

Review of Further Education teachers' attitudes, intentions and behaviours in response to the 'Professionalisation Agenda' UK.

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Abstract

The FE 'Professionalisation Agenda' (PA) is a contentious concept. It refers to the process of increasing the status, recognition, and qualifications of those who work in a sector or area. For these professionals, 'cognitive mastery' of a subject, demonstrating expertise through occupational behaviours and practices, technical and tacit knowledge following a period of tertiary education and vocational training are essential prerequisites in Further Education (ETF, 2018, 2022).

Since 1993, consecutive governments in England have introduced a range of education reforms aimed at developing the quality of teaching and training provisions in Further Education (FE). The current reforms were introduced on 1st September 2024 (DfE, 2021, 2023, 2024; ETF, 2022).

The PA, while overtly seeking to achieve parity of esteem of FE teachers with schoolteachers has reportedly given more work and diminished autonomy. The contract culture has culminated in a wider sense of de-professionalisation and proletarianisation of the profession (Sachdeva, 2023; Crawley, 2024).

This study explores the views of a sample of academics on the impact of enhanced professional qualifications on teachers' development and practice. The research uses questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to collect data from participants working in both vocational and academic curriculum areas. Eliciting the views of the FE workforce on these policies yielded perceptive views on the narrowing and marketisation of FE.

The research is underpinned by a practitioner led conceptual framework, applying the research questions to structure a practitioner-based study and adopts a pragmatic design (Capps, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell, 2021; Silverman, 2021), which accommodates the features of both positivist and interpretivist paradigms. This approach helps in clarifying the research problem and data analysis. It's the tool that ties all aspects of the study together, offering a coherent perspective for the researcher and readers to understand the research more holistically (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017).

Keywords: Performativity reforms practitioner-led de-professionalisation professional autonomy

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