Practitioners' experiences of implementing national education policy at the local level

An examination of 16-19 policy

Review conducted by the Post-Compulsory Education and Training Review Group

Report written by Dr Lawrence Nixon, Dr Maggie Gregson, Trish Spedding, Andrew Mearns

EPPI-Centre
Social Science Research Unit
Institute of Education
University of London

TECHNICAL REPORT

Practitioners' experiences of implementing national education policy at the local level

An examination of 16-19 policy

TECHNICAL REPORT

Review conducted by the Post-Compulsory
Education and Training Review Group

Report by Dr Lawrence Nixon (University of Sunderland)
Dr Maggie Gregson (University of Sunderland)
Trish Spedding (University of Sunderland)
Andrew Mearns (University of Sunderland)

The results of this systematic review are available in
four formats. See over page for details.

The results of this systematic review are available in four formats:

SUMMARY	Explains the purpose of the review and the main messages from the research evidence
REPORT	**Describes the background and the findings of the review(s) but without full technical details of the methods used**
TECHNICAL REPORT	Includes the background, main findings, and full technical details of the review
DATABASES	Access to codings describing each research study included in the review

These can be downloaded or accessed at **http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/reel/**

CONTENTS

List of abbreviations

AARE	Australian Association for Research in Education
ALLN	Adult literacy, language and numeracy
APL	Accreditation of prior learning
CETT	Centres for excellence in teacher training
CPD	Continuing professional development
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EMA	Education maintenance allowance
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
ETP	Employer training pilots
FE	Further education
FENTO	Further Education National Training Organisation
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
HE	Higher education
ICT	Information and communication technology
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSS	Learning and skills sector
NVQ	National vocational qualification
OfSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PCET	Post-compulsory education and training
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
QIA	Quality Improvement Agency
SfL	Skills for life
SVUK	Standards Verification United Kingdom
TLRP	Teaching and Learning Research Programme
TVEI	Technical and Vocational Education Initiative
TECS	Training and Enterprise Councils
YTS	Youth Training Scheme
WoE	Weight of evidence

Abstract

What do we want to know?

The initial review question used to identify and map the research literature in this area was as follows:

> *What do practitioners say about their experiences of implementing national post-16 education policies at the local level?*

Then a specific question for in-depth review was identified as follows:

> *What do practitioners in FE colleges say about the conditions, attitudes and implementation of national education policy?*

Who wants to know and why?

This review's overall aim was to support the further development of teaching and learning. Educational policy implementation has been the focus for this review. Specifically, this review looked at post-16 practitioners' perceptions of implementing national education policy at the local level. The findings of the review are relevant to the tasks of framing, presenting and administering effective policy: that is to be able to harness the potential of local settings in the pursuit of improving teaching and learning.

The review focused on the sector of post-compulsory education and training (PCET) and identified a number of national policies that have recently been implemented in the sector. The attitudes of local practitioners and their descriptions of their local context/conditions of work in relation to the policy implementation process were sought.

The review is therefore relevant to those working on education policy formation, its implementation, and managers and practitioners in local educational settings. The review examines the impact of a number of national policies that have recently been implemented in the PCET sector. The attitudes of local practitioners and their descriptions of their local context / conditions of work in relation to the policy implementation process were sought. The results identify a number of issues and strategies that could contribute to the future development of education policy and its effective implementation in local settings.

What results were found?

The in-depth reviewing of the identified studies and subsequent synthesis of findings generated the following findings.

- National policy is mediated in virtually all local settings. The form that 'local policy' takes can vary between institutions and between levels within the same institution. Practitioners will commonly meet and implement local policy. There is currently a widespread tendency for policy in its local form to appear in a marketised form.

- Practitioners commonly respond pragmatically to local policymaking it work for the benefit of their institution/learners.

- Practitioners faced a key challenge when implementing policy at the local level: balancing the duties placed on them by both marketising and pedagogic discourses. Tutors, in particular, felt that they struggled to make space to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency in a context they perceived to be dominated by marketised discourses.

- Practitioners, and tutors in particular, identified concerns about their ability to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency. The view was widely expressed that this aspect of practice was the under-exploited resource in local settings.

It was perceived that the way in which local policy was articulated operated to constrict the exercise of pedagogic judgement and agency.

- Tutors sometimes expressed attitudes of professional and pedagogic insecurity. That is, they were sometimes unsure that they had struck the best balance between pedagogic and marketised priorities. This insecurity could be seen to be stimulated by three factors: the demands for more and more flexibility, a context of policy initiative overload, and a local tendency to devalue pedagogic principles and valorise marketised discourse.

However, the messages in the research are neither simple, nor conclusive. The process of drawing conclusions from the cross-comparison of studies is complicated by four factors. First, there is a lack of conceptual clarity surrounding the key terms framing the ten studies. Second, the studies can be located in different, if often overlapping, theoretical frameworks. Third, policy is mediated in almost all contexts and levels. These factors introduce a level of conceptual variability into the studies that impinges upon the veracity of the systematised conclusions reached. However, it should also be noted that these dimensions of variability are to some extent mitigated by the striking similarity of the issues and concerns raised by practitioners across contexts. Finally, the sector itself is widely recognised to be under-researched. This fact limited the number of studies available.

What are the implications?

The review found that practitioners, at whatever institutional level, saw themselves to implementing policy in contextually sensitive ways for the benefit of the organisation and learners. However, tutors, in particular, expressed concerns about their ability to exercise pedagogic agency in local contexts congested with competing 'policy' demands, commonly expressed in marketised forms.

The Review Group interpreted these findings to suggest that the current preferred levers of policy implementation carry unforeseen negative consequences for tutor performance, restricting agency and a sense of responsibility.

The Review Group also suggest that novel forms continuing professional development could be utilised to enhance local pedagogic agency and initiative, in the service of more effective policy implementation.

Implications for policy

The review of practitioner comments identified a widespread concern that, at the local level, space is not being made for tutors to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency. The implication for policy-makers is how to exploit this under-utilised resource more effectively.

Further, practitioners perceive that they are far removed from policy decisions. They see no way in which their concerns and reflections can contribute to the development of policy. Introducing a practitioner, policy-maker and policy administrator forum would not only address this perceived sense of isolation but it could also feed into a virtuous circle where the advantages of a continuous improvement could be realised, both at the level of policy and practice.

The literature also implies that support for communities of professional practice could further enhance standards of teaching and learning and the quality of policy implementation at the local level.

Implications for practice

There was a widespread view that space to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency is currently restricted. There was also a widespread perception that the greater opportunity to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency would improve learner performance. The implication is that pedagogic spaces need to be organised in new ways, which articulate policy in forms sympathetic to the exercise of pedagogic judgement and agency.

Implications for research

This review has found that the mediation of policy in local settings is crucial to the implementation process. A systematic review of the forms of mediation would potentially throw further light onto the local factors affecting the policy implementation process. That is, how is policy rearticulated locally? How are decisions reached about the meaning of policy texts? How are the specific implications of policy for local settings found?

This review has found that there is a widely held view among practitioners that an increased opportunity to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency would raise standards of teaching and learning in PCET. Systematic reviews could be conducted into (a) how pedagogic judgement and agency is understood, and (b) what impact raised pedagogic judgement and agency has on standards of teaching, learning and achievement in PCET judgement. This latter study would require cross-comparison across EU states.

How were the results obtained?

A systematic search of the literature was undertaken to identify studies that related to the review question. This search aimed to identify research which had been undertaken in

post-compulsory education and training (PCET) settings and reported and analysed the views of practitioners about their role in operationalising policy in their local context.

The initial collection of 512 reports was refined using keyword screening. The screening process identified 62 reports for more detailed analysis. Initial coding of these 62 reports was used to generate a map that identified a number of themes around which the reports could be clustered.

Collaborative discussion resulted in the selection of a sub-set of 10 studies (represented in 14 reports) for in-depth review. The detailed analysis of these studies forms the base of the report's findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER ONE
Background

1.1 Aims and rationale for current review

Much has been written about education policy processes at the national level and its local effects. Much less is known about the practicalities of making education policy a reality particularly in English further education (FE) contexts. In order to address this research topic, the following question was formulated:

> *What do practitioners say about their experiences of implementing national post-16 education policy at the local level?*

Then a specific question for in-depth review was identified as follows:

> *What do practitioners in FE colleges say about the conditions, attitudes and implementation of national education policy?*

The review focused upon local 'practitioners' views of the local factors which influence the implementation of Government educational initiatives. In particular, it aimed to illuminate the human experience of implementing these initiatives in the post-16 area. The review identified studies and reports that explored, described and analysed practitioners' experiences of implementing national policy at the local level.

The review then synthesised the views of practitioners in order to identify a range of common themes and issues. The findings of the review are presented and recommendations are made.

In this way, the review will inform the dialogues of policy-makers and practitioners about current local arrangements and the impact of these on the policy implementation process. This review will also inform discussions about how the future

articulation of policy and its implementation may be more effectively shaped.

1.2 Definitional and conceptual issues

The question at the heart of the review ('What do practitioners in FE colleges say about the conditions, attitudes and implementation of national education policy?') uses a number of concepts that need to be defined.

The term 'practitioners' used here is a collective noun to refer to those concerned with pedagogy working in an FE institution. The distinct roles within the institution are identified using the broad categories of principal (leader of local institution), manager (senior and middle manager) and tutor (teacher working with learners).

The phrase 'say about' is used to mark the reflections of practitioners upon their own work in local institutions. In the context of this review, these reflections will have to make reference to implementing policy. These reflected experiences may be either directly quoted by researchers or summarised by them.

The terms 'conditions' and 'attitudes' are seen to direct attention toward particular themes in practitioner remarks. 'Conditions' signals the importance of discussions about the local working context, teaching space, management of the institution and departments, pay and conditions, and so forth. 'Attitude' signals the importance of the practitioner's evaluation of these local conditions.

The expression 'national education policy' is seen to mark a range of statements, instructions, guidelines and strategies that originated with central government. These directives were concerned with changing education practices in the post-16 sector.

Discussion of policy is further complicated by the fact that the form of policy practitioners meet in almost all local settings will be mediated. The phrase 'local policy' is used to signal the fact that national policy commonly appears in a form that has been translated to fit a local context. That is, original directives are commonly reinterpreted or recast into forms that fit the local organisation's concerns and interests.

The term 'implementation' refers to the processes whereby practice is shaped and/or influenced by the policy that is being implemented.

Defining the post-compulsory and training sector (PCET) is no easy matter. In England and Wales, all education is commonly discussed in terms of three sectors: compulsory (i.e. primary and secondary education), post-compulsory education and training sector (PCET) (often referred to as 'the further education' (FE) sector) and the higher education sector, exemplified in the university. This review concentrates on the PCET sector, which has been defined by Kennedy (1988, p 1) to include all the educational activity 'that does not happen in schools or universities. Anthony Cole's definition echoes this idea of breadth: 'FE is a diverse sector encompassing craft, vocation and academic area' (Cole, 2004, p 15).

Further detail can be given to these very broad definitions if we consider four core examples PCET practice. (This approach to definition by necessity neglects the myriad of boundary crossing instances.) First, the sector provides a range of traditional learning opportunities, such as A-level, GCSE programmes to 'adult' learners, and foundation degrees. Second, the sector offers a huge range of vocational qualifications; typical examples would include NVQ qualifications in hairdressing, bricklaying and car maintenance. Third, the sector includes work-based learning provision: that is, educational opportunities provided by employers designed to improve the skills of their workforce. Finally, the sector includes the community education of adults; examples in this arena would include community-based literacy and numeracy provision as well as recreational learning. Within the PCET sector, this review focused on provision by further education colleges.

1.3 Policy and practice background

Identifying the impact of any social policy upon practice is never a straightforward matter. There are no widely tested, universally accepted theories of public policy analysis and the same policy can be implemented in surprisingly different ways in different contexts. Furthermore, competing policy claims can be made for any gains identified in practice. This presents policy-makers, researchers and practitioners with the complex task not only of making policy work in practice, but also of understanding how well and why it is, or is not, working.

Spours et al. (2007) described the implementation of education policy initiatives in the learning and skills sector in England in terms of three features: (a) policy-drivers and levers, (b) the 'bigger blacker box' (the processes of policy implementation within the organisation itself), and (c) targets and outputs (mechanisms used to measure the success of a policy). Each of these features can be associated with a level of uncertainty and/or ambiguity. Policy-drivers and levers can be interpreted variously; that is, the policy intention or expressed aim, the clear ruling, can be perceived to be asking different things at different levels of the sector. Extending Black and Wiliam's (2002) 'black box' metaphor in order to see the organisation as a 'bigger blacker box' draws attention to the huge range of institutional forms and the myriad of forces operating within them that shape individual responses to policy initiatives. Evaluating success in terms of a predetermined set of outputs leaves much unmeasured and might actually neglect the most significant impacts of an education policy initiative. Rich description does not deny the primacy of policy levers and drivers in guiding and shaping practice, but it does invite us to think carefully about the complex processes that connect policy to local contexts and local contexts to outcomes.

In order to slice through this complex process and generate a review that contributes to the task of identifying local factors and attitudes that impact on the implementation of policy, it is crucial to have a clear object of study. The Review Group decided to pick out the key element in the original tender statement, as an object of study. They decided this was captured in the expression 'local factors'.

The Review Group decided that the practitioner was the pivotal local factor in any implementation process. Within the 'bigger black box', the post-compulsory institution of education, the practitioners operationalised policy in the context of their everyday practice and concerns.

It was decided that the phenomena of practitioner accounts of their experiences of implementing policy would provide a clear and productive object of study.

The output of the review, the rich description of local aspects of the policy implementation process, will allow policy-makers and practitioners to make informed evaluations and judgements about current local arrangements for policy implementation. It will also inform discussions about how the future articulation of policy and its implementation, and development may be more effectively shaped.

1.4 Research background

Much has been written about the forms and consequences of educational policy implementation at the macro level. See, for example, Hajer and Wagenaar (2003), Illeris (2003), Keep (2006) and Scott (1999). Using Bernstein's concept of the 'pedagogic device' (1996) a growing body of research has pointed towards the ways in which the relays of power embedded in education systems and educational reforms have influenced the formation of teacher identity and pedagogic practice. In the field of compulsory education Morais and Neves (2001), Daniels (2001), Teese and Polsel (2003a, 2003b) have drawn attention to how top down approaches to the implementation of education policy are influencing practice in sometimes less than optimal, often unintended, ways (Ball, 2003, 2004).

Beck and Young (2005) and Clegg and Bradley (2006) have applied Bernstein's work to reveal similar policy influences upon the formation of teacher identity and pedagogic practice in the field of higher education in England. Coffield (1999, 2002, 2004) and Coffield and Edward (2007) have extended Bernstein's ideas to reforms in post-compulsory education in the UK to highlight how a particular model for performance improvement has come to dominate the sector. Fenwick (2005), Robertson (2004) and Wheelahan (2005) have identified similar effects of the policy implementation process upon education practice in Canada and Australia.

The importance of the local context to understanding practitioner comments has long been championed by Hodkinson, Coffield and others (Hodkinson, 2004; Hodkinson, 2005; Bloomer et al., 2004; and Edward and Coffield, 2007). This research tradition reminds us of the importance of the local context to what is said and what is meant. In presenting their findings, researchers in this tradition have striven to both make explicit the contextual nuances in the practitioner remarks they present and analyse. They also strive to present these remarks in ways that make them available to wide range of positions not closely associated with the original context. The act of synthesis at the heart of this review follows this twin strategy to link the situated with the more abstract summary. First, the practitioner comments, researcher description and analysis that inform the synthesis are explicitly linked back to their original context by a robust audit trail. In other words, the remarks or commentary can be traced back to the original context via the original study. Second, the review findings summarise themes in the studies in ways that again maintain the link to local contexts.

Daniels (2001) and Ball (2003, 2004) have raised concerns about the potential for practitioners to be faced with an over-determined working context; they potentially face a range of national policy discourses that make competing demands upon them. Local mediation of national policy could either mitigate or exasperate these difficulties. The way in which these competing demands are managed in the local context will have a big impact in determining how policy is perceived and how it is understood to affect the local pedagogic context.

Overall, these discussions are relevant to the review because they foreground the importance of particular discourses in framing the conversations and attitudes. They also draw attention to the fact that national policy is understood, interpreted and implemented in local settings in a range of different ways. This drive to attend to the specific needs to be balanced by an awareness of what is shared across contexts. In this case, it is the local need to respond effectively to the same set of national policy priorities. The significance of these national initiatives is attested to by the ubiquity of references to them in the comments of practitioners.

The synthesis of views that maintains the link to the local while also offering a general account will be able identify the tensions practitioners perceive to be restricting the policy implementation process. The systematic presentation of these views will make a contribution to the ongoing discussions that surround policy formation, its implementation and its management in local settings.

1.5 Authors, funders and other users of the review

The Review Group comprised Lawrence Nixon, Maggie Gregson, Trish Spedding and Andrew Mearns. All have an interest in either the substance of the review and/or the methodological approach of systematic reviewing. All are active researchers, teacher educators or research assistants with responsibility for education policy studies on the PGCE PCET programme at Sunderland University. The project was funded by the DfES (now DCSF) through the EPPI-Centre.

It is hoped that the results of this review will contribute to the development of teaching and learning by helping a range of participants (including policy-makers, administrators, managers and tutors), to see more clearly how policy and its implementation can be tuned to local contexts.

1.6 Review questions

The question that guided the review process up to and including the map stage was as follows:

What do practitioners say about their experiences of implementing national post-16 education policies at the local level?

and subsidiary questions included the following:

Which post-16 education policy does the practitioner seek to implement and refer to?

How is the policy the practitioner is implementing being presented to the practitioner by the local institution?

What are the practitioners' views of the implementation process?

What local facilitators and impediments to implementing policy does the practitioner identify?

CHAPTER TWO
Methods used in the review

2.1 User involvement

Three user groups were involved in the development of the review: experienced FE practitioners, trainee teachers, and newly qualified teachers and academics concerned with education.

A first draft of the protocol was reviewed on 10 October 2006 by 20 representatives from the University of Sunderland's 13 partner FE colleges, drawn from across the North East of England. These experienced tutors were asked to consider the protocol and contribute to its development. Feedback from this seminar was used to refine the protocol for the pilot phase of the review.

On 16 October 2006, a user-involvement seminar was held with the University of Sunderland January 2006 cohort of PGCE students studying to teach in the PCET sector. This group was introduced to the systematic review model and the topic of this review: practitioner experience of policy.

In combination, these discussions identified a range of local factors that the participants thought likely to influence the implementation of policy, including the following:

- class size

- quality of management with the local organisation

- the way policy is interpreted and implemented in the organisation

- the need to match funding to policy goals

- the importance of the local institution, its history, culture and its current priorities to shaping the practitioners' response to policy implementation

In addition, the experienced practitioner group also expressed the view that an understanding of their local working context was crucial to understanding how policy was seen and their own comments upon it.

Between January and February 2007, further user involvement seminars were held to discuss the progress of the review and its interim findings. These user involvement seminars were conducted with the September 2006 PGCE PCET cohort and Assistant Programme Leaders from the 13 PGCE PCET partner colleges. Both groups were asked to look at the emerging review, comment on its progress and contribute to its development. Contact was maintained with the January 2006 cohort as they entered their first teaching jobs, both by sending them the draft report for comment, and by inviting them back to Sunderland for the final review dissemination event in the autumn of 2007.

In June 2007, a dissemination event was held at the University of Sunderland. The provisional findings were made available to over 500 newly qualified practitioners drawn from FE colleges across the North East.

Dissemination of the results of the review to the academic community is being conducted during the academic year 2007/08. Papers drawing on the project have been submitted to the AARE 2007 conference (Fremantle, Australia) and the Towards Professional Wisdom Conference Edinburgh (March 2008).

2.1.1 Methods used

In addition to the above, a Review Group Advisory Group meeting was held at the beginning of January 2007 to report on work to date and to ask its advice on the future development of the review. Experienced members of the Advisory Group were asked to comment on drafts of the report. A further Review Advisory Group meeting was convened prior

to the submission of the draft report at the end of August 2007.

2.2 Identifying and describing studies

2.2.1 Defining relevant studies: inclusion and exclusion criteria

The EPPI-Centre tools and guidelines for undertaking systematic reviews were used throughout the conduct of the review, in order to limit bias at all stages (EPPI-Centre, 2002a, 2002b and 2002c). Reports and studies deemed relevant to the review were those that identified or summarised accounts of practitioners' views on their conditions and attitudes as these related to implementing policy. The scope of the review was limited to reports and studies in English, published between 1976 and 2007, and based upon studies of UK Education policy in the field of the post-compulsory education sector.

Inclusion criteria

1. Participants must be teachers and/or managers in further, adult and community education.

2. The research study must examine or summarise the human experience of implementing post-16 policy at the local level.

3. The research must examine phenomena of policy implementation at the local level.

4. The research must be examining state funded further education, and/or adult and/or community education.

5. The research must be examining the experience of teachers and managers working in the further, adult and community education setting.

6. It must be research about the UK.

7. It must be published between 1976 and 2006.

8. The research paper will contain empirical data, including ethnographic accounts, case studies, surveys and/or interview data or the summary of interview data.

9. Articles will be in English only.

Exclusion criteria

1. Participants must not be teachers and/or managers in primary or secondary education.

2. The research study must not examine or summarise the human experience of formulating policy.

3. The research must not be examining privately

funded further education/training, and/or adult and/or community education.

4. The research must not be examining the experience of teachers and managers working solely in the primary, secondary or higher education setting.

5. It must not be research about anywhere outside the UK.

6. The research must not be published before 1976.

7. The research paper will not contain any articles that are solely opinion pieces (i.e. newspaper editorials).

8. Articles will not be in any language other than English.

9. The research paper must not be solely about higher education.

10. The research paper must not be about work-based learning.

11. The research paper must not be about prison education.

12. The research paper must not contain articles that make no reference to practitioner experiences.

13. The research paper must not contain articles that make no reference to policy and its implementation.

2.2.2 Identification of potential studies: search strategy

Searches of the following data bases were carried out:

- AEI
- ERIC
- International ERIC
- BEI
- EBSCO (professional development collection)

All of the database searches were carried out in November 2006.

This was supplemented with the following:

(a) searches of prominent websites, including:

- The Nuffield Foundation
- The National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC)
- Education-line
- National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)

(b) handsearching the relevant 'grey' literature

(The full search strategy for the electronic databases is contained in Appendix 2.2.)

2.2.3 Screening studies: applying inclusion and exclusion criteria

The Review Group set up a database, using Endnote, for keeping track of, and coding, studies found during the review. Titles and abstracts were imported and entered manually into the database. Pre-established inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to (a) titles and abstracts, and (b) full reports. Full reports were obtained for those studies that appeared to meet the criteria or where there was insufficient information to be sure. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were reapplied to the full reports and those that did not meet these initial criteria were excluded.

2.2.4 Characterising included studies

The studies that remained after application of the inclusion/exclusion criteria were keyworded using the EPPI-Centre coding tool for education studies (version 2.0) (see Appendix 2.3). Additional keywords which were specific to the present review were added (see Appendix 2.4).

2.2.5 Identifying and describing studies: quality-assurance process

Application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, and the keywording was conducted by pairs of members of the Review Group, working first independently, and then comparing their decisions before coming to a consensus. The EPPI-Centre also conducted quality assurance on the work completed.

2.3 In-depth review

2.3.1 Moving from broad characterisation (mapping) to in-depth review

The Review Group conducted a pilot review of the mapped reports to investigate further the clustering of the articles. The aim was to begin to identify the subset of articles that could potentially address the review question most effectively. The Review Group then met to reflect on these findings and decided that further inclusion/exclusion criteria would be applied to the mapped reports. The aim of introducing these additional inclusion / exclusion criteria was that their application to the mapped reports would identify a focused subset of studies that most closely addressed the review question. This subset of reports would then be put forward for in-depth review. The additional exclusion criteria that were applied to the map were as follows:

Exclusion criterion 1: Reports that do not contain direct quotes from study participants (practitioners) will be excluded.

Exclusion criterion 2: Where the discussion or analysis of quotes does not directly relate to national education policy, the study will be excluded.

The full inclusion and exclusion criteria are contained in Appendix 2.1.

2.3.2 Detailed description of studies in the in-depth review

The reports selected for the in-depth review were analysed, using the EPPI-Centre data extraction and coding tool for education studies (version 2.0). The results of their analysis were then synthesised to produce findings.

2.3.3 Assessing quality of studies and weight of evidence (WoE) for the review question

The EPPI-Centre weight of evidence (WoE) framework was used to make explicit the process of apportioning different weights to the findings and conclusions of different studies. In EPPI-Centre systematic reviews, the assessment is made on four criteria: the first three (criteria A–C) identify and evaluate different aspects of the study's research method and the evidence it presents. This framework was used to guide the Review Group's deliberations and resulted in an agreed weighting for each study (WoE D).

Criterion A (WoE A) related to the soundness of the study's methods, regardless of its appropriateness to the requirements of the systematic review. A judgement was made of how well the report had been carried out, with reference to the internal methodological coherence of the data-extraction process. This information is ascertained from the report itself. This may or may not have given an account of all the methodological aspects that need to be considered when forming a judgement. The lack of summary information about methodological detail in the report does not necessarily entail that it did not feature in the conduct of the research, just that it was not clearly reported by the author(s) of the report. Reports were rated as high, medium or low in relation to methodological soundness according to what was reported.

The reviewers made a judgement of the weighting informed by the results of the coding, in particular the results of section K of the coding tool.

Criterion B (WoE B) related to the appropriateness of the research design when it was being used

to answer the in-depth review question. In other words, this criterion is specific to this review. The following question was asked: did the study design of the primary research enable it to be used to address the review questions? This was not a judgement of the value of the study in its own right, but only in respect of how well its design enabled the review questions to be answered. Studies were rated as high, medium and low in relation to this aspect.

The reviewers made a judgement of the weighting informed by the results of the coding, in particular the results of section L, 9-11 that focused specifically on the qualitative methods used in the study which was deemed to be of particular importance given the topic of the review.

Criterion C (WoE C) was used to assess how relevant the focus of the study is (e.g. topic, population, setting, etc.) to answering the review question. Again, criterion C is review-specific. As in B, this judgement concerns the match of the study to the purposes of the review and is not a judgement on the value of the study per se. In this case, a judgement was made about how well the focus of the research related to the task of answering the in-depth review question. Again, the judgements were review-specific and made in terms of high, medium or low relevance.

The reviewers made a judgement of the weighting informed by the results of the coding, in particular sections, D2 and 3, E.7, E8 and sections H and I. Sections F2 and 3 informed discussion of the focus of the studies.

Criterion D (WoE D) was used to assign an overall weighting to the study in the context of the systematic review. This overall weighting was calculated from criteria A, B and C. The Review Group decided that WoE criteria C was of the utmost importance as this criterion showed that the focus of the study was, or was not, directly related to the topic of the review. Therefore, it was decided that the overall weighting would be calculated, based on a mode rating with the condition that the overall weight of evidence (D) could not be higher than the weight of evidence rating for C.

For example, if the study was rated high for WoE A and B but rated only medium for WoE C, the overall weighting would be medium. The rationale for this overall grade would be that it deserved only a medium weight because the focus of the study was not of direct relevance to the review and therefore its findings would not be of the first importance when generating findings.

2.3.4 Synthesis of evidence

The synthesis process drew on the data collected in section F2 of the in-depth coding tool. This section captured the 'results of the study'. Individual members of the team took a subset of reports and scrutinised the F2 findings for each drawing on the three key terms that framed the in-depth review question (attitudes, conditions and implementation of policy). The data extracted was then sorted into two kinds: (a) direct quotations from practitioners and (b) analysis and implications drawn by the report authors.

The data collected under the subheading A (direct quotations from practitioners) is tabulated and presented in Appendix 4.1 The data collected under subheading B (analysis and implications drawn by authors) is presented in Appendix 4.2.

The team then met to synthesise these sets of data to generate the findings of the review. Each direct quotation and/or author view was examined and the team sought to regroup the statements in a way that drew attention to the common concerns and themes. In creating these interpretations, the team used the data from the studies and their knowledge of the field to make professional academic judgements.

This process of synthesising data to generate findings was completed in three steps. Taking the one finding, 'National policy is mediated in virtually all local settings…', as an illustrative example, the general process can be represented. This general process was followed to generate all of the findings put forward in this review.

The first step in this three stage process was to organise the direct quotations identified into clusters that illuminated one general theme. In this instance, it was found that a number of quotations talked about national policy in a way that demonstrated that practitioners met with mediated forms in their local institutional setting. That is, it was judged that a number of comments all talked about policy in a way that demonstrated that it was mediated in the local context. (These comments are presented in Appendix 4.1 under the heading 'National policy is mediated…').

The second step of the process was then to examine the themes, analysis and implications drawn by the study authors, and to identify comment that also reflected the emerging theme of mediation. The findings that form the basis for this step are presented in Appendix 4.2. Under the heading 'Analysis of attitudes, conditions and themes,' in Table 4.7, is a record of the particular study themes that were deemed to support the finding.

The final step in the process was to review the quotations, themes and the rough theme to develop a statement that encapsulated all this material and which is presented as the finding.

This three-step process was then repeated until the five findings of the review had been generated.

2.3.5 In-depth review: quality-assurance process

Data extraction and assessment of the weight of evidence brought by the study to address the review question was conducted by pairs of members of the Review Group, working first independently and then comparing their decisions before coming to a consensus. Members of the EPPI-Centre also contributed to quality assurance by applying criteria and keywording studies for a sample of studies.

CHAPTER THREE
Identifying and describing studies: results

This chapter reports the results of the searching, screening and initial coding of the studies, all of which contributed to the production of the systematic map. This map presents an overview of the reports and studies that address the initial question:

> *What do practitioners say about their experiences of implementing national post-16 education policies at the local level?*

The first part of the chapter summarises the steps taken towards the production of the map. This includes the searching and screening stages. Section 3.2 and tables 3.2 to 3.10 present the map findings. This summary of the 62 reports included in the map makes it possible to identify the range of topics, areas and local settings investigated by the researchers in this field.

3.1 Studies included from searching and screening

512 citations were identified predominantly from database searches supplemented by material identified by handsearching. Details of the process screening are summarised in Figure 3.1.

3.2 Characteristics of the included studies (systematic map)

The tables set out below offer a summary of the key themes explored in the 62 reports mapped (tables 3.1 to 3.9).

Tables 3.1 to 3.4 offer a broad summary of the types of report included in the map. These tables demonstrate that the majority of the reports were refereed journal articles. These reports described and analysed the views and actions of practitioners in institutional settings. They relied mainly upon interview methodologies to collect data. This

information is supplemented by Table 3.4 which seeks to identify the main focus of these reports. This table demonstrates that just over half the mapped reports examined the impact of policy on practice.

Tables 3.5 and 3.6 offer a summary of the particular features of the local context investigated by the reports included in the map. The views of a wide range of practitioners in local teaching settings had been collected by these studies (Table 3.5). Approximately, two-thirds of the views collected were from practitioners (tutors) who worked directly with learners and a third of views came from managers. Table 3.6 demonstrates that just over half the practitioners interviewed were based in further education colleges.

Tables 3.7 to 3.9 summarise the aspects of practice and/or policy discussed by the practitioner. These tables demonstrate that a wide range of policies were discussed. Themes and issues that drew the largest numbers of comments included funding, targets and the curriculum (Table 3.7) and initiatives, legislation, top-down and marketisation (Table 3.8). Table 3.9 identifies the aspect of the practitioner's working life raised by the practitioner as part of their discussion of policy implementation. The four most popular themes discussed were their own day to day practice and the problems they encountered, professionalism and professional values, and the culture of their organisation.

Overall, the tables indicate the range and depth of the reports mapped. The tables signal the potential of this collection of articles to address the review question in a meaningful and credible way. That is, the tables demonstrated that a number of reports can be identified that summarise their research in a way that makes it possible to extract information that is highly relevant to addressing the question at the heart of this review.

Figure 3.1 Filtering of papers from searching to map to synthesis

STAGE 1 *Identification of potential studies*	

One-stage screening
papers identified in ways that allow immediate screening, e.g. handsearching

Two-stage screening
Papers identified where there is not immediate screening, e.g. electronic searching

499 citations identified

Title and abstract screening

Citations excluded
TOTAL   323

13 citations identified

176 citations

189 citations

1 duplicate excluded

STAGE 2
Application of exclusion criteria

188 citations identified in total

Acquisition of reports

20 reports not obtained

168 reports obtained

Reports excluded
Criterion 1	29
Criterion 2	4
Criterion 3	2
Criterion 4	5
Criterion 5	9
Criterion 6	0
Criterion 7	41
Criterion 8	0
Criterion 9	2
Criteria 10+11	0
Criterion 12	10
Criterion 13	4
TOTAL	106

Full-document screening

62 reports included

STAGE 3
Characterisation

Systematic map
of 58 studies (in 62 reports)

Studies excluded from in-depth review
Criterion 1	26
Criterion 2	22
TOTAL	48

STAGE 4
Synthesis

In-depth review
of 10 studies (in 14 reports)

Table 3.1
How findings were published
(N = 62, mutually exclusive)

Type of text	Number of reports
Chapter in a book	1
Summary of academic research	1
Article (conference)	11
Article (journal)	40
Report	4
Book	3
Other	2
Total	*62*

Table 3.2
Purpose of the paper
(N = 62, not mutually exclusive)

Purpose	No. of reports
Description	39
Exploration of relationships	27
What works?	13
Methods development	2
Reviewing/synthesising research	9

Table 3.3
Distribution of method used
(N = 62, mutually exclusive)

Method	No. of reports
Cohort study	6
Cross-sectional study	1
Views study	49
Ethnography	3
Case study	2
Document study	1
Total	*62*

Table 3.4
Distribution of focus
(N = 62, not mutually exclusive)

Distribution of focus	No. of reports
Classroom management	2
Curriculum	16
Equal opportunities	2
Organisation and management	16
Policy	34
Teacher careers	12
Teaching and learning	21
Other	13
Coding is based on: authors' description	55
Coding is based on: reviewer's inference	2

Table 3.5
Distribution of practitioner status
(N = 62, not mutually exclusive)

Type of practitioner	No. of reports
Employer	2
External verifiers	1
Lecturer	39
Teacher	25
Tutor	27
Trainer	11
Manager	28
Line manager	12
Principal	15
Head of department	5
Head of section	1
Human resources department	2
Learning support assistant/associate lecturer/associate teacher	5
Mentor	1
Governors	1

Table 3.6
Type of institution where
research was carried out
(N = 62, not mutually exclusive)

Setting (institution type)	No. of reports
Work-based learning providers	1
Further education college	55
Adult and community setting	12
14-19	5
Learning and skills sector (other)	9
TECS	3
Employment and skills	2
Vocational education and training (VET) (VET-training providers)	10
Sixth form	7

Table 3.7
Distribution of policies discussed
(N = 62, not mutually exclusive)

Aspect of policy	No. of reports
Funding	24
Targets	20
Inspection	16
Quality assurance	15
OfSTED	7
SVUK	2
FENTO	1
YTS	1
TVEI	1
Competence	9
NVQ	12
S4L and variants	4
Key skills	4
LSC	5
Curriculum	27
Professional development	2
Managerialism	4
Continuous improvement	1
Accountability	1
Value for money	1
ICT	3
Provision	1
Governance	2
Assessment	1
HE and CPD for teachers	1
Equal opportunities	1
Power	1
APL/Assessment	1
Theory	1

Table 3.8
Distribution of aspects of
policies discussed
(N = 62, not mutually exclusive)

Type of policy	No. of reports
Strategy	17
Initiative	20
White paper	9
Legislation	20
Pay and conditions	12
Top down	22
Impact	18
Process	6
Incorporation	15
Standards	6
Achievement driven	6
Marketisation	21
Participation (widening)	9
Employment skills	7
Lifelong learning	8

Table 3.9
Distribution of practitioner
experiences of policy
implementation
(N = 62, not mutually exclusive)

Categorisation of practitioner experience	No. of reports
Identify problems	35
Identify benefits	14
Express opinions/beliefs	15
Discuss expectations	17
Discuss pressure	25
Discuss autonomy	21
Discuss professionalism	36
Discuss practice	37
Discuss identity	18
Discuss managing	18
Discuss coping	18
Discuss protecting learners	14
Discuss relationship with learner	17
Discuss professional values	32
Discuss work life balance	3
Discuss workload	5
Discuss administration/paperwork - positive	1
Discuss administration/paperwork – negative	4
Discuss relationships with other professionals	20
Discuss organizational culture	28
Discuss ethos of the classroom	10
Interpreting policy	2
Discuss recruitment	1

3.3 Describing studies: quality-assurance results

Preliminary keywording was undertaken by the core Review Group, who coded a sample of 10 studies collaboratively. Any disagreements were discussed and resolved in this initial session. Following this stage, studies were keyworded individually, with a further 10 studies keyworded by two coders to check inter-rated reliability. A further sample of five studies was also coded by EPPI-Centre staff to ensure overall consistency.

3.4 Summary of results of map

The map identified a range of studies that address the broad topic of what practitioners say about implementing policy at the local level.

The studies captured the views of a range of practitioners teaching in local institutions in the post-16 sector; these included principals, senior managers, middle managers and teachers and tutors.

The studies also looked at arrange of contexts: FE colleges, sixth-form colleges, adult and community education settings, and basic skills contexts.

A range of policies affecting these practitioners and institutions were discussed: including skills for life, key skills, policy levers (targets and funding), compliance, GNVQs, 'best practice' and 'neo-liberal management techniques'.

CHAPTER FOUR
In-depth review: results

4.1 Selecting studies for the in-depth review

In order to focus the review for in-depth reviewing, consultation was undertaken with the DCSF, EPPI-Centre, user groups and the steering group. It was agreed that attention should be focused on those reports that captured the voice of the practitioners and their views of policy implementation along with their remarks about the local context of work. It was also agreed that in a fast changing context, preference should be given to studies completed in the last ten years. To meet these criteria, the specific question for in-depth review was identified as follows:

> *What do practitioners in FE colleges say about the conditions, attitudes and implementation of national education policy?*

Further sub-criteria were added to focus the study more tightly on practitioner views:

- Reports that do not contain direct quotes from study participants (practitioners) will be excluded.

- Where the discussion or analysis of quotes does not directly relate to the implementation of national policy in FE colleges the report will be excluded.

4.2 Further details of studies included in the in-depth review

The in-depth review focused on ten studies (represented in 14 reports) that met the in-depth review criteria. These studies were identified from the systematic map, in which there was clear presentation and analysis of practitioners' attitudes and conditions of work relating the subject of national education policy implementation at the local level. These studies were all conducted in England. The practitioners were all working in FE contexts. In two studies, the sample included practitioners from community settings and /or sixth-form colleges in a broader consideration of PCET provision. The studies did not present the finding from each setting separately and therefore all data have been included in the analysis.

All the studies generated data using qualitative research methods. Semi-structured interviews predominated, but these were sometimes supplemented with reflective diaries, group working and observation. Although the theoretical perspectives invoked to make sense of data varied between the studies, they all shared a key feature: they all investigated the attitudes, perceptions, views and beliefs of practitioners about their working context and the implementation of national policy in the local setting.

Tables 4.1 to 4.4 offer a broad overview of the 10 studies (presented in 14 reports) included in the in-depth review. Table 4.1 demonstrates that all these projects drew on the same broad school of research methods; that is, they all used interview techniques of one form or another to collect data. Table 4.2 shows that all of the studies focused on the work of practitioners in Further Education Institutions. It also demonstrates that some of these studies broadened the focus of their research to include other settings such as Sixth Form Colleges and community settings. Table 4.3 demonstrates that over half the practitioners interviewed were tutors working directly with learners. The remainder of the group is managers at various organisational levels. Table 4.4 shows that the topics of funding, targets and quality assurance preoccupied many practitioners. Overall, these tables signal the clear relevance of these studies to the task of answering the review question.

Table 4.1 Distribution of method used in the studies (mutually exclusive)

Method	In-depth studies (N = 10)	Mapped reports (N = 62)
Cohort study	0	6
Cross-sectional study	0	1
Views study	10	49
Ethnography	0	3
Case study	0	2
Document study	0	1
Total	*10*	*62*

Table 4.2 Type of institution where studies were carried out (not mutually exclusive)

Setting (institution type)	In-depth studies (N = 10)	Mapped reports (N = 62)
Work-based learning providers	0	1
Further education college	10	55
Adult and community setting	4	12
14-19	3	5
Learning and skills sector (other)	4	9
TECS	0	3
Employment and skills	1	2
Vocational education and training (VET) (VET-training providers)	3	10
Sixth form	1	7

Table 4.3 Distribution of practitioner status (not mutually exclusive)

Type of practitioner	In-depth studies (N = 10)	Mapped reports (N = 62)
Employer	0	2
External verifiers	0	1
Lecturer	10	39
Teacher	7	25
Tutor	8	27
Trainer	1	11
Manager	8	28
Line manager	5	12
Principal	5	15
Head of department	3	5
Head of section	0	1
Human resources department	0	2
Learning support assistant/associate lecturer/associate teacher	2	5
Mentor	0	1
Governors	0	1

Table 4.4 Distribution of aspects of policies discussed in reports (not mutually exclusive)

Aspect of policy	In-depth studies (N = 10)	Mapped reports (N = 62)
Funding	9	24
Targets	8	20
Inspection	7	16
Quality assurance	7	15
OfSTED	3	7
SVUK	2	2
FENTO	0	1
YTS	0	1
TVEI	0	1
Competence	0	9
NVQ	4	12
S4L and variants	0	4
Key skills	2	4
LSC	3	5
Curriculum	4	27
Professional development	0	2
Managerialism	3	4
Continuous improvement	0	1
Accountability	0	1
Value for money	0	1
ICT	0	3
Provision	1	1
Governance	0	2
Assessment	0	1
HE and CPD for teachers	0	1
Equal opportunities	0	1
Power	1	1
APL/Assessment	0	1
Theory	0	1

4.3 Summary of the studies included in the in-depth review

The following details of each study are listed below:

- research methods
- policies studied ('intervention')
- subjects of the study ('practitioners')
- attitudes of practitioners
- conditions (context of work)
- conclusions drawn that relate directly to the review question

Bathmaker (2005) Hanging in or shaping a future: defining a role for vocationally related learning in a 'knowledge' society

This study was conducted at one FE college with an unspecified number of lecturers from three vocational areas. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, transcribed and then analysed. (pp 86-87)

This paper considered the role of tutors in mediating national qualifications policy (GNVQ) in practice (p 81), in line with the national strategy to widen participation and raise achievement (p 84).

Two responses to the challenge of inclusion and GNVQs were contrasted in the paper. In the one setting, tutors' positive attitude to GNVQs was summed up in view that they were a 'means of keeping open the chance of progressing to university...and future employment' (pp 87-88). Tutors, in this context, felt able to support 'preferred' students. These were learners who were judged able to become motivated and progress to University. These same tutors also felt empowered to remove the 'hangers-in', students who would not sign up to the 'learning pact' (pp 92, 89). In these ways, tutors found ways to actively shape their own pedagogic practice. The strategies used by these tutors to mediate nationally espoused policy suggest a 'pragmatic negotiation of rhetoric and reality' (p 97).

By contrast, in the other teaching contexts, the introduction of GNVQs was seen to have been a loss, a loss of good students and loss of control

over the teaching and learning environment (p 92). These negative attitudes left tutors feeling powerless and 'done to', the learners were predominately seen as 'hangers-in' (p 96).

There were indications in the paper that different attitudes to the same policy could be explained with reference to the opportunities the tutor/ teams had to own the policy in their local setting. Tutors and teams evaluated national policy highly when they were able to, at least, contribute to its implementation so that it enhanced the learner experience and complimented their sense of pedagogic judgement and agency. Conversely, when tutors and teams had unexplained policy imposed upon them, they expressed greater dissatisfaction with that policy.

Bolton and Hyland (2003) Implementing key skills in further education: perceptions and issues

This study was conducted at seven FE colleges in England with advanced GNVQ tutors. Forty one semi-structured interviews were conducted, transcribed and then analysed. (p 19)

Changes in the practice and perceptions of tutors were examined in relation to the policy of promoting key skills and its implementation in PCET settings (p 15). The paper begins with a summary of how policy about 'curriculum, qualifications and assessment' has been framed by 'skills talk' (p 15). Academic concerns about the ambiguity and limitations of skills discourse are noted (pp 17-18).

The main focus of the paper is directed toward examining the 'views and experiences of the lecturers' who have implemented the key skills policy (p 19). Tutors were shown to have made sense of the term key skills in five distinct ways (pp 19-21) and to have understood transferability in the light of these self generated understandings of key skills (pp 21-24). These 'can do' attitudes toward key skills policy were shown to generate pedagogy that promoted good attitudes to work, relevant coping strategies and the setting up of near-work experiences (pp 19-21).

The paper concluded that practitioners 'implicitly acknowledged' the limitations of the skills discourse (p 25). However, the practitioners 'had to make sense of the key skills requirements and implement them in the best interests of learners' (p 25). Practitioners were seen to adopt an attitude of 'reflective pragmatism' when working creatively to make the key skills policy work in their local contexts (p 25).

Briggs (2005) Making a difference: an exploration of leadership roles within sixth form colleges in maintaining ethos within a context of change

The paper drew on a study (Nuffield Report) that had conducted three surveys involving a large

number of colleges (p 105). This was followed up by case studies at five colleges; 50 members of staff were interviewed in each setting and data was then analysed.

The subjects of the report were principals, senior managers and middle managers in sixth-form colleges. They identified the main policy initiatives driving change in their organisation as: incorporation, new systems of funding and accountability and new curricula (pp 227-228).

The response of these practitioners to these drivers of change was shown to be framed by their attitudes toward their own organisation. Key to framing these attitudes was an ethos that put teaching and learning at the heart of the institution. This ethos was understood in terms of an 'absolute cultural value' where a work ethos was to be instilled in learners, the individual student counted and the whole person was to be developed (pp 228, 230).

This set of priorities framed the way policy was implemented. Senior managers saw their role as one of retaining control over financial matters in order to 'liberate middle managers to focus on teaching and learning' (p 229). They saw a significant part of their job to be that of maintaining a 'buffer zone' between finance and strategic concerns, competition mergers and so forth, and the 'core business of teaching and learning' (p 230). There was also a conscious attempt to balance the internal demands of the college, its ethos, with the external demands of policy. For example, the desire to maintain funding levels by the improvement of retention figures was recast into the discourse of achieving positive learning outcomes for all learners (p 232).

Further, the process of driving change seemed to involve a 'culture of teacher professionalism and providing support to staff, rather than extensive systems of monitoring and quality control' (p 232). Maintaining a high focus on learning and teaching summed up the prevalent attitude in these organisations and their approach to implementing policy.

Gleeson (2001) Style and substance in education leadership: further education (FE) as a case in point (ESRC funded project)

Five FE colleges participated in the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with between 20 and 25 practitioners in each institution. Interview data was transcribed and analysed.

The paper examines 'the shifting discourse of leadership as it is experienced by principals and senior managers' as they implemented and mediated a 'changing policy agenda' (p 181). The key terms in the title of the paper 'style' and 'substance' point out the complexity of the policy

implementation process for senior managers as they juggle competing demands with the overall aim of fostering organisational success. The policy context is described as having been dominated by quasi-market ideas and the prioritisation of managerialism, an internalisation of regulation and self discipline (pp 185-186, 192).

The paper suggests the rhetoric or 'style' of colleges is now 'corporate' (p 184). The advantages practitioners associated with this form of rhetoric was its ability to share goals widely (p 185), while promoting 'self critical' improvement (p 185). However, the 'substance' of many senior managers practice did not 'passively accept the corporate line' (p 188). Their attitude to educational reform is that it had to be interpreted. They resisted and felt 'morally uncomfortable with hitting targets' that did not 'conform with educational reasoning and rationale' (p 188). They also saw the importance of mediating policy through building relationships with the staff, 'walking and talking' the college. They were commonly faced with negotiating the 'contradictory education and business ambitions of the organisation' (p 188).

Three significant consequences for those managing these tensions are noted. First, the study warns against either a simple compliance, the overt adoption of managerialism (p.193) or a falling back into the 'myths' of a golden age of FE (p 192). Second, senior managers need to be 'strategic in their thinking of policy practice related issues' (p 193). Finally, the 'unprecedented exodus (and recruitment) of principals, senior managers and lecturers' (p 192) may indicate the long term 'impossibility of the task [see 2]'. (p 194).

Hamilton and Hillier (2006) Changing faces of adult literacy, language and numeracy (ESRC funded project)

Over 2,000 short questionnaires were distributed, nearly 200 oral histories were collected, data was analysed and follow-up interviews were conducted (pp 19, 20, 26).

The text reports the changing faces of adult literacy, language and numeracy (ALLN) practice and provision in a four phase history beginning in the 1970s and ending with present day practice (pp 1-15). Part of this discussion concerns the Skills for Life policy (pp 14-15) and the experience of ALLN practitioners in the PCET sector (pp 59-74). Practitioners are seen to be living with a range of tensions generated by 'different views of their [working] context' and different views of what the goals of provision are, or ought to be (p 73).

The text's drive to contextualise current practice in the history of ALLN practice reveals the sector to be 'steeped in the culture of volunteerism' (p 73). The independence of mind, the sense of agency and the social enterprise associated with this history is recognised, by the text, to be a defining feature of the conditions within which ALLN is delivered (p 73).

However, the careful consideration of changing local environments and policy regimes revealed a complex web of forces operating to empower and/or constrain practitioner judgement and agency at any given moment (pp 73-74). For example, the early volunteer culture meant practitioners could choose 'how much to follow and how much to subvert [policy]', but they were often constrained by funding cuts and forced closures.

The current Skills for Life strategy requires the active deliberative action of practitioners for the policy to be implemented. However, the 'deliberative space' necessary to feedback to government and even 'change government aims' is seen to have been diminished in this latest historical phase. This view of the current situation is summed up in the statement that 'the compliance culture has become more pressing in the Skills for Life era' (p 74).

Ozga and Deem (2000) 'Carrying the burden of transformation: the experiences of women managers in UK higher and further education

An unspecified number of female managers in FE and HE settings were contacted. Selected women, who identified as 'feminist managers', were interviewed and the data was analysed (p 146).

The tension explored in the paper is between the women's feminist values, exemplified in the notions of 'equality and trust' (p 146), and a transformation process guided by a particular management ethos. The working context of these women is understood to be shaped by the principles of 'marketisation and devolution', the 'economic rationalist agenda' (p 141) and the 'economising of education' (p 142). The discussion of the marketisation is succinct, but is supported by references.

These managers are shown to be striving to implement policy in ways that seek to empower their teams by 'encouraging involvement', 'negotiating goals' and establishing 'leadership from within' (p 149). In relation to staff and students these managers prioritise 'equality of opportunity' (p 150).

The women were shown to be faced by the challenge of implementing policy in a management context that was dominated by the 'economic rationalist agenda', while they sought to advance equality and social justice opportunities (p 150). The study identifies that the risk to be continually facing these women was one of moving from a position of managing (high agency) to one of coping (low agency) (p 151). Were this to happen, they might develop a 'state of ambivalence about their work' (p 152) and thereby lose the drive to make good things happen.

Robson et al. (2004) Adding value: investigating the discourse of professionalism adopted by vocational teachers in further education colleges

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 22 respondents drawn from five colleges; data was then analysed (p 183).

This study considered the perceptions of vocational PCET tutors of their professional role in preparing learners for work, in the context of recent curriculum innovation, NVQ (p 183). Discourses of professionalism and professional identity were analysed in terms of references to knowledge, autonomy, responsibility (pp 184-185) and occupational identity (p 187).

The study identified four specific ways in which senses of pedagogic and occupational professionalism manifested themselves in discussions about the implementation of the new curriculum. Tutors spoke of 'adding value', that is, going beyond the curriculum to improve student employability (pp 188-189). Tutors saw themselves as more knowledgeable, more resourceful and more committed than 'the curriculum' (p 189). They spoke of 'protecting the standards in their industry' (p 190). Tutors spoke of sharing expertise (p 191) and bringing students to a deeper understanding of the 'skills' in the context of their vocational area (p 191).

This form of policy implementation was enriched by the practices and attitudes of the vocational tutors. For the learner, topic detail and relevance were enhanced by this additional input. Further, the tutors' concern for the industrial sector gave the would-be employee an understanding of the subject that went beyond the concerns of any one employer (p 193). Tutor commitment brought the policy to life through its contextually informed implementation.

Shain and Gleeson (1999) Under new management: changing conceptions of teacher professionalism and policy in the further education sector

Between 20 and 25 participants, based in five colleges, were interviewed using semi-structured techniques; the collected data was then analysed (pp 446, 449).

This paper investigates the notion of a 'good lecturer' in the context of the ongoing transformations of the PCET sector (pp 445-446). It identifies three distinct ways in which this evaluative marker is currently used. Each of these understandings highlights attitudes and aspects of context that will impact on the frontline policy implementation process.

Resisters are a small group of FE tutors who are extremely critical of new reforms (p 453). They see the good lecturer's pedagogy in terms of 'old public

sector professionalism'. This discourse is often used as a defence against change (pp 453-454) and this attitude stands in the way of implementing policy.

Compliers, by contrast, uncritically embraced 'enterprise culture', prioritised flexibility and found freedom in the business model (p 455). The lecturer's role was sometimes compared with that of the salesman (p 455). This vision of the good lecturer supports 'a technicist and conservative view of FE teaching wherein...flexibility and smart appearance are often valued over independent judgement and skill' (p 455). Here policy risks being implemented in an unthoughtful way.

The primary concern of strategic compliers was that 'students receive a quality education within the constraints of the current system' (p 456). They adopted a strategic view and were able to come up with 'alternative measures within the system, to ensure quality education'; they also remain 'committed to new thinking about learning and IT' and cooperation (p 458). This group's attitude seemed most suited to ensuring the success of policy on the ground as it combined an understanding of pedagogic values, with a willingness to innovate and a determination to make the system work.

The information presented in this section is also presented in tabular form in Appendix 4.2.

Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education Project (2001-2005) (ESRC funded)

This study was presented in two reports and collected data from between 16 and 19 tutors from four colleges.

Gleeson et al. (2005) On the making and taking of professionalism in the further education workplace

This paper argues that recent PCET practice is framed by 'two interconnected policy settlements' (p 449): one, deregulated funding and market reform; and the other, a drive for improvement framed by targets, audit and inspection (p.449) It is argued that practitioners are commonly understood to be caught between these two discourses and, as a result, there is a risk that they are seen to be either 'devils' in need of control (p 449), who resist change and use notions as professionalism in 'self serving' ways (p 457), or as 'dupes' taken in by the new managerialism (pp 449, 457).

By contrast, this paper argues that, in this policy context, a 'new form of professionalism' has emerged that embodies attitudes that recognise the value of being flexible, performance driven and multi-skilled (p 449). Practitioners can feel liberated in these new contexts. Alongside these positive perceptions co-exist more ambiguous attitudes. These negative attitudes stem from

their position in frontline organisations, positions that require them to 'work out' the demands of 'external criteria of performance' and the demands of the local 'ecologies of practice' (pp 455-456). In some circumstances, the accommodations reached can be felt to 'circumvent their room for professional manoeuvre' (p 446).

The effectiveness of policy and its positive reception by practitioners could be enhanced by establishing an 'agreement making' process, between government, professionals and communities, that attended to the voices from the 'ecologies of practice' (p 456). The development of these positive attitudes could be further developed through the development of 'communities of professional practice' (p 455).

James and Gleeson (2007) Professionality in FE learning cultures: improving learning cultures in further education

This paper examines the role of tutors in defining what is educationally desirable in their institutional settings (p173). The paper notes the distinction between 'core and peripheral staff', the latter being typically fractional or temporary staff (p 174).

Tutors' attitudes to their work 'came from a strong commitment to teaching, to fostering student learning and development, to attending to learner's needs, and self-development as a professional' (p 175). In the context of this understanding of professional practice, tutors expressed negative attitudes about the impact of many recent policy initiatives (p 175). These focused mainly on a perceived reduction in autonomy and recognition of expertise as a result of performance management practice (p 175). By contrast, it was noted that 'newly employed' staff had 'a more constrained, contractual relationship with the learners' and appeared to operate without the concerns identified (p 180).

The paper concludes with the suggestion that the improvement of teaching and learning will need to take better advantage of the potential for tutors to exercise self-determination in the interests of the learner (p 182).

The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector (2004-2007) (ESRC funded)

This study is reported in four papers included in the review; it collected data from 24 learning sites.

Coffield and Edward (2007) 'Good', 'best' and 'excellent' practice in post compulsory education and training: time for reason and reality checks!

This study examined the government's 'attempt to reform the [PCET] sector by, in part, focusing on

'good', 'best' and 'uniformly excellent' practice' (p 4). The paper investigated how policy framed by ideas of 'best practice', including the Standards Unit initiatives (pp 5, 6-9) and more recently QIA, LSC discussions, were disseminated and received by practitioners. The practitioners studied were tutors drawn from a range of PCET contexts, predominately colleges.

A key section of the paper considered practitioner responses to the policies promoting best practice and practitioner attitudes toward the notion of good practice (pp 9-15). The paper suggests that the response to Standards Unit materials was, at best, lukewarm (p 11). The ways in which these policies represented best practice were seen to sideline 'the skilled judgement of professionals' (p 5) and neglect situated knowledge (p 7). Further, the form of policy implementation functioned in ways that obscured opportunities 'joint practice development' (p 6). The overall message from the practitioner interviews was that 'good practice' materials may only lead to creative teaching if they are used imaginatively by a tutor who knows the needs of a particular group of learners' (p 12).

The explanation for practitioners' ambiguous attitudes towards these best practice policy initiatives is located in their 'almost unanimous' attitudes to good practice which they defined in terms of 'identifying and responding to the needs of the particular groups of learners' (p 9), building learner confidence and helping them to succeed (p 10). The implication of this research is that these policies failed to address the 'complexity of teaching and learning in specific localities' (p 2). Policies that acknowledged and addressed the situated 'processes of teaching and learning' (p 2) might be expected to enjoy a wider success and endorsement by practitioners.

Coffield et al. (2007) How policy impacts on practice and how practice does not impact on policy

This paper explores how three policy 'levers' (funding, targets and initiatives) impact on the practice of tutors and managers in FE settings (pp 8, 9). The paper explored this impact in relation to the 'ecologies of practice' (p 8) that already operate to furnish practitioners with a range of attitudes toward 'good practice', professional identity, learner centred-ness, effective team working, and so forth. Viewing implementation in relation to these established attitudes and contexts presents policy as that which 'percolates down through the various levels of the system' (p 20). This makes it possible to investigate 'how these levels interact, or fail to interact in the interests of the learners' (p 20).

Funding and targets were seen to be the most powerful 'levers', especially when used in combination (p 9). Practitioners' attitudes toward these 'levers' was first and foremost to recognise

their importance to the institution and their own role within it. For example, 'targets focus the mind a lot...you have an eye on them...endlessly' (p 9). Further, there was a perception that responding to these levers had a negative impact on the process and content of teaching (pp 10, 21): constant change, increased workload and time spent on paperwork not learners (p 21). In relation to initiatives (EMA, ETP and SfL), practitioners recognised the benefits they brought but also worried that these were 'partially offset by the heavy burdens of paperwork' (p 12).

While practitioners expressed concerns about 'the pace of external change' and the 'constraints on their time', they acknowledged that they could 'still exercise professional judgement in how they teach' (p 16). Further, it was recognised that the perceived negative consequences of these conditions could be either magnified or diminished, depending on the local management culture (pp 17-19). The authors raised serious concerns about the ability of the current 'policy levers' to 'harness the knowledge, creativity and energy of staff working in the [PCET] sector' (p 25) for the benefit of learners.

Edward et al. (2007) Endless change in the learning and skills sector: the impact on teaching staff

This paper considers how far practitioners have had to adjust their own practice to accommodate the impact of policy (pp 155-157). The agents for change are understood to be the policy areas of funding, targets, initiatives, 'translated' or mediated by college management (p 156). The rate of change is described as 'constant', 'fast' and 'endless' (pp 170, 166, 155).

The paper draws together a range of attitudes and feelings that tutors express about the changes policy implementation has brought; only four are noted here. Firstly, many tutors had difficulty in identifying 'the source of any particular change' (p 161). This uncertainty could generate 'anxiety' and a sense of 'distance' or disconnectedness from their own futures as practitioners (p 161). Secondly, tutors supported the policy for inclusion and worked hard to implement it; they worried, however, that the policy was underfunded and that learners would suffer as a result (p 163). Thirdly, practitioners reported a 'heightened sense of accountability' which, in combination with other operative pressures, made some of them 'very stressed and weary' (p 165). Fourthly, practitioners saw it as part of their professionalism to comply with bureaucratic demands, but what they were truly enthusiastic about was the impact they could have on the lives of their learners (p 166). Overall, the paper concludes that tutors see themselves 'to be weighed down with constant changes', but simultaneously they are 'shielding their learners from these pressures, albeit at some cost to themselves' (p 170).

Spours et al. (2007) Mediation, translation and local ecologies: understanding the impact of policy levers on FE colleges

This paper considers the views of managers and tutors on the effects of five policy 'levers' (planning, targets, funding, inspection and policy initiatives) on learning and inclusion in FE settings (pp 193, 195). Constraints dictate that only three can be discussed. The crucial role of colleges in mediating or translating policy in the local context is foregrounded (pp 194, 203-208).

Principals' attitudes toward implementing policy were summed by the statement that they felt increasingly 'straightjacketed' within the learning and skills sector (LSS). Of the range of factors identified four are noted here: 'lack of funding stability', 'the highly directive nature of targets' (p 195), lack of real dialogue between LSC and colleges (p 196), and lack of coherence in broad objectives (p 196).

Managers, when discussing funding and targets, recognised the important role targets played in focusing institutional and departmental aims and in generating income (p 197). Criticisms were made of the high 'transaction costs of accountability'. (p.197) Further, concerns were raised about the ways in which targets could encourage the view that 'students are money' (p 197). The discussion of policy initiatives recognised the inclusive benefits of national policy (for example, the introduction of EMA), but there was also a recognition of the local costs of implementing these policies (p 199).

The paper describes the crucial role local organisations play in mediating policy. It is argued that the LSS would function better if policy levers were shaped more at the local level (p 208). It also observed that 'pragmatic devolution appears to produce a variety of management approaches' (p 201).

4.3 Assessments of weights of evidence

The majority of studies were rated high-medium, implying that they fell on the high side of the medium-high divide; studies labelled 'medium-high' fell on the medium side of the medium-high divide. The WoE scores for each study are shown in Table 4.6.

4.4 Synthesis of evidence

4.4.1 Overview

The synthesis process undertaken by the Review Group is described in section 2.3.4. This process generated five main finding statements and these are set out in summary form in section 4.7. The current section strives to make explicit the links

Table 4.6 Weight of Evidence (WoE)

Author/Date	WoE A	WoE B	WoE C	WoE D
Bathmaker (2005)	M	M	H	M-H
Bolton and Hyland (2003)	M	H	H	H-M
Briggs (2005)	M	H	H	H-M
The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector (Coffield and Edward, 2007; Coffield et al. 2007; Edward et al., 2007; Spours et al., 2007)	M	H	H	H-M
Gleeson (2001)	M	H	H	H-M
Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education Project (Gleeson et al., 2005; James and Gleeson, 2007)	M	H	H	H-M
Hamilton and Hillier (2006)	M	H	H	H-M
Ozga and Deem (2000)	L	M	H	M
Robson et al. (2004)	M	H	H	H-M
Shain and Gleeson (1999)	M	H	H	H-M

Note: A = Quality assessment issues; B = Appropriateness of research design analysis to question; C = Relevance to focus of study; D = Overall Weight of Evidence (H = High, H-M = High Medium, M-H = Medium High, M = Medium, L= Low)

between the in-depth reports and the themes and quotations identified and finding statements. This section therefore presents each finding statement; identifies the key terms associated with that statement; and then explores the meaning of these terms, with reference to the in-depth themes and quotations taken from reports. In this way, it is hoped that the link between these terms and the in-depth reports could be made explicit. This analysis of the key terms in the findings statements is supplemented with illustrative examples taken from the in-depth reports. It is also supplemented by Table 4.7, and appendices 4.1 and 4.2. These tables record the link between the in-depth report themes and quotations, and the finding statements. The overall aim of this section is to put before the reader a clear account of the 'evidence' that supports each finding statement.

This section is structured in the following way. First, each finding statement is presented and the key terms framing the statement picked out. Second, these key terms are presented and the link back to the in-depth report stated. The meaning of the key term is then considered with reference to the themes and quotes drawn from the in-depth articles. Finally, Table 4.7 summarises the link between themes and quotations in the in-depth report and the finding statements. (Table 4.7 draws on Appendix 4.1 and Appendix 4.2.)

4.4.2 Finding statements and their analysis to identify key notions

4.4.2.1 Policy mediation

National policy is mediated in virtually all local settings. The form that 'local policy' takes can vary between institutions and between levels within the same institution. Practitioners will commonly meet and implement local policy. There is currently a widespread tendency for policy in its local form to appear in a marketised form.

The term 'marketised' characterises a broad range of management practices that establish what Ozga and Deem (2000) call a 'post-Fordist economising project' (pp 142-143). Such projects set clear educational outcomes, redefine professionalism and reorganise the institution along corporate managerial lines. In these contexts the policy levers of funding, targets and policy initiatives are pre-eminent (Coffield et al., 2007).

This statement is framed by three notions:

• mediation

• local policy

• marketised form

4.2.2.2 Practitioner pragmatism

Practitioners commonly respond pragmatically to local policy, making it work for the benefit of their institution/learners.

This statement is framed by two notions:

• a pragmatic response

• the benefit of the institution/learners

4.2.2.3 Juggling competing discourses

Practitioners faced a key challenge when implementing policy at the local level: balancing the duties placed on them by both marketising and pedagogic discourses. Tutors, in particular, felt that they struggled to make space to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency in a context they perceived to be dominated by marketised discourses.

This statement is framed by three notions:

• balancing marketised and pedagogic duties

• space to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency

• context dominated by marketised discourses

4.2.2.4 Constriction of pedagogic judgement and agency

Practitioners and tutors in particular, identified concerns about their ability to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency. The view was widely expressed that this aspect of practice was the under-exploited resource in local settings. It was perceived that the way in which local policy was articulated operated to constrict the exercise of pedagogic judgement and agency.

The expression 'space to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency' is used firstly to mark the dynamic relationship that exists between the teacher and the learner and/or the institution and the learner. Secondly, the term is used to refer to the ability of the tutor/institution, in a specific context, to respond effectively to the perceived needs of the learner. (This expression draws on the work of Edward and Coffield (2007), Hamilton and Hillier (2006), and Sarason (1990).)

This statement is framed by three notions:

• practitioners' ability to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency

• the under-exploited resource

• local policy articulation

4.2.2.5 Uncertainty and insecurity

Tutors sometimes expressed attitudes of professional and pedagogic insecurity; that is, they were sometimes unsure that they had struck the best balance between pedagogic and marketised priorities. This insecurity could be seen to be stimulated by three factors: the demands for more and more flexibility, a context of policy initiative overload, and a local tendency to devalue pedagogic principles and valorise marketised discourse.

This statement is framed by six notions:

• professional and pedagogic insecurity

• the balance between pedagogic and marketised priorities

• demand for more and more flexibility

• policy initiative overload

• devaluing of pedagogic principles

• valorisation of market principles

4.4.3 Key concepts in the findings statements and their links to the in-depth review articles.

4.4.3.1 'Mediation' and 'local policy'

The idea that national policy is mediated in local settings drew on Shain and Gleeson (1999), The impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector (Coffield et al., 2007; Spours et al., 2007). Shain and Gleeson's invitation to view many practitioners as 'strategic compliers' captures the way in which policy is manipulated by practitioners at various institutional levels. Spours amplifies this sense of national policy undergoing transformation as it moves from one arena to another with his use of the idea of policy 'translation'. The term 'translation' perhaps conjures the image of an uncertain journey, in which original meanings can be lost and unexpected meanings appear and supplant the original. Here the intention behind the original policy statements and its call for action seems threatened by a necessary but unpredictable iterative process.

The term 'local policy' marks the concrete and commonly unambiguous directives that determine large aspects of day-to-day local practice.

The reality of policy mediation is captured in the following practitioner statement: '... we are told basically, 'This is what you are going to do: this is what we suggest you do and your funding depends on it', then is that not what we do?' (Coffield and Edward, 2007, p 13). Here one can imagine how an

original policy intention, for example the intention to improving adult literacy levels in England, has through various levels of translation become, an almost irresistible force directing day-to-day practice in a way that appears to leave little room for individual or collaborative initiative.

4.4.3.2 'Marketised form', 'context dominated by marketised discourses', 'local policy articulation', 'valorisation of market principles' and 'demand for more and more flexibility'

The vast majority of studies considered in this review identified a particular management form to dominate local settings: Bathmaker (2005), Briggs (2005), The impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector (Coffield et al., 2007; Edward et al., 2007)), Gleeson (2001), Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education Project (Gleeson et al., 2005), James and Gleeson (2007), Hamilton and Hillier (2006), Ozga and Deem (2000), Robson et al. (2004), and Shain and Gleeson (1999). This management model was commonly described as 'neo-liberal' or 'marketised'. These marketising discourses picture the institution, its workers and it output in a particular 'technological' way. They also see the relationships that pertain between the parties in this setting in particular instrumental ways. Staff, for example, are encouraged to be flexible in what, who and how they teach (Gleeson, 2001; Gleeson et al., 2005).

One practitioner statement strikingly captures the way of seeing associated with these marketised discourses: '[Sally, senior manager] Eastward College is a corporation; we are the employer and we are totally responsible for our employees in terms of employment legislation...The employer in the past was **** County Council – a body far removed...The college has got a strong identity, although having said that, some people have taken quite a while to adjust to it - some people perhaps won' t ever adjust…It has brought with it...a sort of commercialisation, a sense of reality that we have to win.' (Gleeson, 2001, p 183) This manager, gripped by this neo-liberal picture, sees the academy in business terms and she is likely to hear policy to be speaking of outcomes to be measured in terms of productivity.

4.4.3.3 'A pragmatic response' and 'the benefit of the institution/learners'

Articles by Bathmaker (2005), Bolton and Hyland (2003), Coffield et al. (2007), Gleeson (2001) and Robson et al. (2004) explored the way in which practitioners responded to policy through a reciprocal process of interaction. On the one hand, they adapted themselves and their institutions to policy innovations; on the other hand, they adapted policy to their local settings. In a forceful piece of work, Bolton and Hyland (2003) demonstrate how a policy articulated through

a problematic 'skills' discourse has been made to carry real and positive meanings for learners through the work of tutors. Tellingly, Bolton and Hyland also illustrate just how many different 'translations' can be rung from the same policy statement. Another example of pragmatic response is found in Bathmaker (2005), who considers the response of tutors to the policy of extending inclusivity as actualised through the policy of GNVQs. Bathmaker charts the pragmatic way practitioners strive to make the policy a success.

The ways in which tutors strive to pragmatically implement policy is illuminated in the following: 'We give students an aim to go as high as they can, and we try to give them an incentive to stay in training because it's a difficult industry to stay in…It is about the actual pride in the work, which is a great motivator and that does not appear on the NVQ' (Robson et al., 2004, p 189). The pragmatic response to policy is found in the expressed determination to work with the NVQ framework and supplement it in ways that enhance the learning experience.

The Review Group also found evidence in the in-depth review articles that practitioners, situated at different levels within the organisation, had different understandings of what making policy work for the benefit of the institution and/or the learner, could and should be like. This theme is taken up again under the next heading.

4.4.3.4 Balancing marketised and pedagogic duties' and 'the balance between pedagogic and marketised priorities'

A number of articles considered the role of practitioners as they strived to negotiate the currents of marketising and pedagogic discourse: the impact of policy on learning and inclusion in the new learning and skills sector (Coffield et al., 2007; Gleeson (2001), Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education Project (James and Gleeson, 2007; Ozga and Deem, 2000). The work of Coffield et al. (2007) offers a clear and detailed discussion of how practitioners struggle to meet competing demands, and their analysis of practitioner views shows how tutors struggle to meet the institutional priorities often expressed in marketised terms, while still addressing the pedagogical needs of their learners.

This state of affairs is summed up in the following pithy statement: '[Paul, drop-in centre tutor] It feels to me like the audit process assumes a certain mode of learning, the students turn up and sit in the classrooms, which we simply don't do' (Gleeson et al., 2005, p 454). The tutor here expresses exasperation at the image of student learning that the marketised discourse assumes. One might assume that the tutor is drawing a contrast between this imagined simplicity and the far more complex reality of the drop-in centre and the pedagogic strategies that are actually appropriate

Table 4.7 Synthesis of data/relationship of synthesis to findings

Findings	Source of data synthesised	Reports
National policy is mediated in virtually all local settings	Direct quotations (Appendix 4.1) 3	Briggs (2003), The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector (Coffield and Edward, 2007), Gleeson (2001)
	Analysis of attitudes, conditions and themes (Appendix 4.2) 4	The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector (Coffield and Edward, 2007; Coffield et al., 2007; Spours et al., 2007), Shain and Gleeson (1999)
Practitioners commonly respond pragmatically to local policy making it work for the benefit of their institution/learners	Direct quotes (Appendix 4.1) 6	Bathmaker (2005), The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector (Edward et al. 2007), Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education Project (Gleeson et al. 2005), Hamilton and Hillier (2006), Robson et al. (2004), Shain and Gleeson (1999)
	Analysis of attitudes, conditions and themes (Appendix 4.2) 5	Bathmaker (2005), Bolton and Hyland (2003), The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector (Coffield and Edward, 2007), Gleeson (2001), Robson et al. (2004)
Practitioners faced with balancing the duties placed on them by both marketising and pedagogic discourses	Direct quotes (Appendix 4.1) 5	The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector (Edward et al., 2007; Spours et al., 2007) Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education Project (Gleeson et al., 2005), Ozga and Deem (2000), Shain and Gleeson (1999)
	Analysis of attitudes, conditions and themes (Appendix 4.2) 4	The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector (Coffield et al. 2007), Gleeson (2001), Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education Project (James and Gleeson, 2007), Ozga and Deem (2000)
Concerns expressed about the ability to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency	Direct quotes (Appendix 4.1) 3	The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector (Edward et al., 2007), Gleeson (2001), Shain and Gleeson (1999)
	Analysis of attitudes, conditions and themes (Appendix 4.2) 11	Bathmaker (2005), Briggs (2005), The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector (Coffield and Edward, 2007; Edward et al., 2007), Gleeson (2001), Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education Project (Gleeson et al., 2005; James and Gleeson, 2007); Hamilton and Hillier (2006), Ozga and Deem (2000), Robson et al. (2004), Shain and Gleeson (1999)
Concerns expressed about professional and pedagogic insecurity	Direct quotes (Appendix 4.1) 1	The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector (Edward et al., 2007)
	Analysis of attitudes, conditions and themes (Appendix 4.2) 4	The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector (Coffield et al., 2007; Edward et al., 2007), Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education Project (Gleeson et al., 2005), Hamilton and Hillier (2006)

to this context.

4.4.3.5 'Space to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency', 'practitioners' ability to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency', 'the under-exploited resource', 'professional and pedagogic insecurity' and 'devaluing of pedagogic principles'

The majority of in-depth review articles raised concerns about the ability of practitioners to exercise pedagogic agency: Bathmaker (2005), Briggs (2005), the impact of policy on learning and inclusion in the new learning and skills sector (Coffield et al., 2007; Edward et al., 2007; Gleeson, 2001), Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education Project (Gleeson et al., 2005); Hamilton and Hillier (2006), James and Gleeson (2007), Ozga and Deem (2000), Robson et al. (2004), and Shain and Gleeson (1999). The graphic description by Hamilton and Hillier (2006) of how pedagogic agency has been encouraged or stifled by particular organisations of the working arena, along with their analysis of the potential benefits and drawbacks of these forms, offers a striking example of how tutor initiative can be enabled or constrained by the context within which they must act.

The limited sense of agency found in many contemporary local settings is summed up by the tutor who states: 'We don't know what's happening as tutors; we're nearly always the last to know. And it's not been the programme managers' fault: they don't know either' (Edward et al., 2007, p 161).

In summary, the above remarks seek to capture the way in which the Review Group's discussions of the themes and issues inherent in the in-depth review articles led them to pick out these particular terms and expressions. The link between the finding statements and in-depth article themes and quotations is also captured in Table 4.7.

4.5 In-depth review: quality-assurance results

All the studies in the in-depth review were checked for inclusion by all four members of the core Review Group. Each of the studies was then data-extracted by two members of the team and entered on to REEL, the EPPI-Centre database of educational research. Six studies were also data-extracted by EPPI-Centre staff to ensure consistency across reviews. Any differences were resolved before an agreed version was used in the final synthesis.

4.6 Nature of actual involvement of users in the review and its impact

Feedback from the Policy Steering Group and members of the Local Advisory Group was central to the development of the review question, the inclusion and exclusion criteria, and the focus for the in-depth review. A meeting with the Policy Steering Group was also held as the findings from the review were emerging to ensure that any further useful or relevant issues could be fed into the final report.

4.7 Summary of results of synthesis

The key components identified from the studies included in the in-depth review are as follows:

- National policy is mediated in virtually all local settings.

- Practitioners commonly respond pragmatically to local policy, making it work for the benefit of their institution/learners.

- Practitioners balance the duties placed on them by both marketising and pedagogic discourses which they perceive as competing.

- Practitioners, particularly tutors, identified concerns about their ability to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency to constrict the exercise of pedagogic judgement and agency.

- Tutors sometimes expressed attitudes of professional and pedagogic insecurity.

CHAPTER FIVE

Implications

5.1 Strengths and limitations of this systematic review

A strength of the review is its use of systematic reviewing techniques, based on EPPI-Centre procedures and techniques, which aim to make the processes of systematic reviewing more transparent and objective. A further strength of the review was the collaborative relationships built up over the review process. The strength of the review is its ability to pinpoint a number of issues that deserve further consideration by those seeking to devise policy and administer and/or manage its implementation. The findings of the review are supported by earlier work in the area.

The limitations of the review derive primarily from the breadth and complexity of the concepts that frame the descriptions of local conditions. Four features of fundamental importance to the review, and the definition of its object of study, lacked conceptual clarity.

First, the term 'policy' is recognised in the literature to be a 'loose term used to cover value commitments, strategic objectives operational instruments' (Finlay et al., 2007, p 138). The implication of this broad definition is that it allows a wide range of activities to be legitimately labelled within the term. This means that widely differing studies could legitimately claim to be investigating policy, while the actual focus of the studies could vary widely. Any differences in focus would be crucial to interpreting and evaluating correctly practitioner attitudes and views on conditions and implementation.

These difficulties were further compounded by the ambiguities that resulted from situating the term 'policy' in relation to the terms 'local' and 'national'. While the terms 'local' and 'national' can be used to mark a distinction between central government settings and local settings, the fact that national policy is almost always mediated complicates the idea that national policy is implemented in local setting (Edward et al., 2007; Spours et al., 2007). This observation is directly reflected in the fact that the 'policy' that practitioners meet, implement and talk about is almost always a localised version of the original national policy statement, initiative.

This observation has two consequences for the review. Firstly, it challenges any inclination to draw a simple causal link between national policy statements and practitioners' views and attitudes; this is because the practitioner response will commonly be to the local or mediated version of the policy. Second, it would be unwise to generalise from any one context, unless similar responses were detected across settings; these concerns must be balanced against the fact that the research did find similar comments from practitioners in different contexts.

It must also be noted that some of the studies used terms, such as 'managerialism', 'marketisation', 'neo-liberal management' and 'quasi-market ideas' to describe the administrative context. The wide range of meanings that can be associated with the terms means no simple equivalence can be drawn between the uses. Some studies, however, mitigated this danger by focusing on topics such as targets and funding, which could be understood across the contexts.

The expression 'pedagogic judgement and agency' has been used in the review to mark a collection of comments from practitioners about their role as teachers engaged with learners. The justification in collecting comments and analysis under this heading is the similarity in the claims made: that is, comments about working with, and for, learners. This term deserves further careful consideration

Finally, the PCET field as a whole is under-researched and the community of researchers working in this field is small by comparison with

other education sectors. These facts limited the number of studies available to the review, limited the number of voices that could be heard and, given the widespread preference for critical sociological research methods, limited the forms of research available. Further, given the limited size of this research community, it should be noted the Review Group know some of the study authors. Further, during the period of the review, one member of the Review Group, Gregson, worked closely alongside the TLRP Project, The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector. The four papers produced as part of this study's outputs are included in this review.

5.2 Initial implications

Introduction

This section details the Review Group's interpretation of the findings of the review. In the specific arena of education, perhaps the most effective way to further enhance national policy implementation will be to develop arenas where informed, practice focused interpretations of policy can be made and applied in local contexts. In these settings, the collaborative dialogue between policy-makers and practitioners could promote responsibility and agency, translate policy more effectively into frontline practice, develop pedagogy, and generate feedback for future policy development.

In order to substantiate and add detail to these claims, this section foregrounds the most significant aspects of the review findings, identifies the challenges that lie behind these features, and, finally, presents one practical strategy that could be used to address these challenges effectively.

In this way, the section identifies the implications of the review for understanding the current organisation of policy implementation and local practice. It also suggests lessons which can be taken from the review to guide the future development of policy and its implementation, practice and research.

The section is organised in three parts. Section 5.2.1 identifies three aspects of the review findings that deserve further scrutiny and pinpoints the challenges for policy-makers, policy -implementers and practitioners associated with these aspects; section 5.2.2 presents and scrutinises one practical strategy that could be utilised to address these challenges; and section 5.2.3 identifies research opportunities that could be used to test, in practice, the hypothesis set out in section 5.2.2.

5.2.1 Key features and challenges

In this section, the three most significant features of the review findings - mediation, competing demands and constrained professional and pedagogic agency - are identified and the challenges associated with them explored. The first significant aspect of the review findings is located at the heart of the statement that national policy is mediated in virtually all local settings. The term 'mediation' alludes to the complexity of the policy implementation process and signals an inherent unpredictability or uncertainty associated with this process. The double-edged nature of the term 'mediation' draws attention to this inherent uncertainty. The term alludes both to the mediators who facilitate progress, and finds the common ground, but also to the mediator who thwarts development, subverts discussion and forwards only their own interests. The idea that policy is mediated and that this mediation may be more or less 'successful' is the first issue the review foregrounds.

The challenge that the uncertainty associated with mediation puts before policy-makers and administrators is how best to manage the implementation process so that the original intended outcomes are achieved. The research studies considered in the in-depth review point to the fact that, at present in England, there has been an almost unanimous preference to manage this uncertainty with the levers of targets, funding and quality assurance. The direct and forceful way these mechanisms can function to shape and control the implementation process explains their appeal to administrators and managers.

The second significant aspect of the review findings that deserves careful consideration is located in the statement that claims that practitioners balance the duties placed on them by both marketising and pedagogic discourses. While this finding was seen, in part, to point to the willingness of all practitioners to work hard to implement policy in their local setting, it also focused attention on the frontline tutors' concerns about their ability to satisfy competing demands (Ball, 2003). Bathmaker (2005), for example, discusses the ways in which tutors are forced to balance the competing demands for practice to be both inclusive and to maximise cohort achievement. In such instances, practitioners struggle to balance marketised concerns to maximise recruitment and achievement against pedagogic duties to address student needs with the day-to-day limits on meaningful differentiating practice.

The second aspect of the review that deserves further consideration is the insecurity and possible inertia resulting from tutors being situated in an over-populated discursive field. The risk is that the priorities set by marketised discourses come to dominate and displace pedagogical concerns. The challenge here is to bypass these ambiguous ways of being located and establish the conditions that inspire relevant, creative and effective practitioner responses to unique local conditions.

The third significant aspect of the review findings suggests that practitioners, particularly tutors, identified concerns about their ability to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency, tutors sometimes expressed attitudes of professional and pedagogic insecurity. The final aspect of the finding statement that deserves careful consideration is the tutor perception that their agency is currently constrained and even discouraged.

This claim can be interpreted in at least two ways. Firstly, the suggestion that individual and collective practitioner agency is constrained could be taken at face value and be seen to reinforce the above discussion of evaluation and development. The challenge this aspect of the review sets is that of how to enhance further the practitioners' ability to act in the public good to make policy work in the local context. The second, less flattering way to interpret this claim is to hear it as a statement of 'adversarialism' (Sarason, 1990, p 23). Sarason observes that, in educational contexts where ownership is not taken and responsibility not claimed, the common corollary is to blame others for failure and / or lack of progress. If one takes the statement about a lack of pedagogic agency as evidence of adversarialism, then one would need to look for its cause. Whichever interpretation is preferred, the implication would seem to be the same: to establish a space in which practitioners are empowered to and are willing to take responsibility for teaching and learning, implementing policy and its improvement.

When combined, these three aspects of the review findings - mediation dominated by marketised discourses, practitioners caught between competing demands and a sense of a constrained professional, and pedagogic agency - draw attention to an interesting possibility: the apparent assurance with which current policy-levers are able to manage the uncertainty associated with policy mediation can draw attention away from the detrimental effects these levers have on frontline practice. Paradoxically, the tools currently utilised to implement policy may operate on the ground, in ways that undermine the achievement of the desired outcomes, in so far as they operate in local settings to restrict pedagogic agency.

5.2.2 A practical strategy to address these challenges

This section considers how one might establish the conditions in which tutors are supported to take and share responsibility for local situations, and are active in evaluating and developing their own performance. In such situations, practitioners would be more able to play an active role in engaging with the task of implementing policy and making it work in their local settings. This alternative approach would also need to assure quality and offer some mechanism for controlling the instability inherent in the policy mediation process.

In order to free up professional practitioner agency, in the context of making policy work in local settings, two mechanisms could be adopted. The first mechanism would establish high quality professional development provision within the sector, alongside robust incentives designed to facilitate and promote participation. For this provision to produce the desired outcomes, it will need to bring together current policy priorities, current pedagogic research, and practitioner experience and understanding of local conditions. It will need to explore these interconnected issues and themes in ways that keep the focus on the individual/team practice.

One concrete way to establish such a regime is suggested by the government's current initiative to establish centres of excellence in teacher training (CETTs). In nearly all instances, in this model, universities act as hubs for practitioner development. These centres are distinguished by their three aims: to address policy priorities, to make available to practitioners the resources of the academy, research findings and informed dialogue, and to focus on local practice.

Gregson and Spedding have devised and are currently managing the implementation a project that is framed by these principles: the Sunderland Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training. This project creates spaces in which practitioners, in consultation and collaboration with research and academics, can develop evaluation skills, initiative and professional confidence. At the heart of this process is the collaborative development aims, and the collaborative evaluation of performance and the collaborative setting of further aims. Through shared teaching, shared reviewing, shared innovation development and shared target-setting and management, practitioners work as part of a team to implement policy. In this collaborative arrangement, the impetus for initiative comes from the collaborative response to local conditions. Responsibility for the progress made is shared and the emphasis falls on what is practically possible in a specific local setting.

The second mechanism required will need to manage the uncertainty associated with policy mediation in productive ways. This mechanism will need to ground evaluation and development in practice, encourage genuine ownership and make space for creative tensions and argument but also make space for the determined promotion of the agreed solution (Lindblom, 2000). By threading policy aims into an ongoing collaborative relationship, opportunities will be opened up, with targets mutually agreed, to record progress, evaluate performance and then readjust targets. The collaborative nature of this process would hopefully foster responsibility and initiative. It will also establish a feedback loop capable of supporting timely, adjustments to practice. The foundations for the building of such a relationship could already exist in the relationships that have

been established between practitioners, CETTs and policy administrators. These collaborative forms could be developed to generate the required administrative mechanisms (see Coffield, 2007c).

5.2.3 Research opportunities

Given the above discussion, the Review Group identifies three areas in which further research could profitably be focused. Firstly, further research could be conducted, on both a theoretical and practical level, into the mediation process. Here investigations would focus on how the implications of national policy for particular local settings can and should be collaboratively forged, monitored and adjusted.

Secondly, research could be conducted into the performance of the current CETT initiative to investigate if its model of operation actually works to re-establish a link between evaluation, practice development and local settings. In other words, investigate whether pedagogic agency and professional responsibility can be enhanced by participation in a project that collaboratively reconnects evaluation and development. Such an investigation should also be able to identify facilitating and inhibiting factors.

Finally, research could be conducted into the potential and possible weaknesses associated with establishing the form of policy implementation process embodied in the CETT initiative. In this case, the research would investigate the possibility of establishing responsive target-setting mechanisms that were able to foster evaluation and development between those involved.

The aim of conducting this research would be to ascertain the potential of reconnecting evaluation and development with the individual/team in the policy implementation process. The frontline conditions currently exist, through the CETTs initiative, to test the hypothesis the Review Group have described.

In summary, from a practitioner's point of view, marketised approaches to policy implementation (such as setting targets) have detrimental consequences for the practitioner's sense of pedagogic judgement and agency. Practitioners perceive that this reduction reduces their commitment to, and the possibilities for, using their initiative to deal effectively with the many differences that distinguish policy implementation in any local context. In place of a process framed by top-down targets and micro management they argue for a collaborative approach. This approach aims to harness the communities of people who are knowledgeable about the problem in hand and who are all too conscious of the political, financial and practical limitations and constraints that define the situation. It is these communities of practice that need to work together in an everyday struggle to decide meaning and craft local policy (Fischer and Foster, cited in Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003, p 14). Here the challenge comes not from finally solving problems but from, as a team, facing up to ambiguous, tenacious and practical problems and questions, learning from failure and building on local success.

CHAPTER SIX
References

6.1 Studies included in map and synthesis

Studies marked with an asterisk (*) were included in the in-depth review.

Ainley P, Bailey B (1997) *The business of learning. staff and student experiences of further education in the 1990s*. Herndon: Cassell.

Bailey B, Robson J (2004) Learning Support Workers in Further Education in England: a hidden revolution? *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 28: 373-393.

*Bathmaker A (2005) Hanging in or shaping a future: defining a role for vocationally related learning in a 'knowledge' society. *Journal of Education Policy* 20: 81-100.

Beach I (2003) Improving retention and achievement through independent learning. Paper presented at the *Scottish Educational Research Association Annual Conference*, Perth, November.

*Bolton T, Hyland T (2003) Implementing key skills in further education: perceptions and issues. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 27: 15-26.

*Briggs ARJ (2005) Making a difference: an exploration of leadership roles within sixth form colleges in maintaining ethos within a context of change. *British Educational Research Journal* 31: 223-238.

Brooks R (2005) The construction of 'age difference' and the impact of age-mixing within UK further education colleges. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 26: 55-70.

*Coffield F, Edward S (2007) 'Good', 'best' and 'excellent' practice in post compulsory education and training: time for reason and reality checks! *British Educational Research Journal* (forthcoming).

*Coffield F, Edward S, Finlay I, Hodgson A, Spours K, Steer R, Gregson M (2007b) How policy impacts on practice and how practice does not impact on policy. *British Educational Research Journal* 33: 723-742.

Commons PK (2003) The contribution of inspection, self-assessment, investors in people and the inclusive learning quality initiative to improving quality in further education sector colleges: an initial exploration. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 27: 27-46.

Crawley J (2004) Shrouded in the mists of someone else's vision: teachers using learning technology in post compulsory education. Paper presented at the *British Educational Research Association Annual Conference*, University of Manchester, UK, 16-18 September.

Dickinson R, Chown A (1992) Developing the City and Guilds 7305 competence based curriculum: the Croydon experience. *NASD Journal* 27: 33-40.

Diment K, James D (2003) Gwen (the tutor) is the college: the necessity of a cultural perspective on learning. Paper presented at the *European Conference on Educational Research*, University of Hamburg, 17-20 September.

Dore A (1994) Board failed to curb impetuous principal. *Times Educational Supplement* 4090: 6.

Edward S, Coffield F, Steer R, Gregson M (2005) Coping with endless change: the impact on teaching staff in the learning and skills sector. Paper presented at the *British Educational Research Association Annual Conference*, University of Glamorgan, 14-15 September 2005.

* Edward S, Coffield F, Steer , R, Gregson M (2007) Endless change in the learning and skills sector: the impact on teaching staff. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 59: 155-173.

Finlay I, Finnie C (2002) Values in post-compulsory education: the divide between public statements, private discourse and operational practices. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 26: 149-157.

Finlay I, Hodgson A, Steer R (2006a) Flowers in the desert: the impact of policy on basic skills provision in the workplace. Paper presented the *British Educational Research Association Annual Conference*, Warwick, 6-9 September.

Finlay I, Gregson M, Spours K, Coffield, F (2006b) '*The heart of what we do': policies in teaching, learning and assessment in the new learning and skills sector*. London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Giannakaki MS (2005) Using mixed-methods to examine teachers' attitudes to educational change: the case of the Skills for Life strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills in England. *Educational Research and Evaluation* 11.

Gleeson D (1981) Communality and conservatism in technical education: on the role of the technical teacher in further education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 2: 265-273.

*Gleeson D (2001) Style and substance in education leadership: further education (FE) as a case in point. *Journal of Education Policy* 16: 181-196.

*Gleeson D, Davies J, Wheeler E (2005) On the making and taking of professionalism in the further education workplace. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 26: 445-460.

Gleeson D, Shain F (1999) By appointment: governance, markets and managerialism in further education. *British Educational Research Journal* 25: 545-561.

Graham I (1997) Principals' responses to incorporation and the new funding regime. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 49: 545-562.

Gray DE, Dean GS (1998) Funding maximisation within a further education college: a case study. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 22: 41-48.

*Hamilton M, Hillier Y (2006) *Changing faces of adult literacy, language and numeracy*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.

Hammond M (2001) *A critical analysis of the effects of a market model on the culture of further education and a West Midlands further education college*. www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00001868.htm [10 January 2007]

Hammond M (2001) Key skills: a metamorphosis of failure? Paper presented at the *Learning and Skills Development Agency Conference*, Robinson College, Cambridge, 5-7 December.

Hammond M (2003) Talking each others language: are OfSTED and the LSC really singing from the same hymn sheet? Directions in Educational Research: Postgraduate Perspectives University of Leicester, 23-24 July.

Hodgson A, Steer R, Spours K, Edward S, Coffield F, Finlay I, Gregson M (2005) Learners in the learning and skills sector: the implications of half-right policy assumptions. Paper presented at the *British Educational Research Association Annual Conference*, Glamorgan, 14-15 September.

Hodkinson P, Goodrham M (2004) Professionalism and the English Further Education Practitioner: Continuity and Change. Paper presented at the *British Educational Research Association Annual Conference*, University of Manchester, 16-18 September.

Hyland T (1993) Training, competence and expertise in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Development* 2: 117-122.

Jackson J (2006) Fallout from quality: developing professional practice with trainees in UK post-compulsory education and training. Paper presented at the *36th*

Annual SCUTREA Conference*, Trinity and All Saints College, Leeds, 4-6 July.

James D (2005) Getting better all the time? What can we say about strategies for improvement in teaching and learning? Paper presented at the *Learning and Skills Research Networks for the South West Region Summer Conference*, Dillington House, Ilminster, July.

*James D, Gleeson D (2007) Professionality in FE learning cultures. In: James D, Biesta G (eds) *Improving learning cultures in further education*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Jones C, Duckett I (2004) *Tutorials and target-setting in the effective delivery of vocational A-levels*. London: Learning and Skills Development Agency.

Le Gallais T (2002) Transitions: the journey from chalk and talker to Innovatively Communicating Teacher. Paper presented at the *Annual Conference of the British Educational Research Association*, University of Exeter, England, 12-14 September.

Leader G (2004) Further education middle managers. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* 32: 67-79.

Lines A, Stoney SM (1987) *YTS: the impact on FE*. Windsor, UK: NFER-Nelson.

Littlejohn A, Campbell LM, Tizard J, Smith A (2003) From pilot project to strategic development: scaling up staff support in the use of ICT for teaching and learning. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 27: 47-52.

Lucas N, Loo S, McDonald J (2005) Combining 'subject knowledge' with 'how to teach': an exploratory study of new initial teacher education for teachers of adult literacy, numeracy and English for Speakers of other Languages. *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 24: 337-350.

Lumby J (2002) The management of sixth form colleges: implications for leadership. Paper presented at the *Annual Conference of the British Educational Research Association*, University of Exeter, England, 12-14 September.

Mackay F, Etienne J (2006) Black managers in further education: career hopes and hesitations. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* 34: 9-28.

McCrystal P, McAleavy G (1995) Managing the implementation of a collaborative competence based teacher education course in further education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 19: 84-93.

McKenzie P, Mitchell P, Oliver P (eds) (1995) *Competence and accountability in education*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

McTavish D (2006) Further education management strategy and policy: institutional and public management dimensions. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* 34: 411-428.

Moreland N, Dhillon J (1996) Participants' experience of a competence-based professional development programme: a case study. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 48: 367-384.

*Ozga J, Deem R (2000) Carrying the burden of transformation: the experiences of women managers in

UK higher and further education. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 21(2): 141-153.

Parsons D, Berry-Lound D (2004) *Qualifications of staff in LSC-funded provision*. Research Report_RR590. Nottingham, Department for Education and Skills.

Preston D, Smith A (1993) APL: the relationship between rhetoric and reality. *Management Education and Development* 24: 395-405.

Preston J, Hammond C (2003) practitioner views on the wider benefits of further education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 27: 211-222.

Pye J (2003) SOLT: Supporting Online Learning and Teaching in Europe. Paper presented at the *European Conference on Educational Research*, University of Hamburg, 17-20 September.

*Robson J, Bailey B, Larkin S (2004) Adding value: investigating the discourse of professionalism adopted by vocational teachers in further education colleges. *Journal of Education and Work* 17: 183-195.

Saunders M, Helsby G (1993) Evaluating the influence and legacy of TVEI: an overview. *Evaluation and Research in Education* 7: 45-115.

*Shain F, Gleeson D (1999) Under new management: changing conceptions of teacher professionalism and policy in the further education sector. *Journal of Education Policy* 14: 445-462.

*Spours K, Coffield F, Gregson M (2007) Mediation, translation and local ecologies: understanding the impact of policy levers on FE colleges. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 59: 193-211.

Steer R, Spours K, Hodgson A, Finlay I, Coffield F, Edward S, Gregson M (2006) 'Modernisation' and the role of policy levers in the learning and skills sector. Paper presented the *British Educational Research Association Annual Conference*, Warwick, 6-9 September.

Twining J (1992) *Vocational education and training in the United Kingdom*. Berlin: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

Walker J (1990) A point to the people: teachers, policies and unemployment. *Studies in the Education of Adults* 22: 167-180.

Wallace S (2002) No good surprises: intending lecturers' preconceptions and initial experiences of further education. *British Educational Research Journal* 28: 79-93.

Williams S (2003) Conflict in the colleges: industrial relations in further education since incorporation. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 27: 307-315.

6.2 Other references used in the text of the technical report

Ball S (2003) The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education and Policy* 18: 215-228.

Ball S (2004) Performativities and fabrications in the education economy: towards the performative society.

In: *The Routledge Falmer Reader in Sociology of Education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer, pages 143-155.

Beck J, Young M (2005) The assault on the professions and the restructuring of academic and professional identities: a Bernsteinian analysis. *British Journal of the Sociology of Education* 26: 183-197.

Bernstein B (1996) *Pedagogy, identity and social control*. London, Rowman and Littlefield.

Black P, Wiliam D (2002) *Working inside the black box: assessment for learning in the classroom*. London: King's College.

Bloomer M, Hodkinson P, Billett S (2004) The significance of ontogeny and habitus in constructing theories of learning. *Studies in Continuing Education* 26: 19-44.

Clegg S, Bradley S (2006) Models of professional development planning. *British Education Research Journal* 32: 56-76.

Coffield F (1999) Breaking the consensus: lifelong learning as social control. *British Education Research Journal* 25: 479-499.

Coffield F (2002) Britain's continuing failure to train: the birth of a new policy. *Journal of Education Policy* 17: 483-497.

Coffield F (2004) Alternative routes out of the low skills equilibrium: a rejoinder to Lloyd and Payne. *Journal of Education Policy* 19: 733-740.

Coffield F, S Edward (2007c) How policy impacts on practice and how practice does not impact on policy. *British Education Research Journal* (forthcoming).

Coles A (2004) Post-compulsory education and training: an historical perspective. In: Coles A (Ed.) *Teaching in Post-compulsory Education*. London: David Fulton, pages 3-19.

Daniels H (2001) *Vygotsky and pedagogy*. London: Routledge.

Edward S, Coffield F (2007) Policy and practice in the learning and skills sector: setting the scene. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 59: 121-135.

EPPI-Centre (2002a) *Core keywording strategy: data collection for a register of educational research (version 0.9.7)*. London, EPPI-Centre, Social Sciences Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

EPPI-Centre (2002b) *EPPI-reviewer (version 0.9.7)*. London, EPPI-Centre, Social Sciences Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

EPPI-Centre (2002c) *Guidelines for extracting data and quality assessing primary studies in educational research (version 0.9.7)*. London, EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

Fenwick T (2005) The audacity of hope: towards poorer pedagogies. Keynote paper, *Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning Conference*, June.

Finlay I, Spours K, Steer R, Coffield F, Gregson M, Hodgson A, Edward S (2007) 'The heart of what we

do': policies on teaching, learning and assessment in the learning and skills sector. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 59: 137-153.

Hajer M, Wagenaar H (2003) *Deliberative policy analysis: understanding government in the network society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hodkinson P (2005) Learning as cultural and relational: moving past some troubling dualisms. *Cambridge Journal of Education* 35: 107-119.

Illeris K (2003) Adult education as experienced by the learners. *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 22: 13-23.

Keep E (2006) State control of the English education and training system: playing with the biggest train set in the world. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 58: 47-64.

Kennedy H (1997) *Learning works: widening participation in further education*. Coventry: FEFC.

Lindblom CE (2000) *Inquiry and change: troubled attempt to understand and shape society*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Morais A, Neves I (2001) Pedagogic social contexts: studies for a sociology of learning. In: Morais A, Neves I, Davis B, Daniels H (eds) *Towards a sociology of pedagogy: the contribution of Basil Bernstein to research*. New York: Peter Lang.

Robertson I (2004) Metaphor, online technology and recontextualisation in teaching. Paper presented at *The Heart of the Matter, 7th Annual VET Research Association Conference*, Rydages Eagle Hawk Resort, Canberra, 17-19 March.

Sahlberg P (2007) Education policies for raising student learning: the Finnish approach. *Journal of Education Policy* 22: 147-171.

Sarason SB (1990) *The predictable failure of educational reform: can we change course before it's too late?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Scott JC (1999) *Seeing like a state: how certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. London: Yale University Press.

Teese R, Polesel J (2003a) Durkheim, Vygotsky and the curriculum of the future. *London Review of Education* 1: 110-117.

Teese R, Polesel J (2003b) *Undemocratic schooling: equity and quality in mass secondary education in Australia*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Wheelahan L (2005) The pedagogic device: the relevance of Bernstein's analysis for VET. Paper presented at the *13th International Conference on Post-compulsory Education and Training*, Gold Coast, Australia, 4-7 December.

Appendix 1.1: Advisory Group membership

Andy Convery, Senior Lecturer (PCET), University of Sunderland

Graeme Blench, Senior Lecturer (PCET), University of Sunderland

Sarah Rennie, Senior Lecturer Education, University of Sunderland

Judith Doyle, Head of School (Education and Development), Gateshead College

Dionne Ross, Assistant Programme Leader (Basic Skills), South Tyneside College

Sally Jane Brown, Principal Lecturer, Tameside College

Appendix 2.1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria

1. Participants must be teachers and/or managers in further, adult and community education.

2. The research study must examine or summarise the human experience of implementing post-16 policy at the local level.

3. The research must examine phenomena of policy implementation at the local level.

4. The research must be examining state funded further education, and/or adult and/or community education.

5. The research must be examining the experience of teachers and managers working in the further, adult and community education setting.

6. It must be research about the UK.

7. It must be published between 1976 and 2006.

8. The research paper will contain empirical data, including ethnographic accounts, case studies, surveys and/or interview data or the summary of interview data.

9. Articles will be in English only.

Exclusion criteria

1. Participants must not be teachers and/or managers in primary or secondary education.

2. The research study must not examine or summarise the human experience of formulating policy.

3. The research must not be examining privately funded further education/training, and/or adult and/or community education.

4. The research must not be examining the experience of teachers and managers working solely in the primary, secondary or higher education setting.

5. It must not be research about anywhere outside the UK.

6. It must not have been published before 1976.

7. The research paper will not contain any articles that are solely opinion pieces (i.e. newspaper editorials).

8. Articles will not be in any language other than English.

9. The research paper must not be solely about higher education.

10. The research paper must not be about work-based learning.

11. The research paper must not be about prison education.

12. The research paper must not contain articles that make no reference to practitioner experiences.

13. The research paper must not contain articles that make no reference to policy and its implementation.

In-depth inclusion/exclusion criteria

Criterion 1: Reports that do not contain direct quotes from study participants (practitioners) will be excluded.

Criterion 2: Where the discussion or analysis of quotes does not directly relate to the review question, the report will be excluded.

Appendix 2.2: Search strategy for electronic databases

Search terms used to search the data bases included the following:

TOPS OR YOPS OR KEY SKILL? OR SKILL? WITH(3) LIFE OR COMPETENCE OR TVEI OR YTS OR QUALITY WITH(3) ASSURANCE OR INSPECTION? OR TARGET? OR FUND? AND TRAINING OR VOCATION? WITH(3) EDUCATION OR LEARNING WITH(3) SKILL? OR COMMUNITY EDUCATION OR ADULT EDUCATION OR FURTHER EDUCATION AND HEAD WITH(2) DEPARTMENT OR PRINCIPAL? OR LINE WITH(3) MANAGER? OR MANAGER? OR TRAINER? OR LECTURER? OR TEACHER? OR TUTOR?

Searches were completed in November 2006.

British Education Index

http://www.leeds.ac.uk/bei

The British Education Index (BEI) is designed to aid the identification of appropriate literature by people investigating aspects of education or training. The Index provides details about the contents of various literature sources: over 300 education and training journals published in the British Isles, similar report and conference literature, and texts in the Education-line collection.

EBSCO

http://www.ebsco.com

EBSCO provides a single, comprehensive online list of titles. Users can locate and link to journals of interest. Users can search for journals by keyword or browse an alphabetical list by title or subject. The master A-to-Z title database provides link and coverage information to more than 100,000 unique titles from nearly 1,000 database and e-journal packages from approximately 200 different providers.

ERIC

http://www.eric.ed.gov

ERIC provides free access to more than 1.2 million bibliographic records of journal articles and other education-related materials and, if available, includes links to full text. ERIC is sponsored by the US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences (IES).

APPENDIX 2.3   EPPI-Centre keyword sheet, including review-specific keywords

V0.9.7   *Bibliographic details and/or unique identifier*

A1. Identification of report
Citation
Contact
Handsearch
Unknown
Electronic database (please specify)
....

A2. Status
Published
In press
Unpublished

A3. Linked reports
Is this report linked to one or more other reports in
such a way that they also report the same study?
Not linked
Linked (please provide bibliographical details and/or
unique identifier)
....
....
....
....

A4. Language (please specify)
....
....

A5. In which country/countries was the
study carried out? (please specify)
....
....

A6. What is/are the topic focus/foci of the
study?
Assessment
Classroom management
Curriculum*
Equal opportunities
Methodology
Organisation and management
Policy
Teacher careers
Teaching and learning
Other (please specify) ....

A7. Curriculum
Art
Business studies
Citizenship
Cross-curricular
Design and technology
Environment
General
Geography
Hidden
History
ICT
Literacy – first language
Literacy further languages
Literature
Mathematics
Music
PSE
Physical education
Religious education
Science
Vocational
Other (please specify) ....

A8. Programme name (please specify)
....
....

A9. What is/are the population focus/foci
of the study?
Learners
Senior management
Teaching staff
Non-teaching staff
Other education practitioners
Government
Local education authority officers
Parents
Governors
Other (please specify) ....

A10. Age of learners (years)
0-4
5-10
11-16
17-20
21 and over

A11. Sex of learners
Female only
Male only
Mixed sex ....

A12. What is/are the educational setting(s)
of the study?
Community centre
Correctional institution
Government department
Higher education institution
Home
Independent school
Local education authority
Nursery school
Post-compulsory education institution
Primary school
Pupil referral unit
Residential school
Secondary school
Special needs school
Workplace
Other educational setting (please specify)

A13. Which type(s) of study does this
report describe?
A. Description
B. Exploration of relationships
C. Evaluation
   a. naturally-occurring
   b. researcher-manipulated
D. Development of methodology
E. Review
   a. Systematic review
   b. Other review

Review-specific keywords

A.1 Type of Text

A.1.1 Review
A.1.2. Summary of academic research.
A.1.3 Report
A.1.4. Article (conference)
A.1.5. Article (Journal)

A.2 Type of policy

A.2.1 Strategy
A.2.2 Initiative
A.2.3 White paper
A.2.4 Legislation
A.2.5 Pay and conditions
A.2.6 National
A.2.7 Regional
A.2.8 Local
A.2.9 Top down
A.2.10 Impact
A.2.11 Process
A.2.12 Incorporation
A.2.13 Standards
A.2.14 Achievement driven
A.2.15 Marketisation
A.2.15 participation (widening)
A.2.16 Employment skills
A.2.17 lifelong learning

A.3 Practitioner employment status

A.3.1 Full time
A.3.2 Part time
A.3.3. Casualised
A.3.4. Other/Not specified

A.4 Type of Practitioner

A.4.1 Lecturer
A.4.2 Teacher
A.4.3 Tutor
A.4.4 Trainer
A.4.5 Manager
A.4.6 Line Manager
A.4.7 Principal
A.4.8 Head of Dept.
A.4.9 Head of Sect.
A.4.10 Not specified
A.4.11 Learning support assistant/associate lecturer/associate teacher
A.4.12 Mentor
A.4.13 Human resources department

A.5 Aspect of policy discussed

A.5.1 Funding
A.5.2 Targets
A.5.3 Inspection
A.5.4 Quality assure.
A.5.5 Ofsted
A.5.6 SVUK
A.5.7 FENTO
A.5.8 YTS
A.5.9 TVEI
A.5.10 Competence
A.5.11 Qualifications
A.5.12 S4L and variants
A.5.13 Key skills
A.5.14 Yops
A.5.15 Tops
A.5.16 LSC
A5.17 Curriculum

A.6 Categorisation of practitioner experience of policy implementation (broad categories)

A.6.1 Identify problems
A.6.2 Identify benefits
A.6.3 Express opinions/beliefs
A.6.4 Discuss expectations
A.6.5 Discuss pressure
A.6.6 Discuss autonomy
A.6.7 Discuss professionalism
A.6.8 Discuss practice
A.6.9 Discuss Identity
A.6.10 Discuss managing
A.6.11 Discuss coping
A.6.12 Discuss protecting learners
A.6.13 Discuss relationship with learner
A.6.14 Discuss professional values
A.6.15 Discuss work life balance
A.6.16 Discuss work load
A.6.17 Discuss administration/paperwork - positive
A.6.18 Discuss administration/paperwork – positive
A.6.19 discuss relationships with other professionals
A.6.20 discuss organizational culture
A.6.21 discuss ethos of the classroom

A.7 Setting (institution type)

A.7.1. Sixth form
A.7.2. Further Education College
A.7.3. Adult and Community setting
A.7.4. 14-19
A.7.5. Learning and Skills sector (other)
A.9.6. TECS
A.9.7. Employment and skills
A.9.8. Vocational education and training (vet) (Training providers)

Appendix 4.1: Direct quotes from practitioners grouped around the review finding headings

National policy is mediated in virtually all local settings. The form that 'local policy' takes can vary between institutions and between levels within the same institution. Practitioners will commonly meet and implement local policy. There is currently a widespread tendency for policy in its local form to appear in a marketised form.

(B2M3/5) 'I suppose a year of consolidation would be nice, but it's not likely to happen. ...If we are told basically, 'This is what you are going to do: this is what we suggest you do and your funding depends on it', then is that not what we do?' (the impact of policy on learning and inclusion in the new learning and skills sector: Coffield and Edward, 2007, p 13)

(Sally, senior manager) 'Eastward College is a corporation; we are the employer and we are totally responsible for our employees in terms of employment legislation... The employer in the past was **** County Council, a body far removed...The college has got a strong identity, although, having said that, some people have taken quite a while to adjust to it. Some people perhaps won't ever adjust – and it has brought with it...a sort of commercialisation, a sense of reality that we have to win.' (Gleeson, 2001, p 183)

((C2M1/2) (senior manager)) 'I don't care about the staff, to be honest. If they want to leave, I'll get more' (The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector: Coffield and Edward, 2007, p 14)

(Head of Department, Sixth Form College) 'Heads of faculty and subject are pretty well insulated from financial running, but we know the general direction.' (Briggs, 2003, p 230)

(Principal) 'Funding methodologies and all that goes with it - that's my job.' (Briggs, 2003, p 230)

(Principal) '[The funding methodology] is extremely complex and extremely difficult to follow. I honestly start to wonder if any non-numerate person could exist as a principal now.' (Briggs, 2003, p 230)

Practitioners commonly respond pragmatically to local policy, making it work for the benefit of their institution/learners.

(Harvey: lecturer, Oldhill College) 'If you are a teacher, part of being a teacher means you have to be flexible and you have got to respond to your pupil/student demands. You have got to be student led, haven't you? I do think incorporation has brought some good things, such as being more customer-led: you do what the student wants. In the past, the student had to sit there and take what you as a college were prepared to do for them. I think it has given far more flexibility, particularly to adults wanting to go into higher education.' (Shain and Gleeson, 1999, p 450)

(Louise, IT section leader): 'I think one thing that I've found is that we do a lot more prodding of students than we used to. We're continually on their backs, saying, 'Have you done this?' or 'Have you done that?'... in some ways it was easier to actually deliver a project, than to check that they're finding these things out themselves. There's a lot more work involved and it turns you into a different type of person, because you're just chasing people really instead of actually feeling like you're delivering a product.' (Bathmaker, 2005, p 93)

(Tutor) 'We give students an aim to go as high as they can, and we try to give them an incentive to stay in training because it's a difficult industry to stay in ... it is about the actual pride in the work, which is a great motivator and that does not appear on the NVQ.' (Robson et al., 2004, p 189)

(Rachel) 'The joys are of course the students that you can see you've, or feel you've made a difference with, the ones that have really come one. You know their confidence builds and so on.' (Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education Project : Gleeson et al., 2005, p 452)

(S4L tutor) 'It's political and it's a social conscience. I think a lot of people who go into this work [skills for life] are like that. Not everybody of course. For some people, it's a job: it's teaching and that's all right, isn't it? But I think there are a lot of people who have quite a heightened social conscience.' (Hamilton and Hillier, 2006, p 62)

(Julia, Business Studies lecturer) 'If I'm not here, then Tony will help them with my assignment and vice versa. If you don't get along with one of the members of staff, then there's another member of staff who's willing to help you with the work.' (Bathmaker, 2005, p 92)

(Chrissie, Science lecturer) 'I suppose it is tiring but the door never closes and the students always know that they can come. I'm always and I think we all are, always willing to give as long as they're willing to receive. They are a very pleasant receptive lot [the students]. It doesn't matter if they don't understand and I think we've probably all got the same ethos: we just give our time to the students.' (Bathmaker, 2005, p 92)

(IM1/2) 'I know a lot of the tutors are really worried, because they have learners in their class who will be moving. ... I think the impact could be quite profound. ... A lot of these people ... have taken a huge leap to come to learn, and [the fact] that it is going to change again will rock many people, I'm sure. And I know that is what gives a lot of my tutors real problems, real problems [uncomfortable about the change and loss of flexibility], conscience problems, because we don't want to make it unstable.' (The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector: Edward et al., 2007, p 162)

Practitioners faced a key challenge when implementing policy at the local level. This was balancing the duties placed on them by both marketising and pedagogic discourses. Tutors, in particular, felt that they struggled to make space to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency in a context they perceived to be dominated by marketised discourses.

(Rachel) 'I think as I get more into it [the job] I find it more and more difficult...To think of apportioning your time between what you think you're here for and what you actually end up doing.' (Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education Project : Gleeson et al., 2005, p 452)

(Ingrid: lecturer, Oldhill College) 'We have all been very stressed; really it has been incredible the amount of stress we have been under. I have personally felt very stressed because I have had twice the number of second year groups I should have. The way the course works is that each student produces sixty five pieces of course work over the two years and these pieces of course work have to be marked, so each group has a tutor who marks their work...It was muttered that there would be help with the marking, but help with the marking never appeared and a replacement tutor also never appeared, so I have ended up with two groups. With everything else that has gone on, again it is something you don't really feel you can make too much of a fuss about, because they might decide to get rid of you altogether.' (Shain and Gleeson, 1999, p 451)

(Wendy: lecturer, Northway College) 'Even though people in my team and in [my department], are safe...you don't just think to yourself - well I am all right; phew, I am all right? I don't have to worry. You don' t actually think like that; you know that it could easily have been you and it does have the effect that the next time a memo comes asking you to do something you make damn sure you do it by the deadline, if not before. It is not a very nice atmosphere.' (Shain and Gleeson, 1999, pp 451-452)

(Centre director, FE) 'At some point, my principles and integrity will be stretched too far. Once you enter anything, you feel competitive within it, but I wouldn't want to be a principal for very long. At the moment, it's one of the most destructive posts you could take, implementing untenable policies on people already stretched too far.' (Ozga and Deem, 2000, p 147)

(D2M2/4) 'I've never seen a college like it, in terms of the amount of data I get every week to evaluate. For example, because we've got electronic registers, we get electronic register reports every week.' (The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector: Spours et al., 2007, 197)

(Centre director, FE) 'You never seem to have enough time in the day. I regularly take work home in the evenings because I like to be up to date, to start each day fresh without anything hanging over me. Men get away with being a hell of a lot lazier...they seem to have drifted there. (Ozga and Deem, 2000, p 148)

(ZA05) 'You either disadvantage the groups of students by mucking up their timetable to respond to the employer over there, or you can't provide what the employer wants, so immediately becoming nonresponsive.' (The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the

New Learning and Skills Sector: Spours et al., 2007, p 200)

(Paul, drop-in centre tutor) 'It feels to me like the audit process assumes a certain mode of learning, the students turn up and sit in the classrooms, which we simply don't do.' (Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education Project: Gleeson et al., 2005, p 454)

(FT1/2) 'The Entry Level students seem to have taken a back seat with the target-driven thing and the contractual issues'. (The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector: Edward et al., 2007, p 167)

(GT1/2) 'And I think it is a danger, because then you are seen as successful, because you have got 300 people through the tests [at Level 1 or 2], but in actual fact what might be more of an achievement is getting five people from Entry [Level] 1 to Entry 2.' (The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector: Edward et al., 2007, p 167)

Practitioners, particularly tutors, identified concerns about their ability to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency. The view was widely expressed that this aspect of practice was the under exploited resource in local settings. It was perceived that the way in which local policy was articulated operated to constrict the exercise of pedagogic judgement and agency.

(Gina, senior manager) 'I went though a stage last year where I felt like a police lady, policing people. [I was saying] 'You can't do that. You have to use a corporate image' and 'I don't like that at all, but...' Having developed a good corporate style, then I couldn't allow people in a way to do their own thing and so it has to be controlled, but in a nice way. I don't like controlling people; you get the best out of people by letting them all do their own thing, but then you can get chaos and, when you are dealing with the public, you obviously have got to instil in staff that there are rules to this.' (Gleeson, 2001, p 186)

(Monica: Manager, Westgate College) 'This college has had to wake up. It has had to realise that nobody will bail it out if it goes under. It has had to develop a professional air which in some areas [the lecturers] still don't have. They still have the view that, 'I'm the teacher and the student must put up with it'. In the main, there is a growing feeling of professionalism. Now we are front of house. We look as smart as we can. We attempt to be as professional to our public as we can; we have a frontage...We have set up a new personnel office and new finance office, whereas we relied on the LEA before.' (Shain and Gleeson, 1999, p 450)

(GT1/1)(S4L tutor ?) 'I hate this new diagnostic tool...because it reduces things and it is saying 'If you can prove that they did this time, then they have achieved that aim.' But you know that the reality for a lot of these students is that they can do it one day, but...you need loads and loads of over-learning for them to sustain those bits.' (The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector: Edward et al., 2007, p 167)

Tutors sometimes expressed attitudes of professional and pedagogic insecurity. That is, they were sometimes unsure that they had struck the best balance between pedagogic and marketised priorities. This insecurity could be seen to be stimulated by three factors: the demands for more and more flexibility, a context of policy initiative overload and a local tendency to devalue pedagogic principles and valorise marketised discourse.

(D2T1/2) 'The management will tell you that...it comes from outside, because the government wants us to do things this way and the funding this way. So you don't know who to blame for the changes...' (The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector: Edward et al., 2007, p 161)

(D2T2/1)I suppose it's another change. There seem to be many, many changes in FE, many, many changes in names ... I see this primarily as a funding body, and so they call the shots.' (The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector: Edward et al., 2007, p 161)

(JM1/4) 'We don't know why decisions have been made. It's just very, very isolated.' (The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector: Edward et al., 2007, p 161)

(JT2/4) 'We don't know what's happening as tutors. We're nearly always the last to know. And it's not been the programme managers' fault; they don't know either.' (The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector: Edward et al., 2007, p 161)

APPENDIX 4.2   Analysis and implications drawn by in-depth report authors

Study	WoE	Summary of the reports' analysis of local attitudes and conditions as they relate to policy implementation	Themes and implications discussed by the report author(s)
Bathmaker (2005)	M-H	Practitioners express a pragmatic attitude to negotiating the rhetoric and reality of policy implementation (p 97). Distinct attitudes found toward the same policy. Indications found that the creation of local space where practitioners could exercise both individual and team pedagogic judgement and agency played a key role in generating the positive, can do, attitudes (pp 87-89). Local management of policy implementation could stand in the way of exercising this pedagogic judgement and agency (p92).	A sense of pedagogic judgement and agency make an important contribution to the effective implementation of policy (pp87-89). Forms of policy mediation at the local management level could adversely effect the tutor's abilities to exercise this agency (p 92).
Bolton and Hyland (2003)	H-M	Practitioners adopted an attitude of 'reflective pragmatism' to implement curriculum policy (p 25). They sought to implement policy in ways that operated in the best interests of their learners (p 25).	The ways in which tutors took policy and implemented it, in ways sensitive to the local setting, worked to enrich the student's experience of the curriculum (p 25).
Briggs (2005)	H-M	Principals and senior managers in sixth-form colleges were shown to maintain a high focus on learning and teaching. This priority shaped both their attitude to policy implementation and the organisation of staff roles and responsibilities (pp 228, 230).	Significant senior management energy was expended on maintaining space for pedagogic judgement and agency for middle managers and tutors (pp 230,232).
The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector: Coffield and Edward (2007)	H-M	Lecturers and tutors expressed an almost unanimous attitude that learners were their top priority (p 9). Attitudes toward policies that promoted best practice were ambiguous due to concerns that all too often these policies neglected the complexity of teaching and learning in specific localities(pp 9-15).	Policies that acknowledged and addressed the situated processes of teaching and learning could be expected to enjoy a wider success and endorsement by practitioners (p 2).
The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector: Coffield et al. (2007)	H-M	Policy is described as percolating down through the various levels of the system (p 20). Lecturers' and tutors' attitudes to the 'local policy' was split between recognising the importance of clear goals (p 9) and a sense that they suffered from an administrative burden that came between them and the learner(pp 10, 21).	There was a concern that forms of policy implementation (best practice) commonly failed to harness the knowledge, creativity and energy of staff working in the PCET sector for the benefit of learners (p 25).
The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector: Edward et al. (2007)	H-M	Tutors are shown to see themselves to be weighed down by the twin tasks of dealing with constant local policy change and shielding their learners from these pressures (pp 166,155 and 170). Anxiety and uncertainty resulted from the perceived disconnection between policy and frontline practice (p 161).	Frontline tutors are struggling to exercise pedagogic judgement and agency in local contexts, given the quantity and shape of local reform (pp 166,155 and 170). Common forms of implementation worked in ways antithetical to good pedagogic practice (p 161).
Gleeson (2001)	H-M	The predominant attitude of principals and senior managers to policy implementation is shown to be one of strategic pragmatism (p 193). This attitude is shaped by the twin desires to implement policy to modernise and sustain the organisation, and also to maintain pedagogical principles, maintain staff relations and encourage staff initiatives (p 188).	The study notes the high turnover of staff in these crucial positions (p 192) and raises the concern that this points to the long-term impossibility of the leadership role in these circumstances (p 194).

Study	WoE	Summary of the reports' analysis of local attitudes and conditions as they relate to policy implementation	Themes and implications discussed by the report author(s)
Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education Project: Gleeson et al. (2005)	H-M	New forms of professionalism have emerged which embody positive attitudes toward change, value flexibility and performance targets, and are multi-skilled (p 449). Negative attitudes toward policy implementation are seen to result when accommodations are reached between satisfying the external criteria of performance and the demands of the local ecologies of practice, that circumvention of room for professional manoeuvre (pp 455-456).	It would be beneficial to establish an 'agreement making' process, a communication loop that allows feedback and discussion between government, professionals and communities (p 456). Developing communities of professional practice would support the exploration of new forms of professionalism (p 455).
Hamilton and Hillier (2006)	H-M	The analysis of practitioner interviews reveals a range of local environments and policy regimes where a complex weave of forces operate to leave practitioners feeling sometimes empowered and sometimes constrained in their pedagogic practice (pp 73-74).	The text indicates that the establishment of a working context that encouraged a sense of pedagogic judgement and agency, social enterprise and collaboration with policy-makers and administrators would be one that embodied the best of the past four phases of ALLN provision (p 74).
Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education Project: James and Gleeson (2007)	H-M	It is contended that practitioners' primary attitude to their work comes from a strong commitment to teaching and to fostering the development of their learners (p 175). Recent 'local policy' initiatives are sometimes viewed negatively because they reduce pedagogic autonomy and neglect local expertise (p 182).	It is suggested that policy should be implemented in ways that encourage and sustain practitioners in exercising self-determination in the interests of the learner (p 182).
Ozga and Deem (2000)	M	The attitudes of female managers to policy implementation in the local settings are shown be coloured by the perceived tension that exists between the women's feminist values and those implicit in the predominant neo-liberal management ethos that commonly frames the policy implementation process (pp 141 and 146).	The report suggests that there is a risk of the erosion of the high agency that is associated with successful local policy implementation and its displacement by coping strategies that support an unthoughtful approach to policy implementation (pp 151-152)
Robson et al. (2004)	H-M	Tutors are shown to add depth and local relevance to the curriculum they implement. In this way, they are shown to enhance policy delivery in the pedagogic context (pp 188-191).	It is suggested by the study that the pedagogic experience of the learners was enhanced by the judgement and agency exercised by practitioners (pp 188-189). The authors highlight the work done by tutors to make policy work in local contexts (p 191).
Shain and Gleeson (1999)	H-M	An attitude of 'strategic compliance' was shown to embody both a willingness to embrace new practices and pedagogic possibilities, and a real concern for the local learning context and local learner needs (p 456).	The report implies that making space to acknowledge, negotiate and celebrate strategic compliance might hold out the opportunity to maximise pedagogic impact (p 458).
The Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion in the New Learning and Skills Sector: Spours et al. (2007)	H-M	Policy is mediated and/or translated in local contexts or ecologies of practice. A range of practitioners' attitudes to the process of mediating policy in their local contexts is identified and explored (pp 194, 203-208).	It is argued that the learning and skills sector would function more effectively if 'if policy levers...are shaped more at the local level' (p 208). It also noted that a 'pragmatic devolution [of power] appears to produce a variety of management approaches' (p 201).

APPENDIX 4.3   Further information on studies in the in-depth review

Item	What was the total number of participants in the study (the actual sample)?	Which method does the study use to select people, or groups of people (from the sampling frame)?	Which methods were used to collect the data?	Which methods were used to analyse the data?	If the study uses qualitative methods, how well has diversity of perspective and content been explored?	If the study uses qualitative methods, how well has the detail, depth and complexity (i.e. the richness) of the data been conveyed?	If the study uses qualitative methods, has analysis been conducted such that context is preserved?
Bathmaker (2005)	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) 12 lecturers in one Midlands FE college across four vocational curriculum areas (science, IT, business studies and foundation studies)	Not stated / unclear (Please specify.)	One-to-one interview (face to face or by phone)	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) Tape-recorded interviews, transcriptions analysed	Details Across four subject areas but only in one college	Details Lots of text in quotes	
Bolton and Hyland (2003)	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) 41 practitioners	Not stated / unclear (Please specify.)	One-to-one interview (face to face or by phone)	Implicit (Please specify.) Analysis of interview transcripts	Details Quite well	Details Quite well	Details Yes
Briggs (2005)	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) 50 staff and 85 students.	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) A senior member of staff.	Focus group interview One-to-one interview (face to face or by phone) Self-completion questionnaire Other documentation	Implicit (Please specify.) Some statistical analysis of survey and thematic analysis of qualitative and quantitative	Details Multiple lens approach: The five case study colleges have diverse origins and serve areas with different socio-economic profiles.	Details Direct quotes woven into text and centred around themes. Qualitative data adds to the quantitative analysis.	Details Yes: context preserved as above
Coffield et al. (2007)	Not stated / unclear (Please specify.)	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) Purposive for given characteristics	Focus group One-to-one interview Observation Self-completion questionnaire	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) In-depth interviews, thematically analysed by wide research team	Details Stratified sample, variety of sites Studied over three years	Details Rich description of data, direct quotes	Details Context reported in detail

Study					Details	Details	Details
Coffield and Edward (2007)	Implicit (Please specify.) 24 learning sites	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) Purposively for given characteristics	Focus group One-to-one interview Observation Self-completion questionnaire	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) In-depth interviews, thematically analysed	Stratified sample, variety of sites	Richness of description of data, direct quotes from participants	Context reported in detail
Edward et al. (2006)	Implicit (Please specify.) 210 interviews: 184 with tutors or their managers, 26 with workplace managers or ULRs (p 157)	Not stated / unclear (Please specify.) Not stated	One-to-one interview (face to face or by phone) Coding based on: Authors' description	Not stated / unclear (Please specify.) Unclear	Interviewed both teaching staff and managers on different educational settings	Direct quotes of tutors and manager given, but no in-depth details on local environments / situations	Adequate
Gleeson (2001)	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) 30 senior managers.	Not stated / unclear (Please specify.)	One-to-one interview School/ college records Secondary data such as publicly available statistics Other documentation	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) Thematic analysis	Through gender and point in career	Authentic narrative extracts	Yes, lots of reference to broader literature reviews and contextual information referring to participants
Gleeson et al. (2005)	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) 16 tutors from four FE colleges in period 2001-2003	Not stated/ unclear (Please specify.) Does not state how tutors/ colleges were chosen	One-to-one interview self-completion report or diary	Not stated / unclear (Please specify.) Based on themes / recurring contradictions	None	Lots of direct extracts of speech and journal entries, which bring report to life; rich in detail	Yes, voices of participants are authentic.
Hamilton and Hillier (2006)	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) Nearly 200	Not stated / unclear (Please specify.)	One-to-one interview (face to face or by phone)	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) Read, discuss and edit transcripts; this would inform subsequent interviews.			
James and Gleeson (2007)	Implicit (Please specify.) Various tutors and students across 19 learning sites		One-to-one interview Observation	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) See K6 and K7.	Thematic analysis Incremental case studies developed over four-year period	Rich description of data	Close attention paid to context

Item	What was the total number of participants in the study (the actual sample)?	Which method does the study use to select people, or groups of people (from the sampling frame)?	Which methods were used to collect the data?	Which methods were used to analyse the data?	If the study uses qualitative methods, how well has diversity of perspective and content been explored?	If the study uses qualitative methods, how well has the detail, depth and complexity (i.e. the richness) of the data been conveyed?	If the study uses qualitative methods, has analysis been conducted such that context is preserved?
Ozga and Deem (2000)	Not stated / unclear (Please specify.) Numbers not presented in paper		One-to-one interview (face to face or by phone)	Not stated/unclear (Please specify.)			
Robson et al. (2004)	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) 22	Not stated/ unclear (Please specify.)	One-to-one interview (face to face or by phone) Semi-structured Coding based on: Author's description	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) Summarised by interviewer, then analysed by second researcher			
Shain and Gleeson (1999)	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) Between 100 and 125	Not applicable (no sampling frame) As above	One-to-one interview (face to face or by phone)	Not stated / unclear (Please specify.)	Details Wide range of practitioners interviewed	Details Strongly: high quality data and analysis	Details Clear identification of context
Spours et al. (2007)	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) 74 interviews with tutors and managers	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) Purposively for job role	Focus group One-to-one interview Self-completion questionnaire	Explicitly stated (Please specify.) In-depth interviews and thematic analysis	Details Multi-level stratified sample Variety of sites	Details Rich description of data Direct quotes from participants	Details Contextual mediations reported in detail

The results of this systematic review are available in four formats:

SUMMARY	Explains the purpose of the review and the main messages from the research evidence
REPORT	Describes the background and the findings of the review(s) but without full technical details of the methods used
TECHNICAL REPORT	Includes the background, main findings, and full technical details of the review
DATABASES	Access to codings describing each research study included in the review

These can be downloaded or accessed at **http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/reel/**

The **Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre** (EPPI-Centre) is part of the Social Science Research Unit (SSRU), Institute of Education, University of London.

The EPPI-Centre was established in 1993 to address the need for a systematic approach to the organisation and review of evidence-based work on social interventions. The work and publications of the Centre engage health and education policy makers, practitioners and service users in discussions about how researchers can make their work more relevant and how to use research findings.

Founded in 1990, the Social Science Research Unit (SSRU) is based at the Institute of Education, University of London. Our mission is to engage in and otherwise promote rigorous, ethical and participative social research as well as to support evidence-informed public policy and practice across a range of domains including education, health and welfare, guided by a concern for human rights, social justice and the development of human potential.

The views expressed in this work are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funder. All errors and omissions remain those of the authors.

This document is available in a range of accessible formats including large print. Please contact the Institute of Education for assistance:

telephone: +44 (0)20 7947 9556   email: info@ioe.ac.uk