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**Docile Bodies? Foucault, Neoliberalism and FE Learner
Identities**

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M.A. (Philosophy); BA (Hons) (Communication Studies)

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Doctor of Education (Ed. D)

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Under the supervision of Dr Mark Murphy

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Abstract

The extent to which Neoliberalism is an influence on identity has emerged as a key question in academic debates. Alongside issues such as worker and professional forms of identity, this debate has found its way into analyses of learner identity, with much of the literature suggesting that Neoliberalism has extended its reach into the ways in which students perceive themselves and their place in institutional life. However, the debate so far has tended to ignore learner identities within the Further Education sector, tending instead to examine the impact of neoliberalism in schools and universities. The purpose of this research is to explore the institutional contexts of further education, and specifically college learner identity in a context of neoliberal developments. I utilised the work of Michel Foucault to help explore this topic, particularly his ideas on discipline and docility; the study also considers other Foucauldian concepts such as ‘biopower’ and ‘care of the self’.

This study found that there were degrees of docility evident as aspects of college learner identity, with this degree of docility resulting from college disciplinary practices. This research provides evidence that docility exists within further education that accords with Foucault’s four disciplinary techniques that shape identity: ‘the art of distributions; ‘the control of activity’; ‘the organisation of genesis’; and ‘the composition of forces’ (1977, pp.141-169). On top of this, what emerged from the study are three identifiable traits - flexibility, individualism and credentialism – that can be understood as almost typical manifestations of neoliberal culture. As a consequence of institutional controls, therefore, learners have become docile; nevertheless the *degree* of docility is dependent on the complex form of mediation between the learner and disciplinary practices.

The study shows that these forms of learner identity have developed from the learner’s mediation of pre-existing individual priorities, through to neoliberal college practices as well as the intersection between the two. These findings suggest that the ideas of Foucault, particularly his ideas on docility but also his later ideas on governmentality, are important conceptual tools for understanding learner identities. The forensic approach adopted in this study has a key contribution to make to the already existing strong literature base that adopts a Foucauldian take on educational learner identities. At the same time the findings illustrate that not everything can be explained using a Foucauldian approach and that the institutional context remains a key mediator between (social) theory and (professional) practice.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: ROBERT ALLAN

Signature:

Chapter One

Introduction and Context

1.1 Rationale of the Study

At the earliest stage of this study, I began by identifying a problem I would be interested in within education, enough so to commit to and carry out future years of research. Ledy and Omrod emphasise the elegant simplicity of this:

In virtually every subject area, our knowledge is incomplete and problems are waiting to be solved. We can address the holes in our knowledge and those unresolved problems by asking relevant questions and then seeking answers through systematic research (2005, p.1).

Having worked in Further Education for eighteen years as a lecturer and promoted lecturer, I centred on consideration of the rapid changes across the areas of technology, the economy, society, politics (local/national and global) and the environment, a context within which colleges sit. This was weighed up alongside the idea that learners can be affected by external change, with Burns claiming, for example, that the ‘future profile of learners is dramatically changing, even at the most basic level’ (2010, p.9). The general question that emerged from this thought process was the following: are colleges, as a key educational sector in Scotland, meeting the needs of its learners?

I proceeded to disaggregate this problem into its component parts and in doing so I was aware of the fact that even before the study of a topic could begin I was applying subjectivity to the process of inclusion and exclusion of potential lines of enquiry. I was guided by preconceived ideas and subjectivities and the unpacking of the problem could have led in many different directions. This was the beginning of a post-structural research approach, outlined in more detail below, of which the benefits to me are obvious. As Jahn and Dunne argue, within ‘scholarly and pragmatic sectors’ we should aim to ‘weave a new fabric’ that utilises ‘subjective qualities as much as objective’ and ‘aesthetic sensitivities as much as analytical logic’ (1997, p.222). In this process of unpacking the problem I

considered the following question which immediately arose: is there any common ground regarding learner needs in their specific contexts?

The context of learners is critical to their needs but complicated. Political and economic structures today have moved on in terms of the viability of theories or ideologies and arguably there are even more complicated political and economic realities than was the case at least throughout the early 20th century. Within the Humanities and Social Sciences there is also a context of competing perspectives such as Neoliberalism, Feminism, Liberalism, Marxism, Communitarianism, Cosmopolitanism, Postmodernism. Ideology too has not disappeared as both a concrete phenomenon and lens of analysis with Laclau declaring that notions relating to its demise 'are impossible dreams, ensuring that we will continue living in an ideological universe' (1996, p.220). While many will carry out research from within one of these perspectives, others are considering writers or concepts related to these positions as heuristic tools that can be used to test ideas. Many of the perspectives contain within them writers who agree on one major challenge to individuals and wider society: neoliberalism. There is growing concern over neoliberalism as a significant force, economically and normatively, on individuals and society. Various writers, as a result of its perceived influence, have sketched a crisis for learners and citizens with evocative language. Giroux describes the 'terror' of neoliberalism (2005) and later describes its violence (2014) while Bauman uses the metaphor of the 'tourist' to describe modern individuals who are in but not of the place where they are situated (1996).

However, in academia, journalism or public life there is a great deal of inconsistent management of the term where it appears. Neoliberalism is veiled and not referred to at all when it should or could be; it is at times referred to without justification as a branding exercise or erroneously by its supporters; it is met with scepticism even concerning the question of its existence especially outside of academia (it is rarely discussed at any level within Further Education); and more crucially it is gaining academic attention but relative to the scale of the issue is underexplored and under researched. One of the most important areas where further study of its impact is needed is education and the ways in which neoliberalism affects learners. In their study of education policy in relation to globalization, Olssen argues that the process of democracy in liberal democratic states is being 'eroded'. It is education they argue that is key to a 'strong civil society based on

norms of trust and active responsible citizenship' which in turn will ensure 'a deep and robust democracy at a national level' (2004, p.82). There are countless areas of potential enquiry in relation to this challenge but it is the work of Michel Foucault and particularly his ideas on discipline and docility that have been used in this study as a heuristic device to approach the impact of neoliberalism on learner identity.

1.2 Utilising Foucault

As an antidote to often successful but at times worn-out structuralist approaches, Foucault's ideas provide fresh direction, unearthing relevant factors and possibilities that could otherwise remain hidden. Foucault is highly sceptical of the rationalism that followed Immanuel Kant's work on the question of the Enlightenment which has supported a sagacity that is 'crisscrossed by intrinsic dangers' (1984, p.249). When interviewed, Foucault gave the example of Social Darwinism and the racism that followed, including Nazism, that although irrational, 'was at the same time, after all, a certain form of rationality' (ibid., p.249). Foucault argues:

The relationship between rationalization and excesses of political power is evident. And we should not need to wait for bureaucracy or concentration camps to recognize the existence of such relations. But the problem is: What to do with such an evident fact? (1982, p.779).

Foucault recognises the useful work carried out by the Frankfurt School in investigating this kind of rationalism but offers his own alternative approach to understanding the connection between rationalisation and power. Instead of examining power at the level of the state on society and individuals, Foucault favours what could be described as a disaggregated analysis of diffuse manifestations of power. As Foucault explains:

It may be wise not to take as a whole the rationalization of society or of culture but to analyze such a process in several fields, each with reference to a fundamental experience: madness, illness, death, crime, sexuality, and so forth (1982, p.779).

One such field Foucault's concepts were intended to be used for is the fundamental experience of education with its institutions such as schools, colleges and universities. Foucault uses the example of an educational institution to elaborate and states:

the disposal of its space, the meticulous regulations which govern its internal life, the different activities which are organized there, the diverse persons who live there or meet one another, each with his own function, his well-defined character-all these things constitute a block of capacity communication- power (1982, p.786).

The educational institution then is said by Foucault to contain a disciplinary matrix of control that appears to be highly deterministic. Within this structure exercises are said to be carried out on individuals through micro-processes. Individual identity is thus shaped by 'a whole ensemble of regulated communications (lessons, questions and answers, orders, exhortations, coded signs of obedience, differentiation marks of the 'value' of each person and of the levels of knowledge) and by the means of 'a whole series of power processes (enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, the pyramidal hierarchy)' (ibid., p.786).

Crucially, Foucault acknowledges the fact that power is not *just* diffuse when he argues that state power is both 'individualising' and 'totalizing' (ibid., p.782). The dual pressures at the micro and macro level are explored and applied in this study through Foucault's ideas in relation to micro processes that create docility; alongside biopower's influence stemming from macro level priorities that control individuals by instilling an individually managed and refined auto-discipline that Foucault further developed with his concept 'care of the self'. This study does not end here though as questions emerge in relation to possible responses by individuals to the dual processes of governmentality: discipline and biopower. In response to both totalization and individualization pressures, Foucault offers an alternative to the strategies which search for answers to the question of who we are when he states, 'Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are' (ibid., p.785). Instead of confining our goal to liberation from the state and its institutions, Foucault suggests 'We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries' (ibid., p.785). Foucault's belief was that instead of viewing critique as a statement of things not being good as they are, it 'consists in seeing on what type of assumptions, of

familiar notions, of established, unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based' (2001, p.456). This study focuses on Foucault's earlier work for two main reasons. Firstly, docility is still being referred to empirically within educational research but with further education under explored. Secondly, it is only by examining Foucault's earlier work in Further Education that his later work, which doesn't replace conceptions of coercion but adds to them, and is also under explored in the sector, can be introduced. Foucault's concepts of resistance and parrhesia are therefore also included within the scope of this study and use of Foucault's analytical concepts as tools for research.

1.3 Research Questions

The following questions then emerge and it is hoped responses to these will pave the way to improving our understanding of the relationship between neoliberalism and learner identity:

- Are learners docile?
- Does neoliberalism affect learners and if so in what ways?
- Does neoliberalism rely on docility?
- Can learners resist?

Further Education learners have been selected as the focus of this research. Recent reform has seen Further Education in Scotland significantly affected by Government policies that themselves have been influenced, at least partly, by global pressures. Change to the sector includes the regionalisation of funding tied to more detailed targets, replacing individual college funding, strong encouragement from government for the merging of colleges within regions alongside increased emphasis on employability, certification and the targeting of young learners (16-24). For decades now colleges have helped many learners gain entry to employment directly, study Higher Education qualifications or progress on to University education. The sector has traditionally recruited from across demographic categories including areas of deprivation and learners of all ages above 16. It has supported learners with extended learning support needs and it has commonly been seen as providing individuals with a 'second chance' to gain the education and qualifications needed to flourish in society. It is possible that many college learners from lower income backgrounds go in to further education with narrower experiences of culture and society compared with more affluent learners. Further Education is a crucial sector therefore to

many learners who have some degree of vulnerability yet it is by far the least studied sector in it academic research. As the question around academic neglect narrows to consider the topic and subject of study, it becomes clear that an exploration of neoliberalism's impact on college learner identity is an area with very little if anything already written.

1.4 Researcher Context

For various reasons I have been able to settle into a period of professional development with the Ed. D but in a way that recognises the programme as an end in itself, with study and research experience as the prize. The six years of study have involved, throughout, the rigorous exploration of areas related to education that have been practically and theoretically beneficial to my own developing practice. An increased awareness of ideas and research on topics such as critical reflection, ethics, policy studies and futures analysis have broadened my understanding of educational concerns and developments. Also, specifically in relation to my own role in further education, I wanted to explore the contested topic of neoliberalism which I believe to be hugely influential on the FE sector I have been a part for over 18 years. My aim was to introduce and highlight this aspect of power relations within FE discourse in Scotland but I wanted to focus on learners because too often studies have focused on practitioners. I also wanted to carry out empirical research beyond solely a conceptual study for various reasons: it would be direct in its approach to an uncharted area; it would through its methods provide its own architecture to a complex area of research and it would explore identity by drawing from learners themselves their experiences, dispositions and opinions.

As a practitioner, as well as having taught Media, Communication, English and Philosophy I have had a strong interest in the personal development of college learners. I have tried over the years to fill gaps in the curriculum with rich examples that I believed would benefit individuals in relation to their studies and wider life. With a colleague I helped create a film festival that ran for 10 years with professional screenings; I formed an Amnesty international student group, which developed its own radio show and saw members receive training in Edinburgh and London; I organised learner engagement activities such as the college football club when one did not exist; and I organised speakers from areas that did not tend to gain access to the mainstream media including Human Rights activists who had experienced injuries from shootings while in the Gaza

Strip and other Palestinian territories. I also liaised with an organisation who campaigned for the creation of a Spanish Civil War memorial for Scottish volunteers in Lanarkshire and worked with students to create events, awareness and financial support for this.

However, perhaps largely as a result of my own discipline and background in cultural studies and philosophy, as well as my increasing awareness of educational contexts through ED. D study, I have wrestled with the tension between indoctrination and development. In my role as Assistant Head of Faculty within a further education college, I am a promoted lecturer who also supports the Head of Faculty in the operational implementation of college strategy within a large department that exceeds 3000 learners. As part of my role, I am professionally involved in the promotion of wider 'soft' skills as a member of College Development Network's Essential Skills Advisory Group. I have been involved in vetting SQA Essential Skills qualifications and national Skills for Progression events. I have also provided advice to organisations such as those who are developing skills evaluation tools for learners. In these roles I have critically reflected on the context and origins of policy ideas in relation to learner development and wrestled with questions regarding the extent to which sector developments benefit learners or utilised them within larger systems concerned with economic or neoliberal priorities. I am therefore interested in the question of what counts as legitimate control within education.

1.5 Overview of Dissertation

This study begins with a review of the literature on neoliberalism, education and an examination of Foucault's concepts regarding discipline, docility and resistance. This is followed by a chapter on methodology that lays out the reasons for a post-structural research approach to exploring the question of learner docility, alongside specific methods of interviews, a focus group discussion and ethical considerations. Chapter four then presents the findings from the empirical study of fifteen participants within an unnamed further education college. The structure of this section is based around Foucault's four disciplinary techniques that he argues combine to create docile bodies. Chapter five then discusses the four techniques in relation to the institution but also considers neoliberal influences much wider than the college alongside possibilities for resistance.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

There are a number of aims within this chapter, including the exploration of the influential sweep of Neoliberalism and its apparent impact on education and learners, as well as an examination of Foucault's ideas in relation to discipline and the creation of docile bodies. Although there is ontological disagreement regarding learner selves including whether or not there is even a central core identity, there is broader consensus that effects on a self (or imagined self) are possible. It is Foucault's developing ideas that are used as theoretical tools to help understand the impact of neoliberalism on learner identities and explore the question: are learners docile? Michel Foucault's genealogy of Discipline, written during his middle/late period within *Discipline and Punish* but generally regarded as part of his 'earlier' ideas, is an essential resource in the study of individuals and identity. His later work on Biopower is useful too in its extension from the individual towards macro level control with his work on care of the self and parrhesia allowing us to return to the individual after considering disciplinary controls that can become codified at the macro level. Moreover, Further Education, as a key tertiary sector within Scottish education, has seldom been examined with the tools and insights that Foucault can bring to our understanding of the obstacles and constraints that individuals face within education.

This literature review begins by examining neoliberalism, beginning with consideration of its historical context, a useful first step in understanding Foucault's subtle treatment of neoliberalism later in the review. The pervasiveness of neoliberalism will be identified before discussing its impact on education where it will be clarified as an area that is subject to its dominance. With the extent of its reach established, key thinkers' ideas on the effects neoliberalism is having on the self will be discussed with a range of descriptive qualities ascribed to individuals in the current age, often pejorative, emerging from these views.

The focus of the second section of the chapter is largely on the work of Michel Foucault, whose ideas in the area of discipline, neoliberalism, care of the self and parrhesia provides a critical resource for the study of the effects of neoliberalism on individuals within

education. Foucault's toolbox of concepts will be considered with learner docility as one possible consequence of disciplinary processes within further education. Foucault's idea that four specific techniques discipline the individual to the extent that people are rendered docile will be inspected with reference to Foucault's own work and the application of his ideas, particularly within education studies. These four techniques are: 'the art of distributions; 'the control of activity'; 'the organisation of genesis'; and 'the composition of forces' (1977, pp.141-169). The discussion then turns to Foucault's concept of Biopower, found in his later work, which considers both the influence of power over life but also of life. This saw the development and refinement of his earlier ideas on discipline alongside an emphasis on the care of the self and parrhesia that occupied him until his death. Learner identity is an extremely complex area of study but Foucault's thought in these areas will be used to apply theory to the method of improving our understanding of learner identity within education, through empirical, post-structural, research.

2.2 Neoliberalism – A Brief History

Neoliberalism's history is complex, from use of the term in the 1930s to its resurgence in the 1970s. To focus firstly on the latter and the modern application, neoliberalism was a response to Keynesian inspired economic structures alongside the Bretton Woods economic system, which was created in 1944 and provided the paradigm for the global economy until the 1970s. Thatcher's Britain and Reagan's U.S.A. openly feted the neoliberal philosopher economists F.A. Hayek and Milton Friedman, now regarded as the key thinkers behind a new wave of political economy characterised by, 'neoliberal orthodoxy; deregulation and liberalization of government policy and establishment of highly integrated private transnational systems of alliances'; and 'privatisation and marketization' (Olssen, 2004, p.241). Hayek's position, for example, was based on his notion of individualism opposed to 'the social' and the influence of the interventionist state. Instead of big government, Hayek preferred laissez faire capitalism that created the arena for individuals to flourish or fail according to effort (and admittedly for many neoliberals, fortune). Stuart Hall elaborates on the relationship between the state and the individual from his understanding of a neoliberal's perspective:

The state must never govern society, dictate to free individuals how to dispose of their property, regulate a free-market economy or interfere with the God-given right to make profits and amass personal wealth (2011, p.706).

Both the origins of neoliberalism and its perpetuation can be traced to nation states and their connection to global institutions. Davies and Bansel (2007) assert that:

The advent of neoliberalism extends to those capitalist countries participating in the global economy, and its impacts are more widely geographically dispersed through the activities of such groups as the World Bank and the IMF (p.247).

However, it has also been possible for neoliberal ideas to become dominant due to the support shown by international governments and subsequent amendments to the practice and policies of global authorities such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. As Olssen argues, 'neoliberalism structures the character of globalising processes already taken place' (2004, p.241). The connection to global authorities mean that the autonomy of nation states is being eroded. The state's influence is rapidly being reduced in the modern age to the extent that 'Autonomous regional and global agencies will replace the state in relation to specific areas of control' (ibid., p.243).

Neoliberalism is seemingly contradictory given its purported status because it manages to avoid analysis in places where there should perhaps be reference made to it. Davies and Bansel (2007) highlight the challenge this creates due to a 'diffuse and largely invisible installation of neoliberal technologies and practices'. This then means that it takes a considerable degree of vigilance 'to make the constitutive force of neoliberalism open to analysis' (p.249). Neoliberalism's quiet and even potentially apocryphal status has been highlighted with the Guardian newspaper revealing in August 2017 that, despite views to the contrary, it does in fact exist and indeed has 'Swallowed the World'. This was confirmed, the article stated, when the IMF addressed neoliberalism directly in its Finance and Development article: 'Neoliberalism: oversold?' (Metcalf, 18/08/17). Studies have shown that neoliberalism's development has been no organic accident but has been brought about to suit certain interests 'concertedly financed and engineered by those with a great deal to gain financially from the resulting labour practices and flows of capital' (Davies and Bansel, 2007, p.248).

It is important to point out, however, that there is no straightforward, top down, neoliberal ideology being imposed smoothly by global organisations on to regional and national approaches to education. Verger et al argue that instead of placing all international organisations in the one category 'we observe that they express divergent and even

rivalling education agendas' (2012, p.13). Moreover, against the idea of a simple imposition of neoliberal globalisation, regional organisations too are gaining increasing influence on education within nation states. Olssen argues that 'Regionalisation makes the relationship of the nation-state to globalisation more complex' with constraints on the nation-state that 'erode and confirm its sovereignty in important respects' (2004, p.10). Regional organisations themselves even differ fundamentally with important divergence between the European Union, APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) and NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) in certain key areas. As Hall states, 'Neo-liberalism has many variants. It is not a single system. And by no means all capitalisms are neo-liberal' (2011, p.708). To add to such complexity, even neoliberal principles themselves are breached in order to maintain its force:

Since the meltdown of 2007-8 even quasi-Keynesian measures have been tried, such as spending huge amounts of public ('taxpayers') money to save banks in neoliberal regimes...Neoliberalism is nothing if not contradictory (McGuigan, 2014, p.225).

Olssen traces the development of neoliberal ideas alongside specific, distinct but related global economic developments aligned to similar general principles. Transaction Cost Economics, with Agency Theory, Property Rights Theory and Public Choice Theory, are collectively represented as part and parcel of the New Institutional Economics (NIE) or of New Public Management (NPM) (2004, pp.2579-2582).

There are many other reasons behind the emergence of neoliberal ideas: some accidental; others contextual to circumstances across regions, nations and communities. What is clear, however, is that the neoliberal influence is strengthening, as Hall informs us:

Nevertheless, geo-politically, neo-liberal ideas, policies and strategies are incrementally gaining ground globally, re-defining the political, social and economic models and the governing strategies, and setting the pace (2011, p.708).

The common language and practices are finding their way, albeit through mediated processes, into the fabric and practices of nation states and its institutions. This goes beyond a simple erosion of the welfare state. As Davies and Bansel (2007) argue, this has resulted in 'apparatuses and knowledges through which people are reconfigured as productive economic entrepreneurs of their own lives' leading to the creation of 'homo-economicus' (p.248).

2.3 Normative and Economic Effects in Education

To begin generally, Davies and Bansel (2007) state that ‘Neoliberal discourse constitutes a set of relations among government, society and the individual’ (p.253). This has replaced the dominant discourse that existed when the Keynesian economic system has been seen to be ‘working well’. In the 1960s and 1970s, institutions such as schools and colleges were invested in with the aim of increasing ‘human capital’. This was based on the belief at the time that economic growth results from improvements in the ‘quality of capital and labour’. Neoliberalism, however:

withdraws value from the social good. Economic productivity is seen to come not from government investment in education but from transforming education into a product that can be bought and sold like anything else’ (2007, p.254).

The policies and practices that stem from neoliberal rhetoric across government, society and the individual such as ‘the information economy’, ‘the knowledge economy’, ‘globalisation’, ‘flexibility’, ‘mutual obligation’ and ‘enterprise’ result in consequences that affect education. Public institutions that were ‘essential to collective well-being’ were now reconstituted as ‘part of the market’ (ibid., p.254).

It is important here to outline the relationship between neoliberalism and education because complications arise when examining any impact of neoliberalism on education without a definition or explanation. As Rowlands and Rawolle caution us, the failure to spell out what is meant when we discuss neoliberalism, ‘ensures that we risk being misunderstood or referenced in ways which are contrary to our original intentions’. (2013, p.269). Peters states that the neoliberal impact on education has been derived less from economic affairs and more so from normative developments ‘through an intensification of moral regulation rather than through an overall reduction of levels of welfare and education spending in real terms’ (2009, p.59). Peters goes on to provide five related features of neoliberalism. Firstly, there is the promotion of an ‘enterprise culture’ and the concept of the ‘entrepreneurial self’. Then, economic models pervade ‘all processes of voluntary agreement among persons’ (Peters argues here this is known in education circles by Gary Becker’s Human Capital theory). Thirdly, there is the ‘neoliberal revival of homo economicus, based on assumptions of individuality, rationality and self-interest, as an all-embracing redescription of the social as a form of the economic’. Then, there is the relationship between government and management or what in Further Education has been

described as a New Managerialism. Finally, there now exists the ‘degovernmentalisation of the state’ including ‘consumer driven’ education. (ibid., pp.68, 69).

This view, however, is not strictly or universally shared. Ball, for example, appears to argue the case for a conflicting impact of neoliberalism, emphasising the economic over the normative,

In all of this education is a service commodity, or is real estate (buildings and infrastructure), or a brand, alongside any other commodity or capital asset and is treated accordingly...In the world of business shareholders, investors and stock market value, profitability is what counts in the final analysis (2012, p.24).

For Ball, education policy is written not with any argumentation or democratic processes with normative debate, ‘Education policy, education reform are no longer simply a battleground of ideas, they are a financial sector, increasingly infused by and driven by the logic of profit (2012: 27). Olssen, however, draws attention to the ideas of neoliberalism’s founders who see normative preferences within the economic model and a process of ‘catallaxy’; that is, of the voluntary exchange of goods and services between competing individuals. Lying behind such an analysis is a strong normative commitment to free-market individualism which provides a common rationality linking the economic and political worlds (2012, pp.16).

Despite regional variance and national differences in the absorption of neoliberal ideology, the adherence of global organisations, the global economic market and corporations to neoliberal orthodoxy makes any variance increasingly difficult to maintain. As Hall argues, ‘Today, popular thinking and the systems of calculation in daily life offer very little friction to the passage of its ideas’ (2011, p.728). Henry Giroux, similarly observes ‘a new form of authoritarianism’ resulting in a ‘revolution in which the welfare state is being liquidated, along with the collective provisions that supported it’ (Giroux, 2014).

A difficulty for individuals, authorities, governments and regional organisations, in at least having the ability to mediate and negotiate neoliberal proposals, can be traced to its success for a privileged, wealthy and influential minority. As Giroux states,

I don't believe the system is broken. I think it works well, but in the interest of very privileged and powerful elite economic and political interests that are aggressively waging a war on democracy itself (Giroux, 2014).

2.4 Scottish Further Education

The specific focus of this study is the Scottish Further Education Sector and to understand its current context it is important to recall its recent history. The most significant reform, prior to the most recent changes to FE, took place alongside the fundamental financial review of all public sector institutions, after the global oil crises and their impact on national finances in the 1980s. Watson and Crossley state that, 'In the FE sector, as with much of the public service during the 1980s, the core mission was reconceptualized in terms of a market ethos' (2001, p.113). Prior to devolution, this 'mission' was crystallised by the introduction of the Education Reform Act (1988) and the Further and Higher Education Act (1992). This legislation led to the incorporation of colleges, a term regarded by many as a misnomer because it led to colleges' independence from local authority funding and control towards strategic focused organisations with a 'new managerialism' emerging to help college senior management teams cope with shifting foci. Watson and Crossley state that, 'The new competitive model was primarily concerned with the enterprising college, income generation, local competition and survival in the market-place' (ibid., p.114).

The FE sector that emerged was criticised from various quarters. As Canning argued, 'Rather than a liberating or egalitarian force for change, initial post-16 education expansion, based upon simple notions of economic instrumentalism and the marketisation of education, are reinforcing existing social and occupational inequalities' (1999, p.192). O'Donnell describes the 'dominance of neo-liberalism' within FE due to its 'unshakeable faith in the benefits of the free market, competition and individual freedom from what was considered to be overbearing state interference' (2018, p.63). O'Donnell points out that this hard-edged neoliberalism gave up some ground to New Labour's 'Third Way Politics' from the late nineties onwards, where the priorities of market and completion remained but were melded with a reinvigoration of 'equity and social justice' (ibid., p.64). Although these priorities were constant and pervaded FE in Scotland, each college forged its own path leaving a complicated general development of FE in Scotland. As O'Donnell describes it, 'diverse contexts of practice flourished, making it increasingly challenging to

find a consensus on the role and identity of the FE sector' (ibid., p.64). However, following Scottish Devolution the Scotland Act 1998 gave the country legislative power over its own education, which was to eventually result in further reform of Further Education from within its borders.

It was with the SNP's election as the majority government in 2011 that reform of the further education sector could be advanced. By 2010/11 Scottish colleges were being asked to cope with financial cuts and more radical cuts were implemented in 2012-13 which arguably helped pave the way for further policy reform. The Scottish Parliament Information Centre Briefing (SPICe) stated, 'Funding reached a ten year peak in 2010-11 and is now falling. Although there is a small cash terms increase in the draft budget for 2013/14 compared with the 2012/13 draft budget, the overall trend is one of reduced resources' (2012a, p.3). In fact, after revision, FE was restricted to a cash terms reduction from the revised budget of £518.3m in 2012/13 to £496.8m in 2013/14 (2012a, p.7). Although Higher Education has seen similar sharp cuts in Capital funding, resource funding has steadily increased and will continue to do so (although in cash and not in real terms): £926 million in 11-12; 1002 million in 12-13; 1042 million in 13-14; 1062 million in 14-15 (2012b, p.5).

It was a series of key policies that would significantly reform the sector though, particularly, 'The Report of the Review of Further Education Governance in Scotland,' (Scottish Government, January 2012), also referred to as the Griggs Review alongside the policy response 'Reinvigorating College Governance: the Scottish Response to the Report of the Review of Further Education Governance in Scotland', (Scottish Government, 2012). Two further key documents were the consultations 'Putting Learners at the Centre: Delivering our Ambitions for Post-16 Education' (Scottish Government, 2011a) and 'Regionalisation: Proposals for Implementing Putting Learners at the Centre' (Scottish Government, 2011b). The Griggs review recommended significant reform within Scottish FE and its two main aims, as summarised by O'Donnell were ambitious. The first was to ensure 'an appropriate level of democratic accountability'; and secondly, 'to examine the structure of college governance and make recommendations for sector wide change that would support the role of colleges in economic and social development' (2018, p.65).

The most far-reaching measure targeting both of these aims was the recommendation that colleges should merge where appropriate and possible. This was not technically a diktat to college boards and Principals but regionalisation and merger as beneficial and preferable was reinforced by the government's response document so that the amount of colleges has been reduced from 37 in 2012 to 20 in 2014-15 (Audit General Report: Scotland's Colleges, April 2015). As the then Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning stated, 'Most colleges are working towards merger. I welcome that because colleges of significant size can lead to better outcomes for students and greater efficiency' (Scottish Government 2012, p.1). As the Government's later document, 'Overview of College Regionalisation Plans' states more fully, 'Regional strategic bodies' will be formed (assuming the Bill goes through) which performs a similar, more local, role to the SFC – that is, it will allocate funding that has been distributed to the region to its regional colleges (2013, p.3). Scottish Government also aim to have new powers to 'remove board members', issue guidance on the appointment of board members and give directions to the SFC and regional strategic bodies 'if an assigned college is being mismanaged financially' (2013, p.6). The overall message in PLATC, and in the document Summary of Government Plans for College Governance (26/07/2012) is one of much greater intervention by Scottish Government in the control of Scottish Colleges.

In a subjective Ministerial Foreword, a 'vision' early on in the document PLATC is revealed as involving a post 16 education sector which improves 'life chances' 'outcomes' and 'research' but which also 'maximises its contribution to sustainable economic growth for Scotland' (2011, p.5). The document goes into detail regarding Further Education a little further on when it states, 'We suggest the fundamental role of further education is to provide people with the skills they need to get a job (however far they are from the labour market), keep a job, or get a better job and develop a good career' (ibid.:10). The Scottish Government also states that it is choosing its own route, 'we want to deliver a unique Scottish solution' (ibid., p.5). The question of the extent to which Scottish education is unique, however, requires examination in the global context.

Globalisation, firstly, is arguably the most significant factor that makes the neoliberal extensive reach possible. Olssen distinguishes between two senses of globalisation: what he terms 'Globalisation I' and 'Globalisation II'. The former involves 'a high degree of global interconnectedness, as a consequence of changes in science and technology'; the latter, arguably more relevant to neoliberalism involves 'a discursive system, pursued at

the policy level by powerful states and international capital' (2004, p.240). Olssen describes the discursive system's features as involving the replacement of the Keynesian inspired international economic Bretton Woods agreement with 'neoliberal orthodoxy; deregulation and liberalization of government policy and establishment of highly integrated private transnational systems of alliances'; and 'privatisation and marketization' (ibid., p.241).

There is not the scope within this study to trace the influence on Scottish education by global institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. However, it is worth considering even briefly here the next tier down in this macro structure of control. In their article, Robertson & Dale (2002) clarify the idea of globalization in ways that help them to analyse the role of regional organisations in education. The authors arrive at the assertion that there are fundamental differences between the organisations. Regional organisations are not 'uniformly influential in the education field but vary considerably with very different social, political, and economic consequences' (ibid., p20). The EU differs from more neoliberal influenced regional organisations such as NAFTA in its approach to education. Crucially, in relation to the extent to which proposed reform to FE improves education, life and work in Scotland, the EU goes further than its economic agreement with an additional social and political focus. This emphasis has been consolidated by EU strategy explicitly highlighting the need to raise learning standards. Unlike NAFTA, the EU has a high degree of 'regionness' (ibid., p.13). However, the EU is limited to 'supporting and supplementing' national education (ibid., p.17). With the EU, 'subsidiarity' is an important principle that is not adhered to by NAFTA. It involves 'delegation to the lowest possible level of governance' (ibid., p18). The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) is the recent development in this vein. Interestingly, an 'anticipatory' effect concentrates the energies of those wishing to join the EU to adopt its policies and practices (ibid., p.18). However, current debates regarding the UK's relationship with the EU involves a more complicated interpretation and reaction to distance created between the UK and the EU.

Overall, these regional factors would indicate a degree of mitigation against global neoliberal forces which filters down to F.E and the national level in Scotland. However, the governance structure put forward in PLATC is not a world away from the one preferred by the new Conservatives. Exley and Ball (2011) argue that with 'new conservatism' we are seeing 'a classic unstable mix of freedom for schools and surveillance over them – a

version of autonomy and responsibility' (2011, p.102). There is a reminder here of the Scottish Government's interventionism in FE through the implementation of regionalisation. This hegemonic structure may enfold regional boards into adherence and allegiance to Government priorities but at the expense of needs that are local to the community campuses or colleges in particular towns previously met by college leaders and lecturers located in one main community college campus. This extra layer means that upward/downward communication of needs will arguably be more difficult with a regional board in charge, effectively hired and fired by Government, notably fired for 'financial' mismanagement and not any other sort (PLATC, 2013, p.6).

Ball seems to explain the contradiction regarding the interventionism of state in Scottish education which historically has been anathema to the philosophy of laissez faire neoliberalism (as noted by Verger above) and economically motivated actions by Scottish government that seem typically neoliberal. Neoliberalism is reinforced by the state which is 'increasingly involved in facilitating, extending and managing markets. This includes replacing state organisations with voluntary, social-purpose or profit organisations, the contracting out of services' (Ball, 2012, p.25). This is a feature of modern neoliberalism in the United Kingdom and perhaps explains the creation of regional boards who will take on much of the burden of the government's own SFC. It is possibly the case that Further Education is vulnerable to the danger of policy formation being sutured into neoliberal economic ideology. It is a vocational sector that traditionally involves direct links with employment needs and wishes from both the private and the increasingly privatised public sector. The risk here is that alternative needs, based equitably around education, life and work are stifled.

2.5 College and Employer Demands on Learners

The college context for learners has been described in bleak terms. Bauman argues that education must cope with a 'liquid-modern' times that delivers 'heavy blows to the very essence of the idea of education as it was formed' (2003, p.19). This can take many forms but one is the potentially rapid change to job types that will require transferable skills rather than stable, skilled labour, 'By one popular estimate, 65% of children entering primary school today will ultimately end up working in completely new job types that don't yet exist' (The World Economic Forum, 2016). To better understand the predicament learners face it is necessary to examine closely the concept of flexibility.

Costello summarises flexibility practices as focused on the individual development of employability skills, which constitutes a 'central slogan'. This means individual responsibility is required 'to be continuously trained and adapted to labour-market needs, thus attributing unemployment to individual deficiencies' (2001, p.3). Costello traces the official justification for neoliberal flexibility to European legislation, particularly in 1997 when European Employment Guidelines were adopted 'with principles of employability, adaptability, entrepreneurship and equal opportunities' alongside the EU publication of documents such as 'Modernising and Improving Social Protection in the EU', which shifted the focus towards employment friendly protections' and the statement that employers' flexible approaches should be supported (ibid., p.3). The UK government and even UK trade unions, Costello argues, conceded ground to these principles, with the latter seeking to 'accommodate the casualization regimes rather than resist them', although the resistance of workers has slowed the progress of this shift to an extent (ibid., p.7).

In addition to the legislative support for these principles, especially recently, has been the impact of the economic crisis which has accelerated the establishment of flexibility as the norm. Hill states that unemployment and under-employment in the form of 'shorter hours and worsened conditions' have led to 'varieties of super-exploitation, notably through intensified casualization' (2015, p.44). It should be highlighted though that excessive emphasis on the economic collapse of 2008 should be avoided because as Howell advises us 'it only made visible tendencies that can be traced back into the 1980s and 1990s' (2015, p.586). Further Education learners, for the short period they are at college relative to the duration of school and University programmes, are inextricably engaged with the flexible working environment. If a learner fails assessments then withdrawal can result, or, if she passes but does not achieve the entry requirements for another course or University programme, employment, or unemployment, beckons. The individual's predicament regarding potential unemployment should therefore be emphasised. According to Bauman the traditional notion of being unemployed was bad enough as 'a temporary affliction that can and shall be cured'. However, in liquid times, 'redundancy' is the more appropriate term for Bauman, which captures 'being rejected, branded as superfluous, useless, unemployable and doomed to remain 'economically inactive' (2013, p.69).

Neoliberal performativity has emerged as a key feature of educational practices with Ball particularly prolific in relation to tutor pressures, however, learner performativity has been, relatively, overlooked. Wilkins has argued that citizens that ‘militate against complacency, revere competitiveness, tolerate precarity and evince flexibility are precisely those individuals who fit into the coordinates of neoliberal performativity’ (2012, p.207). The term ‘performativity’ can be traced largely to Austin who explored connections between speech or communication and action. Judith Butler has augmented her use of Foucault’s concepts with the role of performativity in the social formation and maintenance of gender categories. Goffman’s development of performativity has also influenced our understanding of the dramaturgical façade we display when we interact to the extent that we become what we project. Interestingly, given the previous discussion of fluidity, Goffman compares this to static trades, where it is only ‘ceremony’ that is visible:

there is the dance of the grocer, of the tailor, of the auctioneer, by which they endeavour to persuade their clientele that they are nothing but a grocer, an auctioneer, a tailor...society demands that he limits himself to his function as a grocer (1959, p.76).

Lyotard’s interest in performativity is particularly pertinent to this study with his belief in an epistemological shift, as Jeffrey and Troman summarise as an alteration of the ‘pursuit of knowledge’ which has changed into ‘something whose use value is paramount rather than a value in itself – a postmodern condition’ (2011, p.485).

Two dimensions to performativity have emerged which draw from its early contributors, both related to identity: the first refers to data based quantitative measures with learner identity shaped by, at times, intense benchmarking to the other; the second refers to emotional and dramaturgical performance in everyday interaction. The key feature of performativity to note though is the artifice involved, ‘neoliberal performativity is less an act of spontaneity and autonomy...and more of a re-enactment of and adjustment to socially and politically ascribed norms’ (Wilkins 2012, p.199). Much of Ball’s analytic and empirical work has been focused on teachers and educators across sectors where performativity is a ‘culture and a mode of regulation’. Ball quotes Lyotard’s description of this culture as a ‘system of terror’, which utilises ‘judgements, comparisons and displays as means of control, attrition and change’ (2000, p.1). MacFarlane, however, believes this extends to learners, ‘Student performativity is the mirror image of teacher performativity. It is just the targets and the performance indicators that differ’ (2015, p.338). Although

tutors have a variety of measures, targets and performance indicators, learners are also measured against:

attendance registers, assessment-related proxies for attendance such as in-class tests and presentations, the use of anti-plagiarism software and requirements to sign statements testifying to authorship when students submit assignments for assessment (2015, p.338).

2.6 Identity and the Neoliberal Self

The idea of the learner self in education has had much literature devoted to it with conflicting perspectives regarding what if anything constitutes the self. The essentialist view that has guided many educators since modernity has not disappeared. Bonnett describes this view as sitting ‘loosely in the tradition of liberal-humanist theory of an on-going pre-existing self that lies at the centre of its world’ (2009, p.359). The impact of the environment on the young person is not new:

The existence of an ‘inner’ realm that could be impacted by an ‘outer’ realm was the conceptual scaffolding necessary for the increased debate over child-rearing and the nature and order of studies from the late 1600s onwards’ (Baker, 2010, p.280).

However, while the essentialist view has been critiqued by those wishing to highlight social, cultural and economic forces that condition the individual, others have attempted to go further and undermine the very existence of a self, central to the individual. Anti-essentialists (drawn from postmodernists, deconstructionists, psychoanalysts, feminists and others) question the fixed concept of the child or individual, replacing this with an essence free person, shaped variably, depending on which anti-essentialist account is given, by power (in its different forms); ideology and/or environment. The person formerly labelled child or male or female, anti-essentialists argue, can be the focus of educationalists now freed from regimented, artificial, categorisation.

Inspired by Thatcher’s statement of intent when she acknowledged the economic method but also the object of ‘changing the soul’, Jim McGuigan sought to identify the ‘ideal’ neoliberal type of self (2014, p.224). Language itself, for McGuigan, is influential, ‘neoliberalism is implicated in an ideological battle for hearts and minds over everything, most insidiously by influencing the very language that is used mundanely’ (ibid., p.225). Although the word neoliberalism itself is rarely mentioned in common culture, ‘politics is

represented naturalistically in places like Britain and the USA these days as a debate over how to be 'competitive' under 'global' conditions in pursuit of 'growth' according to the taken-for-granted market and budgetary principles of neoliberalism' (ibid., p.225).

There is an impression some have that neoliberal identities are unrestricted and lack meaning. McGuigan, for example, worries about neoliberal individuals who, victim to the fulfilment of the supposed neoliberal criterion of freedom without intervention, are left with little guidance, 'Now that the old collective supports and scripts no longer apply, everyone is abandoned to their fate like an angst-ridden French philosopher' (ibid., p.234). The individual self in such a world is said to combine 'freewheeling consumer sovereignty with enterprising business acumen'. McGuigan goes on to describe features of the neoliberal self, acknowledging the power of their appeal, which I have brought together: 'cool capitalist', 'aspirational', non-conformist, generational tension in 'rejection of dinosaur attitudes', 'bohemian posturing', 'personal experimentation', 'geographical exploration' with 'the year out' an example of how such traits are developed (ibid., p.234). 'Universalist' and 'collectivist' principles give way to the excited personal ambitions of young people, and 'the neoliberal self is connected to a generational structure of feeling, a selfhood counter-posed to the old social-democratic self' (ibid., p.234). As Hall states, 'Marketing and selling metaphors now threaten to swamp public discourse... Nobody just 'shops': every one 'competes in the marketplace'. Exercising 'consumer choice' is the next best thing to freedom itself' (2011, p.722). Such choice and freedom is often linked to personhood and individuality through:

care-of-the-self and self-fashioning industries - the punishing rigours of the gym, the skills of self-promotion, the stylistic gendering and 'racing' of commodities, cosmetic surgery, personal trainers, life-style advertising, the public relations industry - feed massively off these trends. Even applications for jobs become quasifictionalized exercises in self-puffery (Hall, 2011, p.722).

Personification of this, for Hall, is the: 'self-sufficient urban traveller - mobile, gym-trim, cycling gear, helmet, water bottle and other survival kit at the ready, unencumbered by 'commitments', untethered, roaming free' (ibid., p.723). For Hall this individualist, neoliberal inspired personhood is too often at the expense of the social or community:

The nest of people sheltering outside an office to beat the No-Smoking ban is not a 'group'; they are an aggregate of individuals, facing outwards, each talking to another individual on their mobiles (2011, p.723).

Rose, in his examination of government, control and justice depicts ‘new techniques of rationality and control’ that produce ‘the responsible subject of moral community guided – or misguided – by ethical self-steering mechanisms’ (2000, p.321). This takes place in ‘advanced liberal’ society (ibid., p.323) and in terms of individuals promotes qualities above others including the high value given to ‘competitiveness’ (ibid., p.322), ‘order’ (ibid., p.323), ‘consumerism’ (ibid., pp.324, 328), ‘prudence’ (ibid., p.324) and ‘honour and shame’ (ibid., p.324) .

The articulation of possible traits that could stem from neoliberal contexts is a useful step in identifying areas of further conceptual and empirical study and critique. It poses questions regarding the veracity of these speculated behaviours and mannerisms. The pejorative vein should also be open to scrutiny, with any identity’s engagement with these traits unpacked and not simply accepted at face value or categorised. Moreover, the study of neoliberalism’s impact on identity should be extended to a range of contexts, including further education learners, which research until now has generally neglected to cover.

2.7 Learners, Discipline and Docility

A central source for critiques of neoliberal identity formation is the work of Foucault and his concept of docile bodies. This section considers Foucault’s concept of docility in relation to the learner within education. Michel Foucault’s toolbox of ideas is utilised as well as the research literature that has made use of the concept in existing education research. It will be shown that not only does his work provide a unique perspective on learner identity but a distinction can also be drawn regarding Foucault’s own developing ideas, from discipline to governmentality, a development that can be a useful tool to utilise within education research. The concept of docile bodies will be examined by firstly exploring the techniques of discipline, identified by Foucault, that render bodies docile. Docility itself will then be delineated through an examination of the *features* of docility created by disciplinary mechanisms. The determinism inferred by these accounts will be challenged by Foucault’s concept of Biopower, a few years after he first wrote about docile bodies. Foucault’s emphasis on the concepts he explored in his later writings, particularly parrhesia and care of the self, are also considered.

In his book *Discipline and Punish* (1975) Foucault sought to employ his own method to trace a history of the 'modern soul on trial', arriving at a 'genealogy of the present scientifico-legal complex from which the power to punish derives its bases, justifications, and rules' (1984, p.170). Foucault's approach uniquely focused beyond the 'secret souls of criminals' which punishments historically targeted, examining instead the 'political economy of the body' which includes violent and lenient forms of punishment. In both cases, Foucault argues, 'it is always the body that is at issue - the body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission' (ibid., p.172).

This examination then took Foucault beyond the study of the body that Historians had confined to germs, viruses, the extension of the lifespan and so on. For Foucault the body is also immersed in a political field, 'power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs'. It is only useful when it is both a 'productive' and 'subjected' body. Foucault describes a 'political technology of the body', which is 'diffuse, rarely formulated in continuous, systematic discourse; it is often made up of bits and pieces; it implements a disparate set of tools or methods' (ibid., p.173). Institutions and state apparatuses employ the methods of this technology of the body, operating a 'microphysics of power' in the process (ibid., p.174). This microphysics involves power 'exercised' on bodies and not 'possessed'. This power, then, invests a people, and 'is transmitted by them and through them' (ibid., p.174).

Joseph Rouse refers to Foucault's seminal work *Discipline and Punish* as the point in which he turned his attention from 'the structure of discourse' by focusing on the 'organisation of new institutions' such as 'asylums, clinics and hospitals' to 'the context of practices of discipline, surveillance, and constraint, which made possible new kinds of knowledge of human beings even as they created new forms of social control' (2005, p.97). This latter type of force is more subtle and successful than naked coercion which can destroy with its ability to 'produce new gestures, actions, habits, and skills, and ultimately new kinds of people' (ibid., p.98). Practices that include 'surveillance, elicitation, and documentation' are able to control behaviour by making it better known. This helps give rise to a particular relationship between power and knowledge because detailed knowledge can lead to a 'more continuous and pervasive control of what people

do, which in turn offers further possibilities for more intrusive inquiry and disclosure’ (ibid., p.99).

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault argued that ‘projects of docility’ emerged in the eighteenth century that although had similar emphases on control of the body were profoundly different from previous disciplinary methods. These were not invented suddenly and did not spring from religious cultures but were brought about by:

a multiplicity of often minor processes, of different origin and scattered location, which overlap, repeat, or imitate one another, support one another, distinguish themselves from one another according to their domain of application, converge and gradually produce the blueprint of a general method (1977, p.138).

They began within secondary schools at least early on, then later primary schools, before moving into hospitals and ‘within a few decades, they restructured the military organization’ (ibid., p.138). Thus, Foucault states further on, ‘since the seventeenth century, they had constantly reached out to ever broader domains, as if they tended to cover the entire social body’ (ibid., p.139). It is worth noting here because it is seldom commented on and it does have implications for the scale of the spread of similar disciplinary techniques, that in his first chapter footnote Foucault states that he chose these particular examples of institutions to focus on but ‘other examples might have been taken from colonization, slavery and child rearing’ (ibid., p.314).

Foucault highlighted three elements that diverged from previous mechanisms: scale, object and mode of control. In terms of scale, the body was now treated not ‘wholesale’ but worked ‘retail’ and this involved ‘a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself – movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body’. Foucault’s opening chapter to *Discipline and Punish* conveys in graphic detail the savage punishment of a criminal. However, with a second new feature of eighteenth century discipline, the ‘signifying elements of behaviour or the language of the body’ had been replaced as the object of control by an ‘economy of the body’ through ‘efficiency of movements’, and ‘internal organization’ with ‘constraint’ impacting on the ‘forces rather than upon the signs’ so that ‘the only truly important ceremony is that of

exercise'. Finally, the new mode of control involved 'an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result and it is exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement'. These methods 'made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant coercion, subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility' which, Foucault states, might otherwise be called 'disciplines' (ibid., p.137). It was within this 'historical moment of the disciplines' that 'an art of the human body was born' that went beyond the 'growth of its skills' to include 'the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely' (ibid., pp.137, 138). Not only would an individual simply 'do what one wishes' but would do so 'with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines'. As Foucault summarises, 'Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies' (ibid., p.138).

Foucault went on to describe in detail the techniques and instruments that discipline employs to create types of individuality. As Foucault states, these were 'always meticulous, often minute, techniques, but they had their importance: because they defined certain mode of detailed political investment of the body, a 'new micro-physics' of power' (1977, p.139). Foucault implies that these techniques are deliberate as they are the result of:

small acts of cunning endowed with a great power of diffusion, subtle arrangements, apparently innocent, but profoundly suspicious, mechanisms that obeyed economies too shameful to be acknowledged, or pursued petty forms of coercion (1977, p.139).

Foucault identifies four disciplinary activities and he explores each in turn throughout the remainder of the chapter on 'Docile Bodies': 'the art of distributions'; 'the control of activity'; 'the organization of geneses' and 'the composition of forces'. Foucault's emphasis on detail has largely been ignored by many authors who, although subject to the need for concision, rarely refer to the deliberately microphysical specifics of the techniques he highlights. This is despite the fact Foucault did not describe the four techniques as variables with one or more potentially absent from an institution's disciplinary structure. Although not stated explicitly, each of the techniques is presented as necessary and

sufficient for docility to be achieved. It is for this reason that I outline each of the four techniques in some depth below:

1. The art of distributions

Discipline ensures the ‘distribution of individuals in space’ through the use of several techniques. The first is ‘enclosure’ where individuals are located in a place that is ‘closed in upon itself’ to create a ‘protected place of disciplinary monotony’. Schools, barracks and factories were created to hold individuals in place (1977, p.141). Secondly, machinery must work space in a ‘more flexible and detailed way’ through ‘partitioning’. Here movement is limited so that ‘Each individual has his own place; and each place its individual’. As Foucault states, within such techniques ‘One must eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation, their unusable and dangerous coagulation; it was a tactic of anti-desertion, anti-vagabondage, anti-concentration’ (ibid, p.143). Thirdly, Foucault states that ‘functional sites’ organise through the creation of ‘useful spaces’. In the factories, for example, by placing workers meticulously according to skill and task it became possible to:

carry out a supervision that was both general and individual: to observe the worker’s presence and application, and the quality of his work; to compare workers with one another, to classify them according to skill and speed; to follow the successive stages of the production process. All these serializations formed a permanent grid: confusion was eliminated (1977, p.145).

Lastly, despite the constraints within the previous three techniques, spaces have a ‘rank’ where bodies are individualised ‘by a location that does not give them a fixed position, but distributes them and circulates them in a network of relations’. Foucault stated that within education from the eighteenth century onwards, rank:

begins to define the great form of distribution of individuals in the educational order: rows or ranks of pupils in class, corridors, courtyards; rank attributed to each pupil at the end of each task and each examination; the rank he obtains from week to week, month to month, year to year; an alignment of age groups; one after another (1977, pp.146,147).

This resulted in ‘each pupil, according to his age, his performance, his behaviour’ occupying ‘one rank, sometimes another’ (ibid, p.146). It was through instruments such as tables that these four techniques could be realised:

In the eighteenth century, the table was both a technique of power and a procedure of knowledge...it makes possible the measuring of quantities and the analysis of movements...it allows both the characterization of the individual as individual and the ordering of a given multiplicity...a base for a micro-physics of what might be called a 'cellular' power (1977 pp.148, 149.)

2. The control of activity

The 'time-table' with its 'three great methods' to 'establish rhythms', 'impose particular occupations' and 'regulate the cycles of repetition' entered institutions like schools and hospitals. These regulations tightened further the temporal rules that had historically been laid down by religious decision makers so that 'one began to count in quarter hours, in minutes, in seconds' (ibid., p.150). The 'temporal elaboration of the act' defines an 'anatomy-chronological schema of behaviour' where a timed value is ascribed to physical acts. The 'correlation of the body and the gesture' involves the body being required to capture the 'best relation between a gesture and the overall position of the body'. Good handwriting for example involved a detailed set of bodily requirements in terms of position and execution that combine with 'efficiency and speed' (ibid., p.152). The 'body-object articulation' sees a 'meticulous meshing' of 'two parallel series': the body and its tool. In the case of the soldier and rifle for example, 'power is introduced, fastening them to one another'. This 'instrumental coding of the body' then results in a triple-helix 'body weapon, body-tool, body machine' complex (ibid., p.153). The final control of activity is 'exhaustive use' and it reverses the negative religious principle in relation to time, which emphasised the elimination of 'time wasting'. Instead, exhaustive use 'arranges a positive economy' where time is mined for 'ever more available moments and, from each moment, ever more useful forces' (ibid., p.154). In the 'mutual improvement school' for example:

each passing moment was filled with many different, but ordered activities; and, on the other hand, the rhythm imposed by signals, whistles, orders imposed on everyone temporal norms that were intended both to accelerate the process of learning and to teach speed as a virtue (1977., p.155).

In the body's demonstration of 'conditions of functioning proper to an organism', disciplinary power over the body can be seen not only as 'cellular' but also 'natural and 'organic'' (ibid., p.156).

3. The organization of geneses

Foucault's third technique of discipline is concerned with human development. This mechanism of discipline focuses on the progress made by individuals through the 'procedure' of 'exercise', 'Exercise is that technique by which one imposes on the body tasks that are both repetitive and different, but always graduated' (ibid., p.162). Foucault traced the genealogy of exercise back to 'its mystical or ascetic form' where it was a way of ordering earthly time for the conquest of salvation'. Although elements of its character remained, it shifted direction in the eighteenth century to the point that far from being teleological, this exercise became inexhaustible:

Exercise, having become an element in the political technology of the body and of duration, does not culminate in a beyond, but tends towards a subjection that has never reached its limit (1977, p.162).

4. The composition of forces

The final technique responds to 'a new demand' 'to which discipline must respond'. This demand requires the creation of 'a machine whose effect will be maximized by the concerted articulation of the elementary parts of which it is composed' (ibid., p.164). The creation of 'forces in order to obtain an efficient machine' involves three aspects. Firstly, the body is reduced to its function which is prior to its ability, with the 'body-segment' placed within a 'whole ensemble over which it is articulated' where it is part of a 'multi-segmentary machine' (ibid., p.164). Secondly, Foucault states that 'the various chronological series that discipline must combine to form a composite time are also pieces of machinery'. If not quite from the cradle to the grave then each individual with any capacity to contribute something is used, 'There is not a single moment of life from which one cannot extract forces, providing one knows how to differentiate it and combine it with others'. Foucault provides an example from primary education, where, from the seventeenth century to the beginning of the 19th century before the 'Lancaster method' was introduced, the mutual improvement school was 'built up cog by cog'. The older pupils would supervise, check work, and then even teach so that at all times the school machine entailed pupils who were 'occupied either with teaching or with being taught' (ibid., p.165). Thirdly, there must be a 'precise system of command' with the 'master' using 'signals...according to a more or less artificial, prearranged code'. This is a 'technique of training, of dressage'. In schools there were:

few words, no explanation, a total silence interrupted only by signals – bells, clapping of hands, gestures, a mere glance from the teacher, or that little wooden

apparatus used by the Brothers of the Christian Schools'. The 'signal' in its 'mechanical brevity' held 'both the technique of command and the morality of obedience (1977, p.166).

To sum up his four techniques of discipline, again with the implication that all four techniques would be present and influential on the individual, Foucault stated the following:

It might be said that discipline creates out of the bodies it controls four types of individuality, or rather an individuality that is endowed with four characteristics: it is cellular (by the play of spatial distribution), it is organic (by the coding of activities), it is genetic (by the accumulation of time), it is combinatory (by the composition of forces) (1977, p.167).

The concept of docile bodies has proven popular as an explanatory device for conceptualising the effects of disciplinary practices. The idea continues to be researched and applied across a range of subjects including Education, Psychiatry and Business Studies. In Sociology, Foucault's thoughts around discipline have been adopted as 'a framework to examine a variety of issues that he could not have predicted, such as thinking about obesity or human resource management' (Di Leo, 2013, p.1). Within education studies, the mechanics of disciplinary power that render bodies docile have been applied in attempts to assess degrees of docility across learners and tutors. One example is, through a focus on the first technique, the art of distributions, Clapham's consideration of their relevance to teaching, stating firstly that, enclosure is specified as a space that is heterogeneous to other places and closed in on itself and those enclosed are thus visible to surveillance systems. A partitioned space helps to achieve docility by separating off the precise location of those to be controlled and thus 'supplements enclosure in the distribution of disciplinary power'. Functional sites are coded spaces which can be the 'physical fabric of a building's architecture, or the metaphorical coding of a space where those within the space are readily observed, analysed, and, if necessary, punished'. Linked to these spaces is the rank which classifies, thus rendering the disciplined as docile because it creates the wish to aspire towards a higher rank or maintain an already high ranking position (Clapham, 2015, pp.268, 269). Clapham's research involved a Mathematics teacher in the first year of her profession with a particular focus on the impact Local Area Under Performance Inspections (LAUI) inspections have on teachers, including even the threat of these inspections.

Each of the four mechanisms mentioned above were related to the inspections with Clapham arguing that all four were evident within his research. An example of enclosure could be found in the teacher Cheryl's lesson which was shaped by the anticipation of what an inspector would wish to see, leaving Cheryl enclosed within 'structures of disciplinary power, mediated by LAUI, which outlined the way she should teach'. There was variance regarding enclosure though, with one particularly lively and engaging lesson not enclosing learners due to its deviation from any focus on inspection requirements. Clapham observed the second mechanism, partitioning, with 'Cheryl's surveillance of behaviour and attainment'; the partitioning of the school by OFSTED if attainment levels fell below a certain level; and surveillance of Cheryl by her line manager. Students placed themselves within coded spaces in the form of their positioning within particular predicted grades. Those who were predicted by themselves or the tutor to achieve a C grade held a 'sanguine attitude towards attaining more' while some of those who would not achieve a minimum C pass would simply resign themselves to not get a 'good' GCSE'. The fourth mechanism of rank was identified by Clapham in relation to the importance of students achieving and the direct impact student success has on the ranking of the particular school and whether or not it could be extricated from the category of a school that can be potentially inspected within the remit of LAUI (ibid., pp.274-276). These findings led Clapham to conclude that:

The four areas of the docile body represented in LAUI were constantly redistributed and reassessed during the lessons and could be seen in three key areas: (1) pedagogy, (2) the implicit and explicit importance of data, and (3) wanting to do well (2015, p.276).

Alongside the four mechanisms mentioned above, Foucault has distinguished between three types of 'correct training': hierarchical observation, normalizing judgements and examination'. As Bowdridge and Blenkinsop summarise, 'Each contributes to his notion of disciplinary control, and each may be illustrated by examples from our public schools' (2011, p.154). The first is essential to the maintenance of discipline that results in 'docility and utility' through constant surveillance where one can observe many. In further education many colleges have new buildings with open plan work rooms, public classroom spaces, 'learning centres', and virtual learning environments, all allowing visibility of the many by the few. Normalizing judgements involves the prescription of what is acceptable, with problems and disruption resulting from the unacceptable. Examples within education

include those falling behind being categorised as falling outside of the norm. Similarly, 'reward and punishment' can control by making clear the differences between those who adhere to the norm and those who do not. The third component, examination, brings together the first two as Bowdridge and Blenkinsop clarify, 'The examination both confirms students are under scrutiny and establishes a normalizing judgment on their actions or abilities' (ibid., pp.155, 156). This process creates documentation which can be used to compare and rank students. As Leask argues, manipulation is intensified through examination because individuals 'are carefully monitored', 'norms are now stringently and uniformly disseminated' and conformity can be evaluated through 'the documentation process that undergirds this new epoch in discipline' (2012, p.59). Crucially, Bowdridge and Blenkinsop take the approach that docile bodies are 'more productively educatable'. The writers remind us that for Foucault, power is shortened from 'relationships of power', is ever present and 'does not represent something an institution or an individual has or wields. It is a fundamental and unavoidable part of social interaction (ibid., p.150).

A great deal of research and analysis has been devoted to other specific examples from the practical context of education to demonstrate mechanisms that discipline and render bodies docile. Although not documented in such a way here, many of these examples would fall within one of Foucault's four techniques of discipline. Bánovčanová and Masaryková (2014) describe hand raising as an example of disciplinary communication. The student who raises her hand may or may not be selected and thus enters into competition between the winner who is selected and the losers who are not (2014, p.255). Handwriting too leads the pupil to adopt a particular position. Initially, learning to write is a 'physical drill'. Over time, the docile body is produced through 'a series of defined movements' and correct posture with exercise books lined to determine the size of letters (ibid., p.260).

Research has shown that disciplinary measures are not always consciously implemented with a wish to produce docile bodies. The extent to which Foucault ascribed planning and premeditation to the institutional control of discipline is open to question. Although his descriptions of factories, barracks and schools describe micro-processes that are at least in the main not accidental, the original cause or creator is often not clearly identified. This leaves open the possibility that traditional institutional disciplinary techniques could differ from the application of discipline by human agents in authority. In an ethnographic study which looked at the relationship between secondary schools and the children's services

department, Carlile stated that there were benign intentions by different agencies who came together to try to reduce negative elements that existed in the management of excluded pupils or those on the verge of being excluded. Problems for one learner case began when different agencies competed with each other, thus silencing the individual, Becky's, voice. The pupil became an area of contestation within which different agencies competed, rendering Becky docile (2011, p.304).

Another study that referred to one of Foucault's four disciplinary techniques was an ethnographic study within MGIMO, 'the premier university for training future Russian diplomats and elites', and which was carried out by Muller (2011). The study's core argument which refers to Foucault's 'art of distributions' is that there is a difference between (neo) liberal democracies and countries like Russia in that less subtle methods of observation and control can be seen with the latter but self-regulation in the former. However, specific examples not far removed from the types listed above from within (neo) liberal democracies were identified within the Russian university. For example, 'rigid timetabling' creates a 'disciplinary space' within which to locate individuals, allowing surveillance to take place. The university also has a system whereby individual pupils are awarded 'starosta' status, which gives the pupil the authority to monitor other pupils. Muller also notes that there are public announcements of excellence, which has a 'normalising effect' (2011, p.6).

From Foucault's ideas, Muller makes the assertion that not only can disciplinary devices be found within education, but education itself is a mechanism of discipline. The writer states that for Foucault, knowledge and power are inseparable, therefore, 'In contrast to scholarship in the tradition of the Enlightenment, this work foregrounds the power of education to produce subjects' (ibid., p.2). Leask makes a similar point in his summary of Foucault's approach, stating that:

...as Foucault also wants to claim, it is the kind of disciplinarity manifest in schooling that constructs the human subject: famously, he will argue that there is no substantial entity ('the subject') (2012, p.59).

This is important in its clarification of Foucault's anti-humanism, 'it is not so much that 'we go to school'; it is more that we only emerge from school—there having been no 'us' prior to institutional manufacture' (2012, p.60). Truth itself is a product of power relations in that 'disciplinary practices and the production of docile bodies at an educational institution are always bound up with the constitution of knowledge and regimes of truth' (ibid., p.8).

This makes examinations critical in the production of docile bodies because 'Testing and evaluating knowledge through exams is one central technique through which knowledge is fashioned with objectivity' (ibid., p.9). Similarly though, the simple presentation of information in lectures 'also relies heavily on seemingly objective facts and figures to support conclusions' (ibid., p.9). Muller argues though that it is not simply a case of the tutors exerting control, because with each example, 'lecturers and students are complicit with the disciplinary regime of education and contribute to its efficacy' (ibid., p.7). Numerous mechanisms of disciplinary power have, therefore, been identified through empirical research and consideration of common practices within education. The question of the character and detail of the experience of docility remains though and this will be taken up in the next section.

2.8 Features of Docility

Often in research, such as those described above, the causes of docility are conflated with docility itself or the features of docility are not explored in enough depth, if at all. This section aims to address this issue in an attempt here to delineate the features of docility from its causes. Cooper has stated that the fundamental aim of western education has centred on 'authentic' understandings of the world and that the power of education is to 'enrich lives' (2014, p.93). The Meriam Webster online dictionary definition though states that docility is 'easily taught' and 'easily led or managed' (03/06/18) while dictionary.com notes docility as 'easy to manage, control or discipline', 'submissive', 'ready to learn' and 'easy to teach' (04/06/18). Cooper, in line with these definitions, states that docility and passivity are subversions of the fundamental aim of western education because they are 'enemies of social and emotional development' (ibid., pp.93, 94). This perspective can be seen too in Grant and Barrow's exploration of teachers and the question of their potential docility where they eventually conclude that in the staff teaching seminar there is a

fashioning of docile bodies (2013, p.314) and a 'bewitching of new academics' (ibid., p.315). Carlile described the docility of Becky similarly, the pupil being researched in the context of multiagency working to reduce historic problems that surrounded excluded and potentially excluded pupils. Becky's 'extended' docile body became a 'constituency of contested space' (2011, p.311) as different agencies competed with slightly different aims. This left Becky 'pathologically disadvantaged and therefore docile' (ibid., p.314). Bánovčanová and Masaryková argue that practices such as raising a hand or handwriting are not extensions of our inner self but are manifestations of 'our submission to disciplining the body' (2014, p.258). The writers restate Foucault's assertion that the school 'cannot be a place where cognitive processes can freely develop' (ibid., p.256). Muller explains that this is the case because knowledge and power cannot be separated and subjectivities are created from students 'internalising knowledge' (2011, p.2) and 'institutional practices' (ibid., p.3).

Bowdridge and Blenkinsop provide a slightly different account of docility that, although as deterministic on the individual, highlights the benefits docility can provide to those subjected to disciplinary mechanisms. They begin by restating Foucault's own view that the effect of discipline is double edged because it increases 'the usefulness of bodies (i.e., increase the ability of individuals to learn while decreasing their ability resist)'. The writers go on to highlight the connection Foucault made 'between utility, return on investment (e.g., learning), and the presence of a docile body'. They provide the example of the need for higher education and the fact:

the creation of a dependence on that system requires the docile acceptance by people: first, to imbue the notion itself with value, and second, to allow for the creation of elaborate structures and impressive institutions, which in turn operate to sustain the need (2011, p.152).

This points to a contract of sorts with individuals willing to commit themselves to mechanisms of discipline. What though would be the perceived benefit of committing such an act? As the writers suggest, docility can actually be beneficial to the disciplined individual:

when docility leads to increased utility (e.g., enhanced learning), it is difficult to argue that the result is necessarily bad. Indeed, Foucault proposes that, concurrent

with the use of power to increase utility and docility, there can be an accompanying sense that this will benefit the individuals involved (2011, p. 152).

The writers do caution though when they state that we adopt imposed systems and practices to the extent that 'we become so blind to our own role in the creation of those systems that we have become our own jailers' (ibid., p.15).

Conceptual and empirical research that have sought to apply Foucault's ideas have helped to create analytical avenues and generally improve our understanding of education settings. By focusing on micro-processes, academics have been able to examine non-traditional or atypical, often structuralist, areas of enquiry. However, there are no examples that can be found of all four techniques being applied in any setting, little examination of the further education sector, considerable analysis that looks at teachers, lecturers and managers within education with only a portion of the academic literature focusing on learners. Finally, perhaps partly a result of Foucault's estate's commitment to not publish any of his works posthumously, there has been relatively little attention paid to the relationship between Foucault's earlier ideas within *Discipline and Punish* and his later work. Only recently has this later work emerged more fully with audio recordings of Foucault's lectures now being published as these are able to side step the prevention on publishing Foucault's writings. The concepts of biopower, governmentality and subjectivation are key terms that should be considered in this context of Foucault's developing thought on disciplinary control.

2.9 Subjectivation, Biopower and Governmentality

Foucault, in his exploration of the specific nature of Power, describes it as a way in which actions shape other actions. Universal power itself does not exist be it concentrated or diffuse. Instead, power appears when put into action (1982, p.788). Power therefore does not impinge on others in a violent or consensual way but acts upon an individual's actions:

it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action (1982, p.789).

Foucault introduced the term 'conduct' - otherwise known as the 'conduct of conduct' when translated from the French 'conduire des conduites' to describe specific power relations because it can involve leading coercively and behaviour in the context of multiple possibilities (Foucault, 1994, p.237). As Foucault states:

The exercise of power consists in guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome. Basically power is less a confrontation between two adversaries or the linking of one to the other than a question of government (1982, p.789).

Hamann argues that Foucault's studies of 'governmentality' and the 'conduct of conduct' bridge 'the government of others (subjectification) and the government of one's self (subjectivation)'. This involves the two strategies of, 'on the one hand, the biopolitical governance of populations and, on the other, the work that individuals perform upon themselves in order to become certain kinds of subjects' (2009, p.38). Biopolitics is one of Foucault's most important concepts and was indeed developed later in his career, with the term first coined in *The History of Sexuality* in 1976. With *Biopower* Foucault significantly develops his concept of power from that described in *Discipline and Punish*. He describes Biopolitics as 'the endeavour, begun in the eighteenth century, to rationalize the problems presented to governmental practice by the phenomena characteristic of a group of living human beings constituted as a population: health, sanitation, birthrate, longevity, race'. Emerging from within a new Liberal political climate, population presented a challenge to all those who now sought the 'respect of legal subjects' and the entitlement of 'free enterprise' to individuals (1984, p.73). From the 17th century onwards, Foucault argues that power over life evolved in two forms. The first focused on the 'body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls'. This was achieved by an 'anatomo-politics of the human body' (ibid., pp.261, 262). The second form focused on the 'species body' which is 'imbued with the mechanics of life' and which is the 'basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity' alongside all that can affect these. The result was an investment in life, both 'anatomic and Biological', towards 'performances of the body' and the 'processes of life'. The crucial

development around these two poles was the creation of a supervisory process involving 'interventions and regulatory controls: a biopolitics of the population' (ibid., p.262). This power over life replaced the power over death exemplified by the sovereign power, whose symbol was the sword and whose right of life and death 'was in reality the right to take life or let live' (ibid., p.259).

What followed was an age of 'bio-power' characterised by a rapid expansion of wide ranging techniques whose goal was the 'subjugation of bodies and the control of populations' (ibid., p.262). In this category Foucault listed disciplines including 'universities, secondary schools, barracks, workshops'. In 'political practices and economic observation' there were problems such as birth rate, longevity, public health, housing and migration' (ibid., p.262). Foucault argued that biopower was critical to the creation of capitalism which relied on the embedding of bodies into the cogs of production and population's alignment with economic processes. Foucault concludes that these developments were significant to the extent that:

this was nothing less than the entry of life into history, that is, the entry of phenomena peculiar to the life of the human species into the order of knowledge and power, into the sphere of political techniques (p.264).

In his analysis of Foucault's concept of Biopower, Koopman observes that Foucault identified evolving types of Biopower over the centuries. In the 19th century Biopower's methods extended to 'efforts in public health, nationalism, medicine, psychiatry, demography, information sciences (e.g., statistics), emerging sciences of sexuality, and the tentacles of public policing efforts'. In today's world, however, Biopower is located in different contexts, 'that includes genetic technologies, biological weapons, dense global communication assemblages, and other newly emergent objects of analysis' (2014, p.90). Koopman continues by pointing to Foucault's idea that Biopower describes the coming together of 'politics and life' where 'political technologies' engage with the 'regulation of life' (ibid., p.95). Wolfe reminds us of Foucault's famous description when he states that:

the shift from sovereignty to discipline can be summarized as the passage from the old power to make die and let live to the new one of making live and letting die (2014, p.148).

Wolfe states that, significantly, the move to Biopower from sovereignty extends the subject beyond an individual's legal category, which for some time was central to the long held paradigm of self, described by Foucault as 'homo juridicus' or 'the subject of right'. Replacing this today is 'homo oeconomicus' or 'the subject of interest' which is not as easily controlled or accessed by government. This threat to power led to a new governmentality and biopower:

which subsequently gave rise to new sciences and discourses: of ratios of birth and death, fertility and mortality rates, figures on longevity – in short, sciences of 'populations' whose task it is to manage this aleatory element' (2014, p.153).

Wolfe highlights that for Foucault, sovereignty, while still important, becomes 'recontextualized, and finally subordinated, to a fundamental political shift' (ibid., p.154). The swing towards biopower has moved away from political rituals and symbolism and created instead 'an affair of power over and of life that is regularized, routinized, and banalized in the services of a strategic, not symbolic, project'. (ibid., pp.156-157).

Previous docile bodies' research has largely neglected to consider Foucault's later work, yet these ideas build on the published works towards the end of Foucault's life to problematise Foucault's own ideas on disciplinary mechanisms and their effects. This is because Foucault's later work has important implications for the question of practices of freedom in the face of discipline. On the one hand there is an added layer of discipline on top of the techniques discussed in Foucault's earlier work; this layer though involves the self more directly in the construction of this process. However, contra to this, Leask asserts that:

the intensification or concentration of power-relations now revealed becomes the potential dissolution of the purely vertical, oppressive, model (or dispositif) that seemed dominant earlier in Foucault's thinking (2012, p.62).

With Biopower then, 'new and perhaps liberating possibilities begin to emerge' because 'Power as a vertical domination, is not taken to disappear—far from it. But, crucially, it

can no longer be taken as total or hegemonic'. This is because 'life itself has become the site of a potential domination', therefore, 'the scope for resistance to this potential is widened exponentially' (2012, p.63). The key argument here then is that with life being the arena of domination, power relations become wider and multiple to the extent that a hierarchical vertical distribution of power does not have the same dominant influence over affairs which was implied in Foucault's earlier work and can be seen in more structuralist approaches to understanding power. Foucault's anti-humanism is maintained because individuals are not simply fabrications but 'self-fabrications' (ibid., 2012, p.64).

Crucial to this idea of self-fashioning is Foucault's concept of 'governmentality'. Miller traces the word to Roland Barthes who coined the term 'during the high point of his own Marxism to describe market variations and the state's attempt to claim responsibility for them (when the outcome was positive)' (2014, p.190). Faubion states that Foucault developed governmentality gradually but later in his intellectual career and that the term encompassed two distinct aspects centring on the 'conduct of conduct'. The first involves 'political domination, economic exploitation, and characterological (e.g., racist) subjugation'. All are 'coercive' and 'incompatible with 'freedom''. The second aspect though, 'arts of government', operate as 'incentives, tips, guidelines, and rules as thumb, not merely for adjusting to being governed but also for developing ways and means of governing oneself'. Arts of government permit freedom in the form of 'behavioural and conceptual and emotional alternatives in any given situation'. However, crucially, freedom is always entwined with power relations, which mostly involve one side having more power than the other in any given relationship. Our understanding of freedom is overhauled by Foucault's examination of power to the extent that freedom needs to be reconceptualised. In his summary of Foucault's understanding of power relations, Faubion states that the use of power is not simply about coercion because power relations condition freedom and are also conditioned by freedom (Faubion, 2014, p.5). Foucault's analysis of self required the use of the term subjectivation, beyond simply subjection, to describe the self created by the subject through what Laidlaw articulates as 'active self-constitution' (2014, p.29). Further, subjectivation depends on the distinction between moral codes and ethics. Moral codes are 'rules and regulations enforced by institutions such as schools, temples, families and so on, and which individuals might variously obey or resist'; while ethics 'consists of the ways individuals might take themselves as the object of reflective

action, adopting voluntary practices to shape and transform themselves in various ways’ (ibid., p.29).

Welsh has considered the differences between Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*, which he describes as ‘a last gasp of the early works’ and the development of these ideas in his later work. One reason why he believes many have turned away from the earlier work is because ‘critical scholarship has become increasingly keen to move analytically beyond the normative mode of disciplinary power’ (2016, p.1). Welsh believes that the ‘genealogical movement from disciplinarity to governmentality’ is ‘undertreated’ but sets out his argument that both can be linked by what he terms as ‘meta disciplinary techniques’ (ibid., p.2). This builds on a greater appreciation of Foucault’s concept of discipline that considers more than a reductionist account which only views this work as ‘an inexcusable continuation of the discourse of repression’ (ibid., p.2). Welsh states that contemporary society has strategically moved beyond the techniques used within the industrial age examples to create ‘docile bodies’, provided by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*, towards instead ‘proactive bodies, or perhaps ‘proactive souls’ (1977, p.3). This requires attention to be diverted from micro-physical techniques towards ‘power at a distance’ (ibid., p.5). The two forms of control are seemingly profoundly different but governmentality can be seen as including within it an additional layer, so that on top of the individuating discipline that creates docility,

must now be added the practical techniques that impel, mobilize, operationalize, tease, blackmail, tempt, or incentivize the instrumental individual within a population, but which nevertheless continue to coerce in some way ‘at a distance’ and with an averted gaze (Welsh, 2016, p.7).

This form of discipline, layered on to more coercive control appears to reinforce but also to an extent even supersedes micro-physical control because its emergence is a ‘transition of emphasis from the gaze of discipline’. This is done through ‘enclosure, and its microphysical technology of coercive force, to the mechanisms of mobilization in the governmental rationality of the biopolitical community’ (ibid., p.7). This stage of meta-discipline involves techniques that, according to Welsh, urges individuals to internalise within their own identities the wish to:

seek reward, gain approval, aspire, succeed, advance, excel, by means of 'representations' generated by the fluidic economy of semio-techniques backed up by particular constellations of material social relations between individuated disciplinary subjectivities in a totalizing biopolitical community (Welsh, 2016, p.7).

Perhaps due to its recent emergence in the literature, the meta structure of the biopolitical has received little critique regarding its seemingly close resemblance to structural ideological influence that was important to the grand theories post-structuralists like Foucault rejected. The idea of individuals internalising such priorities is not dissimilar to the features and concerns expressed earlier in this chapter regarding the influence of neoliberalism. Although I have shown that Foucault has suggested biopower's emergence from liberal movements from the 17th century onwards and I argue this has been accelerated by neoliberalism, it may also be the case that biopower is made possible by neoliberal conditions but that the two are more closely intertwined. Of greater importance to my study though is the question of the experience of college learners as they seemingly face two forms of control that comprise biopower. In his study of biopower and school surveillance systems, Andrew Hope highlighted discipline and biopolitics as Foucault's two poles within biopower, with discipline ensuring the correct behaviour, efficiency and productivity of individuals and biopolitics managing populations, for example, through the establishment of a healthy workforce. For Hope, the mere six pages devoted to biopower within *History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1978) and discussion across Foucault's 1976 lectures at the College de France, do not amount to a clarification of Foucault's thought on biopolitics that can obviate the loose ends left by Foucault's interchangeable use of the terms biopower and biopolitics. However, as Hope points out, Foucault advocated use of his concepts as ways of approaching subjects rather than rigid principles so in his own study Hope settles on a definition of biopower that captures the two poles of discipline and biopolitics. This is also the definition used in this study.

2.10 Resistance: Care of the Self and Parrhesia

Despite ongoing educational research into docility, there is an argument that descriptions of learners as simply docile do not capture *resistance* to disciplinary mechanisms. After examining Foucault in relation to educational policy, Dwyer states that this must be questioned, 'We are left with an interpretation of the interconnections between power and knowledge which in effect excludes considerations of resistance or counter-discourses'

(1995, p.472). Foucault's post-structuralism means that, although often vague in his descriptions, he would not have supported, even in his earlier work, a picture of homogenous disciplinary power affecting all individuals in the same way. In terms of the extent of disciplinary mechanisms and how deterministic they are in education, Muller states that they do not 'apply to all students and at all times in equal fashion' (2011, p8).

Significantly developing his ideas in relation to discipline and biopower without simplistically revising them, Foucault placed greater emphasis in his later work on individual resistance. Two forms of resistance are 'care of the self' and 'parrhesia'. Although it is not clear if the latter is entailed within or is a type of the former, both concepts cannot be ignored within this study, even though the focus is primarily on Foucault's earlier ideas. Foucault describes the wider history of subjectivity as 'techniques of the self'. This is defined as,

'the procedures, which no doubt exist in every civilisation, suggested or prescribed to individuals in order to determine their identity, maintain it or transform it in terms of a certain number of ends, through relations of self mastery or self knowledge' (2000, p87).

This refocusing is a typical example within Foucault's anti-structuralism, with structuralist attempts at the time interested in understanding identity through binary opposition and dichotomy such as 'the mad and the nomad, the sick and the nonsick, delinquents and nondelinquents' (ibid, p88). Instead there should be an understanding of cultural 'relations with oneself' and their 'technical armature and knowledge effects' (ibid, p88).

Batters summarises Foucault's position, regarding his apparent revelatory insight in his later work on self, by stating that where governmentality involves the subjugation of individuals, it is 'critique' which is the way in which the individual self-appoints the role of questioning truth and its power. Crucially for this study, the result involves a *reversal* of docility, so that critique becomes 'the art of voluntary inservitude, of reflective indocility'. This involves a 'critical awareness of 'self' and 'surroundings' (2011, p.1). This is an 'ancient' practice for Foucault who traced it back to the Greeks although it then developed through Christianity but this saw a shift from 'self-cultivation' to confession and 'self-discovery' in order to achieve 'salvation' in the afterlife. Unfortunately, as Batters

describes, this had ‘drastic consequences’ on how the individual relates to the self and society’ (ibid., p.7). What may be surprising to those who are only familiar with Foucault’s earlier work, it is still possible to resist institutional discipline, summarised by Batters, ‘an individual must first explore how he fits into these power relations and how he may change that relationship’ (ibid., p.9).

In the article *Self Writing* (2000), Foucault delineated two forms of personal communication that appear to be developing the third technique of discipline from his earlier work, ‘organisation of geneses’, with an emphasis on ‘exercise’. Foucault argued that the *hupomnemata*, an ancient journal or notebook for the Greeks, did not aim to find hidden truths but aimed to ‘capture the already said, to collect what one has managed to hear or read, and for a purpose that is nothing less than the shaping of the Self’ (2000, pp. 210-211). It is, therefore, a tool for the care of the self. As Swonger summarises, ‘It is not a detached documentary, the *hupomnemata* makes the writer just as surely as the writer makes the *hupomnemata*’ (2006, p2). A second form of writing highlighted by Foucault is ‘correspondence’ which is similar to the *hupomnemata* as a form of exercise that involves the individual training oneself but differs from it because it is ‘by definition a text meant for others’ (2000, p214). In summarising the two, Swonger states, ‘The *hupomnemata* provides a practice by which one can constitute oneself. The correspondence allows the individual to communicate this process to others, who can provide support and advice to the individual’ (2006: p.23).

Within his concept of care of the self, Foucault was consistent with his earlier work to a degree because he did not support complete liberty of the self but instead ‘practices of freedom over processes of liberation’ (2000: p.283), although degrees of liberation are possible. Foucault appears to emphasise the micro over the macro processes. Using the example of the colonized, in attempting to liberate themselves he stated that they are evidencing ‘a practice of liberation in the strict sense’ (ibid., p.282). However, this practice is ‘not in itself sufficient to define the practices of freedom that will still be needed if this people, this society, and these individuals are to be able to define admissible and acceptable forms of existence or political society’ (ibid., p.282). Therefore, despite his shift from coercive control of the ‘passive subject’ to ‘practices of freedom’, the issue remains for Foucault that both his early and later work still involve the individual’s adoption of external ideas. As Foucault states:

I would say that if I am now interested in how the subject constitutes itself in an active fashion through practices of the self, these practices are nevertheless not something invented by the individual himself. They are models he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society and his social group (2000: 291).

Foucault's ideas in relation to resistance rest on a particular conception of power, which helps to make sense of his earlier work, his discussion of biopower and governmentality, through to care of the self. Foucault states that when he does occasionally use the word power 'it is simply as shorthand for the expression I generally use: relations of power' (2000: 291). Here Foucault flips traditional ideas by stating that 'power relations are possible only insofar as the subjects are free' and so there must always be a certain amount of freedom on both sides. Resistance is necessarily always present in power relations because 'if there were no possibility of resistance (of violent resistance, flight, deception, strategies capable of reversing the situation), there would be no power relations at all' (ibid., p.292). For Foucault, we should not be attempting to break free of power because power is not 'bad in itself' but instead be attempting to 'play these games of power with as little domination as possible' (ibid., p.298). To return to education, Foucault singles the 'pedagogical institution' out in his discussion of power relations by stating that there is nothing wrong in itself with a person 'knowing more than others in a specific game of truth' telling 'those others what to do, teaches them and transmits knowledge and techniques to them'. Problems arise though where 'domination effects where a kid is subjected to the arbitrary and unnecessary authority of a teacher' (ibid., p.299). All of this helps to highlight the variability of power relations across individuals. This is because according to Muller certain learners are able to side-step subjectivating practices because 'some students live up to the necessities of the disciplinary regime, but do not subscribe and become complicit with it' and that subjectivation in education 'works to different degrees with different groups of students' (2011, p.8).

Foucault's reintroduction of a classical term *parrhesia* points to possibilities regarding practices of freedom in the purest sense. Developed late within Foucault's oeuvre, the concept of *parrhesia* has considerable significance for disciplinary techniques and governmentality's influence within education. Faubion summarises the origins of the term *parrhesia* as 'Greek, and from the Greek – ancient and modern – it might most readily be translated as candor, freedom and frankness of speech, speaking fully what is on one's mind' (2014, p.225). Foucault himself traces the earliest recorded written use of *parrhesia*

to Euripides (c.484-407BCE) and one of the earliest meanings of the Greek word being to 'say everything' although it has become more frequently translated as 'free-spokenness (franc-parker), free speech, etcetera' (Foucault, 2011, p.905).

Peters goes on to examine Foucault's analysis of ancient classical Greek culture to early Christianity and particularly his focus on three aspects: parrhesia's opposition to rhetoric with its emphasis on truth; its relation to politics as essential to Athenian democracy 'between citizens and individuals and as an assembly'; and its important role within philosophy as 'an art of life' where Socrates 'demonstrates his care for others in their concern for truth and the perfection of their souls' and by the time of the Epicureans parrhesia had become key to educating the soul. (2003, p.213). As McFalls and Pandolfi summarise, 'the political parrhesiasts would include Sophists such that drew Socrates' and Plato's general contempt. Political parrhesia includes the 'rhetorical device of flattery, the appeal to passions and interests to arrive at the appearance of agreement' (2014, p.175). In what Foucault described as a move from the rhetorical to the erotic, philosophical parrhesiasts including Socrates would engage in an exchange with others by adopting a 'critical, external stance towards politics' with the aim of 'a convergence of the logos of his and his interlocutors' souls' (ibid, p.175). Peters shows that Foucault's analysis of the development of parrhesia with Socrates moves the term on from 'political parrhesia' which preceded Socrates to a game between a parrhesiastes such as Socrates and his interlocutor in a face to face context; the interlocutor is led by Socrates into giving an account of self and the life he has led with a focus on whether or not there is a relationship between the life led and the rational discourse. The intended result is an interlocutor who becomes more interested in the life she leads, desiring to live as best she can and to educate herself without regard to age (2003, pp.214,215). Peters continues that Socrates was respected by his contemporaries because of the 'ontological harmony between his words (logos) and his deeds (erga)' (2003, p.215).

Peters shows that this new 'philosophical parrhesia' influenced the way individuals related to themselves, their own moral subjectivity and 'involved the playing of certain games of truth'. This involved three types of activity. The first involved an 'epistemic' role adopted by the philosopher tutor with her role focused on telling truths about the world; a political role with her adoption of a position towards the city, its laws and political institutions; and

a spiritual role with responsibility taken for clarification of truth's relationship with an individual's style of life (2003, p.215). Philosophical parrhesia also involved a 'personal teaching relationship' aimed at encouraging the student to care for himself thus 'changing his life'. A third aspect pointed to the new emphasis, which would lead to enough self-knowledge to be able to arrive at truths. A fourth feature of philosophical parrhesia involves new techniques that are different to those used within rhetoric and that can be used beyond the court across wide ranging situations (ibid., p.215). As stated though, Foucault's genealogy of parrhesia also tracks to a third form: beyond political parrhesia and philosophical parrhesia there is also aesthetic parrhesia. The Cynical parrhesiast's approach is radically different to these two approaches: he seeks 'performatively to provoke his interlocutors. His mode of interaction is neither rhetorical nor erotic but 'aesthetic' in Foucault's sense of a perpetual subversive practice'. McFalls and Pandolfi clarify Foucault's views on parrhesia by stating that it is the third form that should be esteemed:

only the radical, provocative alterity of the ethical and 'aesthetic' parrhesia of the Cynical tradition responds to his personal aspiration for a different life, a life in truth, in a different world (2014, p.175).

Parrhesia's continued development into the first two centuries of the Common Era, most notably with the Stoics, saw it move away from simply describing the courageous act of telling truth to others but towards courage in establishing truth with oneself. As Peters summarises, 'this new kind of truth game of the self requires "askesis", which, while the root for "ascetic", denotes a kind of practical training or exercise directed at the art of living (*techné tou biou*)' (2003, p.216). Peters shows that the meaning of the term developed five new key characteristics. The first is 'frankness' because parrhesia corresponds with the speaker's beliefs unlike the 'rhetor' whose motivation is to persuade an audience of something which is often at odds with her belief. Secondly, parrhesia involves speech where belief and truth coincide within the rules of the 'parrhesiastic game'. The third characteristic is the moral courage of the parrhesiastes who in telling the truth may be risking her life. The fourth characteristic refers to the critical nature of the comments made by the parrhesiastes who is capable of inflicting harm on the interlocutor. Finally, parrhesia is a duty because telling the truth, even in the face of such risk, is a duty (ibid., p.213). These characteristics arguably amount though to an extremely strict set of

criteria an individual would have to meet in order to be considered as having successfully resisted micro and macro control through parrhesiastic acts.

Foucault's genealogy of parrhesia is a fascinating account in the context of an educational institution whose learners are influenced by neoliberal pressures. McFalls and Pandolfi describe parrhesia as 'the courageous practice of speaking truth to power in an act of subjective affirmation and resistance'. It harnesses and crystallises the 'three axes of Foucault's oeuvre': subjectivity, truth and power. McFalls and Pandolfi state that each of these interact with the other two elements and through social interactions (2014, p.173). Crucially, there is the potential for parrhesia to provide explanatory power to shifts that have taken place recently in education and specifically further education in Scotland. Peters suggests that schools today, '...bent on teaching students generic skills as preparation for the knowledge economy have deviated from our historical models and begun to shed the concerns for truth and truth-telling in favour of entrepreneurship' (2003, p.217). Specifically in relation to economic circumstances, Peters argues elsewhere that through 'twin strategies of a greater individualisation of society and the responsabilisation of individuals and families', neoliberalism promotes entrepreneurial selves where 'responsibilised individuals are called upon to apply certain management, economic, and actuarial techniques to themselves as subjects of a newly privatised welfare regime' (2009, p.60).

McFalls and Pandolfi state that parrhesia is important today if one wishes to avoid complete subjugation at the hands of neoliberalism, to the extent that 'only the ethical and 'aesthetic' self-reappropriation of the body remains as a possible avenue for a different life' (2014, p.174). They describe the impact of neoliberal dominance and subjectivation on populations as 'therapeutic' and argue that the only way out of this is through Foucault's concept of parrhesia. McFalls and Pandolfi sketch an interesting contrast between the parrhesiast and the teacher. Whereas the teacher 'reproduces his knowledge and ultimately himself in continuity with a tradition', the parrhesiast puts at risk 'his reputation, his friends and perhaps even his life when pronouncing his truth. He must ultimately lay his life entirely bare' (ibid., p.174). For Foucault the question of accuracy regarding truth is not relevant. As Faubion states:

the parrhesiast does not cater to what the people want to hear. He does not pander. Whether he speaks the truth as such is another matter. In the Aristotelian theorization of oratory, what truth he speaks is indeterminate at best' (2014, p.225).

McFalls and Pandolfi discuss the absolute importance of the alternative Cynical parrhesia in the face of the development of neoliberal marketisation to the extent that we are even moving beyond the previous structures of neoliberalism. They state that 'therapeutic domination' is, in other words, 'post-liberalism' which 'sweeps away the liberal subject of rights and the remnants of representative democratic authority' (2014, p.177). This is not the replacement of neoliberalism but its extension because it 'more fundamentally, even ontologically, redefines the human experience' (ibid., p.180). As stated, the practical possibility of parrhesia should be considered in relation to education though. The demands entailed within the characteristics of cynical parrhesia are so stringent that opportunities for resistance that do not lead to sanctions being placed on the learner including exclusion would seem to be limited.

A return to parrhesia in its most effective or appropriate form(s) could help explore more deeply the social, economic and cultural features of neoliberalism's impact on education. The parameters of authentic resistance have been gradually narrowed by Foucault in his evaluation of different forms of parrhesia. It is already clear from this that opportunities for learners to put into practice a Cynical form of parrhesia would in many cases lead to significant consequences for the learner and the college. This raises the question of whether or not the Cynical form is essential or is it *good enough* to engage in political or philosophical parrhesia. When resistance is considered in these ways, however informed by Foucault's later work, individual learners and educational institutions such as further education colleges can perhaps step out of the bleak depictions within Foucault's earlier work and the diagnosis made by others who have lamented in often deterministic language, the inevitable plight of those on the receiving end of subjectivating practices. Leask expressed an optimistic argument in relation to education through 'active' subjectivation instead of 'passive' subjectivation because even if opportunities for resistance are limited, at the very least 'care of self' and softer forms of parrhesia if not cynical, are not as limiting as the total disciplining of an individual by an institution implied by Foucault's earlier work on docility and discipline:

instead of being rendered merely the factories of obedient behaviour, schools or colleges can be the locus for a critically-informed, oppositional micro-politics. In other words: the power-relations that (quite literally) constitute education can now be regarded, on Foucault's own terms, as being creative, 'enabling' and positive (Leask, 2012, p.57).

Given the development of Foucault's thought from a focus on disciplinary mechanisms that render subjects docile, to his later concepts of biopower, governmentality, care of self and parrhesia, further empirical research is needed to examine learner identity in relation to these concepts. Examining Foucault's early ideas on docility and applying these to research specific contexts has proven to be worthwhile in the ways in which we are made to think about taken for granted ideas regarding the discipline of areas such as space, time and individual progress. Further benefit can be borne from applying all four mechanisms of discipline that Foucault stated contributed towards docility within *Discipline and Punish* in order to offer a form of conceptual reflexivity. This complete coverage of his disciplinary concepts will then help to bridge Foucault's earlier ideas with care of the self and parrhesia, allowing us then to interrogate further the extent to which learners are docile or able to resist, even if we accept them as without essence. Great care is needed though when considering Foucault's ideas regarding power and freedom. The impossibility of freedom to exist in the absence of power is precisely why Foucault is against efforts towards liberation. For Foucault, an arrived at experience of pure freedom is not possible. However, as Laidlaw states, 'freedom was not to be imagined as a state – the circumstances that will prevail once we have conquered power – that could be secured by any social arrangements, institutions, or laws' (2000: 354, 355). As Allan points out:

Foucault saw transgression as distinctively different from transcendence or transformation: he did not envisage individuals as gaining absolute freedom from limits, but instead suggested that individuals, in crossing limits or boundaries, might find moments of freedom or of otherness (2013, p.750).

The application of Foucault's ideas to the question of learner freedom in education can be a worthwhile exercise. Foucault's articulation within his early work, which explored disciplining forces and his later offering of approaches to resistance in relation to coercive mechanisms, creates conceptual spaces so that educators can better comprehend questions

of learner identity. In liquid modern times, which has challenged capitalist and socialist ideologies as political and ontological concerns demanding attention, increasingly subtle approaches are required to deal with neoliberalism's effects. Olssen captures this when describing Foucault's work as:

a new version of superstructural sociology which provides a means of understanding how educational and economic practices mutually condition and adapt to each other while avoiding the excesses that plagued Marxist analyses in the later 20th century which represented such processes as the outcome of a necessary determination (2006, p.213).

Examining Foucault's early ideas on docility and applying these to research specific contexts has proven to be worthwhile in the ways in which we are made to think about taken for granted ideas regarding the discipline of areas such as space, time and individual progress. Further benefit can be borne from applying all four mechanisms of discipline that Foucault stated contributed towards docility within *Discipline and Punish* in order to offer a form of conceptual reflexivity. Crucially, this reflection will consider any relationship between neoliberalism, discipline and docility. This complete coverage of his disciplinary concepts will then help to bridge Foucault's earlier ideas with care of the self and parrhesia, allowing us then to interrogate further the extent to which learners are docile or able to resist, even if we accept them as without essence.

2.11 Conclusion

Based on the literature, the influence of neoliberalism and its reach into educational institutions is widespread, however, the various forms this influence takes and the exact nature of this influence are under researched in some areas. The literature review has explored and drawn from Foucault's concepts of discipline and docility with one key argument being that individual identity can be examined by exploring institutions at a micro level. Despite Foucault's disaggregation of discipline being laid out within his early work, few studies have paid attention to the detail of each of the four techniques Foucault provides as the institutional recipe for the creation of docility. Instead, studies have focused on one or more of the aspects of discipline that follows Foucault's chapter on docile bodies through the application of four techniques, such as the means of correct training or panopticism. This paves the way for further study to be carried out that

examines the veracity of these techniques, at least within current institutions. Complex forms of learner identity can be considered more fully in relation to recent arguments around discipline, subjectivation, governmentality, care of the self, biopower, resistance and parrhesia through empirical research. The further education sector has also been neglected from studies involving Foucault's concepts: therefore the study of docility within a further education college will be a useful addition to ongoing research into learner identity, power and neoliberalism.

On the basis of this review key questions arise that merit further attention. These are:

- Are learners docile? By using Foucault's disciplinary practices that he argued combine to create docility, I will be applying a heuristic tool to FE in order to establish if learners are ever docile.
- Does neoliberalism affect learners and if so in what ways? It is not clear to what extent neoliberalism reaches learners to influence them and if so in what ways.
- Does neoliberalism rely on docility? One possibility to explore is whether or not neoliberal ideas can best reach learners if they are docile bodies.
- Can learners resist? It may be possible for learners to be docile and resist or instead only resist if not docile. It may be the case too that resistance and parrhesia are ideals that are not easy to achieve.

These questions provide the rationale for the study and approach taken.

Chapter Three

Approach and Method

3.1 Chapter Outline

I began the research process by considering a range of questions that interested me in relation to education, my own practice and the context of both. The research question I have arrived at centres around the question of the extent to which learners can be described as *docile bodies*, a concept developed by Michel Foucault in his 1975 book *Discipline and Punish*. The research will also explore any influence neoliberalism has on learner identity.

Although there has been a great deal written about the clear boundaries between research paradigms, others including Niglas believe in the possibility of integration (2001, p.1) and there is also a lack of complete agreement over definitions of terms such as methodology and method. Figure 1 depicts an approximation of these layers that will help guide my overall research.

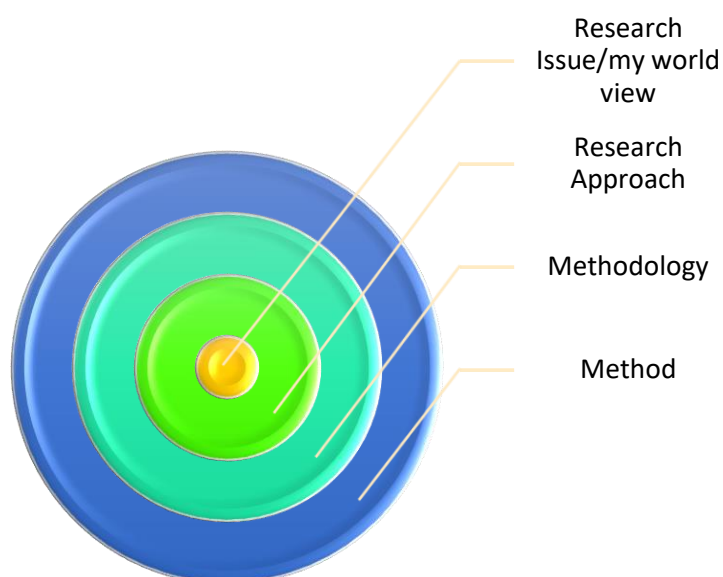


Figure 1: Methodological Process

3.2 A Post-Structuralist Approach

In its effort to arrive at truth, which it holds to be out there waiting to be discovered, positivism argues that, 'The world and the universe are deterministic, they operate by laws of cause and effect that are discernible if we apply the unique approach of the scientific method' (Krauss, 2005, p.760). This approach is more closely aligned with an objectivist epistemological position and the merits of positivism seemed obvious to me until alternative approaches revealed themselves in my own academic studies over the years, concurrent with wider developments of alternative paradigmatic approaches with 'the number of practitioners of new paradigm inquiry...growing daily' (Lincoln and Guba, 2011,1p.63). It is not my intention here to critique positivism in a fundamental way but to demonstrate that it is not suitable to my particular issue in its particular context; indeed I will not rule out a positivist approach with a future separate issue of study. However, in approaching the question of learner docility I am drawn towards the paradigm of post-structuralism because of its closer alignment to my own outlook and my belief in its capability to explore deeply a complex question in relation to college learners in a multi-layered way.

One of the main reasons for my interest in a post-structuralist approach for this particular study concerns the fact that the hard to reach, deeply held, views of human agents as research participants would seem essential in exploring the issue of learner identity. Although a view not shared by positivists I see this as credible and valuable, in raising the issue of docility with learner participants, unearthing and opening up ideas and perspectives that without the research would remain closed. I do not agree with the positivist view regarding such an approach, as described by Lincoln and Guba, 'the taint of action will interfere with, or even negate, the objectivity that is a (presumed) characteristic of rigorous scientific method inquiry' (ibid., p.175). My main reason for objecting to this is that a positivist approach to my research question might struggle to carefully take account of Foucauldian ideas in a neoliberal context involving FE learners, present related ideas in clear terms to individuals, and then reveal meaning about individual beliefs around these concepts. This itself does not rule out a positivist approach blended with an alternative approach. Indeed, in arriving at a research approach I appreciate the fact that there is overlap with paradigms and they are not rigid and clearly divided. As Lincoln and Guba state, there is value in attempting 'to probe where and how paradigms exhibit confluence and where and how they exhibit differences, controversies, and contradictions'

(ibid., p.164). However, from such a consideration I have been able to confirm that positivism should normally be demarcated from the alternative approach of post-structuralism, which I am drawn towards in this study.

Criticisms of post-positivist research approaches have extended beyond concerns from positivists regarding the de-emphasis of scientific tenets such as reliability and validity. Giddens, for example, has questioned the idea that subjects can be truly reflective, arguing against the idea that individuals continually monitor and reflect on actions and that it is only when action is questioned or affected that this reflection occurs. This partly explains the reproduction of norms because 'It is always the case that the day-to-day activity of social actors draws upon and reproduces structural features of wider social systems' (1984: 24). This has practical implications for any researcher who wishes to explore the dispositions, motivations, decisions and priorities of individuals. It poses the question, are individuals only clarifying key ideas at the point of reflection, when prompted by an interview question for example? Similarly, in his seminal book, Schon distinguishes between reflection 'in action' and reflection 'on action' with experienced practitioners being increasingly better able to engage in the latter of these two forms of reflection. Schon compares the reflection in-action process to the skills of the baseball player who 'finds the groove' or jazz musician who 'manifests a 'feel for' the material'. Both involve noticing what is right and what is not right and repeating or changing respectfully (1983, p.55). This points to a demanding set of conditions for individuals to be able to articulate their own experience beyond that which is simply conditioned by the external environment. However, I argue that even if conditions are externally shaped, it is precisely such influences of subject behaviour and thought that interests post-positivist researchers. Moreover, the researcher should be able to interpret responses to understand the meanings subjects give to these experiences and there is little to suggest this cannot be done apart from a relatively isolated concern expressed by Giddens. As Murphy states, 'From school surveillance to curriculum, social theory is used to shed light on "practical" issues facing the sector, helping to widen and deepen discussion around these areas when they are in danger of being over-simplified' (2013, p.15). It is the case with my own study of learner

identity in a neoliberal context that I will aim to interpret individual responses and relate these to post-modern theory.

3.3 My World View

A feature of the post-positivist approach is that the social location of the researcher is important and should not be veiled. I believe this to be crucial and that my own research must not ignore my own position as the lack of attention to this would create ‘an artifice which is doomed to fail’ (Bridges, 2003, p.2). Indeed, there is no reason why such transparency cannot be a positive feature of the research. Gray makes the critical point that the background of the researcher is all-important:

the choice of methods will be influenced by the research methodology chosen. This methodology, in turn, will be influenced by the theoretical perspectives adopted by the researcher, and, in turn, by the researcher’s epistemological stance (2013, p.19).

It is important to highlight the complexity of the links between a researcher’s own beliefs, a research paradigm or approach, methodology, method and tools for data collection and analysis. My very selection of a post-structuralist approach has its own origins and the requirements of such an approach demand a certain transparency regarding the researcher’s background and outlook in order to contextualise the research activity. In an effort to disentangle hidden influences and assumptions, my own epistemological and ontological outlook is considered here. This is not in any way a positivist measure to ensure validity but to develop rigour within my overall approach, although it is important to note that reflections of my own worldview are to an extent limited and only indicative of the factors that shape my approach. My own epistemological outlook favours post-structuralism and subjectivism over objectivism.

Although my own academic background has always been within the Humanities, it took until my postgraduate years with the Falsificationist work of the post-positivist Karl Popper and his scepticism regarding the ability to know when truth has been established, appeared to me as a compelling critique from which I believe positivism has not emerged unscathed. Edmund Gettier’s 1967 paper entitled ‘Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?’ has also influenced my outlook, highlighting the stringent demands of knowledge, with

belief, truth and infeasible justification all argued by some, following Gettier's paper, to be sufficient but necessary for knowledge to be gained. For a while I have been appalled by the implications of versions of relativism, from Protagoras' 'rivers' to Nietzsche's 'perspectives' until I was drawn towards Bertrand Russell's degrees of probability as a useful practical approach to reconciling a wish to lay foundations for the development of ideas, without committing to hold a particular truth. Alongside these epistemological interests I was theoretically and practically influenced in the context of significant geopolitical changes by structuralist efforts (Gramsci, Said, Chomsky) at critiquing practices of the state and large corporations using a combination of logical reason and autonomous moral revulsion against injustice. However, it has been the work of Michel Foucault and his own sceptical approach to knowledge and the enlightenment which, as an alternative perspective, most recently resonates and which also accord closely, I believe, with certain existentialist conclusions regarding knowledge and meaning as created by the individual.

3.4 Methodology

The ESRC Society Today describes the two major strands to research methodology in terms some would argue are too simplistic but I believe still hold in general today, 'The two generally defined types of research methodology are those that use quantitative or qualitative techniques to collect and analyse data' (ESRC, 2018). My research will be predominantly qualitative as this, arguably, can more easily glean information relating to the question of learners' opinions on their own personhood. A post-structuralist approach lends itself to qualitative methods although does not technically exclude a quantitative methodology, providing the post-structuralist approach that utilises a quantitative methodology does not become confused or blurred with erroneous reliance on positivistic emphasis on truth and proof. The following discussion on methods will detail the qualitative methods that are planned to be used for this research study.

It is arguably a qualitative methodology within a post-structuralist approach that allows value to enter into the considerations of the researcher. As Given argues, it is 'in their development of a qualitative approach to enquiry', that the human social sciences have, through people's relation to and attribution of meaning, accepted 'the role played by human subjectivity, context, and (moreover) human values in the generation of knowledge

and in the logic of inquiry' (2008, p.3). The idea that value could be a feature of research has been anathema to modern approaches until recently, where writers have now started to consider its importance and relevance. The term 'axiology' is now used to capture value in its widest sense in relation to research as Given summarises that axiology, or 'value theory', aims to 'bring the disparate discussion of values under a single heading', covering a wide range of critique that includes 'truth, utility, goodness, beauty, right conduct, and obligation'. In relation to qualitative research, axiology 'has a direct bearing on the ethical context of research' and includes a 'direct focus' on areas such as 'human life, knowledge, wisdom, freedom, love, justice, self-fulfilment, and well-being' (ibid., p.2).

Given goes further to argue that axiology should be considered as potentially more important than epistemology or ontology when accounting for the researcher's approach, methodology and methods. He does so by referring to Heidegger's two opposing concepts of 'readiness-to-hand' and 'present-at-hand'. The former, which has 'primacy', involves 'objects and events' that are 'of value to us, what matters to us, and what is of use to us'; whereas the latter constitutes 'the things in themselves'. This, argues Given, is a justification for the qualitative approach because:

if qualitative inquiry is to be closely associated with the study of the ready-to-hand, and quantitative inquiry is to be closely associated with the study of the present-at-hand, then it could be argued that it is the qualitative approach to research that should enjoy some sort of priority (2008, p.4).

For my research, a qualitative approach that does not discount value, particularly in relation to a complex area of human life such as learner identity, will be a fresh 'ready-to-hand' alternative to the 'present-at-hand' performance indicators that dominate further education research and evaluation in Scotland, largely driven by the Scottish Funding Council. More simply, qualitative research is aligned with the post-structuralist's wish to research issues deeply towards 'an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, unlike quantitative researches which are usually concerned with investigating and describing a phenomenon to a certain level' (2013, p.1).

There has been significant recent development that considers deeply the benefits a theory-as-method approach can bring to empirical study. As Murphy and Costa highlight, such approaches ‘share a common concern, regardless of concept, when it comes to bridging a not-insubstantial gap between theory and method’ (2018, p.3). As stated within the literature review, there are gaps in the study and application of Foucault’s concepts to education. No study as far as I have been able to ascertain has applied all four techniques of discipline, carefully outlined by Foucault within his Chapter on Docile Bodies, within *Discipline and Punish*, to any field of research. Instead, individual disciplines from the four are cherry-picked, often after research is conducted, to help explain findings from empirical study. Yet, the four techniques are described by Foucault in collective terms of ‘a whole set of techniques, a whole corpus of methods and knowledge, descriptions, plans and data’, towards a ‘meticulous observation of detail’ that allows for the ‘control and use of men’ (1977, p.82). The techniques are also applied by Foucault periodically, albeit fleetingly to barracks, factories and schools and although numerous educational studies have been carried out in schools with reference to docility, there have been few within the college sector and again none which explore the techniques in detail.

Theory as method aims to utilise carefully understood theoretical concepts, which can then be ‘operationalized as method’. This can then ‘move theoretical understandings forward through a tailored application of the concept applied to the research phenomenon at hand’ (Murphy and Costa, 2018, p.11). This fresh examination of the relationship between theory and method in research is arguably as beneficial to a post-structural approach than any other due to its potential to provide ‘an alternative to overly-agentic or structural accounts of social phenomena’ (ibid., p.1). By utilising Foucault’s toolbox of concepts and applying these to the empirical research of college learners, I am adopting a heuristic methodology. Moreover, this fits neatly into a non-positivist approach that is reliant on rather than attempting to bury the drivers of this ED D research project, speaking as it does to ‘the lived experiences of researchers who are eager to examine the everyday relational modes of being that offer insights into the often invisible workings of power and privilege’ (2018, p.1). Most importantly, in the process of empirically testing Foucault’s four techniques, I was able to make better sense of the relationship between Foucault’s earlier work on disciplinary measures within institutions and his later work on care of the self. By mapping the extent to which the four techniques are evident as revealed by participants, I was able to establish the first layer of Foucault’s tiers of control with care of the self being

the second tier (it should be noted that further research, both empirical and conceptual study, could test more strictly the accuracy of layers and tiers. For example, does the second layer depend on the first or is it an additional form of discipline that can act without it). The analysis of both layers helps this study to challenge traditional humanist conceptions of learner identity as Cartesian centred selves, as well as challenging selves that have been impacted by Freudian and Marxist analyses. This study continues post-structural efforts to more radically undermine the very notion of learner selves in order to more scrupulously deconstruct artificial theoretical structures. As Adams St.Pierre asserts, 'The subject of poststructuralism, however, is certainly not dead; rather, the category of the subject has been opened up to the possibility of continual reconstruction and reconfiguration (2000, p.502).

3.5 Methods

In adopting a post-structuralist approach, with theory as method, I will particularly focus on the work of Michel Foucault, mainly through the selected use of specific tools he favoured and developed, including discourse, disciplinary techniques and to an extent technologies of self. I refer to a post-structuralist rather than a postmodern approach because of the subtle differences between the two terms. Wright, for example, highlights the fact that beyond the former term being preferred by European scholars while the latter appears to be used in North America, post-structuralism is arguably dominated by Foucault and Derrida while Lyotard informs postmodern debates (2004, p.34). As outlined within the introduction to this study, reason itself has been questioned by Foucault and others due to it being 'contingent and historical' (Adams, 2000, p.487). As Adams explains, 'poststructuralism acknowledges and investigates multiple forms of rationality produced by the codes and regularities of various discourses and cultural practices' (p.487). Dominating the post-structuralist's focus is the humanist notion of a concrete self which now, all the more so, requires to be reconfigured, 'Most importantly, humanism's inscription of the individual, the subject, must give way once the meaning of language, discourse, rationality, power, resistance, freedom, knowledge, and truth has shifted' (Adams, 2000, p.501).

Foucault viewed *discourse* as one of the most crucial processes behind the formation of constructs, 'It is through discourse that meanings, subjects, and subjectivities are formed' (Wright, p.36). Similarly, Ryan states:

A discourse is a web of statements, categories and beliefs, habits and practices. Discourse is used to filter and interpret experience and the discourses available at a certain historical moment construct the ways that people can think, talk about, or respond to phenomena. (2006, p22).

Although there is complexity created by different discourses being preferred by different individuals and the same discourse being engaged in different ways, Foucault saw the relationship between power and discourse as a key explanation. As Wright summarises, 'Some discourses have more power to persuade than others and are reiterated more often across a wide range of sites and/or by those who are believable and understood to be expert. For Foucault, this is covered by the notion of technologies of power' (2004, p.36). Adams describes how discourse (with power), 'works in a very material way through social institutions to construct realities that control both the actions and bodies of people' (p.486). Moreover, the difficulty for those subjected is the confinement it creates, 'once a discourse becomes "normal" and "natural," it is difficult to think and act outside it. Within the rules of a discourse, it makes sense to say only certain things. Other statements and others ways of thinking remain unintelligible, outside the realm of possibility' (p.486).

Foucault did develop his ideas to consider a second layer of discipline involving care of the self. As Wright summarises,

While Foucault was more interested in his earlier writing with the ways in which individuals are subjected to particular operations of power, his later work was more concerned to understand how individual selves are constituted; how the 'truth games' that he identified through his genealogical analyses of knowledge fields are taken up by individuals and in what circumstances (2004, p.37).

Foucault's later work focuses on 'technologies of the self', which captures the ways individuals 'engage in psychic practices', which allows them to influence by themselves, or with others, 'operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of

being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (ibid., p.37). It is, however, the examination of technologies of power as laid out by Foucault within *Discipline and Punish* that is the primary focus of this study. Although technologies of self will be considered this study will focus on the earlier technologies of discipline. In her consideration of feminist post-structural research, Adams states that it is only after the ‘specific, everyday situations’ of oppression towards women are explored and identified and the ‘micropractice’ of ‘the working of patriarchy’ is revealed, that such discourses can begin to be refused (p.486). Although this refers to the idea that *resistance* itself can only take place when micro processes are explored, it also points to the idea that our *understanding* of resistance that is already or could potentially take place can only happen after technologies of discipline are known. The aim though is to not ignore technologies of self, revealed by participants, but to prioritise mechanisms of discipline.

Detailed planning of the research process was carried out in order to reduce potential problems and meet the ethical requirements of the parent institution – Glasgow University. In doing so I was mindful of Turner’s cautionary note that, ‘Qualitative research design can be complicated depending upon the level of experience a researcher may have with a particular type of methodology’ (2010, p.754). A pilot research exercise was carried out on a different topic, ‘Assessment’, in order to test possible methods and develop my own experience as a researcher. Turner recommends this exercise as a useful element when laying the groundwork for research because it can ‘assist the research in determining if there are flaws, limitations, or other weaknesses within the interview design and will allow him or her to make necessary revisions’ (2010, p.754). This was also done prior to my final decision to employ purely a qualitative methodology and not a mixed methods approach. In the pilot study a quantitative exercise was carried out involving Q Methodology or ‘Q sorting’ as well as a qualitative focus group discussion. Despite the great deal of endeavour required, the Q sort method raised issues regarding the need for proficiency around related software with a limited time to carry out this study’s research. It also jarred with the poststructuralist paradigm with the positivist conclusions that emerged and I found it very difficult to reconcile this. The focus group exercise though was extremely useful in developing my expertise in both face-to-face research but also post research coding.

Semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion were selected as the two methods of research for the study of docility and college learner identity in relation to neoliberalism. Interviews are extremely useful in their ability to explore issues in depth across relatively few participants because:

an experienced interviewer, with a clearly defined research topic, and a small number of well-selected homogeneous interviewees (with adequate exposure to or experience of the phenomenon) can produce highly relevant information for analysis (Cleary and Hater, 2014, p.473).

With this in mind participants were selected who shared certain criteria. Only SCQF (Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework) level 7 HNC college students from three courses were selected as there would be confidence in their ability to articulate ideas in relation to questions that touched on complex issues. This is important in light of Cleary and Hater's advice that 'verbal fluency, clarity, and explicatory and analytical abilities' are useful respondent traits for many interview situations; and that 'informants are selected because of their personal experience or knowledge of the topic under study' (2014, p.473).

The sample size selected for both the interviews and focus group discussion was fifteen, however, sample attrition due to participant absence and personal issues affecting attendance meant that six attended the focus group discussion. It was the predictability of this attrition as being possible which cemented the decision to have only one focus group discussion with any second group discussion likely being affected again by sample attrition. Although an increased sample of interviewees would have likely meant more participants for the focus group this could have brought its own problems in terms of data saturation or excessive data. Overall, a sample of fifteen interviewees and six focus group participants was felt to be sufficient because a wide range of questions in two different formats would glean relevant data, steering clear of the warning from Cleary et al that, 'a variable and very large sample could result in superficial data, providing a false sense of security and/or generating large amounts of information non-conducive to in-depth analysis' (2014, p.473). As Cleary et al advise, qualitative selection should involve 'Small numbers' who 'are studied intensively'; 'Participants are chosen purposefully'; and 'selection is conceptually driven by the theoretical framework' (2014, p.473).

The following fifteen participants from three courses were selected to be the sample for both interviews and the focus group:

Participant Profiles

Lorna – Female 50s – HNC Administration and Information Technology

Nicole – Female 20s - HNC Administration and Information Technology

Ros – Female 20s - HNC Social Sciences

Sarah – Female 30s - HNC Accounting

Jenny – Female 20s - HNC Accounting

Emily – Female late teens - HNC Social Sciences

Mary – Female 40s - HNC Administration and Information Technology

Ross – Male 20s - HNC Administration and Information Technology

Jack – Male 20s - HNC Social Sciences

Calum – Male late teens - HNC Social Sciences

Gary – Male late teens - HNC Administration and Information Technology

Liz – Female late teens - HNC Social Sciences

Jill – Female 20s - HNC Accounting

Louise – Female 40s - HNC Accounting

Naz – Female late teens - HNC Accounting

A list of key areas of the further education college where disciplinary mechanisms could be located if they do indeed exist along the lines suggested by Foucault has been developed from the perspective of the learner and perceived influences on her. This list of 39 elements was arrived at through personal consideration based on my own experience of eighteen years in further education and informal discussion with colleagues across the sector. There was little reference to complex theory in relation to Foucault's work or neoliberalism but by enquiring into the areas across nine areas I would be able to determine the meaning attributed by individuals towards controls within the further

education college. The areas explored were: recruitment, support inside class, support outside class, curriculum, quality assurance, assessment, college policies, stakeholders, space and time.

The construction of the interview and focus group questions emerged from this exercise. Questions were not provided in advance to interviewees because it was felt that ideas and recollections would be more spontaneous and would involve less retrospective construction. As Ryan states, 'Where the positivist researcher might strive to discover objectively the truth hidden in the subject's mind, post-positivists strive to disrupt the predictability that can occur in traditional interviews' (2006, p.19). Understanding individual motivations not mediated by time and cogitation, even if these involve less agency, is key to my exploration of learner identity. This arguably helps to reduce potential problems such as the Hawthorne effect because respondents have less time to consider alternative versions of events.

Subjects unwilling or unable to answer honestly is a potential barrier that faces any researcher. There can be many reasons why participants would be constrained including the fact that my research is planned for the first term of the academic year and subjects may be apprehensive in a new environment. Projective techniques were considered as a way of mitigating against these concerns, as Will et al argue, 'Appropriate usage of projective or enabling techniques, it is claimed, allows respondents to express their feelings without offending others and thus transcends the barrier of politeness' (1996, p.39). Furthermore, Catterall and Ibbotson state 'projective techniques generate respondent curiosity because they are different, unusual and intriguing. They are more likely to stretch the respondent's imagination and involvement than survey questions and scales'. (2000, p.248). The use of vignettes within qualitative research can be another way of reducing anxiety felt by a research subject and this particular method was therefore considered. Barter and Renold highlight three purposes vignettes may have within social research: 'to allow actions in context to be explored; to clarify people's judgements; and to provide a less personal and therefore less threatening way of exploring sensitive topics' (1999, p.1). Vignettes ask subjects to comment on fictional or non-fictional accounts of other people or issues and can therefore 'elicit perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes from responses or comments to stories depicting scenarios and situations' (ibid., p.1).

It was felt though that practicalities in relation to time and volume of questions could create difficulties when using projective techniques or vignettes within this study. There is also the danger that, when exploring a complex subject like identity, the respondents could in their answers be imagining the separate and different identities of others depicted within a response sheet and not projecting their own motivations and dispositions via a proxy self. I also recognised the fact that participants are adult returners and used to national survey and feedback systems within college albeit mostly quantitative or less immersive.

The specific concern regarding potentially inhibited respondents can be avoided by targeting continuing learners who have attended college for at least a few months. This was the case with interviews taking place from October, three months after the August start date. Although interviewing subjects individually can help regarding any peer pressure, the presence of the interviewer who he/she has only recently met may still negatively influence the subject's responses. I was conscious of the power shifts involved between the researcher who asks the questions and the participant who responds. Although it would seem the interviewer is in complete control, the participants control the detail of any responses. As Anyan highlights, 'The interviewer apparently may have more power than the interviewee but the interviewees have control over what they say and that is the most crucial part of the conversation' (2013, p.4). Although respective powers are used, the interviewer is expected to 'learn to be able to control the shift of power during data collection' (ibid., p.4) because ultimately the process involves a 'hierarchical form of conversation' and it is the interviewer 'who sets the rules of the game' (ibid., p.6). For these reasons I decided on face to face interviews. Irvine and Sainsbury highlight the fact that although non-face to face research methods such as telephone interviews have their own advantages, signs of discomfort or reservations can be identified quickly, 'Visual cues supplied by the researcher may serve a role in indicating attention and interest to an interviewee' (ibid., p.7).

It was felt that comfortable surroundings for the interviews and focus group would benefit the research process. A 'research room' designed for non-teaching activity was used that allowed me to control lighting and overall it was ergonomically pleasant, clean and modern. It was also a room that all participants were familiar with using informally, often

without a tutor present and this helped create an atmosphere that relaxed participants, which is in line with McNamara's advice that, 'Often, they may feel more comfortable at their own places of work or homes' (1999, p.1). I did not know any participants prior to the research and all participants had little experience of participation within qualitative research settings, however, careful decisions around the interview space helped put them at ease.

A meeting was held with all participants one week before interviews began within the research room. The meeting's discussion addressed confidentiality with all participants notified of who exactly would be able to read the research transcripts and the study itself. Participants were invited to create their own pseudonyms which was a measure, when discussed, that eased participants into the process although when they were approached to do so at each interview there was pleasant disinclination and instead they wanted to leave it to myself to create respondent monikers. The format and timing of the interviews and focus group were discussed, particularly in relation to the fact interviews would be carried out in three blocks, one for each college course. Also discussed was the detail regarding the recording and transcribing processes. Informed consent was received during the first meeting from each individual for both the interview and focus group participation. Finally, contact details were pointed to on the Participant Information Sheet and final questions were asked and responded to.

Preparation for the interviews in terms of making participants comfortable and involved undergirded the interview process itself but I also followed McNamara's (1999) advisory elements regarding the construction of questions and I deliberated over the process of questioning during the interviews themselves. The wording of questions was open ended, clear and neutral, allowing respondents to choose their own expressions. Questions were asked one at a time and 'why' questions were avoided due to the problems this can cause:

This type of question infers a cause-effect relationship that may not truly exist. These questions may also cause respondents to feel defensive, e.g., that they have to justify their response, which may inhibit their responses to this and future questions (1999, p.1).

During the interviews I periodically checked the recorder to ensure it was working. I ensured neutrality as far as possible, responding as though nothing unusual or surprising was said. Participants were reassured with affirmative responses and gestures such as nods of the head to show understanding in terms of the meaning of what was said but not approval. Care was taken when note taking to ensure no sudden movements that could be interpreted with concern regarding my motive. Finally, continuity was ensured by bridging sections, recapping briefly and gently keeping respondents on topic when necessary.

Steps were taken immediately after conducting the research on the day of each interview and focus group discussion. This was done both to safeguard the data but also to make the most of it. McNamara describes three steps, each of which I carried out: ‘Verify if the tape recorder, if used, worked throughout the interview; Make any notes on your written notes; Write down any observations made during the interview’ (ibid., p.1).

It was my aim to invite as many participants as possible from the interviews to take part in the focus group discussion. These students shared the SCQF course level in common, are fellow learners within a further education college and also had the shared experience of participating within the interviews. As Parker and Tritter advise:

Participants are asked to engage in focus groups because they have something in common with each other and something which the researcher is interested in—for example, a lifestyle circumstance or condition (2006, p.24).

I was therefore interested in responses to questions but also engagement between respondents, as Cleary et al describe, ‘they take advantage of interactions between participants that allow reciprocation, exploration and elaboration of ideas’ (2014, p.474). As stated, sample attrition meant that some interviewees could not attend the focus group discussion, however, the following six individuals took part:

Ros – Female 20s - HNC Social Sciences

Emily – Female late teens - HNC Social Sciences

Calum – Male late teens - HNC Social Sciences
Liz – Female late teens - HNC Social Sciences
Louise – Female 40s - HNC Accounting
Naz – Female late teens - HNC Accounting

This was a meaningful sample with deep discussion between participants. I had to ensure I was facilitating and not leading discussion, because as Parker and Tritter state, the researcher should be the ‘facilitator’ or ‘moderator’; that is, facilitator/moderator of group discussion between participants, not between her/himself and the participants’ (2006, p.26). I was also able to probe areas that did not receive sufficient attention during the interview process including reasons for studying at college and plans for the future. Cleary et al believe more respondents would have been a challenge:

who amongst us has the skills to manage in-depth focused information gathering from more than twelve participants (even with a digital recorder/note taker) who are unknown to each other, within a timeframe of 90 minutes? (2014, p.474).

Focus group questions were structured to gather qualitative data on the issue of learner identity and disciplinary mechanisms. The focus group has been defined as, ‘a facilitated group discussion in which open-ended questions are asked in a way to trigger discussion amongst a panel of participants’ (Dick, 2003, p.34). It should be noted however, that the inclusion of a moderator is one key feature that distinguishes between a focus group and a roundtable discussion. I was not attempting to recreate real life world situations but as Warr states, focus groups can ‘generate interactions and discussions of ‘real-life’ scenarios that are not entirely contrived’ (2005, p.202) as well as ‘socially grounded insights into aspects of personal and social life’ (ibid., p.200).

The focus group was held after the interviews so participants had received the benefit of the preparation for these interviews alongside the experience of taking part. This meant learners coming together from three distinct college courses to meet each other would be as comfortable as possible with the arrangements. Preparing learners in this way is all the more important because research of this kind is not too common in further education and

‘They may not be accustomed to this scenario, even when the other members of the group are perceived as familiar and trustworthy interlocutors’ (ibid., p.202).

Being relatively inexperienced in the specific area of focus group coordination, the following steps proved to be helpful:

- the need to provide introductions including myself and participants;
- provide participants with an overview of the topic, context, the purpose of the researcher and research, with time left for questions regarding this information;
- provide a description of what will be done with the information;
- be clear about the detail regarding the identification of participants;
- structuring the discussion into three related phases with time at the end for participants to help in the drawing of conclusions and synthesis of information (Dick, 2003, p.34).

In the gathering of information Dick describes the four main phases of focus group data collection as: asking the question; allowing ‘individual thinking time’ with each participant then responding; beginning the group discussion; recording the ‘summary and interpretation’ (ibid., p.34). These broad phases were again beneficial, particularly given the nature of discussion with themes of space and time abstract to many with such terms as described being removed from some participants’ everyday experience. Finally, regarding this specific method, a feature of the focus group that benefited me in my research was its suitability to the untried researcher, where the process will still ‘usually yield good quality information’ (ibid., p.34). Overall the planned detail of the focus group meeting ensured its value within the research process resulting in what Parker and Tritter describe as the creation of a ‘kind of momentum’ which then facilitates the emergence of ‘underlying opinions, meanings, feelings, attitudes and beliefs to emerge alongside descriptions of individual experiences’ (2006, p.30).

When presenting findings, there will be no clear distinction between the interview and focus group data. This is to allow the findings themselves to flow without unnecessary interruption to the reader: I believe the medium is less relevant and is therefore not the

message in this case but the statements of the participants in relation to, at times, complex ideas should be uncluttered as far as possible when being presented.

3.6 Data Collection: Codes, Themes and Theory

Data collection was slightly complicated, therefore it is worthwhile clarifying generally the process that was followed before providing further detail. As stated above, this study has aimed to use Foucault's theory of docility as a tool with potential explanatory power to help explore the impact of neoliberalism on college learner identity. This is not a grounded theory approach but instead is using specific post structural theory as method to reveal new ideas in an under researched area within education. As Costa, Burke and Murphy eloquently assert with concision, 'Through applying an abstract theoretical lens on the everyday, we make it unfamiliar and can begin to ask questions' (2018, p.11). This has wider implications worth noting, first of all, which is that using theory as method in any given study potentially has wider significance due to the gap that currently exists between theory and method in research. As Costa, Burke and Murphy state, these share a common concern:

What emerges from this endeavour – by bringing theory to life through the process of application, while also unpacking the mechanisms via which theory and method converge – is a set of challenges for researchers who wish to bridge the theory-method gap via the socio-theoretical vocabulary of concepts (2018, p.3).

The theory based approach has shaped the methodology and methods employed. This is in line with a deductive approach suited to a post positivism as Onwuegbuzie describes, which moves away from positivist data collection methods because it involves 'multiple constructed realities' where 'time- and context-free generalizations are not possible'. Also with this approach 'logic flows from the specific to the general' and the 'knower and known are inseparable' (2000, p.6). However, during the data collection phase after all interviews and the focus groups had been transcribed, I adopted coding analysis techniques for practical purposes, as part of a 'multistep "sense making" endeavour' (deCuir-Gunby, 2011, p.137), in order to help organise a large volume of qualitative data. Although I have used codes that have been 'developed a priori from existing theory or concepts (theory-driven)' (ibid., p.137), I have kept in mind at all times the need to avoid the risk of 'forcing the data'. Glaser and Strauss summarised a key measure against 'forcing the data', which

was ‘literally to ignore the literature of theory and fact on the area under study, in order to assure that the emergence of categories will not be contaminated’ (1967, p.37). However, as Kelle states, this has fallen into ‘deserved bad reputation’ because ‘the construction of any theory, whether empirically grounded or not, cannot start *ab ovo*, but has to draw on already existing stocks of knowledge’ (2007, p.135). It is now more widely accepted that ‘Qualitative researchers who investigate a different form of social life always bring with them their own lenses and conceptual networks’ (ibid., p. 35). I wanted to avoid the constraints associated with allowing codes to simply emerge, particularly as Kelle highlighted, ‘to let codes emerge from the data then leads to an enduring proliferation of the number of coding categories which makes the whole process insurmountable’ (ibid., p.136).

Qualitative data collection can be extremely challenging, arguably more so than is the case with positivist research. As a result of open ended and at times detailed responses, researchers can find it difficult to identify codes or themes. As Turner states, ‘it can be a more cumbersome process for the researcher to sift through the narrative responses’ (2010, p.756). I produced a verbatim account of the focus group discussion and interviews and recorded these using an Olympus Dictaphone. Although I did not include all utterances the transcripts remain faithful to the exact wording used. I did not use a research assistant to transcribe because writing up the responses myself will ensure immersion within the data. I used a pedal linked to the Dictaphone occasionally to help transcribe efficiently.

De Cuir-Gunby et al describe coding as ‘the assigning of codes (that have been previously defined or operationalized in a codebook) to raw data’. The researcher can then ‘engage in data reduction and simplification’. It is then possible to create ‘data expansion (making new connections between concepts), transformation (converting data into meaningful units), and reconceptualization (rethinking theoretical associations)’ (2011, p.138). Initial codes are narrow and are the first step towards the identification of broad latent themes. The first practical stage in developing codes was to ‘determine how to reduce raw information into smaller units, such as categories or themes’ (ibid., p.144). I decided to vary between line by line and paragraph by paragraph depending on what made sense to pull together and separate. The following initial codes were used to help organise the data: Capital, collegiality, strategic, habitus, parrhesia, space, time, confidence, mechanisms of

discipline, docility, learning structure, institutional differences, neoliberal, learner awareness, satisfaction, gratification, learner agency, lecturer/student relations, learner behaviour and student support. The initial codes were useful in organising and describing learner views in relation to mechanisms of discipline that could impact on learner identity and create docility.

In order to fully review the themes I was settling on, I returned to the literature and specifically Foucault's chapter on 'Docility'. Here I focused on the detail of the disciplinary techniques described by Foucault, particularly, his four techniques of discipline: art of distributions; control of activity; organisation of genesis; and composition of forces. In reviewing the themes I was able to begin a correlation exercise that explored which of the initial codes related to each of the four techniques of discipline. This approach is in line with the wider ongoing research project of bringing theory and methods closer together and the benefits derived as a result (see Murphy, 2013). In their description of the development of codes, DeCuir-Gunby state that is 'a circular process in that the researcher may then revisit the raw data based upon theoretical findings and the current research literature' (2011, p.138). Similarly, Costa, Burke and Murphy highlight the need to revisit, '– it is also the researcher's task to engage in a second phase of reflexivity in which what was narrated with a tone of familiarity needs to be approached from a distance to arrive at renewed understandings of the social reality under focus' (2018, p.10). It was in this iterative way that I revisited and arrived at Foucault's four disciplinary types as key to approaching the question of docility in further education. After reviewing the themes I had organised the data into findings that were structured around the four parent techniques of discipline and the sub categories that relate to them.

3.7 Trustworthiness

Morrow argues that, depending on the research approach selected for a particular study, 'there are particular standards of trustworthiness that emerge from and are most congruent with particular paradigms' (2005, p.250). Therefore, my study does not adhere to quality standards that would be sought for within a positivist or post-positivist study such as validity, reliability and objectivity. Instead, I am interested in what Morrow describes as the 'parallel criteria' to these positivist control measures. Instead of validity I am interested in 'credibility' through such measures as drawn out engagement in the field and

researcher reflexivity. The former is better realised through longitudinal study but care was taken not to rush the interviews and focus group arrangements. In relation to validity, instead of generalising I am more interested in ‘transferability’, which can be achieved by providing:

sufficient information about the self (the researcher as instrument) and the research context, processes, participants, and researcher– participant relationships to enable the reader to decide how the findings may transfer (Morrow, 2005, p.252).

I have aimed to achieve this by detailing my personal research interest and motivation in my study above as well as basic details of participants. Instead of reliability I have sought dependability in my research by describing the step-by-step process involved from the preparation stage, the research itself and the processes followed after the research was carried out. Finally, it is acknowledged here that my research, and perhaps any research, is never completely objective. Instead, I will aim for ‘confirmability’ which Morrow states is based on the following idea:

the integrity of findings lies in the data and that the researcher must adequately tie together the data, analytic processes, and findings in such a way that the reader is able to confirm the adequacy of the findings (ibid., p.252).

In my effort to achieve confirmability I will not veil a motivation of the study which is to participate in the review of Foucault’s concept of docile bodies and neoliberalism’s role in education with personal concern at some of the suggested potential outcomes. In this vein, I am inspired by Hall, who said:

So, in the light of all this, is neo-liberalism hegemonic? Hegemony is a tricky concept and provokes muddled thinking. No project achieves a position of permanent ‘hegemony’. It is a process, not a state of being. No victories are final. Hegemony has constantly to be ‘worked on’, maintained, renewed and revised (2011, pp.727,728).

The potential impact of neoliberalism on learner identity concerns me to the extent that, through techniques of discipline learners may be rendered docile. However, I do separate here a cause for concern from eventual results and analysis, which will be explored within the Findings and Discussion sections.

3.8 Ethics

Various steps were required to ensure that ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Glasgow in advance of the research being conducted. This is both mandatory and helpful as Orb et al explain:

Ethical principles can be used to guide the research in addressing the initial and ongoing issues arising from qualitative research in order to meet the goals of the research as well as to maintain the rights of the research participants (2001, p.93).

An application with accompanying documents, as guided by University procedure, was completed and submitted electronically to the College Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects. The ethics application form included an account of ethical risks and justification for research, as well as my proposed methodology and data collection methods.

One of the key documents accompanying this form and which was important to the practical management of the initial stages of the research process was a Plain Language Statement, issued to participants during a briefing session prior to their commitment to take part. This included information regarding the purpose of the study, the fact it is non-compulsory, detail regarding its degree of confidentiality (unless, for example, harm to individuals is disclosed), contact details and a note of who will review the study. This was also signed off by myself as researcher and my dissertation supervisor. Participants had expressed initial interest with their course leader in participating so there was confidence that many or all would agree to take part in the interviews and the focus group. After agreement, participation within the focus group would reduce ethical concerns regarding anonymity being undermined by participants meeting each other during the briefing session (if I did not conduct a focus group session I would have met participants individually to brief them). The following statement was included within the Plain Language Statement: ‘...that approximately fifteen participants will be taking part and guarantees cannot be given regarding other participants’ respect for confidentiality’. This was discussed further during the briefing to request that participants nevertheless, as far as possible, respect anonymity during the focus group discussion. There was also the risk that by inviting participants together during the briefing session I was undermining anonymity, including, for example, if a participant decided not to take part and engage with the ethos

of anonymity. However, this was reduced by the fact I split the briefing sessions into three, one per academic course across the three courses. By inviting participants as a group at all during the briefing session, I felt this would create a group ethos that would help ease tension during the focus group discussion and this benefit in terms of both participant wellbeing and the quality of the findings marginally outweighed the risk to anonymity.

The learners who were offered the opportunity were given approximately one week to consider the detail of the plain language statement before a consent form was distributed. This allowed them time to digest all relevant information: I felt without this time to discuss the opportunity with family, friends or college staff, learners may have felt compelled to take part if asked for a quick response, ‘for reasons of social desirability, fear of repercussions if they do not participate, or losing social contact with the researcher’ (Mertens and Ginsberg, 2009, p.515). The following week though, all of those approached agreed to take part. After amendments by the Ethics Committee were made I was given clearance to begin my research for the period of 29th August 2016 until 1st September 2017.

The whole process prompted reflection and vigilance regarding the research I was about to embark on, which is important given the unpredictability of working with human subjects, as Orb et al caution, ‘Ethical dilemmas that may rise from an interview are difficult to predict but the researcher needs to be aware of sensitive issues and potential conflicts of interest’ (p.94). As a researcher, I developed a clarity regarding the two elements of ethics highlighted by Guillemin and Gillam:

These are (a) procedural ethics, which usually involves seeking approval from a relevant ethics committee to undertake research involving humans; and (b) “ethics in practice” or the everyday ethical issues that arise in the doing of research (2004, p.263).

It was particularly important for me to be cognisant of the potential power imbalance and the impact this could have on participants. Participants were made aware of my role as a manager within the college sector as well as the fact I am carrying out research as part of a

doctoral study project, which, at SCQF level 12, itself potentially carries a degree of status in the eyes of participants who are engaged in study at SCQF level 7. Power imbalances can be created from such factors but this is dependent on the interpretation of each participant as well as the handling of the situation by the researcher. A certain tact was employed during the social interaction at the early stages where I discussed briefly my own vulnerabilities as a research student and hopes for the research process. I emphasised this side over my occupation which I believe helped to relax the participants. As my research was going to be focused on individuals and their identity, I became increasingly aware throughout the preparation stage, of my responsibilities. In my own case, ethics did as Guillemin and Gillam suggest, 'it acts as a practical reminder that we need to be both mindful and active in protecting our research participants (and ourselves) from harm and undue risks, as well as affording respect for autonomy' (2004, p.277).

3.9 Conclusion

A post-positivist approach will be adopted as the research paradigm for this study alongside a methodology, methods and approach to data collection suited to this but which also benefit the topic of research. I am not aiming to establish findings that can be generalised but instead interesting ground can be opened up through exploration of learner identity using an empirical approach aided by Foucault's concepts as a heuristic tool that can itself be tested.

Chapter Four

Findings

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this section, in line with this study's post-structural approach, is to draw from relevant theories in order to describe as fully as possible the meaning participants give to their experience of educational discipline as learners within a further education college in Scotland. The college rests within a specific context and so in order to help build a picture regarding the extent to which neoliberalism affects learner identity the following key questions have been explored:

- Are learners docile?
- Does neoliberalism affect learners and if so in what ways?
- Does neoliberalism rely on docility?
- Can learners resist?

In order to respond to these questions, individual interviews and a focus group discussion surveyed a wide range of topics relevant to the college structure and learner in order to unearth the attitudes, dispositions, priorities and beliefs participants have in relation to their college experience. It was only after the descriptions emerged from participants' responses that an albeit loose correlation could be identified between the very specific detail of Foucault's disciplinary techniques that create docility and the views learners expressed when discussing their time at college. This chapter will therefore focus on key findings in relation to the four specific techniques Foucault provided as the formula for docility, as a heuristic way of examining whether colleges are producing docile learners. In its consideration of identity, this section aims to describe the traits that are revealed by individuals that may contribute to our understanding of learner identity, at least in relation to their college experience. Finally, different degrees of docility will be described where they can be found alongside examples of resistance or other alternatives to docility to help understand the extent to which discipline and docility are inevitable or can be mediated.

4.2 Learner Identity and the Art of Distributions

To recap, the control of individuals through spatial discipline can be achieved using four techniques according to Foucault's chapter on Docility within *Discipline and Punish*: 'enclosure', 'partitioning', 'functional sites' and 'rank' (1977).

4.2.1 Enclosure

The first, ‘enclosure’ involves individuals being located in a place that is ‘closed in upon itself’ to create a ‘protected place of disciplinary monotony’. Schools, barracks and factories were created to hold individuals in place (Foucault, 1977, p.141). In the current study this begins to surface where participants across the Social Sciences and Administration courses discuss general spatial factors as well as the classrooms being used for delivery.

In relation to all college spaces, quality, convenience, access and restrictions were concerns shared by participants. All impact on learners but individuals are less passive than we will see within the class room. Travel decisions involved spatial challenges early in their college life. Emily described the thirty-minute car journey from her home as difficult due to heavy traffic but now that she is settled into the course with her friends and lecturers she is happier. A few others described their choice of local college as stemming from the long journeys to and from school they endured in recent years. For one participant travel has even led to health considerations:

My mum – because I was unwell she said she didn’t want me to travel too far because I applied to the colleges further away but they would have been harder to get to. But because it’s local my family were kind of pushing for this one – they thought it would be better [Liz].

A surprising view was expressed by one participant who stated that she deliberately wanted to go to a college that was further away, in order to put some distance between her and her family, ‘I always attend class. I live far way so my mum and dad are like you can’t go there it’s too far but I was determined and said I want to go’ [Naz]. Perhaps a relatively new effect on recently merged college students relates to courses being delivered across campuses, in some cases in different towns. Although in many cases campuses will have progression routes without the need to move to another campus building, this is not always the case and it bothered one participant who described her fears if the course she is due to progress on to is delivered elsewhere:

at the moment I rush straight from work to come over here to get in for quarter past 12. I’m hoping because my hours are as such that it’s still going to be the same days when we go to the other town [Louise].

It is not clear if the courses offered at other campuses are actually new beneficial progression opportunities resulting from mergers or, alternatively, if learners are required to attend the next year in a different town because colleges assume that it is natural and acceptable for progression routes to traverse campuses.

The spaces within college including classrooms and facilities were discussed with mixed views on issues such as the quality of food in the café and the amenities local to the college. However, overall, college spaces were described in positive terms. Sarah said ‘I think it’s very nice – it makes coming to college a pleasure’, while Lorna reported that ‘It’s nice, clean it’s modern – it has a nice feel to it. Generally the students who are around find it comfortable here’.

Three learners described their use of college rooms as a change from their experience at school because the timetable involves a range of locations with different layouts across the college. Learners on these courses are timetabled across different rooms for different subjects and so move with belongings between classes to environments that differ even slightly. Others on one course, HNC Accounts, however, discussed the problem of being timetabled, unusually, in only one room for all subjects, including the impact this has on their learning, education and social side of college life:

We spend our whole day in that one room – at times when we have a lot of stuff on we find ourselves not arguing or growling with each other but it’s like we can be quite snippy with each other. But we are all together 3 days a week in one room. [Mary].

Although this would appear to enclose individuals in a way that is perceived negatively, one learner highlighted the benefits of this arrangement:

I also enjoy the class environment – the room and the people – we don’t change the rooms which is good. When you’re in the one room it’s easier for everyone – we can leave our stuff in and we’re not trekking around everywhere [Ross].

It was participants from the Accounts course especially who revealed that, occurring by stealth to an extent, the classroom could be used during break times. Although this was not formally offered to learners, the room would continue to be occupied through intervals as learners remained in the room to interact informally.

Learners showed appreciation for the degree of choice regarding where to sit during class. It was revealed by one participant that optional seating arrangements allows spontaneous peer support because learners being able to choose where they sit can lead to the sharing of helpful advice between fellow learners:

Because I'm older and I really knew nothing about computing before starting this course – I had my daily breakdown at some point and people would be like come on over here [Mary].

It appears that the freedom to choose where to sit extends in certain circumstances to not just the beginning of a class but learners can move at different points of time during class. This appears on the face of it to be a more relaxed environment, however, disciplinary processes are arguably still at work. Although a lecturer could have designated more permanent seating arrangements, temporary groupings can still be organised ad hoc to encourage interaction. However, by mostly leaving decisions up to the learner there is a sense of choice but in reality there is a separation of learners: this is described as 'segmentation' by Foucault and is an aspect of the fourth technique below.

Although there is the general perception of choice, which is appreciated, there was a feeling that space was limited:

It's tight to move around and everyone is just there. I usually sit up the back but there's not enough space for everyone. You're right on the edge of the desk [Calum].

With learners able to choose where to sit and even appreciative of remaining in the same space, apart from the individualism promoted which is important to note, the classroom is generally not so much closed in on itself as, at worst, uncomfortable at times. There was one example of discipline highlighted from a participant's experience of another college where a lecturer locked the classroom door but this was to keep late learners out and prevent them from disrupting the lesson:

I have to say I found the other college more rigid than here. For example, students walked into a class 2 or 5 minutes late then they were told don't do that again. One of the lecturers locked the door. I've never seen anything like that happen here [Lorna].

This experience though, which can still be recalled by the participant, could be influential on *perceptions* of enclosure. If so, this can be said to support two types of enclosure, concrete and perceived, with the latter influencing learners, especially those who have experienced a strict application of rules in relation to physical space in the past. In this case, although it took place at another college, punitive measures are in the mind of one learner. Overall, it appears that the college as an institution encourages individual choice and separation while participants themselves hark after social interaction.

4.2.2 Partitioning

The second technique to manage space, highlighted by Foucault, is partitioning where movement is limited so that 'Each individual has his own place; and each place its individual'. With partitioning, 'One must eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation, their unusable and dangerous coagulation' (Foucault, 1977, p.143). With learners able to choose where to sit in class but also communicate with learners close by as well as the social interaction that is permitted during break times, partitioning appears to be less obvious. This also includes options regarding where learners can complete work, which can have positive effects as described by Jenny:

Some of the communication classes it's been up to us when we do our reports and stuff. Whether we do it in class or at home. He lets us decide what we prefer and feel more comfortable with [Jenny].

Spontaneous peer support is also possible, 'One of the youngsters would sit beside me or say log into this computer and sit beside me today. You know it's the support' [Mary]. Of course, modern technologies can make partitioning much more difficult than it was prior to the use of features such as online social networking. Although this could be favourable, at least regarding the experience of learners, potential problems were highlighted by some in relation to online spaces, such as Calum who described social media as enabling 'a bit of bullying...name calling'. This is perhaps one reason why mobile phones are banned from the classroom but learners did not show any concern regarding this ban. Disciplinary controls involving partitioning were mentioned though in relation to employers who carry out surveillance on prospective employees, 'I only went on facebook because I was told at the job centre that employers look to find out what kind

of person you are' [Sarah]. This is not dissimilar to the argued effect of Foucault's panopticon as influential on individuals because it prompts personal reflection on the perceptions of others towards oneself.

4.2.3 Functional Sites

The third technique, 'functional sites', according to Foucault, organises a group of individuals through the creation of 'useful spaces', for example according to task or skill. As Foucault stated, 'All these serializations formed a permanent grid: confusion was eliminated' (1977, p.145). In further education, although seating is not pre-determined this could be applied to the arrangement of class groups according to ability. One participant described this type of organisation, which improved her experience from the previous year:

last year I was put in a class where some people were quite badly behaved and they weren't punished properly. Whereas I think this year I think they've put a lot of thought into where they put classes and where they put people who are quite similar into the same classes so young people in the same class and mature people into another class. It kind of blends well [Jenny].

It appears from this participant's observation that college lecturers or managers deliberate over which course groups learners should be placed in. This is possible when there is more than one occurrence of a particular course. It would be difficult though for such decisions to be taken with single occurrences, with only one class to manipulate according to task or skill. As stated, seating is not used by managers or lecturers to organise learners and so the manipulation of space with reference to function is not apparent where it could have been.

4.2.4 Rank

The fourth spatial disciplinary mechanism is Rank and this manifested itself within this study through age in particular. According to Foucault, rank individualises bodies by ascribing 'a location that does not give them a fixed position, but distributes them and circulates them in a network of relations'. This resulted in 'each pupil, according to his age, his performance, his behaviour' occupying 'one rank, sometimes another' (Foucault, 1977, pp.146,147). Although assessment was discussed in terms of its own challenges and preferred types, which will be examined later in this chapter, there was no obvious

reference made by participants to ranking according to ability or progress. Instead, there was common appreciation of the college tutors working with learners to allow them to progress at their own pace or learners supporting or being supported by other learners. Age difference, however, was reflected on by most participants in what amounts to as a self-imposed ranking technique of discipline which *indirectly* perhaps also relates to ability. Age was raised numerous times during interviews as a category recognised by participants. Lorna stated:

To be honest here it was ok and I learned what I wanted to learn but there was an element of people swanning in late and that's not really on. That's probably because I'm more mature and they're still young.

Jack reflected more positively on his experience at another college:

With that college there were people who were mature students so that was a different element as well...I liked it because I think I get on quite well with people of all ages. They were a bit more mature as well which I quite liked.

At his current college though, now a little older, Jack described the need to adjust to being slightly older than some learners, 'For me it has been a little different because I'm a little older and some have come from school so I've had to adapt in certain ways to relate to others'. This highlights confidence issues and tensions that could result from the interplay between factors such as continuing within education; older learners entering a new environment dominated by younger learners; and conflicting feelings when an older learner returns to an environment experienced when younger. What is clear is that learners are discerning regarding the differences between themselves as individuals and others in class who are older or younger which can also relate to ranking according to ability. If younger learners arrive late, for example, there could be a stereotypical benchmarking process, which concludes that these younger learners are not doing what is required to succeed; vice versa, younger learners could perceive older learners as more competent.

In summary, issues around space (i.e. the art of distributions), particularly in relation to the four sub-aspects identified by Foucault affect college learners to some degree. College spaces appear to be comfortable which can shape the experience of learners. The

classroom itself is recognised as mostly formal, involving as it does official college activity. It is clear though that learners interact and work with spaces to mitigate against spatial discipline and capitalise on the opportunities that different spaces create. Learners can occupy a room during break times, choose where to sit in class with spontaneous peer support one result, and enjoy the independence of completing tasks outside of the classroom. Where spatial discipline exists through the ban on mobile phones, learners can potentially be disadvantaged but learners also commented on the problems of social network bullying this measure can prevent. Finally, the control of space creates the conditions for learner docility in two ways. Spatial discipline creates a material, bordered and organised environment that limits freedom. It is also though a demonstration and exercising of power with decisions made on behalf of learners who would be clear who is in control of key spatial decisions. There are examples though of learners making spatial decisions that at times subvert the original preferred meaning of rooms, seating and other aspects of organised space.

4.3 The Control of Learner Activity

Foucault's second disciplinary technique involves three main mechanisms with the first two of these related directly to temporal control of the individual: 'the timetable', 'exhaustive use' and a third, 'body-object articulation'.

4.3.1 Timetable

Foucault believed that temporal regulations tightened further the rules that historically had been laid down by religious decision makers but with even greater emphasis on time's constituent parts: months, days, hours and minutes. It was found that the inexorable nature of time provided a power to the disciplining of individuals in a range of aspects connected to learning such as assessment and attendance. As will be seen this in turn helps to instil a credentialist outlook amongst most participants within this study.

Although full time HNC students are required to attend 15 or 16 hours per week, most courses timetable subjects across a maximum of three days. Some courses schedule classes across three consecutive days and others with a day or two days in between, within the week. Three participants stated that timetabling for three consecutive days was

preferred, to allow learners to work part time outside of college, with one of these participants stating:

I think it's good we have all the classes in 3 days and they're all together. If it was to be split up in an afternoon or a morning it wouldn't be as good. It helps with your other commitments and I'm quite happy with that [Lorna].

This capacity to manage commitments outside of the classroom is therefore an important factor for at least a few learners who enrol at college, bringing with them other priorities they have to manage alongside their studies. Alternative views were expressed by a few other learners though with one participant stating that three days' attendance in the week is akin to part time study, 'I know this is going to sound terrible but the course is only 2 and a ½ days even though they say it's full time to me – it's part time!' [Sarah]. Encompassing both views is the significant finding that participants, by being physically outside of college for four and a half days, although still connected to the college experience in some ways such as online learning and homework, are not subject to the college's disciplinary elements described by Foucault for much of their week, although they may be subjected to disciplinary practices in their work place for example. As will be seen below though, this intensifies considerably the focus learners have on what they see as the most critical aspect of their learning: assessment.

The college start time suits one participant who, having been used to waking at 8am Monday to Friday while at school, now enjoys two days off during the 5 day week, saying that 'it's very manageable' [Naz]. This was not shared by another participant though who described her routine established at school as being affected, 'I think it is a big change – it's less of a routine – you're not in at the same time every day...I was 5 days in school. We just had classes Monday to Friday' [Emily]. The three days though, when managed carefully and used to his advantage, benefited another learner, but importantly only three days' commitment was stressed:

I think because we're only in 3 days I push myself more in those 3 days. Then when I go home – I want to do more work – but when I was at school – you did your 5 days and you were absolutely knackered when you got home [Gary].

Time affected learners' sense of freedom in relation to the management of assessment. One participant [Lorna] appreciated open book assessments without tight exam conditions and one other participant was grateful for the understanding tutors showed towards assessment rules, stating that tutors are careful to ask what other assessment deadlines the students have before setting their own. Not in agreement in terms of their own experience, three participants described the impact on them if this considered approach to assessment is missing. They stated that often preparation for assessments and assessments themselves can be 'rushed' while there can be too much time for certain assessments, as one of the learners described, 'Some assessments we've been given 2 hours for and we didn't need it. We've completed them in 25 minutes. Then others where we did need it and we've not been given enough time'. The same learner refers to the impact this can have:

in one class we were in for an hour and a half and we all felt under pressure constantly checking the clock but if you had the 2 hours you'd feel a bit more relaxed. You can take your time [Jenny].

4.3.2 Exhaustive Use

Another temporal technique to ensure the control of activity is 'exhaustive use', which addresses traditional religious and industry concerns in relation to timewasting. Instead, exhaustive use 'arranges a positive economy' where time is mined for 'ever more available moments and, from each moment, ever more useful forces' (Foucault, 1977, p.154). Whilst the timetable totalling 16 hours' tutor contact can be arranged to allow learners two clear days outside of college as discussed above, this also involves two full days and one day with four hours per week when attending college. Participants were aware of the exhaustive use of time this model leads to. Jill states:

I was not expecting this amount of assessments but it certainly keeps you focused and sometimes some of them could be structured a little better. If we had started a month earlier we all could have felt a bit less rushed – now it feels like there's a lot of assessments to do at the one time.

Jill believes though that it is greater discipline, perhaps in relation to the signposting of progress by tutors, that is needed:

I've found as a learner you have to create your own discipline so we almost find ourselves reaching a consensus that yes you're our teacher but maybe we want a wee bit more discipline.

Too much free reign then can involve greater discipline with (lack of) time emerging as the technique that carries this out. Most learners stated that the volume of activity over the three days means that engagement with extra-curricular activities is not possible. Liz described working through lunch with little time to do anything else:

Well on the social side...I find it hard to balance the social side and the work side because we get given a lot of work from this course – it's a really demanding course so I find it hard outside the college as well as inside like some lunches I'm supposed to be in the library but I want to go and talk to my pals so that's kind of tricky.

There appears to be a lack of decompression time here for learners to consolidate their learning inside of college as well as the impact on social time.

4.3.3 Body-Object Articulation

One other practice that Foucault argued allows individual activity to be controlled is through 'body-object articulation', which sees a 'meticulous meshing' of 'two parallel series': the body and its tool where 'power is introduced, fastening them to one another' (1977, p.153). Such examples within modern day colleges are less visible than the example cited by Foucault of an 18th century soldier and his rifle. However, participants described their interaction and close relationships with learning tools in ways that parallel Foucault's examples. Lorna, for example, is conscious of the need to be aware of the physical-temporal relationship between the body and object and to continue to improve this area along a route that involves less exertion as she gets older but will ensure she is employable:

I feel now I've reached a stage where I 'm not up to date with IT and admin and all that stuff and as I get older I think it might be a good idea to have some of those skills as well because my job is quite physical – what will be good for me employment wise.

Another participant [Sarah] worried about whether or not the body-object relationship, in her own terms, was advancing beyond a reasonable degree of interaction, in her own observations of younger classmates:

that's the way people are – it can't be doing your skeleton any good but that's technology. Like in the film Wall-E – I thought that could happen when we're so obsessed with technology we're sitting on our bums and not doing anything. So that's a downside for technology!

Again the issue of technology surfaces where the reliance on mobile phone technology is challenged by a ban on mobile phones in the classroom. This is a good example of the complexity that can be found through deeper analysis of disciplinary techniques. The ban on mobile technology is a disciplinary tactic employed within the college but this tactic also arrests the power of body-object discipline that extends outside of college with the increasing reliance on mobile technology. However, it can ensure there are few distractions to docile behaviour when being taught in class.

The need for greater controlling influence through body-object control is suggested by one participant who is still getting to grips with how, when and where to use more or less appropriate learning tools:

I think if we're given an essay and we get told to look up quotations everyone really goes to the computer but we shouldn't really just do this. We should also go to books. We keep getting told go to the library and get the books but see if you've got your phone or a computer at home you just google the question but it's not always correct because you get Wikipedia [Liz].

Legitimate forms of control are clearly lacking here in the form of guidance and the support of research activity that is not overly reliant on technology. However, by dismissing a potentially disruptive technological resource in the form of Wikipedia, this learner has internalised rules and their apparent docility can be seen as a result of subjectivation.

To summarise the body's relationship with college tools, despite corporal punishment being removed from state funded education in Scotland, the learner body can still be directly impacted by disciplinary techniques that are more subtle. Learners are recognising an increasing dependence on mobile technologies, however, with the ban on mobile phones participants appear to express less body object discipline within the classroom than can be found outside of college. This may, however, help ensure learners are docile in class though.

To conclude the control of activity and learner mediation of this, time, exhaustive use and body-object articulation are disciplinary techniques that affect individuals in this study. Crucially, in relation to the previous section on spatial discipline, learners do not appear docile outside of college over 4.5 days because they are engaging in part-time work and other pursuits. They are at the very least not subject to more physical spatial discipline therefore for much of their week by the college at least, although the work place can continue this control. Docility is most evident in their present moment though when they must meet deadlines and have good time management. This docility is intensified when assessments are not timed well and so are rushed, leading participants to focus on credentialist priorities over other aspects of learning. The more compulsory assessment takes up the time of participants, the less likely they are to engage with opt-in activities such as the wider life of the college or activities interpreted by participants as opt-in such as wider classroom learning that doesn't involve assessment. These events are often of a particular ideological bent which is more aligned with socially democratic principles than neoliberal such as inclusion and equality, as can be seen within NUS campaigns. Finally, due to the ban on mobile technologies within the classroom, there is less body-object articulation within college than there is outside of college where other institutions can engage with individuals through mobile phone apps and websites. Although participants are docile to the point that they seem to accept the ban uncritically, the particular technique of controlling individuals through their relationship with the tools they use is lacking, therefore subjectivation does not appear to be reinforced through body-object articulation in ways that could it be. What is lost though is the opportunity for learners to interact with other members of the student body through online software that is familiar to them, at least during class time. What is *gained* is an opportunity for learners to become more docile in the classroom.

4.4 The Organisation of Learner Geneses

Foucault's third technique of discipline is concerned with human development. This mechanism of discipline focuses on the progress made by individuals (without limit) through the 'procedure' of 'exercise', 'Exercise is that technique by which one imposes on the body tasks that are both repetitive and different, but always graduated' (1977, p.162). In relation to this, college, with its own range of exercises, was seen by most participants as development from school without a clear goal beyond, a stepping stone to University or an opportunity to change career.

4.4.1 Adjustment

Almost all participants described the challenges of moving across institutions, something not captured by Foucault in his description of institutional constraints, perhaps due to a belief that institutions were generally homogenous in their use of the four techniques. Jack left school before his final year without a career or HE course in mind but knew he wanted a change, 'I thought it was good to have a different environment as well so a new chapter if you like'. For Jenny it was simply about rekindling her wish to learn in the first instance after a difficult school experience, 'When I left school I got put into a course in a proper college when I was 15. It was like a new start course that taught you a bit of everything. I loved that – it was really good'.

For most participants, whether joining college from the work place, domestic environment or school, forms of support undergirded their lives prior to college enrolment through advice, financial help, and the specific rules that guided them. This support was reduced as learners found they needed to cope quickly with newfound independence and responsibility in a different college environment. Attendance for example, although linked with funding, does not involve noticeable intervention from the curriculum area or faculty according to one participant who described the transition to college as challenging because of its more relaxed attitude towards attendance compared to school:

If you didn't come in you would have to make sure you caught up and stuff – there weren't the consequences if you didn't come in. In school they'd phone your parents – but here it was on you because you wanted to do it. I think that did take a bit of getting used to [Jack].

One participant stated that adjusting to greater freedom compared to school life is not straightforward for all learners:

I think if you go through school and you've always done everything on time it's fine but I think if you went to school and you sort of needed the wee push and then you come here then it's a shock [Emily].

When it came to open book assessments, projects and other formative assignments, learners revealed a level of agency that they did not experience at school. This appeared to require a great deal of adjustment to cope with different learning and teaching styles within college. One participant explained that school subjects involve the use of information handed to the learner by the teacher:

If you're researching someone you can decide on what to do as long as it's on the subject you are doing. You aren't forced to do certain books. School tells you what pages to read. You just get a text book and it's like there's a page and there's a page [Ros].

For this learner and a few others who described their experience of college formative and summative assessments, college subjects encourage original research with the choice and creative freedom this brings. For some students though this is their first experience of being let loose creatively without text book page numbers and a teacher's preferred information being the framework for an individual's educational development. There is therefore arguably less docility in colleges in relation to these open book exercises and assessments but the lack of guidance for transitioning students can compound and reinforce learners being docile in class in order to gain the knowledge needed to pass assessments within an 'exhausted' period of time.

Although group work and close associations with peers in the classroom at school was highlighted as beneficial and supportive, the social side at school was also a factor that improved the learner's general experience. The impact on one participant when the social side fell away at school was highlighted as she recollected her experience. The social aspect of such time spent beyond the group work that is prevalent in schools was important to this learner whose friends left school during her own 5th year at High school. This participant ended up leaving school mid-year because there was no longer social interaction outside of the classroom with fellow learners,

I was doing ok academically. I just didn't really know anyone else so I was stoating around myself. All my classes were good and I was doing quite well in them. I only left because all my friends had left [Nicole].

One learner, however, identified a development that could capitalise on the positive element social relations bring to the learner experience. If the lesson incorporated peer-to-peer activity not just involving group work but learners also leading lessons, it could benefit the student's progress:

We hardly use hands on. At the same time I know it's an IT course so there will be a lot of computing. But sometimes maybe something else. We don't really do presentations. I'd enjoy. I feel if I teach it I know it – if I say it. If you can teach it you know it [Louise].

The fact that there are few examples of peer-to-peer exercises encouraged within colleges is important to the emerging trend towards individualist learning, yet learners do look for this occasionally.

Transitions from the work place required a degree of adjustment as participants either gave up employment altogether prior to studying or attempted to juggle college life with home life and part time employment. However, one participant [Emily] more positively described working part time but considered asking to be taken on full time before eventually deciding on the college course she is currently on. The main reasons for this were due to the monotony of the part time job in a clothes shop. As the participant stated:

I prefer learning and being interactive so I thought I'll go to college for a year and go into University after that. I know now I'll be able to get a much, much better suited job to me [Emily].

Although she acknowledged the fact it pays well, working in a job that she enjoys is now very important to her. The participant identified the requirement of any future preferred career to 'talk to people and you're on the go' that is 'more interactive and involved rather than just doing task after task'. She continued that her current course allows greater scope than 'just being told' because you can express your opinion in seminars and structure essays 'in your own way'. This is a welcome alternative to her current job that she seems to endure more than enjoy:

Some people have worked there for over 10 years. A lot of people really like it – it's well paying and they just like the pay – the discount as well is a perk but now I go in and just shut my eyes [Emily].

Although the experience is one of endurance, the job may have been helpful to the student by providing experience of what would not be an enjoyable career when she states, 'I don't have a clue what job will be suited but I know what wouldn't' [Emily]. The adjustment to college after this experience within employment would appear to be a positive process overall though and one where the participant is relatively less docile in college than she is in her job. However, although there are a range of support services available to learners it is not clear if there is sufficient support and guidance available to enable learners to cope with the adjustment required from school to college.

Most participants revealed that there is support for college 'exercises' in the form of the tuition and advice from lecturers in learning and assessment and help from fellow learners. However, specific academic support was not meaningfully available to learners outside of the classroom. Participants reported a great deal of wider advice provided from college departments such as funding, the student adviser, the student association and its activities and information systems. Although these support systems are aligned to college rules, procedures and practices that themselves act as mechanisms of control, participants tend to engage more critically with these services and are less docile and cooperative when encouraged to get involved with wider college activities.

One participant, for example had complained to the college about the funding structure, 'No...The 100% attendance issue is a joke – that's really bad. I don't agree with that – it didn't used to be 100 for funding' [Jenny]. Although the college funding procedures require 100% attendance, learners are provided with 5 days' authorisations which they can use when they wish. Yet, this seems like a helpful measure that would provide learners with the freedom to authorise their own absences without any contact with the college.

Another learner described her frustration at not being able to update her attendance at home using 'authorised absences' [Liz]. Therefore, concerns relating to the processes within structural arrangements are expressed with learners irked by these issues apparently as much as by the financial awards or amounts themselves. It appears this lack of docility with the wider college is also because they do not provide the support learners perhaps require in relation to their own priorities of passing assessments. Even learning support

can only help with exam arrangements or supporting literacy and numeracy – but not the academic element. All of this means that college learners are able to be less docile outside of the classroom but inside the classroom participants are choosing to be passive, submissive and docile in order to get through assessments unscathed.

To summarise participants' views on adjustment, learners joining college soon after school had to adapt to college lessons that involved less group work, more individual tasks, greater independence with research and homework, and a different social structure than recollected from their experience of school. College lessons, while involving less group work, were nonetheless varied in their activity across most units, which a few learners appreciated, however, this more flexible empowering approach to learning was a challenge to others. Those joining college from the work place or while continuing to maintain part time work, had to adapt to a new environment but this appeared to be a more positive experience compared to that of school leavers. Although for some this was a motivating factor behind their enrolment because it allowed them to escape the prospect of a monotonous job, consideration should perhaps be given to the possible lack of support to allow learners to manage this new found freedom and autonomy. Finally, there is a clear distinction between the types of support available for academic study and the support learners can receive for other matters such as personal issues. Although wider support is considerable, academic support is confined to the classroom which sharpens and narrows the learner's focus in this area, leading to greater docility in the classroom to cope with individualist approaches to class work and a credentialist approach but less docility in other areas. Outside of the classroom participants are less docile and more critical in their engagement with wider support services.

4.4.2 Employability

Older participants with employment experience spoke of their wish to change career or improve their prospects within their vocational area. Ros' focus is simply, 'finding a job that you'd be happy in and stuff'. Sarah attended night school prior to her current course to improve her prospects as she saw them benchmarked against others:

So I was moving to Scotland and I thought now everybody can use a computer and I can't. So I went to night school before I moved to Scotland to get experience with computing ...to get the certificates and come up here [Sarah].

Jill who completed a social science degree at University stated that she has to be pragmatic and less fanciful in her plans in order to gain employment, even though she could have continued in Higher Education. Jill chose to complete an HNC Admin and Accounts course because of its employability potential. Others too emphasised the benefit of progressing by improving their employability skills. Naz feels this is more unique to colleges, 'if you want a more academic related job like a doctor or researcher then go to Uni. If a job is your focal point a college will certainly get you trained up'. Mary would like to see greater input from college tutors regarding evidencing progress, 'every course in the college should have cv personal statement support – even an hour for 6 weeks. I think that would be a massive help to our students'. After raising her children, Louise, who ultimately wants an office job, is looking forward to transforming her life through college study, 'I always said once my kids were grown up I would go back to working in an office – it's a lot better money as well – this is the start – big change'. Participants are therefore describing the need to develop a range of skills that will allow them to become flexible in order to cope with but also initiate change.

A second main motivation involved a few participants describing college as being a 'stepping stone' for progression into Higher Education study. Emily spoke of her approach to learning being less instrumental once she accesses University, 'I'd say more with this course doing it to pass it to get to Uni but I think when I get to Uni I'll be more learning to learn. This is a stepping stone for me to get there'. Naz wants to complete her college course and go to University before employment but in large part this is due to encouragement from her family, 'my family keep telling me go to University, go and get a job. Take care of yourself and get a job so I always feel ready for that'.

One participant described the case of a fellow learner who, perhaps because of financial constraints and parenthood, was sharply focused on the amount of salary she could earn after college. Describing young school leavers who have not worked as lacking in insight, she stated that one fellow learner had children just after leaving school and was now focused on salary more than any other factor. The participant provided the learner with advice, informing her that a good CV does not always equate directly and immediately to a good salary. This helped the student develop insight but the participant felt she was still met with motivations that were different to her own:

So explaining that to her gave her some understanding. I also said to her why don't you knock on doors and volunteer your services. Your currency will be your experience – that's what you're getting. But she said if I'm not getting paid I'm not doing it [Sarah].

Similarly, one other learner, Louise, stated that, from her own experience, younger learners at college are not motivated as they should be in her opinion because too many begin college because their parents encourage them to 'go out and do something'. These learners then choose college over employment because they do not want to work and the freedom that college gives learners is conducive to these motivations. It appears that participants perceive themselves to be doing what is required of them in a docile way but recognise others who are not. While they develop skills and volunteer to increase flexibility in the work place, other often younger learners are not and this is perceived to be discordant with participants' views regarding the 'learner' role.

It is clear that learners seek to develop the skills that increases their own flexibility as they face their next steps of HE or employment. Although colleges help develop flexible learners, participants emphasised a need for more guidance and exposition from the college in this area, indicating it is learners themselves and not simply colleges that are the source of this thrust towards the development of a wide range of employment related skills. It is not clear if colleges are simply creating docile learners and developing flexibility for the employment market with learners thirsting for more in this area; or if colleges are touching on employability skills as part of a wider curriculum but learners have internalised from a range of institutions and sources the need to become flexible and are therefore less docile with the college institution but more docile in the face of a combination of institutions. Either way it is clear that flexibility is a key characteristic of learner identity.

4.4.3 Knowledge and Skills

Although successful completion of assessment has been shown to be of critical importance, practical knowledge gained was important to learners with one stating that her college course has the 'right mix' to prepare her for industry. Another learner spoke enthusiastically about knowledge gained generally, 'I feel more educated every time I come to college – I'm learning stuff I don't know' [Ross]. One HNC Accounts learner described how she was not aware of aspects of decision making in her previous

employment when she worked for a building company but now she has an appreciation of the variables taken into consideration with each building project:

I worked for a builder – he obviously wrote an estimate – I used to think he saw a job and I typed it up because that’s all I saw – typing it up and sending it away...I didn’t even think about that until my class and then thought yeah [Sarah].

As stated above, most participants, when asked about their long-term plans, could only provide vague ideas beyond their wish to develop a wide range of skills and an ambition to go to University or ‘get a job’. However, one participant, Jack, described the impact the political context is having on his long-term plans by referring to a fast stream graduate programme, the impact of Brexit and the hiring of 30,000 civil servants to cope and the impact of possible independence for Scotland in the future. One other participant summarised personal research he had carried out prior to attending college, which now forms his long term plan:

Long term goals would be achieving a career in accounts. Stirling is an option because I’ve got a few friends who go to that and I’ve heard it’s a brilliant University. Napier I’ve been reading up about and they said they had a 93 percent employment rate. 93 percent of students would study and get a job in that subject. I thought that sounded quite appealing [Ross].

Evidence of this degree of research based, informed, planning was not common and rather fragmentary but at least demonstrates, if it needed to be, that learners are not always simply docile bodies focusing on present priorities such as assessment but are obviously capable of strategic, informed, planning. Although learners did not show a deep appreciation, knowledge or understanding of management decisions in relation to course structure, course design, awarding body framework limitations and possibilities, there were nonetheless comments made that revealed critical awareness. One learner, for example, described her own acceptance of the realistic nature of education, stating that:

I think it’s giving you a grounding in everything and the basics – I don’t think you’ll be an expert in anything. I don’t know you need to be – you could learn on the job [Lorna].

However, participants showed the strongest desire for knowledge in relation to assessment and it was this credentialism that brought out the greatest degree of strategy and deeper thinking. For example, the focus group involved a discussion around the benefits of learner engagement activities, which showed fresh insight and innovative ideas regarding

educational possibilities. One learner began by arguing that assessment is the most important factor for her and if there were activities in class not related directly to the assessment she and her classmates would 'prioritise the stuff we were being assessed on and probably wouldn't even bother about other things' [Emily].

Another participant indicated that she is well aware of strategies adopted by lecturers in relation to assessment that she herself would almost play along with:

They've been really good – some of us have been late with things and they'd be like ok we'll extend the deadline a wee bit – especially since I've been really bad with deadlines – they've been good with me. They've not been talking about removing me from the course or anything. They make you think that that's going to happen! [Liz].

The process implied by the learner is worth fleshing out to help us understand the interplay of strategies between the lecturer and learner. An assessment deadline is set by the lecturer; the deadline is not actually a final deadline because an extension can be given; learners are aware the deadline is not final; lecturers make learners think they can be removed from the course for failing or non-submission; learners are aware that the threat of withdrawal from the course is a bluff. This points to stratum of strategies interacting between the learner and lecturer which the student ultimately navigates through.

Another learner showed cynicism of college efforts to engage and build in curriculum for excellence principles saying that trips and activities don't make her want to learn more, 'We went to the Robert Burns museum and we were learning Burns' poetry but it didn't make me want to...you have the poem and you just analyse it' [Naz]. Another participant replied that a placement within the work place would be more helpful because they have been involved in other types of learner engagement activities from early on in their schooling, 'At primary school we had trips and went to the parliament so we've kind of done that. We could go back which would be interesting but we've done that' [Liz]. Again, it is a credentialist and individualist focus that participants appear to have but this is revealed through a Janus-faced critique on the one hand from learners who are not docile regarding their act of criticism with aspects of curriculum; but on the other hand indicate a preference to simply pass assessments and develop employability skills. Learners are therefore not docile in their display of knowledge and critique of curriculum but this is because of their wish to be docile in relation to assessment and employability skills.

Overall, the organisation of learner development as a disciplinary technique that helps create docility is arguably the most complex of Foucault's four mechanisms. The term 'exercise' is vague as a Foucauldian concept and should be considered as more than simply the tasks learners complete. In colleges, learners are required to first of all adjust to the unique form that exercises take in a further education environment which involves an individualism not encouraged in school or employment. This individualism means learners have to cope with assessment demands often on their own, a lack of academic support outside of the classroom, funding pressures on the individual in terms of finances and the process of managing the absence system and finally the social side of college is less prevalent than at school. This is off set slightly by learners meeting during break times to support each other. However, even here there is reinforcement of specific views regarding what is most important. This includes a focus on employability skills which has found its way into the mind-set of some participants and although would seem instrumental cannot be a surprise within a vocational college. However, there was a significant emphasis placed on flexibility by most participants as opposed to intrinsic educational value. The development of knowledge is a key exercise within any educational setting but alongside the development of employability skills it was a credentialism that dominated the thoughts of participants, often with apparently contradictory outlooks that revealed on the one hand sophisticated critical views on how to augment, develop and continue to focus on assessment and flexibility, but revealing docile acceptance of these priorities.

4.5 The Composition of Forces and Putting Learners at the Centre

The final technique, the composition of forces involves separate segments combining to form an efficient machine with the learner at the centre of its influence. This involves three 'tactical' aspects: the individual body becomes a 'segment' within an 'ensemble'; secondly, combining temporal elements from the other three techniques, where moments of lives are utilised so that stages of life journeys inform one another, for example through more advanced learners supporting those who are younger or less advanced; thirdly, a 'precise system of command' is followed as a 'technique of training' (Foucault, 1977:164).

4.5.1 Segmentation

The college structure is largely shaped by governing decisions made by college boards, senior managers, middle managers and with the involvement of lecturers. These decisions are often the direct result of guidance issued by stakeholders such as the college's main financial contributor the Scottish Funding Council; executive agencies of Scottish

Government such as Education Scotland who promote educational practice and carry out college reviews; providers of student funding such as the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS); and awarding bodies such as the Scottish Qualifications Authority. These organisations inform college practice to a considerable degree although college leaders can obviously mediate and prioritise aspects of this guidance. Central to this study though are the views of learners who are the end receiving point of pressures before they leave college and interact with the wider world in their own way.

Disciplinary mechanisms, according to those interviewed, are noticeable throughout the college experience and this reaches into the classroom. To begin with the most extreme descriptions, there are situations cited by participants that refer to the physical body being seemingly rendered docile with Foucault's metaphor of the cog in the machine not too distant. One participant stated that she is unable to move in class or take her eyes off the lecturer, 'I try not to move too much – just sit still and listen to everything they say and write it down' [Liz]. This would be more discomfiting if it was not for the explanation given by the learner who states that this behaviour is not due to any threat but because of the value of the lesson being delivered and respect for the lecturer: 'just because they're giving us so much information so I need to give them my full attention' [Liz]. Another student stated that this approach is the most productive, 'It's a different dynamic in the class as well. Eyes forward – you don't breathe – but then it gets things done' [Lorna].

The two examples above illustrate the approach taken by some learners in the process of knowledge acquisition. It is a passivity to a degree with the body still and the mind seemingly uncritical. However, the mind is active in the sense that it is alert at least to the tutor's exposition. The following statement by one participant perhaps exemplifies this possibility and sheds a different light regarding concerns around classroom passivity, indicating docility prior to attending college:

I just go in and I'm like a sponge – I want to learn. I was saying to my daughter that a lot of my education after leaving school came from the box in the corner of the room called the television. I've always been like a sponge absorbing all the time and I'm just sitting there taking it all in [Sarah].

This has obvious implications regarding any claim that *colleges* are simply creating docile bodies. Nicole described an appreciation of boundaries:

In all of your classes you have choices – you can lay it out the way you want but I just follow structure because I think it's easier doing it that way. Then like with the publishing one – it's all to be the way you want it to be.

Another learner spoke in similar terms when asked about choice in the classroom describing the benefits derived from being passive:

By this stage you become one of those lambs where you just swallow it – by now it's just about getting the assessments done week to week and getting by it...It's just follow the structure and see where it goes from there [Jill].

At least one model of learning evident within college then is exposition by the lecturer with learners attentive and uncritical. One participant points to the possibility that this submissiveness is not due to a college or tutor preference but a strategy adopted by the learner in the face of assessment demands. The participant states that learners 'get moaned at' by lecturers if they attempt to just copy *PowerPoint* information down but this is what learners do continuously, word for word. Lecturers encourage learners by saying that the HNC qualification is at a Higher Education level and so learners must be putting information into their own words and note form. Here then is a clear indication of lecturers actively working against any notion of creating docile bodies. This is not straightforward for some learners though:

you need to put it in your own words but that's kind of hard for me to put things into my own words when I'm learning new concepts. We're not really making that many choices – we just sit and have to take everything in - in our own way, either writing it down on our own or writing it out late [Liz].

It seems possible here that learner and lecturer motivations are jarring with each other over classroom practice with passivity, the learner's preference and not the lecturer's. However, the learner is partly developing methods to cope with the demands of the course and this could be due to an adjustment that affected participant's assimilation into college life due to changes to types and practices of assessment alongside the possible reliance of lecturers who hope for engagement but rely on didactic exposition using powerpoint. One learner described a problem with a typical process of learning from her own experience at school where she would often be given information by the teacher to learn, then in exam conditions the learner tried to recall as much as she can remember. Although she learned to a degree from subjects she studied in the process, the information would often be

forgotten later and time would also be wasted memorising in the short term information that would not appear in the exam. The participant problematized this model of knowledge acquisition:

This type of thinking can get in the way of your learning. With open book you can get into an author and find out stuff your teacher or lecturer wouldn't bring up rather than just give us certain information – just write that! This is how to look at it and if you answer it differently you're outside of the marking guidelines [Ros].

A few learners from the HNC Administration and IT course described one class that followed the model of prescriptive learning similar to that seen in schools and each separately shared their concerns stating that it was much less preferable to other units that involved what amounted to in their descriptions as more innovative, blended learning approaches. Similarly, one HNC Social Science learner described the repetition of the same assessment process despite some opportunity to create a unique response:

I think with the social sciences and the A units and essays, from what they seem, especially the history, you're given a choice of what you focus on in the essay. Other than that, it's not that you're told everything but it seems like the same routine every week – it's always similar [Calum].

Overall, most college units were less inflexible than the descriptions of school assignments given by participants. However, even where there is creativity, one participant described college learning activities as involving greater personal responsibility, stating that there had been fewer group activities compared to school where there were many throughout each school year. This, however, had the potential of placing a greater burden on individual students with one participant stating that:

...in school it was very much like team work – everyone was to help each other out but in college it's not like that – it's more like you're in it for yourself because everyone's applying to Uni, everyone wants to pass their course so you're more worried about yourself than helping others. It's a bit more, not selfish but you are more focused on passing for you but in school everyone tries to help each other out for their exams [Liz].

Learning and teaching within the examples above can frame the experience of students to the extent that even their bodies are impacted in ways that would seem unnatural to many. This includes sitting without moving and eyes set on the lecturer, which would be alarming

if it was not for the fact learners appear to be doing this consciously in order to strategically gain the most from the lesson in order to prepare for and pass the assessment.

Although examples of agency in relation to the learner's direct experience will be discussed below there was very little critique from any participant regarding college management, perhaps due to this tier being more removed from the learner experience. Perhaps learners feel there is little to question or more likely there is a lack of awareness across learners that would give them the knowledge and confidence to hunt assumptions and question aspects of the management of their courses. It was her trust in college management that made one learner relax and not get too involved in certain processes:

I'm opinionated but I wouldn't say I have any influence. You just go along with it. It suits – if it's not broken – it clearly isn't with the HN course we're on. The management of the HN course is superb... We don't have a choice – it's a set curriculum [Mary].

Despite the rules listed above, most participants described the freedom of college life, especially compared to other institutions such as school. One mature student pronounced her gratitude for not having to obtain permission to go to the bathroom, 'Rules are fine for school because you need them but here it's more relaxed and open. You get told the rules. Going to the bathroom you just get up and go' [Louise]. Another learner spoke about college as being more relaxed, stating 'I don't feel like there are barriers. There's a lot of encouragement – I don't feel like that about anything here' [Lorna].

4.5.2 Utilising Differences in Learner Progress

A key aspect of Foucault's final technique is the institution's ability to utilise individuals at all stages of their life journey. This can mean that there are few moments free of control because temporal gaps are filled by those who have developed knowledge supporting those who have not. On the surface level a positive constructive statement was made by participants who gave the strong impression that the social side of learning is crucial to them. This is not surprising given the extremely difficult experiences relayed by a few participants that included serious levels of bullying and intimidation they had to endure. Nicole stated that 'It's easier to concentrate because people aren't talking all the time and everyone wants to learn so it's easier'. This does, however, also echo the findings within spatial discipline that the social focus is on learning, possibly to the expense of other aspects such as the creation of social bonds, relationships or friendships. One mature

student described in very positive terms her pleasure at meeting new people saying that her colleagues in her part time job have noticed the impact, ‘people would say you can tell you’re really excited about it because I light up when I’m talking about college’ [Louise]. However, most participants described connections with students much less so in relation to their individual progress and when they did it was as a support for this vocational development. One participant described the concrete support provided between learners by ‘working as a team’ [Mary]. This is partly due to the commonality of completing exactly the same units. Whereas many students study options from 3rd year at High school involving bespoke timetables for each learner, HNC level college courses, in the vast majority of cases, involve all learners following the same timetable. One student picked up on the benefits of this arrangement:

With our whole class sometimes they’ll go into wee groups and they all maybe hang out at lunch times and work in their group. But our whole class – I think because we’re doing the same thing are all quite close [Louise].

Peer support was experienced by some learners who highlighted its benefits. Louise had to attend a funeral and missed four days’ tuition. However, support from fellow learners helped her catch up with missed work, ‘Fellow students got notes and everything for us so it’s great to know we have that as well’. Mary was enthusiastic about the support she has received from fellow learners, with younger learners at times able to help older learners:

We all really push each other along. Because I’m older and I really knew nothing about computing before starting this course – I had my daily breakdown at some point and people would be like come on over here.

Similarly, Sarah highlighted the support received from younger learners:

It is quite engaging because you’ve got people either side of you. When you’re learning to do something for the very first time you want to make sure you’ve done it right and you want to nudge the person next to you – they’re on exercise 3 and you’re still on exercise 1 because they’re sharp and young.

Mary did have a negative experience with younger learners though because she believes too many from that age group are not as focused as older learners, ‘They come out of school – still in the school mentality’. To resolve this, Mary suggested segregation according to age:

You make allowances for people's backgrounds. I would segregate the 17/18 year olds. I'd put them all together and have a more set way, take them back to school. You'd soon discover who really wants to be there and those who didn't [Mary].

One other participant felt that most learners within college were respectful, however, a few who weren't could cause disruption, 'Especially when the person sitting next to you is sitting talking away etc. and the lecturer is talking and you can't concentrate' [Calum].

Learners do appear to be connected with other learners, as Foucault suggested, where the benefit is for the individual's progress or the college's efforts to control the totality of its learners. Nudging the person next to you for help, a preference for the exercise of teaching to learn, 'breaking down' on the shoulders of peers are examples of helping oneself and not others. However, this control via 'support', which capitalises on existing knowledge so that it is shared, could be backfiring because of Mary's suggestion that younger learners be segregated. This would tip the fine balance of segmentation/peer support towards the former.

4.5.3 System of Command

The third aspect of the composition of forces was the least evident of all of the techniques and sub-techniques identified by Foucault. There were indications that other institutions such as schools employ systems of command but colleges do not commonly utilise bells, signs or gestures as specific techniques of training. One participant did describe the need to raise a hand to ask or answer a question as an annoyance:

Some lecturers make us put our hand up but I don't do it that much. I prefer someone saying what was that? and I'll answer. Putting your hand up makes you feel younger and back at school – you feel a bit silly putting your hand up (Ros).

Mostly though controls such as these found within the disciplinary repertoire of schools as Calum described:

It's much more relaxed here...here one of the examples I like to use is even in 5th and 6th year you still had to ask to go to the toilet. At 17 years you're not going to play games to get out of class. If you need the toilet you need the toilet but in here you can go when you want.

It became apparent that learners internalise rules throughout education that do not need to be read or heard as they move from year to year and even from school to college. As one learner stated,

There's a lot of rules that you just know without having to be told them. I don't think there's a lot of written rules that you're not allowed to do. It's not that you're not allowed to dress a certain way [Emily].

Another participant echoed the view that rules per se are limited and that this made college life more relaxed:

It doesn't seem like there are that many rules. If you think about it – you just wear your own clothes you don't need to call your teachers miss or mr – it's more informal I'd say [Liz].

One learner observed rules but embraced the controls and limitations on his freedom generally because he had confidence in the fact it would ultimately benefit him. This view was shared by a few other participants who comply with regulations and restrictions because to do so will be beneficial in the longer term. The learner described obedience as a strategy he uses to cope and progress:

this is a stepping stone for me – it's not like I'm here and I don't know what I'm doing – I do have aspirations – so the rules I'm happy to comply with because I know I'll need to meet expectations if I'm going to move forward [Jack].

One other learner stated that she appreciated structure as support for the organisation of her own learning. When asked what types of decisions she makes in college Jenny spoke of a desire for structure, 'It's all laid out. I'm not too bothered though – I prefer it – I like structure sometimes'.

Regarding opportunities to 'resist' college discipline, every full time college course has two class representatives who work with the wider group to identify issues before raising these with college lecturers and management. One learner described how this structure led

to views being presented to management resulting in change, 'When we first started we were supposed to have a class in the morning then a big break then another one in the afternoon between 2 and 4 and that was annoying but then they changed it' [Nicole]. Another learner described a situation where a 'bit of a revolution' took place when the class reps asked a lecturer if they could be taught as a group and not just individually, resulting in their request being met [Lorna]. In another case one participant highlighted the difference between the college complaint systems and that of school:

People were failing and the lecturer was old fashioned and nobody was learning and everyone was getting upset because it's their course obviously. We were able to get round that and get resits. The student is able to get valid points across and I think that can benefit a lot of people [Gary].

One participant is a class representative himself and plays an active role in working to improve aspects of the college, in consultation with management, in one case improving the frequency with which computers are cleaned, 'I'm the class rep so everybody responds to me and when I take that to the head things can get changed and then the college if it gets put forward will change it' [Ross]. One participant did suggest that it takes courage to approach college management about an issue and perhaps another procedure is necessary:

The class reps are a good thing but I don't know if there is a suggestion box or something say for in between times for anonymity. On the whole if there's something you need to address you can do it. Maybe not everyone is comfortable being open about things [Lorna].

Although no participant made reference to it, the common system within colleges which allows an individual learner to lodge a formal complaint is within the procedures and structure of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). Use of this system with courage may come closest to Foucault's definition of parrhesia.

Foucault's descriptions within the fourth technique, composition of forces, where docility is created through the 'segmentation' of individuals within an 'ensemble' and a 'precise system of command' can be observed to a degree. At times creative decision making was illusory in that choices were often limited where only narrow selection parameters seemed to exist. Learner input and decision making was restricted to such faux-freedoms as having the choice to take a break or instead to 'choose to stay in and study and catch up on

stuff' [Ros]; 'decide if you're going to study or not study or speak out in class or not speak out in class' [Emily]; choosing where to sit in class, 'although after a while this falls into a structure and it doesn't change' [Emily].

4.5.4 Mediating College Discipline

However, there is a clear deficit in the ability of the composition of forces (as well as the other three techniques) to explain expressions of knowledge, ambitions and commitments outside of college that compete with college disciplinary structures. Despite disciplinary techniques acting on learners, Lorna described how she is able to manage her own workload, despite changes from the previous year due to the increased level of complexity after she progressed from SCQF level 6 to SCQF level 7,

I need to prioritise. What I'm confident about with the different subjects, what I'm less confident about. How I'm going to manage thathopefully! There seems to be quite a big difference between the way I was learning last year and what I'm learning this year – it's a completely different subject [Lorna].

The social circumstances of another learner provided the catalyst for her to realise goals she had that were separate from her domestic priorities. While working full time, her husband had a stroke and she had to give up work to become a full time carer. After doing this for a number of years it became possible, although still difficult, to consider education that would be of personal benefit:

I wanted something out with that I was going out every day. Ok I'm not going out to work but I am out all day in the classroom and I just needed that – I needed it [Sarah].

An account by another learner, albeit whilst at University, was provided as she reported her experience of trying to finish her course after taking a year out to give birth but still nursing her child. While studying an honours degree in social science at University the participant became pregnant and took a year out to give birth and look after her new-born. She returned for a fifth year to complete her dissertation and finish her degree but also with the aim of continuing to breastfeed her child:

So I'd have a 2 hour lecturer and after I came out – my partner who was supportive would meet me. I'd sit at reception, breastfeed my son – the receptionists because they saw me quite a lot I became really close to and fond of them and they just loved my wee boy. Then I'd go back to class. Then obviously he'd meet me at the end and we'd go home [Jill].

Such efforts in the face of complex challenges indicate a range of aptitudes, qualities and skills employed by the individual to cope with her studies and personal life that enable her to continue on her pathway.

Examples of more positive agency than simply coping that may also nonetheless include constraints, where participants are able to seek out and act on opportunities that will bring benefit, were not difficult to discover from each interviewee's responses. One learner explained the detailed considerations that led her to apply for college including the fact she had been out of work:

my cv was going out and I wasn't getting bites so I needed something more for my cv...I did an ECDL and that just scratched the surface but I needed more because if I was sat there and they wanted to talk about spreadsheets I wouldn't have had a clue – I would have been shooting myself in the foot [Sarah].

In relation to his plans to go to University, one participant had the foresight to consider travel options in the future stating that he would like to pass his driving test in the near future because the Universities and courses that are better suited to his interests and qualifications are difficult to reach by public transport alone [Jack]. Another participant is using his experience of studying at college to help inform and prepare him for a career as a college lecturer. Alongside the curriculum knowledge he is developing, he is also gaining insight into the lecturing profession by observing the practice of his own tutors:

I'd like to lecture in history... You gain an insight as to what life is like as a lecturer. It's not how it impacts the lecturer's life but how they handle the job and how they act to students' queries [Calum].

Disciplinary mechanisms exist within college classrooms in addition to college rules to the extent that learner bodies are even restricted. This however is qualified by learners stating this is not through fear or intimidation but what could be described as a more benign respect for the lecturer. There are examples of docility in the classroom but with at least some of these cases they are possibly residual behaviours and norms derived from school or other institutions and so not necessarily cultivated solely by college mechanisms. However, it is not clear if enough is done by colleges to recognise this behaviour that learners bring. There are examples though of teaching and assessment approaches that necessitate greater creativity from learners. Whilst this will partly be due to the conditions of the specific SCQF level 7 assessments as stipulated by SQA, it is nonetheless welcomed by participants who have to adjust but enjoy this new learning process.

Lecturers do support learners which was evident in how grateful learners were for focused bespoke help they received in relation to specific circumstances. Knowledge is gained that equips learners in relation to the curriculum and employability skills while examples of agency emerged which led to creative approaches to the management of college requirements. This mediation involved a combination of individualist approaches but also social and family responsibilities.

4.6 Conclusion

The key finding within this study is that Learners are, *at times*, docile during their attendance and study at their further education college. Participants described or exhibited information that correspond to the four techniques of discipline detailed by Foucault during his exploration of docility within *Discipline and Punish*. The impact of each technique showed a degree of similarity to the descriptions of institutional controls detailed by Foucault.

The first technique, art of distributions, involves four mechanisms that were variably evident: learners at times were ‘enclosed’ within settings including the classroom but could exercise choice with seating; learners did not describe situations that could be described as ‘partitioning’ in college but this was experienced in the work place; thirdly, ‘functional sites’ were evident with learners occasionally organised and placed by task and skill to avoid conflict; age was mentioned as the only ‘rank’ participants recognised when reflecting on the final spatial mechanism.

The second technique, the control of activity, involves three mechanisms, each of which can be seen in the learner's life at college. The first mechanism is 'time' and learners showed that they are less docile when it comes to present concerns compared with reflection on the past or future planning. Secondly, an individual's 'body-object articulation' can be seen in the learner's close relationship with the tools they use such as ICT. Thirdly, 'exhaustive use' of time and resources was described by learners who had little time to engage with the wider life of college because of the range of personal commitments, assessment demands and the college timetable structure.

The third technique, the organisation of genesis, had a bearing on participants and is also a key conduit of disciplinary practices. Learners described a significant degree of adjustment from school and employment to college life. The school experience is significant in its connection to the college experience. It is a foil or counterpoint but also a preparation for college life: learners internalise rules learned from school and develop learning habits that aid them but also create complications with learners needing to adjust to a different environment and teaching style. Learners described one of three reasons for enrolling on to a college course: development from school without a clear goal beyond; a stepping stone to University or an opportunity to change career. Learners also displayed evidence of the knowledge that can be gained on a college course as part of their own human development.

In the case of Foucault's fourth category, 'composition of forces', only two of the three 'tactics' were evident with a 'system of command' less apparent in colleges. Segmentation could be seen with college controls involving learners within an 'ensemble'. Peer support was evident and appreciated by learners as a second force that can be combined. Other examples of support were also evident but perhaps just as controlling. Learners interacted with support systems including pastoral support; social and economic support from family, friends or those whose opinion matters to the individual; as well as help from fellow learners. However, learners also found ways to develop self-sufficiency, in some cases, just beginning to develop education and career management skills by researching occupations, communicating with those who can aid their journey, applying for courses and finding strategies to help them adjust to changes in their own circumstances.

However, compared to schools, colleges involved little in the way of controlling gestures, bells or signs.

Overall, three identity traits emerged from the findings, which recur repeatedly and require further discussion: flexibility, individualism and credentialism. These traits at times appeared as a result of college disciplinary practices but there were examples of learners displaying these traits against the college's preferences, indicating an internalising of these prior to or external to the college institution and therefore possible examples of Foucault's care of the self.

Chapter 5

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter detailed the study's findings concluding that learners are at times docile in college and that participants revealed examples that corresponded to the four techniques of discipline described by Foucault during his exploration of docility and institutional micro-processes within *Discipline and Punish*. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the implication of these findings, particularly in light of previous research.

To begin with, this discussion will summarise the key findings before considering the role of the college in the creation of docility and the assembly of disciplinary techniques. However, the impact of broader neoliberal ideology will then be examined as contributory to the creation of docility and the shaping of learner identity. The three traits of individualism, flexibility and credentialism, revealed in the findings, will be discussed as emerging from this wider neoliberal context. In order to flesh out these issues in more detail, this chapter also draws on Foucault's later work. By engaging the two different Foucault's with one another, the chapter aims to develop a greater understanding of both the levels of docility as well as the development of these three traits. Foucault's later ideas in relation to discipline are useful as conceptual tools that go beyond the deterministic description of institutions within *Discipline and Punish*. Foucault developed his ideas on docility, adding to the four techniques described within *Discipline and Punish* to show in his later work that resistance to discipline is possible. A key development in his thought was that individuals are not simply shaped by external factors but participate themselves in the process of identity formation. Instead of being simply docile, Foucault described the possibility of care of the self, resistance and parrhesia. The question for this study is: does such a notion apply here? These possibilities, therefore, will also be discussed, exploring any room that is left for individuals to escape disciplinary control of neoliberalism and institutions such as colleges. Finally, social class will be introduced as a significant factor to the question of college learner identity that should be considered as complementary to the post structural concepts used in this study.

5.2 Overview of Key Findings

Firstly, this study's participants are not as enclosed as Foucault suggested in his analysis of spatial discipline because there was appreciation for the range of spaces throughout the college and learners even acted as bricoleurs in their use of the classroom to socialise in at break times. It was the case though that learners were more docile within the classroom but this was due to a credentialist focus rather than material spatial factors. Learners were not partitioned as Foucault suggests because they are free to choose where they sit and which desks they at times move to during class. This lack of organisation though meant that participants were encouraged to be individualistic rather than integrated socially with interaction dependent on the learners themselves. Where learners are organised and placed in classes (functional sites) by college staff, this tends to be to avoid conflict rather than as a positive strategy so again social interaction is left to chance with individuals left to their own devices. Learners appear to discern each other according to age more than ability and this process involves performative benchmarking which is an extension of the credentialism. Social networking potentially blurs traditional spatial control and could complicate 'proximal partialism', which is the preference this study's participants showed for what is close to them in time and space. The college did not seem to take advantage of this partialism through a focus on community but the mobile phone ban in class does avoid blurring in this space.

The control of time is evident to a degree but can only go so far given learners only attend college for 16 hours per week over three days. There was a commodification of time within college, which inexorable as it is, brings pressure to the learning experience. This has led to sharp boundaries between college and external priorities, however, this creates an intense focus on assessment with learners even wishing for more discipline in this area and importantly displayed docility in class because of these pressures. This also means learners are less interested and engaged in the wider life of college despite the reported benefits some argue these activities can have on the individual, the college and wider community. The main tool that emerged as an example of body-object articulation was ICT and the relationship participants reported is complicated in our consideration of docility and identity. Firstly, this is due to a ban on mobile phones in the classroom and so given the possibility of disciplining the body using an object as Foucault described there is an opportunity for greater control not taken up by the college, although it makes classroom docility more straightforward. ICT is however used often and individualism is again

developed through the use of such atomising equipment with its emphasis more on working through college exercises individually than on networking, however, learners did report spontaneous support of peers when using ICT equipment. Overall, temporal control, is not able to pervade the learner experience as it has the potential to do but the exhaustion of time does increase the learners' focus on assessment.

Learner progress entails three key elements: adjustment, employability skills and assessment. Firstly, school learners especially need to adjust to differences related to social interaction, funding, learning/assessment approaches and academic support. Employability skills are developed and sought after by learners who wish to prepare fully for employment by increasing flexibility. To cope with the pressures of assessment thus increasing the chances of successful attainment, learners are focused, strategic and knowledgeable regarding all elements relating to formative and summative work.

Colleges are not total institutions but they do control activity considerably in places, given colleges are modern, comfortable, institutions providing services to its learners. Learners are segmented by the college and individuals separate themselves. However, this segmentation is not, as Foucault suggests, to create a product that all contribute to but is individualistic, although colleges can benefit in terms of funding. Lecturers work against docility by expressing a wish for greater interaction but still separate learners from each other at times using didactic exposition, which is often in line with the assessment driven requirements of the awarding body. Peer support does take place though which contradicts segmentation slightly but as Foucault argues this takes place occasionally to ensure successful contributions by all individuals towards the overall efficiency of the machine. There is no system of command as can be found in schools but there are processes such as the SPSO complaints system, which arguably commodifies learning and can help to create consumers, however, it can also be a source of resistance.

Overall, the four mechanisms do enough to justify the conclusion that Foucault's techniques, which he argued combine to create docility, are largely evident within the college studied. Discussion of each element though highlights complexities in relation to the degree of docility, the usefulness at times of docility to the learner's priorities as well as examples of where learners are not docile, especially in areas of the college that are

outside of the classroom. Clearly though identity traits emerge from the mediation between learner and college disciplinary practices and these are also well known external features of neoliberalism: flexibility, individualism and credentialism.

5.3 The Role of the FE College in Creating Docility

To begin with, a key area for discussion is the extent to which the college institution itself is implicated in the creation of docile bodies. The findings detailed the extent to which Foucault's four techniques could be seen as acting on learner bodies, creating degrees of docility. A few examples will be discussed in more detail here in relation to the college's part in this process.

From Foucault's study of madness in his earlier career, he was focused on institutions such as the asylum and the key role carried out on behalf of wider society in the creation and management of spaces that provide the conditions for discipline. *Discipline and Punish* (1975) partly focused on Western penal systems but with the clear argument made that similar conditions are evident across institutions such as barracks, schools and factories. The four spatial techniques help to construct one aspect of the disciplinary framework learners operate within. For example, when college learners entered the classroom they entered into a more disciplinary environment, with participants, as noted within the section on composition of forces, describing the need to 'sit still', 'be like a sponge' and 'not breathe'. However, beyond these categories, other spatial constraints emerged in this study that were not easily captured within Foucault's four types. For example, the location of the college institution relative to the participant's home was a key external spatial factor in relation to participants' motivations for attending college as well as future aspirations. Convenience and travel costs are factors that participants revealed influenced their choice of college and course. Most participants live within an area of high deprivation, which will shape the motivations of learners and set challenges for them to overcome. Eisenstadt has described the spatial concentration of disadvantage in Scotland:

The supply of employment, the quality of jobs, competition for work and employment rates all vary by region and neighbourhood. Income from wages, housing costs and other living costs also vary substantially (2017, p.4).

Travel arrangements to and from college were discussed by all participants as important to their educational experience, as Eisenstadt reveals, 'Place matters, particularly to those who are disadvantaged in the labour market, as research suggests they tend to have a more 'local focus' than the population as a whole (ibid., p.4). Therefore, in relation to space as a factor within a learner's choice of college, next steps and future employment prospects, learners tended towards opportunities that are close to them. It should also be noted though that the Scottish Government's rules for college learners in relation to travel expenses extends funding only to those students who live two miles or more from their place of study. Similar rules are neater with secondary education but with further education, this arrangement is more anomalous because a learner who lives under two miles from college can choose to apply and enrol with a college that is further away and thus secure funding. This creates tensions for learners who must reconcile priorities regarding convenience and safe travel to a community college with the financial benefits of travelling further.

In their article on environmental and ecological sustainability, Bobbi & Heinen make the distinction between more proximate and less proximate and the preference of the former for most individuals. As they argue:

humans, like all other living organisms, evolved to get resources in order to survive and reproduce, and that individual and familial wellbeing has always been central, while the good of the group has seldom been relevant (1993, p.9).

In the majority of acts since, they argue, the proximate has been prioritised:

The more remote or uncertain are future benefits, the more we 'discount'--the difficulties of solving problems increase with anonymity, separation of costs and benefits across individuals, time, and space (1993, p.34).

It will be discussed below that alongside space, proximity is also a factor regarding learner views on time. It is important to highlight early in this discussion though that although the four disciplinary techniques detailed by Foucault apply to a degree to the participant's own experience within a college institution, a more complicated picture begins to emerge when

we consider external factors. While previous research examined techniques within education settings, external factors have tended to be unacknowledged. This points to the college being one of potentially various contributory influences on individual choices, thus problematizing Foucault's sharp focus on the institution as a totalising disciplinary space.

In relation to the college's temporal discipline, beyond expected issues around attendance as required by the institution and linked to funding, all participants were timetabled for three consecutive days. The possible downside to this arrangement is the fact there are few gaps between classes for learners to be encouraged to appreciate the wider college life. This also led to a perceived intensity regarding concurrent assessments with little decompression time for administrative aspects of learning such as the clarification of deadlines or other assessment requirements. In their study of timetabling in educational institutions, Oude Vrielink et al highlight the importance of the issue because of the impact of educational budget cuts on resources, leading to increased sharing of rooms and resources. As state of the art timetable systems are developed they argue that more research is required to ensure educational needs are met (2016, p.295). However, the timetable structure within this study appeared to be the result of efforts made by college management to provide convenience to learners who only need to attend 16 hours over three days rather than having to travel to college over four or five days. The overall benefits that stem from this arrangement remain questionable. It may benefit learners in terms of their own preferences related to responsibilities and interests external to the institution and colleges might profit from learners prioritising assessment, which they are measured against in the form of performance indicators. However, it may have less benefit to both learners and the college in relation to events and exercises across the wider life of the college that are not taken up because only classes are attended over full days.

The extent to which the college should be seen as offering a total command over individuals can be further questioned when considering the third sub-discipline within the total system of control, a precise system of command. This has arguably gained as much attention by researchers than any of the other techniques within Foucault's chapter on Docility. It is a clearly articulated and accessible description of a system many will recognise in schools and factories, that refers to the 'bells, signs or gestures' used to train individuals within institutions. The further education college, however, has no aural signal

or bell apart from those alarms used for health and safety reasons, while other commands such as the need to address a school teacher formally by surname are much more limited compared to the other institutions Foucault mentioned. Although learners described the awkwardness at times of raising a hand to answer a question, this was not a concern shared by most others and was the only example of this kind to be cited. The inevitable result from the lack of such a system is the reduced uniformity and simultaneity with college features such as class session changes or classroom etiquette. It should be noted though that participants are aware that any breach of college policy risks the emergence of a hidden command system, such as learner behaviour policies and procedures. Overall though, the lack of a precise command system, whether it be the absence of bells, gestures, honorific titles or a loudspeaker system, can also positively influence the ambience of college life with most participants describing a comfortable and relaxed environment, especially compared to school or the work place.

The focus of learners on the college curriculum and ultimately assessment alongside the institution's development of employability skills, which can improve flexibility, emerged as sharp priorities for individual learners. The complexities of this in relation to the college, learner and wider society are important to consider though and are discussed below.

5.4 The Complex Development of Neoliberal Traits

This section will now examine, individualism, flexibility and credentialism as three overlapping neoliberal traits that, I will argue, at least partly, characterise the experience of the learner, creating yet deeper layers of discipline and also degrees of docility. A college level analysis is useful because learner identity can be better understood to a degree in relation to institutions and the disciplinary mechanisms employed within. However, this approach on its own is insufficient. The argument will be considered that individualism, flexibility and credentialism are developed by the individual and the college as identity traits but also descend from multiple external factors within an overarching neoliberal ideology.

The general move within Scottish education towards support for the economy was discussed in the literature review as stemming from reform policies that are the result

themselves of influences at the national-regional (e.g. EU) and global levels. Writing in 2008, Simons describes the shift within education towards the economic that has resulted from global policies that impact on education regionally and nationally. To fully appreciate this we must accept that education is not serving a separate economy but is an actor within it:

What is stressed here is not just that education can and should be an object of economic calculation (the economics of education), but that education as a supplier is part of the economy—that is, the knowledge economy (2008, p.397).

The structure of a nation's education system has moulded around the effective delivery of educational programmes that allows learning to create products of worth:

While schooling and education have been regarded as an economic force for a long time, against the background of the knowledge society, learning itself is now regarded as a force to produce added value (Simons, 2008, p.397).

These products of worth are learners. Gillies, however, caveats the importance attached to the knowledge economy with other sectors such as hospitality having more employees than the knowledge economy:

Of course, much of this is questionable. Just as the 'agile' company may be more of an ideal than a fact, so the 'knowledge economy' may also be somewhat difficult to substantiate from current trends (2011, p.4).

5.4.1 Individualism, Neoliberalism and Learner Identity

As a trait of learner identity, individualism offers a good case study of the overlapping concerns of college and broader neoliberal life. As will be seen, it takes work to explore the term carefully but this examination reveals individualism is not only developed in colleges but its evolvment is sutured across the institution, the college learner and the external neoliberal world. Although most participants attend the college closest to them for convenience, it appears there is little structurally that encourages cooperation and social interaction based on commonality such as the fact they live in the same town and

community. It may be the case that this is exacerbated by the recent national programme of regionalisation and merging colleges across towns, eroding, at least to a degree, the local identity of colleges. Instead, individualism emerges. The concerns in relation to neoliberal individualism in the current age, highlighted and developed by Hall, Giroux, Bauman, Rose et al aim to address an identity trait revealed by participants. However, the forms individualism takes as well as the origins of its development and spaces where it is reinforced need to be explored further.

Perhaps able to challenge or at least change, in the future, some of the problems created by the physical location and spaces of the college organisation, social network spaces are affecting individual identities regarding institutional and private spaces in complex ways. The general population's rapidly expanding use of devices and networks should therefore be considered in relation to continued spatial discipline. As Hope argues, 'it is possible to perceive surveillance not merely as control, but as also allowing individuals to transform their own subjectivities'. It is not clear though whether or not the private use of spaces technically outside of an institution will escape discipline:

This reflects the need to consider not only the role that such items play in student identity construction, but also the manner in which institutions seek to appropriate such devices for surveillance purposes (Hope, 2016, p.897).

It is possible that social networking will in the future complicate the proximal motivations of individuals as space becomes less physical and more abstract. Regarding body-object articulation, the use of ICT dominated the participants' discussion of their relationship to the tools that they use. If other vocational groups had been used such as hairdressing or mechanical engineering, different relations between body and object may have emerged. However, with ICT dominant across many disciplines, Foucault's highlighting of this technique allows us to consider carefully our use of such tools in relation to the physical body's position and actions within college. The appeal of ICT technology, especially in their recent modern, shrunken, advanced forms ('phablet' is one most recently coined hybrid noun) is becoming stronger inside and outside of education. Some educators are embracing these tools in efforts to make learning and teaching more engaging and the proximal spatial priorities of learners are being tested through global networking, both social and professional. College learners are in contact with other European learners

online within *Erasmus* projects and learners communicate with other students and friends online, socially and for education reasons, with increasing frequency. For example, ICT can enable cooperation with others where group tasks require online communication within Virtual Learning Environments, now established within most Further Education institutions. However, in relation to the close connection between body and object within an institution, using favoured objects as tools can, as Foucault argued, also lead to greater docility. Although not examples of ICT, Bowdridge and Blenkinsop assert in their reflections on outdoor education equipment:

Handing out packs and paddles does not meet the same resistance as passing out textbooks. The willingness (docility) increases to such a degree that team roles, such as taking up the rear of a hiking group, maintaining canoe counts on the water, or being a spotter in rock climbing, are easily assigned (2011, p.160).

The assimilation of ICT technology as examples of disciplinary body-object articulation within education can similarly engage students to be docile who believe they are amplifying their intelligence and thus gaining advantages while using ever-slicker devices. As Bowdridge and Blenkinsop state:

Students have the sense that they are gaining power and becoming emancipated, but they are simultaneously assimilating disciplinary structures and participating in the process of observation and control (2011, p.160).

Such docility appears to be created by the appeal of the specific objects and the related tasks yet it also supports responsibility and cooperation beyond the self, albeit that the activity is closely monitored. However, the participants within this study revealed traditional personal computers as the main form of ICT used within their learning. Although involving networks these are for individual use and so face to face interaction or physical cooperation is reduced. The nature of this use reflected the employment areas related to the Accounts, Administration and Social Science courses studied. Current trends alongside developments in industry and society, within a neoliberal context, are key therefore to the college curriculum, the use of technology and the resultant relationship between body and object. Both neoliberal individualism and the erosion of institutional control were neatly predicted at the earlier stages of the Internet's establishment when

Wellman described the ‘rise of networked individualism’, which has led to ‘the social transformation of work and community, from groups in little boxes to globalized, ramified social networks’. This has involved a change of emphasis from:

place-to-place connectivity – based on the household and the workplace – to
person-to-person connectivity – based on individuals making and remaking
connections in their social and computer networks (Wellman, 2002, p.5).

This has implications in relation to learner identity and the fact individualism emerged from the findings as a neoliberal trait among participants. For two decades use of online technology has, at the very least, changed the communication processes and pathways between individuals, the institutions they occupy and the world *external* to these spaces. Networked individualism appears to describe the current uses of social media that are increasingly personalised. This type of individualism has made its way into college spaces in a more controlled way so that learners connect online with other learners but with close college management over this and little use of social media in the class room. The future within college education regarding these processes is unclear in terms of whether individualism will be consolidated or not by technological developments outside of college. Chomsky (2014) has stated in far-reaching terms, ‘As far as technology itself and education is concerned, technology is basically neutral. It’s like a hammer. The hammer doesn’t care whether you use it to build a house or whether on torture, using it to crush somebody’s skull, the hammer can do either’. Planned intervention and design may be required to mitigate against neoliberal individualism that appears to be inextricably linked to the left-alone technological development of body-object personal devices, even if this includes an element of ‘networking’. As Wellman stated, ‘Simultaneously looking backward and forward, like Janus, offers integrating perspectives in which the future and the past mutually inform each other’ (2002, p.6).

The concept of segmentation as Foucault intended was, therefore, partially evident in that learners were found to be separated from one another in college settings with less group work and more in the way of individual tasks and responsibility, including the use of personal computers. However, this involves the separation in differentiated ways across learners without the overarching cause on behalf of the institution, which Foucault supported. The learner is indeed ‘one cog in the machine’ but learners can be seen as cogs

within their own separate machines that do at times interact with others but are improved and progressed as individuals through a combination of tutor and learner input. However, the focus on personal computers for college work related activity and the ban on mobile phones within the classroom possibly skews the findings towards an image of students as less sociable than they can be and probably are outside of college. This too can have an impact on the complex process of adjustment required of learners after joining a new institution. Based on findings from their own study of social media and adjustment, Gray et al argue that such technology can be extremely beneficial regarding social relations if used within education and this can lead to improved retention. This is especially the case with first-generation learners and minority learners and is relevant to the views of this study's participants who highlighted adjustment as a significant challenge. As the researchers argue:

Contrary to some popular depictions that Facebook is merely a forum for sharing breakfast choices and party photographs, SNSs have the potential to serve as a medium for meaningful support at a critical time of transition in students' lives (2013, p.23).

It is clear that spatial discipline is present within the college studied and that these affect learner identities by limiting what can and cannot be done in terms of college spaces. Where spatial discipline does impact on learners, it tends to encourage individualism and separation alongside a credentialist focus on passing assessment. Social networking has limited impact on learners within the classroom due to a ban on mobile technology but may be impacting on the college's spatial discipline in other college areas. However, learners tend to be more docile and individualistic within the classroom space not only in order to help them ensure they individually pass assessments but because the body-object articulation involving personal computers encourages this. Spatial controls implemented by the college but also brought in by individuals and external influences on technologies helps to create an environment that encourages individualism.

There are, however, numerous examples on a regular basis of innovative and exciting learning and teaching activities across Scottish colleges. These often involve multi-disciplinary or cooperative events or exercises that display the development of skills, knowledge and aptitudes alongside both the intrinsic and instrumental value of vocational

syllabi. Within this study though, participants referred to an awareness of activities and events organised by the Student Association but other responsibilities and the prioritisation of assessments superseded these opportunities. In relation to this, Ball has been interested in what it means to be an educator or learner:

I am interested in the way in which these texts play their part in 'making us up'...by providing 'new modes of description' and 'new possibilities for action'; thus creating new social identities, what it means to be educated (Ball, 2000, p.2).

An immediate challenge for this aim regarding further education learners is that by focusing on college as economically instrumental prior to or in the absence of its social or cultural value, learners are arguably narrowing the parameters of possibility to college as a 'stepping stone', as described by participants within this research and also within Ball's study. It is also the case that, for most participants, college is something to be done alongside activities that demand as much or more time and effort separately including part time work and external social activities. However, the benefits to wellbeing from the types of extra-curricular activity learners appear to be ignoring has been argued for some time. As Fredricks and Eccles stated in relation to their own study's findings, for example:

Some possible explanations for the psychological benefits of activity participation include the opportunity to develop social relationships, the increased sense of belonging, and the chance to be involved in a highly valued activity. (2005, p.10).

However, more recently, Mullen amongst other researchers has cast doubt on the benefits of extracurricular activity, stating that within her study there was no concrete evidence to suggest that extracurricular activity participation impacts positively on academic achievement but refers to other academics who argue that a negative impact is possible (2016, p.107). It should be noted here, however, that again the determining factor is assessment as the priority. Further study would improve our understanding of wider learning but what is clear is that, in line with this finding, learners appear to be all too aware of their own constraints, choosing not to get involved in extra activities in order to focus more sharply on their own academic studies. One factor that can complicate this though, as referred to above, is social networking platforms' blurring of social spaces. Overall though, the types of voluntary college exercises inside and outside the classroom

that see less docility across participants are arguably activities that could benefit learners in the future and which can involve skills and interests they have developed in the past. Significantly, by focusing on present priorities over past experience or future plans, proximity appears here to be not solely a spatial motivation but learners are focusing sharply on present concerns at the expense of other often positive social experiences. This should be considered though alongside the fact that learners revealed future plans, albeit of a narrower sort, as essential to them including their development of employability skills, the need to pass assessments and progress individually. However, to summarise, it would appear that college time is devoted to these priorities but non-college time is not invested or, if it is, this is a by-product. For example, employability skills can be developed while in part-time work, however, the financial benefit is the main aim over skills development.

In their study of student perceptions of time, Case, J. and Gunstone, observed that there were two main perspectives when learners discussed their views on time, ‘one reflecting a perception of ‘being in control’ and the other a perception of ‘being out of control’ of time’ (2003, p.55). This has resulted in what could be described as the commodification of time, ‘Time is a resource, similar to money, which one decides how to allocate’ (ibid., p.61). Unfortunately, despite having some ability to manage time, learners within Case and Gunstone’s study did experience being out of control when they fell behind and did not pass certain tests:

These perceptions of time were reflected in ways of talking about time in which time seemed more like a runaway roller coaster or a nightmarish monster than the impassive resource which was firmly under control (p.61).

The inexorability of temporal discipline is a factor which affected learners within this study who did not speak in such extreme terms but did describe the pressures of time-management in relation to assessment. As will be discussed in more detail below they were also able to keep ‘monsters’ at bay by prioritising assessments and qualifications through an individualistic, credentialist, approach to their studies.

One glaring lacuna in relation to individualism and the exercises carried out relates to Foucault’s two types of writing that support the care of the self: ‘hupomnemata’ and

‘correspondence’. There were no examples of reflective writing mentioned by participants, in the form of personal writing or writing to others. Yet, as discussed by Foucault, these particular exercises would help support processes that can lead to forms of resistance within power relations.

One final element in relation to time that could be examined in any future study of college learners that adopts a Foucauldian approach is the emphasis he placed on our conception of time within societies influenced by Christianity as opposed to earlier Greek society. The latter emphasised this life as prior to or to the exclusion of any afterlife, which has been a priority of the former. Study of learner motivation, argued here to be based on the proximate, that is the present or very near future, could be explored further in relation to deeper held beliefs in relation to metaphysical beliefs. This would require digression within this study but does have profound implications for degrees of liberation, especially within an increasingly secular society, ‘Christianity, by presenting salvation as occurring beyond life, in a way upsets or at least disturbs the balance of the care of the self’ (Foucault, 2000, p289).

5.4.2 Flexibility, Learner Identity and the Entrepreneurial Self

With space and time acting as highly disciplinary mechanisms that create the context for learners to be individualistic, the findings revealed a key insight in relation to the possible neoliberal influences on identity. Ros, Sarah, Jill, Naz, Mary and Louise all reported specific priorities that centred around the need to improve their own employability, be pragmatic, simply ‘focus on getting a job’, develop CVs and transform lives through better employment. This indicates broader forces acting on individuals and not just the college institution. Colleges help meet these needs to an extent where learners are required to complete a range of progress exercises that correspond to Foucault’s description as being both repeated and changing. The college’s development of the individual relates to specific vocational skills but also tasks that promote what is regarded within the sector and beyond as ‘employability’, ‘soft skills’ and ‘essential skills’. The vagueness of such terms alone, despite their recognised importance, present challenges as Matteson et al state, ‘when pressed to describe particular soft skills, the concept becomes murky’ (2016, p.71). Colleges are increasingly encouraged by the Scottish Government though to set tasks that develop wider attributes beyond the specific curriculum. The most recently published

Education Scotland quality framework for Further Education ‘How Good is our College?’ has added ‘career management skills’ as a priority to this list. This refocus diverts college time and resources to the Scottish Government’s interpretation of employer needs, which has also been internalised by participants so that when they enter college there is a double bind in place that makes the development of these skills relatively uncomplicated.

Until recently neoliberal measures involved lifelong learning as a key tactic in the interpellation of learners within an employability culture. As Zackrisson et al argued, ‘no one will ever finally graduate as there will always be knowledge to gain’ (2008, p.115). Thus, continuous learning could ‘enable adults to become employable, healthy and responsible as democratic citizens (p.117). Since the reform of further education, most notably with the publication of Putting Learners at the Centre, however, there has been a considerable shift towards prioritising 16-24 year olds, backed by target driven ring fenced funding from the main financial contributor colleges rely on, the Scottish Funding Council. Froehlich et al urge caution though when prioritising employability according to age. Age difference does not explain, for example, why some older employees continue to develop employability throughout careers and other do not. They argue though that a key factor not often considered regarding lifelong learning is the set of perceived employment opportunities and limitations open to each individual in their working lives which has a direct effect on personal development which they term ‘future time perspective’ as more appropriate than, merely, ‘age’ (2015, p.214).

It is argued here, therefore, that the emphasis during a learner’s life at college, especially younger learners, on the preparation for employment within a flexible environment, is a direct result of neoliberal practices. Gillies describes the emergence of flexibility within the neoliberal discourse because in such contexts ‘Each must have a range of skills, be capable of learning and absorbing new ones, and be easily redeployed as corporate need demands’ (2011, p.5). Gillies has therefore identified two key features of flexible employment: the need to adapt to changing spheres of activity as an employee and the need to increase individual capacity. The development of flexibility alongside the achievement of qualifications pervade the learner experience at college and so if not the result of neoliberalism, such development is certainly in line with it. As Wilkins highlights:

Elements of a neoliberal pedagogy can be further traced to the ways in which schools, FE colleges and HEIs are encouraged to incorporate ‘capitalist enterprises’ into their procedures and rationale (2012, p.200).

Although there is near unanimity regarding the importance of developing skills for employment within vocational education, there is the possibility that the emphasis on such skills that is encouraged within many schools and colleges is excessive. As neoliberalism encourages ‘entrepreneurially relevant skill development and entrepreneurial literacies that seek to close the gap between requisite learning skills and the demands of the labour market (Wilkins, 2012, p.201) the impact on alternative learning content should be examined. When Liz states that she would rather take part in work placements than college excursions, it may be the case that she has internalised neoliberal emphases. At the very least, by sacrificing what for many would be an exciting educational trip in favour of work experience, Liz has articulated an either/or logic which could reveal an instrumental/intrinsic value dichotomy within learners’ own frameworks. This reflects the aims of the modern skills agenda which Holbrow describes as ‘the commodification of human abilities and an alienating notion of human potential, both of which sit ill with the goals of education’. As Holbrow continues, this agenda is ill judged and a fundamental flaw in Human Capital Theory because it sets false expectations for many who will find it difficult to access jobs that are purported to be created within a knowledge economy but don’t exist apart from in nations like India and China and so it ‘sets limits on the unchallenged hegemony of this particular strand of neoliberal ideology’ (2012: 93).

The increasingly emphasised aptitude of agility has been used within neoliberal discourse and arguably has positive connotations that involve a greater degree of agency than ‘flexibility’. As Gillies points out, in the workplace, this involves a shift towards individual responsibility with employees required to seek out and engage with the complexity of change:

Just as neoliberal governance shifts much more from society and community to the individual, so ‘agile’ workers become much more responsible for their own fates. If only ‘agile’ companies can survive in the new ‘fast’ market, then only ‘agile’ workers can hope to survive too (2011, 5).

Where docility was identified in colleges within this study's findings, crucial questions emerge in relation to the identity of the individual who is effectively being disciplined. The prioritisation of assessment, at the very least by learners themselves, as well as the development of employability skills help to equip the increasingly 'agile' individual. All of this points to a narrowing of possible behaviours and traits in both college and employment towards the moulding of atomised learners in preparation for the work place. Henderson and Hursh believe that the neoliberal marketization and competition ideals and practices that now pervade learning have created environments 'where students and teachers rarely focus on the relationship they have with one another and with the human and ecological community in which they are situated' (2014, p.167). Similarly, Wilkins argues that individuals must now be:

reflexive, self-determining authors of their own lives and negotiate the ever-changing risks and obligations brought on by the necessities of the global market economy (2012, p.207).

5.4.3 Credentialism and Neoliberalism

Individualism overlaps, therefore, with flexibility to discipline the learner and it is the third trait, credentialism, which will now be discussed in relation to neoliberalism. Of even greater importance to learners than employability skills regarding their own progress is their need to pass assessments and gain qualifications, both seen as paramount. For example, participants revealed that they would employ tactics in order to manage time effectively with one learner stating that if there were activities in class not related directly to the assessment she and her classmates would prioritise assessment and ignore non-assessed activity. This contradicts the idea that lecturers simply perpetuate credentialism. For example, based on his own research findings, Wilkins (2012) observed that teachers inscribe neoliberal priorities within their own practice in the form of 'channeling 'excellence' through competitive and individualist orientations to learning' (p.203). There is an 'obsession' Wilkins believes amongst teachers and students with credentials, levels and grades (ibid., p.203). A learner's progress is said to be organised then through disciplinary techniques involving particular types of exercises such as individualised assessment approaches and the development of employability skills. Although the curriculum itself requires completion of assessments as the main gauge of success and failure, it is, however, learners themselves who extend this by investing more time and

attention towards this priority, sometimes against the wishes of the college lecturers or managers who deliver more than just summative assessed curriculum. However, there is no question that credentialism does benefit colleges in relation to external reviews and audits as well as the need to secure funding as a result of positive performance indicators.

Participants within this study appear variably susceptible to the two elements of performativity described within the literature review: credentialist based performativity can be identified but Goffman's dramaturgical performativity does not seem to apply to the learners studied. Further study perhaps ethnographic and on a smaller scale at least could explore dramaturgical performativity with learners, particularly with a focus on peer influence and social interaction in relation to discipline and neoliberal pressures. As previously stated, learners benchmarked themselves against the progress of others as Foucault explained through the disciplinary practice of spatial function and rank alongside the exercise of segmentation. This accords with Jeffrey and Troman's description of performativity influencing the identities of 'both individuals and organisations that become committed to improvement in outputs measured against competing peers and institutions' (2011, p.498). Two further examples of such performativity worth highlighting in relation to my participants are 'learner focused pedagogy' and 'presenteeism'. The paradigm of learner focused pedagogy that is now dominant but needs to be problematized has been discussed by MacFarlane. For decades many have written about a shift of focus from tutor to learner, especially after Carl Rogers first used the term 'student centred learning' and this focus has arguably established itself as a pedagogical norm within further education. As stated, differentiation is now emerging as a development of student centred learning within Further Education. Uncritical support of learner centred participation also embraces those students who prefer to be decentred due to, for example, reserved, introverted or cautious dispositions. In reference to student centred learning, MacFarlane argues:

The censorious nature of phrases such as 'teacher-centred' and 'surface learning' imply, in effect, 'bad' teaching (or learning) means that it is unfashionable to question the assumptions of learnerism or the performative demands that follow (2015, p.342).

Participants have revealed a compelling juxtaposed blend of docile behaviour in order to develop goals aligned with those of the college such as gaining employability skills and

passing assessments but which will allow them to benefit from the ability to take on greater responsibility with greater flexibility in difficult environments promoted even more so and existing outside of college. To consider the former, the findings highlighted learners, as a result of disciplinary practices, some of which are temporal, as becoming credentialist, but of a particular neoliberal sort. In this study, performative practices encourage a degree of atomisation through a focus on personal individual progress with what matters: qualifications. MacFarlane describes the performative strictures created that could affect the autonomy of the learner such as, 'policies on attendance requirements, tasks that demand the presence of the student in order that they may be assessed during class contact time, and high levels of assessment loading' (2015, p.342). One learner Liz described how her choice of college was directly shaped by the fact it does not involve travel, whereas if she had opted for her university place further away, presenteeism or absenteeism could have been complicating factors to her progress. Others described the challenges of the college's attendance based funding, which is much more demanding than the University model. Presented in such terms, these practices fail to recognise the 'anti-libertarian implications of performativity' (ibid., p.346) of which MacFarlane has concerns:

Presenteeism removes the right of students to be treated as adults and exercise free choice regarding their opportunity to develop this capacity in the process. Learnerism subjects students to participative pressures turning university study as a private space into a mode of observable public performance (2015, p.347).

As also described within the discussion of segmentation, learners were separated but not then brought back in to be cross evaluated, benchmarked or regarded as part of a bigger machine. To a degree at least, therefore, individuals are assessed, individuals are resulted and individuals aim to progress externally on different paths. By choosing to focus on assessment and often ignoring anything that is unrelated, it can be argued that learners are making consumerist choices about what suits them best given their knowledge of their own circumstances.

The argument held by some Foucauldians would be that even though learners are strategizing to focus on aspects of college that are the most determinant in terms of future progress, this is due to a biopolitical subjectivation that sits comfortably within a neoliberal agenda of a healthy, flexible working population. Learners within this study mostly

referred to the priority of passing assessments in order to eventually be successful. A permanent emphasis on employability inevitably means that ‘competency-based and competency-oriented teaching and learning become major concerns’ (Simons, 2008, p.397). It is also the technical nature of competency-based learning that allies it with neoliberal agendas. As Simons points out:

The competency-based curriculum could be regarded as an “open matrix” to adapt education quickly to the requirements of the labor market: competencies are both the outcome of learning and the input for the labor market and society as such...that is, they represent employable learning results (2008, p.397).

This involves disciplinary techniques that arguably extend the theoretical scope into Foucault’s later work beyond simply disciplinary practices because as Hope reminds us, Foucault showed that the ‘norm’ can be ‘coercive’. For example, ‘Practices such as the examination combine surveillance with normalising judgements’ (2016, p.888). This is despite the hazards of such norms with Sir Ian Wood, in a Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee meeting, recently claiming that the pressure involved in obtaining qualifications to meet the entry criteria required to reach university is ‘damaging to pupils’(Glasgow Herald, 14/06/18). Colleges then are said to be instrumental in the creation of a credentialist ethos which is arguably damaging learners who feel pressured but it is harmful in another sense because it sends, ‘very narrow messages about what counts in terms of being a good student and a good person’ (Keddie, 2016, p.120). As Morgan also argues, ‘Young people are told that credentials are essential to vocational success and yet even the best education provides no guarantees’ (2013, p.402). McRobbie (2016) describes ‘a continuing emphasis on individual asset-building as a means of gaining competitiveness through the shoring up of human capital’ (p.121).

Learners in this study were preoccupied by assessment more than any other aspect of their college life. It is what drives their individual focus with engagement in other aspects of college life extremely limited. The need to succeed with assessments is what often motivates learners at college and has furnished this study’s participants with knowledge and opinion across many aspects of assessments, including timing, the balance of formative and summative, the amount of assessment, types of assessment and is ultimately a key cause of an apparent docility. It is this that leads Jill to describe the need ‘to become

one of those lambs where you just swallow it' towards the need to be 'getting the assessments done'. However, it is not always the college but learners' own internal neoliberal motivation that can lead to this behaviour. As Case and Gunstone highlight:

students respond and react to the situation they perceive, which is frequently quite different to that defined by teachers and researchers. Although a course might formally state certain educational objectives, students could be looking for a simple set of rules for what really has to be done to pass the examination (2003, p.56).

Foucault's concept of dividing practices can be seen perhaps more than in any other aspect of education, in the increasingly credentialist approach to learning and preparation for employment. It has been argued that learners can become squeezed by the priorities and attitudes of not only the lecturer but also fellow students. As Wilkins argues, pressure can come from lecturers who discipline if learners do not engage correctly. On the other hand if they do engage they can be criticised by fellow learners leading to a 'double-bind of being damned if you do and damned if you don't' (2012, p.207). Within my study only the first element could be seen where learners felt that lecturers were becoming frustrated when they perceived students to be relying too heavily on copying information from presentations. Such teaching approaches may be important to counter a 'creeping credentialism' in further education. As Wilkins argues, more 'democratic education', and one could add mediation by different personnel, is required against 'the imposition of business-oriented character and behaviour'. This approach can help 'protect the spontaneity, creativity and agency of learners from the incursions of market forces, business ontology and bureaucratic administration' (2012, p.207).

5.5 Resisting Disciplinary Practices in College

5.5.1 The Convolution of Neoliberalism, Docility and Resistance

Although Foucault left little scope for freedom within his earlier work, his later work allowed greater agency, which is considered here. As has been discussed there are important differences between Foucault's earlier ideas on discipline and his later work. Gillies points out that, although some writers have argued that Foucault's work 'has less relevance in post-Fordist economic structures', it is his earlier work on discipline that is suited to industrial Taylorism but his later work is 'very much relevant to modern

neoliberal governance (2011, p.6). This is arguably too neat a distinction though. The ideas Foucault developed later were an attempt to augment his earlier work and although there is an element of contradiction in that *Discipline and Punish* left little hint at the possibility of care of the self, Foucault nevertheless was eventually clear that there exists an additional layer on top of the disciplinary techniques that lead to docility.

Foucault's claim within *Discipline and Punish* was that the four disciplinary mechanisms are employed within institutions to create docility across individuals. However, each of the four mechanisms involved complexity in terms of the extent to which learners are docile as a result of their application. This helps to identify disciplinary examples as the first pole of biopower, that is discipline of the body but biopolitics is a second strand that revealed itself at times through learners' care of the self. Murphy has described Foucault's subjectivation as a continual line of thought that can be seen during a key phase in Foucault's development of his own concepts from *Discipline and Punish* (1977) and the self-monitoring processes that occur within the panopticon through to the *History of Sexuality* (1980) which explores the 'care of the self'. The latter serves the 'interests of neoliberal ideas' because disciplinary practices are actually persuasive, encouraging 'particular practical relations' for individuals in the 'exercise' of freedom (2003, p.249).

However, others have interpreted care of the self, perhaps in practice rather than the ideal given above, as less beneficial to the individual and simply another layer of discipline so that there appears to be an optimistic and pessimistic version. It is argued here that the learner's engagement with the overlapping neoliberal traits of individuality, flexibility and credentialism, is in line with Foucault's later work on care of the self and this adoption of neoliberal traits within a learner's journey would appear to involve the pessimistic version. As Reveley reminds us, one of Foucault's key ideas is that 'self-technologies sink deep cultural hooks into individuals, encouraging them to constitute themselves as subjects' (2015, p.83). As Brown too states, individuals 'have been seduced by their own perceived powers of freedom and have, at the same time, let go of significant collective powers', with individuals welcoming:

the increasing individualism as a sign of their freedom and, at the same time, institutions have increased competition, responsabilization and the transfer of risk from the state to individuals (2003, p.249).

The result argues Brown is that the:

powers of the state are thus directed at empowering entrepreneurial subjects in their quest for self-expression, freedom and prosperity. Freedom, then, is an economics shaped by what the state desires, demands and enables (2003, p.249).

As Murphy also states, 'Power in this conceptualization works, not through destruction and repression, but through production and incorporation – i.e., through a process of control' (2017, p.2). This highlights the crucial subtlety within a new recipe of discipline: despite the shift from a more deterministic compulsion towards self-creation (or self-fabrication) the individual is still subjectified in a process of command and control that the individual, in effect, subsidises so that institutions such as further education colleges, 'exercise their disciplinary practices via the 'docile bodies' of subjects' (ibid., p.2).

However, the evidence of disciplinary techniques causing docility and a pessimistic care of the self must be balanced by the findings that show wider motivations such as the demarcation individuals make between their experience in a college institution and its relationship to other commitments including family and the home. Individuals like Sarah described how the time away from family pursuing ends of their own was essential, 'Ok I'm not going out to work but I am out all day in the classroom and I just needed that – I needed it'. However, this experience was a foil for the significant support Sarah provided at home for her husband who was unable to work due to incapacity. This then is not an account of a neoliberal 'go getter' or other pejorative terms discussed within the literature review but an individual who is striking a balance between work and home life while improving her prospects at the same time. This questions the dogmatic purity of certain ideas in relation to neoliberalism and similar concepts of marketization, commodification and individualist traits. As Foucault argued within his conception of care of self, it is possible to liberate desire in order to foster ethical relationships with others, The care of the self is ethical in itself; but it implies complex relationships with others, insofar as this ethos of freedom is also a way of caring for others (2000: 287). Importantly though, this

does not involve domination, ‘the risk of dominating others and exercising a tyrannical power over them arises precisely only when one has not taken care of the self and has become the slave of one’s desires’ (2000, p288).

Similarly, participants described the concrete tangible skills taught within courses but which could be related directly to the world of work, for example, ‘I didn’t even think about that until my class and then thought yeah’ [Sarah]. This describes a process of assimilation and corroboration on the part of the learner as she relates her studies to her experience of employment. However, this is arguably an example of deeper thought and not simply a description of docility and flexibility. Learners therefore may appear to be docile as they absorb information, sometimes uncritically on the surface, however there is a process of mediation with each individual making more of their life experience.

Regarding concerns in relation to a fluid employment environment and the need for flexibility, participants within this study did not convey alarm or deep concern regarding their next steps after education. The evidence points to a process of internalisation at work among the learners who either accept instability and insecurity or do not notice these challenges. This is perhaps understandable if consideration is given to the possibility that the problem is overstated because young people have only known fluidity to be the case and moreover associate greater stability with negative perceptions of the previous generation’s stagnant structures. As Morgan argues:

While job security remains a key social justice demand, many young workers have internalised the injunction to vocational restlessness that is central to the discourses of ‘new capitalism’. To these people, job security is synonymous with the repetitive drudgery and alienated labour that they associate with the sacrifices of their parents (2013, p.398).

In relation to this study though, an expected finding on this basis would have been older learners expressing more concern than younger learners but it was a mature student Lorna who, in a relaxed way, with very little frustration, described her meandering route to her preferred job, with stops and starts that she philosophically accepted, ‘I haven’t changed my goals really – I’m still heading in that direction’. A lack of alarm from all age groups indicates a potential overstating of the perils associated with fluidity even though the

according need for flexibility is responded to through the wish to develop employability. There is no doubt that fluidity can benefit organisations in terms of their own priorities. Camps et al go as far as attesting that demanding environments can be positive for employers because flexible employees will perform better under conditions of high turbulence (2016, p.364). However, the general argument that both flexible working practices and flexible workers benefit the employer more than employee is the prevailing one. However, many learners, especially younger learners, have been able to significantly develop digital literacy levels but also interests that are now part of the employment fabric. Both proficiency and attention to this area has advanced considerably with the emergence of social networking over the past decade, consolidating Prensky's description in 2001 of 'new students' as 'digital natives' because 'Our students today are all 'native speakers' of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet'. Digital natives arguably face a fluid world fluently with tools and skills that are suited to such liquidity, compared with a shrinking category of older learners, who are 'digital immigrants' (2001: 1). Another explanation for the lack of anxious sentiment expressed by participants in relation to the flexible, churning, working environment could be a lack of awareness or, given awareness that older participants should have, is instead, possibly, due to more neutral expectations and even perceived benefits that can be found within the modern world of work. Indeed, McRobbie, for example, even recognises the image of neoliberal flexibility as often more exciting than alternative models:

We also need to pay more attention to the means by which contemporary neoliberalism is able to harness the power of feel-goodness and optimism – indeed fashionability - particularly in relation to the rise of the Google-type start-up or 'new economy', which partly accounts for its special attraction to young people (2016, p.120).

Neoliberal fluidity and accompanying possibilities for individuals are as appealing as ever, which therefore requires critical consideration of the term 'flexibility'. The term implies cooperation with a system in which individuals are required to meet certain conditions in order to function as an employee. I deliberately use the term function because flexibility does not tend to connote success. Other descriptions are perhaps needed to capture the more neutral and even positive perceptions and experiences of learners looking to progress through education and gain employment and employees themselves. Gillies state that 'being 'agile' is presented as a way of resisting recession, a means by which corporations

and employees can survive and, indeed, succeed' (2011, p.1). Gillies notes the positive connotations of the word with its relation to terms such as 'movement, speed, fluidity, and lightness'. It can be distinguished from flexibility in that it can involve the ability to 'thrive' on rather than simply 'cope' with unpredictable and rapid change, with a degree of agency. This hints at why the term is becoming more prevalent even than flexibility within policy discourse. The term 'agility' still seems to describe individuals 'coping with' rather than 'flourishing within'. Even if flexibility and agility more accurately describe the individual experiences and required approaches to employment, descriptions that have positive connotations in relation to the fashionability of neoliberalism should be explored within further research to help ascertain whether it is these descriptions that individuals perceive prior to more negative descriptions and crucially the extent to which reality supports the accuracy of such positive terms. Discussions regarding the challenges of flexible working are possibly not making their way out of individual experiences to become generally recognised. A key challenge, therefore, to those who wish to critique the neoliberal influence on learners who are at times docile, is the need to respond to three factors: the practical benefit of neoliberal skills, the fact it is the only environment young people know, and neoliberalism's fashionability.

Furthermore, in relation to the expressed wish for more activities to develop career management skills, three motivations for studying at college were identified that did not fall neatly into the narrow flexible workforce route. Learners chose to study at college simply as a progression from school with openness towards next steps; or college was a step towards a University course with again a range of career options possible thereafter; or learners were studying in order to change career. The third motivation revealed participants to be managing their progress with a sharp focus on specific personal skills or qualification gaps. This is not a description of a docile precariat, within a disciplining of progress, at the mercy of the ebb and flow of 'flexploitative' practices. Instead, this highlights individuals as having a degree of agency, taking steps and making commitments, with inevitable sacrifices, that will lead them to something better in the longer term.

5.5.2 The Significance of Parrhesia in Learner Identity

Parrhesia is the term Foucault gave to the need to speak truth to power with bravery. Foucault, traced the genealogy of parrhesia to the Cynics who had displayed the purest form of parrhesia over the more flawed religious and political forms with McFalls and Pandolfi stating that resistance in the form of parrhesia is unavoidable today if one wishes to avoid complete subjugation at the hands of neoliberalism (2014, p175). When learners resist with courage though they take a risk because the form of resistance may breach college regulations. The difficult criteria regarding the overcoming of discipline's control in the strict form of parrhesia should therefore not be underestimated. However, there were examples of resistance that approached parrhesia, involving as they did similar features outlined by Foucault such as courage, creativity and personal sacrifice.

For example, It has been shown above that spatial discipline involving enclosure, partitioning, functional sites and rank are techniques partly imposed by college management from above but these techniques are still evident to varying degrees, having been embedded partly at least by learners themselves. However, they are also contested. The group that uses the classroom for lunch breaks, for example described covertly eating lunch in class while working or socialising during this time. By subverting college rules and using a classroom for activity other than what the space was planned for the learners can be described as bricoleurs. In the Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, bricolage is described as 'the practice of transforming 'found' materials by incorporating them in a new work' (2015, p.42). It has been applied often, particularly within cultural studies, to explain creative cannibalisation of ideas through meaning subversion across the arts and within the analysis of subcultures. The participants in this study derived benefit from their creation of a unique space although the threat of punishment remained if food or drink was consumed. This comes close to another term utilised by Foucault in relation to space, that of heterotopia. In his examination of spaces Foucault developed the concept of 'heterotopia', which in contrast to utopia, are spaces which represent, contest and invert other real spaces. Although heterotopias can be located they are outside of all other real spaces. Foucault provides examples such as the mirror, but also more concrete spaces such as the garden and brothel. The ship is the 'heterotopia par excellence'. Foucault explains that in societies without boats 'dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates' (1986, p.27). In their use of a classroom for leisure

purposes learners are arguably outside of ‘real’ space in their own process of ‘inversion’ and therefore not docile at break times.

Considering resistance to temporal discipline, the control of learners towards docility through the control of time, exhaustive use and body-object articulation cannot be said to be complete or clearly the case, despite all three elements having some presence within the accounts provided by learners. Although learners are pulled, pushed and constrained at times by timetable decisions, an intense work load and the prevalence of ICT (but not mobile phones), learners manage the impact of these factors through the division of college life and home life. They do not need to attend or participate in a Student Association activity because they can socialise at home, they will engage with college ICT systems and they do not need to use a mobile phone in class because they will again do so outside of class. Also, the use of technology for individual use does not necessarily lead to further isolation within class but can result in peer support. As long as college time is limited to less than three days (16 hours per week) learners are not impacted greatly by disciplinary techniques relative to their overall activity over the week. Learners are free to attend college during their days off, however, even though most live nearby, they choose to work or do other activities externally, despite the college’s encouragement through the disciplinary practices inherent within wider college support. Learners appear to be happy to give up college time to be disciplined by neoliberal flexibility and individualism but do not give up personal time to volunteer or develop other attributes or interests. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault depicted pictorially the disciplinary support of a botanic sapling through staking and guying, originally referred to in an 18th century text on the art of preventing bodily deformities (1977, p.166). Regarding the discipline found within institutions, learners appear to be, figuratively, tightly secured but have roots that extend outwards in different directions that surface elsewhere.

Foucault’s third technique, the organisation of progress, was present in the responses participants gave when they spoke frequently about prioritising assessment. College lecturers in this study, however, do set non-assessed creative tasks which are ignored by learners. This points to learners strategising according to their individual priorities, which in this case centres on the successful completion of assessments. So, even though the college provides ‘exercises’ to encourage individuals to focus on certain wider ranging

educational priorities, learners are not completely docile because they fuse college priorities with their own, even if there is partial docility with some tasks. It was revealed by one participant that this can even involve very shrewd behaviour. Mary described how the assessment deadline set by the lecturer is often not final with extensions being provided where required and although lecturers hyperbolise the consequences of not meeting deadlines, learners recognise it as a 'bluff' and can therefore manage their way through an assignment by exhausting conditions.

In relation to Foucault's fourth technique, the extent to which the segmentation of individuals is as mechanical or systematised as Foucault implies is brought into question with further exploration. The participant Liz who sat still during lessons did so because she valued the content of what was being delivered and did not want to miss any information. Even if individuals are at times physically constrained to the extent that even breathing is affected, if this is to be taken literally, this is arguably done by their own approach to their learning and not simply through directly imposed rules or controls. There was no reference made to college or lecturer rules regarding classroom behaviour involving talking in class, posture or other aspects of conduct. It is more likely the case that these approaches are adopted by learners to help her meet their own ends because 'it gets things done'.

Furthermore, recent requirements that have been applied to the public sector in Scotland are resulting in a swing towards the learner voice. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman describes itself online as 'the final stage for complaints about councils, the National Health Service, housing associations, colleges and universities, prisons, most water providers, the Scottish Government and its agencies and departments and most Scottish authorities' (SPSO, 2018). Learners are able to use systems such as SPSO to shape their experience at college. In the past colleges could manage the learner feedback systems. Although there would be some scrutiny by external parties such as Education Scotland or SQA, the complaints structure involving SPSO now provides learners with a non-college based feedback facility. The SPSO has restructured complaints procedures within these organisations so that there are now three stages the user of a service can follow: frontline resolution, investigation and if a complaint is not resolved internally to the satisfaction of the complainant it can be heard by the Scottish Public Services

Ombudsman. Such systems provide learners with avenues to be heard but also a latent system of command of their own and for moments at least is swinging the disciplinary pendulum the other way.

The application of Foucault's four techniques points to a critical finding within this study regarding the actual experience of docility that requires further examination. With the examples above, even where docility is evident, the participant's experience is variable. For the docile learner who meets temporal or spatial requirements; or the learner who seeks employability experience; or the learner who focuses on assessment; or the learner who does not breathe or just sits still to take everything in, there are different experiences evident. There emerges either degrees of docility or at least different types. It is also the case that learners are not always docile in acceptance of disciplinary techniques because they in fact exercise self-discipline, which suits them for particular reasons. It would seem paradoxical to suggest that an individual is docile and disciplined in relation to a practice that is self-administered, even if it can be described as a classic form of discipline. The idea that the promotion of neoliberal traits through both discipline and biopolitical control helps to explain this paradox. It is not clear that parrhesia according to Foucault's strict definition, particularly his preferred Cynical form, is evident but the criteria to be met is so strict that learners would risk exclusion and formal discipline. However, there is complexity to the docility experienced and there are clear examples of resistance that can also be described in Foucault's own terms as 'moments of freedom'.

5.6 Learner Identity and the Significance of Social Class

There would appear to be obvious common ground between care of the self, particularly the more positive and liberating version and the relevance of class to the aspirations of many learners within further education who seek to change their prospects. However, class and economic factors weave their way throughout this study's findings and discussion without being explicitly addressed. This is a potential downfall to Foucault's microphysical approach to discipline. It has been suggested here that college discipline at times creates docile learners who individualistically develop employability skills to be more flexible or agile; become individualistic in their focus on their wellbeing as well as that of close family; and credentialist in their pursuit of qualifications at the expense of other aspects of learning and college life. However, consideration should be given to the

potential utility of such learner behaviour and identity traits even if this is eroding important principles such as social interaction, cooperation and an array of normative values. Who can blame the individual, often a first generation Higher Education learner within college, who focuses sharply on individual success, relative to others, in order to equip oneself with credentials and skills that will have direct currency that can be used in a fluid workforce environment?

For some learners, the fact that they are at college at all is worthy of consideration. Learners could after all be on a different path with less risk and greater immediate reward. The salary that students have to struggle with in Scotland has been well documented but more recently a Government commissioned review laid out the argument that a learner's salary is insufficient and FE and HE students should be entitled to an increase, with options that include an increase in loan award towards a minimum income of £8100, albeit through a combination of bursary and loan (2017, p.1). Crucially, this would also involve means testing to target support towards more deprived students with one proposed model being 50% loan and 50% bursary. Currently means testing involves a greater amount than can be borrowed by poorer students, which leads to the problem of greater debt for the most deprived students. Depending on circumstances the bursary allocation is at present roughly a quarter or a fifth of the loan amount (ibid., p.27). These recommendations would improve the circumstances of college learners studying HE qualifications because to commit to such a course at this time involves financial risk and proximally distant rewards.

The crucial problem in the consideration of class more deeply though is that many learners struggle to achieve the social mobility and distant rewards that neoliberal traits are believed to prepare them for. As Reay highlights, 'Most of the contemporary debate on making the educational system more equitable focuses on social mobility. But social mobility is a red herring. Currently we do not have it' (2012, p.593). Reay, and others in their emphasis on class issues, add to the discussion of neoliberal traits, however, too often it is a circular argument that is proposed. Reay laments a focus on social mobility which 'neglects the fact that given the current high levels of inequality, social mobility is primarily about recycling inequality rather than tackling it' (ibid., p.593). This is in part because 50% of the working population are made up of 'the working class as a labour

market category'. The solution Reay proposes is that instead of promoting social mobility 'in the narrow sense of becoming middle class' we need:

an educational approach that values vocational routes and careers and the existing knowledges of working-class young people...where the vocational has esteem alongside the academic, rather than being perceived to be an inferior form of knowledge (2012, pp.594, 595).

However, alongside the need to prioritise the vocational it cannot be forgotten that Scottish Further Education, for many people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, is the only possible route to University. Many learners, including most of this study's participants are sharply focused on using college as a stepping stone to access University which would not have been possible otherwise. The problems surrounding access to University for the poorest in Scotland are being addressed through various measures such as funded places within the Ancients and the target set by the Commission on Widening Access, that a fifth of HE entrants in 2030 should come from the fifth poorest areas (Blackburn et al, 2016: p.2). However, it is Scottish Colleges that currently provide access for the majority of the poorest learners. Since 2006, 90 per cent of all the growth in entry into Scottish higher education by disadvantaged students has been through sub-degree courses in colleges (ibid., p.2). This is due to the supply of university places in Scotland not keeping up with an increase in demand so that competitive application processes have had an excessively harmful impact on students from the poorest backgrounds (ibid., p.3).

The role of colleges has been critical in Scotland and particularly when compared to the rest of the UK, Scottish FE has been instrumental in providing opportunities for excluded learners, 'In Scotland, about 17% of higher education, generally in the form of sub-degree programmes, takes place in the college sector, compared with 6% in England and 1% in Wales' (ibid., p.21). Care should be taken, though, not to draw simplistic conclusions regarding the divergent philosophies between Scotland and England. As Croxford and Raffe state, 'it is widely accepted that policies since devolution have seen a divergence between a neo-liberal, market approach in England and a more social-democratic philosophy, based on HE as a public good, in the devolved countries and especially in Scotland' (2014, p.16). However, as the researchers point out, in relation to their own study across UK learners from 1996 to 2010, 'there is no evidence that the social-

democratic approach has generated greater equality or wider access than the market approach. Indeed, to the extent that there is any difference in trends it is probably in the other direction' (ibid., p.16). Overall though, FE Colleges in Scotland provide significant opportunities, particularly to those from lower socio-economic (and cultural capital) backgrounds, that should not be ignored in the discussion of neoliberal discipline.

Unfortunately, though, Further Education in Scotland should not be viewed simply as an educational oasis for those deprived of opportunities due to deprivation or any other reason. The opportunities it provides is of a more limited set which cannot be compared in equal terms to the routes taken by students who succeed in specific areas without interruption at school. Relative to European countries such as Germany, Scottish education is 'weakly stratified', in terms of the tracking and streaming of school students into vocational or academic routes (Iannellia et al, 2016, p.563). However, it is the case that to enter the ancient or old universities, or particular courses, students need to obtain very good grades at the senior phase of secondary school but they also need to achieve in more challenging subjects. The Russell group calls these 'facilitating subjects' which are deemed essential to entry. Subject choice, therefore, 'plays a strong role in accessing (elite) universities regardless of field of study' (ibid., p.565). Such barriers to the Ancients should not be underestimated with Further Education colleges that rarely deliver such subjects, unlikely to be in a position to meet this particular gap regarding efforts to improve access for the worst off. As Blackburn et al state, 'any access policy which underplays the importance of access to the Ancients is an access policy that does little to change access to Scotland's top professions' (2016, p.1).

The importance of subject selection, even within supposedly non stratified education systems, has been highlighted by some who see deeply established arrangements that only benefits the capital rich. As Ball, highlights, this involves a shift towards individuals and families, 'The onus is now much more on the 'classified and classifying practices' of the proactive consumer. Education is subtly repositioned as a private good'. It would appear that the outcome for Ball is damaging to at least some, 'Its operation, via processes of individualization (choice) and the characteristics of the requisite cultural capital (how and what to choose), are classic examples of Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence' (1996, p.91). This can be said to bear out, as Iannellia et al confirm from their own research, 'Our

results confirm that subject choice is a stronger mediator of social inequalities in HE entry and access to prestigious universities in Scotland while attainment is more important in Ireland' (2016, p.561). However, although certain courses, careers and even some Universities will be closed off to many who use FE colleges as their route to employment or Higher Education, there is no doubt that to emphasise the harmful impact of college courses over its capacity to transform lives and provide opportunities would be at the very least misleading. However, the concerns do remain and learner agency and resistance to neoliberal pressures is, therefore, undermined even through processes that can be said to be at least partly liberating.

The Scottish Government's recently published influential and far reaching Learner Journey Review holds, as its key aim, that young people be equipped 'with the skills and knowledge they need to reach their full potential in both their careers and their wider lives' (2018, p.4). The Review's very first recommendation calls for a nationally available online system that learners utilise and write on to, 'that enables learners to record their attributes, skills and qualifications in a way that follows them beyond school and helps them plan their learner journey into work' (ibid., p.11). This system could arguably be a form of *hupomnemata* (and correspondence if shared with employers), that Foucault stated operates as a writing tool for the care of the self. The creation of such a system will create new terrain for a power relations and resistance tussle between the learner's care of self and neoliberal pressures that could also support greater social mobility.

Considerations regarding social class, therefore, helps to clarify a gap within Foucault's post-modernist approach. Challenges learners face can, arguably, be traced to their particular backgrounds, opportunities, wealth and capital. These constitute further reasons why resistance can become more difficult for some, or conversely, may be factors that, when addressed, can lead to greater opportunities for moments of freedom.

5.7 Conclusion

It is clear that the four disciplinary techniques identified by Foucault are extremely useful to our developing understanding of learner identity. The four techniques were instrumental in the creation of learner docility, however, this was not a straightforward or

deterministic process. A second layer of findings emerged after a detailed examination of Foucault's four techniques, in relation to the learner's experience at college. Participants expressed views that revealed flexibility, individualism and credentialism as identity traits, which are also key features of neoliberal culture. These are at times promoted and encouraged by the college institution but they are also, arguably, crucial examples of 'care of the self', which stems from a governmentalising process that is much *wider* than the college institution. This means learners are mediating institutional disciplinary practices that create degrees of docility but have also internalised priorities and ideas that may stem from neoliberal culture and these intersect with the college's own techniques. This means that, if correct, then woven through an already complex process of mediation between the learner and the college's disciplinary practices is an additional layer of neoliberal control. College learners focus sharply on passing assessments; they are mostly individualist in this process and in relation to other matters; and learners also develop skills, or seek to improve their employability in order to enhance their flexibility. Learner docility is, therefore, arguably related not just to college discipline but is also due to external neoliberal influences.

It was shown, however, that despite the presence of disciplinary techniques, which have the potential to be highly deterministic regarding the influence of neoliberalism on learners, resistance, to a degree at least, is possible. This includes an optimistic version of care of the self and practices that approach, without ever reaching because consequences would be severe, even Cynical parrhesia. However, the double bind of disciplinary practices and what I would describe as 'pessimistic' care of the self, limits the 'moments of freedom' Foucault indicated could be possible. These dual processes appear to dominate the contextual picture learners presented. However, these challenges may be offset by the appeal of neoliberal elements alongside generational factors because some of the threats neoliberalism carries such as fluid employment contracts are more acceptable to younger learners. However, this is complex and may obviously entail a lack of awareness or appropriate vigilance to certain developments by younger people. The apparent appeal of neoliberalism as well as the argument that many learners have not known stable structures and are therefore less affected by any fears of neoliberal 'liquid times' were two pertinent factors discussed in relation to the findings. These ideas appear on the face of it to be reflected by the relative lack of concern among my study's participants for the widely asserted claims regarding the profound challenges of neoliberalism. However, although

concern was not stated explicitly, the fact learners displayed degrees of docility alongside neoliberal traits points to a personal programme of preparation for life after college and therefore concern to some degree. This preparation is complicated though by the fact that learners prioritise the proximate in terms of space and time and so, for example, instead of future planning or activity that may help them prepare for many aspects of life and work, they concentrate sharply on present priorities in nearby locations that are narrowed towards employment and assessment. They also invest college class time in less proximate priorities such as employability skills but do not give up their own time to do so.

The discussion of resistance was followed by a brief consideration of class as an area unexplored and hidden within the analysis of discipline and identity, using Foucault's techniques. However, it is the case that social mobility is more challenging than neoliberal discourses, especially those involving postmodern concepts, would have us believe. Perhaps there is nothing wrong for example in working class learners concentrating on credentialism (as well as individualism and flexibility), but not much else in terms of future planning, if this is effective. Significant questions exist though in relation to the extent of the opportunities available and whether or not these identity traits will serve learners well after college. This potential gap points to the need for further conceptual and empirical study that takes account of social class as well as post structuralist ideas.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to explore learner identity within the F.E. sector in a neoliberal context. A number of key questions were addressed:

- Are learners docile?

Although the literature review pointed to examples of docility across a range of studies, as far as can be seen, each of Foucault's four techniques that he stated combined to create docility have not been applied to education in a single study. This question was therefore addressed by exploring each of these techniques as described in the findings but also in relation to the literature. Degrees of docility were found but this involved a complex process of mediation by the learner and examples of resistance.

- Does neoliberalism affect learners and if so in what ways?

Prior to discussion of the data one possibility was that where learners are docile this is a result of a neoliberal college institution creating such learners. Analysis of the findings showed this to be the case to an extent, however, learners are also embodying the neoliberal traits of flexibility, individualism and credentialism because of the four techniques but also partly from factors external to the college.

- Does neoliberalism rely on docility?

There is a complex interplay between neoliberalism, the college institution and the learner so that it is not simply the case that neoliberal ideas influence learners when they are docile. For example, learners, at times, are *deliberately* docile in order *to be* credentialist, individualist and flexible, as they see it, in order to benefit most from their time at college as they see it. This, however, is arguably an extension of neoliberalism into the individual's version of a 'care of the self' which could be, otherwise, more optimistic.

- Can learners resist?

Care of the self as a later development of Foucault's can, when interpreted, arguably be categorised as either optimistic or pessimistic. Some writers emphasise resistance to governmentality pointed to by Foucault; while others see care of the

self as more significantly susceptible to its utilisation as an additional method of control. Foucault's Cynical form of parrhesia as his preferred mode of resistance is too demanding given the fact it can damage the learner's college place due to punitive sanctions that can result such as exclusion. There are examples of resistance though provided by learners and even to an extent 'moments of freedom' such as when learners acted like 'bricoleurs' or through the brave engagement with formal complaints processes.

Regarding docility, learners do appear to be docile at times during their experience in college, however, it was shown that this is complicated by the fact that docility is apparent to different degrees and not all of the time. Foucault's four types of discipline that he argued together produce docile individuals were largely evident within this study but three neoliberal identity traits also emerged: individualism, credentialism and flexibility. Locating the causes of docility and the origins of neoliberal influences is difficult and complicated. However, it is clear that the learner's interaction with the college institution but also wider society results in a double bind on the individual. This involves, overwhelmingly, neoliberal messages and priorities that find their way into the learner experience but this process is also complex so that certain more positive and fashionable aspects of neoliberalism should be considered, to ensure the learner's predicament is not exaggerated but associated problems of neoliberalism can still be engaged with fully and appropriately. Finally, resistance is possible to an extent within individualist environments. However, parrhesia, which Foucault argued can significantly challenge discipline, in its purist Cynical form, is difficult to attain, without impacting on the individual's relationship and contract with the institution's management.

New research ground has opened up as a result of this study within the further education sector, which tends to be neglected from academic research relative to Early Years, School and University contexts. The focus is on three courses of study that involve little practical activity and so future research could consider other vocational areas when examining disciplinary practices. This would further contribute to our understanding of learners in relation to Foucault's claims regarding docile bodies and governmentality. Further longitudinal study of discipline, docility, neoliberalism and identity could aid our understanding of the connections between the critical elements that college learners experience throughout their education and beyond. Care of the self as a concept is being

wrestled with and different camps of thought are competing for a settled definition. Further study could explore examples of individual identity to establish the possibilities individuals have to resist or negotiate discipline or the ways in which care of the self is being used to reinforce dominant neoliberal orthodoxy. A study of time that considers the metaphysical beliefs of modern day multicultural learners in relation to Foucault's ideas of time as a disciplinary mechanism, would be a useful research topic, given the importance Foucault attached to the 'interruption' of care of the self by the Christian belief in an afterlife. Finally, fertile research ground may be opened up by the Scottish Government's recent recommendation, within the Learner Journey Review, that a national online tool be created to allow learners to note 'attributes, skills and qualifications' (2018, p.11) as this could be regarded as a form of hupomnemata and even correspondence if shared with employers and other institutions.

This study has profoundly affected my own practice as a manager and educator within the Scottish Further Education sector. The EdD, overall, provided insights and opportunities to reflect on a wide range of issues that affect my daily practice including critical reflection, ethics, educational futures, lifelong learning and research methodology. The dissertation topic has allowed me to explore an area of educational importance through empirical research. I have uncovered a college's systems and structures, influenced as it is by neoliberal external drivers, that in turn influence learner identities. I have also shown how resistance is possible but the complex interplay between disciplinary mechanisms and the individual create a challenging context for learners looking to flourish in learning, life and work. I have already applied my better understanding of institutional factors to my own practice. For example, I have been able to contribute to discussions around class sizes which are judged according to price groupings put in place by the Scottish Funding Council. This involves certain vocational groups requiring larger class sizes to be efficient and viable, which can create tensions between staff who do not appreciate the resultant challenges such as the management of assessment and marking. By highlighting the awarding body SQA's volume of assessment itself as much as the SFC's price grouping I have been able to encourage staff to firstly delineate the key factors but then work with their cross sector groups to explore a possible reduction in assessment volume where appropriate. Given the learner's tendency towards credentialism this diversion towards greater space for non-assessed activity could benefit learners educationally if managed properly. I have also been well placed to influence cross sector drives to improve essential

skills. As a member of the sector's Essential Skills Advisory Group I have been able to help influence developments so that there is an appreciation of the difference between individuals developing their own skills as well as their articulation of these, supported by a school or college; and attempts by institutions to stratify individuals according to their backgrounds. I now also consider parrhesia deeply as a concept that, although contested, is crucial in any attempt to negotiate neoliberal pressures on my institution, my colleagues, my learners and myself. I have exercised my attempt to speak with 'candor', 'freedom' and 'frankness' even in situations where this requires bravery, including direct communication internally and even external with the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council in areas I believe require further opinion, mediation and opposition.

Finally, having had a reduced teaching commitment in recent years as a promoted lecturer, this study has, in many ways, reconnected me profoundly and more fully with learning and teaching *within* the classroom. I have now gained an insight into the complex interplay between neoliberal influences, disciplinary practices and to a certain degree at least, the adoption by learners of certain identity traits. My personal views on neoliberalism have changed as a result of this research. To some degree my deep concerns regarding neoliberalism prior to this research have been moderated by the review of a wide range of literature alongside a general optimism among the participants. However, I worry about the highly complex interplay of college practices, neoliberal influences and learner priorities because resistance and moments of freedom appear out of reach for much of the time during college and there appears to be an imbalance in favour of certain government priorities over other aspects of education. I have considered deeply my own mediation with these factors as an Ed. D student and college employee. I hope the work here that has initiated these reflections can be useful as a basis for further research on similar topics as well as a source of personal inspection for the reader.

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Appendix A

Ethics Approval Letter



University
of Glasgow

College of Social
Sciences

Application Approved

Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

Staff Research Ethics Application ☐

Application

Postgraduate Student Research Ethics

x

Application Details

Application Number: 400150205

Applicant's Name: Robert Allan

Project Title: Docile Bodies? Foucault, neoliberalism and FE learner identities

Application Status: **Approved**

Start Date of Approval: 29/08/16

End Date of Approval of Research Project: 01/09/17

Please retain this notification for future reference. If you have any enquiries please email socsci-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk.

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Appendix B

Interview Questions

Thematic Questions

Docile Bodies? Foucault, neoliberalism and FE learner identities

Robert Allan

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Interviews

Fifteen participants will be invited to take part in an individual interview lasting approximately 40 minutes and a focus group discussion lasting approximately 1 hour. The interviews and focus group will be semi-structured. The data will be collected using a Dictaphone and transcribed with anonymity ensured by the use of pseudonyms chosen by the subjects. The transcripts will then be analysed using thematic analysis techniques.

Indicative questions include:

Section 1 – Before College

This section aims to explore any choices made by the participant in order to understand the extent of agency.

What was your experience of school?

Why did you choose to apply for the course you are currently on?

Why did you choose to study at college?

What has been your experience of the application process?

What knowledge do you have of the courses available to you across new college Lanarkshire?

What differences do you perceive between your memories of school life and college life?

How would you describe the transition from school to college?

What or who influenced your choice of course and college?

Was it the course or college that influenced your decision most?

What are your short, medium and long term goals?

Section 2 – College Life

This section explores the learner's experience outside of the classroom to help reveal agency and influence on the learner.

What have you found most surprising about college life?

What types of decisions do you make from day to day in college?

What aspects of college life do you have the most influence over?

What would improve your college experience?

What college activities or opportunities are you aware of outside of the classroom?

Section 3 College Support

This section will examine the relationship between the participant and any support received.

In what ways has the college supported you?

Who or what support departments help you the most?

What support is not in place that you feel should be in place?

Section 4 College Structure

This section will look at where the participant's choices are closed off and possible areas of resistance to any controls.

What barriers do you experience in college?

What is the most frustrating aspect of college life?

What college rules do you believe are necessary and important?

How do college spaces impact on your college experience?

What rules are unnecessary?

Where could more discipline improve your college experience?

What awareness do you have of college policies and procedures?

Section 5 Experience of Assessment Process

These questions will look at the participant's choices in relation to summative assessment.

What choices do you have, if any, in relation to the assessment process?

How much assessment do you experience: is it adequate or too much?

What types of assessments do you have on your course?

Are there assessment types you would like to see introduced?

Section 6 Teaching

This section will explore the influence of the lecturer and other classroom dynamics.

In what ways do computing technologies improve your college experience?

In what ways do computing technologies hinder your college experience?

What do you gain from the learning and teaching experience?

How involved are you in classroom activity?

Do you have choices to make in your day to day lessons?

What classroom rules do you have to adhere to?

Section 7 Curriculum

This section will look at options and controls in relation to the curriculum.

How does the timetable structure impact on your college experience?

What do you enjoy most about your subjects?

What do you enjoy least of all across the curriculum?

What choices do you have when learning a particular topic?

How much input do you have to shape your learning?

Do you choose any of your subjects or aspects of your learning?

What would you have liked to study on your course that isn't there?

Are you aware of the reasons behind the construction of the curriculum?

Appendix C

Focus Group Questions

Docile Bodies? Foucault, neoliberalism and FE learner identities

Robert Allan

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Focus Group

Fifteen participants will be invited to take part in one focus group discussion lasting approximately 1 hour. It is expected that there will be more discussion and fewer questions than the interviews. Questions will be more general within a semi structured discussion.

Indicative themes/questions

Rules and controls

What rules are you aware of that you must adhere to?

Which rules are tighter than others?

Which rules are more flexible?

Agency

Where do you have choice within the classroom?

Where do you have choice in the assessment process?

What other freedoms do you enjoy on college?

How do you use college to benefit you personally and your progression?

Identity

What do you see as the main priorities in your life?

What should be the college's priorities?

What should be the Scottish government's priorities?

How much direction and support do you get?

Do you need more - if so in what areas?

Appendix D

Plain Language Statement



College of Social
Sciences

Plain Language Statement (or Participant Information Sheet)

Study title and Researcher Details

Docile Bodies? Foucault, neoliberalism and FE learner identities

Robert Allan

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Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please feel free to ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study will examine what learners perceive to be the measures that affect their education and even identity. The purpose of the study is to explore the influence on student learner identity, in particular the role of curriculum, assessment and teaching staff in further education colleges. It will consider such influences as having potentially positive and negative effects and will look to glean participants' views on this idea; the study will also consider the political context's potential influence on individuals.

Why have I been chosen?

Little research has been carried out on this subject within further education. Your views would be most welcome in helping me to gain a better understanding of the topic of student learner identity and also help me in my journey to complete an Education Doctorate.

Do I have to take part?

Of course you do not have to take part. You are invited to participate in this research study but if you do not wish to do so your decision will be respected.

What will happen to me if I take part?

There are two parts to the research you will be asked to participate in. The first will be a semi-structured individual interview lasting approximately 40 minutes. You will also be asked to participate in one focus group discussion with other participants lasting approximately 1 hour. This will involve myself as 'moderator' asking questions on the topic of learner identity, influences within college and the influence of political drivers that will be opened up for discussion within a group of approximately 15 individuals for wider discussion.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All participant names will be changed to pseudonyms so that no participant can be identified.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies. It is the case, however, that approximately fifteen participants will be taking part and guarantees cannot be given regarding other participants' respect for confidentiality.

Will taking part in the research affect my course?

Taking part, or not taking part, in the research will have no impact on your studies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research study will be analysed and written up as part of a dissertation before being submitted to Glasgow University's Education Department for feedback from my dissertation supervisor. All information will be stored securely in an electronic format that will be password protected.

Who has reviewed the study?

Academic staff members of Glasgow University's Education Department will review the study. The research has also been reviewed and approved by the ethics committee of the College of Social Science, UoG.1.

Contact for Further Information

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If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer Dr Muir Houston, email: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk.