theme highlights the emergence of research about the need for there to be official recognition for the distinctiveness that paints a typical CBHE student and lecturer as being neither entirely FE, nor HE, but somewhere in the middle. To begin with, there is some research emerging about the nature of the CBHE lecturer as being perhaps quite unique.

For example, Karima Kadi-Hanifi and John Keenan, anchored within a 'community of practice' based on a close collaborative provision of teacher education courses between two GFECs and one local university, explore the professional self-concept of those who teach CBHE with them. Through life history methods they argue that there is a kind of 'breed' of lecturers that are able to negotiate successfully the complex nature of being an HE lecturer within the FE sector. Their study sees the role of life events as a determinant of how prepared such lecturers are in terms of resilience, student-centredness and other key factors that influence their success within this sector. Commonalities of experience such as having had to survive, or escape from, a school system that failed them, have given birth to a CBHE lecturer self-concept that champions FE, whilst at the same time grounded within a successful HE practice that develops the future teachers of the FE sector. These lecturers are recognised by their managers who promote them to the HE teacher education courses almost as change agents who have the self-concept needed for factoring in 'HEness' within their known FE spaces.

In terms of the students, there is also a distinctive look at their singular nature, compared to that of university students. For example, Breda McTaggart argues that 'dual-sector' students may experience anxiety relating to lack of support of their learning needs—'dual-sector' being another way of thinking about the contested term of 'CBHE' from an Irish perspective. Bourdieu is part of the theoretical framework here as it was for many of the articles regarding the first question posed in this case study. It is about students not having the appropriate capital—economic and social. Similar to non-traditional students in HEIs, dual-sector students felt that there were barriers to their learning, such as lack of

academic and personal support. McTaggart states on page 95, that 'these are neither traditional HE students nor non-traditional students, but contemporary HE students who are in fact becoming the norm', which seems to suggest that, just as there may well be a type of lecturer who takes on CBHE teaching, so there could be too a type of student that takes on CBHE courses. If this were to be recognised more officially and appreciated, then one might argue that institutions and policy makers could then begin to adapt their support systems for such students and staff to be able to have more positive experiences. This echoes a theme of the previous section which tackled the inequality experienced between those who study in traditional HEIs and those who attend FECs for higher education courses. More needs to be done 'on the ground' to meet the needs of students and lecturers who are sometimes caught in between two differing sectors (with, for example, different systems of assessment and accountability) without the necessary adjustments being made to their individual positions.

Indeed, CBHE lecturers often blame the organizational culture of the FEC for its authoritarianism, bureaucracy, constant change, relentless pursuits of funding and how detrimental these could be to the well being of staff. For example, Denis Feather looks at FECs as employing organisations and interviews lecturers of CBHE delivering HE business courses and states on page 108, that 'there was a large degree of embitterment and resentment in what they were not allowed to do and what they were employed to do'. Angst and stress among the lecturers are among the key findings from his data. Feather wonders how they could be installing 'HEness', or the need to conduct research and teach students about research, if the corporate culture within FECs were to remain managerialist. He concludes that FECs should be allowed to be again what they are good at, which is as service providers to communities and industry, and that government should not interfere in defining how FE should meet needs. What matters is how they can best serve their own stakeholders which they would know better than any other body or government. This article chimes with those within the previous section about the nature of CBHE that concerned themselves with high-level vocationally oriented curricula that are more fit for purpose and more in tune with the needs of the economy.

Similarly, the findings from the life history project of teacher educators in FE by Kadi-Hanifi and Keenan, identified how sometimes the lecturers sampled mentioned periods of stress and heavy workloads, as well as tensions with funding priorities, which they dealt with in their own specific

ways. When digging further through their lives those lecturers, however, rather championed the FE sector as a key formative element in their developing selves, first as learners and thereafter as professionals. This was a small-scale research project with CBHE lecturers anchored in a deeply collaborative community of practice that managed to bypass the managerialist approach of the institutions and, therefore, the issue of 'championing' FE, whilst positively working within HE, could well be due to the strength of the democratic and respectful collaboration between an HEI and its FE partners in that case. It is also possibly due to the strategic strength of certain FECs and in how they select and then adequately support their CBHE workforce. There is need for more research or for more sharing of good practice if indeed some CBHE spaces are managing to operate more successfully than others and if some lecturers are managing to be agents of change for some of the time, rather than mere subjects of bureaucratic managerialism for all of the time.

What Are the Latest Innovations and Powerful Pedagogical Practices that Are Making a Difference?

In this final sub-section summarizing the research located within the same double issue, the focus of the theme is on some powerful examples of excellent practice in teaching, learning and assessing within empowering CBHE spaces. This sub-section gives further hope and is, indeed, very refreshing research that takes the 'edge' off the conventional, hierarchical and deterministic ontology of HEness and gives it a new grassroots dimension. The notion of the rhizo curriculum, as exemplified by Alex Kendal's article is explored here (and in Chap. 3, in more detail) and this gives food for thought for pedagogies that empower learners in an age of super diversity and policies that perpetuate top-down, elite thinking, instead of bottom-up agentic performance for change. Alex Kendall and her research group explore the role of 'petits recits', literally 'little narratives', in the classroom and how students can genuinely help shape the curriculum with their tutors on an equal footing. Theirs is a focus on progressive learning and teaching practice as this is a collaborative piece of work between lecturers in HE and students studying CBHE. They argue, on page 119, that 'through our discussion of auto-ethnography we opened up and expanded definitions of what might be "counted" as data and the curatorial, productive role of the researcher as an agent of, rather than conduit or receptacle for, meaning making and taking. We would we suggested: make objects;

tell stories; listen to stories; discuss our object and story making; curate and share symbolic objects; take pictures and audio recordings; and discuss our thoughts and feelings uninhibited by research conventions, interviews, structure or systematisation, along the way. We would "count" all of this as empirical "stuff," material openings for our grappling with our own entanglement'.

From the perspective of governance, management and classroom practice, Jas Dhillon and Jon Bentley offer an unusual commentary on CBHE, exploring its challenges and potential. Their review of two GFECs in the English Midlands reveals imaginative and ambitious strategies for CBHE, driven in part at least by college managers' desire to grow an HE income stream to offset successive deep funding reductions in their 16–18, adult and employer-led income. It is clear that in the case study, college governors wholeheartedly endorse the college's strategy of developing responsive and work-based higher education through close educational partnerships with universities. Such provision, in the words of a governor, is geared to offering 'the best skills training in the region'. It is, however, in the classroom that such ambition must be translated and realised. Often working with 'limited HE specific resources', the lecturers work hard to ensure they (page 147) 'personalise learning and provide individualised support (that) is greater than in a University'.

This sub-section ends with a summary of another empowering piece about pedagogical practice at grassroots level. Ewan Ingleby and Caroline Gibby's article reports on a transformative learning ethos based on andragogy within a foundation degree course taught in FE. Theirs is also about the pedagogy needed for teaching ethics effectively within legal studies. They argue that the curriculum needs to be student-centred and open up the space for different literacies and different literacy practices, whilst also engaging emotions, values and feelings. They stress the importance of the role of the 'community of practice', using problem-based learning strategies that empower and transform. They recommend an assessment diet that includes oral and visual presentations and a pedagogy that avoids a 'house that Jack built' as they put it. For their subject of law and ethics, it was felt that students could not enhance their skills within the traditional law degree as adequately as they were doing within the CBHE sphere. Regarding CBHE in general, and based on the success of their programme with its pedagogy of transformation, they state, on page 160, that 'the relative lack of research into this form of education in England is a

Table 4.1 Discussion/reflection task for research

Consider the articles summarised in the above case study of recent research on CBHE and discuss the key themes developed, perhaps adding to those from your perspective. Next, think of ways you could: carry out similar research in collaboration with colleagues working either in CBHE or across both sectors; identify one or more of the special areas (highlighted in the three sub-sections of the case study) that you might like to research further, as well as why and how you would go about doing that; consider how co-researching with students or other stakeholders would add value to your research; discuss what impacts such research could have on practice and/or on policy.

problem in itself. The consequence is that there is a lack of reinforcement that this is an ideal form of post-compulsory education'.

This case study therefore ends on a note of hope, giving the positivity that emanates from CBHE practice its due. The sector is doing its best and, against all the odds, is producing some incomparable practice which ought to be celebrated. At the same time, through research, more could be done to improve the current state that CBHE finds itself in, caught up within an unequal system of education, fast-changing policies and lack of funding, and therefore unable to even have the flexibility to do what is has always done very well, which is to provide a flexible, multifaceted, modern and empowering education to the communities that have had (and still do have) faith in its ability to meet their needs. If it is adequately supported and its many distinctive voices listened to, as is reported in the case study articles, perhaps it has a chance to thrive and find a more permanent identity that could help it defend its own corner in the face of continuing adversity and interference (Table 4.1).

Identification of Trends from Research on CBHE in Recent Years

In the past, and to a certain degree now too, there tended to be a belief that somehow CBHE was not able to compete on an equal footing in terms of scholarship and research with established universities. The view still prevails in informal discussions and we take a stance here that times have changed. As early as 2012, and crucially at the point when university fees were raised to a forbidding £9000, and during a recession period

bringing along further austerity in the UK which we are still living with, this perceived tension between FE and HE persisted, as competition for the HE market became even more intense. One such tension was based on the employment terms and conditions that are different between the two sectors of FE and HE (for example, FE staff teach for over 880 hours a year whereas university staff have 550 hours a year in most institutions). This, for obvious reasons, led some to believe that FE lecturers were unable to match the scholarship skills of their colleagues in universities.

A lot is still said about the doubts felt relating to the ability of FE staff to deliver the 'HE-ness' of a degree in an FE setting, but at the same time research on this aspect is growing, as we saw in the case study of section "Chapter Overview", and, of course the strengths and weaknesses of the CBHE sector are also highlighted through that. That alone may well lead to changes in the terms and conditions of CBHE lecturers as the research grows and thereby influences institutional level or national policy. The Augur Review of post-18 education and funding of May 2019 may perhaps be the beginning of moves towards installing parity between FE and HE. The view earlier expressed by Harwood and Harwood (2004) that there was a lack of research and academic literature relating to CBHE still prevails, linked, in particular, to the impact of limited time for scholarly activity in colleges on the development of an HE culture. This research that Harwood and Harwood conducted among staff in 5 colleges which delivered HE in the South West of England is often quoted in support of a view which says that the two cultures are destined never to overlap and/or create a distinctive new form of HE. However, as the report of King and Widdowson (2012), based on research with 30 CBHE colleges, shows, times have now changed with many more institutions providing CBHE and significantly more provision being delivered by colleges with a large critical mass of HE.

Most staff teaching CBHE now possess a qualification higher than that which they teach and many HE programmes have a high standard of equipment and facilities. In a key research monograph, Widdowson and King (FETL 2017) report on research in which the views of over 800 CBHE students were gathered for the Mixed Economy Group (MEG) of CBHE colleges, whose task it is to further develop HEness in FE colleges. Of greatest importance to students was getting a job at the end of their course. They saw their ability to do this as being directly related to the teaching skills of their teachers and the extent to which they were up to date in their subject. It was not important to the students that staff were

undertaking research. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), as it too adapted its quality procedures to target CBHE more specifically through peer review, and in a differentiated way to how quality is monitored in universities, has rarely commented on there being an issue with the lack of HEness in CBHE. 'Only a couple of colleges have generated concerns over the quality of their HE delivery, an outcome which compares favourably to that of the university sector' (King and Widdowson 2012). The evidence from the QAA and the MEG reflects the views of previous and current researchers that CBHE is defined by its commitment to teaching and learning often evidenced by the high level of teaching hours. In addition, staff who are qualified teachers often have qualifications in their original profession or academic discipline.

The King and Widdowson report (2012) did not find any evidence to suggest that a distinctive pedagogy was emerging within CBHE, but that, rather, CBHE tends to carry out the good practice already in existence within FE. CBHE teachers often teach both phases of FE and HE, and more importantly, know their students and are able to motivate them, with high levels of retention and success that only the best universities can achieve. If, indeed there is no distinctive pedagogy, is it therefore that, as Lea has suggested, CBHE is a hybrid?—in that

> 'The notion of a hybrid refers to the extent that HE in FE borrows from, and then fuses, aspects of the two wider sectors in which it has been immersed. An obvious example of that would be a desire to see students working more independently (HE style) but within a supportive tutorial culture (FE style); or put another way, teachers taking active responsibility in identifying independent learning needs and then providing support to meet them.' (2013: 4)

Healey et al. (2014) in a case study of 50 CBHE providers, focusing on student-led research have demonstrated that HE is in a period of significant change during which some of the traditional distinctions and differences between CBHE and the rest of the HE sector are beginning to break down. Moreover, in advancing students' scholarly learning, they argue, CBHE teachers are in turn drawn to advancing their own scholarly activities, often collaboratively with students. At the same time, they make the point that it is not just in CBHE that academic research may be lacking. Many post-92 universities struggle to get their staff to publish and be returned in the Research Excellence Framework. Another argument made

in the case study would be that good, impactful research occurs everywhere, not just on university campuses. The difference, they maintain, is about how universities have built a discipline of academic research into their curricula with 'research methods' or 'research design' modules mandatorily being part of almost all of their undergraduate and post-graduate programmes. But, as Healey et al. (2014) argue, we know that, for example, the ground-breaking research of Einstein's occurred outside of a university campus. Indeed, often research is being carried out in private sector companies (such as pharmaceutical, IT, engineering and engineering ones), in publicly-funded organisations (a former CBHE student of mine now works as a full-time researcher on Stroke patient-centred methods for the NHS) or in charities (such as Oxfam and Shelter). This has meant that often, and not just within CBHE contexts, stages of pure research scholarship by more applied HE practitioners are deferred, or simply not prioritised because they do not integrate well with teaching and learning, or with what Walkington (2015) has emphasised is the 'student as researcher' ambition that most lecturers have.

Applied HE practitioners' other many talents and strengths are defiantly advanced in the following individual quote from a CBHE employer, Carl Lygo:

> 'At BPP [a UK based private university college for professional studies] we recruit practitioners to teach our students, their experience is forged on the anvil of reality! Trial advocacy is best taught by somebody who has actually conducted countless trials in court. It does not matter to us that they have not then gone on to write up their experiences for the general public to read about it. A PhD is not a necessary qualification for expertise in teaching nor practice. The key issue is whether they bring their experiences to the classroom, either in terms of the materials they prepare for use in the classroom or the way in which they teach. The shared experience of our practitioner faculty is then used to enrich the curriculum and we take on board the published research in the area. (In King and Widdowson 2009, p. 16)

The main point that Lygo—the principal of BPP University College—is making, and which possibly best defines a CBHE approach to scholarship and research, is that good teaching at a higher level cannot be done without prior experience of practice and expertise first, which then consequently leads the applied lecturer to know what research could be effectively embedded within it. Are we, therefore, seeing the kernel of a distinct

CBHE approach to scholarship and research that refuses to carry out non-teaching and learning-embedded research. A similar point is made in the context of academic drift in Dutch non-university HE by Griffioen and de Jong (2013) which prompts us to ask why should CBHE strive to be comparable to universities in the first place, and, at the risk of drifting away from its student-centred pedagogy and hence scholarship and research. In the UK, and ironically because of their unequal status compared to university lecturers, CBHE academic staff have the advantage of not risking to fall victim to the 'publish or perish' rule of the more established research intensive universities.

And again we need to remind ourselves that, in the UK, most CBHE teachers will also be undertaking other further education teaching alongside their HE work. For some this wider FEC culture has resulted in a somewhat stifled culture of compliance and surveillance (Lea 2009), or what has been referred to as the terrors of performativity (Ball 2003). In a research context this might also make it difficult for a college-based teacher to conceive of research going in whatever direction the research leads him or her, because, first and foremost all questions will need to be framed in terms of how the answers would enhance the effectiveness and status of the institution. But equally it can also offer to students the clear prospect that the institution in which they are studying is firmly focused on achieving its avowed aims, and that meeting their needs would be high on any research agenda—be that pedagogically or vocationally related.

Comparison of HE Research Outputs and the Changing Significance of CBHE Research

In comparing research outputs it is very important to distinguish again between the university and the college in their pursuit of HEness. Whilst the UK-wide Research Excellence Framework (REF) is a measure of research quality, much of the research that academic staff pursue is less well rated and might often fall below standard, including in many universities. This is also where sometimes CBHE research outputs are located, or, not figure at all in the formal outputs of the REF overseen by the funding body of each nation of the UK, such as 'Research England', with HE institutions submitting their staff's research so it can be judged on its quality and rated by expert panels to establish benchmarks nation-wide and trigger funding which is allocated accordingly to those that show the

correct level of research activity. This creates undue competition between institutions as they battle to 'return' as many staff as they can in order to secure a good reputation in the public domain and attract much needed research funding. And, it can marginalize staff whose research is deemed not 'REF-able', or who are deemed not to have a significant responsibility for research and thus ineligible to be included in the REF process.

Universities start from a place of advantage compared with colleges when it comes to research funding as they have the dedicated staff and infrastructure to bid to the funding bodies periodically, for more research money and for their place on the league table of research excellence. Colleges, unless they 'return' staff in collaboration with an HEI with which they work in partnership, hardly ever partake in the REF exercise, and, therefore, lose out in terms of the recognition, both material and intellectual, of any research that they might have generated. Having been myself a CBHE lecturer in the past, I recall how many times I produced evaluative research on key issues such as race equality, curriculum design and refugee education which only 'hit the desk' of the principal and although it possibly resulted in better quality teaching, learning and staff development was not more widely disseminated. When I decided to take a paper to an international conference on anti-racist teaching and learning, I had to do that in my own time and at my own expense. Research for publication and conference presentation is just not encouraged, or considered a priority, in the sector. If university lecturers complain about the lack of time and encouragement for research, the situation is even worse in colleges. However, this does not mean that the research is necessarily of less value between the sectors. In addition, a great deal of teacher education partnerships carry out self-evaluative research with real primary and secondary data and that is never considered to be 'REF-able' by both the university and the college. This kind of evaluative research for self-assessment and improvement is prized by inspectors of quality in teaching, learning and leadership but not by research funding bodies.

Indeed, a strong domain in which CBHE is also capable of generating good research is that of teacher education. Crawley (2018) alerts us to the fact that such research is almost invisible for the post-compulsory sector (see also Solvason and Elliott 2013, on the invisibility of post-compulsory research). And yet, post-compulsory teacher education is an important 'self-improving system' (BERA 2014). And yet, this kind of research has impacted on the quality of many teacher education programmes, including those managed by universities for post-compulsory teachers. Various

CBHE scholars have attempted to successfully enact communities of research practice and the dissemination of their outputs is having an impact, such as the community research network created by Lloyd and Jones (2018) at Bedford College, England. There are various communities of practice and indeed the sector is moving towards a greater recognition of the impacts of research through dissemination, and, what is heart-warming too, is the growing number of communities of practice with research partnership between university and college, such as the one represented here in this book between Newman University, Birmingham City University, University of Worcester, and, both Halesowen College and Solihull College which have their own dedicated HE centres within their large FE remit.

Ways of Promoting Research in CBHE

We have previously mentioned the importance of communities of practice which already exist in the CBHE sector, either within FE alone or between FE and HE, across institutions, regionally or nationally. The annual Birmingham City University standing conference, 'Re-imagining FE', as well as various other networks and fora, some internationally reputed, such as the Association of Research in Post-compulsory Education (ARPCE) with its bi-annual conference attracting CBHE scholars from Australia, Canada and the UK, as well as national networks, such as TELL (Teacher Education in Lifelong Learning) and LSRN (Learning and Skills Research Network) are some of the few spaces within which CBHE research is flourishing and can be further supported. At the same time, the ETF (Education and Training Foundation) and AoC are also supporting the growth of research scholarship within the sector. Ways to promote research in CBHE are now many and perhaps it is time to be hopeful that the future is brighter and that the lecturer on the ground in CBHE is not the lone researcher of the past, continually feeling frustrated from some perceived lack of support for his/her research.

There is much to celebrate and promote in terms of the research strengths identified within CBHE and particularly around the newer research trends within HE, in general, of problem-based learning, assessment for learning and student partnership for curriculum design and improvement. Such research would encourage course design reviews (already experienced in successful CBHE/university partnerships) that would prompt teams and departments to consider how the whole

curriculum supports students in developing their research and inquiry capabilities. As HE course or programme validation and accreditation events demand that teaching teams have the appropriate qualifications to teach on the relevant courses, an obvious way of ensuring that CBHE teachers are suitably qualified is to insist that they are being provided with opportunities to register for higher qualifications themselves. Such study at higher levels 7 or 8 will enable them to conduct research in which high level scholarship and enquiry, using participative action research, or such like critically reflective research methodologies, figures and gives impetus to research more in future. Crucially, a well-supported CBHE teaching team would be able to support the development of their prospective students' research and scholarship skills. An important implication of what we are promoting in all the chapters of this book is to engineer the space to develop the necessary scholarly skills we have been advocating. CBHE scholarship and research needs to be visibly disseminating good practice in how it prepares countless students of HE for 'Fluidity, fuzziness, instability, fragility, unpredictability, indeterminacy, turbulence, changeability, [and] contestability' (Barnett and Coate 2005, p. 53) of the world they now live in. This context also brings to the fore the role of students not just as partners in learning or (co-) producers of knowledge, but also as agents in the design of the curriculum, and in the production of their own high level, critical learning and development. CBHE is already doing this important work by working with smaller cohorts of high achieving students.

Chapter Summary

The chapter has tried to summarise the research that is currently being promoted in the CBHE sector. At the same time, the chapter takes the view that there is still some form of inequality between the two sectors of FE and HE that is impacting on perceived weaknesses of CBHE scholarship. However, on close scrutiny, such as through the detailed case studies presented in the chapter, there is much to be celebrated about CBHE research. The point is made that more needs to be done to support and encourage the lecturers who are at the forefront of scholarship within the sector. There are kernels of hope emerging, such as the few fora that dedicate their work to CBHE research and scholarship, and, notably, the ARPCE, the annual Re-imagining FE conference and the Birkbeck College-led 'linking London' network that focuses on bringing CBHE

practitioners together to discuss their high level research and scholarship in education. There are also many employers sponsoring or encouraging their CBHE staff to take up doctoral study at level 8, with the Professional Doctorate being the best way of integrating academic research with practice.

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CHAPTER 5

The CBHE Lecturer Experience

Craig Tucker, Sarah Pedder, and Gemma Martin

Abstract Craig Tucker, Sarah Pedder and Gemma Martin are practising CBHE lecturers who live the realities of the sector. They document the pressures, pleasures and pains of teaching CBHE and their experience reflects the concerns and celebrations seen elsewhere in the book. Two of the authors are managers of CBHE so they have also responded to some CBHE issues from an institutional perspective. Workload, the difference between FE and CBHE and time for research are their main concerns. The pleasures of teaching at HE-level, the recognition the role gives and the ability to see students develop are highlighted and some of the barriers FE lecturers face when trying to enter into CBHE are discussed.

Keywords Teaching CBHE • Managing CBHE • Workload • FE lecturers • FE institutional system

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Chapter Overview

We are CBHE lecturers who feel a great sense of privilege in our position but also that there are issues with this fledgling sector which need to be addressed. At the moment, FE colleges are trying to 'shoehorn' CBHE into existent FE conditions and contracts and, we argue, it is not fully working. Two of us are also managers of CBHE courses and so it might be thought that this would lead to a positive selling of the CBHE lecturer's experience but instead we recognise that the demands are such that changes are needed on an institution-wide basis. Our hope is that the changes we propose could make our working lives more manageable. While we address some of the difficulties or pains of teaching CBHE there are many joys. We start with these joys, particularly how CBHE allows us to develop the lives of students—many of whom we have nurtured from Level 3 or lower—and to see them grow academically and personally while under our care and tutelage. The views we express include those of colleagues whose daily lives we share and we have recalled the comments they have made to us as we feel they help shed light onto the daily life of a working CBHE lecturer.

The Joys and Pains of Being a CBHE Lecturer

The consensus amongst CBHE lecturers, from our experience, is that they like teaching adults; as one lecturer reflected, 'I am an andragogue at heart.' CBHE allows us to develop our practice, and make what Tran et al. (2010 in Wang et al. 2013: 478) called a 'shift of the paradigm from a teacher-centred teaching and learning to a student-centred one…where students support construction of their own knowledge instead of teachers.' For some, the pleasure is in engaging with higher level learning students and for others it is linked to knowing the difference we make in the lives of our students. As one fellow lecturer reflected: 'education really does change lives.' The love for our specialisms also drives us to teach in CBHE. This includes sharing of the real-world professional experience with students from one lecturer who 'enjoys bringing their experience of working within the sector to the study of CBHE students.'

The status gained from being part of CBHE in an FE environment is another of its 'pulls.' This recognition is now nationally recognized with the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) which brought wider recognition with 66% of CBHE providers gaining silver or

gold status (AoC 2020). Added to this, SEDA's (Staff and Educational Development Association) new post-graduate award for teaching and Learning in CBHE can lead to Higher Education Academy fellowship (Advance HE 2019). Such recognition adds to the general high position in FE of teaching at the highest level. CBHE also affords the lecturer the exciting opportunity to complete more HE qualifications and this is, sometimes, funded by the institution or subsidized by partner universities.

In addition to the benefits CBHE brings to us, we also feel the joy of seeing students flourish in the CBHE environment. These are often people we knew as 16-year-olds when they started their Level 3 or even Level 2 qualifications in the same institution. Such students can thrive because CBHE gives often-smaller teaching groups within CBHE when compared to universities. This allows for students to be seen and known to lecturing staff on a personal face-to-face level and to be recognised as more than their student ID number. This is in contrast to our own university experience which, as an example, in the case of one of us, included being asked to send details of who they were to our lecturer as she could not recognise the name. Such an event would never happen in the smaller, more student-centred environment of CBHE. Indeed, this is one change an FE lecturer needs to make when moving to HE-level is to move out of the larger group teaching mode. The Higher Education Academy (2009: 1) description of some university teaching being: 'large group…with the stereotypical scenario of the lecturer standing behind a podium delivering a monologue' is rare in our experience. Large groups are not the best conditions for discussions or problem-solving activities. Students in large groups can go off in the wrong direction, be hijacked by determined individuals or become passengers or 'free riders' (Petty, 2009: 233). This is far less likely to happen in the smaller groups of CBHE. Unlike in some more traditional university settings, CBHE is taught by trained lecturers who will use a range of techniques and approaches (see King and Widdowson 2012) such as those recommended by Biggs (2003)—student-centred and active HE provision. CBHE offers this to the student with more one-to-one support and a familiar environment and teaching strategies that they are used to, having progressed from FE. It could be argued that the CBHE student has greater opportunity to succeed than their university counterpart.

We often see students come into CBHE from our own FE setting and for some of those learners we may suggest that this has been a more

comfortable route for them to stay on having spent the prior years of their education with us. Having already become adjusted and settled with the college environment, there is a quicker less of a transition to adjust to a new level of learning. When comparing the experience of CBHE students with their university counterparts it is felt, among our colleagues, that it provided learners with the progression opportunity that they may not have otherwise experienced. The first consideration is that CBHE courses often carry lower course fees making them more accessible for learners at the lower end of the socio-economic strata. For some learners who have families and full-time jobs having the opportunity to study locally, part time and in the evening can be invaluable for those wanting to access the degree-level courses. As Avis and Orr (2016) noted, CBHE lecturers are 'interested in being more distinctively located within a widening participation ethic that are keen on advancing social justice and bringing about enhanced opportunities to non-traditional learners.'

While there are many joys, the range of expectations of the CBHE lecturer means that Edward de Bono's six thinking hats would not be enough when considering the work CBHE lecturers have to complete on a day-to-day basis! There is the high workload within a shortened period of time, sandwiched around other FE duties including enrolment, induction, school 'tasters' and exam invigilation. This dual FE-HE role is often not understood by colleagues and managers who have not experienced it, including the pressure of trying to engage in scholarly activity, demystifying how to research and present findings whilst also fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of an FE lecturer.

From our experience, workload issues and work/life balance seem to be the biggest concerns of CBHE lecturers and this is often compounded by the organisation's approach of 'one size fits all.' The main concerns among our colleagues were the time it took to plan, deliver and assess in CBHE. On average, contact teaching hours can range from between 18 and 26 per week with on-site time being 35 hours per week. The high expectations of face-to-face delivery, added to the way FE colleges often 'front load' with increased teaching hours during September–March, is particularly acute as CBHE courses finish before many FE courses. When the expectations of a lecturer in FE are placed on a CBHE teacher, tensions arise as one CBHE lecturer said: 'it can be difficult to fit the HE requirements into FE...CBHE should be supported more by understanding that it is separate and the requirements are not the same.' This common issue is explored by Feather (2017: 706): 'lack of time and onerous

administrative responsibilities on top of their current workload were two of the major issues these lecturers were facing in their current roles.'

There are also issues from student expectations including the return of marked work also adding to the workload of a CBHE lecturer. FE students become used to a quick turnaround and colleges often give such expectations as days rather than weeks. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006: 205) identified the importance of good feedback practice to promote self-regulation which encourages learners to assume control over their learning and self-regulate their own performance but there is a sense, we feel, that the rushed nature of what we are asked to do would not achieve these aims. Fortunately, in most cases HE-level marking policy will allocate more time in which to return marked work but managing student expectations is difficult.

A CBHE course leader is often responsible for interviewing all applicants and it is felt that often interviews are 'squeezed in' around their already-full teaching timetable—a timetable which is very complex as teaching hours between FE and HE are not always compatible. Much of the preparation and marking for CBHE teachers takes place outside of the teaching day. As one CBHE lecturer reflected: 'I work a full day at the weekend to keep on top of my workload.' It is seen by some lecturers that CBHE was double the demands experienced by an FE teacher and some referred to it as 'hidden work.' This was linked to the restricted capacity of a CBHE teacher juggling the challenges of teaching CBHE with no acknowledgement from the organisation of how they were going to 'cope' with the additional workload. The word 'respect' often comes up in conversations with the feeling that this was not received from those who manage the courses. The workload issue, compounded by long-term CBHE staff absence, was also seen to contribute to workload issues as teachers in the team were required to take on additional marking, planning and teaching to 'plug the gap' of the absent staff member.

As a learning environment, CBHE appeals to students in a route that offers an element of social justice (Avis and Orr 2016), providing an improvement in opportunities for learners, increasing social mobility and reducing the idea of HE as being an elitist form of education available only to a few. CBHE provides lecturers that are seen to be available more regularly—CBHE students will often knock on our staff room door for a conversation or advice, not needing to have booked in or emailed in advance. This holistic nurturing approach is considered to provide emotional stability and resilience for CBHE students. McGhie (2017) suggests that many

CBHE teachers demonstrate 'high levels of nurturing students, because it is personally fulfilling, and it reminds them of their own educational success within FE.' This high level of support, however, can create demanding students who then expect access to their lecturers to an extent which creates heavy workloads that can impinge on tutor wellbeing. We do, at times, feel that with this we often assign a label to our learners as being more 'complex,' with higher needs for support. This is a label we also see as staying with CBHE learners, as being awarded a degree in a college somehow seems a lesser achievement from individuals at universities. If we tell individuals that we teach at HE level, it is met, at times, with an element of confusion about how this happens, so this must be the same for students.

As with university HE, in CBHE there is a belief that students will still be taught programmes from staff with specialist knowledge that is current and continuing. This infers that lecturers are able to embed current research to their teaching whilst being able to update their own knowledge, but here lies a disparity. FE colleges, notoriously, have limited space and support for pursuing scholarly activity and this has to be pursued 'off timetable.' From our experience, this would have to be during holidays, at weekends or evenings (if the lecturer is not planning or marking in these hours!). The university culture, by contrast, offers a priority, to some, of research and publications (Feather 2014; Schofield and Burton 2015; Avis and Orr 2016), of the sort not widely encouraged within our settings. Added to the lack of allocated time, access to journals for some CBHE teachers is also very difficult as they are expensive and FE is unable to invest in subscription. This places lecturers at a disadvantage when wanting to engage in their own evidence-based research. From our experience, CBHE lecturer and student access to databases are more limited than the university accesses due to licensing agreements and funding. In some instances, we have even experienced students given greater access than the lecturer to published content. This proves problematic, not only for creating resources such as reading lists but, in addition, when marking student work, as there is no way of checking the resources that have been referenced.

We are working at a high level in CBHE—up to Level 7. Dissertations at this level take much careful tutelage and marking. Many of us resign to the idea that they are unlikely to complete much (if any) dissertation marking during work hours and as such this then becomes a task that is taken home. In our case taking dissertation work on also comes with

expectation of attendance at events such as 'dissertation Saturday'—a weekend 'drop-in' for students. As a dissertation supervisor within CBHE, hours are allocated for tutorial support but not for the marking. Additional responsibilities such as early registration, student sign off days, interviews, welcome days and the chasing of FE students for their outstanding work, appears to override any conception of protected time for dissertation marking. When the student work is of a very high standard CBHE comes at a disadvantage to students as we found recently when a recommendation was made that an outstanding piece could be published. The CBHE team met the feedback with apprehension and as such illustrated limitations in our own knowledge of how we would even support a student in this process. Although most of the staff had completed post-graduate research, very few had any published work or understood the process of publishing work. The apprehension shown seemed to come from a position of unknowing.

Recruitment takes up a lot of our time as well as other expectations. CBHE does not have the robust marketing strategies or large advertising teams and campaigns so it is often left to us to market on a personal, individual basis. Under resourcing within CBHE and local competition from large universities can often mean that CBHE is resorting to lowering entry requirements to compete and recruit to their courses. Lecturers we work with identify that, as a result, students on their CBHE courses can struggle with higher content, autonomy and teacher expectations. In response to this, CBHE teachers use their wealth of pastoral and andragogical FE experience to support individuals.

The delivery of CBHE carries the expectation on FE institutions and their lecturing staff that they are able to deliver the degree-level courses to students to the same standards as universities. This is made more complex by the issue that Lucas (2007: 99) describes as 'best practice' model in teaching and learning at FE-level which often differs between departments and subject cultures. In the case of CBHE, there is the concern about whether students are receiving an 'HE experience' and this constant scrutiny of the lecturer's practice makes the everyday work less pleasurable. Such scrutiny comes often in a datafied form so student expectations, experiences, along with the 3 Rs of recruitment, retention and results are reduced to numbers which cannot reveal the true picture of work in education. FE colleges see CBHE as a business opportunity and if it does not turn around good business early on, then courses and even departments are closed. We have recent experience of seeing a CBHE qualification

being developed by colleagues, entailing an immense amount of work, including the recruitment phase, only to be informed after just one year of running, that this was not viable and would not continue.

Recruitment, Progression and Promotion Prospects

For all of the joys and pains of teaching CBHE, the tutors in this position, from our experience, rarely want to move back into FE-only teaching. Often, they aspire to move into universities instead, as, having had a 'taste' of this level of teaching, they want more of it. Teaching CBHE takes FE lecturers out of our comfort zone—which is no bad thing. From our experience, it is rare for a teacher to plan, deliver and assess CBHE during an academic year and then decide that they do not wish to continue in future academic years. Furthermore, there is a great sense of achievement in doing the seemingly impossible!

It is rare, in our experience, for CBHE lecturers to leave their posts and as a result of the courses and so there is a lack of flexibility within the FE curriculum and working year to allow for shadowing and development opportunities. Often when FE teachers are exposed to CBHE teaching it is their first time of teaching at that level and they are exposed to the different academic regulations and standards. Petty describes that (2009: 516) 'Good teachers are not born, nor are they made from tutors. They make themselves…but only if you know how to learn from your mistakes and successes.' Those new to teaching CBHE, and experienced in teaching in FE, are able to draw on a wealth of teaching experience. King and Widdowson (2012) identified that when FE trained teachers are teaching CBHE in FE they will use a range of techniques and approaches which aid the student experience. CBHE was not an aspiration for ourselves or many of our fellow lecturers but it happened as an organisational necessity—there was a CBHE course which needed a lecturer and we had the qualifications (a requirement of partner courses is that the lead tutor has at least a Master's Degree) and the time on our timetable. For some CBHE teachers, their transition was due to staff shortage or shortages of the required specialism. This reflects the transient nature of some CBHE and reactive approach of the organisation to 'fill the gap' rather than strategically plan a CBHE provision. Promotion is also seen to be more likely if teachers were teaching in CBHE, in some cases course leaders were promoted from within the team. However, this cannot be said for all courses.

CBHE, in some settings, feels very closed off and almost an elitist area from the rest of the college, it seems to be a very protected position and feeds into the idea of 'class' (Avis and Orr 2016). As an example of this, there are annual HE conferences conducted that are suggested to be accessible to all staff from the college and yet they are not advertised in such a way with details being sent directly to the current CBHE staff only, thus excluding other FE lecturing staff. This seems to give the impression that being able to teach CBHE is almost a 'reward.' There is a higher educational importance seemingly placed on this teaching where only some staff members are 'trusted' to teach on it. The pressure to succeed in such circumstances is great and we feel this not least because fellow lecturers would tell us we were 'going up in the world.' In this sense it feels as though this teaching is treated with a higher status than the FE teaching, despite the fact that the FE teaching is preparing students for the HE step and for us, this dictates a high level of importance in its own right in terms of student progression. This further importance on CBHE here seems to be down to the external partnerships that CBHE dictates as we are often answerable to universities and as such want to show we can 'hold our own' and match the HE establishments for level of work produced. This, from our experience, leads to a far more stringent and meticulous process with regards to the moderating of student work than throughout the wider FE institution. A negative effect the closed-off 'vibe' that CBHE gives is it feels like a difficult circle to break into for staff members who do have a lot to offer on various CBHE programmes. Also, in such a closed-off environment, staff sickness, or staff moving on, leaves the CBHE courses suddenly in a place where no contingency plan is arranged and students may suffer.

Manager Concerns

CBHE managers have different concerns but we recognise those of the lecturers while also viewing CBHE as a way of professional development not only with scholarly activity but the opportunity to reflect and spend time with like-minded colleagues. In support of this, a number of FE colleges are subscribing to Advance HE and encouraging CBHE teachers to engage in and undertake the process for Fellowship accreditation. This demonstrates a willingness of the institution to engage in professional development and further demonstrates to policy makers how CBHE should be recognised in the wider community.

We feel the need to focus on quality assurance, or more specifically the assessment of teaching, learning and assessment at HE-level. This is partly because we are answerable to outside organisations, often a validating university, or Ofsted, when it is a teacher-training course and need to fulfil the UK Professional Standards Framework (Advance HE 2011). As a result, FE managers tend to default to what they know and this means internal scrutiny on an FE basis. As the CBHE provision will be dwarfed by the main FE provision, often colleges will judge the experience of CBHE students in the same way in which they judge their main FE provision. There are manager frustrations from the way the National Student Survey (NSS) do not include the views of the thousands of CBHE students undertaking Higher National Certificate and Diploma courses. There could be an argument that they do not matter in the eyes of the regulators and policy makers. However, the recent creation of the Office for Students (OfS) as a regulator who are committed to 'delivering positive outcomes for students—past, present, and future' (OfS 2018: 14) including those based in CBHE, is a positive one.

There are frustrations that CBHE removes some autonomy from the FE manager as any decisions need to be taken past the validating university first. Any changes to programmes, assignments, course content as such, have to go via the awarding university and cannot often be dealt with quickly 'in-house.' It makes decision-making processes harder with the franchised qualifications in particular and it feels as though no-one locally wants to make a decision for fear of upsetting the awarding institution, which can be held in such (too?) high esteem and status, by staff—more so than students in our experience. When speaking to colleagues about this, they are often in agreement that local decisions do become difficult to make with a suggested need for our own internal procedures, such as an internal ethics board to be developed. This is an essential development needed especially if CBHE providers are to gain their own degree awarding powers.

Chapter Summary

Dows (2017), a CBHE consultant, urges employers and managers to seek equality between HE and FE and to nurture their staff, especially considering the level and workload outlined in this chapter. One additional issue which could be readily addressed is the disparity in pay between CBHE teachers and those teaching at a university with the latter having higher

pay scales, resulting in a higher salary over time. It is not only parity of pay that CBHE lecturers seek but the time to engage in research and work more in collaboration with university colleagues. FE Teachers are acutely aware and feel that there is a difference between them and their counterparts within university provision, not least the prestige of being a university lecturer rather than a CBHE lecturer.

Despite the current problems, there is, we believe, a great future for CBHE with the widening participation political agenda which has been in place for the last few decades in one form or another. Indeed, it might be seen to go back to The Robbins Report (1963) which identified that university places should be available to all who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them. This was first reiterated in former Prime Minster May's first speech 'There are not enough students from disadvantaged backgrounds and from ordinary families fulfilling their potential with the grades to get into the best universities' (2016). The number of students that attend HE and providers have increased dramatically during the past forty years. With seven FE colleges with foundation degree awarding powers and two FE colleges having taught degree awarding powers (AoC 2020) CBHE is becoming more of a norm and this, in turn, is starting to provide CBHE providers with a greater voice to negotiate better conditions.

In our view there needs to be an exploration of the negative effects on staff and on 'HE-ness' of some of the more corporate and managerialist FE Colleges that exist today (see Healey al. 2014; see Lea and Simmons 2012). CBHE lecturers recognise that they are doing a good job with some students who would not ordinarily participate in HE. In attempting to explore the possibility of negotiating better conditions the stark reality is that ultimately CBHE is governed by the working policy of FE and until this is changed the chance of improved working conditions is reduced. With increased pressures on FE colleges due to external factors including area reviews, reforms to apprenticeships, reduction in funding and the introduction of the Post-16 Skills Plan, mergers, de-mergers (BBC 2015; OFSTED 2016; UNISON 2016; UCU 2017) many FE colleges have been through, and still face further periods of turmoil. These external factors are often absorbed by the teachers within the sector. There is a squeezing of time, increased workloads, class sizes, students with additional needs, additional efficiency measures and pressures. All of this adds to extra responsibility and reduces time available. A sector-wide consultation—which starts with an agreement that this is an identifiable and different level of education—could be a start to address the issues so that the joys outweigh the pains. This is all we are asking for.

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CHAPTER 6

CBHE Identities

Iain Jones

Abstract The chapter rejects the status of FE as a 'second chance' sector whilst asking what the implications of this label are for CBHE. It views how multiple identities of lecturers and students are understood, shaped and situated in flux. The chapter introduces a 'double shuffle' between marketisation and social justice and multiple identities within CBHE. The chapter asks how, and why, the notion of 'possible selves' may open up spaces for re-conceptualising identities within CBHE. Finally, the chapter reflects on how contemporary educational frameworks could be re-negotiated by consideration of 'dual' and 'triple' forms of professionalism in the sector.

Keywords Second chance sector • Multiple identities • Dual/triple professionalism • Marketisation • Social justice • Possible selves

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Chapter Overview

The chapter builds on the argument that the development of CBHE has been situated in diverse political, economic and social contexts which can be understood by analysing the material and institutional conditions that have shaped policies and practices. FE and CBHE have particular remits in the UK education 'system' but, rather than taking a single or fixed form, CBHE has a shifting not singular identity. Different forms of provision in the four countries and regions of the UK, within different institutions, with different levels of participation have implications for the multiple identities and practices of institutions, lecturers and students. These diverse forms of CBHE are reviewed and three key concepts introduced. First, there is an analysis of a 'double shuffle' (Hall 2005) between human capital and marketisation on the one hand and social justice on the other to show how different practices have been re-produced. Secondly, the chapter reviews the multiple identities of students, and lecturers, and asks how, and why, the notion of 'possible selves' (Markus and Nurius 1986; Rossiter 2007; Stevenson and Clegg 2013; Henderson 2018) opens up spaces for re-conceptualising identities within CBHE. Finally, the chapter reflects on how contemporary educational frameworks could be re-negotiated by arguing the multiple identities of lecturers may be re-constructed and negotiated through inter-plays between 'dual' and 'triple' forms of professionalism (Gannon 2014; Hodgson and Spours, 2019).

Context: Multiple and Diverse Forms of CBHE

CBHE is not a new sector nor does it have a single identity. Parry et al. (2012), Parry (2016), Orr (2016), Elliott (2018) and Hodgson and Spours (2019) each map the origins of Further Education Colleges (FECs) documenting how vocational and liberal arts education were intertwined. Elliott traces distinctive histories of CBHE from technical institutes and their vocational origins through to the growth of day-release courses (Simmons 2016), Non-Advanced Further Education (NAFE) and the emergence of Advanced Further Education (AFE) (see: Feather 2012; Parry 2016). Other dimensions of vocational higher education, including the development of Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Diplomas (HND), have shaped the contemporary landscape and introduction of Foundation Degrees in 2001.

Parry et al. (2012) and Parry (2016) also note several features and trends in the complex and shifting development of CBHE in England. For example, those students studying for HE and higher-level qualifications in England in FE are now taught in four main types of FE and other institutions:

- The majority study at a general FEC where most young and adult learners are studying other academic, vocational, general and basic levels
- A smaller proportion are taught at specialist FECs
- A smaller number are taught at specialist adult residential colleges
- Remainder are taught in some sixth form colleges (Parry et al. 2012: 44–45).

Elliott (2018) emphasises how these different forms of provision have provided opportunities designed to meet the diverse needs of communities and the economic needs of sub-regions and regions. CBHE in England has consistently been tasked by policymakers with addressing perceived local skills gaps, as well as enhancing social mobility (see: Orr 2016): a 'double shuffle' (Hall 2005) between human capital and social justice. The Kennedy Report (1997) 'Learning works: widening participation in further education', a key report on adult learning in further education, emphasised that:

> 'The ladders linking further education and higher education are extending all the time, and higher education will increasingly be delivered by the further education sector' (10).

Successive phases of policymaking, franchising and partnerships developed FE-HE connections and these took different forms. They included indirect funding and a sub-contracting of student numbers to partner colleges and direct funding for colleges from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for HNCs and HNDs. The subsequent Dearing Report (NCIHE 1997), and prospectus published by HEFCE (2000) then led to the introduction of the first CBHE Foundation Degrees in 2001.

Hall (2005) argued that such policies were designed, and practices produced, that exemplified tensions or a 'double shuffle' between perceived economic benefits of human capital and competing demands of equity and

social justice (2005: 329)—but that economic imperatives were dominant. This metaphor of a 'shuffle' also provides a conceptual lens for understanding the struggles between marketisation and multiple identities and diverse possibilities of different forms of practice for CBHE in different settings. The Foundation Degree, by addressing both a 'perceived graduate level skills shortage' and the affordability of local forms of HE (see McKenzie and Schofield 2018: 315) exemplified this 'shuffle'. Policies were represented as clear and fixed rather than contested and in the 'flux' (see Ball 2017) of a recurring process of policy and practice. The neoliberal strands of 'human capital' and economic gain were in a dominant position while social democratic values were subordinate.

Jones (2004), in an earlier study of one of the first round of FD pilots, noted how the language of the prospectus for the new FD award defined students in terms of 'supply' and 'evidence of marketing opportunities' in which 'Bids must demonstrate that their programmes will meet employer and skill needs and show how they will develop students' employability' (HEFCE 2000: 19). Potential students were not represented as social actors but ascribed an abstract character in which their change, progression and development were determined (Jones 2004). As Fairclough argued, 'The absence of responsible agents further contributes to constructing change as inevitable' (2000: 26). For example, the language of HEFCE (2000) was promotional not dialogical, using lists and bullet points of the 'cascade of change' showing how the new degrees would meet employer and skill needs. This was presented as inevitable and conceived in a particular 'business-speak' form. One example of this was the first round of pilots (2001–2004) in which a University in North West England worked in partnership with five FE Colleges and their respective local authorities to design a FD in Community Governance producing a prospectus which framed 'outreach' not as an act towards the community but as meeting the needs of local business communities.

While new forms of provision were marketed, there has been a declining number of students on FD and HNC/Ds courses (between 2013 and 2017, CBHE FD-level study declined from 51,890 to 33,975; HNC/D--level study declined from 51,890 to 33,975 [HESA 2019]). This is in contrast to the numbers for undergraduate CBHE first degrees from 1,533,950 in 2013/14 to 1,621,725 in 2017/18. While it is estimated that the overall growth of CBHE went from 8% (Hodgson et al. 2015: 4) in 2012 to 11% (AoC 2016) of the total population of England's HE-level students, there were regional differences to these figures with the largest

amount of CBHE teaching in the North West of England and a larger proportion of part-time CBHE was taught in the North East and West Midlands regions (Saraswat et al. 2015). In 2012, 18% of all HE students in Scotland and Northern Ireland studied in FE Colleges but only 1.4% of FE students in Wales studied at HE level. Gallacher (2017) reported that by 2016, 22 % of all HE students in Scotland studied in its FE Colleges. However, in Wales in 2016–17, HE students in FE colleges were only 1% of all student enrolments (Stats Wales 2017).

The choice of provision varies too. Gallacher noted that 74% of HE-level students in colleges in Scotland are enrolled on HNC/Ds (and a further 11% are enrolled on other Higher National units), while only 2% are enrolled on first degrees (SFC 2016). Whereas, in their summary of FE provision in England, the AoC (2019: 9) report that 86% of colleges teach Foundation Degrees and colleges teach 59% of all Foundation Degrees in Scotland:

> Most HE courses in colleges are independent of the universities, in that they are based on Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs), which are not developed in co-operation with the universities, and are not validated by them. (Gallacher 2017: 713).

The latest 'College Key Facts 2018–19' (AoC 2019) summarises the contemporary scope and differences between colleges teaching CBHE in England. In February 2019, 204 out of 257 FECs in England provided undergraduate and postgraduate courses. In particular, 86% of colleges taught Foundation Degrees and colleges taught 82% of HNC/Ds and 59% of all FDs (AoC 2019: 9) but only seven colleges in England have foundation degree awarding powers and only two have taught degree awarding powers.

Diversity, Difference and 'Possible Selves': Multiple Identities of Institutions, Students and Lecturers in CBHE

Parry et al. (2012), Parry (2016) and Avis and Orr (2016) emphasise the diversity and differences between colleges providing HE, and the complexity of institutional identities within FECs, between HE and FE level provision within HE. For example, HE is taught in the majority of colleges but 52 of these taught 50% of CBHE students (Parry et al. 2012).

There are also significant regional differences with clusters where, in one example, Avis and Orr (2016) note 3,000 students went to three colleges while the majority of FECs have fewer than 100 students. Interpreting binaries between FE and HE are also complex. It may be tempting to see HE and FE in competition but, as Avis and Orr argue a binary plays down institutional differences within and between FE and HE. Not only are there dual-sector institutions (Bathmaker and Thomas 2009; Parry et al. 2012) but FE-in-HE will also be present in HE institutions—see, for example, the Level 3 Foundation Year.

These examples of complex and multiple identities have implications for institutions but also students and lecturers of college-based and other forms of HE. Parry et al. (2012) and Saraswat et al. (2015) reported that the majority were studying at under not post-graduate level. Of this cohort, just under a half were studying at FD level, nearly a quarter a Bachelor's Degree and another quarter either an HNC or HND. Within the overall CBHE undergraduate cohort, the ratio of part to full-time CBHE students varied. For example, 60% per cent of students on Bachelor's Degrees were on full-time programmes. By contrast, of another 64,000 students studying for higher-level qualifications (or credits) leading to a variety of vocational, technical and professional qualifications, most studied part-time. The majority of the remaining 5000 students taking taught postgraduate programmes were part-time students too. This intersects with a series of other characteristics embodying social class, age, gender and ethnicity. However, the overall decline in part-time CBHE, in all the regions of England, was evident in the data Saraswat et al. (2015) examined. Regional differences were reported too. A decline of 44% in the North East (calculated as difference between 2008/09 and 2012/13) compared with a 33% decline in London and 20% in the West Midlands and the East of England regions. Avis and Orr (2016) recognised the same trend. In their analysis of patterns of HE enrolments in England, between 2008 and 2012, they noted the number of entrants to part-time HE courses in England fell by 37%.

While Duckworth and Smith warn that the abstraction of 'the FE sector' reduces it through a process of simplification (2019) they also argue that participation and practices have been shaped in 'increasingly reductive and instrumentalist terms by successive governments' (2019: 9). For example, in earlier work, Parry et al. (2012) also emphasised that students in CBHE, compared with those in HE, are older. Sixty-Five per cent of students in CBHE were 23 years and over. However, Saraswat et al. (2015)

note a decline in students in the 25 and over band. Between 2008/09 and 2012/13 the number of students over 25 has fallen, those aged between 21 and 24 remained stable while those under 21 has risen (Saraswat et al. 2015: 68). Bathmaker (2016) and Jenkins (2017) have both analysed these patterns of participation. Jenkins (2017) placed these trends in CBHE in the wider context of changing patterns of part-time HE and the decline in the number of mature students. Between 2010/2011 and 2013/2014 the proportion of UK/other EU undergraduate entrants, to English HE institutions and FE colleges studying part-time, fell from 40% to 27% (HEFCE 2014). Bathmaker (2016) associated this with government austerity measures introduced by the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition government (2010–2015) and Conservative government (2015-) that contributed to this change. First, between 2011 and 2012, there were cuts to HE spending of 7% and in FE spending was cut by 18%. In 2014–15, cuts to HE spending were 18%, while FE spending was cut by 7% in 2015–16 (2016: 22). Secondly, in England, policy has shifted responsibility from the state to an individual in meeting tuition fee costs. While there were fees of £3290 in 2011/12 from 2012/13 students had to pay £9000 through a student loan and then repayment after graduation. In addition to fees, in 2015, the Conservative government announced a further loan system to replace the maintenance grant for low income students. Jenkins (2017: 453) extended this analysis and emphasised that these reforms to student funding in higher education in England trebled the cost of HE study. Jenkins argued that while the expressed intention of extending loans to some part-time students was presented as a way of ensuring parity between the costs of full-time and part-time study, in practice increased fees, the introduction of loans, combined with evidence of debt-aversion among adult learners led to very substantial cuts in the number of part-time and mature students in HE (Callender 2014). Two further differences, beyond a measure of age, were highlighted by Parry et al. (2012). More women took all qualifications except for the HNC and HND. However, in terms of representations of ethnicity, the FE sector taught a lower proportion of BAME students. In data reported in 2012, White/White British students represented 83% of the total of students in CBHE compared with 68% of all HEIs.

Research on the identities and experiences of students within FE and HE provides other perspectives on patterns of participation by exploring the complexities and intersections of age, gender and class. Crozier et al. (2019) analyse experiences of working class and BAME students attending

elite universities. But their use of the concept of hybridity, and metaphor of mapping borders of identify, also opens up spaces for understanding the experiences of students within CBHE (Robinson 2012; Esmond 2015; Smith 2017). Crozier et al. argue that

> identity formations are processes of change, development and renewal...It is a fusion of experiences, values and 'cultures' (in the broadest sense); we conclude that these can be creative experiences but are often achieved through struggle (2019: 925).

For example, the tensions between dominant policy discourses of CBHE and the perceived value of the FD, and complexity of students' experiences and self-identities were reviewed by Robinson (2012). Students' ambitions were markedly different depending on their age, whether they were full- or part-time students and their gender. While younger students emphasised the vocational importance of the qualification, older part-time students recognised multiple values of the FD, beyond their current roles at work and roles as mothers (2012: 459), where relevant, by also highlighting intrinsic benefits of study. Esmond, in research (2015) with part-time FD students, also argued the dynamic of work and multiple identities were complex too. While students emphasised their identities in work, rather than as students, the relationship between work and study was often framed in terms of protection and the possible loss of a job—rather than the opportunity to expand opportunities (2015: 27). Similarly, the notion of a 'triple shift' (Smith 2017) between higher education, the workplace, and home—and the experiences of student-as parents—demonstrates the complex and shifting forms of struggle. These identify shifts combined protecting familial roles, identities as a foundation degree student and managing roles in the workplace (2017: 115). In parallel with the metaphor of mapping borders of identity (Crozier et al. 2019), Smith found that work-based learning tasks 'took place on the margins or in the shadows of the workplace' (2017: 118) and concluded this paralleled the experiences of those students who sought to maintain their identities as mothers. By contrast, Smith also reported student-fathers had defined 'ring-fenced' time, so they did not need to fit study around existing family responsibilities.

Stevenson and Clegg (2013) report little research exploring how learners orientated themselves towards their futures, after completing their degree, despite policy texts including Browne's (2010) which emphasised

individual financial gain from participating in HE and a trajectory of individual upward social mobility. But, the work of Markus and Nurius (1986) on 'possible selves' provides a framework for understanding different dimensions of self-knowledge and multiple identities and can be applied to CBHE. For example, by defining how this 'domain of possible selves' relates to

> how individuals think about their potential and about their future. Possible selves are the ideal selves that we would very much like to become. They are also the selves we could become, and the selves we are afraid of becoming (Markus and Nurius 1986: 954).

Rossiter (2007) extended this concept by applying it to adult learning and the means by which change, growth and goal achievement may occur. The 'present' is experienced and understood in relation to both the past but also the future. The notion of an 'elaborated future self' is one which helps to map specific strategies and activities. But, an individual's view of what is desirable/undesirable is framed by socioeconomic status, past academic experience, family, friends and peers—or what Fuller et al. (2011) term a 'network of intimacy'. Identities can be interpreted through interplays between particular sets of objective and subjective factors that generate particular forms of identity and practice. Stevenson and Clegg (2013: 27) emphasised that attention to 'possible selves,' and future possibilities, provides a more complex and nuanced narrative for understanding the diverse experiences of students in HE compared to how futures are embodied in policy texts; see, for example, HEFCE's (2000) assertion, that programmes *will meet* employer and skill needs *and develop* students' employability (emphasis added) and the assumptions of financial gain within the Browne Review (2010). Henderson (2018) extended this analysis of policy narratives by examining 20 institutional webpages and representations of CBHE students. Using an explorative sample, based on a range of colleges in England from London and four other regions, Henderson reported three recurring themes: CBHE was 'supportive,' 'real' and a 'low-cost alternative' 2018: 1112). 'Support' was embodied in smaller class sizes and these, in turn, were associated with widening participation because of the capacity of the institution to respond to students' needs (2018: 1113). However, Henderson also argues this example could be interpreted differently. Discourses may constitute, not only reflect, 'support.' In this instance, the 'possible self' is created as 'vulnerable'

within Archer's (2007) pathologised discourse of 'the widening participation student'. Henderson concludes that this suggests 'the paradoxical position of college-based HE, which must define itself *against* university-based HE, while *differentiating* itself from it' (Henderson, 2018: 1115. Emphasis added)—a further manifestation of the second and specific form of 'double shuffle'—between material conditions and institutional forms of marketisation, on the one hand, and spaces for distinctive forms of pedagogy on the other.

Negotiating the Current Educational Framework: Professional Identities and Diverse Forms of Practice

If the demographic profiles and identities of students in CBHE are complex, the motivations and ways of conceptualising the roles of lecturers in FE can also be interpreted through the first example of the shuffle between human capital and social justice and a second example of the struggle between marketisation and space for different forms of professional identity and pedagogy. In the marketised spaces it occupies, English FE has had to develop multiple roles and forms of provision, including CBHE. Teaching may include a range of vocationally orientated sub-degree qualifications. These may include foundation degrees but also HNDs, HNCs and other professionally orientated qualifications. In one sense, Hodgson and Spours argue, this has 'contributed to a weakened sense of professional identity' (2019: 229). However, Avis and Orr also acknowledge the motivations of lecturers in CBHE and ask why their commitments to 'increasing the participation of excluded and disadvantaged groups reflects an interest in social justice and a concern to provide enhanced opportunities for non-traditional learners' (2016: 51).

This question also relates to debates on 'dual' and 'triple' forms of professionalism and has implications for how identities are ascribed and negotiated and how the inner drives of a CBHE lecturer are understood and conceptualised (see Gannon 2014). Notions of 'dual' professionalism conceptualise the combination of a vocational identity with that of lecturer (Gannon 2014). But, for the lecturer, a state of flux may produce multiple rather than dual, or binary, identities. Hodgson and Spours (2019: 232) argue that this is a triple professionalism:

> 'those working in the FE and skills system continue to fulfil the function of dual professionals, that is experts in both their occupation and as teachers, they will also need a greater emphasis on the ability to work beyond the boundaries of the institution and towards the wider geographical, policy and economic landscape.

In an earlier review of professionalism and professional learning in FE, Gannon (2014) summarised Spours' emerging definition of 'triple professionalism' grounded in how teachers' practices are shaped by the context and conditions they may work within. A series of seminars, hosted at the Institute of Education, London, in 2013-13, explored the nature of professionalism at four critical levels: international, national, institutional and classroom/workshop. Spours referred to a range of professional dispositions: the ability to be experts in their own profession or subject area, to be inspirational and expert teachers and to be able to work with other partners—particularly in their locality or region. This form of professionalism, characterised as 'democratic,' 'activist' and 'ecological,' was conceptualised as underpinning the co-production of knowledge and professional development. In this instance, leadership in FE (and perhaps CBHE) is seen in a supportive role. Spours also identified that the production of this form of professionalism needed to be nurtured by greater time for initial teacher training and postgraduate study, access to local, national and international communities of practice focused on improving teaching and learning and 'expansive working environments'. Fuller et al. (2011) summarised the attributes of such environments. These include: the involvement of all staff in decision-making (beyond one-off events); the promotion and use of extensive forms of constructive feedback and the embodiment of values including respect, nurture and a sharing of expertise. In earlier work (2003, 2010), Fuller et al. (2011) acknowledge intra-institutional differences. For example, it is possible for a single organisation to display a 'spiky profile' with different departments exhibiting different combinations of 'restrictive' or 'expansive' traits (Gannon 2014: 11)—and these, in turn, may be in flux rather than fixed.

Dual and triple forms of professionalism within CBHE, relate to the work of Hoyle and John (1995) and Cunningham (2015) on 'restricted' and 'extended' forms of professionality. 'Restricted' forms of professionality are characterised by skills derived from experience but limited to an immediate time and place and a perception of each event in isolation from others. By contrast, 'extended' professionality is framed and mediated

between experience, theory and perspectives placing each event in a broader social and political context (Hoyle and John 1995). Cunningham (2015) expands this notion of an 'extended' professional further by reviewing different forms of 'hybrid' or 'blended' professionalism in which opportunities to work collaboratively with others from within and outside an institution are widened. A range of regional and national networks include the Association for Research in Post Compulsory Education (ARPCE), British Education Research Association (BERA) and its Post Compulsory Education Special Interest Group, the Learning and Skills Research Network and annual events organised by individual Universities (for example, 'Reimagining FE' at Birmingham City University) illustrate these collaborations and possibilities.

However, the conditions of possibility for research, and an openness to new ideas, are not only shaped by the values of those who teach (Elliott 2012; Duckworth and Smith 2019). They are also formed by uneasy struggles between political contexts, material and institutional conditions in which CBHE is located and the time, as well as space, for developing individual and collective research and collaborative curriculum development. For example, in one sense, the current debate about the place of the Foundation Year, in HE, and how it may compete with other forms of CBHE and Access to HE, in FE, (see Augar Report 2019) is one example of both shifting boundaries between FE and HE but also within HE in specific settings. This competition may sit uneasily alongside others forms of partnership between HE and FE, and within an HEI. However, it also exemplifies contemporary processes of marketisation where, ironically, in this instance, specific universities developing Foundation Year programmes are adopting a quick response to market opportunities—associated with dominant narratives about FE. These processes may take precedence over previous forms of collaboration nurtured in partnerships between FECs and HEIs. This example of marketisation, combined with managerialism, is both a 'mode of regulation' but also a 'measure of productivity and output'—with institutional but also individual advantage secured (Lea and Simmons 2012: 182).

Conclusion

This chapter has emphasised different dimensions of the multiple identities of institutions, students and lecturers in CBHE. It is grounded in Elliott's call for the need to understand the spaces and diverse possibilities

in which CBHE may flourish. The chapter also relates to Keenan's analysis of the identities of CBHE lecturers and students and Kadi-Hanifi's review of research within CBHE. Each policy episode reviewed earlier illustrates organisational forms of FE, HE, CBHE or FE in HE. These, and contemporary enactments of practice, are specific to the identities of 'embedded' (Duckworth and Smith 2019) or 'anchored' institutions—rooted in urban and rural landscapes (Elliott 2018). On one level, how each diverse college, or university, imagines its future, and multiple identities within CBHE, is bound up in different combinations of local, regional, national and international missions and markets. However, these struggles also exemplify two manifestations of a 'double shuffle' threaded through this chapter. First, a struggle between CBHE meeting the material demands of human capital, on the one hand, and social justice on the other but also, secondly, a specific further struggle between the marketisation of FE and spaces for the multiple identities of students and lecturers in CBHE.

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Postface

'The course of true love never did run smooth' Shakespeare once noted. If it were not for the love, the passion for the subject and students taught then CBHE would flounder, we believe. The path is not, and will not be, smooth but with love comes hope and this book has tried to show how the sector is an identifiable one. It has done more, we hope, than, to quote The Bard again, give an 'airy nothing a local habitation and a name.' We hope it has brought together the varied voices which have helped the forming sector start to gain an identity. It is only a start, however; but what better place to be? What flows through the chapters is a commitment to localised, affordable, student-centred, quality HE provision.

The book has also been written with an audience of policy makers in mind for whom we hope it has helped identify, champion and consolidate past policy in order to shape its future. For practitioners in the sector we hope it gives greater sense of belonging to a wider academic grouping and voices the pedagogies which make it unique. For researchers of education, we hope it has provided a repository, summary of its milestones and a foundation to build on for future research in, on and for the sector. For a general reader we have tried to make the book accessible and hope it explains and explores the sector in a way that can be enlightening. In all, this book is about hopes.

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Afterword

If the key ideas from this book were presented in the form of a SWOT analysis we would probably find pretty even lists for the strengths and weaknesses, but the opportunities would surely outweigh the threats. If that analysis was then concluded in the form of a school report it might say that CBHE is *producing good work and making good progress.*

Geoffrey Elliot's contextualising chapter showed us that, although the provision is relatively small (around 10% of total HE), it is not niche. Since World War II CBHE has consistently offered higher education study opportunities to students who would otherwise probably not even have considered it. And, even in the face of a steady stream of reforms which have expanded the number of universities, CBHE has also proven itself to be extremely resilient. Clearly, it must be meeting a need.

Evidence throughout this book demonstrates that this need turns out to be multifaceted, primarily revolving around non-traditional students who are often: balancing study with work and family commitments; accessing higher education from home; studying in flexible ways; and in order to qualify for a range of professional and technical occupations, in local job markets. Many of these students will also have been further education students who have stayed on in the same institution, and without the cultural capital normally found amongst traditional university students. It is important that we fully understand this context, as the chapter by John Keenan explored.

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But if we leave the classroom, we often find a much more problematic wider context. Here, CBHE appears double-edged. Its localism is important—providing opportunities for local 'hard to reach' students to access local professional and technical occupations. But this happens within a wider 'positional' higher education context—where CBHE students often end up as second class citizens when competing with students who have graduated from the ancient universities. Paraphrasing Graham Gibbs, an effective teaching and learning environment turns out to have little direct correlation with employability (Gibbs 2012). But, as the chapters by John Keenan and Alex Kendall and Stuart Mitchell point out, college HE students are not passive in this process. They have a degree of agency and will learn to navigate their way through the educational habitus they find themselves in. Things may be stacked against them, but, equally, they learn to be resilient and realistic, often resulting in education compensating for society— a bit (Gorard 2010).

But how do we expand the 'bit' that Gorard speaks of? As the chapter by Iain Jones explored, it is crucial that CBHE staff experience 'expansive' rather than 'restrictive' teacher education and continuing professional development opportunities. CBHE staff need to prove that they are competent, and that they have complied with agreed standards, but they also need to be treated as trusted professionals, working to advance their dual professionalism—as critically reflective teachers and problem-solving occupational practitioners.

In this context, what might appear to be a threat turns out to be a unique opportunity for CBHE staff, for what better context could there be for staff to work with students to nurture problem-solving skills in local contexts; specifically, finding solutions to work-based problems and enhancing community engagement. And this is almost exactly what the American scholar Ernest Boyer had in mind when he spoke of a scholarship of engagement (Boyer 1996). There is an irony here, in a British context, because many of the, so-called, red brick universities established in the Victorian period originally had missions to exploit the potential behind this form of scholarship. But once academic drift took hold of these universities, they ended up emulating the ancient universities. There is a fantastic opportunity here for colleges to re-appropriate and occupy this space in order to make it their own (Healey et al. 2014; Eaton 2015). The context for arriving at such a conclusion was fully explored in the chapter by Iain Jones.

To fully release the potential behind this re-appropriation—the third space in CBHE that Alex Kendell and Stuart Mitchell carefully analysed and explored, needs to develop a strong accompanying professional identity. Without this, another double-edged issue may fester. Just as the red brick universities began to emulate the ancient universities, there is a danger that CBHE will bow to the inexorable logic that a research-focused, academic-based, curriculum is the way forward. The danger is most obviously apparent in the ways that colleges have become junior partners in university partnerships, and the way that CBHE teachers often struggle to articulate and own a distinct professional identity. On this front, the chapter by Craig Tucker, Sarah Pedder and Gemma Martin neatly captured many of the contradictions and ambivalences at play in the minds of CBHE teachers.

For the last four years I have been the research director for a Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) (now the Office for Students) catalyst project aimed at enhancing CBHE through the opportunities provided by scholarship. The background to how such a project could have been conceived was outlined in the chapter by Karima Kadi-Hanifi. It is important that we acknowledge how far we have come in delineating CBHE as a distinct and researchable space.

The conceptual underpinning for the scholarship project was Ernest Boyer's notion of a scholarship of engagement. His earlier work had popularised widening the definition of what it means to be a scholar, to incorporate, equally, not just the scholarship of discovery (or traditional research), but also the scholarship of integration (curriculum development, multi and inter-disciplinarity, etc.); the scholarship of application (knowledge transfer, community engagement, etc.); and the scholarship of teaching and learning (pedagogic research, classroom action research, etc.) (Boyer 1990).

The main aim of the project was to apply Boyer's four scholarships in CBHE contexts. This was facilitated by the Association of Colleges, who administered the project, and recruited 46 CBHE institutions in England to engage in action research projects, which experimented with enhancing learning opportunities through the application of Boyer's ideas. The main outcome was a suite of 50 resources, which utilised Boyer's concept of scholarship to enhance: student engagement, professional development, quality enhancement and curriculum development.

What was encouraging throughout that project was the commitment to securing college-wide scholarship policies and practices and to provide

opportunities for staff to engage in relevant staff development. What was particularly exciting was the commitment to providing opportunities for CBHE students to experience scholarship opportunities in the curriculum. Perhaps surprisingly, what was disappointing was the number of times that employer engagement amounted to little more than formal partnerships, without fully exploiting the potential behind a scholarship of application. And although we found many great case studies of scholarship enacted in classrooms, it was not clear that the curriculum had been validated with scholarship at its core. Hopefully, the 50 resources which the project developed will help the enhancement of these strengths and address these weaknesses.

The HEFCE scholarship project documented much of the *good work* in CBHE, but also highlighted where more work needs to be done. More attention is required around curriculum development and professional identity. The two are linked because one of the first steps in developing a stronger professional identity is to develop a vocabulary and narrative which teachers feel they can own. CBHE teachers are avowedly proud of their teaching and learning regimes, so one way to develop their identity could be to work more on the scholarship of integration. Once again CBHE teachers are almost uniquely positioned to successfully exploit the potential here. For here is an opportunity to work on integrating research—some of which may have been undertaken in traditional universities—and making a virtue of *recontextualising* that knowledge in classroom and work-based contexts, what Bernstein referred to as 'the pedagogic device' (Bernstein 2000).

For some time, The Association of Colleges has been keen to dissociate itself from the term 'vocational' education and speak instead of professional and technical education. The inferences are clear: the British education system has been dogged for centuries by the hierarchy implied by references to academic education as opposed to vocational education. Professional and technical education needs to develop a narrative which not only breaks down this hierarchy but also provides practitioners with a clear curriculum focused narrative.

Luckily, we do not need to re-invent the wheel, because history provides us with a powerful set of existing concepts. When von Humboldt defined higher education as putting staff and students in the service of *scholarship*, he also gave us our foundation for applying much of the later work of Boyer (Humboldt 1810). He also spoke about the inferences behind the German word *bildung*—character formation. This notion

became a central operating principle in the German vocational education system, implying that professional and technical education is not just training for a job, but also an induction into an occupation, with implications of pride and ownership. And although the roots of the academic-vocational divide might be found in the work of Plato, we should remember that Aristotle offered an early critique, in celebrating the implications behind the notion of *phronesis*—the practical wisdom at the heart of professional and technical work.

Recontextualisation, scholarship, bildung, phronesis. Here is a vocabulary, which if embedded in the curriculum would not only help to differentiate the CBHE offer, but could also become the foundation for a strong professional identity. That identity would mean that CBHE teachers would no longer need to talk about being caught between two stools—as neither a university-style academic or an FE teacher—and no longer feel like rabbits caught in the headlights, not knowing which way to turn. The chapters in this book outline this context and provide us with the foundation to move forward on developing not only the CBHE curriculum offer but also in helping to frame future higher education policy.

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