‘QUICK FIX’ OR ‘SLOW DEEP BURN’? AN EXPLORATION OF THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING A JOINT PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT APPROACH IN FURTHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Foreword

In this foreword, I discuss my professional role and how this enables me to have a broad understanding of the context in which my research is situated. I also explain how my perspectives have changed and influenced my position as a researcher.

My role and how my perspectives have changed and influenced my position as a researcher

I think it was my mother who instilled in me a strong sense of social justice. As a nurse, she was committed throughout her life to using her knowledge and skills for the benefit of others. She used to tell me when I was a young child that I had a gift for 'showing people how to do things', so it was probably inevitable that I would become a teacher in my adult life.

For the past 20 years, I have been committed to helping tackle disadvantage and underachievement by teaching young people and adults who need to improve their maths and English skills. As a literacy teacher and dyslexia specialist at a further education (FE) college in the south-east, I soon learned the value of providing high-quality, intensive support to the 60% of young people on vocational courses at the college who had not achieved maths and English qualifications to a good level at secondary school. It was clear to me that without these skills, they would struggle to achieve their vocational qualifications and progress on to further courses and into employment. By teaching these skills in a motivational way that was relevant and related to their vocational subject, my learners developed the confidence that had been so often eroded during their school life and they subsequently began to improve their maths and English skills.

I then progressed to an initial teacher educator role, training teachers at the college from vocational, as well as academic backgrounds. With my literacy and dyslexia

background, I had particular responsibility for helping trainee teachers better understand and respond to the diverse needs of their learners; an area that had not been addressed before I joined the team. I began my Master's degree at that time and focused my dissertation on the impact of managerialism in further education, basing my findings on interviews I had undertaken with a cross sector of teaching staff working in the organisation. I left the college midway through my studies, as my research had heightened a growing disillusionment with the institution I was working for. It seemed clear to me that the managerialist strategy was having a negative impact on the teaching staff and their learners. The research study was therefore hugely influential as a catalyst for change, since I then took a leap of faith in 2001 and joined the Prince's Trust as a basic skills manager, an opportunity that was funded through the New Labour government's national Skills for Life programme. The role involved training the Trust's volunteers and staff to better understand the maths and English needs of the young people enrolled on their programmes.

The period when I worked at the Trust was hugely significant, because for the first time I met learners with considerable disadvantage with whom I had rarely come into contact, such as those who had left care, been in prison, excluded from school or were homeless. Many of these young people would quite possibly have never enrolled at their local college, since for many of them, this world would have seemed inaccessible.

I completed my Master's degree and following a short period working at the Basic Skills Agency, I joined the government funded agency, the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA), that later became the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS). The QIA was set up by the Blair government in 2006 to improve the quality of teaching and learning in further education. In my role as Programme Manager, I led national Skills for Life programmes that aimed to support maths and English teachers develop their pedagogical and subject knowledge, predominantly through consultancy or professional development events.

In the early years at QIA, it seemed apparent from Ofsted inspection data that although there was some very good quality provision, a considerable amount was 'mediocre' (DfES, 2006, p.2). Whilst some good practice was shared through initiatives such as the government's Beacon Status programme launched in 2002, improvement initiatives tended to be focused on commissioning consultants with proven expertise in teaching and learning to support 'weaker' providers deemed 'inadequate' by the Inspectorate. These consultants had often worked as Skills for Life managers in institutions that had been graded 'outstanding' by Ofsted, or were Ofsted or Adult Learning Institute (ALI) inspectors.

By 2008, the government had invested £5 billion in the Skills for Life strategy that had been launched in 2001 (NAO, 2008) and it seemed clear to me that practitioners in a number of organisations were beginning to develop considerable expertise and no longer required external support. In these institutions, teaching staff were fully qualified and were continually updating their practice through continuing professional development (CPD) events that had been organised by LSIS. At that time, practitioners' expertise tended to be measured using external performance indicators, such as Ofsted grading criteria, and it was felt that many teachers who were working in institutions that had been graded 'outstanding' were in a strong position to share their knowledge and skills with others, not only in their organisation, but with others in their locality.

Consequently, in 2011, I designed and set up a national 'sector-led' programme where LSIS contracted with organisations with 'proven' expertise in the delivery of maths, English and ESOL[1] to share their expertise with beneficiary providers, rather than drawing on the support of LSIS associates (or consultants). Recruited through a tendering process, these providers with high-quality maths, English and ESOL provision endorsed by the Inspectorate were known as 'improvement partners' and were representative of a range of settings and geographical regions.

[1] ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages

During the final phase of the programme (September 2012 – June 2013), over 200 providers had been supported in this way. Although there were challenges, the evaluations conducted by LSIS suggested that this approach was having a positive impact on teachers' confidence and skills.

At this time, I also commissioned 50 practitioner-led action research projects with the aim of helping maths and English teachers develop innovative and creative approaches in their practice. In partnership with SUNCETT[2] and drawing on the successful LSIS Research Development Fellowship (RDF) programme, practitioners were provided with support to help them carry out action research projects. This project differed with the improvement partner approach, as it was based on collaborative approaches to professional development where relationships tended to be practitioner led, rather than a top-down model where 'experts' are parachuted in to organisations to help address identified weaknesses.

Many of the teachers who were involved in these programmes succeeded in bringing about change in their practice and I was keen to find out why it was that this approach had such a positive impact on the confidence and skills of practitioners. At this time, I also became interested in a programme that a colleague at LSIS was managing that was exploring the effectiveness of using Beacon colleges to share and transfer practice, drawing on some of the theories and practices of Fielding et al's model of joint practice development (Fielding et al, 2005; Moorse and Moore, 2006). It was at this point that I decided to focus my doctoral thesis on exploring this further, since this seemed to chime to some extent with what I had been trying to achieve with the improvement partner model and practitioner research programme.

About midway through collecting the data for my thesis in July 2013, I was made redundant but was fortunate to be employed initially for a short spell as a consultant

[2] SUNCETT: University of Sunderland Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training

for NIACE and subsequently as a consultant at the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) in January 2014. As a result, I was able to continue to conduct research interviews with teachers and managers involved in practitioner research projects that had been commissioned by the Foundation.

At that time, I had responsibility for leading on the project to develop the new professional standards for teachers and trainers working in further education in England that were launched in May 2014 (ETF, 2014). This involved extensive consultation with practitioners and a key purpose of the standards was to enable teachers and trainers to identify areas for their own professional development rather than having these decided by others, such as their line managers. The learning from being involved in this project was invaluable, as it provided further insight that would contribute to my thesis, that is, the importance of practitioner identity and ownership of professional development and the subsequent impact on teachers' motivation to improve their practice (Fullan, 2011). In conducting the consultation, I was also acutely aware of my own positionality as a manager working for a government agency, with my own beliefs, political stance and cultural background and how these variables might influence the process.

In July 2014, I was appointed by the Foundation as a consultant to join a team whose aim was to transfer the legacy of the Institute for Learning (IfL) to the ETF that was a consequence of the Lingfield review (Department of Business, Innovation and Skills [DBIS], 2012b). My role was to ensure the smooth transition of Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills status (QTLS) to the Foundation. Since April 2015, I have been employed as a permanent member of staff as Head of QTLS with responsibility for managing QTLS on a day-to-day basis as well as strengthening it to improve its parity with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). More recently, I have led on the research and development of a new advanced status for experienced practitioners (Advanced Teacher Status [ATS]) that was launched in 2017, designed to align with the Chartered Teacher Programme that has been developed for experienced teachers working in schools.

My developing research skills have been hugely beneficial, since I have conducted two research studies: an impact study and a structural review that involved extensive consultation with practitioners as well as stakeholders. Findings from the consultation informed the development of the new strengthened QTLS that was launched in September 2016. The focus of my research has also been very influential in taking forward QTLS, since collaborative working now features very strongly for teachers and trainers undertaking QTLS, as well as ATS.

An involvement in conducting research as part of my professional role has also influenced and shaped my thinking in relation to undertaking this research study. For example, I am now much more aware of the importance of my reflexivity, since when conducting research in my role, I was employed by the Foundation and therefore respondents would not have viewed me necessarily as an objective and neutral researcher, and this may have affected the way they related to me and their responses to my questions, and ultimately influenced the interpretation of the data. As a result I have become more aware of how bias may creep in and the importance of acknowledging my background and beliefs as a researcher, so that others are able to scrutinise the positioned nature of my research.

Even though I aimed to conduct my doctoral research study as an independent researcher, and this was emphasised when inviting respondents to take part in the study, I am aware now of the need to be explicit about the role of power when conducting research and how this affects the way that I perceive, interpret and write about my participants (Frisby, 2006; Frisby et al, 2005; Reid, 2004a, 2004b). Although all my life I have been committed to social justice and social change, being white and middle class, I sometimes forget that I have power over others and realise that when conducting research I need to ensure that I am not using my power in disempowering ways and try to account for power imbalance by reflecting in my research how I am discovering more about myself and writing this into the research (Reason and Bradbury, 2008, p.101).

Another issue of note is that the research that I conducted on behalf of the Foundation needed to be framed to meet the cultural norms of the organisation and so was presented in a report format, with no inclusion as to the status of myself as the researcher and a limited reference to relevant educational theory and research. This contrasts sharply with the writing of my doctoral thesis which has necessitated a development in my skills in terms of criticality, constantly critiquing what I am discovering in relation to theories and practice, and continually seeking to identify sources of evidence that may offer contradictory evidence.

I have become aware of the need to critically analyse language used in the context of my research, that is words and terms frequently used by the participants that appear to have become over-used and so risk losing their meaning, for example 'collaborative' and 'communities of practice'. Consequently, an analysis of language, particularly how language revealed tensions and contradictions between interviewees, formed part of the data analysis. Indeed I am now aware of the limitations in terms of the interpretation of the data from research that I conducted on behalf of the Foundation, since I did not take into account the role of power and conflict when analysing the data. This led me to investigate and subsequently implement activity theory as an approach to help me improve my understanding of to what extent the individual participants were influenced by the context in which they were working (Engeström, 1999a)

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Abstract

The research aimed to explore the benefits and challenges of implementing a collaborative model of professional development where teachers learn from each other, rather than from more traditional approaches where knowledge or good practice is 'cascaded' to members of an audience from 'experts' outside the workplace. It aimed to examine the extent to which practitioners can take ownership of their professional development and improve their practice through an approach known as joint practice development (JPD) (Fielding et al, 2005). Rather than being concerned simply with the transfer of practice from one teacher to another, this approach provides opportunities for teachers to share and develop their practice with each other in their working context, with the result that all teachers engaged in the process benefit from the interactions, since all of those involved in the process have skills or knowledge to share. Typically, the model involves practitioners experimenting with new ideas, informed by peer observations, professional discussions and underpinned by relevant literature.

A considerable amount of research has been undertaken to explore how the approach can be implemented in schools. However, there appears to be a lack of studies that have investigated whether JPD is a model that could flourish in further education and skills settings and so this research aimed to address this apparent gap in the knowledge.

Fundamental to the research was to explore the concepts of professionalism, collaborative learning and specifically how teachers learn from one another in ways that enable them to develop their practice. Through a series of one to one interviews, the study explores how improvements in practice are subsequently spread to the benefit of organisations. By studying the activity through the eyes of a cross section of roles in six FE institutions, the research examines the possibilities of developing a model of joint working that can be generalised to other individuals, groups and further education and skills settings. Since FE organisations are often

complex hierarchical structures, the extent to which power facilitates or constrains the approach was central to the study.

Focusing on the relationships, interactions and cultural constraints when implementing a version of JPD, the research argues that the approach has the potential to improve practice at an individual level. The findings suggest, however, that JPD is not sustainable as a means to improve practice at the level of an institution in the current climate, due, at least in part, to the prevalence of managerialist cultures in further education organisations.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this chapter, I begin my story providing some background to the study. I subsequently critically examine the political and economic context in which my research is set, highlighting changes in the further education and skills sector that relate to the study. I then outline the aims of the study, stating my positionality in relation to the research and conclude by posing four questions to which my research provides answers.

1.1 Background to the study

On a cold, rainy day in November 2018, I arrived at a further education college in London to give a talk about QTLS to the teaching staff. As I approached the entrance, I was met by groups of teachers handing out leaflets about pay and working conditions. I suspected that things may not go as planned in the next hour or so - and I was right.

There were over two hundred teachers in the lecture hall. They appeared restless and I wondered whether some were waiting for an opportunity to vent their frustration. Their moment came when they were asked if they had any questions for me and, apparently believing that I was a direct representative of government, they were highly vocal about their concerns ending with, ‘I don’t know why anyone would want to be teacher. Tell me - what is the point?’

Although I was shocked by this experience, it did not come as any surprise. Teaching staff at this particular college had endured the impact of three mergers over the previous two years, adding to frustration caused by bitter disputes with management about increased workloads, a perception of lack of autonomy, and pay that had not kept pace with inflation.

My thesis is set against this background of substantial under-investment by government over the past nine years in the further education and skills sector that has caused considerable instability, as well as an intense sense of disillusionment amongst many teachers and a loss of professional identity as a result of deregulation.

1.2 Government policy: the political, economic, cultural and historical context in which the thesis is set and changes in the FE sector that relate to the research

This study has been undertaken at a time when the further education and skills sector has been subjected to almost three decades of turmoil that began when the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 removed colleges from local authority control. In pursuance of implementing a managerialist agenda, this was a deliberate move by government to take away power from these authorities, as well as the teaching unions (Davies, 1999), requiring colleges to compete with one another for students in order to increase productivity (Kay 2003).

Twenty-eight years on, the dismantling of local authority control has systematically led to a centralised funding model of education and training. A consequence of this has been an unparalleled marketisation of the sector together with mechanisms of accountability and high stakes inspection (Ball, 2012). These factors have contributed to the development of pedagogical practices driven by assessment (Nash et al 2008) and to the 'establishment of a new form of control' and education being regarded as a 'commodity', rather than a 'public good' (Ball, 2015). Indeed, the language of marketisation has infiltrated my own organisation, where members of the Society for Education and Training (SET) are referred to as 'customers', teacher development programmes as 'products' and the term 'customer service' has replaced 'member support'.

In my research study, government policy is understood as essentially neoliberal (Davies, 2014; Harvey, 2007) where performance and product are considered more important than personal development and satisfaction, with policies and accompanying processes frequently described in terms of 'performativity' (Ball, 2003). In further education settings, these continual government policy initiatives have led to the development of organisational cultures where senior leaders are expected to prioritise financial and market performance over teaching and learning.

The impact of marketisation on teacher professionalism

These factors in relation to an entrenched performance culture have had a substantial impact on the shaping of teacher professionalism. Under New Labour, teachers in FE were subject to a series of regulations and in particular characterised by the Further Education Teachers' Qualifications (England) Regulations 2007 that required all teachers to work towards an initial teacher education qualification and subsequently QTLS or Associate Teacher Learning and Skills Status (ATLS) if they had a full teaching role (Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills [DIUS], 2007). All teachers were required to be members of the Institute for Learning and were obliged to submit evidence annually that they had undertaken a minimum of 30 hours' CPD. All costs at that time were met by the government.

A complete reversal of this top-down regulation was implemented by the subsequent Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition, since there was a belief by the government that there were 'too many external controls in further education, leeching away powers from those who need them to work confidently and creatively in the service of those they care most about: their students' (BIS, 2012b, p.ii). This led to the publication of a review of FE in 2012, paving the way for the revocation of the 2007 workforce regulations, so that from September of that year, teachers in FE no

longer had to be members of the Institute for Learning or work towards a professional status (DBIS, 2012b). By September 2013, the final requirement of working towards an initial teacher education qualification was revoked and, from this point, the requirement for FE teachers to remain qualified was at the discretion of the employer, rather than government.

A consultation subsequently conducted with the membership of the Institute for Learning suggested that members were strongly against the removal of these regulations. Eighty seven per cent of the 5,000 members who responded to the survey were strongly against the revocation of the requirement to work towards an initial teacher education qualification, fearing that this would undermine their professionalism and professional status (IfL, 2012). Concerns were also expressed by FE teachers' unions, with one fearing that the removal of the regulations would result in an 'inequity' where secondary and sixth form learners would be taught by teachers who are qualified and learners in FE would be taught by unqualified teachers (Association of Teachers and Lecturers [ATL], 2012, p.2).

Although following the revocation of the 2007 workforce regulations there is no longer a requirement for teachers to be qualified, Ofsted continues to have a strong influence on organisational policy in relation to teaching and learning, particularly with the introduction of unannounced inspections in September 2014, focusing their attention on aspects of provision that in their view have the most impact on their learners' achievement. In relation to staff development, Ofsted appears to be promoting collaborative working amongst practitioners, citing an 'outstanding' grade that is awarded where 'staff reflect on and debate the way they teach' being 'deeply involved in their own professional development' and where senior leaders have 'created a climate in which staff are motivated and trusted to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for their learners' (Ofsted, 2018b, p.39). Areas of practice, such as graded observations, however, have led to contested debates and discontent among teaching staff about the value of formulaic measurements of what constitutes 'effective' teaching (Smith and O'Leary, 2015).

Recent policy initiatives have signalled a new relationship between government and FE institutions, who now have the flexibility to structure professional development in a way that will meet the particular needs of the organisation and their learners. However, 45% reductions in funding for provision for 16-18 year olds between 2009 and 2008 (Belfield et al, 2018) are having an impact on the amount of available funding for professional development and a report published by the ETF in June 2017 stated that almost two thirds of teachers in the further education and skills sector do not spend any time on CPD (ETF, 2017). This may well be a consequence of senior leaders in FE institutions being reluctant to release practitioners for external training due to staffing pressures.

Government funded organisations, such as LSIS and its successor the ETF, have tended to rely on 'best practice' professional development models, such as one day events or short courses in order to satisfy policy makers, since their primary function is to carry out the requirements of government ministers and civil servants and to assist them in meeting targets (Keep, 2006). This 'best practice' model characterised by an 'expert to novice' approach, however, is frequently perceived as a deficit approach that has little impact on developing practice (Coffield et al, 2014).

Both regulatory and deregulatory policies implemented by successive governments over the past few decades have reduced much professional development to a strategic tool for the administration of government policy. An outcome of this has been an expectation of compliance of teaching staff. Consequently, a climate of uncertainty has become an accepted feature of working in a college (Smith and O'Leary, 2013). This has contributed to the formation of a 'controlled' teaching workforce (Sachs, 2016) that may be reluctant to experiment with new teaching strategies and to take risks. The consequent erosion of autonomy represents a serious challenge to the professional identity of teachers in the further education sector, whose previous roles have now been marginalised as a consequence of marketisation (Ball, 2015). This indicates that there is a space for an alternative professionalism that represents a shift away from the market model, placing an

emphasis on more collaborative approaches that can restore teacher ownership of a more democratic professionalism.

Policy developments in relation to collaborative models of professional learning

There is evidence to suggest that some elements of government policy have paved the way for the implementation of more collaborative professional development models. For example, over the past eight years, government policy has placed an increasing emphasis on the ability of schools and further education and skills providers to take responsibility for improving the quality of their provision (DBIS, 2011b). Consequently, there is now an expectation, despite operating in a competitive environment, that educational providers will work together in partnership, to identify and subsequently share pedagogical expertise that exists in their institutions, with the aim of enhancing the outcomes of their learners.

Policy makers argue that now free from government control, the responsibility lies with further education institutions to improve teaching standards and to respond more effectively to the needs of local communities (DBIS, 2014). This new-found freedom and sense of self-determination, however is questionable with an increased centralised control by government as a consequence of marketisation. Furthermore, it has been argued that the notion of self-improvement leads to increasing demands being placed on teachers as the role of the state is transformed by the new public management culture (Smith and O'Leary, 2013) and the government's implementation of its austerity agenda (Done and Murphy, 2018).

Recently, the ETF have taken forward the self-improvement model into a small number of their funded improvement programmes, where practitioners share their practice through partnership working, rather than a model based on externally provided CPD. Rather than a consequence of policy realisation, however, this shift

from a top-down to a more collegial approach was at least partly due to the success of the Research Development Fellows programme originally offered by Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) (Gregson et al, 2015). Based on a model of joint practice development (Gregson, 2010), the programme continued to be offered by the ETF. In 2014, the ETF made funding available for a number of projects to pilot the JPD approach and it is this initiative that has provided me with a platform for my work as an educational researcher with a special interest in novel, more democratic and collaborative forms of professional learning and development.

JPD: a radical alternative

In the current political and economic climate in the FE sector that has been described, joint practice development (JPD) represents a radically different approach to professional development that Coffield et al (2014) propose has the potential to restore trust in the professional judgement of teachers. First proposed by Fielding et al (2005), this model involves teachers working together to develop their practice.

It differs from conventional methods in three ways in that teachers are:

- empowered to take ownership of their professional development, identifying areas of their practice they wish to improve
- provided with time and space to improve their practice, enabling them to share, discuss and reflect on their practice with others
- able to experiment with new strategies and take risks without fear of being judged.

This model of professional development therefore runs counter to the more 'top-down' approaches that may be perceived as alienating and disempowering to teachers who are striving to regain some form of agency in their professional lives (Coffield et al 2014). It is questionable, however, as to whether this approach can be

implemented in performative cultures which Gleeson (2014) suggests are characterised by a lack of trust in the teaching profession, a core feature explored in my study.

1.3 The aims of the study

By carrying out semi-structured interviews with participants from five JPD projects, the study set out to explore the benefits and challenges of implementing a joint practice development approach in further education institutions. The aim was to identify the conditions that are likely to encourage the development of collaborative relationships within and between partner organisations and evaluate the extent to which leadership culture facilitates or constrains the JPD approach.

The study identified the extent to which JPD offers an effective alternative to more traditional approaches, with teachers being afforded agency to be authors of their own professional development, critically reflecting on their practice spaces of action with other practitioners.

Existing studies have tended to focus on how the JPD approach can be introduced in schools and driven by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) (ref., e.g. Sebba et al, 2012). The review of the literature indicates that little research has been undertaken to date specifically related to JPD in the further education and skills sector. There are important differences between the further education and skills and school sectors. Whereas the school sector is focused on the development of knowledge, the further education and skills sector is primarily concerned with the development of skills, linked to employment. It is this feature, as well as the smaller number of further education colleges in comparison with schools, that distinguishes it from the school sector and enables the government to achieve rapid policy intervention (Smith and O'Leary, 2015). The use of funding incentives and the

imperative to 'drive up standards' have created specific tensions in the further education and skills sector that may negatively impact on the implementation of JPD (FETL, 2019). The study, therefore, is contributing to this lack of research in the further education and skills sector and adding to the knowledge.

Drawing on the existing literature on this approach, my study sought to establish the conditions necessary to enable this way of working to flourish and at the micro as well as the macro level. It examined how this self-directed approach is internalised by individual practitioners and is subsequently permeated at an organisational systems level, exploring the infrastructure required in organisations, as well as in networks of organisations where practitioners are engaged in developing their practice with others. Contextualised by an arguably undermining funding methodology, the research aimed to identify the factors or 'drivers' that promote a systems approach to reforms in practice that lead to improved experiences for learners, such as those proposed by Fullan (2011). An examination of the role of middle leaders in mediating the approach was also a key feature in the study.

A key focus in the research concerned the examination and impact of the culture of FE institutions and in particular the features that have resulted from marketisation, such as quality assurance and performance management processes, and the extent to which this 'legibility' serves policy makers' needs rather than organisations' needs and may consequently impede the introduction of more collaborative ways of working (Smith, 2015; Scott, 1998). The role of leadership is central to the study, since the literature attests to the fact that senior leaders are crucial to establishing the conditions that enable interaction between practitioners to flourish, for example providing time and collegial space for reflection and discursive interactions about teaching and learning (FETL, 2019). Leadership culture was also a critical feature of the study, since research has suggested that, as a consequence of marketisation, college funding is driven by performance data putting pressure on college principals to demonstrate competence and compliance in order to continue to receive funding (Smith and O'Leary, 2015). Ways in which this culture of performativity undermines

the values of teaching and learning and the fostering of expansive approaches were examined.

My positionality

It is crucial to emphasise that in terms of my own positionality, I have carried out my doctoral research entirely independently of the requirements incumbent upon me as an employee and manager in the government quango that has sponsored the JPD initiative. I have conducted the research in the knowledge that the ETF, as one of the ‘creatures of central government’ (Keep, 2006, p. 50), is answerable to the Department for Education and as such, administers the existing power structures – conceptualised as Weberian bureaucratic management systems – that prevail in the sector (Samier, 2002). Having conducted my research conscious of this knowledge, I acknowledge in my role as researcher, the challenge of leaving behind the expectations of others and throughout the research remained acutely aware of the influences of my employer.

My role as an independent educational researcher**,** therefore**,** is to question the following:

- the cultural, historical, political and intellectual foundations on which such hierarchical structures are built
- current efforts under the guise of re-professionalisation to ‘educate’ or induct teachers in the further educations and skills sector into a pedagogy of performativity and productivity
- whether or not JPD is proving to be, or proving to have the potential to be, an intervention which changes minds, changes the activities in which the community of FE practitioners participate, and ultimately transforms organisational culture.

1.4 Research questions

In my role as educational researcher, the following questions will be answered by my thesis:

1. What are the current cultural, historic and political structures that influence professional development?

2. How, in the current managerialist climate, are senior and middle leaders enabling teachers to regain some ownership of their professional development through more reflective and collaborative approaches?

3. To what extent does JPD have the potential to transform professional development approaches, breaking down managerialist structures and ultimately leading to changes in organisational cultures that have historically been paternalistic and hierarchical?

In this introductory chapter, I have explored the context for my study in relation to my own personal background and experience, and the culturally, socially and historically situated circumstances of teachers in the current political and economic environment. I have considered the developments that have occurred in the wider educational landscapes over the past twenty-five years and the negative impact this has had on teachers' professionalism.

To conclude, I have argued that there is a space in the current landscape for a radically alternative model of professional development impervious to market forces

that shifts the focus on teaching and learning from those who lead to those who teach; an approach rooted in more democratic values that could potentially enable teachers to regain a sense of identity and ownership of their professional learning.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Conceptualisations of JPD are central to this thesis, but such conceptualisations as exist in the literature are largely centred on professional development in schools, school leadership (often under the aegis of what was then the National College of School Leadership), and the school improvement project generally (Hargreaves, D.H., 2012b). I have noted previously the paucity of literature on what JPD might look like and how it might be operationalised in the further education sector. FE colleges, as I further elaborate in this chapter, are very different from schools in their constitution and their culture and this must qualify our reading of the available literature such that we recognise that 'the significance of these [JPD] activities within a practice varies from practice to practice and, arguably, within the same practice in different cultures' (Winch, 2006, p. 38). That notwithstanding, the parameters of the school-oriented models are important in so far as they provide us with a valuable reference point for understanding the as yet unrealised relevance of JPD and the opportunities it offers in the very different context of further education communities. In these settings, organisational size matters, and bureaucratic management systems are seen as the determinant of efficient governance. Furthermore, dialogic and social interactionist approaches to professional development and improvement in these contexts may be seen to provide a challenge to the rule-bound, role-delimited, hierarchical structures historically embedded in the sector's culture.

In this chapter, I review relevant literature to establish the conditions that appear to be necessary to establish a JPD community. Firstly, I theorise JPD to identify how this approach differs from other professional development approaches. In particular, I focus on notions of joining from an individual, organisational and community perspective, examine the thorny issue of how practice is shared and transferred, and I review the literature on the role of the mentor in supporting this practice.

I move on to examine the concept of professionalism, the ownership of the practice being shared and the impact of JPD on practitioners' motivation and ability to bring about change in their practice, drawing out tensions and contradictions in relation to power. I review the literature on the relationship between partner organisations and the role of middle and senior leaders in supporting and implementing the practice.

Literature on factors that facilitate and those that constrain the approach is then examined, along with research that analyses the impact of JPD on practice and the role of the evaluator in supporting the activity. Finally, I analyse the literature in relation to how the JPD approach can be sustained and subsequently scaled up in order to permeate an organisation at a systems level.

2.1 What is 'joint practice development'?

The term 'joint practice development' was first proposed by Fielding et al (2005) and later by Hargreaves (2010, 2011, 2012a, 2012b) and Sebba et al (2012). These latter studies, promoted by the NCSL, sought to investigate how practice could be transferred between individuals and small teams, predominantly in schools and local authorities. Funded by government, the studies place an emphasis on developing a 'self-improving school system' and as such would seem to suggest that JPD is a top-down approach where leaders dictate the improvement activity. However, since it is the practitioners who are jointly engaged in the activity, where the improvement of teaching and learning is owned by teachers rather than their managers, JPD can be regarded as a bottom-up approach. Those tensions which exist between the bottom-up theoretical claims of JPD and the top-down organisational structures that administer it are not fully explored in the literature, something that it is hoped will be redressed in the present study.

Fielding et al (2005) define JPD as 'learning new ways of working through mutual engagement that opens up and shares practice with others'. Cordingley et al

(2003) propose that collaboration is at the heart of this whole-organisation way of working, with all partners benefiting from the relationship in the exchange of knowledge and practice, with the result that practice is improved and not simply transferred from one teacher or institution to another. This approach, therefore, provides an alternative to the cascade model of CPD where teachers are presented with examples of 'best practice' and then expected to replicate this in their everyday teaching. However, the term JPD proposed by Fielding et al, and later by Hargreaves, has been developed for a schools-based audience and so it is unclear how JPD would be interpreted in the further education and skills sector.

The literature indicates that JPD approach is not concerned with merely swapping notes, but has at its core, interactive learning within the teachers' workplace, that is 'fused with and grows out of practice' (Hargreaves, 2011, p.11). Through a reciprocal process of observing one another's practice and reflecting and engaging in professional dialogue, teachers can experiment with new ideas and so bring about a change in practice. Hargreaves states that this new model, informed by evidence from research, where two or more people support each other's development through sharing and reflecting on practice, is a 'development of the practice, not simply a transfer of it' and so is potentially a form of organisational improvement (Hargreaves, 2012a, p.9). He proposes that this approach results in professional development becoming a 'continuous, pervasive process that builds craft knowledge, rather than an occasional activity that is sharply distinguished in time and space from routine classroom work' (Hargreaves, 2012a, p.8). However, how Hargreaves interprets the term 'craft knowledge' is not clear.

There is substantial literature on craft knowledge that views the practice of teaching as an art form rather than an applied science, bringing into question the conceptualisation of knowledge Hargreaves claims JPD develops. For example, Shulman (1987b), offering a pedagogical perspective, suggests that the knowledge base for teaching consists of pedagogical knowledge gained from the experience the teacher has acquired in teaching his or her subject. This interpretation is further expanded by Grimmett and MacKinnon (1992) who propose that craft knowledge

concerns a teacher's judgement based on their experience of teaching, citing Leinhardt (1990, pp.18-9) and Shulman (1987a), suggesting that this particular type of knowledge is derived from the 'wealth of teaching information that very skilled practitioners have about their own practice ... [a] deep, sensitive . . . contextualized knowledge' (Leinhardt, 1990, pp.18-9) derived from the 'wisdom of practice' (Shulman, 1987a). More recently, Sennett (2008) emphasises the social nature of craft knowledge, in that the development of new skills involves practising skills with others, resulting in the knowledge becoming gradually embedded and transformed into tacit knowledge and this interpretation would seem to correlate with the essence of JPD that is focused on teachers working collectively to develop their practice.

The benefits of the JPD approach have been explored by Boon and Fazaeli (2014, p.39) who report that the JPD approach can bring substantial advantage to teachers, since 'teachers value sharing critical reflection, testing practice and learning from each other, both within and outside their place of employment'. Sfard (1998, p.5) argues that different metaphors of learning 'may lead to different ways of thinking and to different activities'. Rather than an acquisition approach, which regards knowledge as something that is acquired and 'infinitely transferable' (Biesta and James, 2007, p.104), this model of JPD is rooted in a participation approach that views learning as a social process where teachers are bound together by common goals, where knowledge is developed in context. This participation model involves learners being members of a community; learning is thus contextualised, rather than individualised (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Reflecting on Fielding's research, Gregson et al (2015, p.269) have developed a six-step cycle with the aim of helping leaders and teachers to understand what JPD could look like in practice, serving as a stimulus or focus for discussion, to be adapted to different further education and skills contexts. The first stage involves a creation of the conditions for the collaborative improvement of practice, suggesting that if the approach is to take root, the culture of the organisation needs to be one

where joint working is promoted and valued, and the focus is teaching and learning, rather than performance management.

Gregson et al propose that the approach, if implemented effectively, enables teachers and senior leaders to 'devolve or share power to improve the experience and achievements of learners' (Gregson et al, 2015, p.273); however, this would require leaders to create an environment for the model to become established. What is not made clear in Gregson et al's study is how the model can be implemented in the current economic climate and market-led environment where FE leaders may be reluctant to take the risk of implementing this model and this appears to be a gap in the literature waiting to be filled.

In summary, the review of the terminology used to describe JPD, particularly that proposed by Fielding et al (2005), would suggest that JPD is a superficial term and rhetoric that may be veiling a reiteration of existing power relations within organisations, where more powerful people in institutions exert their power on individual practitioners. My research seeks to uncover whether practitioners working in FE settings are able to engage in JPD free from middle and senior management control, or whether it is simply another approach exercised by management to preserve existing power structure (Smith and Katz, 1993).

Because my research examines the implementation of JPD in further education settings rather than schools, the study focuses on an innovative and relatively underexplored phenomenon. Culturally and historically embedded differences encapsulated in the notions of, on the one hand, *compulsory* education and, on the other, *further* education complexifies any transport of what is essentially a school-based JPD model from one to the other. In the FE sector, the 'rules' are not as clear cut and we must look at JPD as a more fluid, less sharply defined social practice.

2.2 How JPD differs from other models of CPD

What is distinctive about JPD is that it is in stark contrast to the more conventional CPD model where knowledge is often transferred from a so-called 'expert' to a 'novice' in the anticipation that this will bring about change (Coffield et al, 2014, Kennedy, 2005). This top-down approach tends to convey to delegates what constitutes 'good' practice and usually takes the form of attendance at events, conferences and webinars, and often fails to 'connect with the essential moral purposes that are at the heart of (teachers') professionalism' (Day, 1999, p.49).

Often referred to as a 'best practice' model, Coffield and Edward (2009) suggest it has a tendency to be perceived as a potentially authoritarian approach, since it implies that there is only one approach, that, if implemented 'will solve any difficulties' (Coffield and Edward, 2009, p.375). In a later study, Coffield states that this term risks building up a psychological resistance for those 'on the receiving end, because they are told implicitly, if not explicitly that their current practice is, in comparison, poor or inadequate' (Coffield et al 2014, p.24). This repeated narrative that teaching is 'poor' and that there is a need to 'drive up standards' has been reinforced by the current government policy, whereas recent data from Ofsted in 2018 demonstrates that 76% of colleges were rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' (Ofsted, 2018a).

Coffield (2008) further describes the conventional CPD model as 'a smorgasbord approach where individuals choose from a long list of options whatever suits them', suggesting this model is unlikely to have a substantial impact on teaching, since teams of teachers require time and space following any CPD session to reflect on any new strategies in order to develop strategies for testing these out with learners (Coffield, 2008, p.23; Schon, 1983; Eraut, 2004).

Continual policy reform and discourses with respect to standards and innovation in teaching and learning have influenced professional development approaches in the

FE sector where a certain degree of compliance is required, for example in relation to new government policies, such as the safeguarding legislation (Hoban, 2002). Kennedy (2005; 2014) argues, however, that this 'training model' approach, supports a 'high degree of central control, often veiled as quality assurance, where the focus is firmly on coherence and standardisation' and stakeholders are able to 'control and limit the agenda' (Kennedy, 2005, p.4). A number of studies, however, seem to suggest a move away from this approach where participants are passive recipients, suggesting that active and collaborative approaches, such as JPD will have more impact on improving practice than active approaches (Glaser et al, 1983; Joyce and Showers, 2002).

In support of these studies, Hargreaves argues that a weakness of this 'expert to novice' model promotes reflection 'on' (rather than 'in') action (Hargreaves, 2011, p.11), suggesting that this top-down approach may not be effective in bringing about change in practice, since it is disconnected from a practitioner's everyday working context. This contrasts sharply with JPD that Hargreaves (2011) explains 'gives birth to innovation and grounds it in the routines of what teachers naturally do' (Hargreaves, 2011, p 11). This suggests that JPD is an approach firmly rooted in teachers' everyday practice. That said, however, in the early stages of implementing the approach, prior to its being embedded in practice, Hargreaves (2011) proposes that the concept of JPD needs first to be introduced and adopted as a professional development approach by teachers and managers. In addition, he indicates that the introduction of peer observations and a coaching culture will need to be established. It would seem, therefore, that when being introduced as a new professional development approach, JPD could be perceived as de-contextualised and abstract.

The term 'continuing professional development' is a contested one. Timperley (2011) proposes that the term has become devalued, since it has a tendency to be associated with attendance and participation in CPD courses. A preferred term, she proposes, is 'professional learning', that is not merely concerned with the acquisition of theory but putting it into practice; 'implementation', Timperley

explains, 'is part of how something is learned and more deeply understood' (Timperley, 2011, p.6).

Coffield (2014, p.29) agrees that the term 'professional learning' is preferable to 'professional development', describing professional learning as 'a collaborative process of improving practice in the light of experience, research and reflection in order to become more effective and efficient at enhancing outcomes for students'. It is of significance that Coffield has included a reference to research in his definition, as the extent to which the JPD activity is research informed will be investigated as part of the study. It is the intense interaction between practitioners that leads to the creation of new professional knowledge, with theory and practice being built together, suggesting that the context through which knowledge is gained or used is as important as the new knowledge itself (Eraut, 1994). It would seem therefore that once embedded as an approach, JPD is context dependent and so cannot function as an evaluative model of knowledge production for comparative purposes within a 'market'. This is because the practice being transferred cannot be measured or standardised, as it will be shaped and adapted depending on the practitioner's individual teaching context.

Kennedy (2005) uses the term 'transformative' to describe a model of CPD founded on professional autonomy that draws together a number of facets from a range of CPD models that incorporate new knowledge as well as context. In her view, it is the focus on 'enquiry' as opposed to simply 'practice' that will enable teachers to bring about lasting change in their practice. Furthermore, there needs to be an understanding by participants of 'who sets the agenda' at the beginning and throughout the process. Therefore, issues of power are critical and will inevitably result in tensions, if such models are implemented. Indeed, she argues that an awareness of these tensions is necessary in order to promote debate amongst key stakeholders that will lead to a transformative practice (Kennedy, 2005).

Sachs (2007) offers a political perspective on professional development using the term 'reimagining' to describe a model of professional development that is 'highly

political', suggesting it will require systemic change in order to implement it. My study seeks to explore these resulting tensions and in particular to focus on what the intervention feels like for those on the 'receiving end' of this approach and the extent to which the model provides ownership by the practitioner of their professional development, unhindered by existing hierarchical structures.

Having critically appraised the concept of continuing professional development with reference to a wide range of literature written by researchers who situate their work in political as well as pedagogical educational domains, I conclude that a preferable term is 'professional learning and development' (PLD) that promotes professional autonomy, rather than 'CPD' that is associated with transmission 'deficit' models where practitioners have little or no ownership of their professional development.

I define PLD as a process that involves teachers learning (rather than being trained) focusing on aspects of their practice that they have chosen to improve over time. Rather than working in isolation, that is a feature of more conventional approaches, PLD involves teachers working together, to develop and implement new professional knowledge and skills adapted to each other's specific contexts that will ultimately improve their learners' experience. I propose that this 'democratic' rather than 'managerialist' model of professional learning provides the space for changes in teachers' attitudes, values and beliefs, as well as changes in practice.

JPD as a model for professional development chimes, therefore, with my definition. This democratic rather than managerialist interpretation implies that a further impact will be a transformation of teachers' pedagogic belief system that underpins, as Kemmis and colleagues (2014) call it, 'collaborative self-improvement' in practice [see section 2.6 on mentoring]. However, because the model is arguably a bottom-up approach that is socially situated, its successful implementation requires conditions to be created that enable 'jointness'. This feature will be critically examined in the next section.

2.3 Notions of joining: Partnerships; what is meant by collaboration? Who is being joined: individuals, organisations or communities, or all three?

If JPD is to be effective, Fielding et al (2005) propose there is a need to build on existing relationships or networks providing an established foundation on which to develop that could be internal, such as colleagues or subject departments, or external through schools working in partnership.

Hargreaves (2012a) states that it is the role of senior leaders to identify key staff within their organisation for JPD work, since they are in a position to identify individual teachers with an 'evident strength' as well as the 'capacity to work well with others' (Hargreaves, 2012a, p.9). This identification and subsequent cross-organisational sharing of knowledge is key to bringing about high-quality JPD, although what he proposes in this regard would seem to suggest an expert to novice model.

As well as being judged to be 'outstanding' Hargreaves (2012a) proposes that teachers who engage in JPD also need to be skilled in coaching skills and frequently the combination of these skills is not found in the 'outstanding' teachers and therefore 'those skilled at working with colleagues' (that is coaching) 'may have much to teach the former' (Hargreaves, 2011, p.15). This suggests that rather than inviting teachers to take part in the JPD activity through consultation, senior leaders of organisations will exercise this control. Consequently, teachers will have little ownership about which aspects of their practice they wish to develop, since this will have already been decided by their managers. This appears, therefore, to be counter to the egalitarian principles of JPD.

Hargreaves does not state how leaders select 'outstanding' teachers. However, in FE settings, this has a tendency to be informed by managerialist approaches using graded observations against Ofsted criteria, where the focus is to 'measure teacher performance, rather than actually improving it' (Smith and O'Leary, 2015, pp. 185).

'Effective' teachers are deemed to be those who meet all the criteria of a prescriptive checklist, that is a quantifiable set of data (O'Leary and Wood, 2017). This sharply contrasts to the more teacher-centred 'democratic' approaches where practitioners – individually and collaboratively – shape their professional identities and work practices (Sachs, 1999), or 'high performing' approaches where organisations 'balance pressure and support' and 'empower people to perform while holding them accountable for performance' (McKinsey, 2010, p.3).

Collaborative learning is a key feature of JPD and in terms of more closely defining collaborative practice, Little suggests that 'much that passes for collaboration does not add up to much' (Little, 1990, p.508). She argues that in order to distinguish between collaboration and collegiality, it is necessary to examine the nature of their content that may range from sharing stories and ideas to sharing practice and joint work. The literature on the JPD approach would suggest that much of the 'content' that may be shared in the relationship may be informal and this therefore poses questions about how this new content may be shared systemically in the organisation and whether the harnessing of it to the interests of an institution may disrupt or destroy it.

Taking Little's ideas further, Hargreaves (1994) suggests that in many cases, collaborative activity can be described as 'contrived', where practitioners work together in order to meet the requirements of an institution's quality improvement criteria, rather than their own professional development needs. Features of contrived collegiality, he proposes, are 'administratively regulated', 'compulsory' and 'implementation-oriented' since practitioners are expected to work together in order to achieve the aims of more senior colleagues or 'for' the institution. These relationships tend to be 'fixed in time' and predictable (Hargreaves, 1994, pp.195-6). In collaborative cultures, he argues, relationships develop essentially from teachers who voluntarily choose to work together on their own initiatives that are not necessarily time-bound and where outcomes are 'often uncertain and not easily predicted' (Hargreaves, 1994, p.193). These features that relate to time and outcomes are particularly pertinent in my study, where there are funding limitations.

Activity therefore takes place within a specific time frame, with funders often dictating the purpose of the activity and to some extent, therefore predicting the outcome. This short-term funding or ‘stop-start’ funding may prevent a continuity of support and sustained impact.

A further consideration is that if teachers are working collaboratively in the way that Hargreaves (1994) suggests, then there will be a need to establish how this way of learning can be regarded as an evidence-based mode of professional learning and development and a definitive version of JPD. Guskey (1999) suggests that this can be achieved by establishing networks and Lieberman (2000) proposes that in this way teachers will have a mechanism for validating what they have learned and then developing the knowledge further. Guskey (1999) further proposes that this way of working requires teachers to develop an understanding of student learning at teacher and organisational level that results in collaborative strategic planning in order to bring about systemic improvement. This suggestion, however, although plausible, may take some time to implement, particularly in large hierarchical organisations.

As well as JPD taking place in a single institution, Hargreaves (2012a, p.10) suggests that partnerships between institutions serve to strengthen JPD, since this enables effective practice in an institution to be shared across a whole partnership and also that a partnership can offer a considerably ‘richer’ resource than a single institution, provided that there is a sharing of staff and resources. To be ‘deep’ partnerships, JPD needs to be well established, with participants having a collective moral purpose as well as trust and reciprocity, which Hargreaves describes as ‘social capital’ (Hargreaves, 2012b, p.7). My study seeks to establish whether trust and reciprocity is manifested by the leadership as principal to the ‘sustained impact’ that is central to the research or confined to the teachers engaged in JPD. In addition, Hargreaves (2012b) suggests that evaluation and challenge also need to be practised at all levels within and between organisations involved. A number of participants in my study were external evaluators, appointed by the project leaders to report on the extent to which outcomes of the project had been met. Although not

the prime focus of my research, the role of the external evaluator in the JPD projects needs to be critically examined in my study to identify the extent to which they are able to evaluate not just the 'outputs' of the projects, but the ostensible effectiveness of the JPD model itself.

Wenger and Snyder (2000, p.139) describe groups where common interests are shared as 'communities of practice', which are 'groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise'. In this way, the learning changes who teachers are by altering their ability to take part, belong and 'negotiate meaning' (Wenger, 1998, p.226). Thus, teachers are empowered to bring about change and this is seen as a continual process where knowledge is constantly evolving and as a result of this membership of the community, their identity as practitioners develops (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Sfard (1998, p.9) further suggests that as a result, by participating in this process, a 'new more democratic practice of learning and teaching' may result. Interestingly, like Fielding et al (2005), Wenger (2007) notes that this model of sharing practice requires time and space for ongoing interaction and engagement.

Whilst the knowledge and activity give group members a sense of identity, Lave and Wenger (1991) assert that it is the developing relationship that is more critical if successful learning is to take place. Wenger (1998) suggests that this relationship enables participants to develop identities that relate to these communities and it is this 'social participation' that has an impact on the process of learning.

An alternative to the community of practice model is the concept of the professional learning community. In this model, members of the community are assigned to work on particular tasks for the benefit of the organisation (Dufour and Eaker, 1998; Blankenship and Ruona, 2007). Leadership for the JPD activity is provided by managers in the organisation and the organisation's mission drives the activity, with knowledge shared through reflective dialogue, informed by peer working (Hord, 2004). This would seem to suggest that the term 'professional learning community'

may be a more appropriate descriptor for the group of practitioners involved in the JPD activity, since the activity will have been instigated through funding secured by senior leaders in the institutions, and as such will be leader, rather than practitioner led. Therefore, a question in my study relates to whether the practitioners engaged in JPD activity can be said to constitute a community of practice or a professional learning community and, subsequently, what benefits that this brings to the organisations involved. However, as well as tangible returns on the investment of the new approach, ultimately the study seeks to explore whether the extent to which a learning community has been established ultimately benefits the learner.

Much can be learned about communities of practice from research carried out in the schools sector that could be transferable to the FE sector (Brouwer et al, 2012). These researchers found that whilst communities of practice appeared to exist in some schools, leaders needed to increase their attention to stimulating and sustaining the communities. In another study, Thompson and Wiliam (2007, p.23) emphasise the need for 'structured opportunities for new learning, practice, reflection and adjustment', arguing that teachers need regular opportunities to meet in order to reflect and test out new approaches. However, in a climate where increasingly staff numbers are being cut and continuing demands to complete paperwork are required by awarding organisations and Ofsted, this time for reflection is often not prioritised (Coffield, 2008; Ball, 2013).

In summary, the literature suggests that the enabling of collaborative working will be critical to for JPD to be implemented successfully. However, what does not seem clear is whether senior leaders and middle leaders and practitioners need to be 'joined' for this practice to be taken up, or whether it is dependent only on the collaboration between teachers. Furthermore, the balance between institutional and individual improvement is a key consideration and whether it is possible to harness individual improvement to the benefit of the institution is questionable (Ball et al, 2014).

The term ‘effective practice’ is cited frequently in the literature and since JPD involves the sharing of practice, what is deemed to be ‘effective practice’ by my interviewees is a recurring topic of discussion in the study. An exploration of the literature with respect to this terminology will be presented in the following section.

2.4 What is meant by ‘practice’ and how do partner organisations and practitioners agree what ‘good’ or ‘effective’ practice’ is?

Fielding et al (2005) note that the practice to be shared can range from a new addition to a teacher’s range of skills, to a set of activities or learning resources which may encompass the larger part of a curriculum for a particular subject area. A key requirement is for the teacher to reflect on the way in which they evaluate or look to improve their practice and the way in which they seek out and test new ideas in their practice, ensuring they manage their time so that they have capacity to experiment with new strategies.

Carr and Kemmis (1986), Kemmis (2007) and Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998) interpret the notion of reflection in a very particular way. In their seminal work ‘Being Critical’, Carr and Kemmis (1986) suggest that in order to be critical in a pedagogical context, practitioners need to ensure that any change they make to their practice must be based on an ‘informed, committed action of praxis’ being ‘critical’ (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.190). Praxis, as interpreted by Kemmis, is described as the ‘right conduct in response to a particular situation at a particular time, informed by the agent’s knowledge and by recourse to relevant theory and traditions’ (Kemmis, 2007, p.130). This suggests, in the context of JPD, rather than a ‘one size fits all’ approach, teachers should draw on existing knowledge to modify teaching strategies, appropriate to the context in which they are teaching.

In terms of what constitutes good practice, the judgement that a teacher is good, is often based on external evidence from exam results, inspection grades and an

organisation's self-assessment results, rather than based on the judgements of peers (O'Leary, 2012). However, Fielding et al (2005) suggest that when observing their peers, they have a tendency to judge 'good' practice where it is relevant to their particular teaching context and where there is evidence that the effective practice comes from a 'trustworthy source' (2005, p.57), for example it is backed up by evidence from research. The 'maturity' of the practice is also important, and is likely to have been refined over a period of time and adapted to the needs of a specific group of learners.

Fielding et al (2005) propose that there may be difficulties in making a judgement about a teacher's practice that is likely to only be 'partially transferred' and describes this as 'de-contextualised' practice and can only be evaluated when underpinned by extensive research that has studied the impact of this practice in a broad range of settings. They further argue that teachers may also have difficulties identifying specific aspects to be transferred and may have a tendency to make comparisons with their own teaching (Fielding et al, 2005, p.58).

For practice to be considered 'good' and transferable, Hargreaves, D. (2003, p.46) proposes that it needs to have 'high leverage', in that it should result in high levels of impact for a relatively low input of effort and should have some tangible benefits to learners. In addition, 'good practices' should be subject to scrutiny in order to ascertain which of the practices have the highest leverage and can be transferred the most easily. In his view, this research would need to be carried out by teacher researchers as well as professional researchers (Hargreaves, D. 2003, p.48). He notes in a later study that the term 'good practice' is 'ambiguous and flabby', with 'good' and 'best' practice often considered to be the same (Hargreaves, D. 2004, p.72).

Coffield and Edward (2009) propose there are also problems with the term 'good' practice, since when teachers make judgements about 'good' practice, this varies considerably depending on a wide range of factors, including where the judgement

takes place, as there is a wide range of teaching and learning settings, and also consideration needs to be given as to whether judgements are ‘contextualised’ or ‘generalised’ (Coffield and Edward, 2009, p.376). They suggest that it is possible to avoid the problems associated with using the adjectives ‘good’, ‘effective’ or ‘best’ by implementing ways in which teachers can jointly share practice in order to develop it, suggesting that external models are unnecessary, since teachers working together in an atmosphere of mutual respect can be trusted to make judgements intuitively about what constitutes good practice.

Taking this argument a step further, it would seem that there are inherent challenges with the external or ‘best practice’ model, because practice cannot be de-contextualised and cannot simply be lifted from one context to another. Since knowledge is situated, what constitutes ‘good practice’ is dependent on the context in which it takes place and the culture of the setting (Brown et al, 1989). The available evidence indicates, therefore, that an external model that is imposed by senior leaders is likely to provoke defensiveness and resistance amongst practitioners (Coffield et at, 2014).

Peer observation is central to the notion of sharing practice and Hargreaves (2012b) sets out protocols that should be considered when embarking on peer observations, for example a shared understanding of what will be observed, how feedback will be provided and who will be able to access the feedback. This is essential, he maintains, if the principles that underpin the JPD approach are to be adhered to, that is the principles of trust, openness, honesty and support, where teachers work together in a supportive and non-judgemental atmosphere (Hargreaves, 2012b, p.15).

A study by Gosling (2005) critically examines three models of peer observation: evaluation, developmental, and collaborative. He argues that the evaluation model is managerialist in its aims and purpose, since its intention is to make judgements about the quality of teaching for performativity purposes, whereas the

developmental and collaborative peer review models tend to be non-judgemental in their approach and support reflection on what is considered to be good practice within a particular context, focusing on the 'process' as well as the 'mechanics' of teaching. The research further claims that many teachers have not been sufficiently trained to be able to evaluate and give their peers feedback on their teaching, and questions the value of peer observations if they are not conducted with an adequate degree of criticality. There are dangers, however, in an allegiance to the training approach and conflating 'criticality' with appraisal by expert other and it would seem that teachers who are engaged in JPD activity may benefit from an opportunity to develop their skills in this regard. Furthermore, the model of peer observation may need to be reconceptualised if it is to be in accordance with the non-judgemental egalitarian principles of JPD (Wingrove et al, 2018).

Although the collaborative approach tends to be mutually reciprocal, Yiend et al (2014) argue that there may be a tendency for observers to 'uncritically value observed practice that mirrors their own', suggesting that this may impede the transfer of deep knowledge and skills (2012, pp.467-8). They further state that the peer review model leads practitioners to focus on the 'practical and observable' and may risk reinforcing existing practices. Indeed, the model may be perceived by some as risking the replication of poor practice. They therefore propose that the developmental and peer review models are combined, to include an 'educational expert', such as a researcher who they argue would serve to prompt and enrich discussions in relation to underpinning assumptions, beliefs and values, and provides an opportunity to shift discussion to a space that Bernstein refers to as the 'yet to be thought' (Bernstein, 2000, p.30). However, the inclusion of an 'educational expert' in the model may risk a return to the 'best practice' model and run counter to the aims of JPD where teachers develop their own expertise and so are not dependent on an outsider. Furthermore, the presence of a so-called 'expert' may also hinder the developing relationship between mentor and mentee.

This activity, according to Yiend et al (2014), suggests that it has the potential to go beyond the simple transfer of practice, since the power for decisions about what aspects of practice will be the focus of the transfer lies in the hands of the teachers, rather than their managers. They argue that the purpose of peer observation, when used as a tool by managers, is to standardise practice, rather than develop teachers' pedagogical skills. Peer observation when used as part of JPD activity, will require those in power to have trust in their teachers, respecting the professionalism of those involved and their value judgements, based on a more egalitarian relationship. The resulting tensions in relation to the extent to which teachers are permitted to engage in the study without the interference of 'experts' as proposed by Yiend et al (2014) or their managers is a central consideration of the study.

A recent study by Wingrove et al (2018) explores the challenges of embedding the practice of peer observations in higher education settings. Recognising that performance-driven agenda can often militate against the developmental potential of the approach, the study concludes that leaders have a crucial role in creating a culture based on agency and trust that is necessary for this approach to be effective. My research seeks to explore whether peer observations practised as part of JPD can be conducted in an atmosphere of trust, in FE organisations where there is a hierarchical culture that may militate against the collegial ethos that is necessary for this practice to be 'an enabler of creativity and innovation' (Wingrove et al, 2018, p.379).

In terms of types of practices that can be transferred, Fielding et al (2005) draw a distinction between two types. The first has a focus on 'observable' defined practices that may meet a set of criteria, such as the teachers' standards. The second, which is more relevant to this study, is a focus on learning 'new practices', emphasising that if transfer is to be examined as a learning process, then it is fundamental to clarify what it is that the practitioner needs to learn to be able to implement that new practice in a competent manner. They argue that there needs to be 'a shift in focus from practice as an observable performance to practice as the

overt result of experientially acquired understandings and capabilities which remain largely tacit' (Fielding et al, 2005, p.86). This raises questions about how an 'overt result' may be evidenced, if new knowledge and skills remain 'largely tacit', and brings into question the whole notion of transfer, that is what exactly is being transferred, and more importantly, how it is transferred. My study provides an opportunity to add to the knowledge in this respect.

Fielding et al (2005) propose that when new practice is being learned, there are three types of knowledge: 'codified knowledge', 'skills' and 'understanding and dispositions that inform decisions'. They argue that when teaching, conditions are continually changing, requiring the practitioner to be able to respond to competing priorities that require knowledge, skills and understanding to be integrated and this is often challenging for teachers working in situations that are often unpredictable. These competing priorities for a teacher's time may affect the effectiveness with which a practice is learned.

The model of professional thinking proposed by Eraut (2000) suggests that time available is the factor that most affects the effectiveness of the learning of the new practice and proposes that where there is little time practical knowledge tends to be tacit and, he argues, very often complex or 'thick', but is explained to others in a 'thin' or simple way (Eraut, 2000). It is these more tacit types of learning that are more effectively acquired through working jointly with an experienced practitioner. It should be emphasised, however, that 'working with' is quite different to 'working on' and this will be explored more fully in the next section.

2.5 What is meant by sharing practice and how is practice shared?

A considerable amount has been written about the sharing and dissemination of good practice and the term 'transfer' is used widely in the literature. However, little

has been documented about exactly how knowledge is transferred between individuals and institutions. Hargreaves (2003b) suggests that this is because little is known about what teachers do in the classroom, the intricate details of which are rarely seen by others. Good practice, he maintains, is not passed down but passed on, and should not be 'imposed' on the workforce, since practitioners will frequently opt to reject top-down initiatives that may not be seen to be in their or their students' interests. In order for practice to spread, this has to be conducted 'through peers', since innovations in practice need to 'catch on' or be 'caught from personal contact, like a virus' (Hargreaves, 2003b, p.12). It could be argued that what teachers 'do' in the classroom is observable, however, what informs what they do is perhaps more specifically what Hargreaves is seeking to suggest.

Polanyi (1958, p.49) observes that 'the aim of a skilful performance is achieved by the observance of a set of rules which are not known as such to the person following them'. He argues that if a skill cannot be described in detail, 'it cannot be transmitted by prescription' and that the only way that the skill can be passed from one to another is by example 'from master to apprentice' (pp.52-3), an aspect later taken up and developed by Lave and Wenger (1991).

This observation is echoed by Hargreaves who acknowledges that the transfer of knowledge amongst teachers is challenging to achieve, since the manner in which an innovation is applied in a practical context is often dependent on 'tacit' knowledge. He argues that good practice needs to be 'demonstrated, not just explained' (2003, p.50), with replication in a new context requiring the teacher to adapt and practise through trial and error, with the ongoing support from the 'donor' through shadowing, coaching and mentoring, so that the new practice works in its new setting. This is a particularly salient point that suggests that the 'co-creative' working relationship of the practitioners is fundamental to the successful transfer of the new practice.

A study by Thomi-Grohn et al (2003, p.4) suggests that it is not 'packages of knowledge and skills that remain intact', rather that the act of transferring involves 'active interpreting, modifying and reconstructing the skills and knowledge to be transferred'. This view is supported by Eraut (2004) who suggests that a substantial amount of new learning has to take place before knowledge is sufficiently transferred to bring about changes in teachers' practice. He estimates that the theoretical knowledge – say having been gained from a formal CPD event – amounts to about an eighth of the knowledge needed to put a new idea into practice. The remaining seven eighths is the amount of new learning that is required to bring about an improvement in practice. Eraut argues that there are five stages involved in the transfer of practice, culminating in the final stage that involves the teacher combining the knowledge and skills that are relevant into 'an integrated, holistic performance that allows the professional to think, act and communicate effectively in the new, improved practice' (Eraut, 2004, p.220). We would be wrong to think of the transfer of practice, however it be defined, as something simple and straightforward or fully understood. It needs to be recognised as a highly complex and lengthy process, and it would seem likely that a number of factors may impede a successful transfer.

The term 'sticky' is used by Von Hippel (1994) to describe information that may be hard to transfer on its journey from one person to another. Von Hippel argues that the greater the degree of stickiness, then the less successful the transfer of information is likely to be. Szulanski (2003) suggests a number of factors that may result in an increase in stickiness, for example if a donor is not motivated to share their practice or perhaps lacks credibility, where the recipient is not motivated to try out the innovation or where the relationship between donor and recipient is not based on mutual respect. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) suggest that a four-step 'knowledge conversation' may make new information and skills easier to internalise and these involve socialisation, externalisation, combination and internalisation, implying that the transfer may take time. If the gains of new practice are to be implemented and sustained, Brown and Duguid (2002) propose that where there are vertical hierarchical structures, these have to be permeated. Allied to this,

Detterman and Sternberg's (1993) typology of different depths of transfer aid an understanding of which types of transferred learning may be effective, arguing that near, surface and specific transfer are likely to be more successful than far, deep and non-specific transfer. These researchers writing from a management science perspective, seem to be proposing that transfer involves the parcelling up and delivery of existing knowledge and practice, perpetuating the notion that professional knowledge can only be devised and 'delivered' by experts normally in a position of power (Kennedy, 2005).

A focus on participation, as opposed to building knowledge, on the other hand is emphasised by Desforges (2000) who proposes that knowledge permeates a teacher's practice rather than being packaged and handed over to another colleague. Similarly, McGregor et al (2006) take this further and suggest that learning takes place through developing intertwined relationships, where new learning gradually permeates practice, rather than by being parcelled up and passed on or acquired from time to time through conventional CPD events. This would suggest that factors such as time for the relationship to develop and trust are critical for facilitating permeation, along with opportunities for reciprocal mentoring to provide challenge and support, that may not be possible in a strongly hierarchical culture.

In terms of the process of learning itself, Kolb suggests that knowledge is developed through the 'transformation of experience' (Kolb, 1984, p.38). Eraut (2010) rejects Kolb's experiential learning models, since these do not take sufficient account of the social aspect of learning. Eraut offers some useful insights, defining personal knowledge as 'what individual persons bring to situations that enables them to think, interact and perform' (Eraut, 2004, p.263), and therefore eschews Lave and Wenger's communities of practice models, as in his view, these models do not place enough emphasis on the personal and individual aspect of learning. Their research, he argues, fails to recognise that individuals may belong to a number of groups in which they may acquire knowledge and therefore interpret

knowledge within their own personal context that may have been influenced by other groups, that is 'outside the circle of shared cultural knowledge, because of the unique set of situations in which they have participated' (Eraut, 2004, p.2). He therefore seems to be suggesting that the process of learning involves interaction with others, but that this process is personalised, rather than socially constructed.

Eraut (2012) argues further that traditional forms of acquiring knowledge have been largely focused on what he terms 'codified', 'above the surface' knowledge, in other words, knowledge that is found in sources such as books and examinations. Further learning, he suggests, is required to convert this learning into personal knowledge that can be used in different situations, such as the workplace. This 'below the surface' learning relies on a more informal way of learning, for example, though participation and knowing how to use theoretical knowledge is principally tacit knowledge (Eraut, 2012, p.15). This poses questions, he argues, about how much additional learning is needed to successfully transfer theoretical knowledge into an occupational setting, for example**,** developing and adopting embedded approaches in the teaching of maths and English in a particular vocational setting. He therefore suggests that this process may involve more learning than the time taken to acquire the theoretical knowledge.

An insufficient amount of time and support afforded to this process is all too often seen as a management function 'add-on', a 'given', rather than something inherent in any 'informal' system and Eraut argues that organisations need to understand the importance of transfer, otherwise the impact of education in the workplace will be lower than expected (Eraut, 2012). Further barriers to transfer, suggested by Cunningham et al (2000), include the teacher's manager and the general culture of the organisation, where teachers are generally discouraged from experimenting with any different practices and resources and there is insufficient funding to test out new ways of working – a particularly pertinent area of my study.

There are three types of transfer of practice proposed by Fielding et al (2005). The first of these is 'replication' where learning is one-way and involves compliance, 'maintaining fidelity to the original practice'. The second is 'adaptive', where, although the original practice is still central, organisational culture and the circumstance of the individual organisation are taken into account to a certain extent. Transfer is still largely one-way, although in this model, two-way learning may occur, but this would be accidental rather than intentional. The final type proposed by Fielding is 'exchange', where the originating practice is still at the forefront, however, there is a 'commitment to reciprocity' that is emphasised at the outset. Fielding posits that this can be considered more as a 'developmental' model, since the originating practice does not remain 'static' but results in the practices of both practitioners improving through collaborative learning. The roles of mentor and mentee in the model that Fielding proposes therefore become 'blurred' or 'interchangeable' (Fielding et al, 2005, pp.90-1) and this dialogical and reciprocal aspect of mentoring will be explored in the following section.

A review of the literature clearly indicates that the term 'transfer' is a contested term that is conceptualised in a number of ways. These range from 'transmission' models where knowledge and skills are parcelled up and replicated from one context to another (Kennedy, 2005), to more transformative interpretations that recognise the capacity for teacher autonomy and agency where learning is collaborative, situated and mutually reciprocal (Deakin Crick et al, 2014). It is this latter conceptualisation of 'transfer' that I draw on when I interpret the findings in my study.

2.6 The role of the coach and mentor in the effective practice transfer relationship

Coaching and mentoring are very relevant to JPD, since a core feature of JPD involves the development of trusted non-judgemental relationships between

practitioners in contexts and asymmetrical relationships where one teacher may be more experienced than another (Hargreaves D.H. 2011, Fielding et al, 2005).

The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) (2013) define mentoring as a 'continual but informal relationship focused on long-term goals'. Operating as a 'trusted friend', the role of the mentor is to pass their knowledge on to the mentee. The mentor has expertise and knowledge in relation to the mentee and this is shared in the supportive relationship that develops and this description of a mentor is very much in keeping with the Greek derivation of a 'mentor', who gives help to a younger, less experienced person. Conversely, this suggests that the mentee is the 'receiver', or the object of the mentor, who seeks to replicate in the mentee his or her own skills and knowledge. As such, the relationship is not a mutual or equal one and there is the suggestion that the mentee is deprived in some way, having less power and being subservient to the mentor.

On the other hand, NCTL propose that coaching is a more time-bound activity tending to be focused on short-term goals. NCTL suggest that the key difference between the two activities is that a mentor has knowledge of the mentee's subject area, whereas a coach may not have such expertise, but rather has the skills to enable the coachee to reach their own solutions (NCTL, 2013).

Although NCTL's interpretation of the terms may provide some clarity when differentiating coaching and mentoring, it should be emphasised that these are contested terms (Kemmis et al, 2014, Klasen and Clutterbuck, 2002). In studying the practice of mentoring newly qualified teachers, Kemmis et al (2014) propose that there are three 'archetypes' of mentoring: 'supervision', 'support' and 'collaborative self-development', with the relationship between mentor and mentee ranging from asymmetric roles in the 'supervision' model where the role of the mentor is to undertake summative assessment of the mentee's performance, to a more collaborative model where the mentee and mentor participate as equals (Kemmis et al, 2014, pp. 160).

With respect to coaching, Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) propose that this involves the use of directive methods such as role-modelling and guided reflection and typically deals with performance improvement. On the other hand, Thomson (2013) regards coaching to be a non-directive process whereby the coach uses their ability to listen, to ask questions and to play back what has been communicated in order to help the coachee develop their own understanding of their needs.

'Buddying' is a further term that is used that tends to be a system initiated by organisations, such as in health and education, to help new employees adjust to a new role during their first few months of employment. Unlike coaches and mentors, buddies do not require any specialist training and so relationships tend to be less structured and more informal (Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care North West Coast, 2017).

These definitions appear to suggest that the JPD activity will involve mentoring, rather than coaching or buddying, since the model would necessitate the sharing of practice over time where one of the practitioners has knowledge and experience that they are able to pass on to their mentee. The closer examination of a range of interpretations of coaching and mentoring suggests that there will be a need for practitioners to be explicit about their understanding of these terms, since they will be bringing their personal life experiences and perceptions that will influence their interpretation of coaching and mentoring. Certainly, clarity is needed in the early stages of joint working in order to establish a shared understanding as a basis for their relationship.

If successful collaborative relationships are to be formed for JPD, a mentoring model based on trust, where the mentor is 'non-threatening' and 'on their side' will need to be established (Fielding et al, 2005, pp 10). Clutterbuck (1998) states that

since one partner is a novice and the other more experienced, the relationship is more likely to be hierarchical and therefore risks perpetuating the power differentials that may be inherent in an organisational structure based on the assumption that the body of knowledge resides in the upper echelons of an organisation, that is then ‘passed down’ to the practitioners at the lower end of the institution. This proposal would seem to run counter to the egalitarian promise of JPD.

The reciprocal benefits that can be gained from a mentoring relationship are suggested by Little (1990), referring to this as ‘joint work’ in that the aim is not just to transfer effective practice, but also to improve them through a mutual process of learning. She defines joint work more closely as ‘encounters among teachers that rest on shared responsibility for the work of teaching (interdependence), collective conceptions of autonomy, support for teachers’ initiative and leadership with regard to professional practice, and group affiliations grounded in professional work’ (Little, 1990, p.519), emphasising the reciprocal, collaborative nature of an effective mentoring relationship. This mutuality and collective responsibility of the process are core features of JPD, where the power of this approach runs counter to managerialist cultures dependent on accountability and performance management. Any tensions in the relationship between mentors and mentees are examined as part of the study.

Thus it seems that the roles of practitioners in each organisation may become hazy and even ‘interchangeable’ as Fielding et al suggest (2005, p.91). Indeed, Fielding rejects the term ‘transfer’ since in his view it is rare for teachers working together to imitate each other’s practice. Rather, the collaborative approach provides an opportunity for an ‘extension and refinement of their existing repertoire of practices’ (Fielding et al, 2005, p.32).

Learning in this way, Fielding et al (2005) argue, is reciprocal, not one-way, although they concede that how teachers regard themselves influences the way in which they engage in JPD, since teachers from 'originating' institutions tended to have more professional confidence, as their status had often been endorsed by performance data and were often more enthusiastic in relation to the notion of reciprocal learning. In contrast, those 'receiving' teachers, tended to lack confidence and be more self-critical about their knowledge and capabilities and 'unable to articulate what it is they are good at in ways that enable others to learn from them' (Fielding et al, 2005, p.26). This suggests a power imbalance already exists in the relationship, bringing into question whether the researchers' notion of transfer is a satisfactory one in terms of mutual reciprocity and the language used by them, that is the use of the terms 'originator' and 'receiver' to describe the mentor and mentee respectively, tends to compound this.

Returning to the issue of power in the mentoring relationship, Clutterbuck (1998) has examined how power is acquired, used and, most interestingly, how power is 'set aside' or 'parked' within the relationship. Whilst there may be a considerable difference in power outside the mentoring relationship, within the relationship power issues tended to be 'parked' in effective mentoring pairs (Clutterbuck, 1998, p.59). Furthermore, he emphasises the need for the mentee to be involved in planning and agreeing the transfer activity and this is echoed by Fielding and colleagues, who suggest that the 'receiver' engagement is the most critical aspect of the transfer process (Fielding et al, 2005, p.3).

Different types of power are summarised by Stewart (1989) and this study assists us in gaining a better understanding of its role in a mentoring relationship. The type that is particularly relevant is that of the power of expertise or power of knowledge where the mentor draws on their experience. Clutterbuck argues that 'effective mentors use their expertise sparingly' since their role is not to 'teach', but to support the mentee to 'gain insights and learn through reflection' (Clutterbuck, 1998, p.64). It could be argued that this requirement necessitates a particular skill set, in order

to avoid slipping into the role of an advisor, and this is where training in professional dialogue could be of benefit to partner organisations. Hargreaves suggests that since coaching and mentoring are at the centre of effective joint working, training in professional dialogue will be an important strand if an organisation is going to successfully embed the JPD approach (Hargreaves, 2011).

What new light the present research can bring to bear on the mentoring relationship, and the extent to which mentoring skills are a focus, is crucial in determining to what extent the power relations between mentor and mentee facilitate or constrain JPD activity.

2.7 Professionalism and professionality: Who sets the agenda?

Since my study seems to explore the extent to which managers are able to 'let go' and empower teachers to take ownership of their professional development, a review of the literature on professionalism is pertinent to the study.

Much has been written about the term 'professionalism' in the FE sector and these views differ according to whether the term has been defined by government, leaders in further education and skills providers, or practitioners themselves. Whitty (2006) offers a historical perspective on professionalism, that cites Millerson's list of features that includes theoretical knowledge, pedagogical skills, a code of professional conduct and a strong professional organisation (Millerson, 1964), where up until the mid-1970's, teachers were trusted to know what was in the best interests of their learners. Professionalism was described as 'those strategies and rhetorics employed by members of an occupation in seeking to improve status, salary and conditions' (Hoyle, 1975, p.315).

These notions of professionalism contrast considerably with New Labour's managerialist approach that introduced a need for teachers to accept accountability, seek evidence-based approaches and engage in partnership working. Whitty (2006) cites Barber's four phases of reform, suggesting a final phase of reform, described as 'informed professionalism', that follows the period of 'informed prescription', which introduces policies that are evidence-based, for example the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and standards for teacher training, proposing that it is only at the informed professionalism phase that teachers will have the knowledge, skills and attitudes required so that the government can trust them to use their judgement when they are planning and delivering teaching and learning (Barber, 2005). In other words, ownership of teachers' professionalism resides firmly with politicians and policy makers, who grant their 'trust' only when teachers are seen to have assimilated the 'informed prescription' and are operating within its parameters. We should perhaps consider, then, the extent to which politicians and policy makers can be 'trusted', since they will be pursuing their own political agenda. In spite of this, teachers do still have their own agency, identities and professional pride, even if, to a considerable extent, these have been eroded by external factors (Ball, 2015).

Gleeson et al (2005) present a cultural view, suggesting that professionalism not only takes place in a social context, but is also a social practice. Their interpretation of learning highlights the importance of a power imbalance in further education and skills settings, as well as in society at large. In an attempt to redress this imbalance, the reformed professional standards for teachers developed in consultation with the FE workforce, aimed to represent a rubric for professionalism to support teachers and trainers in maintaining and improving standards of teaching and learning (ETF 2014). This was followed in 2017 by the development of an Advanced Teacher Status (ATS) that, like Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills Status (QTLS), was underpinned by the professional standards that provided an opportunity for experienced teachers to demonstrate mastery in their practice (Exley, 2017). These initiatives aimed to restore ownership of professionalism to practitioners, rather than their managers. However, Kennedy argues that although such initiatives can be used to provide a framework for professional development and may promote

discussion amongst teachers, they have a tendency to 'narrow conceptions of teaching' (Kennedy, 2005, p. 242). Smith and O'Leary (2015) conclude that the notion of professionalism 'with all its connotations of empowerment, stability and permanence – cannot transcend this landscape', proposing that the time is ripe to focus specifically on the 'landscape' to try to establish why the 'enactment' of professionalism is so challenging in the current environment (Smith and O'Leary, 2014, pp. 183).

The impact of the managerialist 'landscape' on teacher professionalism was a key focus for my study and in particular the research aimed to identify whether FE managers are able to abandon applying external value judgements such as Ofsted grading criteria and trust teachers engaged in collaborative activity to devise their own rules of engagement and distribute their labour equitably. A sociological perspective on the drivers surrounding professionalism is provided by Ball (2003), who uses the term 'performativity' to describe the current obsession with grading, testing and data collection, with performance interpreted by what can be measured. Highly critical of this performance culture, where education is discussed in business terms, Ball states that this is leading to 'values schizophrenia' (Ball, 2003, p.221) for teachers who are attempting to meet the needs of their learners as well and perform well in accordance with external indicators, suggesting that practitioners are abandoning their professional values in the interests of their security of employment. More recently, Ball suggests that if education is to change course, then a new type of professionalism will be needed in order to re-establish trust amongst teachers, requiring a move towards a 'democratic professionalism' that will have a strong focus on collaborative working between teachers and educational stakeholders (Ball, 2013, p.39).

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS, 2012b), in its report on professionalism in FE, proposes a set of criteria to describe professionalism that includes knowledge of their subject, ongoing improvements in teaching and learning skills, accountability for high standards of teaching and learning, as well as membership of a professional group that will support the practitioner in continuing

to improve their knowledge and skills. A key focus of the government commissioned report (Commission for Adult and Vocational Teaching and Learning, 2013) was a promotion of the concept of dual professionalism, described as the combining of occupational and pedagogical expertise and the professionalism related to becoming an expert teacher or tutor in order to teach effectively in FE colleges and work-based learning providers. In a paper on 'Contesting Professionalisms', presented at the Institute of Education, Crowther (2014) sharply criticises the notion of dual professionalism suggesting that it conceptualises pedagogy as being unrelated to vocational expertise, risking the devaluation of the skills of vocational teachers' knowledge and skills.

A model of triple professionalism is proposed by Hodgson and Spours (2013) that is relevant to the study, since they suggest that as well as having a high level of subject knowledge and pedagogical skills, practitioners need to be able to work with other social partners, particularly in their locality and region. This democratic model would require FE institutions to work in new ways in a culture where support for young people to progress to employment would be a central feature. Hodgson and Spours strongly support the notion of an expansive culture that would promote maximum participation by practitioners in developing aspects of their professionalism and would be characterised by high levels of trust, as opposed to restrictive frameworks where learning and development is imposed on practitioners (Fuller and Unwin, 2004).

It is worth noting that the term 'professionalism' appears to be almost absent from the literature that specifically relates to JPD. There are scant references in Fielding et al's research (2005) and no references to the term in Hargreaves' key 'thinkpieces' (Hargreaves, 2011, 2012a, 2012b). Indeed, the word 'professional' has been replaced by 'practice', with no reference to 'continuing', with an emphasis when referring to JPD on '*practice* development' rather than '*professional* development' that is associated with more traditional CPD models.

Marketised cultures may lead to the need for a reconceptualisation of professionalism, in which practitioners are empowered to create new identities in the face of tensions arising from cultures where a degree of compliance is required in order to meet government targets (Stronach et al, 2002). The next section explores the role of teacher agency in mediating policy. Successful implementation of JPD, if driven by management, will be dependent on who exactly motivates practitioners to engage in JPD.

2.8 How practitioners respond to policy and the role of 'agency' in policy implementation

Although there has been an increase in focus on teacher agency in the past decade as a means to explore how teachers engage with policy in their day to day roles, how exactly, and in what ways it can contribute to their own professional growth, as well as the growth of others, remains underrepresented in the literature. Priestley et al (2015) propose that there has been a tendency in recent years to conceptualise agency as the individual capacity of teachers acting as 'change agents'. They argue, however, that agency should be understood not only in terms of the individual capacity of teachers, but also in respect of the environments in which they work and the conditions in which agency can be accomplished. They highlight that whilst policy expects teachers to exercise agency, it explicitly ignores the necessity for cultural and structural conditions that will enable the enactment of these development practices.

Bureaucratic cultures and the structural conditions they give rise to may change our perception of the role of teacher agency and lead us to question the extent to which practitioners are agentic in mediating policy only in the sense of administering it. A study by Coffield et al (2007) explored how government policy levers, such as funding and targets impact on learners and teachers and in particular how practitioners and their managers interpret and implement the policy in their day to day practice. A key finding in their research was that there was little evidence of a

policy being transmitted into practice, with practitioners' attention often being diverted away from teaching in order to fulfil bureaucratic requirements. Furthermore, staff who were grappling with the challenges of implementing the policy were excluded from contributing to and evaluating new reforms and Coffield et al (2005) conclude that teachers 'are neither equal nor full partners in reform, they are the *target* of reform' (Coffield et al, 2005, p. 738).

A later research study by Coffield et al (2008) sought to examine the impact of policy levers such as targets, funding, planning and inspection from a range of perspectives that included policy makers, practitioners and learners. The study indicated that practitioners felt alienated from policy changes, experienced difficulty in keeping pace with changes in policy**,** and the subsequent negative effects distracted them from working with their learners. Whilst recognising that teachers have little agency with respect to top-down policy levers, Coffield et al (2008) propose that 'remotely operated' levers can produce unintended (on the part of the powers that be) consequences but which paradoxically might prove to be positive in terms of the principles and precepts of JPD, such as increased peer support amongst colleagues and teachers and managers working together to support each other in dealing with the changes.

More recently, Coffield et al (2014) argue that teachers need to expand their role beyond improving teaching and learning in the classroom and need to become 'powerful, democratic professionals', actively engaging in discussions about how power is implemented in educational institutions, concluding that rather than being regarded as 'passive recipients or 'implementers' of policy', teachers need collectively to embrace a more powerful sense of 'agents of change' (Coffield et al 2014, p.10). The extent to which teachers are able to influence change, however, will be dependent on the leadership culture in the organisations in which they work.

Sachs (2016) proposes that this shift from compliance to a more activist professionalism will support innovation and the co-creation of new knowledge and

transformative change, but requires teachers reach out beyond their professional learning communities to engage with policy and develop partnerships across organisations. Moore and Clarke (2016) argue, however, that an engagement with government policy is frequently in conflict with and undermines teachers' pedagogic values and beliefs that underpin their professionalism, resulting in a 'cruel optimism' (Moore and Clarke 2016, pp. 666).

Since the implementation of the JPD approach may be regarded by teachers as a positive step towards professional empowerment, it is important to next examine the extent to which they are, as the beneficiaries, seen to be motivated to engage with and implement this particular policy where the activity is a mediated outcome of structure and agency (Cant and Sharma, 1998).

2.9 Teacher agency and power relations

In a paper that critically explores the demands placed on teachers in implementing a policy of inclusion, Done and Murphy (2018) highlight the apparent contradiction between high levels of political intervention by government in educational contexts and neoliberal theory that overtly links marketisation with a reduced role for the state. Ball (2015) argues that in pursuance of this agenda, rather than abandoning control over public services, the state has established a new type of control, that he refers to as 'controlled decontrol' that has led to increased surveillance and a divergence in values and concerns between teachers and senior leaders. Neoliberalism, Ball (2015, n.p.n.) suggests, 'is neither natural not [*sic*] inevitable; it is being done and planned and enacted'.

Ball's interpretation of how neoliberal policies impact on education have resonance with Foucault's discourses on power and how new forms of power and technologies, key features of the modern state, have led to 'modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects' (Foucault, 1982, pp. 777). Foucault

focuses particularly on a key characteristic of this new type of power that 'brings into play relations between individuals (or between groups)' and notably on the exercise of this power that is 'a way in which certain actions modify others' (Foucault, 1982, pp. 786 and 788).

Foucault (1982) further argues that a power relation can only be enacted if the possibility for resistance exists and although there are opportunities of 'escape' or 'flight', power relations work in a way that results in limiting the range of options available (Foucault, 1982, pp. 790). As such, those teachers who resist neoliberal practices risk being labelled as 'unprofessional' or 'obstructive' (Moore and Clarke, 2016, pp. 145). Done and Murphy (2018) propose that teachers' ability to resist the dominant performativity discourses as change agents obscures the complexity of political demands placed on practitioners. These practitioners, they argue, are inextricably tangled in the government's agenda of accountability processes, with teachers 'reduced to the measurable impacts of their classroom practice' and not able to ignore the demands placed on them by policy imperatives (Done and Murphy, 2018, pp. 144).

Exploring the literature in relation to teacher identity in a marketised context helps to expose the potential power of neoliberal discourse in an institution and to explain why compliance in enacting performative policy may be a necessity rather than a choice, since resistance may result in negative consequences for their students or, indeed, loss of employment. What also seems apparent from the literature is that resistance is a complex phenomenon in this context. This suggests that an analysis of the tensions resulting from either compliance or resistance can assist in enabling not only an understanding of the 'effects' of government policy, but also how the implementation of policy 'works' (Moore and Clarke, 2016, pp. 675; Bernstein, 2000). In the context of my study, these studies are relevant, since a key element examines the role of power and the extent to which teachers comply with or resist the existing rules in the organisation or whether teachers adopt a more a more nuanced stance that is neither compliance nor resistance, but which explores potential avenues of 'escape' or 'flight' (Foucault, 1982, pp. 794).

Research into practice development in FE needs to assess the extent to which the introduction of the JPD approach is regarded by practitioners as 'just another government fad' (top-down) or an opportunity to regain a sense of autonomy, identity and agency (bottom-up), and whether by working in collaboration with others who share similar concerns, other opportunities emerge.

2.10 The impact of the JPD approach on practitioners' motivation and ability to bring about change in their practice

Fielding et al (2005) note that in some cases, where collaborative approaches were being tested out, the motivation of the learners led to an increased motivation of their teachers, suggesting that teachers may become more motivated as they try out new teaching strategies and begin to note the impact of the changes in their practice. This was particularly observed where teachers could perceive the relevance of the change and where they could see that the change could result in a sustained improvement in their practice.

A key aspect of my study relates to the extent to which managers and senior leaders are prepared to 'let go' and 'take risks' and the subsequent impact this has on teachers' motivation and confidence. Eraut (2000, 2004) argues that the most critical factor in effective learning is confidence which subsequently leads to increased commitment and motivation. His two-triangle model that outlines factors that affect learning at work suggests that if practitioners are provided with tasks and challenges that they consider to be of relevance to them, and if they are then supported in relationships where there is trust, then they will be more confident and committed in their work. He suggests that the balance between the level and quality of support is critical, since too little support or an excess of challenge may result in reduced confidence and commitment; whereas if practitioners are not sufficiently

challenged and support is perceived to be excessive or controlling, then again, confidence and commitment may be negatively affected.

2.11 The relationship between partner organisations

The literature suggests that collaborative models of working where educators are learning together necessitate the introduction of more equal collaborative relationships. It may well be that a practitioner from a partner organisation is supporting a manager in another organisation (or vice versa) resulting in an imbalance in the power relationship and potentially putting the likelihood of change in practice at risk.

For this model to work effectively, therefore, Sennett (2008) suggests that a change in organisational culture may be needed where teachers are permitted to challenge their leaders and also have the space in which to test out approaches through trial and error in their pursuance of improvement. Fielding et al (2005) further propose that, in some cases, the sharing and transfer of practice may be an effective strategy for developing a more inclusive culture, and as such should be viewed as part of a broader organisational development strategy, rather than the sole aim. Much has been written about the extent to which an organisation's culture can be changed, most notably by Deal (1993) and Schein (1992), which includes modifying organisational values, improving communication systems and making changes to the organisational structure.

Alexander (2006) argues that dialogue promotes more equal power relationships since purposeful dialogue is collective, reciprocal, supporting and cumulative. By asking challenging questions, practitioners must be prepared to answer them, especially if the answer is not yet known. Yet the current climate of prioritising performance management dictated by the new Common Inspection Framework (CIF) may militate against any change, since the prime focus of inspection in post-16 learning is on performance within areas of learning. Coffield (2014, p.2)

suggests that teachers will need to find new ways of working with Ofsted, particularly in the current context where representation from Ofsted can be 'deliberately provocative', and cites the (then) Chief Inspector, Michael Wilshaw, who stated: 'If anyone says to you that staff morale is at an all-time low, you know you are doing something right'.

How practitioners in schools see themselves and others in the process of practice transfer may have a negative impact on the potential to bring about change (Fielding et al, 2005). The partner organisation or teacher may be labelled as 'effective' in terms of external judgements made by inspectors, or being awarded Beacon Status. Conversely, receiver institutions may be badged as 'inadequate' or 'requiring to improve'. What is unclear in the literature and addressed in the present study is the extent to which this labelling in FE settings initially impedes equal exchange, particularly in the early stages of building a relationship.

Interestingly, Fielding et al (2005) suggest that most of the relationships encountered were asymmetrical, that is the teacher from the partner organisation was deemed to be a 'better' practitioner as a result of external judgements. He proposes, however, that where relationships were 'flat' or 'symmetrical', there were opportunities for a broader range of practitioners to 'articulate and explore their own practice, and to support colleagues in the same process' (Fielding et al, 2005, p.33).

2.12 The role of middle leaders in the JPD approach

Examining the literature in relation to the conceptualisation of 'management' and 'leadership', indicates that the term 'management' is often associated with organisational hierarchy and command and control styles of management, with its roots, often not entirely well-understood, in Weberian bureaucracy (Lumby, 2019).

Educational leadership, on the other hand, that gained prominence through organisations such as the NCTL and the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL), is a less clearly defined concept. The literature suggests that leadership differs from management in that it entails exercising influence rather than authority to achieve goals that can be pursued by groups as well as individual others (Bush, 2008). Collinson (2008) argues that types of leadership can range from the more traditional transactional models of control, to more collaborative distributive approaches. My research aimed to explore the extent to which there is a transitioning from management to leadership in the brokering of the JPD project.

An early study by Mintzberg (1990) suggests that middle leaders are key to the organisation, summarising their job as interpersonal information and decision makers. Busher and Harris (1999) and Glover et al (1998) propose four roles of middle leaders: bridging and brokering that is translating policy and perspectives of senior leaders into practice; establishing a collaborative group identity in order to promote creativity; using their expertise to improve learner performance and representing senior leaders within and outside the organisation and fostering networks. It would seem, therefore, that middle leaders' roles are conflictual, since their day to day job function may involve bridging in terms of policy implementation; however, their job role in relation to an activity such as JPD will require them to act as a broker to facilitate connectivity between the JPD participants and as a catalyst to create a sense of community (Fielding et al, 2005; Gleeson and Shain, 1999; Leader, 2004). In the study, the role name 'broker' [taken from Busher and Harris (1999)] was used rather than the job title 'middle leader' in order to differentiate between their role in supporting the implementation of JPD and their day to day middle leader role within the institution.

Over the past two decades, the importance of middle leaders has increased and these players are now considered to be of strategic importance in the organisation of institutional policies (Collinson, 2007). In managerialist cultures that currently dominate the FE sector, middle leaders now have a key role in supporting leaders

in the implementation of quality assurance systems. As well as meeting the demands and expectations of senior leaders, however, Briggs (2005) proposes they also experience pressure from other managers and can therefore have a multiplicity of roles, such as corporate agents, implementers of policy, managers of teaching and administrative staff, interfacing with students and leading projects on a day to day basis. Leader (2004) suggests that middle leaders may have a pivotal role to play in developing as well as mediating the vision and strategy of senior management into everyday practice, that will involve not just ‘transporting’ the strategy, but also ‘transforming it en route’ (Gleeson and Knights, 2008, p. 67).

The hybridisation of leadership function in school and further education settings is yet to be explored in any great depth, although a study by Briggs focused on an analysis of professional identities of middle leaders in a range of roles with the aim of identifying implications for practice in both FE and school settings (Briggs, 2007). A key finding was that if they are to be successful in their role, middle leaders need not only to understand the broad range of subjects taught in an institution, but also operate effectively across an ever increasing range of other middle ‘management’ functions that do not support teaching and learning. We might have to consider the term ‘middle leader’ to be an elastic descriptor, since the role will be interpreted differently according to organisational features of the FE setting such as size, setting and geographical location.

Heads of curriculum are a key focus of my study, since their role is central in the planning and day-to-day mediating of the JPD approach, monitoring the impact and liaising with the senior management team. Arguably, the role will place considerable responsibility and pressure on the curriculum manager, particularly since FE institutions are frequently complex hierarchical organisations, and in the case of the JPD pilot, need to be completed within a limited time frame and within a certain budget.

In reviewing the literature on middle leaders, it would appear crucial to distinguish between middle leaders' *job function* a mouthpiece of senior management and their *role function* as brokers of the JPD activity. Their role function during the pilot implementation of the approach will involve brokering and mediating inevitable tensions between the senior leaders and the practitioners who are piloting the professional development approach. In their role function as brokers, they can therefore be regarded as pilots who are potential change agents, challenging the idea of vertical organisational structures manifest in the term 'Senior Management Team' and championing more horizontal organisational structure consistent with the espoused goals of JPD.

It would appear from the literature review that there is little recent research on what is a pivotal role in FE institutions. This lack of research provides the present study with an opportunity to add to the knowledge by focusing on how middle leaders can support senior leaders as well as the practitioners in the implementation of organisational change with respect to the facilitation of the JPD approach. What seems clear from very recent literature is that the concept of middle leadership, rather than middle management is emergent, as these academic managers begin to participate in more strategic activity in the organisation (Wolstencroft and Lloyd, 2019, Husband and Lloyd, 2019). Since a key role of the 'broker' in the implementation of JPD is to lead by example and to change the mindset within the institution, the evolving role of middle leaders is a key focus of the study, providing an opportunity to explore the changing nature of middle leadership in FE organisations.

2.13 The role of senior leaders in the JPD approach

Fielding et al (2005) argue that a considerable amount of 'faith' is placed in leaders as 'key enablers' of the JPD within their organisations (Fielding et al, 2005, p.40).

They suggest that these senior staff members influence the transfer of practice by setting the tone of the organisation, distributing leadership, building networks and by co-ordinating or facilitating practice transfer (Fielding et al, 2005, p.41). Hargreaves (2012b) proposes that head teachers instigate the activity by first considering what they could offer another institution and what they would like to gain from another institution. In this way, Hargreaves argues, leaders are more likely to engage with each other on an equal basis, since they will acknowledge from the outset what they can learn from one another (Hargreaves, 2012b). Senior leaders, he suggests, will also have a strategic role in ensuring that the JPD activity aligns with their organisation's strategic priorities. They will also have a responsibility for setting out the budget quality assurance and impact measurement and making JPD integral to the organisation's strategic development referred to as 'organisational capital' by Hargreaves (2012a).

The role of senior leaders is considered by Harris (2011) to be critical to develop and maintain professional learning communities within and across institutions, for example by securing the resources and 'modelling a vision and shared focus', developing a context for those practitioners who are working together to improve their practice and distributing leadership amongst teachers and 'establishing a high trust environment' (Harris, 2011, p.631). Dhillon (2013) takes this a step further by suggesting that as well as leading and managing partnerships, leaders have a key role in sustaining them and this is particularly relevant to my study in relation to the longer term future of embedding a JPD approach.

'Stakeholder ownership' is cited as being at the core of 'effective' JPD, rather than the practitioners, by Hargreaves (2012b, p.11), suggesting that this model risks being developed as a managerialist approach, rather than one where teachers are encouraged and empowered to take ownership of their professional development. Furthermore, whilst Hargreaves acknowledges that developing trust is a crucial feature of a successful JPD project, this trust is confined to the trust between mentor and mentee, rather than trust being placed in practitioners by senior leaders.

A study by FETL (2019) that examined the role of leadership in improving the quality of teaching and learning in further education contexts proposed that the environmental context is central in determining leadership practices and that the more unstable the environment, the greater the likelihood of adopting a command and control model of leadership. The study concluded that leaders, however, need to devolve ownership of and responsibility for teaching and learning strategies to practitioners, since they are best placed to improve their practice. Leaders therefore have a key role in establishing the conditions that will empower practitioners to enable collegial interaction and development to take place (FETL, 2019).

Drawing on Engeström's (2001) theory of expansive learning, Unwin and Fuller (2003) suggest that senior leaders also have a key role in developing a learning culture in their organisations. They propose that an 'expansive learning' approach will develop the abilities of all employees, and enable the expertise and experience of practitioners to be built on, suggesting that where this approach has been successfully embedded, individual and personal learning enters into the organisational learning (Fuller and Unwin, 2004). Smith (2017) argues, however, that a culture based on performativity largely driven by college principals risks undermining the development of expansive learning approaches and the core values of teaching and learning.

As has been mentioned previously, to successfully implement the JPD approach, discretion and trust are required, with informal learning being valued as a means of sharing and developing new knowledge (Fielding et al, 2005). Where teaching and learning grades are often seen as the priority, the expansive model may be a challenging one for organisations to implement. Indeed, leadership and management in the CIF (Ofsted, 2018a) are inspected primarily in terms of the effectiveness of management processes in supporting the quality of education and training within curriculum/occupational areas. As yet there is no clear indication in inspection reports of what constitutes effective practice in knowledge/skills sharing.

To conclude, if the sharing of practice becomes yet another feature to be measured, there may be a risk of replicating managerialism, rather than bringing about organisational culture change. To achieve this fundamental shift in focus, a reconceptualisation of leadership will be necessary that challenges the Ofsted inspection requirements.

2.14 The role of the external evaluator from in supporting the relationship between partner organisations

The literature on this external role is examined as part of this review since projects were required to appoint an evaluator as a condition of funding. An element of the research involved exploring how the evaluators perceived their roles and it is for this reason that evaluators in three of the five projects were interviewed as part of my study.

There has been little formal evaluation of the practices that have been transferred, according to Fielding et al (2005), who propose that more is learned about the impact of the process than the transfer process itself. My study examined how partner organisations draw on the skills of the external evaluator who plays an integral part in each of the JPD projects. It sought to ascertain whether the evaluator perceived their role as one that involved providing summative value judgements and so satisfy the requirements of the funding agency or whether it was concerned with facilitating understanding, helping participants make sense of what was happening in order to provide useful information to help improve the process in the future. This distinction, a fudging of the evaluator's role, is receiving relatively little, if any, attention in the literature.

A number of studies shed some light on involving an external evaluator as a major player in the implementation of JPD. Brown and Duguid (2002) suggest that in order to transfer practice effectively, an 'organisational translator' is required who is able to objectively match the requirements of one provider to another provider's perspective. Fielding et al (2005, pp.49-50) suggest that these 'brokers' need to 'encourage connectivity' and list a number of elements and roles, and suggesting that they need to 'assist rather than dictate processes'. It is arguable, however, that 'assist' may be a euphemism for 'direct' and in the case of my study, this is particularly pertinent, since the evaluator, although appointed by the partner organisations, is directly accountable to the funding organisation. As such their role may be contaminated by external interests that will include ensuring that certain outcomes are met in line with contractual and funding agreements.

2.15 The role of trust

Trust emerges as a key aspect of effective JPD (Fielding, 2005) and for Timperley (2011) trust is built through professionals interacting on a daily basis with one another over a long period. She defines this as 'a genuine sense of listening to others, personal regard shown by a willingness of people to extend themselves beyond what is formally required, and beliefs that colleagues have the knowledge, skills and/or technical capacity to deliver on intentions and promises' (Timperley, 2011, p.108). This demonstrates how informal learning can be shared, incorporated and integrated into systems, structures and organisational culture and this is key to sustaining long-term, deep, systemic professional development (Ingram, 2014).

My study sought to explore the extent to which FE institutions are prepared to support one another in a climate where FE organisations are keen to maintain a competitive edge. Sennett (2012) argues that modern capitalist cultures promote social withdrawal, causing economic inequality as well as a breakdown in

workplace relations that may threaten the expansive learning approach. In unequal societies, Sennett argues, people are less willing to co-operate and help each other and are losing the skills of co-operation needed to make a complex society work.

More recently, Gleeson (2014) argues governments have been guilty of developing a culture of mistrust, where fear (as opposed to trust) tends to dominate professional lives and where teachers are treated as 'trusted servants' rather than 'empowered professionals' (Gleeson, 2014, p.23). This suggests that there is a possibility that JPD may be misappropriated as a performance-monitoring tool by management and is an aspect that is something I examine in greater depth in the discussion of the findings of my research.

2.16 Factors that facilitate and factors that constrain the JPD approach

To create the ground conducive to implementing collaborative approaches, Cordingley et al (2003) suggest that professional development leaders need to 'foster teacher ownership and avoid an over managerial approach' (Cordingley et al 2003, p.9). In addition, specific expertise in coaching and mentoring may be needed, along with ensuring there is a 'collegial space' where teachers feel safe to discuss their development needs.

Research conducted by Miles and Huberman suggests that strong leadership and support for practitioners to be able to practise new skills and knowledge enables the transferring of a new practice with some fidelity (Miles and Huberman, 1994), indicating that time and space needs to be made available for teachers to not only work together with other teachers, but in order for the practice to be embedded by testing out new approaches and reflecting on their practice.

A crucial factor in this approach proposed by Brighouse and Moon (2013) is to maximise the power of 'critique' that demands skills in providing constructive feedback and that enabling teachers the time and support to continually make small changes to their practice can have a considerable effect on practice and consequently on the learning of others. Time and space will be crucial for an atmosphere of trust to be created for teachers to have the courage to take risks, accept failure if the new strategies are unsuccessful, and adapt ideas to ensure new approaches meet the needs of the context.

Fielding et al (2005) propose that practitioners are involved in agreeing and planning the transfer of the activity, suggesting that time is not only needed for practitioners to learn and adopt the new practice, but also to build the trust and relationships conducive for this learning to take place.

More broadly, temporality is an issue for higher education institutions, where there has been a pressure to accelerate learning to meet the demands under new managerial practices that are focused on competition, economic value and productivity (McGettigan, 2013). A number of studies have explored the extent to which, on the one hand, this trend (or marketing strategy) benefits learners and higher education institutions or, on the other, represents a move towards a commodification of learning, that prioritises convenience – the 'quick fix' - over quality (Wlodkowski, 2003, Marques, 2012).

Financial pressures on FE leaders may result in a demand for programmes to be delivered more 'cost effectively' in less time. Temporality, therefore, appears to be a key ingredient in the implementation JPD, which is, essentially, a 'burn'. The establishing of the Accelerated Academy has led to the organisation of events to explore more closely the changes in higher education sector through a particular focus on temporality. This is significant in researching how JPD works in the FE sector, since time is structured in further education institutions, due to an inflexible and constraining funding mechanism.

Gregson and Nixon (2013) suggest that practitioners should be allowed to identify the aspect of teaching and learning that they deem to be of specific importance to them, whilst Sebba et al (2012) note that learner voice is an important feature, as evidenced by McGregor et al (2006), implying that the view of learners should help to inform areas of practice that will be addressed as part of the JPD activity.

At an organisational level, Hargreaves (2003a, p.50) emphasises the need to identify practitioner champions of effective practice who have developed and successfully implemented the practice with 'beneficial' outcomes. In addition, 'advocate' champions are needed at a more strategic level, who may have had some involvement in validating the innovation.

A further success factor is proposed by Gregson et al (2015) who stress the importance of agreeing indicators of impact that will aid teachers when they are reflecting on their progress during and at the end of the process, and also to provide evidence of the impact more generally on teaching, learning and assessment for learning in the organisation. Impact measures suggested include hard indicators (such as retention and achievement rates) as well as soft indicators, such as changes in classroom atmosphere and an increased awareness of the importance of practitioner research by senior leaders. The qualitative difference between 'hard' and 'soft', however, suggests a continuation of prioritising measurement against externally prescribed criteria, rather than context specific and negotiated outcomes (Kennedy, 2014).

Sachs, who has written extensively about teacher professionalism, proposes that teachers working collectively towards ongoing improvement, should adopt a 'practitioner-led enquiry' approach, where the teacher is researcher, engaging in systematic inquiry, where any improvements in practice are informed by relevant educational theory and research (Sachs, 1999). The need to support practitioners

with relevant educational research is also regarded as a key element of JPD (Gregson and Hillier, 2015).

2.17 Sustaining the model within an organisation

To sustain a new way of working in an organisation, Brown and Duguid (2000) suggest that rather than focusing on a top-down reengineering approach that emphasises the implementation of processes in an organisation, managers should instead promote knowledge management practices that will enable managers to gain a competitive edge, harnessing the knowledge that already exists within the organisation. It could be argued, however, that this gaining of a competitive advantage is simply a further feature of Ball's 'culture of performativity' that focuses on measurement as a means to assess performance (Ball, 2003).

There are inevitable tensions, Brown and Duguid (2000) argue, between process and practice in that if there is too much emphasis on practice, then there is a risk that there will be insufficient structure to implement them. A focus on process may result in 'too little freedom of movement to strike that initial spark' (Brown and Duguid, 2000, p.74). To address these tensions, these researchers argue that managers need to root out the organisation's 'best practice', bridging the gap between tacit knowledge and routine practices often captured in a manual by providing opportunities for communities of practice to thrive. However, as Coffield and Edward (2009) assert, 'best practice' is a contested term and so identifying this practice may prove contentious. As Maxwell (2014) argues, however, once the tacit knowledge has been identified, support is needed by the organisation to oversee knowledge dissemination and this represents a critique of this view. Philpott (2014) further suggests that in addition to accessing tacit knowledge, regular feedback is required and this is frequently hard to achieve or not sufficiently achieved in the workplace.

Brown and Duguid (2000) further state that in a commercial organisation, this may take the form of a manual that should contain 'everyone's favourite idea' and in this way it will be used by the practitioners who contributed (Brown and Duguid, 2000, p.79). However, a 'manual' of tacit knowledge is a far cry from how Polanyi and his followers theorised the transmission of tacit learning (Polanyi, 1958, 1966).

In their studies of expansive learning, Engeström et al (1995) promote the idea of 'boundary crossing', described as 'horizontal expertise where practitioners must move across boundaries to seek and give help, to find information and tools wherever they happen to be available' (Engeström et al, 1995, p.332). Practitioners engaged in this approach 'learn something that is not yet there', developing with others a new, broader and more complex concept and then putting it into practice (Engeström and Sannino, 2012, p.2). Essential also to these studies was the concept of 'knotworking', a metaphor that Engeström explains as 'a pulsating movement of tying, untying and retying together otherwise separate threads of activity' (Engeström et al, 1999, pp.346-7). This concept describes the emerging collaborative practice that in time moves towards the implementation of new ways of working.

2.18 The scaling up of the approach from practitioner to organisational level

The spreading of pockets of effective practice across educational institutions is an inevitable challenge. The term 'scaling up' derives from the business sector, associated with the notion of increasing productivity that prioritises quantity over quality. It is also often used by policy makers and those concerned with educational reform, where there is an imperative to increase the numbers of those influenced or reached by an improvement in practice (Coburn, 2003). Coburn (2003) argues that this restricted interpretation tends to obscure the implications of reach that include a need to create the conditions in an organisation that will enable a deep and

lasting change in practice. The term also implies that effective practice can often be replicated, rather than adapted to meet the needs of specific contexts.

Writing from an educational leadership perspective, Harris (2011) suggests that there is a risk of losing quality when scaling up, arguing that there needs to be a continued focus on improving outcomes for learners, recognising that there will be a ‘tension (here) between professional empowerment, responsibility and accountability and top-down prescription’ (Harris, 2011, p.632) necessitating ‘some degree of direction, specification and prescription’. This would seem to resonate with features of a top-down approach, as opposed to a model where responsibility for teaching and learning is fully devolved to practitioners.

Fullan (2011), offering a macro perspective, proposes that there are ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ drivers that need to be considered if whole organisational change is to be achieved. The right drivers that are levers of whole organisation reform would have at their core the development of teachers’ skills. Conversely, wrong drivers for system reform include an over-reliance on external accountability to bring about improvement, such as test results and appraisals, suggesting that these could also include using Ofsted grading to measure the performance of teachers.

To achieve whole-system reform, Fullan argues that a clear implementation strategy is needed that incorporates collective capacity building as an essential element, so that rather than being sporadic as and when funding becomes available, it should be sustained, otherwise any advantages that have been gained by new learning will be short-lived and may risk a return to the former practices (Fullan, 2010).

Fullan proposes that change theory can only be powerful in informing educational reform if those with knowledge who are charged with implementing the change are actively engaged and motivated in bringing this about. This would imply that the

practitioners, as well as the middle leaders need to be involved in the implementation of JPD, if organisational culture change is the long-term object of a JPD model. For a reform strategy to be successfully implemented, he argues that there should be flexibility and opportunities for reflection and learning in context (Fullan, 2006). One of the fundamental aspects of change to which Fullan often alludes is that because it is complex, it requires persistence as well as resilience. Change is, as Fullan often implies, untidy, complex and challenging, and researching into it often finds a 'messy narrative of change and flows' (Mooney Simmie et al, 2019, p. 55), a notion which resonates strongly with my own research story.

The most significant gains are achieved where the practice of collaborative working, focused on learner needs, shifts the drive for improvement away from the management and brings it nearer the actual practice of teaching and learning (Harris, 2011). Harris (2011) suggests that for the professional learning community in the institution to be effective, it needs to have depth, that is there is evidence that the practice is making a difference to learner outcomes; it needs to have breadth, for example there is risk-taking by teachers, who are empowered to test out innovative strategies in the classroom; and finally it needs to have length, in other words there is investment to ensure that the work of the community will be sustained.

It is this balance between the top-down management from leaders and the professional empowerment of teachers that is examined as a critical element of the research and in particular whether the approach has the capacity to break down managerialist structures within organisations.

2.19 Summary of the literature review

The review of the literature suggests that whilst there is a wealth of research in this area focused on schools, for example the studies of Fielding et al and Hargreaves, little research has been undertaken in relation to the implementation of JPD in the FE sector. The distinction between the schools and FE context is therefore crucial and consequently my project operationalises a model built on the principles of JPD as it appears in the literature, but is arguably different and distinctive.

Hargreaves' thinkpieces, which could be regarded as 'recipes' for the ideal kitchen as opposed to in depth research studies 'on the kitchen floor', suggest perhaps that the key reasons for promoting the JPD approach appear to be related to organisational improvement, rather than the professional learning and development of individual teachers within the institution**.** Since Hargreaves' and Fielding et al's (2005) research studies were funded by government through the Department for Education and Skills and the NCSL respectively, the key driver for promoting the JPD approach is likely to relate to top-down quality improvement, with the likely intended audience being policy makers and senior leaders within educational institutions, as distinct from practitioners.

It can be concluded from the review that there is an increasing imperative for FE providers to support one another to improve the quality of their provision. Although this represents a marked shift from a culture where providers tended to seek help from external 'experts', market structures are still in place and institutional 'success' remains the dominant culture. A move towards self-improvement therefore brings with it challenges, notably with respect to providers' capacity and willingness to help one another where cuts in funding have led to staffing reductions. In addition, the model assumes that teachers already have the necessary skills and/or the will to support one another in order to be able to bring about improvements in their practice. Furthermore, an insistence on personal targets that meet demands for individual efficiencies in line with corporate performance demands militates against co-operative professional development activities. The approach also pre-supposes

that there is an incentive for providers to collaborate with one another and this is questionable in a climate where there is intense competition between further education institutions.

A reading of the literature suggests that research is needed to acquire a better understanding of the challenges of implementing the model in further education institutions in managerialist cultures shaped by high stakes accountabilities, since the model necessitates not just the sharing of effective practice, but also support in the transfer of the practice in an atmosphere of trust.

An understanding of professional learning communities and the nature of collective learning helps to explain to some extent why the model may be effective, suggesting that social rather than individual participation has an impact on learning. However, the current tensions of the demands on practitioners' time in the current economic climate and an emphasis on performance management present challenges in developing and sustaining such communities.

An exploration of the definitions of mentoring affords a more in-depth understanding of the reciprocal benefits of sharing practice. In particular, the need for mentoring organisations to 'park' power issues so that trusting relationships are formed that allow the transfer of practice is of importance, as well as the necessity to develop skills to impart their experience to the mentee. However, as the literature suggests, it has to be questioned how easy it is for organisations characterised by hierarchical cultures to put aside power issues, particularly in the initial stages of relationship building, where it may be evident that the relationship has been brokered on the basis of external judgements, such as inspection, and this may inevitably have an impact on how practitioners see themselves.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, I revisit the aim and objectives of the research and provide a rationale for the methodology that will support the purpose of the research. In addition, I provide a justification for my approach to ethics, as well as a rationale for the chosen methods of data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Research aim and objectives

The aim of the research was to explore the benefits and challenges of implementing a joint practice development (JPD) approach in further education institutions.

The objectives were to:

- identify the conditions that encourage the development of collaborative relationships within and between partner organisations
- establish how 'effective' practice can be identified by senior leaders, middle leaders and practitioners and subsequently shared to the mutual benefit of partnered further education organisations
- evaluate the extent to which leadership culture facilitates or constrains the JPD approach
- extrapolate from the data set ways in which a version of the JPD approach has the potential to improve practice and have a sustained impact at an organisational level
- suggest some implications for practice.

It should be also be noted that the support model has changed since the original application to London South Bank University for ethical approval. It was agreed by the University, however, that a revision to the original application for ethical approval was not necessary. This change in the model reflects the joint practice development approach adopted by the ETF and represents an opportunity rather than an issue,

since the revised model appears to focus on a more bottom-up and practitioner-led approach, than the previous one facilitated by LSIS, where improvement partners who had been approved by LSIS were appointed to support institutions who had been identified by the Skills Funding Agency as 'requiring improvement' or 'inadequate' (see Appendix 1 for a summary of changes to the JPD model).

Drawing on the existing literature on this approach, my research identified the potential of JPD as a means to improve practice in further educational settings, as well as the conditions necessary to enable this way of working to flourish, and at the micro as well as the macro level. With a focus on middle management, it examined how this self-directed approach is able to be internalised by staff at a range of levels in institutions and subsequently permeated at an organisational systems level. It explored the existing infrastructure in organisations as well as in networks of organisations where practitioners are engaged in developing their practice with others.

In particular, the research established factors or 'drivers' that promote a systems approach to reforms in practice that lead to improved outcomes for learners, such as those proposed by Fullan (2011). Fullan suggests that a 'right driver' or force can be judged by whether it promotes motivation of practitioners and learners and their ongoing improvement, whether it fosters teamwork and successfully impacts on all teachers and learners, rather than a few, underpinned by a 'systemic' rather than 'fragmented' approach (Fullan, 2011, pp.1-4). As an element of the research, I identify these 'drivers' and extrapolate them from the data.

3.2 Research sample

The study began in June 2014, comprising 14 semi-structured interviews that concluded in October 2015. Middle and senior leaders, evaluators and a teacher

working in further education and skills institutions in England from five JPD projects were included in the study.   Twelve interviewees participated in the study.

- Six different further education institutions were involved in the research, with two of the organisations working in partnership.
- Four of these were adult and community learning and two were voluntary and community sector organisations.
- Nine interviews were conducted by telephone and five were face-to-face interviews.

An overview of the sample is provided in Appendix 2. This provides a breakdown of the five projects and the twelve interviewees, their role in relation to JPD activity and date of the interviews, and whether these were conducted face to face or by telephone.

3.3 Rationale for the sample size

Reflecting on sample size, Ritchie and Lewis (2003) suggest that in qualitative research, samples tend to be small in size, since ‘phenomena need only to appear once to be part of the analytical map’ and so increasing the number of organisations in my sample would not necessarily result in uncovering new evidence. In addition, because data from qualitative research is very detailed, sample sizes need to be kept small in order to be able to undertake the depth of analysis required (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, p.83).

Furthermore, as I was not seeking to make statistical claims about the frequency of occurrences in the data, there was no need to make sure that the sample was representative of a sufficient number of organisations, as I was not seeking generalisability.

The FE sector is very diverse in nature, comprising a broad range of contexts that include FE colleges, sixth form colleges, private training providers, specialist colleges (for example land-based, special educational needs colleges), offender learning institutions, adult and community learning (ACL), and voluntary and community sector organisations.

The sample was selected to serve the purpose of being able to compare the way in which the JPD approach was implemented in a small number of organisations in two FE settings: ACL, and the voluntary and community sector. A characteristic of the teaching workforce in these two settings is a tendency for a high percentage of part-time workers, with one study suggesting that as many as 82% of the ACL workforce are employed on a part-time basis, considerably higher than in FE colleges, where the figure of part-time workers is 58% (LSIS, 2012). By focusing on these two settings, I was able to extrapolate from the data the extent to which the JPD approach could accommodate teachers who worked part-time.

3.4 Rationale for the sample design

Types of FE institutions selected for the study

ACL is defined as all learning delivered for those over the age of 18 and includes accredited as well as non-accredited courses. It does not include higher education programmes and the focus is on provision offered in the community, normally commissioned by the local authority, in partnership or alone.

Community learning plays an important part in providing a route back into learning for those who may have had a negative experience of learning in the past. A wider role involves supporting government policies on localism, social justice and social mobility. Four ACL organisations were involved in the study: three adult and

community colleges in the south-east and London regions, and a residential college in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations in my study can be defined as non-profit-making organisations that are independent of government. They are involved in offering programmes to motivate adults to take up learning, particularly those who may have had negative experiences of learning at school, those for whom English is not their first language, the long-term unemployed and those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Two VCS organisations participated in my research, with one based in the east of England and another in London.

Further discussion of sample composition

The aim therefore was to ensure that there was geographical representation from more than one region, with projects located in the south-east, London, eastern, and Yorkshire and Humber regions.

As well as being characterised by part-time provision, ACL institutions in particular have been the subject of cuts to funding (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2018) that impact on the amount of provision, leading to job instability for teaching staff and the research sought to investigate the extent to which constraints in funding that are most sharply felt by these provider types impacted on the piloting of the JPD approach.

Interviewee roles in relation to JPD

Interviewees were selected to ensure that they represented a range of roles in the JPD activity. The role names I developed and assigned to them were deliberately different from their day to day job titles. This was because in the process of implementing JPD, my interviewees would be players in the JPD community, rather than employees in the hierarchy of their institution. The day to day roles of

principal/vice principal and middle leaders tended to be focused on management; however, the JPD roles of strategic enabler and broker were oriented more towards leadership. This produces an inevitable tension between role function and job function in development of a community of joint practitioners (see Fig. 7). The assignation of role names, as opposed to job titles, therefore is related specifically to the division of labour, taking activity theory as the structuring frame for examining the implementation process of JPD as the activity in which the roles are enacted (Figure 2).

Participants in my study in relation to JPD roles were:

- strategic enablers, who were senior leaders (chief executive officers or vice principals) in their organisations (three participants)
- internal brokers and facilitators, who were middle leaders (for example heads of curriculum, quality managers) in their institution (five participants)
- a mentee who was a teacher, directly involved in JPD with another teacher from a partner institution (one participant)
- evaluators, who were independent consultants commissioned by the individual projects and whose involvement in the projects was a condition of funding by the government agency (three participants).

The sample is weighted towards middle leaders. This is because middle leaders had a lead role in planning and implementing the JPD approach that is, turning the vision of collaborative working into reality (Gleeson and Knights, 2008). Responsible for mediating tensions between senior leaders and practitioners, this 'layer' has been selected for my study because of their position in the hierarchy of the organisation, being equidistant from both the senior leaders and practitioners and also having insights about the learner experience. Since power relations is a key feature of the study and middle leaders are the mouthpiece of those with considerable power (leaders) mediating with those who have little or no power (practitioners), I considered that their role was pivotal to the success or failure of the approach (Briggs, 2007).

Limitations in the sample design

Since the managing agency funded the project, I was aware that the data that I would obtain would be limited, in that there would be a lack of objectivity in relation to contentious issues such as the funding available and limited timescales for the projects.

As the sampling design was weighted towards upper and middle management and lightly weighted towards the lower tiers in the organisational structure, I was aware that the perspective I would gain in terms of impact on teaching and learning would be limited. The focus of the study, however, was on the relationships, interactions and cultural constraints in relation to the implementation of a version of JPD. The 'object' of the exercise was specifically to explore the potential for JPD to create an environment conducive to professional learning and development and not a 'measure' of whether JPD improved the quality of teaching and learning at the point of sale as evinced by either results or student satisfaction. For this reason, it was considered outside the scope of the study to include any number of learners.

The sampling is proportionate, however, to the management-heavy division of labour in the way the JPD project was introduced into the organisations involved in the study and so represented an opportunity to evaluate how middle leaders, rather more so than practitioners, have transformed their practice in order to implement JPD as an alternative approach to professional development. Therefore, rather than an evaluation of the impact of the JPD at practitioner level, the focus of the study involved an interrogation of the systemic structure of the establishment and facilitation of the JPD that was a key objective of the research.

The balance and weighting of the sample, therefore, is commensurate to the aim of the study that was to interrogate the systemic structure of the organisations to scrutinise the rules of JPD engagement in practice and those in roles who occupy key strategic positions in facilitating its implementation, that is the middle leaders (brokers), rather than senior leaders (strategic enablers).

3.5 Overview of individual projects

Specific data relating to the individual projects can be found in Appendix 3, however in this section I provide an overview of the five projects.

Project 1: Power relations focus

In Project 1, representatives from two organisations that were working in partnership were interviewed, in order to elicit a cross section of views from vice principal to tutor, enabling me to explore power relations (Foucault, 1982) and the tensions between individuals within organisations at the macro and micro level, and how these affect the practitioners and the subsequent impact of the approach. In this particular project, the broker and mentee from one of the institutions were interviewed twice, with the second interviews being conducted a year later, in order to explore the systemic level of impact of the JPD intervention on their practice and their organisation and in particular to explore the extent to which these two individuals had affirmed their identities and resisted the effects of power from senior leaders. The strategic enablers of both institutions were also interviewed once to shed more light on the longer term strategic influence of piloting the model.

Project 2: Strategic enabler focus

The rationale for selecting these interviewees was primarily to focus on the role of the chief executive officer working in a voluntary and community organisation whose role was a strategic enabler in relation to JPD activity. I had also heard that a large number of partner organisations were involved in this particular JPD project and so wanted to find out more about the challenges and limitations of working with more than one partner and the impact this could have on JPD. I chose to interview the middle manager of this institution in order to provide further insights into any tensions or contradictions in the interpretation of the approach in relation to the mentees and mentors.

Projects 3 and 4: Broker

In these projects, the focus was the role of the broker, whose role was to broker relationships with partner institutions as well as between teachers and to facilitate and manage the approach in their institutions.

Projects 5: Evaluator

The focus in this project was the role of the evaluator, who stepped beyond the role assigned to her by the funding agency, by seeking to co-create and develop the JPD approach with the practitioners.

Time period when interviews were conducted

The interviews were conducted over a period of 17 months. The reason for this was that, rather than providing a snapshot of the JPD activity when all interviews would be carried out towards the end of the project activity (June/July 2014), I wanted to explore the impact of the practice in a sample of institutions a year after funding had ended, and to identify to what extent the activity was permeating the institutions at a macro as well as a micro level.

Therefore, as well as conducting second interviews a year later with the broker and mentee in Project 1, I conducted the interviews with the strategic enablers in both of the organisations involved a year after the funding had ended for the JPD activity.

I also conducted two interviews with the broker and evaluator in Project 5, in order to explore to what extent the JPD activity had been sustained, a year after funding had ended.

3.6 Research method

The research method used to collect the data was semi-structured interviews. I chose this method to gain an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of practitioners and managers with respect to the JPD approach. Using this method, the participants were able to help me construct reality, with subjectivity a fundamental part of my research (Robson, 2011). Although I had been a practitioner 14 years earlier, my current knowledge of what it is like to be a teacher today is based on talking to other teachers and reading research, rather than through a direct experience teaching. I was therefore aware of the potential of bias towards a managers' perspective. As a researcher, however, with a strong sense of social justice and working on a professional doctorate with social justice as a core theme, I could equally relate to all perspectives on the egalitarian aims of the JPD project.

I chose semi-structured as opposed to structured interviews as I wanted to have the flexibility to immerse myself in the world of the participants, rather than an approach that would place greater limits on the data collected. In terms of my role as a researcher, I wanted to be more than a 'pipeline' through which knowledge is transmitted (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997). By adopting a semi-structured, rather than a structured approach to the interviews, I was able to be a participant in the research and was therefore in a position to be able to create and negotiate the meaning of individuals' thoughts, feelings, views and experiences in relation to their practice, rather than accept knowledge as a pre-existing phenomenon. Using Kvale's (1996) traveller metaphor, the semi-structured approach that I adopted enabled me to play an active role in the interview, as I was 'travelling with the interviewee', facilitating the development of their 'stories' and leading them to new insights and as such playing an active role in the development and interpretation of the data (Kvale, 1996, p.3).

This active, rather than passive approach that I adopted also enabled me to take a heuristic approach that allowed me to a limited extent to bring my own personal experiences and feelings into the interviews, particularly at the beginning of the interview when I provided a rationale and context for the research. As a result, the interviews were collaborative in nature between me and the interviewees, enabling a sharing and reflection on the themes in question (Douglass and Moustakas, 1985).

I aimed, therefore, to adopt a non-hierarchical approach to the interviews that enabled me to occasionally ‘step outside the formal role of the neutral asker of questions’ (Olesen, 2000). In relation to issues with respect to cultural affinity socio-demographic characteristics and similarity of shared experiences, I was aware that in organising and conducting the interviews I needed to be conscious of the influence that hierarchy might have on the interviewees’ responses and how this might impact on my relationship with those participating in the study and whether this may enhance or impede the collection of authentic data. All those invited to take part were willing and gave their consent to be interviewed, with the exception of one middle manager. I was, however, aware that I had made assumptions regarding access to my participants, that is that my day-to-day role would ‘open doors’ and they would consequently be more willing to talk to me.

When conducting my research, I was also conscious that my participants have multiple overlapping identities, since they construct meaning from a range of facets of their identity (Kezar, 2002). As well as being mindful of my participants’ identities, I was also aware of the way in which the participants in my study may have perceived my own multiple identities, since I was carrying out my research in my *role* as an independent researcher, but respondents were aware of my management *job* at the Foundation. Therefore, some respondents may have perceived that there was a power imbalance between me and them and this may have affected their openness with regard to their responses and potentially the validity of the research findings (Cohen et al, 2000, Kemmis et al (2014b). A number of the interviewees may have feared there could be repercussions if they voiced criticism of the project and others may have been eager to please me as the researcher (Borg, 1981).

Consequently, I needed to consider bias as a factor that may have had an impact on my study (McNiff, 2014, p.24).

It was important to ensure that themes were discussed in depth, and that as far as possible I was not in any way influencing the views and thoughts expressed by the interviewees. I was careful in my use of language to ensure that this was as natural as possible, so as not to lead the discussion in a particular direction. In some respects my interviewing strategy reflected a JPD approach in that I attempted to establish a trusting relationship at the outset. I aimed to provide a strong platform from which the issues in relation to JPD could be explored collaboratively. During my study, I aimed to develop a relationship with the participants that was built on and underpinned by trust that enabled me to achieve my aims as a researcher, but also taking into consideration their professional aspirations, so abiding by the BERA guidelines.

With respect to the type of questions that I used, these were a mixture of ‘content mapping’ questions to open up the research and to raise topics for discussion, as well as ‘content mining’ questions that enabled me to explore and probe issues in sufficient depth as to allow me to explore the meaning that individuals had articulated (Kvale, 1996; Rubin and Rubin, 1995; Spradley, 1979). Interviews were conducted to enable interviewees to move from their everyday level to a deeper space where in-depth feelings and experiences could be discussed (Robson, 2011; Rubin and Rubin, 1995; Spradley 1979).

Four of the interviews were conducted face to face and 10 by telephone. Participants were interviewed by phone to avoid substantial travel. I was, however, aware of a number of disadvantages where I interviewed participants by phone. For example, these tended to be shorter than the face-to-face interviews and I was unable to observe non-verbal cues that are often helpful when the interviewer is trying to explore a topic in more depth, or indeed wishes to alter the topic (Robson, 2011). The other disadvantage was that I was less able to gather information about

the context of the participant, for example I was unable to gain a perspective about the environment, types of learners and general atmosphere of the institution.

3.7 Approach to ethics

Before embarking on my research study, I consulted the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) (2011) ethical guidelines, and I made every effort to ensure that I observed them in order to reach an ethically acceptable position in which my actions as a researcher could be considered to be 'justifiable and sound' (BERA, 2011, p.4). I also gained ethical approval from London South Bank University.

As I was not directly working with the participants, I approached the ethical issues in the following two ways. Firstly, prior to interviewing the participants I ensured that I obtained fully informed consent from the individual who was to be interviewed by producing a consent form that is included in Appendix 4. I did not offer any incentive to any of the interviewees to participate. I approached the potential participants by sending them an e-mail invitation (Appendix 5).

I was not directly involved in working with any of the participants at the time of the study. However, I had previously worked with one of the participants when I worked at LSIS, where an aspect of my role involved managing practitioner research projects. The participant was involved in a project that I jointly managed, which meant that I had a relationship with them other than as a researcher. I was aware that this kind of relationship has ethical and methodological implications for a research study (Atkins and Wallace, 2012) and have commented on this where issues have arisen.

Secondly, I ensured that I protected the anonymity of the participants and the organisations in which they worked (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). I did this by using generic titles for their JPD role in the study and then gave them a project number as an identifier in place of the name of the organisation in which they worked.

I used a digital recorder to record the interviews and before the interviews began, I requested the participants' permission and agreement prior to switching on the recorder. To protect the information, I copied the audio recordings onto my personal laptop computer, which is password protected, and removed the recordings from my digital recorder, once the interviews had been transcribed. I explained this to the participants and also informed them that I would delete the recordings and transcripts, once my dissertation had been published.

In addition to audio recordings I also drew on impact data from final reports of the projects that had been written by the external evaluators and subsequently submitted to the ETF. I gained the approval of the responsible director at the ETF to use these reports as a source of data (see Appendix 6 for the approval request).

3.8 Method of data analysis

I used two forms of data in my study: audio recordings from the interviews and final reports of the projects that had been written by the external evaluators and submitted to the ETF. I was aware of the limitations of the latter source, since these would have been written to meet the requirements of the funder, rather than the FE institutions who had participated in the projects.

The audio recordings were initially transcribed verbatim by two recent graduates who were not experienced in transcribing and had no knowledge or understanding of the

context of the study. I therefore had to correct each of the transcriptions before starting to code the data.

I was aware when I was correcting the transcriptions that there are conventions that stipulate how transcriptions should be undertaken and presented. For example, although I intended to present the transcriptions as ‘verbatim’ records, I had to consider the implications of this as to whether I should note in the transcriptions whether a participant had paused, hesitated, rephrased or repeated some of what he or she had said. Savage (2016) argues that pauses and hesitations are crucial to a researcher’s understanding, however, I made a decision not to note these in the transcriptions, but rather to refer back and listen to the recordings, if further interrogation was needed. Furthermore, in transcribing the interviews, I attempted to stay faithful to what the participants had said by not correcting the grammar or inserting words that would perhaps make the transcriptions ‘grammatically correct’.

When considering how I should analyse the wealth of data that I had collected, I decided to use Wellington’s (2000) six stages of analysis as a framework. I had decided to use NVivo to code the data. The ‘nodes’ or themes under which the data was coded were explicitly aligned to questions that I had framed in the methodology section 3.7. These questions were directly related to the model of activity theory that I chose as my unit of analysis (see Figure 2).

I also drew up each transcript in a Word format, with a column on the right-hand side of the text. This enabled a further way of checking data, thus ensuring that I had not missed anything crucial through the NVivo coding process. As I result I was able to fully immerse myself in the data, as well as reflect on it, and also analyse and code the data. Once I had coded all the data, I was able to analyse it section by section, linking it with the relevant literature and then subsequently begin to synthesise the data as a set of findings.

3.9 Research methodology

As the main aim of my research was to explore the factors within an organisation that either facilitate, constrain or redefine models of JPD, I needed to adopt a research methodology where I could study the whole organisation and how the key players related to one another, rather than focusing on the individual perspectives of teachers and managers working in the institution. Rather than adopting an approach where I would have been able to explore individual teachers' and managers' particular perspectives with respect to JPD, I chose to seek a methodology that would enable me to study their perspectives within the wider framework of their organisations.

I therefore examined the literature in relation to cultural historical activity theory (CHAT). The review indicates that activity theory may be used by social scientists, particularly those undertaking research in multi-agency settings where there are a wide range of variables and hence a need for more joined up thinking, for example Leadbetter et al, 2007, whose research is cited later in this chapter. Activity theory is also being increasingly used by researchers in education to analyse educational activity in practice with the aim of bringing about change (McNicholl and Blake, 2013; Wilson, 2014). CHAT offered a socio-cultural approach that would enable me to analyse the interactions between the participants and their relationship within the organisations, and in particular tensions and contradictions that exist within the institution. CHAT seemed an ideal tool, and, more specifically, the activity theory systems models as developed from Leont'ev by Engeström (1999a), since it would not only provide a methodological framework, but also practical tools with which the framework could be applied and therefore also support me in analysing the data.

3.10 Rationale for selecting the approach

As has been observed in the previous chapter, the cultural context in FE institutions, having invariably been established within organisations over time and with reference to historical antecedents, is of particular importance to this study. Nevertheless, as new policy initiatives are constantly being introduced, along with cuts to funding, people working in these organisations are constantly having to respond to rapid change**,** destabilising the existing orders and re-acculturating educators (into neo-liberal norms)**,** and CHAT, therefore, offers an interpretative approach that is particularly relevant.

The historical and cultural context in FE institutions is particularly significant, having invariably been established within organisations over a period of time. Nevertheless, as new policy initiatives are constantly being introduced, along with cuts to funding, people working in these organisations are constantly having to respond to rapid change and therefore CHAT offers an interpretative approach that is particularly relevant.

These continual changes have resulted in many practitioners questioning the purpose of their professional lives, their roles within the institutions in which they work and their relationship with them (Gleeson and Knights, 2006). CHAT enabled me to examine the interrelationships and tensions resulting from these changes in established practices in work settings in relation to JPD.

Since my study aimed to develop an understanding of the social practice of JPD, 'the subject-community relations – communicative relations – as an integral aspect of activity systems' (Engeström, 1999a, p. 32), by individuals working across organisations at teacher (mentee/mentor), middle leader (broker) and senior leader (strategic enabler) level, an activity theoretical approach seemed an ideal methodological framework to use. The term 'strategic enabler' was a name that I developed and assigned to senior leaders in my research; the name 'broker' was

taken from a study by Busher and Harris (1999). The terms were used to distinguish participants' '*roles'* in the implementation of JPD from their *'jobs'* in their institutions.

Using this approach, I was able to examine social and cultural practices in FE institutions from two perspectives: firstly, through a consideration of how practitioners learn from one another by engaging in the cultural practices of JPD; and secondly, by reflecting on how mediational tools, such as language, influenced the activity (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). Focusing on collective social practices, CHAT allowed me to study in depth the complex nature of JPD within the workplace and the motives of various participants in the study, highlighting interactions, contradictions and tensions. The model also enabled me to explore how improvements in teachers' practice could be achieved by improving the 'system', rather than focusing on the individual. I was also able to construct a framework within which to examine the data that emerged from the five projects, placing an emphasis on 'action or intervention in order to develop practice and the sites of practice' (Edwards and Daniels, 2004, p.108).

A further reason for selecting this model is that it essentially focuses on social justice (Reason and Bradbury, 2008) and potentially enables disempowered individuals, such as practitioners, to be heard. The theory therefore has the potential to be able to challenge existing societal and cultural constructs within an FE institution.

Since CHAT places emphasis on resolving tensions through dialogue, there was also a risk of maintaining the status quo in terms of organisational systems, rather than challenging them. I was conscious, therefore, that contradictions emanating from strong power relations within FE institutions may not be easily resolved, since those in power may be reluctant to relinquish that power and may have an interest in maintaining the existing organisational culture (Avis, 2009).

Furthermore, as CHAT focuses on specific and localised social practice, rather than society at large, it was not possible to generalise on the socio-political level since this is beyond the scope of CHAT (McNichol and Blake, 2013). However, my study focused on exploring whether activity theory could be transformational within the terms of reference of my study, that is the organisation that was the focus of the research (the Project 1 Lead Organisation), and the organisational learning and development that was a consequence of implementing the new activity.

My aim, however, was to shine a light on the relationships in one particular institution rather than make generalisations on a broader level and so to some extent I addressed this limitation by ensuring that I closely analysed the activity system 'to see how things look from the perspective of the various agents, and to sense the forces that influence their perceptions and their actions' (Bakhurst, 2009, p.207).

This theoretical approach was selected as it provided a framework which allowed me to analyse the data and examine the research questions from a range of different angles and perspectives. As a methodological approach, I was able to explore the way in which knowledge was socially constructed in relation to the activity and so develop a better understanding of the activity itself, through close analysis of how the participants related to and interacted with each other within the activity system. In the study, I was aiming to uncover 'societally important new, objectified meanings and relatively lasting new patterns of interaction' (Engeström, 1999a, p.31) in order to make recommendations for improvements and suggest what would need to change in order for the JPD approach to flourish.

Using CHAT, I explored the individuals' practice within wider social, cultural and historical contexts and examine how this new way of working could lead to the development of expansive as opposed to restrictive working environments (Engeström, 1999b). I also examined the relationships between the participants and their organisations and the tensions that existed and the extent to which structures within the organisation either supported or impeded this type of working. Rather

than examining the activity practitioner engagement in JPD in a mechanistic way, I was able to examine more closely the way in which JPD has the potential to humanise teaching and learning, by focusing on changes in practitioners' values and pedagogical approaches. Furthermore, I was able to identify ways in which JPD had the capacity to open up social interaction, where the pre-existing culture closed it down.

In particular, using a critical theoretical approach, I examined the role of power in institutions, exploring the discourse from a micro as well as macro perspective (Burr, 2003). In addition, I was able to suggest why individual practitioners were improving their knowledge and understanding through working with others, but were not necessarily making a difference in their organisations at an organisational level, focusing on the leadership culture and exploring the change in leadership culture that would be necessary for the JPD approach to thrive.

Since the research study examined five very different projects with a wide number of variables in terms of the participants and their relationships with others in their organisation, different types of institution and processes, activity theory provided a coherent framework that enabled me to collect and examine the data in a particular way, that is with the JPD activity as the focus, rather than the individuals that were the subjects of the activity (Engeström, 1999a). Drawing on Engeström's second activity theory model, I interrogated the model and reflected on the processes involved and analysed the impact of the activity in terms of changes in practice both at a micro and macro level within organisations, both from a horizontal, vertical and diagonal perspective. This involved identifying how subject-object relations within the activity system were mediated in a multi-directional dynamic, as opposed to a mono-directional, 'subject-artefact-object', almost linear, way.

Offering a flexible model that could be applied to a single activity system or multiple systems, it provided an 'accommodating framework' within which to examine the JPD activity (Roth and Lee, 2007, p.191). This degree of flexibility could present a

limitation of the approach calling into question its validity (Bakhurst, 2009). However, since the interrogation of the JPD model enabled me to conduct a contextual analysis, I identified how the JPD approach could lead to changes in the organisational culture and/or improvements, and therefore in one respect, it could be argued that CHAT 'has proved its value and, in one sense, its validity' (Philpott, 2014, p.50).

Drawing on Leadbetter et al's (2007) interpretation of the model and proposed areas of focus, I established how activity theory could be used to help me analyse and understand the practice of JPD in a systematic way from the individual perspectives of people working in a number of different organisations, focusing on social, cultural and historical contexts. Each of these are explored below and interpreted in relation to my research study and Engeström's two generations of activity theory.

3.11 Using activity theory as a framework for studying JPD

Leadbetter et al (2007), in using activity theory to investigate the development of new ways of working in local authorities, highlight a number of areas on which to focus if activity theory is to be used as a framework for studying practice and these are particularly relevant to my study. Firstly, they propose a need to identity the key players, their roles in relation to the activity and their relationship with other partners. A second area is to clarify the activity that the professionals are undertaking, what they are working on and why; and thirdly, there is a requirement to understand the tools being used, and these include ways that professionals engage and use of language, for example the language used in the JPD project-based theoretical and research literature.

In educational settings, Leadbetter et al (2007) suggest that mediation is particularly important as it offers a helpful way of comprehending the range of tools used within an activity system. These tools represent a breakdown of the whole activity into

elements akin to ‘scaffolding’, for example the ways that practitioners and managers engage in the activity, the processes, specific areas of focus for the participants.

A final area involves an analysis of the rules that may constrain the activity that will necessitate a consideration of the historical relationships and practices. This will also include a study of how work is divided up and the tensions that this may cause and how this changes as new practices begin to develop.

A helpful critical analysis of the application of CHAT in an education setting is provided by Wilson (2014) in which she analyses a study that focused on the practice of mentoring PGCE students in their school placements. Using the CHAT framework to analyse the data, Wilson (2014) argues that by focusing on the different ‘objects’ and ‘rules’, the researchers in the study were able to highlight the contradictions between the focus of mentors (public accountability in relation to delivery of the curriculum) and that of trainee teachers (teacher as a professional learner) and the tensions that arise in partnership between schools and initial teacher education providers. As a result, the researchers were able to reflect on how mentors may be able to shift the emphasis towards helping the trainee teachers develop their practice as learners. There are similarities between this study and my research, in that the middle and senior leaders are focused strongly on accountability in terms of quality of provision and learner outcomes. However, there are differences in my study, since I examined this phenomenon in the further education and skills sector, where contextual factors, particularly with respect to ‘rules’ (for example, deregulation) were a key factor in the analysis.

As suggested earlier in this chapter, as a result of historical antecedents, activity systems are always in a state of flux and the elements within any one system may ‘change places over time’ and new rules may be adopted, as aspects of the practice change (Wilson, 2014, p.23). This interaction between elements of an activity system or systems can offer the opportunity for change and can act as a way of

bringing about ‘expansive learning’, concerned with the learning of new forms of activity (Engeström, 1999b).

Although I concluded that CHAT represented a useful methodological framework for studying the social practice of JPD, I was aware of its potential limitations. For example, because CHAT is focused on practice that is very specific to the local context, it is not generalisable to society at large.

Since the historical origins of activity theory are embedded in the writings of Marx, Engels and in the Soviet Russian cultural historical psychology of Vygotsky, Leont'ev and Luria (Engestrom, 1999a), CHAT offers a political, rather than an a-political theoretical approach that focuses on structure and culture that are very closely connected. The structure of the organisation reflects the internal politics of it, with cultures producing structures and structures producing cultures and so are reciprocal. Activity theory therefore provided a model that enabled me to examine the impact of power during the implementation of the JPD approach and to focus on the division of labour in the organisation and subsequent tensions that were a form of internal politics. In particular, the conflict between management obligations and loyalties and allegiance to a system (JPD) which may be perceived as oppositional to such is very much a matter of the locus of power and therefore represents a political dimension to activity theory as a theoretical frame.

3.12 Reflection on Engeström’s first generation activity theory model

Engeström’s first generation activity theory model (Figure 1), reflects Vygotsky’s belief that human activity is mediated by tools or artefacts that are historically and culturally specific (Vygotsky, 1978). The term ‘subjects’ is used to describe the person or people whose perspective is the focus of the analysis Engeström (1999a). The ‘subjects’ of my research were brokers or facilitators (middle leaders), the

strategic enablers (chief executive officers or vice principals), the funding agency and a practitioner (mentee). The ‘object’ or goal/motive of the activity system as a whole was the development of new pedagogical approaches and the outcome was an improvement in the learner experience.

The mediational tools (or artefacts) for the JPD project included primarily the processes that were used to underpin the mentees’ work that led to a sharing of practice, how they established the focus of practice that they were motivated to improve and how they recognised the effectiveness of their existing practice, the methods they used to share practice and the ways in which they assessed the impact of the activity on their practice, learners and institution, underpinned by any protocols of the institution (rules) in which they were working.

I wanted to understand how practitioners interacted and ‘joined’ with one another through the use of language and engaged in ‘knotworking’ (Engeström et al, 1999, p.346). There are different ways of interpreting the notion of ‘joint’, for example how strong the knot needs to be in order for relationships to develop and changes in practice to occur and, central to this study, was an understanding of how particularly tacit knowledge and skills are shared and the conditions that need to be in place to facilitate this. The extent to which the individual players had flexibility in relation to this activity was explored as well as how the individuals viewed themselves in terms of their developing practice and the extent to which they had control over this.

Concluding this section on my reflections on Engeström’s first generation activity theory model, the following image depicts a simple representation of an activity system, where the activity is JPD.

Figure 1: First-generation activity theory model and interpretation in relation to my research, where the activity is JPD (Daniels, 2001, p.86)

Tools

Process of JPD, methods of practitioner engagement, sharing practice, language informed by research literature on JPD (eg Fielding et al and Hargreaves, Sebba et al)

Subject

Mentors/mentees
Brokers
Strategic enablers
External evaluators

Object

An environment that facilitates the implementation of JPD

Outcome

New pedagogical positioning and approaches

The focus (and limitation) of this classic triadic model is that it does not demonstrate the 'societal nature' of the individuals' actions (Engeström, 1999a). I therefore elected to use this model in my analysis to illustrate the existing CPD practices in Project 1 prior to the development of the JPD community from the *individual* perspectives of three subjects: the strategic enabler, the broker and the mentee who ostensibly had separate and individual 'objects' in tension with the 'object' and intended 'outcome' of the JPD approach.

3.13 Reflection on Engeström's second generation activity theory model

Engeström's second generation activity theory model represents a collective activity system, with a focus now being on complex interrelations between the individual subject and his or her community (Leont'ev, 1981). This second generation of activity theory therefore enables an analysis at an organisational rather than individual level, since there is an emphasis on the contextual and historical influences (Engeström, 1987).

Drawing on this second generation of activity of 'rules', 'division of labour' and 'community', I analysed the whole activity system from a range of participant perspectives, taking account of the constant and rapid changes that may occur in the institution. Through the community, the JPD activity and groups of practitioners are anchored and can therefore be scrutinised (Hyland, 1998; Verenikina, 2001) enabling a JPD to be examined as a **collective** activity. It can be argued, however, that in constantly changing environments, where the nature of activity is constantly evolving, it may be challenging to 'anchor' groups of employees for any length of time, since the nature of the activity is constantly being shaped by its historical antecedents, for example the consequences of continual marketisation of FE (Smith, 2015). By using Engeström's (1999a) second generation activity theory, I was able to focus on the 'societal and collaborative' nature of the activity after the development of the community.

Using this model, I could explore the role of the community in relation to JPD activity and what a community looked like in practice when practitioners were engaged in JPD. I could also examine some of the tensions that were apparent in the formation of a professional learning community in an organisation where there were historically established and hierarchical organisational management structures.

Drawing on the second generation model, I could also examine how the community was constituted and how it differed or could be compared to a community of practice

as defined by Wenger (1998). Communities of practice are generally characterised by their spontaneity, autonomy and fluidity and are managed by members of the community, rather than management within an institution (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Orr, 1990, 1996). Probst and Borzillo (2008) suggest that communities of practice differ from other types of teams or networks, since roles in a community of practice are informal, rather than specific and the community's objectives are not necessarily linked to those of the organisation. Professional learning communities, on the other hand, tend to be led and shaped by the leaders in institutions, rather than community members and therefore through the activity model I explored to what extent the community was operating as a community of practice or professional learning community (Hord, 2004).

A further area involved examining implicit or explicit rules that constrained the nature of the activity. For example, there was a need to analyse the unique nature of the organisation that was the focus of the analysis, the culture and any internal tensions and contradictions, reflecting on the constitution of the organisation and those responsible for setting the agenda, frequently underpinned or dictated by the CIF. The way power is represented by the dominion of official discourses of pedagogy and practice and the state-controlled administration and ordering of the JPD is evidenced in the hierarchical division of labour and its perceived dissonance with the emergence of a professional learning community.

Since my study aimed to explore how JPD was practised in a number of organisations, I explored the role of the institution and the resulting tensions on the activity. I examined the key players in relation to their roles in relation to JPD, as opposed to their job roles, as highlighted in the sample; that is mentors, mentees, facilitators, brokers and enablers, rather than tutors, middle leaders and senior leaders. This enabled me to ascertain how the labour was divided up or distributed within the organisation and also compare the effectiveness of the models in different institutions.

With activity theory, I began to reflect on a range of ways in which the second generation activity theory model could be used to analyse particular tensions and contradictions and the interrelationships in the activity system. For example, taking each one of the 'subjects' (or participants) in turn, I could analyse the activity from particular perspectives. In this way, I was able to identify factors that facilitated and constrained the JPD activity, focusing on human activity and the extent to which JPD can humanise teaching and learning in the organisation.

I was also conscious that there were others not directly involved in the activity, such as the evaluators, who were 'outsiders' who had different perspectives and these perceptions are included in my study. Although they had been appointed by the funding agency to provide data on the extent to which the agreed objectives of the project had been achieved, some of the evaluators engaged directly with the practitioners in an attempt to co-create and develop the JPD approach and for this reason they are pertinent to the study.

Engeström (2001) proposes that the multiple points of view that exist in networks of interacting activity systems are 'a source of trouble as well as a source of innovation, demanding actions of translation and negotiation' (Engeström, 2001, p.136). This suggests that bringing together two or more organisations to engage in activity may increase the apparent tensions that exist in the organisations and that whilst there may be some negative consequences, opportunities for change may emerge that will need to be swiftly addressed by leaders if they are to result in a positive impact at a micro level of the individual practitioner and the macro level of the organisation.

Referred to as 'expansive learning' (Engeström, 1987, 2001), using activity theory, I was able to identify a learning of something new that was not yet understood by those working in the organisation. Reflecting back on my interpretations of the data at the beginning of the interviews conducted with the broker and mentee a year after the JPD activity had been piloted, I was able to ascertain how the new interactions

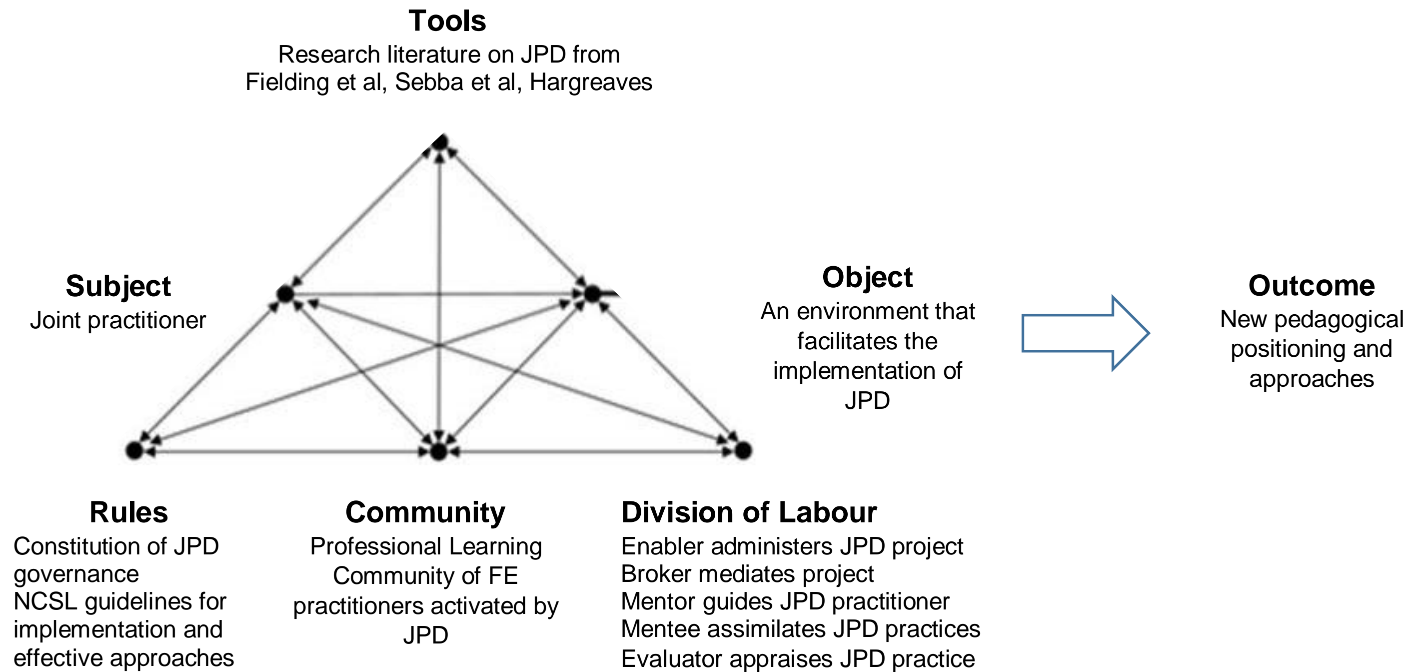
have resulted in change, and subsequent improvement in teachers' practice and ultimately the learners' experience.

Rather than using activity theory to describe the structure of the organisation and its external activity, I used it to examine the cultural and historical context and the internal dynamics of the organisation at the human, rather than structural level, prior to and subsequently during the implementation of JPD. Therefore, because the study focused on the values and belief systems of the participants undertaking the JPD activity, my research was concerned with organisational culture theory (Feather, 2016; Cacciattolo, 2014) rather than organisational structure theory (Weber, 1947), since I was not seeking to describe the organisation during the implementation of JPD.

The study therefore critically examined the balance between the top-down management from leaders and the way the professional empowerment of teachers is brokered and whether the JPD approach has the ability to break down managerialist structures within organisations and emancipate the teacher, turning the practice of teaching from being a mechanical process to a more 'multi-faceted' human activity (Engeström, 1999a, p.20). In framing this in CHAT, the study sought to explore how enabling JPD as a form of organisational leadership activity effectively opened up and changed the leadership culture, which had been historically and systemically hierarchical and paternalistic, or whether the division of labour (distribution of roles and responsibilities) among the community of FE practitioners and the rules of implementation and administration of JPD simply re-produced existing hierarchies in a different guise.

Figure 2 illustrates how JPD can be represented using activity theory, explaining the component parts of the organisation in the activity described above. The diagram is a theoretical representation of JPD or an 'ideal', and my research sought to explore whether it has validity in practice and it is therefore adapted in Chapter 4 to assist in the explanation of my findings.

Figure 2: Second-generation activity theory model in relation to my research (Daniels, 2001, p.86)



3.14 Questions on which to focus using activity theory as a means to explore, investigate and interrogate the data

From my analysis of activity theory, I was able to identify six questions that would form the basis of my interpretation of the data. By collecting and analysing the data from each of the four projects based on these six key areas, key themes emerged that formed the structure for presenting the findings.

1. What are the mediational tools or artefacts for the JPD project?
    - What was the process of JPD?
    - How did teachers and managers engage with one another?
    - What aspects of their work were they focusing on and why?
    - How did teachers share practice and assess impact?
    - How did the use of language reveal contradictions and tensions in relation to the activity and relationships with key players?
    - What were the organisational structures and associated systems and procedures?

2. If JPD was the object, who or what was the subject?
    - What were the roles of key players in relation to the activity, that is, the mentors, mentees, facilitators, brokers and enablers?
    - What is the relationship between these key players and other agencies and partners?

3. How do we identify and define ‘community’?
    - What does a JPD community look like in practice and how is it constituted?
    - How is it different from a community of practice?

4. How is labour divided up and distributed and how might this change as new practices emerge?

- What were some of the key issues in relation to power and conflict?
- What were the tensions resulting from power relations between mentees and strategic enablers?

5. Who draws up the constitution and who sets the agenda (rules)?
    - What were the internal or external rules that constrained the activity and the role of power in relation to the practice?
    - What historical relationships and practices affected the activity?
    - What was the prevailing culture and resulting tensions and contradictions?
    - Who was responsible for setting the agenda?

6. What was the outcome of JPD activity?
    - What was the impact on teachers' practice, the outcomes of their learners and their organisation?

3.15 Aligning the research aims, research questions and findings to the second generation activity theory model

The following matrix (Table 1) demonstrates how my research aims, questions and findings are aligned to activity theory and how the data will be presented in the following chapter. It should be noted that two short case studies are used at the end of Chapter 4 to illustrate the impact of the introduction of the JPD approach on the everyday lives of two respondents.

Table 1: Aligning objectives through to analysis of findings: a matrix

Objectives	Research questions	Activity theory model	Presentation of data
1) Identify the conditions that encourage the development of collaborative relationships within and between partner organisations	What are the mediational tools or artefacts for the JPD project?	Process of JPD: aspects of practice teachers were working on; methods of teacher engagement; methods of sharing practice; language (Fig 1: 1st Gen)	Examining the prevailing culture and existing practices in the organisations prior to the modelling of the JPD approach
2) Establish how effective practice can be identified and subsequently shared to the mutual benefit of teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders in partnered organisations	If JPD was the object, who or what was the subject? How do we identify and define 'community'?	Mentors/mentees; brokers; strategic enablers; external evaluators JPD professional learning community	Exploring how JPD was modelled in the organisations and how teachers identified and subsequently shared their practice
3) Evaluate the extent to which leadership culture facilitates or constrains the JPD approach	Who draws up the constitution and who sets the agenda? How is labour divided up and distributed and how might this change as new practices emerge?	Quality assurance systems; performance management; external inspection Management structure: vice principals, curriculum managers, teachers	Interrogating the JPD model, examining the constitution of the learning community and resulting tensions in relation to power and conflict when modelling JPD
4) Extrapolate from the data set ways in which this approach has the potential to improve practice and have a sustained impact at an organisational level	What was the outcome of JPD activity?	Transformation of teachers' pedagogy (Fig 9: 2nd Gen)	Reflecting on the impact of the activity on participants involved in the activity

3.16 Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided a justification and rationale for the methodology that supports the purpose of the research. This very much reflects my current beliefs that have developed since embarking on my education doctorate (EdD) journey. It also reflects the influence that my EdD teachers had on me and in particular the role of my supervisors with respect to the maturation of my critical thinking in the latter part of my EdD journey.

I recognise the limitations that drawing on the activity theory methodology present in terms of its apparent complexity. However, when standing back and critically reflecting on this approach, I have come to understand that it represents a powerful model that is completely logical in terms of realising the objectives of my research. As Engeström (1999, 2001) argues, the model is an evolving dynamic and is open to adaptation, which is exactly what I have done, adapting it to my research purpose.

Chapter 4: Findings and discussion

Introduction

In the following chapter, the findings of the research are presented through the lens of the participants in the five projects described in Chapter 3, with a key focus on the Project 1 lead organisation.

The analysis of the data is presented in four sections that align with the research objectives as outlined in the matrix in Table 1, p. 75:

1) Examining the prevailing culture and existing practices in the organisations prior to the modelling of the JPD approach.
2) Exploring how the project version of JPD was modelled in the organisations and how teachers identified and subsequently shared their practice contributing to changing the culture.
3) Interrogating the JPD model, examining the constitution of the learning community and resulting tensions in relation to power and conflict when modelling JPD.
4) Reflecting on the impact of the activity on participants involved in the activity.

In the first two sections, data is drawn from all five projects where I analyse existing practices and subsequently how JPD is modelled in a range of organisations. In the last two sections, Project 1 is the focus in order to be able to present an in-depth analysis of the constitution of the learning community and resulting tensions and contradictions in modelling the approach from a range of key players in one organisation. I end the chapter with case studies from two of the participants from Project 1, to illustrate the impact of the approach a year after the JPD pilot and a further funded JPD project had taken place.

The analysis and discussion therefore places a particular focus on the findings from Project 1. When discussing this project in this chapter, there is reference to two organisations who were involved in a partnership to pilot the approach. These two organisations are referred to in this chapter as the 'lead' organisation, where participants across the organisation were interviewed, and the 'partner' organisation, where only the Vice Principal was interviewed.

Findings from the other four projects in sections 1 and 2, where they support or refute data that emerged from Project 1, are presented in boxes beneath Project 1 data to provide supplementary comparative data of perspectives from a range of organisational contexts.

Participants in the study are referred to by their role in relation to the JPD activity at the time of interviewing, that is mentee, mentor, broker and strategic enabler, rather than in relation to their position in the institutional hierarchy prior to the implementation of JPD, that is practitioner, middle manager and senior leader. I was aware when analysing the findings, however, that to some extent the JPD appellations were cloaks to cover their real function for the duration of the JPD pilot, so to some extent the titles are interchangeable since some of the players (the manager and vice principals) were essentially acting out a part or role-playing.

Activity theory as a methodological framework for analysing the data

In order to synthesise the objectives and presentation of the data in alignment with activity theory, the research questions used to structure this chapter are framed utilising activity theory terminology, such as the 'subject', that is the person whose perspective is the focus of the analysis; the 'mediational tools or artefacts' referring to the process of JPD, language used, material objects (for example peer observation forms) and ways in which the subjects interact; the 'object', that is the goal of the activity system; the 'division of labour', referring to the management

structure; the ‘rules’, denoting how the subjects are expected to behave, that is implicit norms; and the ‘outcome’ in relation to the impact of the activity.

It should be emphasised that the study was not concerned with examining the structure of the organisation once JPD had been implemented, as this was outside the scope of my study. It was concerned with, firstly, the cultural and historical context that has been influenced by the structure and, secondly, the internal dynamics of the organisation at the human participant, rather than the structural level.

Engeström’s first- and second generation models (Figures 1 and 2) are used at key stages in this chapter. The first-generation model is used before the JPD approach was introduced to demonstrate how the organisation functioned, as well as the rules and roles that defined the structure. This model also shows the disparity between the different individuals (or ‘subjects’) involved.

The second generation model is utilised to expose the interactions, tensions, contradictions and different motives in relation to the JPD activity after the implementation of the new approach. Here I focus specifically on the participants in Project 1, in order to explore the perspectives of two of the key players: the broker and the mentee.

Activity theory was therefore used to shine a light on the changes brought about by JPD to the relationships between the participants and its impact on teacher agency. I was therefore able to expose new reflections on assumptions, exploring the extent to which new learning had taken place in the professional learning community, drawing on the intrinsic values and belief systems in the individuals that were shared in the practice of JPD. I was subsequently able to identify any actions or interventions needed in order to bring about sustained changes in practice (Wilson, 2014).

In the next section, I will present a critical analysis of the data in relation to the existing professional development practices in the projects before a version of JPD had been implemented.

4.1 Examining the prevailing organisational structure/culture and existing practices in the organisations prior to the modelling of the JPD approach

A key objective of the research was to identify the conditions that encourage the development of collaborative relationships within and between partner organisations. As a first step, therefore, I sought to establish the nature of the existing practices and organisational structure/culture in the projects prior to the piloting of JPD (summarised in Appendix 7) so that I was able to identify the extent to which these had altered to accommodate the approach, following the testing out of JPD.

What were the mediational tools or artefacts in the existing practices?

Cascade or 'best practice' approach to CPD

In terms of the existing professional development practices prior to piloting the JPD approach, the senior management in the lead organisation of Project 1 had tended to rely on a 'cascade' approach to professional development, where teachers are presented with examples of 'best practice' at organised in-house events, external seminars or conferences, and then expected to replicate this in their everyday teaching.

Referred to as a 'best practice' approach, this model of CPD – also known as a 'training model' (Kennedy, 2005) or 'empty vessel model' (Dadds, 1997) – provides an opportunity for skills and knowledge updating. It is often regarded as a top-down model that is usually delivered by a so-called 'expert', with the participant teacher

frequently in a passive ('novice') role and has a tendency to be used where there is a high degree of control and standardisation by management, with teachers having little say in identifying their own professional development needs (Kennedy, 2005).

In Project 1, this 'best practice' approach had often taken the form of an annual one-day event aimed primarily at part-time staff. There had been an increasing recognition, however, by the senior management in the lead organisation, of the expertise that existed amongst the practitioners within the institution and this growing awareness had led to a shift towards the facilitation of the events by the institution's middle leaders, rather than outside experts:

> But the last two conferences, in fact the last three conferences have all been facilitated by members of staff of the college and sort of moved away from an external model of people coming in and talking to them about what is good practice, and actually looking at what we do ourselves. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Lead)

Over the previous year, a less directive approach appeared to be being adopted by the middle manager in Project 1 and this had been noticed by the practitioner, suggesting that although the middle manager was still exercising a degree of control of the practitioner's professional development, there appeared to be an attempt by her to connect with the individual teachers' needs, to encourage reflection:

> It has changed I have to say over the last year …She [practitioner's manager] really does try and help, she will direct you to different sites, she'll give you words, she'll give you ways you can go away and think about it and say 'Well you go and have a go at this then and then we'll come back and review it in four weeks' time and we'll see how you're getting on!' (Mentee, Project 1)

Supplementary

Representatives from other projects tended to be overtly critical of the cascade approach. In Project 4, the broker regarded it as a top-down model, where practitioners are passive recipients of knowledge and skills:

> But I felt it was better doing it [CPD] this way [using a collaborative professional development approach] rather than make them sit on the naughty step next to an expert in English and maths saying: 'Right, this is what you must do'. (Broker, Project 4)

The problem with the best practice approach, in her view, was that often there was not enough time for teachers to use their professional judgement to put new learning into place:

> It's like 'today we're doing equality and diversity' and have an expert standing there which is great, but people are not given enough opportunity to go away and try these ideas out and they're not allowed to use their own initiative and I think people have got a lot of initiative if they're enabled to use it. (Broker, Project 4)

It was also perceived by the broker in Project 2 as an approach that was driven by management, rather than the practitioners themselves and therefore lacked direct significance and relevance to their individual professional development needs:

> I think that sometimes CPD that's top-down – I think tutors could perceive it as another thing they have to do, rather than something that they might want to do and if there's a pressure to report back then actually… at the same time as a good employer I should be following up what the CPD is and asking people about how they're going to put it into practice and that sort of thing. At the same time reporting could be a bit like 'Now I've got to do this, then I've got to fill in a form, then I've got to' … you know? I think it takes away from some of the softer things that happen when someone is developing, things that aren't output driven and are not concrete in that sense. (Broker, Project 2)

This comment reflects the impersonal nature of this type of professional development, that tends to result in teachers having to gather data to please their managers in adherence to corporate rules, rather than an activity that supports teachers' individual needs. The use of the word 'softer' to describe aspects of professional development suggests that tacit development is often not recognised, acknowledged or valued in an output-driven culture. She also suggested this top-down approach was a deficit model:

> You have to go on a CPD session, there's a deficiency. You have to go and fix something. I think sometimes with CPD that can come across. If I said to a team member that they have to go on a CPD session there's an assumption that there's something they're not doing right in that area. (Broker, Project 2)

These comments by participants would seem to support the argument put forward by Hoban (2002) who acknowledges that this model can be effective where new knowledge is to be introduced. However, this type of knowledge is likely to be

procedural rather than conceptual and as such legitimately belongs in the 'training' domain or 'empty vessel' category. When this model of professional learning and development is used, it is unlikely to promote an increased conception of teaching because teachers are not actively engaged in understanding or reflecting on what is being taught (Day, 1999; Dadds, 1997).

Unannounced internal observations

Prior to implementing the JPD approach, the senior management in the lead organisation in the Project 1 organisation had been using a method of conducting 'no notice internal observations' of teaching staff, where Ofsted grading criteria were used for assessing teacher performance. The historical relationship with Ofsted and the practice of inspections by the Inspectorate clearly affected the behaviour of the organisation in relation to monitoring the performance of the staff and the approach they adopted to professional development:

> Here we have no notice observations … it's very formal and I don't think at [partner organisation] they're graded, whereas it is very much about the grade here. (Broker, Project 1)

Recognising it was a contentious issue, the manager justified the policy by suggesting that it was more ethical to inform teachers of their grade, than not:

> For me personally, I think if we observe teachers and we don't grade them, well we are grading them, but we are not telling them what we have graded them as. I half feel that that is kind of unethical, as we are kind of saying it, but we are not saying it with them. (Broker, Project 1)

This view, however, as well as highlighting a data protection issue, brings into question the institution's purpose in observing teachers without a pre-warning. Far from being a practitioner-focused developmental opportunity, this approach is frequently perceived by teachers as being managerialist in its purpose, that is it is a judgemental process that aims to identify and separate 'effective' (those who meet a set of prescribed quantifiable performance criteria) from 'ineffective' teachers (those who do not meet the criteria) with the fear being that in some cases, those deemed as ineffective will be dismissed (O'Leary and Wood, 2017).

Despite being a strong advocate of the no notice observations practice, the manager was, however, willing to try out a more practitioner-focused approach that was being implemented by their partner organisation.

> Theirs [partner organisation's observation policy] is very much with the tutors. The tutor knows that they're coming and what happens prior to observation, is that they sit down with the tutor who will be observing, which usually will be the manager, I think from what they've said, and they will discuss. They will have a huge kind of flip chart paper and they will talk about everything, what's working really well, etcetera. And that will all come from the tutor which I really like. (Broker, Project 1)

It is clear, however, that the process is still a managed one, since the manager is still the observer, rather than a peer as in the JPD model, with the only difference being that teachers have prior knowledge of the observation.

Who drew up the constitution and who set the agenda?

The prevailing culture in the Project 1 lead organisation was clearly established by the Vice Principal who developed and implemented the rules with respect to professional development. Prior to testing out the JPD approach, his aim was to change the focus and 'mission' of the organisation, where the observation of teaching and learning was the tool for changing the culture towards a more learner-centred organisation:

> His [the Vice Principal's] view and the governing body's view was that the college had moved a bit into an FE college model and what he wanted was to go back to an adult community learning model and they wanted to change the shift and soften the culture and [the Vice Principal] had been working quite hard on that, very much as the heart of the community and very much at the heart of the college is the learner and the learner's experience. So that work's being sort of reflected in a revised mission, a new strategic plan. It should not be funding, it should not be budget, it should not be business development. Teaching and learning is what the college is about and the desire to improve the teaching and learning to ensure that the learners' experience was the best possible experience that every learner could have and that every learner would reach their potential. Observation of teaching and learning, if you like is the tool that they are using to try and shift whole organisational culture. So although the project was originally around joint practice in English and maths and ESOL, in terms of improving teaching and learning and improving success and retention rates, it is now part of...it's a tool for part of a whole organisational cultural shift into what the focus is and how they should be working with their learners. (Evaluator, Project 1)

Although this is a quotation from the evaluator rather than the strategic enabler, it suggests that there is a desire by the leadership for change to a ‘softer’ culture, to one where there is less focus on the financial viability of the organisation and more emphasis on a people-centred approach (both learners and staff). This reflects the college mission developed a year earlier, where the aim was to move the organisation from a ‘didactic’ to a ‘learning’ organisation, with a key aim of embedding a cultural shift in the way that professional development is delivered, that was previously a top-down approach where managers determined the professional development needs of teachers as a result of observations, appraisals and the performance management cycle[3]. In the above quote, the evaluator suggests that the JPD approach is an indication of a move away from an Ofsted-driven culture that will have a knock-on effect on the way that practitioners work with their learners, that is a more learner-centred approach.

Interestingly, a more developmental and practitioner-focused approach to observations had been adopted by the Project 1 partner organisation where the tutors identified their professional development needs, rather than the managers. The strategic enabler focused on this inclusive nature of the college as being one of the organisation’s key strengths:

> We are a very supportive and open type of organisation and that’s one of the great strengths of the college. We support our learners and also our staff. And people appreciate that and it’s very much the character of the college. It is one of the things that learners comment on, and it is reflected in the way our tutors work with learners and the whole ethos and atmosphere of the college, so it is very much in that vein. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Partner)

Rules of the activity of using no notice internal observations resulted in tensions for the mentee who regarded the method as a top-down approach, driven by bureaucratic organisational requirements, describing it as:

> someone sitting at the back of the room ticking boxes, getting carried away and saying, ‘You should do this, you should do that’. (Mentee, Project 1)

[3] Project 1 External evaluator report, July 2014

The impact of an unannounced visit from an observer from her organisation was clearly distressing:

> If you were having an assessment or appraisal or whatever word you want to use when someone comes into the classroom, it is very much an 'Oh my God' situation in [mentee's organisation]. It's the fear factor. It's like you're being judged. I think all of us dread it quite frankly. Some people get really ill over it, it makes them feel sick. You get to the point where you think 'What else can I do?' And you start doubting the things that you do – things that you do naturally. (Mentee, Project 1)

And then following the observation:

> You get an e-mail come through with a report. Then you get an opportunity to have another meeting with the person who did the observation. Then if there are things that need to be improved, you get an opportunity with... well in my case it's [middle manager] with the maths, for them to help you and for you to improve. And then it's reviewed every four weeks. There's a reviewing process or something like that. (Mentee, Project 1)

This revelation by the practitioner is worthy of note. The management's dehumanised approach to observations contrasts sharply with the very human practices in which the mentee engages are apparent and clearly illustrate the negative effect of no notice observations on the observed. The effects are both physical as well as emotional, resulting in a lowering of self-esteem and self-doubt. These findings resonate with research carried out by O'Leary and Wood (2017) who document the negative effects of performative models of observation on teachers' professional identities, causing undue stress on those who are observed.

In four out of the five projects, where a view was expressed about traditional top-down professional development approaches, the data suggests that there is a recognition by middle and senior leaders that the 'best practice' approach has its limitations in terms of perceived and sustained improvements in practice. This is, I believe, a new finding, since there is little that I have found in the research literature that suggests this recognition by managers working in FE. This recognition had resulted in them wanting to try an alternative approach, hence taking the opportunity offered by the funding agency to pilot a more 'practitioner-focused' JPD model.

Engeström's first-generation activity theory model has been used in Figures 4, 5 and 6 to illustrate the individual triadic representations of actions in relation to existing CPD practices prior to the development of the JPD community from the perspectives of three subjects: the vice principal, the middle leader and the practitioner (job titles not role titles in this instance) (Engeström, 1999a).

Figure 3: First-generation activity theory model: Vice Principal in Project 1 [Lead] prior to the introduction of JPD (Daniels, 2001, p.86)

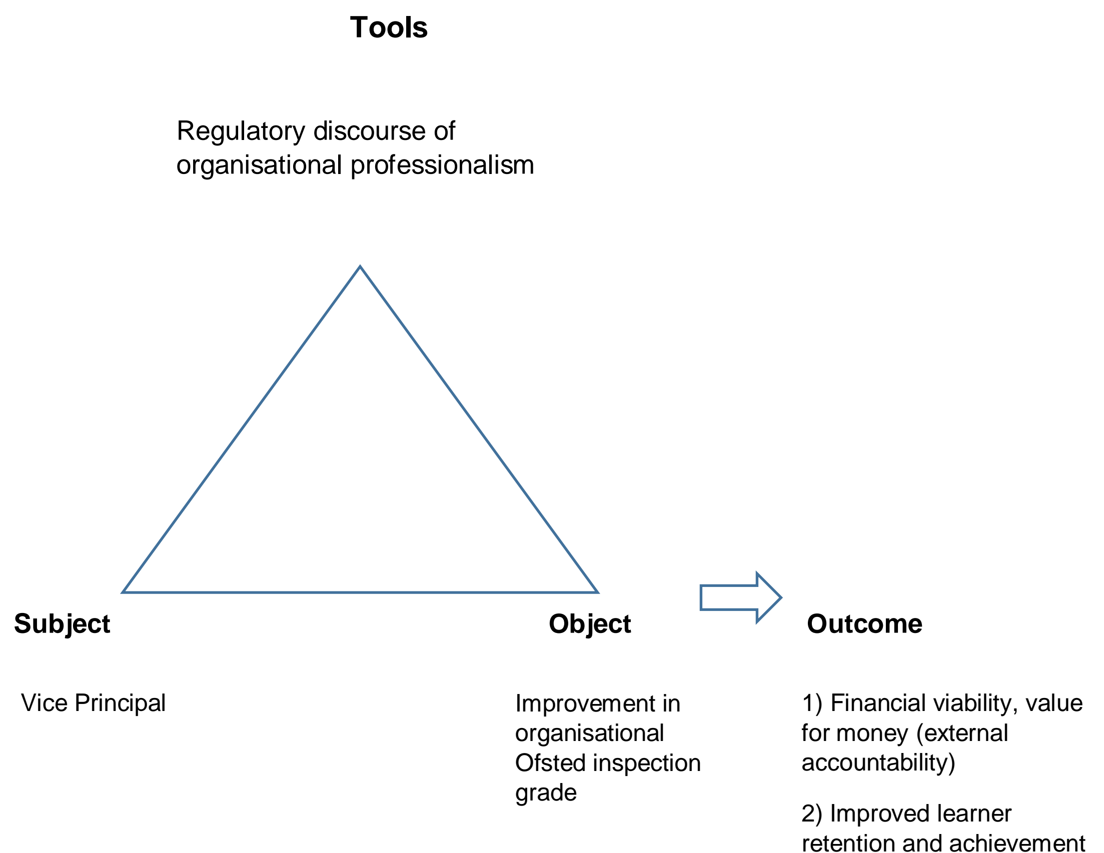


Figure 4: First-generation activity theory model: Middle Leader in Project 1 [Lead] prior to the introduction of JPD (Daniels, 2001, p.86)

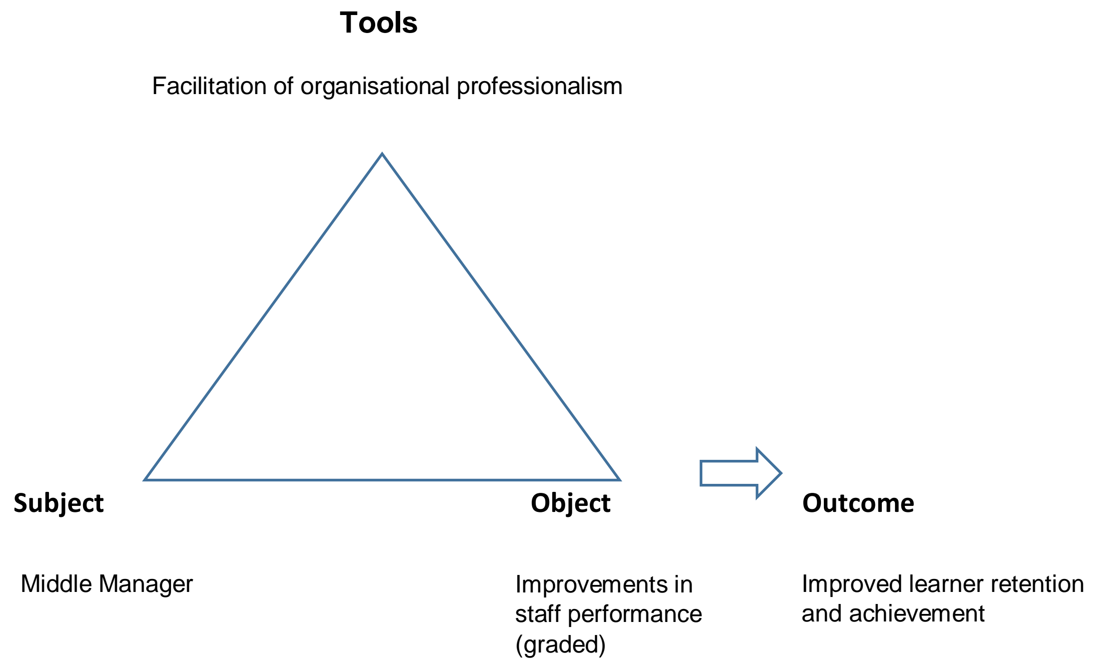
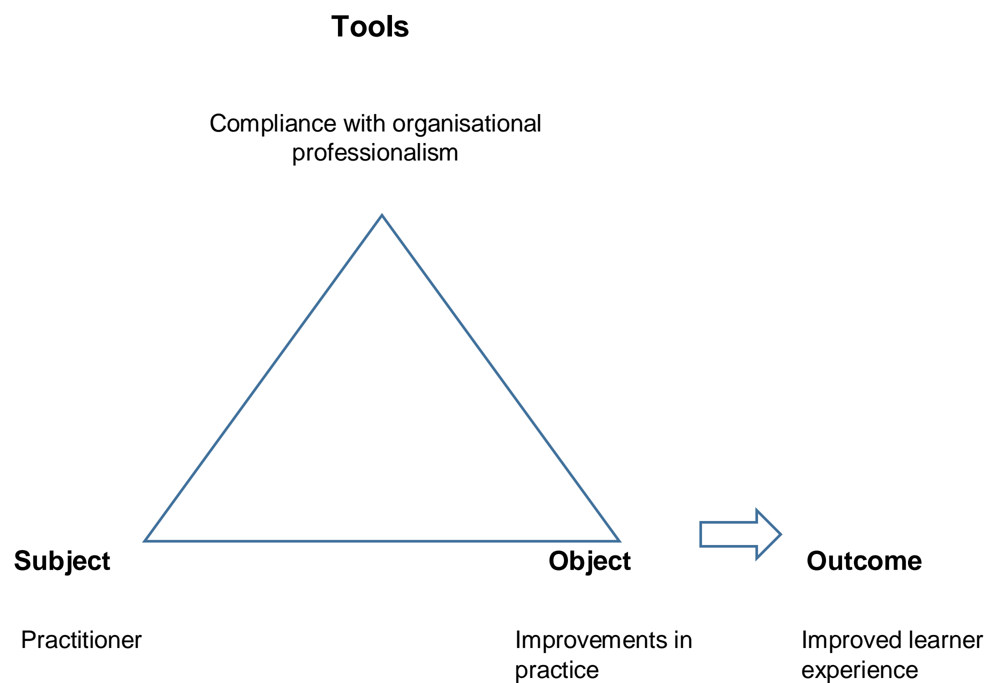


Figure 5: First-generation activity theory model: Practitioner in Project 1 [Lead] prior to the introduction of JPD (Daniels, 2001, p.86)



These representations highlight the disparity of subject-object relations between the three roles. Whilst all three are seeking improvement in practice as an ‘outcome’, each subject is seeking their own objective (or ‘object’), using different tools to achieve that objective. Top-down approaches to professional development appear to be deeply engrained in the existing culture of the organisation and there would therefore seem to be little opportunity for ‘agency’ where individuals are able to construct meaning and identity with respect to their professional practice (Gleeson and Knights, 2006).

Although the strategic enabler and broker accept that the tools are unlikely to lead to improvements in teachers’ teaching and learning skills, the desire to maintain the existing practices indicates that senior management in the organisation is reluctant to move away from managerialist approaches and implement new models for fear that the institution’s inspection grades will slip and the leadership will therefore be perceived by Ofsted and other education providers as not operating a ‘robust’ system, subsequently risking their financial stability.

The study explores the extent to which it is possible for the existing culture to change to accommodate the supportive conditions that would be required to enable a JPD to take root. Engeström’s second generation model will be used in the final section of this chapter to illustrate the collective activity system at the stage when the JPD community has become established.

4.2 Exploring how JPD was modelled in the organisations and how teachers identified and subsequently shared their practice

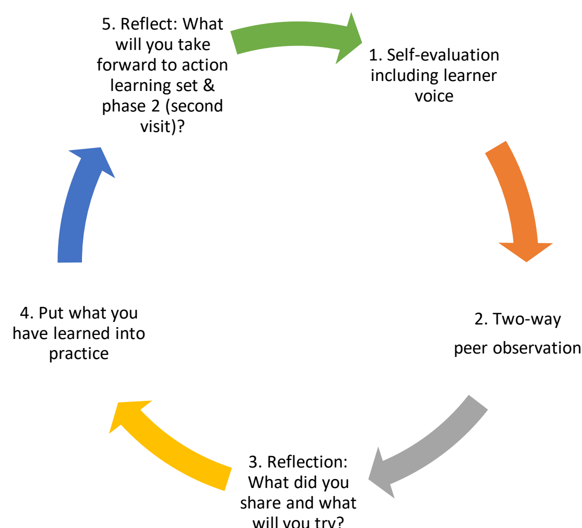
Having identified the existing practices and culture, the next step was to find out how the participants in the different organisations went about putting the JPD approach into practice. This involved identifying the structures and process that were put in place and exploring how practitioners engaged with each other, identified and

subsequently shared existing and new practice that was a core objective of the research. Subsequently, I was able to begin to identify the conditions that may facilitate or indeed hinder the introduction of the new model. In particular, I was keen to find out the extent to which engaging in JPD had resulted in a sense of increased ownership of professionalism by practitioners, as compared with the pre-existing culture where professionalism had been dictated by performance management processes.

What were the mediational tools or artefacts for the JPD project?

The way in which JPD was modelled in each project was broadly similar with mentors and mentees tending to undertake a cycle of activity as exemplified by Project 1 (Figure 6). This sequential activity (the circle representing a cyclical continuum, rather than separate stages or steps) largely reflects the stages proposed by Gregson et al (2015, p.269) and that suggested by Hargreaves (2012b).

Figure 6: JPD process for Project 1[4]



[4] Diagram provided by Project 1 broker

How did teachers and managers engage with one another?

In the planning of the activity, brokers tended to decide the themes that would underpin the JPD activity and what activity or research literature would support these themes. For example, the broker in Project 1 had decided that an intended outcome was for the mentees to improve the use of the learner voice when designing their learning programmes. The broker in Project 1 designed a survey for the practitioners to use to help them find out what motivated their learners to attend and complete their courses. The aim was that the mentees would then reflect on and use these findings to make improvements in their teaching to promote a more positive learning experience and so increase learners' motivation and achievement. This part of the process, did, however, have an unexpected outcome for the mentee in Project 1 in terms of the learner feedback:

> So I thought I'll ask them what they found good. I asked them to reflect back but didn't use the word 'reflect' ...'How are we doing?' This type of thing. You have to give questions to allow the discussion and there wasn't any, it was only the here and now for them. They weren't really bothered about what had gone in the past. It was how they felt now. So I thought 'I am not going to get any proper feedback. They're going to give me feedback that they think I want' and that was very interesting because I'd thought the complete opposite. (Mentee, Project 1)

What is evident from this quotation is the learners' sense of loyalty to the teacher and their reluctance to be critical. This perhaps suggests that the mentee had been successful in building up a personalised relationship with her learners built on trust (Baber and Khattak, 2017). What is noteworthy also is that the mentee was anticipating that her learners would use the opportunity to voice criticism of her teaching, suggesting perhaps a deep-seated lack of confidence in her ability as a teacher resulting from the prevailing unannounced observation approach that had been adopted by management in her organisation.

Following initial meetings in which the concept of JPD was introduced, the mentees were asked to set up their first 'buddy' visit with their mentor in the partner organisation. This involved observing each other's session and then recording their

experiences using a pre-designed self-evaluation form (Appendix 9) and then sharing their thoughts with one another. Interestingly, at this point of the project, there was no reference to management tools, for example action plans or impact measures, so there appeared to be little bureaucracy in relation to the development activity in this respect.

The use of the Americanism 'buddy' in this context is perhaps worthy of note. This term seems to have achieved some credibility which arguably deformalises other terms like 'mentor' and 'coach'. It is used as opposed to the alternative word 'friend' which indicates a relationship that occurs naturally and is not imposed or mandated, as a remedial measure. As the literature suggests, a buddy does not need any particular training (Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care [CLAHRC], 2017), where a mentor or coach would need to have developed specific skills in order to support their mentee's or coachee's development (NCTL, 2013).

It would seem perhaps that the term 'buddy' was used by the broker in Project 1 to avoid the use of the term 'observation', however, the manager conceded that observations had taken place, under the guise of the term 'buddy':

> Some of the buddy visits and we've used the term 'buddy' for it not to be an observation but almost sort of… mini observations have been taking place really. (Broker, Project 1)

What aspects of their work were they focusing on and why?

The need for practitioners to have ownership of their professional development, selecting priorities that they consider are of relevance to them, is a core feature of JPD (Fielding et al, 2005). However, in three of the five projects, these priorities were largely decided by others and often aligned to organisational strategy or performance management. In Project 1, for example, aspects that mentees worked on were informed by outcomes of observations of their practice and the appraisal

process, highlighting a fundamental tension in the system between a managerial focus on teaching quantity and the teachers' focus on learning quality (Sachs, 1999). In Project 1, however, the suggestion for teachers to take into account the learner voice perhaps indicates a desire by the broker to implement the democratic principles of the 'bottom-up' goals of JPD:

> The first part was to establish learner voice, then to think about individual practitioners thinking about their own practice, their most recent observation, what had come from their appraisal … you know, current appraisal and what they wanted to do themselves and what they were thinking about their own practice and to take that into a buddy visit. (Broker, Project 1)

Supplementary

In Project 5, again it was the broker who took the lead in deciding the area of focus for the professional development activity, selecting a research study to stimulate initial discussion and to subsequently underpin the JPD activity:

> We ran [the JPD programme] with a more research base – we used Chris Watkins, the accessible writer in education and we used that as an opening theme 'how can we take personalisation of learning how can we take it and give it to the loci of the learner, so that they make decisions about how they learn?' In all that theme, we grouped tutors by vocational area. From that they sat down together, they worked out things they wanted to explore and they sorted themselves into groups. We set an overall theme that was within what they thought was within the overriding issue and they self-organised and we facilitated and structured it. (Broker, Project 5)

This comment suggests that there are some internal contradictions in the organisational system. For example, this model where the brokers have chosen the personalisation theme is indicative of a controlled professionalism where the mentees are passive recipients, with the brokers giving the illusion to the mentees that they had selected this particular theme, but in fact the brokers had controlled the activity and therefore set the agenda to meet the strategic requirements of the organisation.

In Project 4, a slightly more practitioner-focused approach was adopted in the early stages of the project, with the mentees initially being sent an online survey to ascertain from them their perceptions in relation to their learners' maths and English needs. This was followed up with an initial training day organised with subject specialists that enabled mentees to discuss and explore particular aspects

they wanted to develop. Therefore, a 'best practice' model of CPD was subsequently adopted by the partner organisation at the training day:

> But how we organised it [the first training day] I got some English specialists, maths specialists and so on and the teachers just went round all the different carousel tables and we did it like a speed dating system. So, they, say, had ten minutes on each table just to get some ideas from the specialists. Then people worked in groups to start and draft out ideas, how they could use what they'd learnt that afternoon and embed that into their teaching. (Broker, Project 2)

In Project 3 a key aim of the project was to enable mentees to increase their use of critical reflection in order to develop their own theory of learning, with an emphasis on using interactive technology and social media to bring about improvements in their practice. In order to engage practitioners who initially lacked the motivation to be involved in the project, the brokers of the partner organisation designed an initial session that provided a space for mentees and mentors to listen to one another and start reflecting on aspects of their practice on which they would focus:

> So it started off as being one day getting people really to start thinking and working together, using thinking environment techniques, and then going away and doing something, and people made a promise to themselves, old-fashioned stuff on a postcard and we sent it to them, and then come back and reflect not necessarily on how that thing has worked out, but on whatever you want to think about a couple of months down the line. And what we are seeing is – it was bloody hard work with some people on day one – we are seeing people come back now ready to think, and that second day has been immensely important. (Broker, Project 3)

Although in some respects, the fact that the brokers had organised the initial session, could be described as 'contrived collegiality' (Hargreaves, 1994), the approach taken by Project 3 was the only one that hinted at a type of collaborative professionalism that is proposed by Sachs (2016) where there appears to be a focus on attitudinal development (rather than functional development) to re-engage and motivate mentees who had otherwise become disillusioned (Evans, 2008). However, as it was later revealed by the broker that the mentees were mandated to attend the initial session, the approach could also be described as 'controlled professionalism' (Sachs, 2016):

> But I have learned, and part of my massive learning is, you need to get to the arms folded brigade and perhaps the only way to do that is through mandatory staff training. They've got to be there. The sort of people who have got their arms folded would not have chosen to come to a programme like this. (Broker, Project 3)

The data therefore resonate with Kennedy's research on models of CPD, where brokers are limiting and controlling the agenda for professional development, rather than engaging the mentees and mentors in this discussion (Kennedy, 2005).

In terms of the relationships between key players, their engagement with each other and the themes identified for the collaborative activity, the data would suggest that in all five projects, the brokers struggled to facilitate the JPD activity in a way that promoted an alignment to the principles of JPD as an alternative and new model of CPD. Rather, the specific areas for development were on the whole being decided by the brokers to suit an existing agenda (government and institutional) emanating from senior management, with brokers paying lip service to collaborative activity. In essence, the majority of brokers in the projects are continuing to operate in the same vein, adopting a top-down controlling approach with an attempt to modify teachers' practice, rather than an opportunity to rethink and transform practices (Sachs, 2005).

The approaches to CPD being adopted in all five projects seemed to fail to capture the very essence of JPD, where the fundamental and core emphasis is on collaborative practice where mentees and mentors are working together independently of management, taking ownership of their professional development. The shift towards more collaborative practices which underpins the JPD approach represents a particular challenge in organisations where entrenched managerialist cultures have ownership of the professional development rather than the teachers themselves.

How did teachers share practice and assess impact?

An exploration of the way in which the mentees and mentors shared practice through working collaboratively was a key objective of the study as well as the extent to which this had an impact on practice. I was keen to find out whether the participants had sufficient time in a short project to be able to build a trusting relationship,

whether there were sufficient opportunities for mentoring that would provide the necessary challenge and support to bring about a noticeable change in practice.

Interestingly, the mentee in Project 1 recognised that for the approach to have a positive impact, mentees and mentors themselves needed to be willing to share, suggesting that it might take time for some of them to get used to being part of a learning community, rather than working in isolation:

> I think you have to be open to sharing. I think we do get quite insular and think well this is our resource and we've spent hours making this resource so why should we share? But it's true isn't it? So that type of... you're always going to get people who don't understand the concept and I think there has been a little bit of that. It's been more of what can I take rather than what can I give back? (Mentee, Project 1)

In all the projects, there were opportunities for the participants to work with one another through peer observations and subsequent professional discussions. Through peer observations, the mentees and mentors were able to gain an in-depth understanding of each other's teaching strategies, reflecting on aspects that they had observed and thinking about whether they could adapt them to their teaching context:

> I think that to aspire to be the best, is what we all need to do and I think that by sharing ideas which is what we're doing when we go over, we're looking at what each other does and thinking maybe we can do this, maybe we can do that... which is good. (Mentee, Project 1)

This particular model described by the mentee reflects a 'collaborative' model proposed by Yiend et al (2014, p.467) that is regarded as 'collegial', with the aim of encouraging teachers to reflect on what they consider to be good teaching within the context they are observing. The decision about the aspects of practice the mentee wishes to focus on is clearly with the mentee, who has reflected during the observation on what aspects she considers are relevant to her practice. This captures a key element of JPD, that is, the development is 'fused with routine practice' (Hargreaves, 2011, p.11).

The findings also highlight how peer observation in the JPD model has been reconceptualised, differing sharply from the managerialist nature of peer observations that the mentee experienced prior to the introduction of JPD. In the JPD model, the mentor and mentee are working together as peers, where although one has more teaching experience, they are equal in terms of their roles. They engage in positive reflection, but also in critical reflection that up until now has been the preserve of the middle manager where the function of peer observations has been to standardise and judge quality, rather than to develop the pedagogical skills of the practitioner.

This reconceptualisation of peer observation that is a core element of the JPD model would need to be a key feature in the culture change in the organisation, in which there is acceptance by the senior management that this alternative peer observation approach represents a valid means of furthering practitioners' pedagogical development (Wingrove et al, 2018).

Professional discussions that followed the sessions provided an opportunity to reflect on each other's practice and were often followed up by the provision of teaching and learning resources:

> We all talk about different resources or where we get different resources from and things like that, so we'll help each other there. These types of things, it's very practical or it has been very practical, I can only speak for myself obviously. (Mentee, Project 1)

In this activity, the less experienced mentee from Project 1 is directly involved with the practice being shared by the more experienced mentor and recognised the non-judgemental nature of the approach, that sharply differed from the existing regime based on observation of performance:

> by sharing ideas …as a tutor talking to another tutor it is not within that assessing role, does that make sense? It is a totally different set of communication to that because we want to improve ourselves so it's a different level, it's not like we're being judged. (Mentee, Project 1)

The success of the joint practice activity, in the view of the mentee, is dependent on the confidence of the less experienced teacher, often influenced by the initial fear that the mentor was going to make a judgement about their practice:

> It is hard... a lot of it is personality isn't it and if you're quite a confident person then you're going to be totally different to if you're not so confident in how you feel and how you interact. I think that some of the tutors felt that they were being judged again, that the person from [partner organisation] was coming over to us to judge our classes... which of course they're not but ... they are in some ways. They're evaluating aren't they? It's the terminology. (Mentee, Project 1)

Her comment seems to suggest an ambivalence to the activity, focusing on the observation element of the process that she regards as yet another opportunity for her practice to be judged by someone more senior and more experienced and therefore more 'expert'. This resonates with the view of Fielding et al (2005) who emphasise that trust is crucial in order for the relationship to thrive and that the mentor needs to be seen to be 'on their side' (Fielding et al, 2005, p.10). Fielding et al's research also suggests that there may be a presumption by managers that teachers are confident and self-aware, and highly motivated or very well-disposed towards their own CPD, but that more often, teachers are less vocal and more self-critical in their approach. This latter group are just as committed as the former, but have a different values set and often seek other ways of furthering their professional development (Fielding et al, 2005, p.77).

Once a relationship had been established, however, between herself and her mentor, this fear was then dispelled:

> Maybe that was another bit of peer pressure that we were having but I think once the ice had been broken we just chatted as you would to your colleagues anyway because that's what we have in common. (Mentee, Project 1)

This view would seem to resonate with Nonaka and Takeuchi's notion who suggest that for effective new practices to be gained, four stages need to be gone through, with the initial step being socialisation that involves forming a relationship with the mentor to then be able to move forwards towards internalising new skills (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995).

Rather than 'replicating' the effective practice of others, the JPD activity provided a chance for the mentees and mentors to develop new strategies or 'refine' their practice (Fielding et al, 2005, p.32):

> So we are trying to use different techniques from the different tutors to work out the best way to approach our teaching. What I've tried to do over the last few years is do a really practical 'This is how it affects you, this is why you need to do that'. Get them [the learners] to see how it's relevant to them and that seems to have engaged them more, by talking to the people from [the partner organisation] and also talking to people within our college because you quite often don't get to talk to anybody. (Mentee, Project 1)

By engaging in experiential activities in a practical way, the mentee is able to develop her understanding of effective practice. Subsequently reflecting on the activity, she can consider how she might adapt what she has seen in her own setting, supported by any resources that may have been provided. This ability to adapt what has been observed to their own practice is central to the JPD activity.

What is noteworthy about this comment from the mentee is the apparent impact of the JPD approach on increased engagement with her learners. This has led to a development in collegiality that would be particularly pertinent for a teacher who works on a part-time basis.

In the partner institution in Project 1, the senior leader had tried to assemble examples of effective practice for the mentors and mentees to be used during the joint working activity:

> I have put together examples of practice for others and the process of sharing practice is actually very difficult. The actual mechanics of it when you get right down to it, it is almost impossible because you can provide examples of what good practice

> looks like, but it is the better understanding that goes with the practice that is so important. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Partner)

This suggests that the project will only succeed if the mentors and mentees themselves (rather than brokers) engage in the sharing of understandings with each other, since this active engagement fires the imagination of teachers and empowers them to identify themselves the areas of their practice that they want to improve and subsequently take steps to bring about change, so promoting a deeper level of pedagogical understanding. For JPD to be an effective vehicle for change, teachers must be respected to make judgements about what is good practice intuitively in an atmosphere of collaborative trust, without the need for external examples or models (MacAllister, 2016).

Although the partnership in Project 1 was set up with one teacher being more experienced (the mentor), the relationship between the two could be described as flat, since there appeared to be a reciprocity in terms of sharing practice:

> It makes you think, well actually I can share that and people can see the relevance of that and [mentor] who is from [partner organisation] who I've been working with she was like 'I hadn't thought about doing that... but I can see that' and with her ESOL students it's relevant. She came to me while I was doing a plan in a room and I had Argos catalogues and they were putting bits and pieces and they had measuring to do and I had lots of things to think about. She said that was great because she could use that with her ESOL maths. You've got that synergy as well. So I've thoroughly enjoyed it and it's been very valuable. (Mentee, Project 1)

It seems from this comment that both mentee and mentor have something to contribute in the collaborative partnership and so assumes both parties gain from the relationship (Little, 1990). It also suggests that the opportunity for interaction is key to the success of JPD, and both these aspects are echoed by Hargreaves who suggests that 'interaction and mutual development related to practice' is a key characteristic of JPD. It can be inferred from this example that the mentor is not simply transferring their practice to the mentee and this is because the mentee will be asking questions to clarify aspects of the practice, forcing him or her to reflect on the practice in a new light leading to a reciprocity as the process develops into a co-constructed improvement (Hargreaves, 2012b, pp.7-9).

What was difficult to assess was exactly how knowledge was being transferred, that is how they were working *on* their developing practice. In such a short timescale, where there were opportunities for only two observations of each other's practice, presupposes that whilst there was time to begin to develop a relationship, there was not enough time for the practice to be interpreted, modified and reconstructed in order for it to bring about marked changes in the mentee's practice (Eraut, 2004) and this was a limitation of the study. It did seem, however, as if the new knowledge was beginning to gradually permeate the mentee's practice (Desforges, 2000) and that the mentee felt safe in experimenting with new practices, away from the gaze of the broker. The use of the word 'synergy' is worthy of note which could suggest that the mentee is suggesting that the JPD activity involves development of the practice of teaching, rather than simply sharing tips or resources.

During the interviews, participants were asked about how they could ensure that the practice that was being shared was 'good' when modelling JPD. This is a particularly thorny issue and I was keen to find out to what extent the practitioners were trusted by their managers to make judgements intuitively about what constituted 'good' practice in an atmosphere of trust (Coffield and Edward, 2009).

The mentee in Project 1 adopted a pragmatic approach in terms of what she felt constituted effective practice, suggesting that if a strategy or approach had a positive impact on her learners, then it could be described as 'good':

> I think that if something works and your students are happy using a particular method or enjoy doing a particular part of the subject using a particular video clip or a piece of equipment then it's all down to how effective something is. It has to be related to the student. It can't be related to the tutor. (Mentee, Project 1)

This comment indicates that the mentee's judgement – what constitutes effective practice – is pragmatic and what appears to be of importance is that the practice is relevant to her teaching context and whether it engages and challenges her learners, not whether it has been endorsed by others as being 'good'.

The brokers and strategic enablers in the study tended to take an alternative view. Of concern to one of the strategic enablers was that JPD could be reduced to swapping notes or at worst a spreading of poor practice if there was no guarantee that the mentor's practice was considered 'good':

> I think that one of the dangers is that unless the tutor is being really honest with themselves, you could end up with people actually thinking that their practice is fine and not questioning it. So actually, where is the rigour in the process, if two tutors come along, they're pretty average and they are actually saying 'well this is alright, oh I like that!' So actually it's about…because we have standards and observations, so people know what the standards are that are required, but I think if you don't use the rigour then it will become just sharing notes, or having a chat, or actually accepting that what I do is okay. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Lead)

This is a concern worthy of note, and indeed brokers and strategic enablers in three out of the five projects were of the view that the practice should be underpinned and informed by 'trustworthy' sources so that they could be confident that the practice that was being shared was based on existing knowledge that had been endorsed by an 'expert'. This view of predicating practice, or 'good' practice on 'existing knowledge' resonates with Bernstein's version of the 'official' construct of professional knowledge (Bernstein, 2000) that is the view that knowledge can only be advanced if it has been approved by a reputable authority.

In Project 1, for example, a researcher was engaged to identify underpinning research to support and verify the project aims and objectives, although the nature of this research was not made clear. This research was presented at the beginning of the project at the initial meeting. At the final conference, the researcher presented further studies that she felt were relevant to the themes that had emerged from the action learning sets:

> [The researcher] is putting something together so that's where the effective practice will come from, rather than us saying 'This is what effective practice is, this is what it looks like' and some of it was coming from other peers within the action learning sets and towards the end. (Broker, Project 1)

The strategic enabler from the project also recognised the value of including a research element:

> I think the danger was, without doing that [research element], the actual joint practice development could be interpreted in a large number of ways, couldn't it? In terms of how it might work, it could just slip into sharing practice. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Lead)

This is a genuinely astute and honest observation by the strategic enabler, suggesting that improvements in practice must be informed by evidence from research to add rigour to the process and avoid the activity merely consisting of swapping notes, a view which is supported by both Hargreaves (2012b) and Fielding et al (2005). This perhaps highlights the risk of this type of approach in that notions of 'transfer' may be reduced to notions of 'transmission' or uncritically 'implementing content' (Gregson, 2010). Gregson (2010) suggests that for content to be deemed credible, it should be based on ideas that have been well-researched in the practitioner research community, with assistance provided to mentees to assist them in implementing the ideas, using a JPD approach based on practitioner self-enquiry.

Supplementary

The broker from Project 4 suggested that resources produced by teachers involved in the activity would only be judged as effective if they had been verified and endorsed by 'experts':

> Okay that's a really good point… What we're going to do eventually is put stuff onto Moodle but before anything goes on there what we're going to do is get independent experts in certain fields such as maths, English and ESOL to check them through first just to make sure that they are effective. (Broker, Project 4)

This seems to suggest that the broker does not have sufficient faith or trust in those engaged in the activity to produce an acceptable quality of resources that can be shared with the institution, thus exercising her power to some extent to undermine their professionalism and reinforcing the notion that more senior staff know best.

In Project 5, the evaluator considered that it was necessary to support the mentees and mentors to critically engage with educational research:

> It's all about engaging with the right kind of literature, being given the support and being able to criticise even the literature that is relevant …So there's something about more help in engaging with literature that's worth engaging with but engaging with that literature in a critical way. (Evaluator, Project 5)

The broker had decided on a specific study that would form the basis of the project. The evaluator of this project recognised the limitations of this approach where, in her view, the broker had such a tight control over the project that she had decided on the outcome before the activity had even begun:

> Sometimes the problem was that people got beguiled by a gimmick or a hard sell and they embarked on research projects that they had already decided that they understood what the problem was and they had already identified what the solution was going to be, so the whole thing became a self-fulfilling prophecy... or in a similar kind of vein, the line manager had a great idea and had decided that they wanted the particular practitioner to try it out and make it work and again you're locked into that kind of 'self-fulfilling prophecy' trap. (Evaluator, Project 5)

The evaluator in Project 5 also emphasised the importance of teachers making quality judgements about what is 'good' underpinned by theory and research:

> The quality of teachers' judgement is absolutely paramount... what might be good practice in one class on one day might not be good practice with the same class on another day. So people have to know not just about practice but they have to know about the theory and the research behind the practice. (Evaluator, Project 5)

The view expressed here would suggest a more central role for educational research and theory so that those involved in JPD activity are constantly engaging with relevant research as they are experimenting with new strategies with their learners. This differs from the more imposed view of research adopted in Project 1, where the research element is introduced at the beginning and end of the project by a researcher, rather than being an integral part as is the case in Project 5. There was, however, scant reference to the use of research by the five projects and this is an area for development if the approach is to be implemented more widely.

The same evaluator also provides some very revealing insights into the importance of making judgements in the classroom based on experience and an understanding of pedagogy:

> It's not just enough for me to say to you, Tricia, 'I do that in my class, if you go away and do that in your class, that'll be a breeze!' It's not about that. Sometimes I'll do something when I'm teaching and I'll watch what's happening, I'll watch the students' faces, I'll feel the atmosphere and I'll change what I had planned to do because I've made a judgement about what the right thing to do at the right time is. Without teachers being able to make a good quality educational judgement in difficult and complex situations, then all you've got is somebody who knows how to ride a bike but they don't know how to ride a bike safely. (Evaluator, Project 5)

It is clear from this comment that the evaluator recognises the complexities of sharing practice and that new practices cannot simply be 'cut and pasted' to a different teaching context, since understandings are required to adapt strategies to ensure the approach will be effective in the new context (Myers, 2012). This mirrors the view of Carr and Kemmis (1986) who suggest that in order to be critical in a pedagogical context, practitioners need to exercise phronesis to ensure that any change they make to their practice must be based on an 'informed, committed action of praxis'. They identify the need to be 'critical', stressing the ability to be able to respond intuitively in any given situation, being able to draw on their expertise, as well as relevant education theory (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.190).

A further comment by the evaluator suggests that to derive maximum benefit from engaging in JPD activity, the practitioners need to be confident that the teaching they are observing is informed by a depth of analytical and critical thought based on sound educational theory:

> A thin understanding of what practice is cannot be king. It cannot be the only thing that we care about because, if all you've got is practice and observation of somebody else's practice, then you are limited to how good or bad that person's practice is. If you have someone who is engaged in a particular form of practice because they have made a judgement and they have thought carefully about aspects of educational practice that are important at that point in time and who can then read the practices of others and analyse and see the shortcomings and the potential of those, you've got something more than just a performing person. (Evaluator, Project 5)

This view is echoed by Hargreaves (1998) who notes that if one teacher informs a second teacher about some practice that she finds effective, the second teacher has merely acquired *information*, *not personal knowledge*. In his view, transfer of

effective practice happens only when the knowledge of the first teacher becomes information for the second, who then reflects and works on the information in such a way that it becomes part of her context of meaning and purpose and pre-existing knowledge is applied in action, concluding that 'transfer is the conversion about one person's practice into another's know-how' (Hargreaves,1998, p.46). This view is echoed by Eraut (2004) who describes this type of sharing as 'informal social learning', where the contexts of the former and new situation have to be understood. However, to be transferred, Eraut (2004) argues that the theoretical knowledge and skills that are relevant to that particular situation have to be recognised and resituated. As this knowledge may well be tacit, this stage of the process may well be absent in the practice of JPD, an aspect recognised by the evaluator in Project 5.

How did the use of language reveal contradictions and tensions in relation to the activity and relationship with key players?

Collaboration

There were frequent references by the broker in Project 1 to working 'collaboratively' during the activity:

> My own perception, my own kind of aim was for an individual theme per tutor and they would have a vision whether it would be use of questioning or students to work collaboratively within groups to look at specific resources or approaches. (Broker, Project 1)

Hargreaves (1994) posits that if we are to grasp the meaning of collaboration and collegiality, then it is necessary to focus on who is in control of the collaborative practice. In the study, the brokers were in charge of the themes on which the mentees and mentors were to focus, how they were to go about this (through learners' surveys, for example) and with whom they should collaborate. Rather than collaboration, a more apt descriptor would be 'contrived collegiality', since the relationships in the study have been orchestrated by brokers and as such are mandatory and monitored by the institution, time-bound and to some extent

‘predictable’ (Hargreaves, 1994), since the strategic enabler had outlined the anticipated impact of the project at the start of the activity.

Joint practice development

The term ‘joint practice development’ used frequently by the respondents is worthy of further analysis. In contrast to CPD that tends to be imposed on teachers, the essence of JPD is more concerned with development of the ‘self’. As Engeström et al (1999) suggest, if organisations are to innovate, then collaborative learning should lead to the development of new knowledge and a change in practice that Engeström describes as ‘knotworking’, where no one person involved in the activity has control, with dialogue and feedback being essential features (Engeström et al, 1999, pp.346-7). This configuration takes place over a period of time in which ‘knots are formed, dissolved, and re-formed as the object is co-configured time and time again, typically with no clear deadline or fixed end point’ (Engeström, 2000, p.973). This suggests that the central feature of the activity is the practice, rather than the practitioners and that those involved in tying the knots can change over time. Since knots can be tied and untied, the activity is not fixed or bound by any predetermined internal or external rules and it can adapt to change.

Engeström’s model of knotworking implies that in order for the co-figuration to be successful, active as well as intensive participation will be required. Since the joint practice activity took place over a limited period, and mentors and mentees met on only a small number of occasions to observe one another and hold professional discussions, a degree of knotworking took place. The activity was limited, however, due to the internal rules imposed by the organisation, such as the time and space for practitioners to meet, as well as external rules, such as the impending inspection that took place three months after the testing out of the JPD approach.

The extent to which the activity could be considered JPD varied from one project to another. In all projects, activity could be described as ‘joint’ to a degree, since the

process involved practitioners observing each other's practice and having time to reflect. However, the interpretation of 'joint' in relation to JPD goes beyond just observing one another's practice, since it also involves interaction, for example by reflecting together through professional discussion and mutual support.

In Project 5, the term 'joint practice development' was allied to culture change and organisational performance, rather than to a specific improvement in the practice of teaching:

> Joint practice development is the way to go if you want to bring in a high-performance culture in the organisation. It follows those principles really. If you look at business management speak, if you look at JPD and research, they very much dovetail together. (Broker, Project 5)

It would seem that the broker has misinterpreted the principles of JPD as a thinly disguised propagandist exercise in the rhetoric of the former Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS, 2014). This linking of professional development and organisational performance by the broker suggests that this approach will enable institutions to 'bring in' or maintain a managerialist business and enterprise culture in which the values of performance and productivity are the key features (Ball, 2008). It could be argued that introducing this approach is just another government-sponsored initiative underpinned by the NCSL to enable teachers to be more productive, rather than being a model that puts responsibility for professional development in the hands of the teacher.

'Transferring' and 'sharing' of practice

Understandably, there were frequent references throughout the interviews by participants to 'transferring practice' and 'sharing practice'. The Vice Principal in Project 1 referred to instances of teachers sharing practice in their office or in team meetings. However, sharing of practice in this way, where teachers tell other teachers about an aspect of their practice that they have found to be effective, is

problematic, since this does not necessarily result in a transfer of practice, as the practice needs to be demonstrated in order for the practice to be developed (Hargreaves, 2011, 2012b).

As expected, the term JPD was used frequently, however it tended to be used by strategic enablers, brokers and evaluators, rather than the mentee. The term suggests that there is a mutual development of good practice rather than simply a transfer of practice from one setting or individual to another. A deep understanding of practice, coupled with a justification, however, is required in order for the new practice to be successfully transferred that is influenced not only by the observation of new practical skills, but a development of relevant theoretical knowledge and these two elements of practice and theory cannot be separated, described as 'praxis' (Freire, 1970).

Rather than being a 'continuous, pervasive process that builds craft knowledge' the JPD practised in the models could be described as 'occasional', although the activity was distinguished from the routine day-to-day practice in the classroom, but for only a concentrated short amount of time (Hargreaves, 2012a, p.8).

This suggests that reflecting on the practice at a later stage (for example discussing and reflecting during action learning sets and the final conference) may not bring about a sustained change, since the teacher needs to apply theoretical understanding to every decision they make, for example, planning and actions in the classroom, as well as reflecting and evaluating. These new interventions may possibly require repeated implementation and experimentation for the practice to be embedded in a teacher's everyday practice. Put simply, 'implementation is part of how something is learned and more deeply understood' (Timperley, 2011, p.60).

It would seem, as Hargreaves (1998) suggests, that the process of transfer is extremely complex due to practitioners' differing beliefs, their values and their pedagogy, and there is a risk that efforts to adapt and transfer practice may fail in the

very early stages, due to the lack of continuing scaffolded support by the mentor to enable successful transfer (Hargreaves, 1998, p.46). Therefore, unless organisations take responsibility and have accountability for ensuring the transfer of practice, then as a means to improving teaching and learning, JPD is unlikely to be successful, unless the practice being transferred is very simple (Hargreaves, 2011, p.11).

Given the findings from my study, therefore, perhaps a more fitting term is joint practice transfer (JPT), but then that may not be appropriate since the object of the activity is mutual development of practice and 'transfer' would seem to be rather a flabby term, especially given the difficulties teachers experience in achieving successful transfer of practice. However, it cannot be taken as a given that professional learning and development will occur, solely because teachers engage in the activity.

The term 'transfer' is used throughout the study, since it was cited frequently in the literature review in relation to the sharing of practice. However, my research reveals that it is necessary to exercise sensitivity when using the term, since its interpretation may be different according to the context. The findings in my study have demonstrated that an alternative word is needed that conveys a distinction between the notion of *transmission* - the mechanical parcelling up and replication of knowledge and skills - and the notion of *transformation* that conveys the reciprocal nature of collaborative working, where new knowledge and skills infiltrate or are 'infused' into routine practice. Terms such as 'mutual exchange' or 'reciprocal exchange' may be more fitting descriptors of the activity from the perspective of the practitioners, since these may in some way convey the egalitarian nature of the relationship, where teachers are the authors of the practice, rather than outside experts. Any such term also needs to reflect the assertion that 'organismic aspirations drive human behaviours and that human beings are the authors and active agents of their own development' (Deakin Crick et al., 2015, p. 150), that is the underpinning philosophy of education that motivates and reinforces and builds on teachers' professional development, as opposed to imposed self-improvement

approaches, driven by performance and accountability measures that suppress opportunities for individual organismic action (MacAllister, 2016).

What were the organisational structures and associated systems and procedures?

Performance management processes

An organisational process prevalent in all of the organisations in the study that to some extent constrained the implementation of the approach was the systems and procedures related to performance management.

In Project 1, the performance management process had resulted in the appointment of experienced teachers who had been given additional responsibility for the quality improvement of less experienced staff:

> Because of the appraisal process, we have a layer of junior managers who are senior practitioners themselves. They are the best of our teachers, they have some teaching responsibilities, so they continue to keep their skills up to date, but they also have a sort of quality line manager responsibility. So they sort of … every tutor has a designated line manager, a designated mentor and they are responsible for performance management, for development, for support, advice for particular issues. And basically because they're part of the teaching as well as the management team, they have that bridge and therefore they are able to moderate the quality of resources and things that are being shared. (Broker, Project 1)

This suggests that there are pressures on experienced teachers with performance management and quality assurance responsibilities diverting them away from their teaching role. There also appear to be contradictions in terms of the expectations of their position, since they are expected to 'performance manage', but also be available for 'support'; however, their responsibilities were weighted more towards being an arm of management, rather than a source of support for teachers.

Supplementary

In Project 4, the performance management process had dictated which teachers would be chosen to participate in the JPD project:

> How we identified the teachers for this project… we looked at their OTLAs [Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment reports] and looked at action points and thought 'actually yes, they would really benefit from it'. I think we also chose some of the teachers because they were new. I mean the two newly qualified ones are both absolutely brilliant and you think they have got such potential it'd be really good for their professional development because they will go far. They really, really will. So I think it's good to get them on board at a time like this when they are still full of enthusiasm and ideas and are actually quite inspiring and invigorating for the others who are probably a little bit more jaded. (Broker, Project 4)

There was a perception in Project 3 that the performance culture of the organisation was dictated by Ofsted's inspection criteria and that this was having a negative impact on teaching staff and was not leading to a marked improvement in teaching and learning. There was the suggestion that implementing a JPD approach would empower teachers by enabling them to take back control of strategies to improve their practice:

> …[the senior manager in the partner organisation's] concern, and mine is that we have got into a real 'tick box' situation with Ofsted where organisations are interpreting...making all sorts of assumptions, I think, about what Ofsted are looking for and tightening up practice to the point where teachers are going in a classroom and feeling the need to tick off a thousand things in order to be outstanding. And they're so busy thinking about that, that they're not actually engaged in their own practice in any meaningful reflective way. So it's not coming from the teachers themselves, it's coming from what managers think Ofsted want, I think. (Broker, Project 3)

The suggestion here from the broker's comment in Project 1, and supported by the supplementary data derived from other projects, is that Ofsted ends up driving the performance management systems in operation and dictating performative pedagogical practice in some institutions, with the result that senior leaders in institutions are reluctant to allow teachers to take risks for fear of standards slipping, leading to a drop in student retention and achievement targets: there are a set number of approaches that work and so these are the ones that teachers should, and must, emulate and therefore adopt as their performance management targets.

In this climate of fear, the JPD approach is unlikely to take root, since teachers need to be afforded the opportunities to reflect on their practice and experiment with new strategies and approaches.

Bureaucratic systemic disempowerment

In bureaucratic organisational structures delineated and theorised by Weber (1947), communication flows downward from the leader through successive management levels until it reaches those at the lowest level of the hierarchy, such as practitioners and administrative staff. In this pyramidal structure in which everyone has clearly demarcated roles and responsibility, employees work within rules based on established proven methods. This type of structure, governed by authoritarian relationships, is one that is favoured by further educational institutional management teams, since it meets the needs of the marketisation model of the competitive corporation. In these types of institutions, bureaucracy is entrenched in the culture and operations of the organisation, with practitioners having little agency to challenge this culture, resulting in low levels of collegiality, a lack of innovation and a general feeling of disempowerment in the lower echelons of the organisation (Smith and O'Leary, 2015).

This systemic disempowerment where practitioners are functioning as individuals, rather than in a community was, according to my findings, a feature of the organisational culture prior to the implementation of JPD. In Project 1, although there were no direct references to the negative impact of bureaucracy, there were implicit suggestions of bureaucratic systems in place in relation to the collection of observation and quality improvement data.

Supplementary

The evaluator in Project 5 cited that in her view structures and systems that were associated with quality improvement were overly bureaucratic and costly, having a negative effect on the organisation:

> The micromanaged, bureaucratic system is squeezing out the JPD – it is resilient but fragile at the same time. The pressure of all this bureaucratic work needs to be taken seriously and we need to do something about it because it isn't helping very many people and it's costing an awful lot of money. (Evaluator, Project 5)

Not only were these systems and processes considered to be expensive and time-consuming, it was felt that the root cause of these unnecessary pressures was the demands placed on organisations by the expectations of Ofsted. There was a suggestion that strategic enablers in institutions had a tendency to cause alarm amongst staff by introducing overly bureaucratic systems and processes that placed huge demands on mentees, mentors and learners, so diverting the attention away from the core purpose of the organisation:

> A lot of it is the paperwork that goes on around quality improvement regimes, there's a lot of paperwork... well not a lot but there are some contradictory messages, which almost like urban myths about Ofsted where some colleges for example in confidence at [college known to the evaluator] where there was a view, a perception that this kind of mass battery testing of English and maths skills via computers was what Ofsted were looking for. So Ofsted kind of turned into a folk devil in order to generate a moral panic across the organisation, when really Ofsted I don't think would be that easily beguiled by these things. (Evaluator, Project 5)

It appeared that in Project 5, strategic enablers misunderstood the requirements of Ofsted and introduced measures that were flawed pedagogically and so were not only unnecessary but could also have a negative impact on teaching and learning, for both teachers and learners:

> So there are some perceptions of what Ofsted were looking for which are really pedagogically unsound and I'd hope that Ofsted wouldn't look for them. So the majority of it is about a huge bureaucratic, quality improvement crushing pressure that stops people actually improving. (Evaluator, Project 5)

In relation to the JPD process, there were few examples of bureaucratic systems and processes having been developed. In Project 1, a small amount of data was collected, such as equality and diversity data with respect to the 14 teachers and four managers who were involved in the project. Data was also collected from learners' surveys to identify the 'softer' outcomes of the project, such as the extent to which there had been an increase in practitioners reflecting on their practice as a means to assess the impact of the project on their professional development.

In view of the existing bureaucracy in the Project 1 institutions, if the JPD approach were to be fully embedded, from the comments expressed, it is possible that senior leaders may require the validation of good practice that is being transferred to ensure that money and time are spent prudently in adopting the approach (Fielding et al, 2005). As Fielding and colleagues suggest, if this was to be a requirement in the future, this would present challenges, for example the nature of the evidence required and how the impact of the mutual exchange of practice would be measured and validated, since there would be a considerable number of variables. Given the pejorative remarks made about bureaucracy, it is likely that this bureaucratic requirement would signal a return to a hierarchical culture and risk being perceived as a negative side effect of JPD.

If JPD was the object, who or what was the subject?

Since the ‘object’ in CHAT is the goal or motive of the activity system, the ‘object’ in my study was the engagement in JPD in order to improve practice. In other words the object is the reason why the participants choose to take part in the activity and what binds together the elements of the activity (Kaptelinin, 2005; Hyysalo, 2005). The ‘subjects’ were the perspectives of those whose perspective was the focus of my analysis, that is the strategic enabler, broker and mentee.

What were the roles of key players in relation to the activity?

As well as being influenced by mediating tools, the ‘object’ and the ‘subjects’ were also affected by the ‘division of labour’, that is the way in which labour was divided up within the context of the system. I therefore sought to establish the particular roles that the participants played in respect of the JPD activity, as distinct from their day-

to-day roles as teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders. I was particularly interested to ascertain to what extent they were able to adapt how they related to others involved in the JPD activity in order to reflect the more egalitarian approach. A summary of the JPD roles, drawn on evidence from the five projects, is included as Appendix 10.

The strategic enabler

The strategic enabler's key role in relation to JPD was to lead at a strategic level the institution's involvement in the JPD activity. Not surprisingly, a core part of his or her role involved funding the activity and establishing its cost-effectiveness in relation to other professional development approaches:

> That's the beauty of the joint practice development project. We could give them, it was only like two hours, but it was two hours they could spend reflecting on their practice which they might do anyway but this recognised it from a college level. It only works out about £25 anyway, so it's not a deal breaker. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Lead)

As the strategic enabler in the Project 1 lead organisation aimed to have a strategic overview of classroom practice in the institution, he regularly dropped in on teaching sessions and this was felt by the evaluator to be a signal to the teaching staff that he was 'leading by example'[5] and in touch with classroom practice:

> The senior management team, including the Principal and the Vice Principal, regularly go in and sit in lessons. So that sort of way of working...so there's a sense with the staff that the senior management team understand what is happening in the classroom. (Evaluator, Project 1)

It is unclear, however, what the evidence for understanding classroom practice might be, as a visit from the Vice Principal cannot be compared with an observation or

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judgement of effective practice against a set of competences. This aspect of the strategic enabler's role would appear, however, to resonate with Fielding et al's (2005) research that suggests that senior leaders in schools are frequently involved with observing practice as this enables them to identify the good practice, as well as where there are professional development needs (Fielding et al, 2005).

The broker

The broker in Project 1 was responsible for the day-to-day management of the project and establishing the professional learning community to enable the two peer observations to take place and setting up the pilot action learning sets and organising the joint staff conference at the end of the project. She was also involved in developing stimulus material for the mentees to use and adapt for their learners.

This 'continual guidance' was necessary in the broker's view to keep tutors who may be 'resistant' on track:

> ...so there were some common themes of resistance that came through in terms of the process, that level of autonomy – maybe not as much perhaps – and I think for some tutors it's having that continual guidance, maybe accessing the standards in a sense because there hasn't been complete guidance with absolutely everything. I mean I'd say they've been guided. I've sent them ever such a lot of communication, I feel like I'm just continuously sending them an email! (Broker, Project 1)

The broker's comments suggest that a dependency culture has formed in the organisation, where there is an expectation by some mentees that guidance with respect to all aspects of teaching and learning is provided by the broker, rather than the broker giving mentees the autonomy to develop their own guidance. This comment could be indicative of the broker wanting to keep in control of the focus of the activity that is a feature of a hierarchical culture where roles and expectations are strictly defined. It could be argued that 'guidance for absolutely everything' is an implicit rule that anchors teachers to their position in the hierarchy.

The self-evaluation form (Appendix 9) and peer observation form (Appendix 11) that were designed by the broker to be used when working with the partner organisation could be construed as further evidence of an attempt by her to constrain the activity and to maintain a degree of control. It was unclear whether the mentees were expected to submit the forms once completed to her, but close examination of the forms suggests that a manager-focused approach has been adopted in the design. In particular, the self-evaluation form makes reference to appraisal and a recent observation to help mentees decide on the focus of the practice for development. The peer observation form, through questions such as 'What worked well?' and 'What could be adapted?', bears a resemblance to an impersonal management observation form that aims to monitor teaching and learning, rather than one seeking to capture the essence of a more bottom-up model.

Supplementary

In Project 2, the broker also designed an observation form to be completed by the practitioner when conducting peer observations (Appendix 12). In contrast to the broker in Project 1, a more practitioner-focused approach had been adopted and she had emphasised that the completed form should not be submitted to her as the broker, as she regarded this might constrain the developmental aspect of the JPD approach.

Far from resembling a standard observation form, the Project 2 form included light touch prompts such as 'ideas you would take away' and 'something you would do differently', suggesting it was largely up to the mentee to decide the aspects of practice on which they would focus, signifying a willingness by the broker to stand back and providing a degree of autonomy for the mentee.

When asked how she perceived her role, the broker in Project 1 felt she was someone who 'provoked thought' amongst the mentees, rather than 'telling or guiding':

> I think they see me as somebody – you know – I know what's happening next and I know what the plan is and what they're meant to be doing at the moment. I don't think they view me – well that's my perception – as someone that's checking up on them, making sure they're doing what they're supposed to be doing in an authoritative manner. (Broker, Project 1)

It is not possible to corroborate the validity of this perception from the data, however, it suggests that there may be tensions for the broker (and mentees) in having to adopt a more facilitative, collaborative approach in her new role, having previously been observing teachers and undertaking staff appraisals in a managerial capacity.

Supplementary

Another broker clearly found it difficult to step back from her day-to-day role as middle manager to facilitate the JPD activity, continuing to identify herself as a CPD co-ordinator. Rather than trusting practitioners to work collectively to resolve challenges where they occurred, in instances where the broker felt they did not have 'the big picture', she felt she had to step in and manage the situation, assuming her day-to-day role as a middle manager, rather than JPD broker:

> Occasionally tricky ones I would manage it myself. You know it might be a little contentious and you might need just a little direction, to prevent them going into deep water, but generally that's how it would work. (Broker, Project 5)

This blurring of the two roles is at odds with the ethos of the JPD approach, calling into question whether the appraisals process is actually driving the JPD activity:

> …and all they have to do is talk to their manager, because the manager is kept in the loop in the appraisal process and then come to me and then if I thought I could get a group together then I'd introduce them to each other, I'd find a coach. (Broker, Project 5)

These examples suggest that the brokers are fulfilling a 'bridging and brokering' role where they maybe 'received' some information, perhaps from senior staff, that they had been asked to translate into practice through the JPD activity. The 'thinking' that the broker in Project 1 hopes will be stimulated by this information appears to confirm that the CPD activity is a top-down model, where any learning is controlled

by managers, using a best practice model, and teacher professionalism and teacher identity are the means for control rather than a means to develop a more transformational professionalism where teachers in the institution are supported to develop autonomously and produce new knowledge to bring about change. The broker's thinking is clearly being informed by the 'business model' and the new entrepreneurialism that the evidence suggests are seeping into both further and higher educational cultures (Mockler, 2005; Smith, 2015; Smith and O'Leary, 2015).

Mentee

The mentee's role involved directly engaging in JPD with the mentor from the partner organisation. Both mentee and mentor were, in turn, managed by their respective managers. Joint working included observing the mentor's practice and engaging in professional discussion, sharing practice and resources and then testing out new strategies with her learners. A key part of her role involved disseminating what she had learned at the final conference.

Mentor

The mentor in Project 1 was not interviewed and was a limitation of the study as it would have been particularly beneficial to have had her input, as the more experienced teacher. It was apparent from the data from interviews with the broker and the mentee that her role as the more experienced teacher similarly involved engaging in JPD activity. This included carrying out peer observations of the mentee to discuss possible areas that the mentee might like to consider developing and subsequently holding professional discussions to support the mentee in reflecting on the new practice and adapting it to her context, but also reflecting on her own

practice and through discussion, identifying ways in which her teaching could be modified.

Researcher

Although the researcher was not interviewed as part of my study, it was apparent from data in the external evaluator report that the researcher's role was key to 'identify underpinning research to support and verify the project aims and objectives'[6]. Identification of the research was carried out independently by the researcher, rather than being informed by discussion and interaction with the mentors and mentees. This tends to run counter to the notion of practitioner-researcher teachers, that is teachers being researchers of their own practice (Sachs, 2016; BERA-RSA, 2014).

Evaluator

The evaluator in Project 1 viewed her role as providing support to the strategic enabler and the broker to scope the project and plan the activity so that the aim and outcomes would be achieved, helping to identify any risks and to 'validate the project by determining value for money and confirming the outcomes' (Evaluator, Project 1). She was valued by the strategic enabler, as someone who ensured that the JPD activity remained on track:

> So I think that is important, to have that external ... I think otherwise there is a danger of it to drift a little bit. So she was very clear, we only had a short meeting halfway through rather and then the end meeting so we knew what she was expecting, but in return she really did deliver her part as well, so I think that is quite important actually. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Lead)

[6] External evaluator report for Project 1, July 2014

In this regard, the evaluator's role could be perceived as collecting evidence to be able to report on project activity that has been completed, and not critically considering the extent to which teachers value the activity. Interestingly, she regarded herself as a 'critical friend' who could stimulate thinking, rather than a project manager. These two requirements, however, are not necessarily compatible, particularly as a key part of her role involved reporting back to the funding agency on outcomes and impacts.

In terms of her relationship with the lead partner, she was already known through previous consultancy work commissioned by them and therefore her role remained the same, although her title had changed:

> I think there has been previous relationships. [The evaluator] knows the college and she also knows [the partner organisation] and I think that is part of the choosing aspect. I guess it's no different really from other things within education, I can see why you'd have an evaluator for this type of project in terms of value for money, in terms of the outcome, the impact. So, I viewed it as support, a kind of critical frame so to speak – that type of role. (Broker, Project 1)

This comment by the broker suggests that the evaluation is a top-down rather than a bottom-up practitioner-focused exercise. Indeed, it seems that the evaluator adopts an Ofsted-like role, caught up in the prevailing culture. Her use of the key phrase 'in terms of value for money' implies that JPD is subject to the same kind of commodification and economisation in education more generally, that is to say that education is concerned with 'value' rather than 'values' (Smith and O'Leary, 2015).

Supplementary

The evaluator in Project 3, viewed her role slightly differently in that she considered that this involved keeping in regular contact with the project, more because it needed 'permission to experiment' rather than reassurance. An understanding of the JPD approach was felt to be key by this evaluator to be able to provide the guidance that was needed:

> But I think because of the joint development practice approach, you do need a little bit more than project management you do need to have an understanding of the approach to steer the projects in that direction. (Evaluator, Project 3)

Unlike the evaluator in Project 1, she felt she had ‘permission’ to go beyond assessing whether the aims and outcomes had been met, but in doing so recognised that there would be challenges in writing a report in a way that would enable activity to be measurable and comparable with that of other projects:

> Now the problem with that will be when I come to write it up, it’s going to be hard, really hard because all of the conventions that have been used to make things easier and comparable… a lot of them have been thrown out of the window. (Evaluator, Project 3)

This comment appears to suggest that a useful approach to evaluation in this case would involve collaborative approaches akin to the JPD approach, where evaluators share evidence with the practitioners as well as the learners to help produce new knowledge and understanding as the project developed, with the result that the concept of JPD is shaped and defined as it is being implemented. This view would suggest that there may be value in involving teachers in steering JPD work, through sharing data as it emerges (Engeström, 1995).

An evaluation of the extent to which the tutors had the capacity to make an informed, un-coerced decision free from external control or influence was felt to be a key feature of the role in Project 5:

> I think as part of the JPD project initiative was related to issues of scaling up and the dangers of falling back into a cascade ‘watch me be excellent and you’ll be excellent too’ type model, we were looking at how when people had actually been introduced to the principles and the practices and the literature behind JPD, how they then were then able to take that forward with different forms of support and advice from the (evaluator) team. So we were really looking at how well people coped when they were trying to do JPD on their own with less support. (Evaluator, Project 5)

This comment suggests that JPD is a development from what Engeström’s work suggests, towards a true representation of ‘autonomy’, consequent on self-organisation. Allied to this, the evaluator perceived that a key aspect of her role was to help the practitioners reflect on their experiences of the project, what they

had learned from it and how aspects of it could have been improved, so in effect adopting a JPD approach to evaluation:

> So it's not a model of external evaluator comes in, objectively collects evidence and then tells people what they've found. It's almost like a JPD approach to educational evaluation, where some people who have perhaps got a bit more experience and maybe have more time to engage with the literature and the theory and the research and so on, introducing other people to that, letting them try it out and then in a kind of democratic approach to evaluation … for the evaluators and the people who are trying to make the project work to co-construct their understanding of what's happened and what sense they can make of it. (Evaluator, Project 5)

Out of the three evaluators interviewed, it is worthy of note that one of them perceived the role to mainly involve reporting on the extent to which the aims and outcomes of the project had been achieved. The other two, however, regarded the role as an opportunity to evaluate the JPD model itself and provide support to the practitioners in shaping and adapting the model as they were piloting it, enabling them to be critically reflective of the process and helping them to gain a deeper understanding and make sense of the JPD approach and its impact on their practice.

The evaluator in Project 5 seems also to have viewed her role as helping teachers understand what the JPD process would look like if they were less reliant on their managers for support and therefore had complete autonomy to identify their learning needs, working collaboratively with colleagues to continually develop their pedagogical skills and understanding. This signals the potential of JPD to promote self-governance where teachers are engaged in practitioner-led enquiry, where the learning from their experiences in engaging in JPD is used to gain control of their professionalism and their future (Sachs, 2011).

This would be worthy of a further study, perhaps with a group of practitioners who were accustomed and therefore comfortable with the approach, to assess how in practice this more autonomous and transformative model may work and be of value to them. This social constructivist approach, however, could have disadvantages in the longer term, that there may be a risk that poor practice could be replicated if

there is no guidance in terms of support, signposting, for example, to relevant literature. Practitioners could also become distracted and more time may be needed for improvements to be evident.

What is the relationship between these key players and other agencies and partners?

A key aspect of the study involved identifying the conditions that support the development of collaborative relationships between partner organisations. I was particularly interested to find out the extent to which partners were prepared to share practice, particularly those who were geographically close and therefore potentially compete with one another for students.

The two partner organisations in Project 1 had a history of partnership working, with senior leaders from the organisations meeting regularly. In the previous year, they had started to share improvement strategies and effective practice. Although the institutions were not similar in size, they had aspects in common, for example they were both ACL providers and geographically close. As well as being geographically close, the broker in Project 1 suggested that the partnership was partly driven by the requirements of Ofsted:

> … we had started sharing ideas, sharing good practice through last year. We had a meeting, we all sort of got together and that was essentially Ofsted driven and then going beyond that it was a vision, I think it was part of [Vice Principal's] vision to work collaboratively with others. I think in terms of adult learning we are few and far between in this area and [the partner organisation] is our closest neighbour. (Broker, Project 1)

The use and repetition of the word 'vision' is worthy of note as a managerialist term that has entered the everyday lexicon of managers, research suggests is foisted on vice principals by policy makers, as well as the organisational literature that promotes a culture of performativity (Ball, 2003). This view of the broker with respect

to geographical proximity suggests that the relationship may have been formed as a partnership of convenience, rather than for other more specific reasons, for example particular issues or themes on which they wished to focus.

Culturally, however, the two organisations appeared to be very different, with the lead organisation described as 'very formal' in relation to performance management, as opposed to the partner organisation's culture where their staff were not subject to graded internal observations and, in the view of the broker, this was felt to be a driver for the partnership:

> I know that their observation, learning, teaching process is very holistic and in that aspect they're very different to us' … I think that [the culture of the organisation] possibly would have been part of the initial thought process… for that shift perhaps to look at other models, other approaches to maybe consider a change. So, it's not so kind of, top-down driven essentially. (Broker, Project 1)

Criteria for choosing partners

What was felt to be key by the strategic enabler when selecting a partner was that both were of equal status in terms of the Ofsted grade:

> Well it is a tricky one because it is about joint practice and the danger of going into area who had 'requires improvement' is that it might fall into, you know…we're good, we got it right and therefore it would be a little bit one-sided, so it was important to have an even playing field. Yes that was really important that both partners felt they were on equal grounds really and equal status …otherwise I think it would have changed the dynamic of it and it would have been about, 'Well we'll work with whoever because they've got "requires improvement"' and we could still set it up so that it would work under a joint practice development way, but the dynamic would have changed. So, it made perfect sense. (Strategic Enabler, Project 1, Lead)

Despite his perception that both partners were of equal status, it was clear that the project was being driven by his organisation:

> I sort of wrote the bid based upon, I call it the 'pure model of joint practice development' and I went to them with it and said to them 'Look this is what we are doing' and we all sat around for a bit and scratched our heads thinking. And then as the project rolled on, we sort of melded in terms of the outcomes, so they were fine

> with the outcomes once we had understood exactly where we were going. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Lead)

This view was supported by the external evaluator:

> Yes, I mean [lead organisation], I must say is the driver and again, I'm only making a comment, I'm not making a judgement but [partner organisation] is a bit on the tailcoat. (Evaluator, Project 1)

Clearly the evaluator, however, is making a judgement, through her use of a rather disparaging metaphor 'a bit on the tailcoat', suggesting that the partner organisation is benefiting from the success of the lead organisation in securing the funding for the bid.

Supplementary

In Project 2, the strategic enabler considered it was of value to work with new organisations, as well as established partners to introduce different perspectives:

> So, we were then thinking 'Who could we bring into this who we haven't necessarily worked with?' so directly 'Who can give us a fresh view on things as well?' If you only do it with current partners, how do the new ideas come in? (Strategic enabler, Project 2)

On the surface, the strategic enabler suggests that the purpose of forming such partnerships is to share knowledge that has little to do with the external judgement of the Inspectorate. In his view, a key value of partnership working is that it provides an opportunity to hear and debate opposing views in order to bring fresh ideas to the table:

> The improvement comes from the clash of ideas right or wrong and good or bad actually, so that's why we really wanted to involve colleges we've never worked with before. (Strategic enabler, Project 2)

Later in the interview, however, he appears to contradict himself, suggesting a preference for working in partnership with a grade 1 organisation:

> So, it would be very interesting for example to work with a college that has a grade 1 within the past 12 months, because they'll have a more current view of what Ofsted's looking at – they've just been through it. So that was something [partner organisation

> A] and ourselves really wanted to get hold of and then the word of mouth really kicked in with [partner organisation B] talking about partners they have, so it's kind of a next level of partnership. (Strategic enabler, Project 2)

This comment suggests that ultimately, a valuable partner is one who will be able to share tips and offer advice on how to impress the Inspectorate and that FE has become an 'arena for power and control' fostering an obsession for external validation, with institutions becoming disconnected with issues of 'contested and often fragmented conditions' often prevalent in further education organisations (Gleeson et al, 2015, pp.78 and 81).

Of the four projects where comments had been made about the basis on which they had formed partnerships, three out of the four cited Ofsted as being a key driver, related to the grade they had been awarded in recent inspections. This suggests that partnerships of equal status that had been validated by Ofsted were an important factor when selecting partners.

Clearly, it is not only the importance of external judgements when forming partnerships, but also how organisations see themselves in comparison to others. It would seem from this comment that 'labelling' by Ofsted leads to perceptions by 'outstanding' providers as being somehow elitist in comparison to those who have received less prestigious grades, and this feeling of being in the club of privileged organisations was perhaps one of the unintended consequences of the Beacon college programme introduced by New Labour in 1999. As well as nominating the first ten colleges considered to be 'examples of excellence' at the launch of the scheme, Baroness Blackstone also 'named and shamed' four colleges with 'serious weaknesses requiring urgent assistance to improve' (*First beacon colleges announced*, 1999). This deliberate policy of humiliating 'weaker performing' colleges, may well have led to a reluctance by these colleges (such as those referred to by the strategic enabler in Project 2) to voluntarily join partnerships of higher performing institutions fearing that they will be judged by them to be inferior and also feeling that they have nothing of value to share.

Two of the projects selected partners based on established relationships, whereas working with new partners was a factor for two of the projects. This is interesting, since these findings seem to contradict to some extent Fielding et al's research (2005), who suggest that long-term established relationships are seen to be enabling in practice transfer activity.

Trust was not mentioned explicitly by any of the participants in my study, a feature that is considered crucial in the partner relationship by Fielding et al (2005), although perhaps there is implicit reference to trust in the two projects where there was a preference to work with established partners. The dimension of 'status' when selecting partners is not a factor in Fielding's research, however, external judgements appear to have a strong influence on the selection of partners for JPD activity undertaken in the FE contexts in my study.

How do we identify and define 'community'?

To examine the JPD community in Project 1 in more depth, I drew on the research by Blankenship and Ruona (2007, p.4) who compare professional learning communities and communities of practice using key characteristics.

What does a JPD community look like in practice and how is it constituted?

Membership

Membership of the JPD community was by virtue of the practitioners' employment status (they were part-time) and their subject specialism, since those invited were either maths, English or ESOL teachers:

> Well our Deputy Principal sent out an e-mail asking people in either maths, English or ESOL if they would be interested in looking at this opportunity for the joint

> development which I think is great, so I did... I just thought 'What a wonderful opportunity!' (Mentee, Project 1)

Since the participants were invited, rather than mandated, to take part in the project, the membership could be perceived as voluntary. However, once the teachers had signed up to take part, the brokers assigned them to certain tasks and ways of working, such as conducting a pre-designed survey with their learners and working 'collaboratively' with peers during the JPD activity and guidance.

> What happened first of all we wanted to get learner voice first so we wanted the practitioners to undertake a mini interview so I designed the interview questions for them so I've tried to support them along the way so they're not having to do everything and take on all of this new stuff all in one go. (Broker, Project 1)

Essentially then, it was the broker who was in control of the collaborative practice, as well as the strategic enabler (Vice Principal), who had outlined the anticipated impact of the project at the start of the activity, suggesting further evidence of 'contrived collegiality' (Hargreaves, 1994).

Leadership and organisational culture

Project 1 was strongly led by the strategic enabler (Vice Principal), who was regarded as '*the ultimate leader*' by the broker. A key role was to establish the conditions for the activity to take place, firstly by developing effective partnership working with the partner organisation:

> Yes, we have all been in [provider organisation county] a long time, I know the Principal very well and their atmosphere and their culture is similar to ours, so it was built upon previous relationships, plus it was good to fit in terms of their programme, what they offer. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Lead)

Funding for the project had been secured by the strategic enabler with the rationale for the model clearly relating to the organisation's values and vision of: '*moving the organisation from a "didactic organisation" to a "learning organisation"*' (Project 1 evaluator report, p.5).

How is it different from a community of practice?

Table 2 outlines the features of the JPD community in Project 1, demonstrating a comparison with professional learning communities and communities of practice (Blankenship and Ruona, 2007).

It can be seen that the features of membership of Project 1 tend to align with a professional learning community, rather than a community of practice model, where the membership tends to be informal and where the objectives and activity are agreed by the community, rather than the organisation (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Orr, 1990, 1996). In particular, the top-down leadership style manifested by the strategic enabler in Project 1 would seem to be in keeping with a professional learning community, differing from that manifested in a community of practice, where leadership is based on distributed leadership, both inside and outside the community (Hord, 2004).

The closer analysis of the community helps to form a sound basis on which to examine in more depth key issues in relation to power and conflict in implementing the model and the resulting tensions that will be examined more closely in the next section where the focus is on Project 1 activity to interrogate the model of JPD.

Table 2: Comparison of characteristics of professional learning communities and community of practice models

Feature	Professional Learning Community (Hord, 2004)	Community of Practice (Wenger et al, 2002)	Characteristics of Project 1
Membership	Mandatory or a foregone conclusion, by virtue of status as faculty member	Membership is voluntary and informal, based on expertise, passion for a topic	Voluntary for part-time staff, but themes decided by managers
Leadership	Provided by principal or shared within the group, monitors activity, provides supportive conditions for activity	Distributed leadership from formal or informal leaders within or outside the community	Led by vice principal, with devolvement of day-to-day management to middle manager
Organisational culture	Shared mission, vision and values drive the work, cultural shift essential to becoming a PLC	Levels of trust nurtured to enable collaboration to occur	Driven by values and vision, desire to achieve a cultural shift in the way CPD is perceived in the institution
Knowledge sharing	Teachers participate in reflective dialogue; knowledge shared through peer coaching and feedback	Occurs mainly within the community Emphasis on social learning	Knowledge is shared through peer observations, professional discussions

To summarise this section, a number of key findings have emerged when examining how JPD was modelled in the projects which provide evidence that JPD is in some ways reconfigured when implemented in further education settings.

According to the literature, a key principle of JPD necessitates practitioners deciding for themselves the focus of their professional development. However, my findings indicate that this has been largely decided by their managers, suggesting that the shift to a new collaborative culture that requires a change to the power dynamic in further education institutions presents a real challenge in managerialist cultures. References to providing 'continual guidance' to practitioners and in one instance the

need to ‘manage’ some ‘contentious’ projects demonstrate the challenges that managers face in shifting from a top-down to a more bottom-up model. Furthermore, a particular challenge for the broker is negotiating the transposition of precepts from a school model of JPD to the entirely different context and culture of FE. Without navigating the passage with a careful eye on what lies beneath the surface, there is, as Cooper argues, the risk that teachers will have ‘received’ a culture that will be ‘foreign to the setting’ (Cooper, 1987, p.47).

Findings in relation to how mentees and mentors shared their practice, demonstrate that JPD is valued as a dialogic social practice that reactivates teacher agency, enabling critical reflection on teaching and learning in a community. It is shown to instigate and promote a cultural practice of sharing and reflection and also, perhaps, to use an old-fashioned notion of community, fellowship.

The data indicate that JPD is defined and affected by temporal considerations Extended time is needed for trust to be established between brokers and mentees/mentors. Sufficient time is paramount if changes in practice are to become fully embedded, since repeated implementation and experimentation is required before a ‘perfect fit’ version of JPD can be seamlessly integrated into organisational culture in the further education sector.

Finally, it would appear from the data that partnership working between institutions is shaped largely but not exclusively by external judgements made by Ofsted, with competition and market advantage emerging as key factors in adversely affecting the development of relationships and partnerships.

4.3 Interrogating the JPD model: Examining the constitution of the learning community and resulting tensions in relation to power and conflict when modelling JPD

Having established how the JPD was modelled in the projects, I then sought to establish the extent to which leadership culture facilitates or constrains the JPD approach that was a core objective of the research. Focusing exclusively on the data extrapolated from interviews with the five participants in Project 1, my research enabled me to understand the tensions arising from the new rules of implementation and the resulting power relations, particularly between strategic enablers and mentees once the JPD model had been implemented.

Who draws up the constitution and who sets the agenda?

It was clear that the strategic enabler (Vice Principal) was key in setting an agenda that would provide the conditions that would enable JPD to flourish. There appeared to be a general unwillingness by him to make structural changes to accommodate the JPD approach due to the logistical complexities that it would necessitate (Cunningham, 2002):

> Yes, joint practice development as an occasional activity is very useful and there are great benefits and encourages reflection…you know and a better understanding of your own practice. It is very difficult, it is not something that could be applied as a roll-out for all staff, the logistics and complexity of doing that and the sort of requirement if we were to attempt that could undermine the benefits that we have achieved. What we have is volunteers engaging, it has been a voluntary activity. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Partner)

The strategic enabler seems to be suggesting that JPD would be acceptable as a voluntary activity but embedding the approach across the whole organisation as a professional development approach would not be permissible. Presumably, by 'the benefits that we have achieved' he is perhaps referring to the benefits accrued from making it a voluntary activity for the few, as opposed to making it a requirement for all.

Although in all projects, strategic enablers and brokers organised launch events to introduce mentees and mentors to the aims of the project and engage the JPD approach, there was little sense that the JPD activity was 'learner led', that is that the practitioners were involved in the process of agreeing and planning the JPD activity and little evidence of a sense of shared purpose or ownership of the activity that Fielding et al (2005) consider to be the most important element of the transfer process.

The strategic enabler was able to control the activity through dictating the amount of time being made available for the JPD activity to become embedded. Time was seen to be necessary in terms of developing relationships between the mentors and mentees, learning from one another, reflecting and adapting new practices. However, this was largely constrained by external rules imposed by the project funding and by the funding agency who expected to see evidence of impact in a short space of time.

This suggests that the funding agency does not understand the nature of the activity and the time that is needed for the concept to become embedded. Relating this to activity theory and Engeström's 'complex model of an activity system', 'relatively lasting new patterns of interactions' are achievable once the 'projected outcome is no longer momentary and situational' (Engeström, 1999a, p.31).

This point is reinforced by the broker, who suggests that the JPD model would naturally be more time-consuming to implement and so it would take time before there was any evidence of a positive impact on practice:

> So, in that respect it's really, really good but the more organic side of things which is communities of interest growing and knowledge circles naturally developing you just can't force them. (Broker, Project 1)

This perception by the broker is striking, in that she refers to 'communities of interest', acknowledging the collaborative nature of the JPD community who have common interests, but also that she accepts that the model needs time to develop naturally and organically, rather than being forced unnaturally. This brings to mind an analogy with the artificial nature of force-feeding in nature, as opposed to organic farming or nurturing, that although takes longer and may be more costly, results in a more natural and enriched development that ultimately is of better quality.

There is a risk, therefore, that because practitioners may need time to become familiar and comfortable with the approach, senior leaders may well revert to more traditional 'best practice' models of professional development:

> Yes, I think that's the difficulty… a change can be slow, and it is very difficult. You might not see the benefit for another five or six months in some cases. Certainly, with the peer observations I'm not sure, it is still quite exploratory in that sense. (Broker, Project 1)

The strategic enabler also had control in terms of costing the activity and this appeared to be the primary concern, rather than whether the activity would result in a positive change on the motivation and ultimately the practice of the teachers. The senior leader in the partner organisation in Project 1 shared this view and suggested that a positive feature of the approach was that it was more cost effective than traditional cascade CPD approaches:

> One of the things we have to do is to manage that as efficiently as possible and doing this, I would much rather invest in staff time on paying them at non-contact rates, which is far cheaper and the money goes an awful lot further in those instances and doing those sorts of activities than spending the money externally. It has the benefit that staff appreciate that and it is seen as a recognition, as a value of their time in these activities and that has creates its own momentum and some good will. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Partner)

This comment illustrates that strategic enablers also controlled the agenda through deciding the remuneration of staff in terms of pay. In both the lead and partner institutions, part-time teachers were paid at an hourly rate, so to encourage them to take part in the pilot, they had been offered additional 'non-contact' pay.

The mentee in Project 1, however, was of the view that the additional pay that was offered did not cover the additional time that was needed to carry out the JPD activity. She had, however, decided to take part because of the intrinsic rather than extrinsic reward:

> But all in all, it's tough. I sort of made the decision that I would make the best of it and disregard the hours and the hourly rate of pay because when you start thinking about the hourly rate of pay you just lose the will. And just thought, right well as long as I have got enough money to get by, it's something I enjoy doing and I am in work, so just get on with it…with a smile. (Mentee, Project 1)

This comment may suggest that what is more important for the mentee is the satisfaction and enjoyment that she derives from this new way of working in a community of interest, rather than as an individual in a more controlled and controlling professionalism environment.

What were the internal or external rules that constrained the activity and the role of power in relation to the practice?

There were a number of internal rules that constrained the JPD activity in Project 1, with the most dominant of these processes being performance management and quality assurance processes that were implemented by the broker. Whilst the broker recognised the benefits to teachers of the empowering nature of the JPD approach, there was a reluctance by her for this to be mirrored in the culture of the organisation, and this can be regarded as a constraining factor in terms of introducing and sustaining the model in an institution.

The broker was of the view that the JPD approach could lead to a less rigorous quality assurance process. To accommodate and adjust to the nature of the JPD approach, the broker needed to relinquish an element of control over teachers, particularly in relation to performance management and this led to inevitable tensions:

> … I know myself, I mean I know my team well because I observe them, I speak to them and I undertake their appraisals. I think if I was taken away from that process, I would have to think of different ways to… I mean you're never going to know everything, that's the thing and maybe that it's thinking about something that actually what is happening here could be fed back to in a way that the quality assurance and the quality improvement plans can still be developed and reviewed so we can make sure practice is good or outstanding, would be better. (Broker, Project 1)

She seems to be suggesting here that she should have access to any feedback from peer observations and discussions, to be confident that the practice being shared was of the standard required by management, thereby reverting to a form of professionalism that is ultimately controlled through established performance management criteria that are externally imposed of effectiveness which contradictorily de-professionalises rather than re-professionalises the 'profession' (Sachs, 2016).

The anticipation of Ofsted inspections emerged as an external factor or rule that constrained the JPD activity. Evidence of this factor emerged three months after the piloting of the JPD approach, as an unexpected Ofsted inspection of the Project 1 lead institution had taken place. Whilst most of the teaching areas were judged by the inspectorate as 'good', one of the areas was reported to be 'requiring improvement'. What is noteworthy in terms of my study is that teachers in this curriculum area had been involved in the JPD pilot.

Interestingly, the senior leader in Project 1 recognised that having a respect for teachers was fundamental and having an open culture demonstrating this was key:

> Respect for the tutors, that's one of the key things (that is needed), that tutors are recognised as professionals in their own right, giving them their own management support, having a culture of openness. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Lead)

Following the unexpected Ofsted inspection that took place two months after the JPD pilot project had been completed, where the organisation had '*come a cropper*'

(Strategic enabler, Project 1, Lead) in one subject area, it seemed the culture dominated by performance and surveillance would continue:

> We still have the observation process and it is still graded and people still get feedback, but actually it's that moving on and that continuum to being done to, to actually take a responsibility for their actions and their development, so we are on that continuum. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Lead)

Because of the need to be judged as 'good' or 'outstanding', the strategic enabler subsequently took the decision to revert to the policy of unannounced graded observations to ensure that the organisation's quality assurance systems were sufficiently rigorous:

> It's not that robust enough at the minute to be able to say well that's all fine and we did come a cropper with Ofsted in one area, so there is still a focus on external observations from the managers and I am comfortable with that although I know there always is a huge debate raging in FE schools about 'should you?' My own personal view, it would change if the staff here changed. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Lead)

The actions taken by the strategic enabler suggest that a primary responsibility of principals is the survival of their college and the education of their students, and if that is threatened (for example the results of an inspection threaten the survival of the institution) then he or she must take whatever action is necessary, even if this results in a division between the employers and their staff. The last sentence in his comment is indicative of a blame culture; in other words, he is suggesting that it is teachers' intransigence to the demands of senior management that is the reason for reverting to the previous observation policy. There was also a concern by him that JPD could risk reinforcing poor practice. Consequently, he felt justified in re-introducing the unannounced observations policy:

> So that is one of the key things for me, it [the JPD model] can really reinforce…you know if practice isn't at the standard that it should be, I wouldn't want this process to reinforce it. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Lead)

It would seem that the strategic enabler is suggesting that teaching can only be improved by models based on command and control models, rather than through relationships between teachers and their managers built on trust.

External rules imposed by the funding agency also led to tensions. In particular, the agency required that partner organisations needed to be judged by Ofsted to be 'good' or 'outstanding' in order to bid for the funding.

How was labour divided up and distributed? How did this change as new practices emerge?

The broker appeared to want to retain control in terms of the JPD activity and clearly found it challenging to adapt her management style from an authoritative to a more facilitative approach that was needed in relation to the JPD activity:

> When we had our … I mean I sat on my hands when we had the action learning purposely ... it's really hard not to… When I was designing activities for tutors, it was challenging to think of something that wasn't teaching so to speak and telling or guiding but was more thought-provoking. (Broker, Project 1)

This was further manifested in a reluctance by her to give the task of designing the content of the final conference to the teachers, for fear of overloading them. It was unclear whether she had asked the teachers if they would be prepared to contribute in this way, but she had assumed this would not be possible, so giving her and the senior leader control of the event and its content:

> It would have been good for the practitioners to design it [presentation for the joint conference] but I thought it would be too much for them to do so [the Vice Principal] will be doing a presentation, a minimal, a short one and then the researcher will be giving a mini presentation. (Broker, Project 1)

What were the resulting tensions from power relations between the mentee, strategic enabler and broker?

Tensions between the broker and mentee

Tensions in the relationship between the broker and the mentee were evident once the mentee had been exposed to a more developmental approach to professional development in the partner organisation that did not rely on graded observations. Having always found her line manager to be approachable, she was now beginning to question the judgemental approach that had been implemented in her own institution in favour of a more collegiate model:

> She's [broker] very approachable. But they've (partner organisation) gone that step further in (partner organisation). You have a meeting before the observation so you can talk about things that you're worrying about... things that you can do with help with. It seems to be done in a completely different way, rather than someone sitting at the back of the room taking notes and watching you. (Mentee, Project 1)

Tensions between the strategic enabler and mentee

As the JPD activity was instigated by the strategic enabler within the institution, as well as having control in terms of agreeing the time and space that mentees and mentors would need to take part in the activity, he also had the 'power' and position to drop in and 'sit in' on teaching sessions as and when he wished. This was considered by the evaluator to be a praiseworthy signal to staff, since in her view this communicated to the teachers that, rather than being remote and out of touch, he was in tune with what was happening in the classroom:

> So, it's [a way of working, visiting classes] certainly modelled by senior management engagement even from a distance in going in and seeing teaching and learning happening and encouraging conversations. (Evaluator, Project 1)

The evaluator seems to be intimating that the strategic enabler is modelling and therefore normalising peer observation that is a key feature of the JPD approach. There are clearly differences in the power relations in a situation where a senior leader is sitting in on a class and when a mentor is peer observing a mentee's class

in a JPD context. Therefore, it could be argued that the strategic enabler is monitoring, rather than peer observing, when visiting classes, but this scarcely seems to be recognised by the evaluator.

Rather than completely abandoning JPD in his institution, the strategic enabler appeared to suggest that the model would be revised, reducing the degree of management control to some extent by the brokers, but with future observations conducted by the broker, rather than peers, at the invitation of the practitioners, rather than being unannounced:

> There are no surprises, but we will reduce the sort of management control aspect…that's the way it will go, but we will be encouraging people to encourage visits from managers of support and development but actually working with each other. So, I think it will just be one element of the toolbox we have in terms of the quality of teaching and learning. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Lead)

It was not clear how the management control would be reduced, but what seemed evident was that members of the senior management team were not prepared to take the risk of permitting the mentees and mentors to work to improve their practice independently of the broker and so a 'mixed model' would be implemented that would include a return to the graded observation process.

What would seem to be evident is that a reversion to the original paternalistic practice runs counter to the egalitarian aims of JPD. The decision to return to a policy of unannounced observations inevitably caused tensions between the strategic enabler and the mentee, who was clearly saddened that this had resulted in an abandonment of what had been achieved through the more consultative model, where the benefits of the new way of working had effectively been cancelled out by the inspection process:

> When we came back in September, we were told that we were going to be 'Ofsteded' imminently so that kind of took the edge off of everything else that was going on as you know, I'd like to say that it doesn't, but it does …When Ofsted came in, we had some 'very goods' and we had some 'outstandings' but we had a problem within our English department. So, from Ofsted, what happened was we then had more rigorous observations and more literally ticking the boxes. So, it kind of made things

> difficult again. It broke down a lot of what we had built up. So, from having all of that real enthusiasm, it kind of got kicked out of us come September through to probably February to be honest with you. It was quite hard. That kind of put a really dark cloud over the whole thing. (Mentee, Project 1)

Not only, then, had the senior management decided to re-introduce the unannounced observation regime, but it appeared that the process was even more rigorous than it had been previously. This reversal and return to top-down performance management approaches as a knee-jerk reaction to judgements made by Ofsted, illustrates the fragility of the JPD approach in organisations where performance culture is a dominant feature. The mentee's reference to 'a dark cloud' is very illuminating and this contrasts sharply with the previously cited rhetoric of the strategic enabler that suggests that the mentee considers a return to a culture of compliance will result in an unhappy and de-motivated workforce.

Despite this apparent feeling of despondency, the mentee considered that JPD had brought teachers closer together as a group and there was a suggestion that by communicating with one another both inside and outside the work environment, they would continue to provide mutual support:

> I am personally looking forward to it (appointment of a new principal) because I don't mind change but I know a lot of my colleagues are very unsure about things. But to work in the college itself, it's like any organisation…you get people that just moan, but the majority of people just get on with it, we tend to lunch together, we tend to do things sometimes outside of college together. So I think the people that are kind of natural sharers, we kind of gravitate… (Mentee, Project 1)

Being involved in JPD had therefore brought the teachers closer as a group. Informal meetings over lunch now provided opportunities for informal learning and naturalistic reflection on and sharing of tacit knowledge and expertise to take place.

The strategic enabler of the partner organisation in Project 1, however, was clearly aware of the benefits of the JPD approach that supports teachers in reflecting on each other's practice through collaborative practice and discussing each other's teaching strategies, with a focus on learner engagement:

> It is about encouraging people to review their own practice that makes a difference, the effective element that is exactly what the joint practice development does, because it exposes people to other situations and other teaching techniques and the opportunity to discuss and explore and say 'why did you do that and what was the problem with that learner? Were they engaged?' it is all of those factors…it is a genuine support of a reflective pedagogy. (Strategic enabler, Project 1, Partner)

Whilst the time that was available enabled the practitioners to start to develop relationships and begin to reflect on their practice, it was not sufficient to gain a more in-depth understanding of practice coupled with the justification that is necessary for the new practice to be successfully adapted, adopted and embedded. (Eraut, 2000, 2004).

These comments perhaps suggest that the allocation of roles (mentees, brokers, strategic enablers) to an extent runs counter to the egalitarian aims of JPD. It appears the success or failure of implementing this approach relies very heavily on the leadership and the extent to which leaders (and their managers) are prepared to step back from a managerialist approach and embed a more teacher-centred approach.

To a degree these tensions and contradictions are inevitable, since JPD has its roots in the self-improving schools movement (Hargreaves, 2011) which was driven by the National College of School Leadership, an agency of the Department for Education. Similarly, to an extent, it has also been adopted by the ETF as an alternative means to improving practice, again funded by the Department for Education.

To summarise, many of the participants' comments imply that the command and control culture instituted principally by external agencies, notably Ofsted, in the institutions under study still acted as a constraint on the implementation of JPD. In the relationships between teachers and managers, trust and support appear to have been eroded to a considerable extent by the regulatory mechanisms of monitoring and criterion-referenced observation regimes.

Although the literature indicates that JPD is theoretically a practitioner-focused, rather than a 'managed' top-down model, it would seem that the 'hands off' approach that is necessary for JPD to be successfully implemented as a bottom-up model is difficult to achieve, due to the hierarchical power structure that persists in further education institutions.

There is some evidence in the data to suggest that JPD has the capacity, or the *potential* to begin to erode established cultures, since time for practitioners to critically reflect on practice was considered to be a key benefit of the approach at senior level. However, unless senior leaders are prepared to 'let go' and create the conditions necessary for JPD to flourish, the approach is likely to yield little more than formulaic 'good' teaching, however that be defined, usually by Ofsted criteria. Given these findings, JPD arguably cuts so much against FE cultures at the present time, that it may not be sustainable as a means to improve at the level of the institution.

In the final section of this chapter, I examine the impact of the JPD activity on two individual participants in Project 1, one year after the implementation of the approach.

4.4 Reflecting on the outcome of joint practice development activity

In this final section, I explore the impact of JPD on two of the participants in my study and attempt to extrapolate from the data the extent to which the approach has the potential to improve practice at both a micro and macro level.

To capture evidence of impact, the broker as well as the mentee from Project 1, were interviewed for a second time, 12 months after the initial interviews had taken

place. In this intervening time, they had been successful in gaining further funding for the second phase of JPD activity from the funding agency and so I was able to explore the extent to which the activity was being further embedded across the organisation, to establish whether a deeper, more sustained change had been assimilated into the organisation's culture.

The findings have been presented as case studies of two of the key players in the lead organisation to help illustrate in a more concrete form the longer-term impact of the introduction of the JPD approach on the professional life and pedagogy of the mentee and broker and the perception of their own roles.

The case of Catherine: the mentee

Catherine is a recently qualified part-time maths teacher who has been working at the lead Project 1 organisation for two years. Having taken part in the first JPD pilot, she had gained confidence in herself and her practice and a year later this had led to her being given the opportunity by her manager to mentor new maths teachers. Catherine spoke about the reciprocal benefits of this additional support having now stepped up to this role. In a mentor, rather than mentee role, she seems to be building productive relationships with new members of staff, drawing on her expertise, but with an emphasis on collegiality and informality that is an outcome of her experience of JPD.

> It obviously encourages them [new teachers] to do the best that they can but it has also given me the confidence to step up to the mark and do that because we have had a few maths tutors leave and so…what I do is I just pop in and have an informal look like we did and started doing to see how they are getting on and then I can just write something up to encourage them. So, it is a little bit of observation, but it is more a case of looking at what they are doing and making suggestions of how it could be easier for them as well. (Mentee, Project 1)

Not everything that has happened since the first JPD pilot has been so positive for Catherine. The unexpected Ofsted inspection and the decision to return to the former practice of unannounced observations had clearly disappointed her. She was also critical of the management's response in terms of how they prepared teachers

in advanced of the unexpected Ofsted inspection, suggesting that teachers should have been trusted to have been left alone to teach their learners using their professional judgement.

It is clear from her comments, however, that she is not afraid to make a critical judgement about the managers that was not evident during the first interview. What is interesting is her criticism of the lack of communication between teachers and managers and how this was a factor that contributed to teachers being made to 'put on a show', rather than being trusted to exercise their own judgement during the teaching session.

> I don't think it was dealt with in the right way …I don't think that you should suddenly flap around and start putting pictures on the wall and everything else. I think that if you had a constant understanding and communication with your tutors which was lacking and sensible CPD, then you don't need to. I think we should have just been asked to teach as we teach normally, not to try and put on some sort of all singing and all dancing show …you can't just bowl on through a lesson if the students aren't understanding what you are talking about…it's mad, silly, it's common sense. (Mentee, Project 1)

It is interesting also that she mentions that there should have been 'sensible CPD', perhaps another indication that she values the more collaborative approach to professional development that JPD offers and that a professional development model that she considers to be sensible is one where practitioners have ownership of their professional development, rather than a 'best practice' top-down approach.

Later, in the second interview, she admitted that this development in her confidence also had an impact with respect to her relationship with her manager and she felt that she had become '*more vocal with the managers*', feeling more confident to challenge her manager and make suggestions, in a way that she felt unable to in the past:

> It [her experience of JPD] has been a positive impact, because I have had…you know, I have looked at things and I have turned around and said 'I don't think that this is working', and I give them the reasons why obviously. So, I have got more confidence to critique things and say, 'well don't you think maybe we could consider…or why is this not happening? (Mentee, Project 1)

This is further evidence of the notion of 'resistance' by the mentee and the partial dismantling of the existing power structures. The mentee adopts a stance that is neither complete compliance nor absolute resistance, but a stance that is closer to a more powerful role as an agent of change (Coffield et al 2014).

Perhaps it was also a new-found confidence that led her manager to appoint her as co-ordinator of the second JPD project with the partner organisation and this gave her an opportunity to head up the practitioner team that clearly gave her a further emotional boost to her self-esteem:

> So, we have now started doing another joint venture with (partner organisation) which is really good. So, we've started doing that, I mean I have been lucky enough to be able to co-ordinate and I'm head up running a kind of team, so we have been sharing practice which has made things much better. (Mentee, Project 1)

Taking part in the mentoring and JPD activity seemed to have resulted in a growth in confidence with respect to her practice. This was due in part, she felt, because she now has more teaching experience, but also because she had been able to work collaboratively with peers. Both these aspects had provided her with reassurance in her teaching ability:

> It has, yes. I have grown in more confidence in my actual practice. It's down to more experience in what I am doing, but it is also down to seeing other people's practice and realising that what I do is OK, because we all doubt what we think we are doing, don't we? And we have moments of self-doubt, but you know, I am thinking doing that last year really did help …we are overall pretty good at what we do, and we need just to boost that confidence up. (Mentee, Project 1).

This comment appears to indicate that JPD is not simply concerned with 'swapping notes' or learning 'new tricks' from her peers. This suggestion of 'self-doubt' would seem to be developmental in ways that strike at the heart of the professional identity that underpins the 'good' that 'we do' and that authenticates the practices that are being jointly developed.

Catherine also felt that sharing and developing practice using the JPD approach had had a positive impact on her students, since she was modelling with her learners the less directive, facilitative approach she had experienced in the JPD activity:

> What I have learnt more to do and put it into practice this particular year especially with the higher end learners and higher-level learners...is to let them explore more. So, I have kind of…I'm obviously there as a teacher, but I have stepped back and I in allowing them…I am not stepping in and saying, 'this is how you should do it'. I am standing back and allowing them to grow more. (Mentee, Project 1)

As a result, she had noticed an increase in the communication between learners as well as an obvious sense of achievement and development in confidence as the term progressed:

> So, things that would have frightened them, don't…they are more of a challenge, they are like 'okay, we can do this'. And a bit of one-upmanship as well, in a good way. (Mentee, Project 1)

These latter comments by the mentee illustrate the way in which the engagement in JPD has enabled a 'better understanding' that has led to a change in her belief system and values resulting in improved relations with her learners and learner outcomes. This would suggest that these new ways of engagement and interaction with peers based on an egalitarian relationship, have led to developments in practice that would not have occurred in the existing culture. This is indicative of an incipient culture reorientation working from the bottom–upwards, as evinced in the case of Frances, the broker, where the joint practice development of her protégées impacts on her own values and belief system.

The case of Frances: the broker

Frances is currently a professional development manager in the lead Project 1 organisation. She is a qualified maths teacher and has been working at the organisation for ten years. She was very keen to try out the new JPD approach with teachers in her curriculum area and in her view the experience has had an impact on her professionally, particularly with respect to her management style.

A year on from when the JPD approach had first been tested out, her management practice had continued to be less directive than it had been previously. During the second project, she admitted '*to have let go even more*' in terms of her management of the project. She had asked the teachers who had been involved in Project 1 to volunteer to organise and to facilitate the action learning sets, although it was clear that she still wanted to have oversight, rather than 'letting go' completely:

> And I think because it was already in place, it did work quite well on its own, I mean I did have to, I did oversee and I did kind of guide people through it, but essentially the teachers organised, they did everything themselves. (Broker, Project 1)

She did, however, suggest that she would most probably not attend the final workshop, although again, she had clearly been involved in the planning of the event and the content:

> The most important thing really is focusing on it being completely practitioner led, so there isn't going to be an element of 'I've got this expertise, and I am imparting my knowledge to you'. So, the workshop is going to be very much 'how would you share with other people?' or 'how do you kind of share ideas now...and what do you think you could do moving forwards?' It is probably better for me not to be there really so that they can…get a feel for what the project involves. And hopefully that will generate some interest. (Broker, Project 1)

The less directive approach by the broker was also reflected in the language she felt she was now using with the mentees that encouraged the practitioners to take responsibility for taking forward initiatives:

> I think now it is very much like 'I'd like to do that now, I'd like to do this now' it's much more 'OK this is what we need to do…this is what it needs to get to, this is what it needs to involve or it needs to have these kinds of ingredients it needs to accomplish these principles. But you know, you guys are going to take it forward' and they have. (Broker, Project 1)

As a result of her 'moving away' she had detected a positive change in how the teachers perceived her, that is they were now seeing her as someone who had oversight of the day-to-day management of projects, rather than someone who was continually checking up on them to make sure they had completed tasks that she had set them. There had also been a decision by managers to increase the number of reflective practitioners, with a view to doubling the number over the following 18

months, to 16 practitioners and she had subsequently detected a positive effect of this decision on the teaching staff:

> It's had a ripple effect within the college, a lot of tutors are talking about it and there's a lot of positive talk about it. It's having an impact already and people are quite excited about the conference. (Broker, Project 1)

These comments indicate that the broker has noticed a latent culture shift. She is beginning to adopt a leadership rather than management approach to her role, drawing on her ability to influence the mentees and mentors, rather than using her authority to achieve the goals of the project (Bush, 2008). This is also evidence of her role as a middle leader 'transforming' the JPD strategy, demonstrating her success in having mediated the senior leader's vision into everyday practice (Gleeson and Knights, 2008, p. 67).

During the first interview with the broker from Project 1, I asked her what organisational changes she anticipated would have been introduced as a result of the project. She was of the view that the observation process (no notice observations) may have been abandoned, although she admitted that such a change would need to be approved, but in her view could be possible.

A year later, when I interviewed her, following an unexpected Ofsted inspection, she admitted that the practice of no notice observations was still being implemented, running alongside the practice of teachers observing one another. She perceived the two approaches as having different, but complementary purposes; the practice of teachers observing one another being 'much more developmental based' whereas the 'no notice' approach provided the senior management team with reassurance about the quality of a teacher's practice. Interestingly, she was of the view that the peer observation approach ensured that teachers were more able to cope when quality managers arrived unannounced during a teaching session and it could be argued that this practice covertly suited the management monitoring function:

> So, the no notice observation of very much about the quality at that time, at that moment…it is a snapshot and it does give us that reassurance I would say. But with

> the peer observation, what it is doing is it is helping to de-sensitise them to the process. So, I think they don't feel so threatened when somebody comes into their classroom, it is much more of an open-door policy. (Broker, Project 1)

Frances's observations illustrate that despite her commitment to providing greater autonomy for the practitioners, the implementation of the JPD approach had not, however, impacted on the broader organisational structures, that remained decidedly top-down. This was unsurprising since the environmental context in the organisation was clearly unstable, particularly following the unexpected Ofsted inspection, and consequently there was a greater risk of a reinforcement of a command and control model of leadership (FETL, 2019).

Teachers, however who had been involved in the JPD activity were felt by her to be more engaged and this could be explained by the shift away from performance management observations. The following comment I suspected was made with reference to the mentee in Project 1:

> There is one teacher within the maths team who is far more engaged now than she has ever been before and I think for her ...that it is about maybe feeling valued but moving away from the very much constraints of a very kind of rigid observation …you know that kind of rigid, you need to fit to this box …this is what one looks like, this is what two looks like …you need to work towards. I think for her it is about, I think she just feels less threatened and more able to engage with the process and I have really noticed a change in her. She has also undertaken some other CPD that has happened within the region that in connected to GCSE maths, so I think the combination of the two has had a real impact on her practice. (Broker, Project 1)

A year on from the first project, Frances considered that the number of teachers who had been graded as 'outstanding' had increased, although she admitted that this could be due to a number of other initiatives she had been involved in to improve the quality of teaching rather than, or as well as, the JPD initiative:

> There are more teachers now that are 'outstanding' but it could be because of all the work that I have…I don't know if it is just because of the joint practice project, I would like to think that it was a combination of the work that I have been putting in with lots of different kind of approaches. I think the joint practice development project has complemented everything else that has been going on and I think it has kind of got its own place on its own and it is generating quite a lot of interest. (Broker, Project 1)

In some respects, Frances' comments are a testimony of her continued managerialist mentality and the suggestion that JPD has its 'own place' is tantamount to saying that JPD is a subsidiary activity peripheral to the 'real work' in which middle and senior leaders are engaged. Her remarks also indicate that the introduction of JPD can initially be perceived as de-contextualised and somewhat abstract and for it to become established, a coaching culture needs to be gradually implemented for the approach to be sustained (Hargreaves, 2011).

Twelve months on from the first project, Frances had noticed a number of changes in the behaviour and attitude of members of the teaching staff who had taken part in the JPD activity. In her view, a more open culture had begun to emerge with more communication both within and between teaching teams, with teachers feeling less isolated:

> I think it has been really good as well to create an environment … a culture of openness and a 'come and see what I am doing'…that kind of thing, but then also it is about kind of bringing people together and I have noticed that people are communicating more across teams, within teams, so yes I can see a real shift. (Broker, Project 1)

Allied to this was a sense that teachers were listening to each other more and, in her view, this was key if a culture was going to be developed where teachers can openly discuss issues and take part in professional discussions.

By the time a second project had taken place, Frances felt teachers had begun to express their views confidently, had demonstrated that teachers had a voice, and this again was considered to be a central outcome of the activity:

> But I think when we had our end meeting it was quite empowering really and I think the teachers on the project, they were ... they really feel that they have a voice and I think that is quite important and that comes through and has been quite strong this year. So, they are heard and they have a voice and I think that is really important. (Broker, Project 1)

This empowerment, in her view, was due to the 'open and free' nature of the approach, rather than 'confined' or 'structured'. It was clear that the teachers enjoyed the approach and there was a sense of pride displayed by the participants:

> I can see from bumping into people in the corridor and they're saying, 'I did this and I really liked it!' I've seen some of the tutors who have come here from a distance and I've seen a lot of smiling faces, people are proud to show off their college and proud to show off their practice. I think it's the empowering aspect that has been really valuable, that's coming through quite strong. I think it's very interesting how things have been misinterpreted but that was my vision, I'm quite happy for that to change because that was my perception of how the project would evolve. It's gone…I guess bigger, much bigger than I thought that it would, which has been very positive. (Broker, Project 1)

These comments by Frances demonstrate that her attitudes and assumptions have changed and that perhaps she is beginning to question the managerialist approach to professional development, having now witnessed the value and impact of the 'empowering aspect' of JPD and the renewed sense of self-esteem and agency of the teaching staff. She is suggesting here that JPD has been misinterpreted by senior management as just another means of monitoring teachers. Her (and the management's) original vision, it would seem, was that JPD would be a peripheral, temporary activity, but having now seen the potential and impact of the approach, her view has changed and she is now seeking to find ways for the model to develop and become embedded in the culture of the organisation, rather than it being viewed as simply an alternative CPD approach. This demonstrates the conflictual nature of her bridging role as a middle leader in the institution and broker in the JPD project where she is in the role of a change agent, promoting the notion of more horizontal structures that connect participants and enabling the development of a professional learning community (Fielding et al, 2005; Gleeson and Shain, 1999; Leader, 2004). The case study of Frances also provides an insight into the evolving role of middle leaders, since she has clearly been able to support strategic activity through leading by example and influencing the mindset of practitioners involved in the project. (Wolstencroft and Lloyd, 2019).

With respect to the more open and supportive approach to professional development that teachers had observed in the partner organisation, Frances had clearly anticipated that this may present a dilemma for senior leaders in that the teachers could evidently see the benefits of this developmental approach:

> … and I think that when the teachers on this project realised that actually teachers in (partner organisation) don't actually do that (have no notice observations) and

> (partner organisation) do it this way, they were very much, 'Oh this sounds really good'. I think for them, the ones on the project, they did say that they felt that that would be something that they would perhaps like to experience. (Broker, Project 1)

These snapshots from two of the key players from the lead project illustrate the potential of the JPD approach to bring about change; however, the data suggests in the case of the mentee and broker in the short term, that the implementation of the approach has resulted in changes in values, attitudes and behaviour. To some extent, there has also been a change in both the management practices of the broker, who is less authoritative and directive in her management approach. The teaching practices of the mentee have also begun to change through joint practices, where she and her peers are developing their pedagogical skills through observing each other and professional discussion that takes place in the classroom or in more informal settings and mirroring this approach with her learners has had a positive impact on her learners' confidence.

As the evaluator in Project 5 reminded me, JPD takes time, but essentially requires a fundamental power shift in the attitude of middle and senior staff and in essence this is a risk that the leadership may be reluctant to take:

> First of all, it's slow. It's a slow burn but it's a deep burn if you know what I mean. It keeps going because people actually enjoy working together and it takes power away from the centre or the top and gives it to teachers, so those are two issues that some people might find difficult when their ideas are best in town and they're going to make everybody else do it. So that's one of the disadvantages because it requires a change of mind and a change of heart in relation to the extent of which you can trust teachers to improve what they do. (Evaluator, Project 5)

This comment by the evaluator is confirmation that the temporal dimension of JPD take-up is absolutely critical to consolidating 'a change of mind and a change of heart'. The sarcastic reference to senior management who force their ideas on those lower in the organisation indicates that JPD provides a challenge to the existing power and control structure and ideology of corporate institutional cultures. It would seem, therefore, that because it is a 'slow burn' not a quick fix, this new approach to professional development is in danger of being bankrupted by performance and budgetary-driven short-termism.

The following activity theory diagram (Figure 7) provides an analysis of the CPD practice at the end of two rounds of JPD activity in Project 1. It should be noted that the terms Joint Practitioner and Broker refer to a representative 'joint' or 'collective' role as evinced in my data, rather than a single person in a single project as such. The diagram has been developed in the light of a clear understanding of the principles of JPD, reflected in the mentee's and broker's case studies.

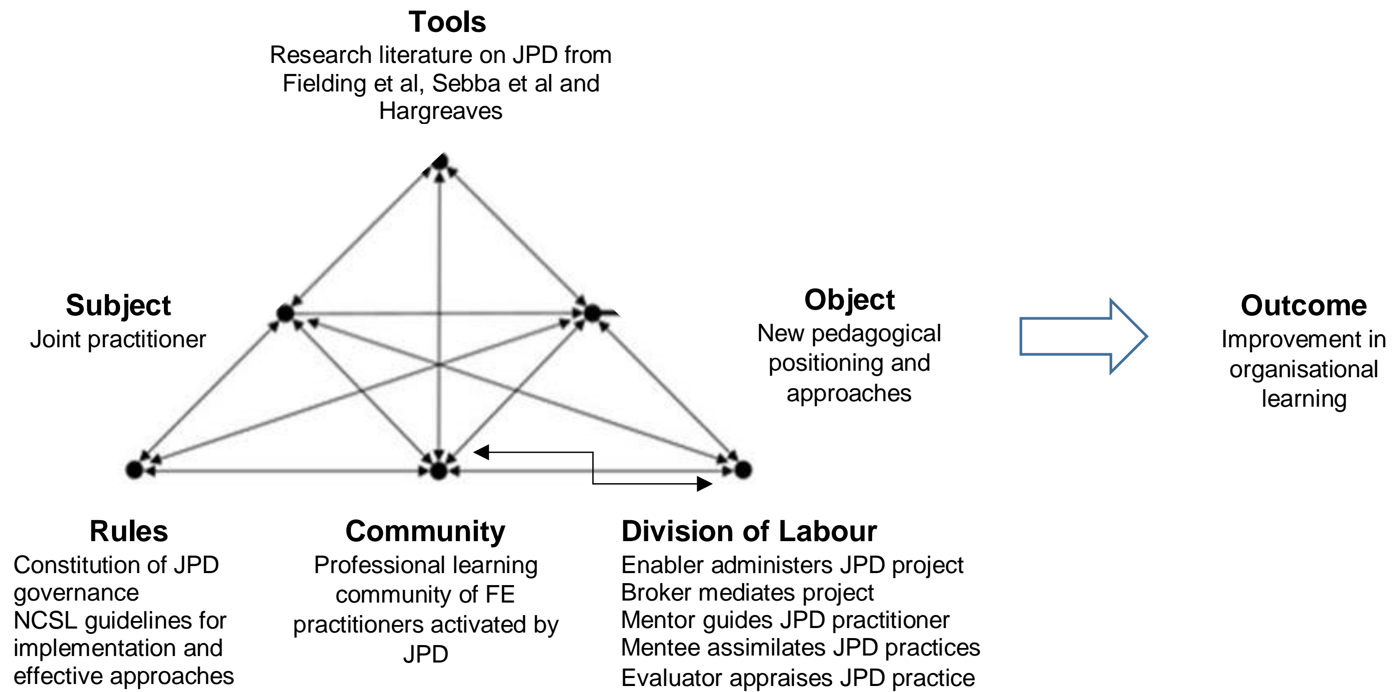
The verbs used to convey the actions of players in relation to the activity in 'division of labour' have been chosen carefully to differentiate their roles, using words to emphasise that JPD has not yet been completely assimilated systemically into the organisation. For example, the enabler 'initiates' JPD, suggesting his role is open to interpretation, that is, he is not leading, as he does not have ownership of the activity, so the more vague term 'initiates' is more fitting since it is suggestive of the roles he has played so far in relation to JPD, for example facilitating, administering or budgeting for the activity. The broker's role is to 'sell' JPD, since her involvement in the activity is essentially to gain buy-in from the practitioners, in order that the project can be delivered, achieving the desired 'outputs' that have been 'appraised' by the evaluator. Similarly, the word 'adopts' has been selected to describe the role of the mentee in relation to JPD, again to emphasise that the project has not yet been fully incorporated into the organisation's system of teaching and learning. It could be argued, however, that the mentee, Catherine, has shifted a little beyond 'adopting' JPD practices, since she has begun to assimilate the aims of JPD and this has begun to change her in terms of her values, beliefs and behaviours. However, it should be noted that a year on, Catherine is now more experienced and there may have been factors other than JPD that have led to changes in her attitudes, knowledge and behaviours.

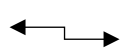
In the diagram, the jagged line between the 'community' and 'division of labour' indicates the tension or contradiction between these two components of the system. As my findings have highlighted, these elements of the system do not synchronise perfectly as represented the diagram in the Methodology chapter (Figure 2) and as Fielding et al (2006) and Hargreaves 2012a, 2012b) suggest. In practice, the

diagram unexpectedly shows that in the collective activity, pressure is exerted on the strategic enabler through financial constraints imposed by the funding agency and by policy makers. This in turn has a destabilising impact on the community and as a result, JPD is marginalised. The jagged line also is indicative of a continuing problem in building a professional learning community, where the players continue to regard their roles as hierarchical in relation to a performativity culture. This indicates that the devolution of control is integral to the successful implementation of JPD.

In the final chapter I pull together the findings from my study, drawing conclusions about factors that may facilitate or constrain the JPD approach, and the impact of the JPD model on the culture of the organisation. I also explore ways in which the approach has the potential to improve practice and have a sustained impact at an organisational level.

Figure 7: Second generation activity theory analysis of the professional development practices after two rounds of JPD in Project 1 (Lead)



 Indicates a tension or contradiction between central components of the system (see Engeström, 1999a, pp.31-2)

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

In this final chapter, I look closely at the use of theory and the extent of its relevance to my study and then discuss some limitations to the study. I summarise the findings in relation to the research objectives and suggest how my study represents a valid contribution to knowledge. Finally, I conclude by providing answers to my research questions, closing with proposed next steps for influencing change in my organisation and the FE sector more broadly.

5. 1 Using activity theory as a methodological framework to interrogate the data

By initially examining the prevailing culture and existing practices in the five projects prior to the modelling of the JPD approach and then subsequently exploring the ways in which the JPD activity was modelled in the projects in my study, I was able to establish how a range of participants identified and then shared their practice. I was also able to assess the extent to which this activity contributed to a change in the culture of the organisations. What makes my study new, is that my research explores how JPD can be modelled in further education and skills institutions, as opposed to schools, as there is little that I have found in the literature review that refers to the implementation of the approach in a post-16 setting.

Placing a particular focus on Project 1, I examined the model in considerable depth, using activity theory to examine the activity from a number of perspectives, drawing on the development of any new rules and tools to meet the requirements of the change (Engeström, 1999a). This exposed a number of contradictions and tensions,

resulting from power relations between the professional learning community of mentors and mentees, and the strategic enablers and the broker who was caught in the middle and tasked with mediating the tensions and interactions between the strategic enablers and mentees and mentors on the ground.

During the research, a key focus was on the relationships that were constantly changing during the activity in a set of conditions that were frequently unstable. Participants reflected critically on how they were changing, expressing frustrations, as well as positive feelings. In this way, therefore, I was able to identify factors that appear to encourage the development of the new pedagogical approach, as well as those that may constrain it. These factors related primarily to the organisational culture and role of the strategic enabler, as well as the contribution of the broker in mediating JPD and the evaluator in supporting the mentees and mentors in the activity.

5.2 Limitations of my research

Although I originally intended to explore how practitioners utilise JPD as an approach to improve practice, the inclusion of only one practitioner in the study limited the range of views from the ‘bottom’. The shift in the weighting of the study towards leadership was a conscious decision to explore how JPD impacted on senior, and in particular middle leaders, whose predispositions emerged as pivotal to its effective implementation and whose ‘change of mind and change of heart’ would be the ‘measure’ of its potential to transform organisational culture. This apparent limitation could therefore be perceived as one of the strengths of the study, an audit of performance being contrary to the express aims and purpose of the study. The immediate impact on learners is outside the scope of this research, but necessarily a future extension of it.

I am conscious that practitioners' views are as important as middle and senior leaders in assessing the extent to which an innovation such as JPD might or might not be supported in the organisational culture and context and due weight is given to the practitioner's views in the present research. Further research could, however, involve interviewing practitioners (mentees and mentors) from a range of further education and skills institutions in order to provide a broader perspective from the 'shop floor' on the impact of JPD on teachers' practice and their identities. A future study could also involve interviewing a broker and a mentee from a partner organisation, in order to explore in more depth the impact of working in partnership with another institution. I would then be able to draw on Engeström's third-generation activity theory that would enable an analysis of two separate organisations and how they relate to one another, and the extent to which JPD activity has the capacity to bring 'objects' and 'outcomes' into a degree of alignment. In addition, further research could focus on the extent to which the JPD model might bring about improvements within a single institution, for example across departments or faculties, rather than between partner organisations where collaborative working may run counter to the competitive culture espoused by neo-liberal government policy.

To an extent, there was a limitation in the research design in the assignation of role names which may not have sufficiently made clear the division of labour when using activity theory to examine the implementation process of JPD. Moreover, the term 'broker' that was used as role name may have been an unfortunate choice in the research, since this is heavily associated with the world of business and commerce. Perhaps in any future study, a preferable term for this role might be a 'mediator'.

'Transfer' is a contested term that is used widely in the literature and further research could focus specifically on the conceptualisation of transfer in different contexts. In such a study, a specific focus on the actual process of transfer, intra-personal and inter-personal, would be of value, that would require engaging more directly with the practitioners seeking to improve their practice by, for example, observing professional discussions and subsequent sessions where mentees put into practice adaptations of what they have learned from observing and reflecting with their

mentor on new strategies. From the literature review, this is still an under-researched area that is worthy of further study.

A particular limitation was that the piloting of the approach was conducted in a three-month period, so there was barely time for the new model to become established. This was largely due to the constraints placed on organisations by the funding agency, since the activity was required to be completed in a specific time period and these constraints are evident in the activity timeline for Project 1 (Appendix 8). Ideally, future research could explore the implementation and impact of JPD that had taken place over a longer time period.

It is also regrettable that although the participants were willing to take part in my research, there was no opportunity to present them with the data as it emerged, with respect to where tensions and contradictions lie in the new activity, and to involve them in how systems and activities could be changed, that is to follow the expansive learning model described by Engeström (1999b) and implement a developmental work research (DWR) approach (Daniels et al, 2000). However, two of the evaluators who had been tasked with reporting on the project outcomes, had involved practitioners to some degree in the evaluation activity, one in particular assisting them in their understanding of how the approach could be implemented in an environment where less support from their managers was available. Reflecting on this, evaluators were better placed than I to assist practitioners in this understanding, since I am aware that my participants’ opinions may have been influenced by my perceived authority as an employee of the funding agency, despite emphasising to all participants that I was undertaking this study as an independent researcher.

5.3 Conditions that encourage the development of collaborative relationships within and between partner organisations

In order to identify conditions that facilitate JPD in further education and skills institutions, as a first step I sought to identify the features of the existing organisational culture in order to subsequently assess the extent to which these had changed, once the JPD approach had been piloted. The data that emerged from participants in my study suggest that there was a recognition by strategic enablers and brokers of the limitations of the 'best practice' approach and so there was an appetite to experiment with the JPD approach that offered a more practitioner-focused collegial model.

It was clear, however, when using Engeström's first-generation activity theory model to examine the pre-existing culture in Project 1, that whilst strategic enablers, brokers and mentees/mentors were all seeking improvement in organisational learning as an outcome, the 'object' differed in each case highlighting the individual rather than collective nature of their actions. This analysis suggested that a change in the existing culture was needed to shift the focus from an 'inappropriate culture' based on performance data, to one that prioritises teaching and learning (Smith, 2018). In this way, the conditions can be established that will enable the new model that requiring a collective approach to take root.

The subsequent step in the study involved examining how the participants in the projects went about implementing the JPD model. The model differed from the one being implemented in schools, not only because of the additional roles in the professional learning community of the broker and the evaluator and their centrality to the process, but also because of the reliance on external funding to incentivise senior leaders to pilot the approach. The hybrid FE model emerging from my findings is very much more grounded than the school model, perhaps necessarily so given the conditions of governance in the FE sector with a relatively unstable staff, lack of parity in qualifications (following de-regulation) and management-heavy

organisational structure. The school model, as evinced in the literature review (Hargreaves, 2012; Fielding et al, 2005) is ostensibly pitched at practice, but highly impractical in its implementation since it is over-laden with 'utopian goals' (Husband and Lloyd, 2019) and heavy with educationalist rhetoric. Having analysed the factors that militate against the simple transposition of the school model to the FE context, it is clear that realising such utopian goals in a dystopian context would seem to be largely unworkable.

A key area of my focus was the 'division of labour' characterised by the internal politics involved in putting the approach into practice and the extent to which the key players were working for or against the approach. In all projects, some elements of the 'division of labour' could be regarded as facilitating the JPD activity. For example, the broker was required temporarily to broker and bridge the activity and to translate the 'strategic vision' into practice by developing the professional learning community. This practice may be seen, however, as contradictory to the principles of JPD that espouse that JPD communities should be self-forming and emerging from the grassroots, rather than developed and driven by middle leaders (Priestley et al., 2015). The findings in my study indicate that the broker is being used by the strategic enabler to facilitate his 'version' of JPD that will facilitate the implementation of his strategic 'vision'. Rather than participating jointly in the project with the mentees and mentors, the broker is required primarily to administer the project, with a focus on judicious management of the budget in order to avoid a loss of future funding.

Operationally, communication with between brokers and mentees and mentors who were engaged in the activity seemed to be well established, with brokers communicating with them on a day-to-day basis essentially to 'sell' the JPD approach. There was a sense, however, that the broker needed to strike a balance between overloading them with information and allowing a degree of autonomy. The research findings would also suggest that there is a risk that 'communication overload' could result in practitioners lacking ownership, that is they expect this guidance to come from their managers, rather than instigating or sourcing this for themselves.

Although the findings suggest that the involvement of the brokers was critical to the success of the JPD activity in the early stages, for example by providing guidance and keeping the activity on track, in three of the five projects brokers found it difficult to resist controlling the activity and this is indicative of a hierarchical culture where roles are strictly defined. Interestingly, neither Fielding et al (2005) nor Hargreaves (2012b) refer to this role in being a key factor in facilitating the JPD activity, since this role tends to be undertaken by the head teacher in schools. Therefore this role is different, as my research suggests, in the further education and skills sector.

A further factor that facilitated the JPD activity to a limited extent in Project 1 was the involvement of strategic enablers in providing leadership. This was confined, however, to administering practical tasks such as securing the funding and leading the final conference. There appeared to be little evidence of the senior leader 'setting the tone' by creating a culture that would promote openness and change and modelling, building and auditing trust, that Fielding et al (2005) and Hargreaves (2012b) consider essential if the JPD approach is to be successfully adopted in schools. This suggests that a reluctance by the strategic enabler to set about changing the culture of the FE organisation to accommodate the JPD approach is a factor that particularly constrained the approach and adversely affected its sustainability (Dhillon, 2013).

The findings also highlighted the potential role of the external evaluator in facilitating as well as appraising the approach. Fielding et al (2005) in their study noted that there was very little in the way of formal evaluation practices to demonstrate the extent of the success of the practice transfer. My research has demonstrated that the inclusion of formal evaluation can be valuable, particularly if it extends beyond evaluating whether the aims and outcomes have been met in terms of numbers participating in events and so on, such as in Projects 3 and 5. In these projects, the evaluators became an integral part of the JPD community, focusing on the effectiveness of the practice of JPD, rather than solely on a set of outputs, and

enabling mentees and mentors to engage in practitioner-led enquiry and in a sense gain ownership of their professionalism (Sachs, 2011).

One of the evaluators considered that a key part of their role should be to support the mentees and mentors to engage critically with educational research to enable them to make quality judgements about what is good, to avoid the proliferation of poor practice. There was, however, scant reference to the use of educational research considered essential by Gregson and Hillier (2015) by four of the five projects and this is an area for development if the approach is to be implemented more widely, signalling a central role for the Chartered College of Teaching and the Society for Education and Training in continuing to promote the notion of evidence-based practice in their respective member journals.

5.4 How effective practice can be identified and subsequently shared to the mutual benefit of partner organisations

My research findings resonate with the literature with respect to how the process of JPD was modelled in terms of the theoretical cycle of activity proposed by Gregson et al (2015) and Hargreaves (2012b).

My data, however, add to the knowledge in that I have been able to demonstrate the impact of attempting to implement JPD in practice in a further education and skills rather than schools setting, where there are inherent tensions attributable to the existing managerialist culture, dominated by performance management and the bureaucratic systems. These tensions and the role of power constrained the activity, due to the adherence by the broker and strategic enabler of the existing hierarchical rules and roles and responsibilities, evidenced by the brokers (rather than the mentees/mentors) deciding the focus of areas of professional development to ensure their alignment with organisational strategy or performance management priorities.

Despite an attempt by the brokers and strategic enablers to control the agenda, the findings suggest that mentees and mentors when working collaboratively to improve their practice regain a sense of empowerment through peer observation and subsequent professional discussions. A 'better understanding' (strategic enabler, Project 1, Partner) of practice gained through peer observations and subsequent reflective professional discussion suggested by the aforementioned strategic enabler and evidenced by the mentee would seem to be at the heart of effectively sharing practice through the JPD approach.

An alternative approach to peer observation has been evidenced in my study that is new that contrasts with the pre-existing managerialist model. In the joint practice activity that is unstructured and informal in nature, the observer is not a spectator, but a co-participant in a learning activity, sponsored by the innate desire to develop their praxis. This suggests that for JPD to be sustained, a radical reconceptualisation of peer observation is needed, where there is a leadership culture that promotes a collegiate ethos in which the practice of peer observation is regarded as 'developmental and emancipatory' as Wingrove et al (2018, pp. 378) suggest, rather than a performance quality indicator (Ball, 2013).

Framed in terms of activity theory, the rules and to some extent the division of labour, have changed through the piloting of the JPD approach in Project 1, and a number of internal contradictions are exposed. As Engeström highlights, these tensions can be a 'source of trouble' or a 'source of innovation', requiring all participants to engage in negotiation, and to regard the tensions as an opportunity for change and development, rather than sources of conflict or problems (Engeström, 2001, pp 136). Activity theory provided a politico-theoretical approach that enabled close scrutiny of how JPD was structured as a social practice, equipping the researcher with a model that permitted a close examination of the relational dynamics and distribution of power during the implementation of the approach and consequent tensions or 'internal politics'.

5.5 The role of the leadership culture in facilitating the JPD approach

The constitution of JPD governance (internal ‘rules’) in relation to the JPD in some respects could be seen to facilitate the activity, as it was evident in two of the projects that a history of prior collaborative working enabled the activity to flourish and in the view of one of the strategic enablers this historicity would result in a stronger likelihood of sustainability in keeping the activity going after funding had ended. Working with new partners was also a factor for two of the projects, and this would appear to contradict Fielding et al’s research (2005) who suggest that established relationships are regarded as enabling in JPD.

In all projects, the external ‘rule’ imposed by the funding agency through short-term funding was a factor that permitted senior leaders in the projects to resource the activity judged by two strategic managers to have been crucial, suggesting that without external funding, they would not have tried out the JPD approach in their organisations, nor would the activity have a chance of being sustained in the future. The short-termism of funders’ perspectives is, it would seem, a powerful influence on the input/output thinking of those economistic, business-oriented college cultures that see the investment potential of JPD in purely financial terms.

External rules imposed by Ofsted criteria influenced the JPD activity, since judgements validated by Ofsted were considered to be important by the majority of the strategic enablers when selecting JPD partners. This had been reinforced by a further ‘rule’ by the funding agency that stipulated that the organisations must have been judged as ‘outstanding’ or ‘good’ by Ofsted in order to be eligible for project funding. This suggests that institutions are still subjected to externally-operating ‘rules’ of engagement and the formal structures of centralised control and ‘governance’, rather than the principles of the JPD concept, as outlined in the activity theory diagram (Figure 2, p. 72).

These rules also constrained the JPD activity, evidenced in my research by an unexpected Ofsted inspection three months after the initial piloting of the approach that led to a decision by the strategic enabler to revert to the pre-existing culture dominated by performance and surveillance.

A lack of sufficient time afforded to the activity, partly exerted by the funding agency, was repeatedly referred to by the participants as being a key constraining factor in the piloting of the JPD approach. There was a sense that projects needed double the amount of time in order to bed in the approach, to enable relationships between teachers to develop, allow time to reflect, adapt the new practices and demonstrate impact. The evaluator in Project 5 described JPD as a 'slow deep burn' rather than a 'quick fix', suggesting that there may be a risk of senior leaders slipping back to 'cascade' methods, if they were seeking rapid change. This would seem to support research by Fielding et al (2005) who emphasise that time is critical to enable teachers to share and transfer practice.

Whilst the time that was available enabled the practitioners to start to develop relationships and begin to reflect on their practice, it was not sufficient to gain the depth of understanding required for the new practice to be successfully adapted and embedded. This necessitates not only the combining of new knowledge and theory, but the development of new pedagogical strategies informed by experience and reflection often referred to as practical wisdom or 'phronesis' (Kinsella and Pitman, 2012).

A further constraining factor was suggested as being an unwillingness to roll out the JPD approach, due to the structural complexities that it would necessitate (Cunningham, 2002), evidenced by the strategic enabler in Project 1 (Lead) who suggested that JPD would be acceptable as a 'voluntary' activity, but embedding the approach across the whole organisation as a professional development approach would not be permissible, referring to JPD as 'just one element of the toolbox'.

There was also the suggestion by the strategic enabler in the partner organisation that introducing the JPD model would ultimately lead to less rigorous quality standards and an ultimate risk to the organisation's reputation, voicing concerns about the credibility of teachers' judgements in relation to their practice and this would appear to run counter to the notion of praxis.

Strategies to sustain the activity instigated by the leadership tended to focus on process (funding, time for the activity, payment for staff, change in an aspect of the role of middle leaders). Less consideration was given to the need for a significant change in the culture of the organisation that would be necessary if the areas of reform that had been highlighted at the start of the project were to be achieved. This would require a change of mind-set in the way that professional development was perceived, where teachers are given responsibility for their professional development through a sharing of expertise and developing their skills in identifying effective practice, reflection, peer observation and coaching.

By the end of the second round of JPD in Project 1, there were evident tensions between 'professional empowerment, responsibility and accountability and top-down prescription' (Harris, 2011, p.632). These tensions were caused in part by a decision by the leadership to continue the practice of unannounced graded observations, and this appears to reflect the view of Fullan (2011) who suggests that attempting organisational reform may not succeed, where institutions lead with the 'wrong' drivers, that is components such as accountability (appraisals) and fragmented, rather than integrated or systemic strategies. The evidence in my study, therefore, appears to suggest that the JPD approach on its own is unlikely to improve practice and have a sustained impact across the organisation unless there is a significant change in the leadership culture.

5.6 The extent to which the JPD approach has the potential to improve practice and have a sustained impact at organisational level

Case studies of the mentee (Catherine) and broker (Frances) from Project 1 a year after the first round of JPD had taken place, assist in exploring the extent to which JPD has the potential to improve practice in the longer term. Interviews carried out with the broker and mentee from Project 1 a year later suggest that there were a number of unintended or unexpected consequences that add an original contribution to the knowledge.

What emerged is that the mentee, in particular, by experiencing a new approach to developing her practice, has deviated to some extent from the established rules or norms, and as a result this has changed her conceptions of herself and her identity. Having reflected on the former practices imposed by the leaders and managers, she has been able to perceive the limitations and challenges of that approach and the advantages of the 'joint' professional development model. There is evidence from the data that this has resulted in an increased confidence and she is now not afraid of voicing criticism, challenging assumptions made by her manager and seeking new solutions. This was particularly evidenced from her critical comments about how the unexpected Ofsted inspection had been managed, demonstrating a new sense of empowerment, where her judgement is valued by peers and managers.

A key finding was that working collaboratively with peers had enabled her to model new pedagogical approaches that had resulted in increased communication between the learners, suggesting that she now feels emboldened to take risks to develop more learner-centred strategies that represent alternatives to standardised approaches associated with performance cultures. This is an example of 'invisible pedagogies' resulting from situations where practitioners in professional learning communities work together to informally share knowledge and experience (Gleeson et al (2015, pp. 85).

These subtle changes in values, behaviours and attitudes demonstrate how JPD can enable practitioners to re-assess organisational structures, as well as their relationship with their learners and their own identity and can mediate the dualism of agency and structure by working collaboratively with peers and learners (Gleeson and Knights, 2006). Rather than modifying practice, the findings suggest that JPD has the potential to transform practice, since it can enable teachers to critically reflect on their values and beliefs and pedagogical knowledge, resulting in a sense of empowerment and agency that is consistent with transformative pedagogy (Ukpokodu, 2009).

As a consequence of examining the impact of the changing practice on the mentee and the mentor, I can see the value of involving an evaluator in the model who engages with the participants and helps to enhance their understanding of how the community operates and to assist them in identifying the action that may be required to bring about change.

Changes in the behaviour and attitude of the mentees had also been noticed by Frances, the broker, who had observed that a more open culture had developed resulting in a degree of empowerment by the mentees. Unexpectedly, the broker stated that she had noticed that her management practices had changed, since she was now adopting a less directive style. However, what had not changed was her view with respect to 'no notice' observations, suggesting that she was still constrained by the demands of the performance culture and managerialism model that operates in a low trust environment and particularly impacts on collaborative cultures (Smith and O'Leary, 2015).

What is clear in examining the data using an activity theory framework, is that whilst opportunities for expansive learning may be identified, it is not inevitable that by exposing the range of motives of the participant and consequent contradictions and tensions will lead to change. There is a possibility that the contradictions may continue to persist and this may be because they are not fully recognised. As such,

whilst I have demonstrated that JPD can work at ground level, and even, to an extent, at mid-level, whether it is capitalised upon will be dependent on 'slow, deep' change in the institutional culture. Examining the organisation and participants in this way does help, however, to explain and expose the fragility of JPD in a predominantly managerialist climate.

5.7 Summary and recommendations for implementation and practice

The research suggests that there are six key factors to support an effective implementation of JPD and these are presented in more detail with implications for practice in Appendix 13a, together with seven steps to help organisations to implement the JPD approach (Appendix 13b).

In summary, the factors that support implementation of JPD are:

1. **a collective approach** to JPD, where strategic enablers and managers create the conditions for JPD to be implemented;
2. **a practitioner-focused** model where mentees and mentors have ownership of their professional development, rather than the broker;
3. **a broker who mediates the activity** by providing guidance and reassurance in the early stages, fostering a sense of empowerment in the JPD community;
4. **relationships built on trust** where mentees and mentors are trusted to make professional judgements and to take risks;
5. **time to implement the approach** in order for there to be sustainable changes in practice and improvements in the learner experience;
6. **challenge and support provided by an independent evaluator** to support mentees and mentors to engage with the activity and to reflect on the JPD process.

My thesis illustrates, however, that the cultural context can militate against a number of these factors. High-rise organisational architectures shaped by the dominant social orders and prime movers of present educational policy, the market, managerialism and performativity (Ball, 2003), stand in strong opposition to the principles of JPD that are founded on reflection, co-participatory practices and collegial interaction.

5.8 My contribution to knowledge and the validity of my claim

In my research, drawing specifically on projects that studied and reported on factors that influence the transfer of practice between teachers in schools, I have demonstrated that it is possible to establish the conditions in further education and skills settings that enable teachers to improve their practice based on JPD approaches.

I have been able to identify the conditions that promote this approach, as well as those that constrain it and I intend to develop a framework in the form of a practical guide that can be used by teachers and managers who are considering implementing the JPD approach. As such, I believe my study will provide a valuable contribution to others, as it will allow those from other backgrounds to engage with my findings and put these to a practical use in their working context.

I have presented the findings of my research to my peers, as well as teachers and managers in further education institutions and to a national research network. I have also presented early findings from my research in 'Intuition Research' magazine, a publication produced by the Society for Education and Training, the professional

membership organisation for teachers working in further education and skills settings (Odell, 2016).

5.9 Concluding remarks

I became fascinated with the concept of JPD, as it was evident through what I have observed in my professional role that the 'best practice' or 'cascade' model of professional development provides little opportunity for reflection and transforming practice. I was drawn to the bottom-up, practitioner-focused JPD approach, particularly as it appeared to present an opportunity to empower teachers and challenge the established managerialist culture that seems to be prevalent in many further education and skills institutions. As a 'manager' myself, I was particularly interested in making apparent leadership attitudes and assumptions and interrogating how leadership thinking impacted on the 'administration', or adoption, of joint practice development principles and processes.

It has been an extraordinary journey and a long one, since I first embarked on this study eight years ago. When I first started reflecting on how Fielding et al's (2005) findings might be relevant to the further education and skills sector, very little had been written about this. In 2013, I produced a report (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), 2013) that reflected on the successes and challenges of a model that I had managed on behalf of a government agency, where organisations who had been judged as 'outstanding' were given funding to support those deemed 'inadequate' in order to transfer their 'effective' practice. For reasons that are clear to me now, this approach did not have a considerable benefit in terms of impact on practice for the recipients and that is why I was keen to see whether the more egalitarian JPD approach had any chance of survival, particularly in institutions where paternalistic and hierarchical structures tend to dominate.

The importance of organisational culture is revealed through using activity theory to shine a light on JPD as a socially situated professional development activity focused on a community of practitioners, rather than individuals. My analysis shows that where there has historically been a reliance on top-down professional development approaches delivered by outside experts, there is a growing desire by middle and senior leaders in further education settings to embrace more collaborative approaches to professional development that promote professional dialogue among peers and reflection on the values dimension of teaching and learning.

What is evident from the findings is that factors such as inspection and accountability systems in a marketised environment create specific tensions leading to a degree of dissonance that has a marked negative impact on participants' commitment to the JPD project. Furthermore, current efforts under the guise of re-professionalisation to 'educate' or induct teachers in the further educations and skills sector into a pedagogy of performativity and productivity militate against any regaining of ownership of their professional development through more reflective and collaborative approaches.

In terms of presentation of the data, my study has been able to reveal individuals' experiences of enjoining in the JPD activity in the further education sector and I have been able to make apparent the organisational dynamics and networks of power that have influenced the practitioners' experiences. This is in contrast to the audit-style presentation of performance data that is demanded by funders and policy makers.

My findings demonstrate that the right conditions for JPD to be implemented, characterised by openness and trust, can be created - if in certain circumstances temporarily - in managerialist cultures that have historically been hierarchical and paternalistic, provided that middle and senior leaders suspend the rules of engagement/participation that exist in performance cultures, such as appraisals, observation and performance data. If these rules are relaxed, teachers can develop a sense of agency through a shift from individualism to an engagement in a professional learning community that represents a neutral space of reflection as well

as a space of action that places teaching and learning at the centre. MacAllister (2016), following MacIntyre (1998), emphasises the point that 'we need to think with others in order to think for ourselves' (p. 389). In the early stages of implementation, JPD can still be perceived as a top-down approach; however, once the environmental conditions have been created by senior and middle leaders, based on the research evidence provided, JPD has the potential to become established as a bottom-up, practitioner-focused model. Nevertheless, because of the complex nature of the activity and the many factors and players involved, establishing the model in its purest form is 'messy', as Mooney, Simmie et al (2019) suggest.

By the time the approach had been implemented in two rounds of JPD activity, the broker and mentee in my study were beginning to show a changed pedagogic mind-set, developing collaborative behaviours and becoming accustomed to sharing, and jointly developing, professional knowledge. This demonstrates the power of JPD in bringing about transformative change – 'a change of mind and a change of heart' - and the evidence suggests that JPD can provide an opportunity to challenge a deficit perception of professionalism characterised by performance cultures.

Reading the narratives of resistance in the data calls to mind the idea that neoliberalist cultures in FE institutions can have the unexpected effect of restoring an element of power, agency and autonomy to practitioners 'constructed through a struggle from within the cracks, crevices and contradictions of practice' (Gleeson and Knights, 2006, p. 289). However, the short-term impacts can be subtle and it may be challenging to evidence any tangible impacts except over time. Temporality, therefore, has emerged as a key factor: JPD is a 'slow, deep burn', not a 'quick fix'.

Although the JPD model has the potential to improve practice, in order to move to a second stage where the JPD process becomes embedded and teachers work collectively at a deep level to share and develop their practice in an atmosphere of trust, there needs to be a sustained rather than temporary change in the leadership culture. For the professional development approach to be successfully implemented,

JPD needs to be perceived by the leadership as the whole ‘toolbox’, rather than ‘just one element’ of it (Project 1, Strategic enabler, Lead). My study has demonstrated that JPD will not work if it is to simply superimpose one bureaucratic structure on another, suggesting that a fundamental systemic change is required from top-down and from inside out if the model is to be successfully embedded.

The research has exposed the fragile nature of seeding such an approach, where often the structures of control in audit cultures are so entrenched that there is little likelihood of it flourishing in its purest form. Whilst there has clearly been an impact at an individual level, the evidence suggests that JPD so challenges the dominant orders, social, economic and ideological, holding sway in further education institutions at the moment, that it may have only a local impact on practice, and over a limited time span. In other words, improvement in practice at whole institutional level and across institutions may prove to be wholly, or at least partly, unsustainable.

5.10 Next steps

As well as developing a practical JPD ‘toolkit’, I am aiming to influence change at a strategic level in my organisation and more broadly in the further education and skills sector. In my role at the ETF, I have led on the design and development of QTLS and ATS where collaborative approaches are at the heart of these programmes. Now that I have completed my study, I am in a strong position to be able to challenge *leaders*’ current perceptions in relation to JPD in particular and more broadly to pedagogy in FE, since my research findings signal the manifold benefits of adopting this professional development model.

I have already been in discussion about my study’s potential contribution with the recently appointed Head of Leadership and Governance at the Education and Training Foundation. I have presented my research findings to the Professional

Development team at the Foundation. Consequently, my research represents the first step towards challenging the established culture in further education and skills institutions in order to bring about sustainable change that will ultimately contribute to an improvement in the learner experience.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of changes to the JPD model since the application for ethical approval[7]

Original model (September 11 – July 13)	Changes since January 2014
1. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills provides funding to managing organisation (for example NIACE) on an annual basis to help further education organisations to improve the quality of their English, maths or ESOL provision in order that more learners achieve their qualifications (for example apprenticeships).	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills provides funding to the ETF on an annual basis to help organisations improve the quality of their provision. Individual organisations bid for funding in January 2014. Funding for up to 20 projects available for six months (projects ending 31.7.14). 13 projects are appointed. ETF manage the projects through consultants, rather than contracting out (eg to NIACE).
2. NIACE appoints brokers (one in each sub region: south, central and northern regions) and improvement partners that have proven expertise in English, maths and ESOL provision.	Organisations bidding for funding seek partners and nominate partners in their bid. ETF not involved in any brokering.
3. NIACE develops impact measures and processes for monitoring, quality assuring and evaluating the support model.	Organisations nominate an independent evaluator in their bid who will support them in developing impact measures, monitoring processes, etc.
4. NIACE promotes the support offer. Providers needing help with their provision (beneficiary providers) apply for support, stating their particular needs in an application form.	ETF promote the offer through a tender specification issued in early December 2013.
5. Brokers match beneficiary providers with an improvement partner that has expertise in the areas of support requested.	NA
6. Beneficiary provider and improvement partner meet and agree an action plan and agree support package (up to six days, comprising consultancy, continuing professional development and opportunities to join peer support networks).	Successful bidders organise timescales for meeting and working with partners.

[7] Approved as part of Res4a LSBU report, June 2014

Appendix 2: Overview of sample of interviews conducted between June 2014 and October 2015

Project Number	Provider Type	Region	Job title of interviewees	Role in relation to JPD	Number of interviews	Date of interview	Rationale for the approach
1) Focus case study	Adult and Community Learning (ACL) (1) ACL (2)	South East South East	Manager Tutor Independent consultant Vice Principal (a) Vice Principal (b)	Internal broker Mentee Evaluator Strategic enabler in lead organisation and facilitator, co-ordinator, network builder, funder Strategic enabler in partner organisation and facilitator, co-ordinator, network builder, funder.	2 2 1 1 1	4.6.14 (face to face) 22.7.15 (telephone) 19.6.14 (telephone) 26.5.15 (telephone) 26.6.14 (telephone) 7.8.15 (telephone) 7.8.15 (telephone)	By interviewing participants across the whole range of roles in one organisation, I was able to focus on the impact of power relations on the JPD approach and the systemic level of impact of the JPD intervention.
2)	Voluntary and community sector organisation (VCS)	London	Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Head of CPD	Strategic enabler (and facilitator, co-ordinator, network builder, funder) Internal broker	1 1	9.6.14 (face to face) 9.6.14 (face to face)	To gather supplementary evidence on the role of the strategic enabler and relationship with the internal broker

Project Number	Provider Type	Region	Job title of interviewees	Role in relation to JPD	Number of interviews	Date of interview	Rationale for the approach
3)	Adult Residential College	Yorkshire and Humber	Teacher Training Manager Independent consultant	Internal broker Evaluator	1 1	17.7.14 (telephone) 7.7.14 (telephone)	To gather supplementary evidence on the role of the broker
4)	ACL	London	Quality Co-ordinator	Internal broker	1	10.6.14 (face to face)	To gather supplementary evidence on the role of the broker
5)	VCS	East of England	Teacher training manager Independent consultant	Internal broker Evaluator	1 1	28.8.15 (telephone) 30.10.15 (telephone)	To gather supplementary evidence on the role of the external evaluator
				TOTAL INTERVIEWS	14		

Appendix 3: Project Summaries

Project 1

Provider setting	Adult and Community Learning
Geographical region	South East
Number of organisations in partnership	2
Aim of project	To develop and embed a cultural shift in the way CPD was managed and implemented in the two colleges from an imposed performance management framework to a model of sharing practice, with the ultimate aim of increasing the proportion of teaching and learning that would be graded as 'outstanding' in future Ofsted inspections or internal quality assurance assessments and improve the retention and success rates of maths, and ESOL learners.
Objectives of project	• To enable tutors to review, analyse and develop skills in sharing effective practice in order to improve the learners' experience • to enable tutors to improve the use of the learner voice by engaging, listening to and learning from their learners what motivates them to attend and complete their courses and to reflect on and draw on these findings to make improvements to their teaching to promote a more positive learning experience and so increase learners' motivation and achievement • to enable managers to increase the use of peer observation in each partner's teaching, learning and assessment framework (OTLA), promoting the sharing of practice with a shift in focus to working in an atmosphere of trust, expertise and experience rather than being assessed and judged as in performance management and Ofsted frameworks • to promote and increase tutors' skills in self-reflection in action learning sets[8] that provided an opportunity for practitioners from both organisations to reflect on their practice and learn from others' practice.
JPD participant roles:	• Mentees (x 14): engaged through professional dialogue, sharing of practice and self-reflection • A facilitator whose role was to identify relevant research that would support and validate the project's aims and objectives. • Learners (x 42) who helped practitioners identify their professional development needs • Maths English and ESOL mentors (x3) • Strategic enablers (x 2) who supported the delivery of the project, through monitoring, promoting engagement and evaluating the project against the organisations' strategic priorities. • An internal broker who was responsible for monitoring and managing the project on a day to day basis. • An external evaluator

[8] Action learning sets provide a structured way of working in small groups which can provide the discipline often needed to help participants reflect and learn from their practice and subsequently improve their practice as a result.

Context for the project
In the year before the project took place, the lead partner had revisited and revised the college mission and vision with a clear intention of the new mission being focussed on moving the organisation from a 'didactic organisation' to a 'learning organisation'. The project was linked to both colleges' strategic plans, the colleges' KPIs and their respective Quality Improvement Plans **Key contextual and organisational features that are relevant to the project:** A feature of the lead partner's last Ofsted inspection was that practitioners demonstrated excellent practice, but they were unable to articulate what is good about their practice. There was strong senior leadership commitment from both of the colleges to drive up improvement in teaching and learning outcomes and both principals were fully supportive in the delivery of the project, seeing it as an important area of investigation in the continued empowerment of tutors to take responsibility for their own professional development and to improve their respective organisations' OTLA grade profile. Both colleges focused on the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment, resulting in an improvement in the observation grade profile. However both colleges had a different way of approaching the development of tutors: • The lead partner implemented a system of no-notice lesson observations • The subsidiary partner focused upon a system where tutors identified their own areas of need. Both colleges had spent time reviewing their respective OTLA framework, and management in both colleges felt there was a need for a different focus in order to increase the number of outstanding grades. The next stage was to achieve a cultural shift with tutors taking responsibility for their own professional development through the transfer of skills and expertise among themselves. Both colleges delivered a 'top-down' model for practitioners' CPD, managers determined the CPD needs of practitioners as a result of OTLA, appraisals and the performance management cycle. CPD events were devised internally in response to management review, delivered to staff (individual/teams), and had poor take-up. This, combined with a predominantly part time workforce and limited potential availability for development, meant that CPD activity was often limited in terms of participation and impact. Both colleges had trained coaching mentors, and were starting the process of embedding this expertise within practice alongside mentoring for new members of staff. The lead partner had regular involvement with a regional association of colleges, and through this network undertook sharing of good practice. However, there was little use of transfer of best practice between tutors as a continuous process, whether internally or external to the organisations. Neither college had in place structured opportunities for practitioners' own self- reflection

Project 2:

Provider setting	Voluntary and Community Sector, Adult and Community Learning & Further Education College
Geographical region	London and the North West
Number of organisations in partnership	4
Aim of project	To build and extend existing relationships, encourage knowledge sharing, and develop productive collaborations across the sectors and to establish a partnership between leading further education colleges
Objectives of project	• To work with partners to develop a framework to support their subcontractors in the third sector, enabling those subcontractors to realistically aspire to Grade 1 • To improve the quality of teaching and learning through the use of joint observations
JPD participant roles:	• Mentees (x 4) : • Mentors (x 3) • An internal broker who was responsible for monitoring and managing the project on a day to day basis. • An external evaluator
Context for the project	
The project was set up as a result of involvement by the lead partner in previous projects that had demonstrated the power of collaborations and partnership working. A key outcome for the project was to improve teaching and learning grades and performance. The lead partner recognised that traditionally many third sector organisations successfully engage with hard to reach and disadvantaged learners and also they generally achieve good results in terms of outcomes and value added. However, as an organisation they did not achieve outstanding grades in many of their observations. By working initially with 'Grade One' partners or larger organisations such as colleges, the lead organisation aimed to explore what could be learned through joint observations that would result in higher grade observations for their teaching staff.	

Project 3

Provider setting	Adult and Community Learning
Geographical region	Yorkshire and the Humber
Number of organisations in partnership	2
Aim of project	To develop a community of practice enabling teachers to increase their interest in pedagogy and their identity as teachers; to promote critical reflection enabling teachers to develop their own theory of learning.
Objectives of project	To enable teachers to increase their use of critical reflection in order to develop their own theory of learning, with an emphasis on using interactive technology and social media to bring about improvements in their practice.
JPD participant roles:	• Mentees (x 124) : • An internal broker who was responsible for monitoring and managing the project on a day to day basis and designing and delivering the two day course. • An external evaluator
Context for the project	

The focus for the project emerged as a result of the two partner organisations sharing similar concerns with respect to teachers' practice being too focused on perceptions and assumptions of what Ofsted are looking for during observations, ie 'ticking boxes' in order to strive to be outstanding. As a result, some teachers had become reluctant to take risks and try new approaches with their learners.

As a consequence, the partner organisations designed a two day course (with a four week on-line course in between the two face to face days) to enable teachers to re-engage with and reflect on their practice, discussing amongst themselves how to be outstanding and testing out new strategies and reflecting on the outcome using an on-line platform.

In July 2014, two months after the project had ended, the lead organisation had received an Outstanding grade for their observation.

Project 4

Provider setting	Adult and Community Learning
Geographical region	London
Number of organisations in partnership	2
Aim of project	• To develop the practice of community-based teachers and trainers employed by the two colleges in embedding English and maths in their teaching in order to enhance the learning experiences and progression of community students and to develop a bank of online resources to be shared between the two colleges.
Objectives of project	• To enable teachers to design, experiment and reflect on different methods for developing their learners' English, maths and ITC skills • To enable tutors to develop their practice through collaborative learning and mentor support.
JPD participant roles:	Mentees (x 9) vocational teachers, with a mix of newly qualified and those with more experience supported to develop their learners' skills in maths and English Mentors (x 5) with expertise in maths and English or employability Internal broker Evaluator
Context for the project	
• 81% of tutors in an initial survey suggested that teachers had learners in their groups who had difficulties with students oral and/or written English. 72% with Maths. • 83% of tutors in the survey expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to support functional skills in their classes. The JPD project therefore aimed to address these issues.	

Project 5

Provider setting	Voluntary and Community Sector (lead), Adult and Community Learning & Further Education College
Geographical region	East of England
Number of organisations in partnership	10
Aim of project	To support practitioners in developing best practice in personalised learning for adult community education in the Eastern Region using joint practice development approaches and to explore how JPD could be integrated into organisational practice.
Objectives of project	• To enable tutors to identify the benefits of developing their practice with the support of peers outside their organisation and to develop their skills in personalised learning • to enable senior leaders in the partner organisation to identify the benefits of JPD and consider ways to incorporate the approach into their professional development programmes.
JPD participant roles:	• Mentees (x 25) : engaged through 4 support groups or 'research pods' • Mentors (x 2) who shared expertise in the subject areas (maths, English) • Facilitators (x 4): engaged to keep the support groups on track • Maths English and ESOL mentors (x3) • An internal broker who was responsible for monitoring and managing the project on a day to day basis. • An external evaluator
Context for the project	
Ofsted had identified that for adult education providers in the region there was a need for improved and consistent differentiated learning targets, relevant to the learner, which included better use of initial assessment and learner choice. The lead partner identified this as a key development area in their own organisational improvement plan and was also echoed across the providers in the area. The lead organisation had previously engaged with a nationally funded research project that drew on a JPD approach to developing practice. The lead organisation was in the process of undergoing a change of culture in organisation, as a result of no longer working with the local county council and were wishing to explore new ways of working. The JPD model was used as part of a wider culture change tool in the organisation and as a consequence of the successful outcome of implementing the approach, the lead partner aimed to champion this way of learning for other providers to experience.	

Appendix 4: Consent form sent to the participants of my study

Towards a collaborative model of self improvement for the further education sector

Researcher: Tricia Odell

I am currently undertaking an Education Doctorate at London South Bank University and I would like to invite you to take part in my research study that forms a key part of the Doctorate. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Do contact me (triciaodell1958@hotmail.co.uk) if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Background to the study

The aim of this study will to be to explore some key principles for improving teaching and learning in further education settings through new ways of working, based on collaborative communities of practice.

You have been chosen to be invited to participate in this study as you are currently involved in a joint practice development project. In total, 12 people will be included in my study.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You are still free to withdraw anytime up to the submission of the dissertation and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw, or a decision not to take part, will not affect the study in any way.

If you are willing to participate, you will be invited to take part in an interview on your premises or on the phone lasting approximately 30 minutes at a mutually agreeable date and time. This study is planned to last two years. During the interview, I will explore with you some of the advantages and disadvantages of the joint practice development model and how the model might be sustained. For ease of later analysis, I would like to record the conversation with your permission as well as take notes. If you do not wish to be recorded but are still willing to participate, I will only take notes. With your permission, I would also like the opportunity to extract quotes from the interview and include these anonymously in the dissertation.

It is not anticipated that you will be any disadvantage or suffer any risk from this study. It is unlikely that you will gain any personal benefit from participating in this research. However, the information you share with me may help you to reflect on your organisation's improvement model, since you may gain some benefit from having the opportunity to discuss this topic with a receptive listener.

You are free to withdraw from the study and not have your information included, at any time up to the time of completion of the dissertation. However, after that time, it would be impossible for me to comply.

All information received from you will be handled in a confidential manner and stored in a locked filing cabinet and on a password protected computer in an environment locked when not occupied. Only the researcher and supervisor will have direct access to the information. Any reference to you will be coded. This information will be held until December 2017.

I should emphasise that the study has been reviewed and ethically approved by the London South Bank University Research Ethics Committee. If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, do contact me on 07920 710692. If you wish any further information regarding this study or have any complaints about the way you have been dealt with during the study or other concerns you can contact Nicki Martin at London South Bank University at martinn4@lsbu.ac.uk who is the Academic Supervisor for this study. Finally, if you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee. Details can be obtained from the university website:
http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/rbdo/external/index.shtml

Written Consent

Title of study: Towards a collaborative model of self improvement in the further education sector

Name of Participant:

- I have read the attached information sheet on the research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information.
- The researcher has explained the nature and purpose of the research and I believe that I understand what is being proposed.
- I understand that my personal involvement and my particular data from this study will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher involved in the study will have access.
- I agree to the interview being recorded and for quotations from the interview to be used anonymously in the research.
- I have been informed about what the data collected will be used for, to whom it may be disclosed, and how long it will be retained.
- I have received satisfactory answers to all of my questions.
- I hereby fully and freely consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason for withdrawing.

Participant's Name:(Block Capitals) ....

Participant's Name: Signature ....

Participant's Witness' Name: ....

Witness' Signature: ....

As the Researcher responsible for this study I confirm that I have explained to the participant named above the nature and purpose of the research to be undertaken.

Researcher's Name: ....

Researcher's Signature: ....

Appendix 5: Sample e-mail inviting participants to take part in my research

Dear xxxxx

I am contacting you because of your involvement in the Education and Training Foundation's Joint Practice Development programme.

I am currently undertaking an Education Doctorate and I would like to invite you to take part in my research study that forms a key part of the Doctorate. Up to 12 people are being invited to participate. Before you decide, I'd like to give you a little more information about why the research is being done and what it will involve.

The aim of this study will to be to explore some key principles for improving teaching and learning in further education settings through new ways of working, based on collaborative communities of practice.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You are still free to withdraw anytime up to the submission of the dissertation and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw, or a decision not to take part, will not affect the study in any way.

If you are willing to participate, you will be invited to take part in an interview on your premises or on the phone lasting approximately 30 minutes at a mutually agreeable date and time. During the interview, I will explore with you some of the advantages and disadvantages of the joint practice development model of support and how the model might be taken forward. For ease of later analysis, I would like to record the conversation with your permission as well as take notes. If you do not wish to be recorded but are still willing to participate, I will only take notes. With your permission, I would also like the opportunity to extract quotes from the interview and include these anonymously in the dissertation.

I should emphasise that the study has been reviewed and ethically approved by the London South Bank University Research Ethics Committee. I also have the permission of both the Director of Professional Standards and Workforce Development and the Head of Research at the ETF to carry out the study.

I hope you are able to participate in my study. If you have any queries in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With kind regards

Tricia Odell

Appendix 6: e-mail sent to the Director of the funding agency, seeking permission to use project impact data collected by the funding agency

2 February 2014

Dear xxxxx

As you know, I am currently studying for a Doctorate in Education and have chosen to focus my research on the factors that facilitate or constrain the transfer of effective practice between FE providers, based on the joint practice development model.

I will be carrying out the main body of the research from March 2014 to August 2015 through a series of interviews with practitioners, managers and evaluators.

In order to enhance my research, I would like to draw on the following data:

- satisfaction data from surveys
- applications for support and final action plans and visit reports for those providers selected for the study
- final evaluation reports

In keeping with BERA guidelines, I would confirm that:

- the information (data) consulted will remain confidential and anonymous and will be used for research purposes only
- the data will not be passed on to, or discussed with, anyone else and will be shredded three years after the data collection period.

I would be very grateful if you could give your permission for this additional data to be used for my research study.

If you are agreeable, please would you sign and date the statement below.

With many thanks

I give my permission for the information named above to be used by Tricia Odell, provided that the data consulted will be used in keeping with the BERA guidelines stated above. Name: Signed: Date

Appendix 7: Summary of the characteristics of existing CPD practices

Characteristic	'Best practice' model	Observations of practice
Who does it?	Outside 'expert'	Middle manager
Purpose	Upgrading of skills/knowledge	Identify underperformance – separate effective from non-effective teachers
Learning process	Passive	Passive
Who benefits?	Individual to a limited extent	Institution
Driver	Management	External stakeholders, eg Ofsted, government
Benefits for the institution	Useful for updating, eg raise awareness of new policies, legislation	Yields standardised performance data – demonstrates to Ofsted there is a 'robust QA process' Can identify 'issues' with new members of staff and put early s support in place
Benefits for the practitioner	None reported	Limited, unless a developmental approach is adopted, so practitioner focussed
Limitations for the institution	Over-reliance on outside expertise/failure to recognise and draw on existing expertise to share effective practice	Incompatible with a collaborative culture
Limitations for the practitioner	Perceived as a deficiency model 'sitting on the naughty step'; not enough time afforded to put new learning into practice	'Daunting', judgemental
Type of professionalism	Compliant	Controlled

Appendix 8: Project 1 Pilot of JPD timeline: January – July 2014[9]

Month	Activity
January	Pre-planning and preparation meeting
February	Design learner voice survey Appoint researcher to identify and present best practice models
March	Staff meeting to share results of research and identify key areas for development and scope out project
April	Confirmation of transfer model to enable staff to share practice
May	Pilot of transfer model Peer observations First action learning set Capture data for analysis Analyse data to inform planning for whole organisation approaches
June	Peer observations Second action learning set End of project conference
July	Review of CPD, appraisals and observation strategy Survey of tutors involved in the pilot Joint final evaluation meeting

[9] Source: Project 1 External Evaluator report, July 2014

Appendix 9: Sample of self-evaluation form (Project 1)[10]

Joint Practice Development Project

Phase 1 - Individual self-evaluation: Tutor name: ……………………………….

Rationale: During phase 1 of the project tutors will undertake a self-evaluation process to identify key strengths and areas for development. This will provide the basis for defining action learning sets to move onto the next phase of the project.

The diagram outlines the cyclic process of action learning sets

<table>
<tr><th>Outcome of observation from 2013/14</th><th>Learner voice – outcome of interviews</th><th>ILP’s progress reviews</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Include here any areas that you are currently developing, it is not necessary to include a grade but to focus on specific actions, i.e. developing small group work etc.</td><td>Learner 1 – you may include the quotes from your learners here, i.e. I felt welcome when I first started the group or I was initially a little shy and I was supported to…</td><td>Review the sample of students that were interviewed and extract other relevant information about their learning experience</td></tr>
<tr><td>Learner 2</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Learner 3</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Learner 4</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Self-evaluation summary</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">From the information collected identify any common themes that you would like to further develop. This could be looking at different ways to engage students at the start of their program or trying different approaches to develop self-confidence etc.. this will ensure that development areas are individually (tutor) relevant</td></tr>
</table>

[10] Source: Project 1 Evaluation report

Appendix 10: Summary of JPD roles

JPD role	Responsibilities in relation to JPD activity for Project 1	Further aspects of the role evident in projects 2-5
Strategic enabler	Leads and funds the strategic management of the JPD activity, ensuring JPD activity is aligned to strategic priorities; observes classroom practice; leads the final conference	
Broker	Provides day to day management of the project; facilitation of the JPD activity; plans and leads the introductory meeting and final conference; sets up and runs action learning sets in line with themes/priorities identified by the strategic enabler; establishes the professional learning community; designs and provides forms/templates to be used during the peer observation activity; designs questionnaires	Steps in and directly manages JPD activity where strong management was required; (P5) Facilitates JPD activity where practitioners had identified a need (P5) Includes a facilitator in the JPD team to help projects stay on track and act as 'critical friend' (P5)
Mentee	Attends and contributes to introductory meetings, action learning sets, sharing lessons learned at final conference. Observes mentor's practice, reflects on and shares practice, resources, testing out new strategies with learners; engages in professional discussions with mentor	Assists the evaluator in shaping the JPD activity, (along with learners) and contributes to the development of the JPD model as it is being piloted (P2)
Mentor	Attends and contributes to introductory meetings, action learning sets, final conference; observes mentees practice, and providing feedback; reflects on and shares practice, resources, testing out new strategies learned from mentee with learners; engages in professional discussions with mentee; shares lessons learned at final conference	Assists the evaluator in shaping the JPD activity (along with learners) and contributes to the development of the JPD model as it is being piloted (P2)
Evaluator	Supports the strategic enabler in scoping and planning the JPD activity, to ensure aims and outcomes of the project are met; validates the project by confirming value for money and confirming the outcomes;	Provides an evaluation framework to enable a comparison with other projects (P2) Gives permission to experiment and steers the projects through knowledge of JPD (P3) Works with practitioners to share emerging findings in order to co-create and develop the JPD approach (P3 and P5) Prioritises an evaluation of the model as key part of role, particularly with reference to development of the model (P5)
Researcher	Identifies educational research that is relevant to the themes of the JPD activity so providing a structure and rationale.	

Appendix 11: Sample of peer observation form (Project 1)[11]

JPD Project
Peer visit form

<table>
<tr><td>Round 1 or Round 2</td><td>Subject area:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Buddy group:</td><td>Tutor visited:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date of visit:</td><td>Setting:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">A brief outline of the group: include the class, how many learners, brief learner profile</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Focus of visit: an outcome of self-evaluation from phase 1 or second visit from</td></tr>
<tr><td>What worked well:</td><td>What could be adapted further:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Reflection and action learning set:</td></tr>
</table>

[11] Source: Project 1 Evaluation Report

Appendix 12: Sample peer observation form used with examples of a practitioner responses: Project 2[12]

What looks good?

- *Comprehensive lesson plan - very detailed*
- *Clear match between stated stage / aim on the lesson plan and what actually happened in the session*
- *Good variety and clear resources – worksheets – cup up cards – use of ICT – laptop - real objects*
- *Care and support for the students was excellent – displayed by the teacher and volunteer*
- *Wonderful interaction between the teacher, the volunteer and the learners*
- *The learners clearly benefited from the warm learning environment created by the teacher and the volunteer – this was reflected in the banter and laughter that took place*

Differentiation

- *Worksheets worked well- selected -worksheets with names attached were provided for less able learners this was evident on the lesson plan as were selected worksheets for able learners - extended worksheets also provided*

Ideas you would take

- *Develop a strategy to contextualise and link the lesson before to the one current*
- *In the event of a late comer – get another learner to explain what she / he is required to do*
- *Less teacher –centred teaching – more student centred learning – more of a role of a facilitator*
- *The sharing of the session in a meaningful way with the students at the beginning of the session*
- *Promotion of equality and diversity through the resources used*

Something you would do differently

- *Provide lined paper to ensure that the learners wrote on the line*
- *Lined paper would improve the learners writing ability – this is particularly important for students at this level*

[12] Source: Project 2 Evaluation Report

Appendix 13: Implications for practice when implementing JPD

a) Six factors that are key to support an effective implementation of JPD

	Factor	Implications for practice
1	A collective approach to JPD	Strategic enablers and brokers create the conditions for JPD to take place, drawing on JPD literature to introduce the approach, explaining how it can be modelled and supporting the establishment of a sustainable professional learning community. Across the organisation, mentees/mentors, brokers, strategic enablers are focused on same outcome: the improvement in organisational learning that will be the result of new pedagogical positioning and approaches. Leaders have a key role in creating a culture that will promote openness and change, providing the time and discursive spaces for practitioners to engage in JPD activity and to enable the JPD community to thrive. JPD is regarded by the leadership as the 'whole toolbox', not just 'an element' of it in order for the approach to be sustained. NB: Cultural change may be necessary, as JPD will not flourish where there are 'inappropriate' cultures, for example those that prioritise performativity over teaching and learning.
2	Practitioner-focused	Mentees and mentors: • have ownership of the JPD activity, choosing areas for development, engaging with their learners to help identify professional development priorities and as a result may adopt more learner-centred approaches; • engage in JPD through informal structures that include peer observation and professional discussion enabling a co-construction and 'better understanding' of the practice; learning for both mentees and mentors therefore is reciprocal in an environment where they are sharing, creatively reflecting together on their practice; • reflect on and renew practices working collectively with peers at a deep level towards continual improvement, drawing on relevant educational theory and research to inform developments in practice and so avoid any proliferation of poor practice; • are empowered to become researchers of their practice, adopting an enquiry-based approach.

	Factor	Implications for practice
3	Mediation of the activity by an internal broker	Brokers have a key role in promoting the JPD approach, providing guidance in the early stages, keeping the activity on track (but at arms-length), mediating any tensions between the strategic enabler and the JPD community. They provide ‘just the right amount’ of information and resist the temptation to ‘overload’ practitioners. A central role for the broker is to foster a sense of practitioner ownership and empowerment.
4	Relationships built on trust, honesty and openness	Mentees and mentors are trusted, valued and respected by the strategic enabler and broker to identify their own priorities for development; they are empowered to take risks with their practice. Peer observations are accepted as a valid and legitimate way of improving practice by strategic enablers. JPD is accepted as an alternative professional development model to one based on performative measures of graded observations.
5	Time and space to implement and sustain change	JPD is a ‘slow deep burn’ rather than a ‘quick fix’. Sufficient time and space is allowed to enable mentees/mentors to reflect on their practice, test out new strategies in order for the new practice to be ‘transformed’ rather than ‘modified’ and to enable changes in behaviours, attitudes and values.
6	Challenge and support provided by an evaluator/facilitator	There is a key role for an evaluator or facilitator (who is a peer, rather than their manager) to support the JPD process, for example by helping mentees and mentors identify their improvement priorities, recommend any professional reading, helping to support mentees and mentors to engage critically with relevant educational research. Evaluators/facilitators are non-judgemental, operate independently of management and help practitioners to produce new knowledge, reflect on what they have learned and how the process could be improved. Evaluators/facilitators therefore adopt a JPD approach to evaluation.

b) Steps for putting JPD into practice (adapted from Gregson et al, 2015)

	Step	How the step can be put into practice
1	Create the conditions for implementing JPD in the organisation	Partnerships with other institutions are developed and established and an implementation strategy is designed that will include how the JPD approach will be evaluated. An introductory event, led by strategic enablers, is held with brokers, evaluators/facilitators, mentees and mentors, providing a rationale for the introduction of JPD, introducing the JPD literature that will inform the implementation, roles of the JPD community.
2	Identification of areas of practice to be improved	A workshop is organised for mentees and mentors to begin to discuss and agree areas practice that they would like to share and strategies for sharing practice. The following questions could help focus the discussion. • What expertise can I offer to other practitioners? • What do I want to learn from other practitioners? • What aspect of my practice do I want to improve?
3	Agreement of timescales for the activity/methods of sharing practice	Evaluators/facilitators meet with the mentee/mentors to agree timescales and methods of sharing, suggesting/discussing relevant educational theory and research that will inform development and adaptation of identified areas of practice.
4	Sharing of practice	Mentees and mentors share practice through a cycle of activity comprising a number of peer observations and professional discussions that enable them to: • identify the potentially relevant knowledge and skills that can be shared and transferred, that will add to the practitioners' repertoire, drawing also on the 'learner voice' to help inform priorities • suggest how the potentially relevant knowledge and skills can be adapted and transferred to the new context • test out the adapted practice, drawing on peer observations • provide feedback and ensure on-going improvement.
5	Interim evaluation of impact of the activity and the JPD approach	Evaluators meet with mentees and mentors to help critically review progress, identify changes in practice and impact on learners, helping mentees/mentors to produce new knowledge, reflect on what they have learned and how the JPD process could be improved.
6	Sharing of practice	Continuation of the cycle of activity as above in Step 4, with mentees/mentors working collectively to improve their practice.
7	Final evaluation of impact of the activity and identification of next priorities	A final workshop is planned and led by the mentees and mentors, enabling them to share and evaluate with the JPD community: • what they have learned about the JPD approach and how the model could be improved • success stories of how the JPD activity has improved their practice and the impact on the learner experience; how this has been evidence informed; how they are producing new knowledge; how this is leading to organisational quality improvement • suggestions for future priorities.

Appendix 14: List of abbreviations

ACL	Adult and Community Learning
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
AoC	Association of Colleges
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
ATLS	Associate Teacher Learning and Skills
ATS	Advanced Teacher Status
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CAVTL	Commission for Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning
CEL	Centre for Excellence in Leadership
CHAT	Cultural Historical Activity Theory
CIF	Common Inspection Framework
CLAHRC	Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DBIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
DfE	Department for Education
DFES	Department for Education and Skills
DIUS	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
DWR	Developmental Work Research
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ETF	Education and Training Foundation
FE	Further Education
FETL	Further Education Trust for Leadership
IfL	Institute for Learning
JPD	Joint Practice Development
JPT	Joint Practice Transfer
LSIS	Learning and Skills Improvement Service
NAO	National Audit Office
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
OTLA	Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment

PLD	Professional Learning and Development
QIA	Quality Improvement Agency
QTLS	Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
RDF	Research Development Fellowship
SET	Society for Education and Training
SUNCETT	University of Sunderland Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector

Appendix 15: List of figures and tables

Figures

Figure 1: First-generation activity theory model and interpretation in relation to my research

Figure 2: Second generation activity theory model in relation to my research

Figure 3: First-generation activity theory model: Vice Principal in Project 1 [Lead] prior to the introduction of JPD

Figure 4: First-generation activity theory model: Middle Leader in Project 1 [Lead] prior to the introduction of JPD

Figure 5: First-generation activity theory model: Practitioner in Project 1 [Lead] prior to the introduction of JPD

Figure 6: JPD process for Project 1

Figure 7: Second generation activity theory analysis of the collective activity of JPD after two rounds of JPD in Project 1 (Lead Organisation)

Tables

Table 1: Aligning objectives through to analysis of findings: a matrix

Table 2: Comparison of characteristics of professional learning communities and community of practice models