

Title: **Professional Standards: learning to change in further and higher education – do managers and leaders constrain or empower?**

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Abstract:

Participants will explore the following after the presentation of the paper

- What are the essential features of developing an inspirational model of excellence in teaching and learning?
- How can management empower and promote professional standards?
- To what extent does culture/professionalism impact on learning to change?

Professional Standards in further education have been viewed in terms of the sector's ability to respond to the market through management and leadership. HEFCE, the Higher Education Academy and SEDA are actively promoting professional standards in teaching and learning in higher education. SEDA suggests that the further education sector has been working with standards-based approaches for sometime. The paper aims to advance an understanding of how professional standards are developing in higher education by taking concepts, theories and methods developed in social anthropology as its framework. It applies this to the concept of lifelong learning, through an analysis of practitioners' experiences and perceptions in further and higher education. Their particular expressions may be symptomatic of both sectors.

Bush's (1995) point that the ethnography of the management of FE is under-researched and Gleeson and Shain's (1999) suggestion that in a climate of rapid and unpredictable change, struggles over meaning and identity and ethos of FE have been to the fore. Thus, the construction of culture, consciousness and identity are central to this paper to explore how the further education experience can inform higher education. These issues are explored and what emerges from the paper is that the concept of lifelong learning is a partial kind of response to the changing circumstances in FE and HE. A more useful conceptual tool is the notion of particular kinds of intra-adaptive, inter-adaptive and extra-adaptive organizational cultures in which a coalescence of features leads to adaptation to promote professional standards. Driving these changes has been a model of inspirational excellence in teaching and learning. The ethnographic approach allowed the generation of grounded theory to offer practitioners an essential appreciation of the tacit and ambiguous aspects of management activity. The paper discusses the wider implications for those involved in management and pedagogy.

References:

- Bush, T. (1995) *Theories of educational management* Paul Chapman Publishing Limited
Gleeson, D., Shain F. (1999) *Changing teaching and managerial cultures in FE: A critical post-fordist analysis* Keele University