

# [Dave barry’s where did my little girl go: puberty in girls](https://assignbuster.com/dave-barrys-where-did-my-little-girl-go-puberty-in-girls/)

[Society](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/society/), [Gender Socialization](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/society/gender-socialization/)

In a dynamic and competitive world of macro political power and interests, in which occupational groups gain and/or maintain professional standing based on the creation of legal boundaries that mark out the position of specific occupational groups –be they in accountancy and architecture or law and medicine. However, if this suggests that the process of professionalisation has differential socio-political dimensions, so too does the fact that not all learned occupations necessarily become professions.

This point is more recently underlined by the comparison of herbalism and acupuncture in England, where herbalists alone have been earmarked by government to gain legal closure through statutory regulation given a perceived need for greater public protection in this area – despite having equivalent knowledge and expertise and arguably less rigorous and unified occupational organisational structures to those of the acupuncturists(Saks 2011) on also needs to be paid to the ideological dimen-sions of professions above and beyond knowledge and expertise in understanding the success andfailureof professionalisation in defining professions.

This can be illustrated with reference to altruism, so often put forwardby taxonomic writers as a distinctive actual professional characteristic (Saks 1995). The case of herbalism and acupuncture underlines its potential importance, as the British government has

Saks: Defining a Profession: The Role of Knowledge and Expertisewww. professionsandprofessionalism. comPage6placed a heavy emphasis on the protection of the public in modernising thehealthprofessions (Baggott 2004).

However, the level of altruism of professions relative to other occupations –as distinct from the legitimating ideological claim itself –has rarely been systematically scrutinised. Interestingly, while a recent replicated Swedish survey of a range of professions, semi-professions and pre-professions –from lawyers to graphic designers –unusually analysed the amount of public trust given to such groups, it did not examine the relative position of non-professionalised occupations (Svensson 2011).

So who teaches on all of these courses? The FE college workforce has begun to emerge as a serious area of research interest, a process that has gathered pace during the last fifteen years or so as successive governments have sought to reform and regulate the workforce in different ways. During this period, FEteachertraining has been reformed, made compulsory and then returned to a voluntary activity. And FE teachers have been 'professionalised' and 're-professionalised'.

Over the last fifteen years, three entirely new sets of professional standards for teachers and trainers in the sector have in turn been consulted on, published, and mapped onto teacher-training curricula and staff appraisal systems. Continuing professional development has been mandated and then discarded. Mentoring and coaching have been introduced, although provision is uneven. One professional body – the Institute for Learning – came, briefly and rather unimpressively stayed, and then left, and a new professional organisation – the Society forEducationand Training – has recently emerged instead. Not without reason has the sector been characterised as undergoing endless change.

During the constant changes of the last fifteen years or so, the issue of teacherprofessionalismhas remained persistently troublesome. Different models or philosophies of professionalism jostle for space amongst contradictory policy discourses and initiatives. Do we want a qualified workforce or not? Do we want compulsory CPD? Should FE teaching also be a graduate – or equivalent – profession? Should part-time staff be required to have the same professional qualifications as full-time staff? Are professional standards or benchmarks a tool for professional development or for quality assurance, audit and performance management?
is it any wonder that meaningful discussions about what it means to be a professional teacher in FE remain difficult to pin down?

Questions such as these persist but are arguably absent from much of the day-to-day experience of teachers in the sector, perhaps pushed sideways by teaching and assessment requirements (it is not uncommon for a full-time FE teacher to deliver over 850 contact hours each year) and employment conditions (almost two-thirds of teachers in FE are on part-time contracts and the staff turnover rate for teachers is almost one in five (Education and Training Foundation, 2014)).

In a sector characterised by relatively high staff turnover, diversity in teacher profiles, backgrounds and experience, variable working conditions and constant changes to policy, is it any wonder that meaningful discussions about what it means to be a professional teacher in FE remain difficult to pin down?

The Post-Compulsory and Lifelong Learning SIG seeks to encourage research into not only questions such as these relating to teacher preparation and professionalism, but also into other areas relating to further education, adult and community education and work-based learning more generally, including the curriculum, the students and the organisations involved. Come and talk to us at the 2015 conference, or get in touch online.

## References

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But these are all much more than simply 'values' we should hold or aspire to. They are prescriptive expectations of colleges, teachers and their practice that are constantly monitored, measured and audited. Quality assurance is rife in FE, from OFSTED inspections, stakeholder and learner surveys and course audits, to staff appraisals, observations and close analysis of (mainly) quantitative data.

Smith (2016) points out that 'quality assurance systems with their SMART targets and 'measurable outcomes' are regrettably a commonplae feature in FE. That is something that should give us serious cause for concern'. He argues that when QA procedures are implemented in an unintelligent, managerialist way several things happen:

* Good quality teaching and learning is valued less and there is greater focus on the 'output' – the success rates, achievement levels or retention rates alone.
* The quality of educational relationships are undermined
* Extra-ordinary, life-changing relationships between teachers, students and knowledge lose value

This cycle of QA, auditing, control and measurement values and 'prioritises the knowledge of policy-makers and auditors, rather than the expertise of the professional teacher' (Pleasance, 2016, p. 75). OFSTED inspections (much reduced in terms of depth and scope) only contribute to these phenomena since they take statistical data as a starting point and a defining factor in their judgements (Smith, 2016).
So how do these conceptions of value and this heavy focus on QA impact me as a lecturer and on my learners?

Personal values, better described as 'the ethical bases of our actions and beliefs' (Bolton, 2014, p. 22) do change as we grow but are very deep seated and woven into our very being. Personal values drive our attitudes and actions, but we rarely stop to examine and question them.
Balancing personal values and principles with those of the organisation and external bodies can be difficult. I like to take a humanistic, holistic approach to teaching and my learners (this fits with my person-centred, humanistic approach in my professional counselling role).

I value my relationship with them, I want to make a difference, treat them with care, teach and behave with openness and integrity and help them leave the course with more than just a grade on a piece of paper. External and internal moderation systems, course evaluation and QA activities focus heavily on grades and achievement.

I also value achievement for my learners but believe that education is more than just a grade or qualification that prepares a learner to earnmoneyand contribute to the local and national economy. Ball (2004: 15) agrees, highlighting a worrying trend in education, suggesting the commodification of education is producing a system where 'beliefs and values are no longer important – it is output that counts'.