

Wellbeing, policy and practice among further education teachers

Walifa Rasheed-Karim

Adult providers as well as further and adult education colleges are a major part of an economically driven society improving skills for developing careers as well as for new interests and jobs. Further education (FE) colleges deliver courses that not only meet the demands of school leavers but also serve the wider community in terms of delivering higher education courses allied to universities. FE advocates the concept of 'inclusiveness', in terms of, for example, disabilities, ethnicity and race. This complies with the Equality Act (2010), which points out that facilitating learning conditions for the vulnerable is essential. Additionally, staff should be appropriately trained to deal with issues such as the wellbeing of learners and day-to-day teaching (e.g. The Wolf Report, 2011; Ofsted, 2014; and the Society of Education and Training, 2017). However, this may be hampered by lack of resources to deal with such issues (Field, 2015). It is suggested there may be repercussions on the wellbeing of teaching staff and this may have negative effects on work-family balance. The Education Support Partnership (2017) advise that the effects of exhaustion/burnout should not be underestimated and this is the focus of this paper. The paper argues that there is sufficient evidence to show that what policy intends to achieve is unachievable given the current climate of FE. One effect is that teachers may feel pressurised. How exhaustion and burnout is dealt with must be a joint effort between policy makers, researchers, teachers and managers.

Keywords: Wellbeing, further education, teachers, work-life balance, policy and practice.

Introduction

I AM INTERESTED in how teachers like myself who work in further and adult education cope in emotionally demanding situations when calmness and detachment are needed. Teaching could involve feelings of being upset, disappointed, annoyed and frightened. We are however, by our work ethic unable to show these feelings outwardly and suppress them so as to be seen by others in a positive light; that is, capable, understanding, responsible, etc. regardless of the emotional labour required in the work. The scale of demands could be overwhelming and there is continual professional development we have to attend to. Regardless of this, we try to do the things we enjoy and so try to change our psychological focus. It is suggested that individual differences in terms of ethnicity, age, and gender impact how teachers cope with carrying out their day-to-day tasks. Policy and practice requires me to manage work demands and

this may be difficult given the constraints of the workplace. There are consequent effects on my wellbeing and this is compounded by feeling unsupported to report this. For many, experiences such as mine may lead to earning less because of time taken off work and there may be other unreported repercussions which are never spoken about.

In examining teachers' wellbeing in terms of policy and practice in FE, the paper is structured in sections.

Further and Adult Education: This is a discussion of types of providers of post-16 education in the tertiary sector. Colleges of further education form a significant part of serving post-16 school leavers and other people such as those who wish to return to work after a break due to for example, child rearing. The colleges and providers of adult education are therefore important in helping the unemployed back to work. The type of courses FE provides is discussed and it is apparent

that there are vast subject areas and levels. By successful course provision it is envisaged that the economic stability of the areas they serve is ensured. However, the manner in which courses are delivered may follow policy guidelines that may not match the ambitions and aspirations of teachers who FE employs. For example, forces such as neo-liberalism and globalisation procedures may increase competitiveness among colleges. It is suggested that teachers are affected negatively and following such policies are counter to their view of their 'teaching role'.

Neo-liberalism and FE: This section argues that wellbeing of teachers is exacerbated by neo-liberalism in FE and this includes policy making and regulation of legislation. These affect types of course provision due to funding available and also influence working practices. It is suggested that such conditions may lead teachers to feeling unsuccessful in the workplace if demands are not met for example. It is therefore argued that when teachers feel out of control from their workloads, their wellbeing may lie in a fragile, vulnerable place.

Definition of Wellbeing and Mental Health: Mental health and wellbeing are terms used to describe individuals able to cope in normal circumstances of life. Specifically, wellbeing is discussed in terms of how individuals in the workplace cope with the stressors they encounter there. It is rarely discussed how teachers in FE use emotions to maintain wellbeing and it is argued that resiliency is important in this respect. However, policy in FE does not address how those who experience poor wellbeing such as exhaustion and burnout can be kept in the workforce and so diversity is improved.

Inclusiveness: The meaning of 'inclusivity' in the student population is discussed. It is argued that although training of staff is stipulated by colleges, this may not be possible due to time constraints of time-tables or staff who may be able to train others but

do not have the training and knowledge for particular cases. The workload involved in carrying out tasks with students who have particular needs may have negative effects when there is emotional labour involved. It is concluded that exhaustion and burnout may be inevitable.

Disability: Defining the term 'disability' is discussed from the view of not making firm distinctions between the 'able and able-bodied'. It is suggested that teachers may lie on the borderline of disability and they may not feel they would wish to disclose this to managers as this will affect their job prospects. Ways of helping teachers remain in the workplace are suggested but policies may only be possible to implement if types of stressors causing stress are fully identified. Addressing these antecedents may help to equip teachers to combat the challenges of the workplace.

Work-Life Balance and Policies: This section points out that imbalance between workloads and time available for carrying out activities outside work such as hobbies and childcare could affect wellbeing in a negative way. It is argued that work-life balance policies in the workplace can help to overcome lack of wellbeing and it is suggested this will improve diversity in the workplace.

1. Further and Adult Education

Providers of Education

A research report for the all party parliamentary group for adult education (APPG), an inquiry into adult education by Hughes, Adrianse and Barnes (2016), reported that FE is a source of developing skills during people's lifetimes as they adjust to new stages of their life. The kinds of providers are varied. Some serve staff to help them enhance skills in the work-place. Official statistics by Ofsted (June, 2016), identified 238 community and skills providers whose objective was to provide work-based learning for adults and young people. The types of learning centres are local authority providers, not-for-profit providers with charitable status and insti-

tutions that receive funds from the Skills Funding Agency. For example, in 2017, I worked for a company that provided Functional Skills in Maths and English to the unemployed who were recommended to the company by the local job centre. The company also provided home tuition and small group tuition at their centre. Another company I worked for provided for mainly primary students up to pre-GCSE whose parents received financial help for this and had ambitions for adult education. These providers were ideal for people living near the centres as the tuition and teaching times made allowances for the life schedules of parents and other carers. Providers deliver courses at learning centres and use many types of locations such as schools, community halls, libraries and office space.

Some local authorities allocate a proportion of their adult education budget to FE colleges which deliver adult education courses through the Skills Funding Agency. The authors reported that quality of provision was high. However, Hughes, Adriane and Barnes (2016) asked participants to identify policy development programmes that could improve the quality of education over the next 5–10 years. Those who replied suggested policies should focus on ESOL and basic skills investment; funding for disadvantaged adults; access to careers information and advice as well as clearer policies related to national and local frameworks for adult education. The manner in which FE define themselves is closely linked to their policy and practice procedures. Policy in terms of adult and further education refers to rules and regulations entrenched in institutions which direct and dictate the practice of its staff. The policy of these institutions includes maintaining the safeguarding and safety of each student; student and parent responsibilities and finally tutor responsibilities. Other policies relate to cancellation of a class, pay thresholds, child and data protection and inclusiveness. Teachers are expected to have high aspirations for learner outcomes. However, there are no

written policies of practice on how to create a nurturing and caring environment, but as professionals teachers are expected to convey a standard of care for the vulnerable as outlined by the Equality Act (2010).

Teachers, a generic term for teachers, tutors, trainers, lecturers and instructors in FE institutions, are focused on serving the local population to seek employment by equipping them with the necessary basic skills necessary for jobs. Those who would like to take courses in higher education are also given the choice of a range of subjects in Science, Arts, Humanities and others. However, to many teachers, policy can be restrictive to the greater part of teaching in terms of too much paper-work for course provision. This is necessary so that courses continue to be funded and there is sufficient evidence in the form of achievement of goals and the required number of overall passes met. The next two sections provide more detail of the kinds of courses FE offers and how these are delivered by teachers. Of note, is that FE can have repercussions on the wellbeing of the larger population when employment is achieved by the many. It is suggested that wellbeing of teachers in delivery of courses is also influenced but in a negative manner when their use of emotions in the workplace is incongruent with their true feelings.

Types of Courses

O'Grady (2013) identifies shifts in FE provision for example, from vocational to remedial: re-takers of school subjects such as GCSE maths and English and part-time learning for adults either accredited or not to a provider of learning impelled to meet demand. My experience of adult education in 2017 is a sector with more sober ambitions as many adults have had careers in other countries and are upgrading English and Maths skills or would like to change careers and so undertake further studies.

Many believe that adults have experiences which they bring to learning a subject such as 'Child Care' or 'Health and Social

Care'. Entering education is voluntary and it is generally thought that learners are motivated and this is a composite of employer interest. That is, adults apply their knowledge in practice while working and knowledge gained from attending courses will help them to achieve their goals. The purposes of adult education can be summarised as vocational, social, recreational or/ and self-development (Bohonos, 2014). A developing sector is English of Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Functional skills in Maths and English and Information Technology. Courses assist immigrants to gain basic language skills for occupations. Unlike adult education courses, FE colleges offer one year 'access' programmes which prepare students to enter an honours degree programme at undergraduate level. Such courses also include units of learning which help international students to reach the required level of English and Maths for degree studies. FE colleges also offer foundation degrees in vocational subjects which combine academic study and work-based learning. Students develop skills in the workplace and courses may be full or part time. Two year foundation degrees can be topped up with another year of study to receive an honours degree at a university which is in partnership with the FE college where learners attend. However, many colleges provide courses that increase their students' opportunities for finding work by linking with local industry. Some students may wish to find part-time work locally.

At the heart of all policy making is a view that lifelong learners are supported and there are sufficient resources available for this. For example, adult education services need to be subsidised so that people from various backgrounds can attend classes and this is particularly relevant for those who find there are barriers to finding work or being an active member of their community. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2014) reported that wellbeing is improved where there is economic security and income linked with social connections. This,

according to Hughes and Barnes (Research Report for the all Party Parliamentary Group for Adult Education (APPG) – Inquiry into adult education) is an important area for analysing the impact of adult education. The next section discusses how courses are delivered to students and an argument is that if wellbeing is maintained, this will enhance diversity in terms of age, gender, etc., and so improve the status of FE in the face of legislation, neo-liberalism and globalisation.

Delivery of Courses

Further education colleges provide education and training to learners from the age of 14 upwards. The lower age limit dropped to 14 in 2002 when the Department of Education and Skills (DFES) in England introduced the Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) for 14- to 16-year-olds. The IFP is organised by partnerships with schools and training providers (the term 'provider' includes FE colleges, sixth form colleges, independent learning providers, employer providers and providers of community learning and skills). Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have similar schemes. However, the vast majority of students are still over the age of 16. Huddleston and Unwin (2012) discuss that the FE sector has worked hard to demonstrate an 'inclusive' approach, providing non-selective education. Colleges are multi-faceted organisations, providing for the local community, national and international students. Many colleges teach courses normally taught in Higher Education (HE). These courses are provided in partnership with universities, for example, PGCE (postgraduate certificate in education), Cert. Ed (certificate in education), HND (higher national diplomas) as well as certificates. Gallacher (2006) argues that the presence of HE in FE has enhanced the reputation of FE, widening access and promoting social inclusion and opportunities for life-long learning.

Felstead and Unwin (2001) noted that under the terms of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, colleges became

independent self-governing co-operations responsible for their budgets, staffing, marketing, planning of courses and delivery. In 1991, the Education and Training for the Twenty-First Century proposed that colleges be given autonomy to develop strategies to provide prospects for enabling them to respond to the needs of students in an environment of high quality education. In the 1990s, Training and Enterprise Councils (TEC's) were also created by government as employer led, whose objectives were to organise and manage work-based training programs in local areas. The 1991 Conservative White Paper, additionally, proposed that Ofsted (office for standards in education) would extend its procedures to inspecting colleges who also provide courses for 16–19-year-olds. Additionally, the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) will be responsible for standards inspection at work-based provision as well as college-based post-16 provision. However, in 2007, ALI became part of Ofsted and now is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.

2. Neo-Liberalism and FE

At the heart of neo-liberalism are two concepts: the promotion of self-interest (Olssen & Peters, 2005; James, 2008) and marketisation (Orr, Jaeger & Schwarzenberger, 2007). The philosophy of self interest is that the best way in which economic development will succeed is by creating a spirit of competition between individuals and institutions. For example, teachers may work extra hard to achieve passes from students so as to increase funding for the courses they teach. Self-interest is also shown in good marketing procedures which may result in gaining students who are invited to pay fees for courses. In this case, state intervention is limited and the result is that colleges ask students to pay fees which are not standardised (Maisuria, 2014). However, colleges will also fund some courses which will help contribute to economic growth and yet cut funding for others, for example,

arts. The outcome is that as the arts curriculum narrows, so does student choice. The consequence is an increase in the skills gap (Education and Policy Institute (EPI), 2017).

Finch (1984) identified that education is a tool used in the shaping of social policy and this is shown by investment and cuts, spurts of enquiry, policy-making, legislation, regulation and the diversification of types of provision. However, state funding is only possible if there is benefit for society as a whole rather than the individual's benefit. Yet, according to Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard (2004) curricula do not keep pace with changes due to globalisation. They suggest this may be because of limited resources, fewer specialised teachers, time pressures on teachers and established modes of work practices. However, involving multiple stakeholders and businesses in framing curricula can form a springboard to diagnosing the needs of learners. That is, educators and policy makers require models that take advantage of the challenges and opportunities offered by globalisation.

Simmons (2010) argues that neo-liberalism and globalisation are transforming FE into one which is largely based on performance measures and a marketable product. He argues that skills, employment prospects and economic competitiveness is contracted and FE still lies at the lower end of the educational hierarchy. However, research may enable improvement of working practices and diversity in the workplace (e.g. Psychology at work: improving wellbeing and productivity in the workplace; report by the British Psychological Society, 2017). The report outlines that individual factors such as the role of emotions in the workplace is recognised as contributing to feelings of wellbeing. One area frequently discussed is that FE finds it important to recognise diversity among learners but there appears to be no transparent policy with respect to teachers.

In an attempt to achieve meritocracy and gain sufficient professional acclimation, FE endorses such practice as the 'lesson observation' and other continual development

programmes. Re-framing colleges with a viable ethos where professional standards are shared across a democratic profession is to some, for example, Orr, Jaeger and Schwarzenberger (2007) not the road to success.

These points suggest that the teaching staff's energy and resources are channelled in diverse directions and this has the effect of reducing the priority of pedagogy and professional development (Gleeson, Hughes, O'Learly & Smith, 2015). However, Back and Puwar (2012) highlighted that such findings in research are often surpassed by policy changes. Stanley, CEO of Education Support Partnership (2017) advised that politicians, policy-makers and education leaders must create working conditions where teachers can succeed; but the emotional and economic cost of burnout should not be underestimated.

Conclusion

This section has highlighted the importance of the FE sector in providing valuable courses for people across a variety of backgrounds with an emphasis on inclusivity. Teachers try to bridge the gap between what students already know and what they can achieve and employ a range of teaching strategies or styles to address learning needs using inclusive policies. It is suggested that teachers follow policies which may be counterproductive to their view of teaching practice. That is, policies do not always convey the messages which teachers wish to hear and address. Rarely discussed is the negative impact of policies on teacher wellbeing. A definition of wellbeing suggests that particular features in the workplace such as lack of support, student inclusiveness and personal factors such as lack of resilience may lead to poor wellbeing. The next section examines these in more detail.

3. Definition of Wellbeing and Mental Health

'Wellbeing is a dynamic state of mind, characterised by reasonable harmony between a worker's ability, needs, expectations, environmental demands and opportunities' (Levi, 1987).

According to the Department of Health, feeling happy and satisfied at work and contented in life signifies wellbeing. Positive or hedonic emotional experiences coupled with eudemonic (meaningful life experiences) are essential for experiencing positive wellbeing and longevity. On the other hand, Xu and Roberts (2010) identified that negative emotions predict mortality but positive and negative emotions are mediated by the kinds of social networks people have. That is, if teachers work with supportive colleagues and have relatives or a family, they may experience more positive emotions as they are able to speak about their feelings to people they know well. On the other hand, if teachers cannot speak to their managers or find other staff members or family members unhelpful, it may be they are more prone to negative emotional feelings. Lack of support may lead to the experience of poor mental health. Mental health is synonymous with wellbeing. Mental health and mental health conditions are terms used interchangeably and encompass emotional labour with negative consequences of burnout. Mental health is defined as:

'A state of wellbeing in which all realises his or her potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community' (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2005).

It is suggested that the make-up of colleges promotes lack of wellbeing. One reason for this is that change in types of courses as well as administration and governance of colleges may put teachers under unnecessary workload which could lead to poor emotional and physical wellbeing. How teachers are able to cope may be due to how resilient they are as well as other factors found in the environment which are not in their control.

According to the National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE, 2010), mental health relates to emotional resilience and how it affects the building of

relationships and aspirations. NIACE points out that some people are more susceptible to poorer mental health due to factors such as racism or other forms of discrimination. However, positive changes in people's lives such as the birth of a child or promotion at work can also affect the mental health condition of workers in a negative manner.

Anderson (2016) asserted that college professionals are placed in challenging positions where they need to develop knowledge in topic areas or a variety of topics, address wellness issues of students, collaboratively build a caring community and be resilient. Lack of wellbeing may be due to stressors found in the environment and this requires stress management. That is, it is contended that teachers need to understand the types of stressors that lead to lack of wellbeing and any management programme of stress should involve helping lecturers to analyse the effects of stressors and how they react to them.

A major feature of the 21st century is that the workplace should consider the psychosocial aspects of wellbeing which may, if not maintained, lead to illness and time off work (Day, Kelloway & Hurrell, 2014). Sonnengtag (2015) identified job related wellbeing with positive features such as enjoyment of work, job satisfaction and sufficient level of morale. In the promotion of 'inclusiveness' in FE, teachers who do not have the appropriate skills may find that without support from colleagues, they are likely to experience emotional exhaustion with the negative occurrence of burnout. In contrast to this, wellbeing, according to Fredrickson and Joiner (2002) engenders positive emotions which help to develop intellectual and socio-emotional skills. However, poor wellbeing includes feelings of depression, burnout and alienation (Sonnengtag, 2015).

I find my job teaching in further and adult education a rewarding endeavour as I know other teachers do. However, like teaching in schools and universities, FE teaching can be demanding for reasons such as high workloads creating pressures which may impact on students. Ashman, president of the Asso-

ciation of Colleges (AoC) in 2017, pointed to a clear link between coping strategies of staff and student success. The association reports that 87 per cent of FE colleges who responded to their survey on examining the wellbeing of staff ran wellbeing sessions. The Society of Education and Training (2017) reports that only by learning about wellbeing can staff support themselves by, for example, following particular lifestyles. In this case, teachers can help students help themselves.

The following section discusses the need of accessibility to learners who have kinds of disabilities and belong to other categories in the population such as ethnicity. However, it is not made apparent to teachers either by policy or management interventions ways in which teachers can help such learners fulfil their potential. In my experience, colleges rarely train teachers in particular skills and it may be left to the individual teacher to gain new knowledge about a particular disability or group of people through self-study, which could constitute some of his/her continual professional development for the academic year.

4. Inclusiveness

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service discusses 'The Equality Act (EA) of 2010'. This act introduces the term 'protected characteristic' which identifies a person's identity guarded from discrimination. Included are: disability, religion and belief, gender/sexual orientation, race and age.

The term 'disability' refers to those people who show symptoms of: physical or sensory impairments; mental health difficulties; long term medical conditions; learning difficulties or neuro-diverse conditions such as dyslexia, autism, tourettes or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

An inclusive college would be characterised as a college that accepts students from a wide range of backgrounds; facilitate training of staff so the needs of a wide variety of learners are met; recognise students' learning styles and or approach to learning; identify assessment with regular

review of individual learning goals, which is often the case for adult education where individual learning plans are required for such courses as ESOL; match individual learning styles of a wide variety of students with teaching strategies in terms of for example, use of resources, technology and differentiation.

Unless the EA is implemented, colleges will be accountable. Briddon (2013) specifies that the EA will need to be brought into practice in such things as marketing, staff recruitment and student admissions; budget decisions and allocation of resources; employment practice; information guidance and advice; additional learning support and teaching and learning. At the heart of the EA is the necessity for protecting the vulnerable. To enable this, the government stipulates that organisations should convey to learners how this might be possible. However, it is clear through my work practice that teachers in FE and adult education do not have sufficient details of how the EA applies to them.

There is accessible information regarding students' acceptability and welfare at colleges and adult education, but systematic research shows that information pertaining to the welfare and wellbeing of teachers who usually face students who may lack the necessary cognition to cope in demanding situations is lacking. However, there are other policies in place which may be useful in combating stressful situations with particular students.

The next section defines 'disability' as this is important in discussions of 'inclusiveness' in FE. A discussion of disability is also important as an introduction to where teachers lie when they experience emotional exhaustion and burnout, as this remains unclear.

5. Disability

NIACE (2010) predicted that by 2020 the focus will be on government policies and the social inclusion agenda; that is, learners and staff such as teachers who experience mental health difficulties will be covered by the Dis-

ability Discrimination Act. This is acknowledged by the Learning and Skills Council National Mental Health Strategy (2009):

'It is an institution's best interest to design services which are widely accessible and appeal to a diverse number of users, including disabled people. It is equally important for institutions to recruit staff and students from a broad pool of talent if they wish to be successful. This will include disabled staff and disabled students.'

The Further Education College Workforce Data for England: An analysis of the staff individualised record data for 2009–2010 stated 3.1 per cent of all teaching staff disclosed a disability with the rate of disclosure being low. While senior managers and technical staff outnumbered female staff, senior managers were least likely to be from black and minority groups. This was especially the case for Greater London which has a high percentage of minority ethnic groups. It is not clear if minority groups are less likely to disclose disability. This may be because disability is a negative concept and this term has become redundant and replaced by 'health and wellbeing' by human resource management (Foster, 2016).

The Education Support Partnership-mental health and wellbeing in the education profession (2017) conducted an extensive survey with 1250 education professionals across FE, higher education and schools and concluded that the main reason why employees did not speak to anyone at work about psychological problems was that they would appear 'weak' (31 per cent) and 23 per cent agreed that it was not the 'norm' at work. Therefore, it is suggested that there are cultural issues at work which have yet to be fully investigated.

Foster (2018) argues that although health and wellbeing initiatives have become visible in the workplace, there is little critical analysis of the meaning of health coupled with wellbeing. She concludes that a social model

of disability and workplace wellbeing is required and that debates should be focused on the social, political and economic causes of ill-health and disability. This is in spite of the definition of disability being unclear (Altman, 2017). That is, although disability encompasses many conditions of mind and body, the dividing line between ability and disability is less distinct. Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare (1999) discuss that in the 21st century an able mind is more important compared with the 20th century when an able body was essential. Degener (2006) argues that people with mental health issues can only participate in the workforce if the government takes a more interventionist approach. It is suggested that variables leading to lack of wellbeing of teaching staff need to be addressed and there are implications for interventionist strategies.

Change is, however, not always possible due to constraints found in the workplace but suggestions could be made for improvements which may satisfy stakeholders. If changes are made to improve teaching and learning, then this will be evaluated continuously and help providers to improve their organisations.

However, it is apparent to the 'learning and skills council' that people with mental health conditions will prefer to see themselves as having particular needs rather than being disabled. The result is that they will not publicly announce their difficulties. This will inevitably affect whether mental health is recognised as a problem.

In terms of maintaining mental health, the British Psychological Society (BPS) (2017) reports that there needs to be more attention paid to occupational health and psychological services will need to address support for individuals to help them stay in work. Training in schools may identify early signs and symptoms of mental health conditions. However, the manner in which this training should be carried out and if ideas could transfer to further and adult education institutions are unclear. Only when it is known that antecedents of stress and lack

of wellbeing take particular forms in adult education and FE can policies be put into place and succeed. The BPS highlight that investment is required to enable provision of access to expert psychological assessments and interventions. This may be problematic for FE and adult education because of the strict financial constraints they follow.

However, the Education Support Partnership (2017) recommends that health and wellbeing policies should be introduced to every educational organisation for workplace stress to be better managed. For example, workplace induction should ensure new teaching staff are prepared for challenges at work and inspection and regulation would promote a culture of health and wellbeing. The organisation proposes that Ofsted will play a role in enabling this.

It is suggested that one way to achieve well being is through a balance between work and family/life.

6. Work–Life Balance (WL-B) and policies

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) defined WL-B as being about the choices employees make to balance their needs with life and work. The association outlines that some benefits of WL-B policies are reduced absence from work, having greater control over work matters, gaining improved relationships at work and home and efficiency at work and retention of staff.

The Workload Agreement created in 2003 recognised that educational professionals have excessive workloads. A major part of addressing this is greater involvement of support staff in the process of delivering education to learners. The ATL points out that this agreement only applies to the maintained sector but is a yardstick for the independent sector.

FE teachers have various backgrounds; some may have busy lives at home with families, friends, hobbies and community connections while others are more focused with work activities. The extent to which people in the workplace cope has consumed many authors. Women may have different

kinds of responsibilities and these may be culturally determined. The FE sector has relatively more female teaching staff than males at 59.1 per cent versus 40.9 per cent (Further Education College Working Data for England 2009–2010–March 2011). Also, according to the Department of Education, School Workforce in England 2013, full-time teaching staff comprises 73.6 per cent women but part time teaching staff is 24.7 per cent. The Further Education College Working Data for England (2009-2010- March, 2011) reported that full time male teaching staff comprised 51.2 per cent and female staff was 48.8 per cent; male part-time teaching staff was 34.7 per cent but female teaching staff was 65.3 per cent. The female to male ratio of teaching staff was 59.1 per cent to 40.9 per cent. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service Summary Workforce Report (2011) concludes that female staff are more likely to have part-time roles than men but nevertheless are more likely to succumb to bullying where there is underrepresentation of minorities in management and leadership positions.

A survey conducted by Kinman and Wray (2015) reported that women working in FE suffered from poorer wellbeing due to demands placed on them compared with male colleagues. Such demands are added to by work-life conflict. However, in comparison with women, men tended to find it more difficult to detach themselves from the issues arising from a day's work. This may be because female respondents are more inclined to gain support from colleagues as well as form meaningful and supportive relationships at work with role clarity and job satisfaction. However, Scheibl (1995) argues that part-time workers may in fact cover full time hours and this is a gendered coping strategy. That is, teachers may feel that their work could not be completed in the part-time hours they are paid for. In this case working extra hours to complete work activities, such as providing advice to students or more one-to-one tuition for those who fall behind in understanding is a natural occur-

rence. Traditional patriarchal racial ethnic cultures may also create additional disadvantages for women. Lorber (2010) discusses that the most advantaged group's values and ideas about the way people should behave usually dominate policies and social agendas and disadvantaged groups may suffer as a result. For example, Larson (2008) reported that female teachers in a community college in the US spent more time in caring and supporting students by listening empathically to their problems, providing information on services available, etc. She pointed out that this helped students remain in college. That is the use of emotions is crucial to maintaining students' wellbeing. However, she argued that female teachers are not given sufficient recognition for the role they play in providing 'valuable labour'. It is therefore argued that an approach to policy making in the future in terms of WL-B is required which helps women to use their emotions for the benefit of their wellbeing.

Conclusion

Further education colleges benefit the working population and economy by providing individuals with the necessary skills. It is suggested this helps individuals to advance their lifestyles in a positive way and policies at FE are mainly concerned with the benefit FE can make to society (e.g Finch, 1984). However, policy may hinder choices when funding is cut from the delivery of courses such as in the Arts subjects. Teachers are also affected with the implementation of policies. Structural changes in FE institutions due to globalisation and neo-liberalism may have negative effects on teachers' wellbeing when teachers face challenges. Exhaustion and burnout are suggested as outcomes where the use of emotions, are inappropriate to achieve outcomes when following inclusive policies. Teachers may feel that they are unable to report feelings of tiredness, apathy and more severe outcomes to supervisors and managers as being labelled 'disabled' would hinder their work prospects.

It is suggested that a policy of WL-B will help teachers understand their feelings and how to manage wellbeing in a positive way. It is suggested that this will help to maintain diversity in the workplace as teachers are encouraged to keep their jobs and teachers at risk because of their ethnicity, etc., may find employment with them. However, a main argument is that teachers are often left out of policy making. It is suggested, before a WL-B policy is implemented, that policy makers will benefit by consulting teachers' views and using these to construct an agenda for a WL-B policy. In particular, it is suggested that

teachers who see a link between practices at work, use of emotions in various ways and WL-B will also benefit by consulting policy makers. It is suggested that by consulting managers and current research in suitable areas will also benefit policy makers so that a rounded view is gained of FE teachers in the context in which they work.

The author

Walifa Rasheed-Karim

QTLS C.Psychol CSci AFBPsS

Email: Walifa.Karim@goolemail.com

References

- Altman, M.B. (2017). *Disability definition and measurement: Conceptual, political and methodological dimensions*. New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Anderson, D.S. (2016). *Wellness issues for higher education. A guide for student affairs and higher education professionals*. New York: Routledge.
- Back, L. & Puwar, N. (2012). A manifesto for live methods: Provocation and capacities. *The Sociological Review*, 60, 6–17.
- Barnes, C., Mercer, G. & Shakespeare, T. (1999). *Exploring disability*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bohonos, J. (2014). Appreciating the experiences and expertise of adult students. *Journal of College Orientation and Transition*, 20(2).
- Briddon, K. (2013). The life-long sector: An overview. In P. Scales, *Teaching in the lifelong sector* (2nd edn.). Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.
- Day, A., Kelloway, E.K. & Hurrell Jr, J.J. (Eds.) (2014). *Workplace wellbeing: How to build psychologically healthy workplaces*. West Sussex: Wiley & Sons.
- Degener, T. (2006). The definition of disability in German and foreign discrimination law. *Disabilities Study Quarterly*, 26(2).
- Felstead, A. & Unwin, L. (2001). Funding post-compulsory education and training: A retrospective analysis of the TEC and FEFC systems and their impact on skills. *Journal of Education and Work*, 14(1), 91–111.
- Field, J. (2015). Further education and the 12 dancing princesses. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 67(4), 597–598.
- Finch, J. (1984). *Education and social policy*. London: Longman.
- Fredrickson, B.L. & Joiner, T. (2002). Positive emotions trigger upward spirals toward emotional well-being. *Psychological Science*, 13, 172–175.
- Foster, D. (2017). The health and wellbeing at work agenda: Good news for (disabled) workers or just a capital idea? *Work, Employment and Society*, 32(1), 186–197.
- Gallacher, J. (2006). Widening access or differentiation and stratification in higher education in Scotland. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 60(4), 349–369.
- Gleeson, D., Hughes, J., O'Learly, M.O. & Smith, R. (2015). The state of professional practice and policy in the English further education system: A view from below. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 20(1), 78–95.
- Huddleston, P. & Unwin, L. (2012). *Teaching and learning in further education: Diversity and change* (4th edn.). London: Routledge.
- Hughes, D., Adriane, K. & Barnes, S.A. (2016). *Adult education: Too important to be left to chance*. Research report for the all parliamentary group for adult education, APPG: inquiry into adult education. University of Warwick.
- James, O. (2008). *The Selfish capitalist: Origins of affluenza*. London: Vermilion.
- Kinman, G. & Wray, S. (2015). *University and college union executive summary (2014): Taking its toll: Rising levels in further education*. London: University and College Union.
- Larson, H.A. (2008). Emotional Labour: The pink collar-collar duties of teaching. *Currents in Teaching and Learning*, 1(1).
- Levi, L. (1987). Fitting work to human capacities and needs: Improvements in the content and organization of work. In Kalimo, R. (Ed.), *Psychosocial factors at work*. Geneva: World Health Organisation.
- Lorber, J. (2010). *Gender inequalities*. Oxford University Press.
- Maisura, A. (2014). The neo-liberalisation policy agenda and its consequences for education in England: A focus on resistance now and possibilities for the future. *Policy Futures in Education*, 12(2), 286–296.
- O'Grady, A. (2013). *Lifelong Learning in the UK. An introductory guide for education studies*. London: Routledge.

- Olssen, M. & Peters, M. (2005). Neoliberalism, higher education and the knowledge economy: From the free market to knowledge capitalism. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20(3), 313–345.
- Orr, D., Jaeger, M. & Schwarzenberger, A. (2007). Performance-based funding as an instrument of competition in German higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 29(1), 3–23.
- Scheibl, F. (1995). Different career patterns: 'Lesser careers'. In S. Ledwith & F. Colgan (Eds.), *Women in organisations: Challenging gender politics* (1996). London: Macmillan Business.
- Simmons, R. (2010). Globalisation, neo-liberalism and vocational learning: The case of English further education colleges. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 15(4), 363–376.
- Sonnentag, S. (2015). Dynamics of wellbeing. *Annual Review of Organisational Psychology and Organizational Behaviour*, 2(1), 261–293.
- Suárez-Orozco, M.M. & Qin-Hilliard, D.B. (Eds.) (2004). *Culture and education in the new millennium*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.
- World Health Organisation (2014). *Second joint meeting of experts on targets and indicators for health and wellbeing in Health 2020, London, 3–4 April 2014*. Available from: www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/253673/Meeting-Report-April-meeting-final-WEB.pdf?u
- Xu, J. & Roberts, R.E. (2010). The power of positive emotions: It's a matter of life or death: Subjective wellbeing and longevity over 28 years in a general population. *Health Psychology*, 29(10), 9–19.