Exploring the emotional labour of further education lecturers in Scotland

Sushila Chowdhry
s.chowdhry@rgu.ac.uk


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Abstract
The British further education (FE) sector has experienced almost continual restructuring as the sector adapts to simultaneously meet the evolving needs of industry and tackle social injustice (Coffield et al. 2008). Studies examining the work of FE lecturers suggest that they have become alienated and stressed by loss of autonomy and work intensification (Mather et al. 2007). This paper discusses the emotional demands made on FE lecturers by the current politico-economic climate within the further education sector.

The study utilised a qualitative case study approach to explore the emotional demands of the work of female care lecturers teaching on care courses in a Scottish further education college. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews with lecturers and also involved an examination of the care curriculum. Hochschild’s (1983) concept of emotional labour was utilised as a framework to explore these demands and analyse the datasets.

Findings suggested that teaching on care courses involved a variety of emotional demands and, as such, were associated with both the teaching and caring roles. The types of emotional demands were linked to how the lecturer viewed the student’s situation and motivation. Lecturers utilised surface acting, deep acting or the expression of genuine emotion. The influence of the broader further education sector, along with professional and gender identity, was evident in the lecturer’s teaching and care ethics and was directly related to the emotional demands faced by the lecturers. Furthermore, the findings indicated that, lecturers may find it difficult to recognise and challenge excessive levels of emotional labour which are associated with their work. As austerity measures further intensify the work of FE lecturers, this study may add to wider debates concerning lecturer well-being and management practices.

Key terms: Emotional labour, female lecturers, caring, education policy, work intensification

Introduction
This research looks at the emotional demands made on female lecturers teaching on care courses within the context of a Scottish FE college. It focuses on the work of female lecturers as previous research suggests that women are at particular risk of the depersonalising effects
of emotion work due to their gendered personal and professional identities (Colley, 2003). The impetus for this study arose from the growing body of literature highlighting the impact of work intensification on FE lecturers (see for example, Mather and Worrall, 2007; Mather et al. 2007; Salisbury et al. 2006) and the current sector focus on emotional support and student success (see for example, Macnab et al. 2008; Scottish Government, 2006a, 2006b). Two key factors appeared to be absent from the literature: the voice of lecturers, and a critical examination of the ways that emotions are utilised within this particular context. This study set out to explore the emotional demands of female lecturers who teach on care courses. Typically, such lecturers come to the FE sector with many years experience in professions such as nursing, social work and primary school teaching. Caring and compassion are considered central to the discourse of such professions and, therefore, are accepted as an integral part of the professional identity of these professions. Anecdotal evidence from within the sector suggests that care lecturer’s draw on both their original professional identity along with a lecturing identity. This creates a somewhat unique new professional identity, which may make it difficult to establish a boundary between the caring and teaching roles.

The article begins with a brief review of the role of the FE sector in the implementation of British social policy and the subsequent intensification of lecturers’ work as a consequence of post-incorporation. Next, the concept of emotional labour and the potential negative effects of emotion work are examined before focussing on the role of emotions in the context of caring and teaching. The literature review is concluded by considering the uniqueness of the role of FE lecturers who teach on care programmes within the context of FE. The next section outlines briefly the methodology which was utilised in the study and this is followed by the presentation of the findings. The paper concludes with a discussion and conclusion and then considers the contribution made by the study.

Background

The role of the FE sector in the implementation of social policy

The British FE sector provides a vast range of continually adapting education programmes aimed at meeting the changing needs of industry. The sector is also pivotal to the implementation of social policy, aimed at reducing social exclusion (Jephcote and Salisbury, 2009). Many of these policy initiatives relate to equality of opportunity in relation to access to education and aim to address the social and emotional problems that are commonly linked with social exclusion. Consequently, the sector caters for a diverse group of students, some of whom are considered to have ‘complex needs’ (Social Exclusion Unit, 2005); such opportunities are often referred to as ‘second chance education’. Therefore, teaching within the sector demands that lecturers have not only a high level of industrial or professional knowledge but also a high level of teaching, coaching and mentoring skills. The emphasis on social and emotional support is seen in the sector’s discourse, which reveals a pedagogic ethos prioritising ‘individual needs’ and ‘student centredness’ (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009). Emotional well-being is considered central to such discourse and is linked to educational success (Mortiboys, 2002). Consequently, the role of emotions is perhaps not only a feature of the sector’s discourse but also part of a wider political agenda.

Teaching in the FE sector

The work of FE lecturers has been considerably influenced by neoliberal ideology, which is believed to account for the intensification of lecturers’ work (Page, 2010). Following
Incorporation of the FE sector in 1993\(^1\), governmental funding to the sector became linked to student retention and achievement. This led to new contracts for staff based on changed working conditions and shifted emphasis from learning and teaching to ‘efficiencies’ (Simpkins, 2000). The effects of this are believed to have brought about what is termed an ‘audit culture’ (Strathern, 2000) widely characterised by increased monitoring and supervision of staff, resulting in staff feeling undervalued (Bureaucracy Task Force, 2002). These changes have served to reposition the relationship between lecturers and managers; managers have been forced to look for increased flexibility in their teaching workforce (Jephcote and Salisbury, 2009) and significantly, this has changed the labour process of FE lecturers (Mather and Worrall, 2007). Studies examining the work of FE lecturers suggest that they have become alienated and stressed by loss of autonomy and work intensification under such market-driven initiatives (Mather et al. 2007).

Along with changes in the management of lecturers, the post-incorporation funding mechanism to the sector has also driven policy initiatives aimed at improving student retention and attainment (Smith, 2007). Such policies are integral to securing funding for colleges and are believed to have placed additional pressure on teaching staff who are ultimately responsible for ensuring student success. Examples of such policies include More Choices, More Chances (Scottish Government, 2006a), which emphasises the need for tailored packages to meet the support needs of individual learners. Critics argue that the sector has become a ‘dumping ground’ for young people with emotional, social or behavioural difficulties (Macnab et al. 2008). The challenge that working with students who are ‘disaffected’ or ‘disengaged’ is reflected within the sector’s discourse, which now heavily focuses on ‘behaviour management’ and ‘student-centredness’ and, an emphasis on understanding and emotionally supporting students by improving their self-esteem and self-awareness. A glance at the Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland’s Colleges (Scottish Government, 2006b) exemplifies the breadth of the range of duties that lecturers are faced with in contemporary FE settings. Lecturers within the sector are believed to have been eager to embrace these standards into their professional identity as a means for raising their status (Ecclestone et al. 2005). However, less attention has been paid to the effects of meeting the demands of the role on the lecturers themselves, as Avis et al. (2011:57) point out; the role of lecturers now includes an “infinite range of demands, with resulting emotional costs for those involved”.

**Theoretical perspective – emotional labour**

*Emotions at work*

The study of emotion within organisations has gained increasing prominence in the sociological study of work (Fineman, 2003). Seminal work in this area includes the work of Arlie Hochschild (1983) whose theory of emotional labour provided significant development in the understanding of emotion in the workplace. Hochschild’s work has inspired a vast body of literature exploring the concept through research on various occupations.

Hochschild (1983) critically extends the Marxist notion of alienation to explain how workers’ emotions are colonised and used by organisations in the manufacture of surplus (profit) within the capitalist workplace. This process requires that workers adapt their personality to meet organisational requirements. According to Hochschild, (1979) the expression and

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\(^1\) The Scottish FE sector moved from local council control and were granted corporate status, however, despite this status, they remain controlled through the governmental funding mechanisms dictated by the Scottish Funding Council. Failure to meet student retention and achievement targets reduces funding for subsequent years (for more information see - http://www.sfc.ac.uk/)
suppression of the workers’ emotions in any given situation is guided by what could be described as an emotion culture in that cultural scripts (norms and values) influence every aspect of the experience of emotion. Goffman’s (1959) influence is evident in her conceptionalisation of feeling rules, which dictate acceptable feelings in any given situation. Hochschild (1983) based her understanding of surface and deep acting on this concept. Surface and deep acting are forms of emotional management which produce a visible display of emotion and are designed to influence the emotions of others. However, both types of emotional acting are brought about by different private mechanisms. Surface acting involves pretending to feel an emotion and, therefore, requires no emotional involvement. Deep acting involves evoking memories or utilising imagination in order to actually experience the emotion that is displayed. While this may feel more natural or comfortable for the worker Hochschild explains that the strain of continually pretending to feel emotions that are not actually felt means that workers eventually “try to pull the two closer together by changing what we feel or by changing what we feign” (1983:90): the process of avoiding emotional incongruence (or emotional dissonance) between what is felt and expressed is so alienating for workers that a transmutation of feelings occurs - a form of depersonalisation whereby the worker loses connection with their inner self and the transmutated emotion becomes a commodified object.

The negative effects of emotional labour – surface acting, deep acting, genuine emotion and depersonalisation

Psychologists, interested in conducting studies to confirm the presence of emotional labour as a feature of various occupations, have found evidence that employees suppress their emotions to conform to rules concerning feelings. According to Wharton (2009) one of the largest bodies of literature concerning emotional labour are investigations into the effects of emotional dissonance. This research includes the measurement of both surface and deep acting (Grandey, 2003), self-report of specific emotions displayed while working (Erickson and Ritter, 2001) and frequency of emotion displays (Zapf and Holz, 2006). However, as Wharton (2009) also points out, variations in the way that the concept of emotional labour is operationalised, along with problems with generalisation, make it almost impossible for theorists to reach a consensus about which jobs involve emotional labour and to what extent. However, despite this, there are many studies drawing attention to the negative effects of emotional dissonance which is associated with surface acting (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002). Abraham (1998), for example, suggests that emotional dissonance is associated with decreased job satisfaction and a reduction in commitment to the organisation. Many studies link emotional labour to emotional exhaustion and stress (e.g., Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Erickson and Ritter, 2001; Kruml and Geddes, 2000; Morris and Feldman,1996). Brotheridge and Lee (2003), suggest that deep acting is less harmful in relation to worker depersonalisation and stress and that positive associations have been found whereby workers experience job satisfaction. Morris and Feldman (1996) concur with this and point out that deeper emotional work may have potential benefits for employees as it is thought to prevent depersonalisation. Importantly, Ashforth, and Humphrey (1993) expand Hochschild’s theory and focus on behaviour rather than underlying emotion by using the term display rules instead of Hochschild’s feeling rules because they believe that this is what affects the customer and that people can learn display rules without having to manage feeling. They define emotional labour as “the act of displaying the appropriate emotion, i.e., conforming with a display rule” (1993:90). They suggest that emotional labour is, therefore, the actual display of ‘appropriate’ emotions and involves surface acting, deep acting or the expression of genuinely felt emotion. The incorporation of genuine emotion into the emotional labour
construct was included as the researchers believed that past conceptions of emotional labour failed to allow for the genuine expression of emotion. This appears to suggest that when employees experience a genuine emotion, rather than one generated through effort via deep acting, the need to use either surface or deep acting to comply with a display rule is avoided.

Care giving and emotional labour

Jobs where employees lack autonomy and spend considerable time serving the needs of others have been extensively researched due to concerns about perceived threats to workers’ identity and sense of self (Wharton, 2009). Gendered occupations such as home care and childcare have been researched by feminist researchers who wish to highlight the exploitative nature of work which relies on women’s ‘natural’ abilities to respond sensitively to the needs of others (see for example, Neysmith, 1996; Colley, 2003a). Nursing has also been extensively researched due to the emotional nature of such work and nurses have been found to utilise a variety of emotional displays including genuine emotion in their interactions with patients (see for example, Bolton, 2000). However, studies of nurses have also demonstrated that changes in the structure or professional norms within the profession have the potential to reduce the satisfaction that is gained from care giving (Huynh et al. 2008). The expression of emotion is considered to be a fundamental aspect of nurses’ identity and, therefore, nurses are perhaps potentially vulnerable to exploitation in this area. It is perhaps worrying to note that a Welsh university recently announced an intention to measure the compassion levels of student nurses (Santry, 2010). Therefore, the willingness of nurses to internalise professional rules provides a compelling feminist argument especially as compassion has become a product or commodity of the healthcare system (Por, 2008) and is therefore politically charged.

Teaching and emotional labour

The centrality of emotion to the teaching identity has spawned a plethora of studies highlighting the negative effects of emotional labour on school teacher well-being and performance (Hargreaves, 2000). Research examining emotional labour and teaching focuses on two main questions: do teachers perform emotional labour, and how does performing emotional labour affect teachers? As previously discussed, there appears to be compelling evidence that the completing demands on lecturers within the current audit culture of FE would make the exploration of the emotional aspect of their work worthwhile. Especially as job dissatisfaction, burnout and health symptoms have been linked to high levels of emotional labour involved in teaching (Schultz and Zembylas, 2009). Furthermore, Oplatka (2009) suggests that as ever-increasing demands are placed upon teachers it is vital that the emotional well-being of teachers is considered and that specific initiatives aimed at addressing the consequences of emotional labour are introduced. The role of female lecturers has been highlighted as being crucial to the implementation of the sectors’ policies relating to student support and the associated emotional labour involved in this task has been highlighted as requiring recognition (Nash et al. 2008). Indeed, female lecturers have been shown to strongly identify with the role of nurturing their students; particularly in relation to those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Larson, 2008). Feminist researchers wishing to explore, gender-stereotyped occupations have studied the emotional labour of students undergoing training to become care workers and childcare workers; to illuminate the impact of gender stereotyped dispositions and abilities on the career aspirations and training of young women within the caring professions (Colley, 2003b). In her study, Colley found that the process of
teaching these young women how to regulate their emotional expression was aided “by the deeply caring culture created by college tutors” (2003b:6). It is likely that providing a deeply caring culture involves various emotional demands for those who are involved in teaching others how to care. The role that lecturers have in this process is perhaps largely unrecognised; not only by the lecturers themselves but also by those who manage them.

Methodology and research design
A qualitative case study methodology was utilised to explore the emotional demands of teaching on care programmes in a Scottish FE college and to examine the interconnectedness between aspects of the college environment (the demands of management, job role, demands of students and the curriculum) and the lecturers’ perceptions of the emotional demands of their jobs. The aim of this project was, therefore, to understand the emotional demands of female lecturers who teach on care programmes and to evaluate whether emotional labour theory provides a useful means of understanding those demands and sought to answer the following research question: What do female FE lecturers say about emotional demands in their work? How far can the theory of emotional labour assist in understanding their accounts of these demands?

At the time of the study there were 19 full-time lecturers teaching on care programmes at the college, one of which was male. 13 of those had additional responsibility for specific programmes and the students enrolled in these programmes. Part-time staff and newly appointed staff were excluded from the case as it was felt that their experience would be markedly different. Lecturers were invited to volunteer to take part in a semi-structured interview. Nine semi-structured interviews were conducted following two pilot interviews. All the interviews were recorded and eight of them were transcribed. The participants verified all transcriptions as accurate. Two short follow up interviews were also conducted to expand upon information and seek clarification and verification. The lecturer data was coded and sorted into themes emerging from the data. These themes reflect the overall aim of the research and relate directly to the research question. The themes were also directly influenced by the three themes from the literature review:

1. Literature on managerialism within the FE sector
2. Further education discourse relating to student support
3. Perspectives on emotional labour, including caring and gender

Following the first reading of each transcript memos were made recording initial impressions of each interview. These were examined along with the interview field notes and then later used to inform the coding process. Interview workshop data were coded in two sweeps following the recommendations of Saldaña (2009). The first sweep involved Holistic Coding helping to “grasp basic themes or issues in the data by absorbing them as a whole […] rather than by analysing them line by line” (Dey, 1993:104). This prepared the data for more detailed examination and further coding. The first sweep also utilised In Vivo Coding to capture the language used by the informants and Value Coding to expose values and attitudes. Emotion Coding was used to code the emotions that were recalled, experienced or inferred. These codes were then subject to second cycle coding to enable synthesis of the data. During this process some first cycle codes were dropped and others merged together. This process facilitated analysis and led to the generation of conceptual themes (Saldaña, 2009). These emergent themes were discussed with several of the informants to provide additional insight and verification. Analysis generated four key themes reflecting the types of teaching
performances conducted by the lecturers; each type of performance is associated with varying emotional demands.

**Emotional labour in Scottish further education**

This section provides details and discusses the analysis and synthesis of the research findings, and in doing so, answers the research question. Each section presents and discusses a separate theme. Each theme draws on aspects of the literature discussed within the literature review.

*The Caring Performance and the ‘blooming student’*

Analysis of the datasets suggested that teaching within the care department involved several different teaching performances, each of these were dependent on lecturer perceptions of the student’s motivation and situation. The overarching performance of the care lecturer is the *Caring Performance* (Figure 1). The Caring Performance may also involve three other types of performance dependent on how the lecturer views the student. Each of these performances involves emotional labour, however, the extent and type of emotional acting varies and is dependent on the type of performance. In the following sections each of these performances will be described in detail.

![Figure 1 – The Caring Performance - Conceptual Themes](image)

*The Caring Performance: teaching care – the unwritten curriculum*

Evident in the lecturer dataset was the common use of metaphors of growth, for example, “flower”, “flourish”, “preparing the seed ground” and “blooming”. It was clear that staff expected that if they created suitable conditions then a transformation of the student would occur in which they would reach their potential. These ideas reflect much of the underlying theories of the caring professions (e.g., Maslow, 1943; Rogers, 1961). Teaching students to care for others involves teaching a variety of subjects, most of which, are based on humanistic principles, for example: students are taught how to understand people as individuals; how to listen; to be non-judgemental and empathic. At the heart of most subjects is an emphasis on improving self-esteem. What Elizabeth says about how she views her role
as a care lecturer perhaps helps us to understand the complexities of teaching students how to care for others:

My immediate self-image, is somebody who delivers, or works with others to create, deliver and create knowledge. So knowledge creation would be the central point of my existence then, as a lecturer, [...] and then I quickly realise [laughs] that this isn’t true; it’s much more complicated than that and maybe perhaps it’s the types of knowledge that I’m engaged in creating, is just not the type of knowledge that’s written in the curriculum.

Elizabeth is clear that teaching care involves, to some degree, teaching an unwritten curriculum, which is complex and difficult to define. She describes it in her own unique way but what she says is echoed by the other lecturers: teaching care involves providing what could be described as a Caring Performance which models the values and behaviour of the caring professions. Therefore students receive, in part, the care they are being taught how to give. It is difficult to separate the teaching performance from the Caring Performance as Trish explains:

...we’re Social Care, we’re Health Care people, that’s what we’ve done and lots of people do the ‘sorting people out’ stuff, that’s been their job, so that can impact on their teaching approach as well.

The Caring Performances of the lecturers in this study were as varied and individual as the staff themselves. How they relate to students appears to be very much associated to their own professional identities as nurses, social workers or childcare workers. A traditional profession, according to trait theories, is characterised by extensive training underpinned by ideologies of altruism and public service (Abbott and Meerabeau, 1998) and are self-regulated by the use of professional codes of conduct that workers must adhere to (e.g., Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2008; Scottish Social Services Council, 2009). Trait theories also provide a means to view professional codes as a method for the middle-classes to socially control those who aspire to belong to these professions by a process of secondary socialisation (Abbott and Meerabeau, 1998). Many of the values promoted by the lecturers in this study espoused the values of their profession and in this way the display rules for emotion were regulated not by their contractual agreement with the college but by these deeply held values underpinning their teaching performance. An exert from the researcher notebook exemplifies this:

Ann explains that she believes that she must demonstrate the care value of respect to her students; this involves “being there for them”. She feels very guilty when she thinks that she is not giving enough and wonders what it will do to her students’ self-esteem. She feels overwhelmed by the number of students that she has, but powerless to do anything about it. She tries to teach her students to be resilient to life’s problems by modelling a professional identity espousing calmness and stoicism and hopes that they will learn not to disclose too much about their own lives.
By doing this Ann tries to teach the students how to hide their own emotions while teaching them the appropriate professional behaviour of the care worker. What Ann hides from her students are any feelings that she thinks are incongruent with her professional identity. Therefore, she tries to manage the situation by calling on inner patience, tolerance and kindness. There are occasions where she feels frustrated, but when asked about whether her students would know what she was feeling, she says:

They had better not! And if they do, then I'm not being very good at covering it up, I wouldn't, I use my colleagues as informal support, I do my moaning in there [points to staff room] and then when the student comes to the door have a big smile, hopefully, and will find the space and time.

By doing this Ann uses surface acting (Hochschild, 1983) to convey to the student that they are important and worthwhile and to hide the fact that, due to competing demands, she really has little further time to spend with them. As previously discussed, surface acting involves modifying the emotional expression rather than the internal emotional state, therefore, when surface acting, the individual ignores the emotions that arise naturally but which are considered to be inappropriate for the situation. Ann’s altruism was not unique among the care department lecturers who, despite increasing demands placed upon them by the sector, remain motivated to meet students’ needs. The pleasure that women are believed to gain from caring for others is a frequently cited argument against those who critique the idea that women are subjugated by their ‘natural” caring abilities. As Colley (2006) puts it, the rewards that women gain from caring work are socially constructed and therefore, it is difficult for women to recognise the distinction between gender disposition and gender stereotyped social replication. Similar studies have noted that female work intensification is associated with the utilisation of so called feminine characteristics that are used to support students (Larson, 2008). However, giving “time” to students as a symbolic gesture of their value was considered to be inadequate for the transformation of some students into appropriate care workers. Margaret’s feelings are obvious here when she talks about the task that she is faced with:

...sometimes [I] have a dilemma about the calibre of students, the behaviour that we accept [...] genuinely just being passionate about very good quality of care and just seeing this as a profession. [...] if another school says “they’re not very able - go into care”. It's just devaluing the whole profession.

What Margaret seems to suggest here resonates the feelings of other lecturers, who also believe that, where female pupils appear to lack career direction, or where they have experienced difficulties at school relating to behaviour, they are often encouraged to seek a career in care by default. Learning how to care for others is believed to help to create responsible, law abiding and caring individuals who can contribute positively to society (England and Folbre, 1999). However, transforming students’ dispositions into something approaching those suitable for care work can be a traumatic emotional experience for all involved. For instance, in Skeggs’ (1997) study of young women encouraged to undertake
care courses she found that they found the emotional demands of work placements traumatic as they lacked both emotional and social capital.

In the present study we can see that Claire feels that the growth and change that is required by some students is a complex and time consuming process which will involve considerable effort from the staff and the student:

...you can’t turn around somebody in an academic year; the course should be 18 months and the first 6 months we should just be doing personal development units.

Although this may be a difficult process, it has been suggested that, working-class care students are believed to value the regulation of their professional behaviour as they view it as means to gain greater respectability (Colley, 2006). For many students ‘transformation’ was relatively straightforward, however, at times the lecturers used additional performances to assist the process. Consequently, I found that the Caring Performance may be supplemented or replaced by three types of more complex and emotionally demanding performances which were dependent on how the lecturer views the student. These performances are: Having a Tough Time, The Wasted Performance and Spoon Feeding. Each type of performance relies on emotional labour. Why these performances are conducted and the extent of emotional labour utilised are explained next.

**Having a Tough Time**

Central to this type of Caring Performance are lecturers’ concerns about the personal problems that students encounter while attending college. The welfare role of FE lecturers is well documented and some studies have found that many believe that it is necessary to understand their students’ biographies in order that they can take on this role (Gleeson et al. 2004). However, the tensions between the teaching and welfare role are evident in what Ann says here when talking about the personal difficulties that some of her students face when attending college:

I don't encourage people to share a lot of that with me but, I hear things; like people getting pregnant, terminations, or struggling at home financially, or with parents; caring for parents who may have mental health issues, or there may be a suicide of a close family member, you know, just troubled, troubled backgrounds.

While Ann tries to maintain a boundary between the teaching and welfare role by avoiding situations where students disclose their personal problems to her, others encourage these disclosures. It would appear that, for some staff, gaining an understanding of the difficulties that students face provides a strategy for dealing with the inappropriate behaviour that is believed to manifest as a consequence of “troubled backgrounds”. Literature arising from within the FE sector urges colleges to provide additional emotional support to students with “dispositional barriers to learning” such as “poor attitude” as these are believed to arise from poor previous learning experiences (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009:63). For the care students in the study there is an additional challenge for those who are Having a Tough Time as, according to the lecturers in this study, they often relate to the curriculum as the receiver
rather than the *giver* of care and therefore, lecturers sometimes find maintaining a boundary between the teaching and welfare role complex and challenging. It was evident from the lecturer dataset however; that some staff resisted being drawn into involvement in their student’s lives, for example, what Margaret says about misbehaviour suggests that she feels less than empathic:

…maybe I’m getting too old, for the students with a lot of behavioural issues like: “Put the phone off, put the phone off”, [...] “Why are you on that site?” [...] and the behavioural issues, and you try to understand, perhaps issues at home, try to be calm, but when it goes on, and on, it just wears me down.

Others are far less likely to admit to feeling anything approaching being “worn down” and use complex emotional strategies to deal with their feelings in relation to students’ problems, as we can see in how Jenny talks about her feelings towards these problems:

…a lot of them come from backgrounds where there’s difficulties, a lot of difficulties, there’s a lot personal social problems [...] I mean they are delightful, but I do feel that they’re actually defined by their problems, rather than by being a student.

Talking about students as “delightful” perhaps demonstrates the challenge that lecturers face; the lecturer realises that the behaviour of the student is far from being anything approaching delightful, however, conceptionalising the student as Having a Tough Time to excuse inappropriate behaviour helps to create the emotions necessary for this type of Caring Performance. “Defining the students by their problems” positions them as vulnerable and, while this may perpetuate their difficulties, as Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) suggest, by creating a rescuer and victim dichotomy it may also allow the lecturer to display the culturally appropriate emotions to meet student expectations by deep acting. In Hochschild’s conceptualisation of deep acting she suggests that the consequences of deep acting are the loss of self through self-deception of a convincing performance “by pretending deeply she alters herself” (Hochschild, 1983:33). Perhaps in situations similar to the one that Jenny describes, where she conjures up the necessary imagery (based on memory and imagination) to allow her to actually feel and display appropriate emotions, it is reasonable to imagine as Hochschild suggests, deceiving ourselves in this way means that we become altered and unable to interpret accurately our emotions; insights from Person-centred or Gestalt theory give an account of this (e.g., Rogers, 1961; Perls et al. 1951). Feelings of empathy may be more beneficial to the lecturers’ identity, as this perhaps prevents the need for the transmutation of feelings (Hochschild, 1983) because the expressed feelings are naturally and genuinely felt.

Empathy and compassion are central to the discourses of the caring and teaching professions and has more recently become considered as a commodity within nursing (Chowdhry, 2010) and a focus of student-centred further education discourse (Mortiboys, 2002). Compassion has been defined as an active involvement with the suffering of another (Schantz, 2007) the emphasis on active involvement indicates the investment of emotional energy required for expressing compassion and appears to involve a similar mechanism to Hochschild’s (1983) deep acting. In contrast, the term empathy is used to “explain how we discover that other
people have selves” (Wispé, 1987 cited in Määttä, 2006) and according to Rogers (1957:210) involves “being sensitive, moment to moment, to the changing felt meanings which flow in the other person”. This involves cognitive and affective orientation towards the situation of another individual and responding genuinely to the cognitions and affect of the other person by producing emotional displays meeting the expectation of the other. The expression of empathy, according to von Dietze and Orb (2000), is intellectual or professional and therefore allows a sense of detachment for the other. Genuine empathic understanding in this way is believed to produce feelings of job satisfaction (Grandey, 2000). Where lecturers have space or time, or are inclined to orientate themselves towards the emotional and cognitive world of their students, they are perhaps more likely to benefit from what may be perceived as a satisfying relationship. In situations where lecturers are motivated to consider the student’s biography (discovering the student’s ‘self’) or position students as vulnerable, they are perhaps more likely to avoid surface or deep acting as they feel empathic towards the student’s situation. However, while the feeling and expression of empathy may be beneficial for the lecturer, it may not have similar benefits for the student. Students may enjoy the immediate short-term attention that Having a Tough Time brings; especially when lecturers are empathic towards them. However, according to Furedi (2003), the cultural trend towards promoting and protecting self-esteem may diminish personal agency by erosion of resilience and resourcefulness.

Managerialism, the diminished self, and the Wasted Performance

Sometimes lecturers withdraw the Caring Performance when they believe that students are “mucking about”. It is apparent that recognising such students is problematic. It is suggested here that mucking-about involves similar behaviour to Having a Tough Time, as Claire explains:

It’s also about separating that from the fact that somebody’s badly behaved because they’re at it [...] it’s about making that judgement, they’re not all sob stories and poor wee souls, you know some are… it’s behavioural issues and for some of them it’s because they’ve got away with it, and they’re really just needing rained in and told “here are the rules, if you don’t like it this is the consequences”.

Due to the focus on ‘customer care’ within the sector most staff believe that enforcing consequences is one of the most difficult aspects of their job. In reality, there are very few sanctions for those who fail to conform to behavioural expectations. Perhaps, as a consequence of the culture of care within the care department, students who fail to meet the expectations of the lecturers in relation to appropriate behaviour often blame Having a Tough Time on their poor academic performance or inappropriate behaviour. However, sometimes a line is drawn where students are believed to be Having a Tough Time but are not seeking to overcome their difficulties. The complexities are apparent here; the lecturer has faith in the power of the Caring Performance to influence growth, however, if what Ecclestone et al. (2005) suggest about the link between efforts to improve self-esteem and the ‘diminished self’ is correct, then for many students this growth will not occur. Perhaps some lecturers recognise this and, when they do, are likely to utilise surface acting as they feel less compassion for the student. Ironically the withdrawal of the more empathic Caring Performance as a form of resistance would necessitate a more cynical performance involving
higher levels of surface acting which, as we have seen, are linked with exhaustion and burnout.

The analysis of the lecturer data within this case study reflected much of the sector’s literature on managerialism which highlights the erosion of professional autonomy within the public sector; with lecturer data suggesting a real sense of powerless in relation to college management, for example, when talking about the number of students on their courses staff speak of being “forced” or “told” to complete tasks or of having things “imposed” on them. Some staff felt that they lacked control over the subjects they taught, leaving them feeling frustrated or anxious at times in relation to subject expertise. There appeared to be a consensus of concern particularly about the high numbers of students in each class and the high level of support that some of these students required. As Ruby says:

*The more students you have the more needs they have and the approach has to be different too. You don’t have the time to spend individually with a bigger class as you do with a smaller class [...] I can’t get round everybody in two hours [...] there’s weeks go by I don’t see the quiet ones.*

One lecturer referred to this situation as a “battle”. However, it appears to be a battle that most of the staff feel they have little chance of winning; as much of the data in this area reflected a general feeling of resignation. Feelings of resignation and powerlessness appear to be facilitated partly by the strong belief that their current working conditions are legitimised by the current economic situation within the sector. What Byron says about this echo the sentiments of the other lecturers:

*Well I think it’s important to be quite candid because I mean it’s a reality, I mean I don’t think it’s going to change, I think that you’ve got to be quite philosophical; there just isn’t the money.*

Most staff appeared to be resigned to this situation and this had the effect of ensuring that they felt grateful for any small concessions that management made for them. It also brought into view the lengths that staff will go to meet the sector’s ‘performance indicators’ that are linked to governmental funding. Therefore when students are perceived to be “mucking about” lecturers may employ the strategy of *Spoon Feeding.* Spoon Feeding contradicts the ideology of the care department and therefore is used as a last resort when the Caring Performance has failed and students are not “blooming” or “flourishing” despite the lecturer’s best efforts. Spoon Feeding is conducted to help students achieve minimum qualifications and help staff to meet, often impossible, targets.

*Spoon Feeding*

The neoliberal policies of the FE sector have directed attention towards providing good customer service. When students are positioned as ‘the customer’ their perceptions of the boundaries of their responsibility may change, therefore, students may expect more to be done for them than lecturers feel is desirable or appropriate. The erosion of bureaucratic-professional models of practice is common place under managerialism (Dillon, 2007).
Perhaps as a response to this I found that the cultural term Spoon Feeding was widely used by both students and lecturers within the care department. It describes those occasions where staff believe that they are doing more for the student that they should be and that the student is taking no or little responsibility for their own learning. Spoon Feeding contradicts the ideology of the care department, in that it is not designed to bring about a transformation. However, with large numbers of students to cater for and larger numbers of students who are unsure of, or unable to, meet the expectations of the lecturers they sometimes have to reluctantly carry out tasks for the students which they feel should really be part of the students learning. Ruby explains how she feels about this:

I make them nice little sheets with six pages into one […] I’m doing the work for them, you know, so it is frustrating.

Emerging from the lecturer dataset was a clear impression of the mutual understanding that lecturers shared in relation to the exasperating nature of this type of performance. Often no words were required for staff to sympathise with each other with strong but carefully hidden emotions in relation to student behaviour. One humorous example of this involves an incident in which Ruby describes a particularly frustrating experience with a student who was reluctant to pull her weight:

…yesterday when I went into the room across there I was put onto a burly chair and given a Kit-Kat […] I went “brrrrr” […] I couldn’t get the words out but, we were laughing […] and everybody knew the feeling. I was sat down on a whirly chair and told to whirl round for a few times and, it’s amazing how that feeling of whirling round eased some of… it kind of lifted you off the ground a wee bit.

It is clear that Ruby utilised surface acting, waited for an opportunity to vent her feelings outside the classroom, and that she had spent a considerable amount of time presenting a calm veneer to the student while she tried various strategies to engage with her. While this example presents an account of this type of performance as perhaps less complex that the other performances, the lecturer dataset suggested that there were very high levels of frustration in response to the need to Spoon Feed students to meet the demands of the sector. With the literature on the effects of surface acting suggesting links between high levels of emotional labour with emotional exhaustion and stress (Wharton, 2009) and research on the work intensification of teachers calling for the emotional well-being of teachers to be considered (Oplatka, 2009) it suggests that, especially in a sector where the effects of managerialism resonate so clearly, lecturers may need to be more aware of the ways that emotion is utilised within this context.

**Discussion and conclusions**

The study set out to explore the emotional demands of female care lecturers working in a care department of a FE college and to evaluate the relevance of Hochschild’s (1983) model of emotional labour as a means for examining these emotional demands. This section briefly evaluates the relevance of applying this theory in this context. Utilising the concept was
found to be somewhat problematic and highlighted some of the operational challenges of applying Hochschild’s (1983) concepts.

Broadly the concept of emotional labour helped to illuminate the complexities of teaching within the care department as the study findings identified that the work involved both providing care and teaching care to students. Consequently, the concept helped to highlight the difficulties the lecturers found in distinguishing between these roles, and was also useful in identifying and conceptualising the main teaching performances with associated varying emotional demands. The influence of the wider sector was evident within these performances and, as such, manifested as organisational demands relating to the performance indicators of retention and achievement (which are linked to funding), and the influence of social inclusion policies emphasising emotional support. The analysis was complicated by other influences directly related to the underlying philosophies of the lecturers’ professional backgrounds and associated professional socialisation, however, the concept helped to illuminate that the care curriculum itself presented an emotional demand as it espouses the altruistic values of the care professions. While this may provide a critical edge to the analysis it is difficult to handle so many concepts at once. Colley’s (2006) work on the training of working class girls as carers was particularly useful for helping to illuminate this aspect. It is interesting to note that the concept of emotional labour is not taught as part of the care curriculum alongside the more altruistic humanistic skills of listening and empathic responding. It would appear that, in light of the literature on the creation and maintenance of gendered professional identities, by doing so may prepare young women more fully to understand not only the emotional demands of care work, but also provide a means to explore gendered socialisation processes.

The findings of this study found that teaching the care curriculum involves, through their interpersonal relations with their students, that lecturers espouse care values consistently; irrespective of the work intensification which has been brought about by the current audit culture within the sector. Therefore, the findings suggest that, the altruistic internalised care values of the care lecturers may provide a means for the exploitation of their emotional labour in the facilitation of college policies aiming to provide support to students with ‘complex’ needs. While it is difficult to assess whether, as Hochschild (1983) suggests, a transmutation of feelings occurs, her concept has undisputed value in making it impossible to negate the interconnectedness of the neoliberal workplace on worker emotional experience. Emotional labour theory undoubtedly provides a means to expose concealed and perhaps unrecognised aspects of the labour process, however, in order that the concept is operationalised in context, one perhaps needs to be prepared to come to terms with many uncertainties and contradictions. Critics of emotional labour theory have argued that it offers an incomplete explanation of the ways that emotions are used and exploited within organisations particularly in the case of professionals where workers are assumed to act with more autonomy (Bolton, 2005). Others argue that that emotional labour has the propensity to be satisfying (Koreynski, 2002; Bolton, 2005). However, these arguments appear to depoliticise Hochschild’s work by ignoring issues of control and autonomy within modern workplaces (Brook, 2009). Consequently, it is difficult not to become involved in a circular and complex argument. Hochschild’s (1983) model of emotions draws on biological, sociological and psychological conceptualisations of emotion. Perhaps the difficulties that are posed in operationalising the concept are partly due to the challenges of handling all of these ideas within one concept.

One of the benefits of applying the concept of emotional labour to this setting was that it helped to illuminate the interconnected aspects of emotions, teaching and the caring role of
the lecturers and ultimately these became a central and unified within the study’s findings. Also, the concept helped to specifically identify types of teaching performances (which were linked specifically to demands from the wider context), which, as such, may have remained hidden otherwise. Importantly, the concept helped to illuminate how each performance involved the active and strategic positioning of the student’s situation or motivation by the lecturer and how each of these positions may produce differing emotional display or genuine emotion. The ultimate value of this is it highlights the importance of an enhanced understanding of the use of and regulation of emotion in relation to contextual demands within this setting, utilising Hochschild’s model helped to understand the interconnected aspects of structure and identify the impact on the individual.

**Contribution made by this study**

While the findings of this small scale case study are perhaps unlikely to make an impact to theoretical debates surrounding the concept of emotional labour, the findings may be useful and relevant for care lecturers and the care curriculum itself. The study’s findings suggested that, on the occasions where care lecturers were able to feel genuine emotions toward students, this may negate the need to engage in more depersonalising surface or deep acting. Other studies have also discussed the utilisation of emotion within the caring professions and also raised the same issue (Bolton, 2003). However, as already discussed, it is difficult to (and important not to) separate context and worker emotion using emotional labour theory (Brooks, 2009). This has never been more pertinent, especially as the FE sector begins to intensify the implementation of austerity measures. This will undoubtedly intensify the work of FE lecturers and it is, therefore, important to consider the wider effects of such measures on the well-being of staff. As this case study was exploratory in nature, further research evaluating the extent to which the findings can be considered generalisable within and out-with the current context would be desirable.
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