



O C C A S I O N A L P A P E R S

LEADING BY LISTENING: REFLECTIVE LEARNING

Paper 2: Compliance

SANDY HENDERSON, OPUS

O C C A S I O N A L P A P E R S

FETL Occasional Papers are short, authoritative treatments of issues key to the leadership of thinking in further education and skills. Written by expert commentators, they are intended to inform and encourage new thinking about important topics.

To cite this paper:

FETL (Further Education Trust for Leadership). 2020.
Leading by Listening: Reflective Learning, Paper 2: Compliance. FETL.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) License. To view a copy of the license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

LEADING BY LISTENING

This project was commissioned to assess the mood and wellbeing of the FE sector in England in 2019, using the 'Listening Post' methodology developed by the educational charity OPUS*.

Listening Post is a form of social enquiry, not unlike a focus group, that is used to take a 'snapshot' of society, or a section of society, at a particular time. It proceeds on the basis that the themes and patterns emerging from discussions by a small group will unconsciously express some of the characteristics of the wider system to which that group belongs.

Between June and November 2019, 33 Listening Posts were conducted in the FE sector:

10 The view above

- 7 groups of college leadership teams
- + 3 AoC Regional groups of CEOs, Principals, Deputy Principals and Assistant Principals

12 The view in-between

- 6 groups of support staff
- + 6 groups of teaching staff

11 The view below

- 11 groups of students
-

33

*OPUS – An Organisation for Promoting Understanding of Society Regd. Charity No. 282415 (see p.27)

HOW IT WORKS

- A Listening Post is a 60-minute group discussion, with minimal facilitation*.
- Participants contribute anonymously as representatives of the FE sector, sharing experiences of their current roles within FE (what it feels like to be me, here, now).
- An anonymised transcript of the discussion is sent to participants to check for accuracy and anonymity†.
- All transcripts are analysed for connecting themes and patterns that speak for the whole sector.

*In cases where a group fell silent for an extended period, participants were asked a question, usually about the measures they took to look after their own or others' wellbeing. Some student groups required more concerted facilitation, involving questions about how college differed from school and what they had learnt about their own ways of learning or coping with pressure. Three discussions were reduced to 45 minutes due to time constraints affecting participants. In larger groups, except those involving students, participants were divided into two groups who took turns to discuss their preoccupations for 30 minutes each while the other group sat behind them and listened. Those in a listening role were invited to write down any personal associations they had to the issues being discussed. The associative data was also retained and used.

†Transcripts were not circulated to student groups owing to concerns about the propriety, from a data protection and safeguarding standpoint, of requesting their contact details.

SEVEN THEMES

Engagement with purpose

- 1. Priorities** – the primary ends set for or by the sector and people within it, as reflected in the choices made by or for them.
- 2. Compliance** – the means by which the sector and people within it seek to achieve the goals set by or for them.

Engagement with practicality

- 3. Capacity** – the extent to which the sector and people within it have a realistic grasp of what they and each other can and can't do.
- 4. Effectiveness** – the extent to which the sector and people within it manage to accomplish those things of which they are capable.

Engagement with people

- 5. Presentation** – the ostensible characteristics of an individual or group (the inside seen from the outside: how the group regards the individual).
- 6. Community** – the extent to which people take responsibility for each other (the outside world seen from the inside: how the individual regards the group).

Each of these themes contributes (positively or negatively) to:

- 7. Wellbeing** – both of the sector and people within it.

Each theme is explored in a separate paper. This paper explores **theme two: Compliance**. Excerpts from the transcripts are reproduced to show how each theme unfolds from above (for leaders), from in-between (for support staff and teachers) and from below (for students). Full transcripts are available at www.fetl.org.uk.

VISCERAL IMAGES

As well as noting the dominant themes arising in discussion among Listening Post groups, this report also explores evidence of subliminal concerns expressed by participants through their usage of idiom.

Idiomatic expressions convey imprecise meaning often not deducible from the literal sense of the words used. They are used subconsciously to add an emotional emphasis to speech by means of figurative language or analogy. Collectively, they represent the affective content of the discussion: a visceral image of the group's underlying preoccupations.

All idiomatic words and phrases have been extracted from the transcript of each Listening Post and put together to create 33 narrative descriptions each of which connects with the first and last topics discussed by the group. This process inevitably involves some editorial licence and represents a conjectural approach to the group's underlying preoccupations.

The visceral images produced provide a useful counterpoint to the content of the discussions from which they were drawn, with much overlap in subject-matter. They are organised to fit the themes identified.

THEME TWO

Compliance

"We could do better for our localities and economies and young people if we were allowed to get on with it."

Rules are bent and flexibility shown so that students have the best chance of passing their courses and progressing into employment. Meanwhile, colleges and staff face exacting assessment against measures which do not fully reflect their efforts or achievements.

- College leaders feel hamstrung by the performance evaluation measures to which their colleges are subject, which divert management priorities towards compliance rather than the broader interests of students.
- Whitehall interference is seen as expressing a lack of trust in the sector and as an attempt to dictate management and teaching processes without sufficient expertise or appreciation of the consequences. The sector sees itself as having contributed to this lack of trust through the conduct of a few 'errant' colleges.
- There is a desire among college leaders and staff to summon the courage to resist Government interference, accompanied by a fear of the consequences if they did so. They regard themselves as having been too willing in the past to comply with its damaging or unrealistic demands.
- The pressure on performance encourages staff to set their own boundaries either by going off sick or by declining to respond to requests for help from colleagues. As well as increasing the burden on others, this also leads to a breakdown in trust between staff members and contributes to a less positive working culture.
- Students are learning to 'game' the system by enrolling on courses so that a parent can retain tax credits while they live at home, or to secure an exemption from council tax, gain a free bus pass or acquire free (eg hairdressing)

equipment. Colleges can be slow to notify the authorities when students fail to maintain their attendance.

- The pressure to secure funding from multiple pots has created a perverse incentive for colleges to create additional courses and places for students and then gamble on 'finding a way' to get them to pass.
- By appraising teachers on the basis of their students' attendance, punctuality and retention as well as their achievement, management creates a disincentive for uncommitted students to be withdrawn from their courses. The appraisal data includes their students' performance in English and Maths GCSE classes over which the teachers have little control.
- Students are sometimes enrolled on courses promising – on paper, at least – a pathway to employment, only to find that the course has been hollowed out to attract less able students or reduce teacher contact time, or equips them with skills and practices that are no longer relevant to employment.
- An increasing proportion of students attending courses are perceived as disengaged from studying, and as bringing with them onto campus the baggage of their turbulent or dysfunctional personal lives. This can make them unwilling to accept responsibility for their own conduct or for its impact on other students.
- Pressure to retain students or lose funding means that some colleges are being more tolerant of indiscipline than they should be; while the number of students enrolling only because they cannot leave education without passing GCSE Maths and English means that more are enrolling with significant domestic, personal or educational challenges.
- Some students are submitting work which is not their own, having bought it from an essay factory, borrowed it from someone at another college or copied it from the internet. Teachers under pressure to improve their record of student achievement are tempted to turn a blind eye.

COMPLIANCE ABOVE #1

College leaders feel hamstrung by the performance evaluation measures to which their colleges are subject, which divert management priorities towards compliance rather than the broader interests of students.

Key words above: interference, consequences, regulation

Leaders:

"Stats drive people in Whitehall because it seems logical but they don't see the wider consequences."

"I just want to say 'can you just leave us alone for a bit and let us get on with it?'"

"The whole education system needs looking at and to move away from league tables and testing and assessment and focus instead on giving students the life skills and resilience so that they are ready to be given those work skills – but at the moment they are not."

"We are driven by things that are illogical. We see huge tightening of the vocational curriculum down to 15 pathways at the same time as we see the 15,000th apprenticeship standard being developed by a small group of people who have got a vested interest in making them work."

"This is a business but our business is education, so you try and get back to education all the time, but actually you're constantly sucked into numbers, PR, all of the measurables."

"We are in a highly over-regulated system."

COMPLIANCE ABOVE #2

Whitehall interference is seen as expressing a lack of trust in the sector and as an attempt to dictate management and teaching processes without sufficient expertise or appreciation of the consequences. The sector sees itself as having contributed to this lack of trust through the conduct of a few 'errant' colleges.

Leaders:

"What gets me at the moment the most is the lack of trust in us as a sector. We are regulated to bloody death at the moment. I have never known anything like it."

"I don't understand why we hire professional people and bring in professional managers and professional systems of governance who then are not trusted to get on with it."

"It comes down to trust, in each other and our teams, and they trust us."

"We do some pretty stupid things in the sector, though, don't we, that explain them not trusting us. We score some pretty classic own goals."

"Teaching, of all the occupations out there, is the one that is more scrutinized than any."

"People do stuff and don't realise that by doing this thing or not doing this thing, a whole bunch of other people they have never even met are going to be impacted if they fail to do this thing correctly or to do it at all."

COMPLIANCE ABOVE #3

Visceral Image #6

This image depicts college leaders as having to work miracles with meagre resources, satisfying the demands of their masters.

Leaders*:

Starting topic: time pressure.

Ending topic: pressure for results.

To *set the scene*, we are the *poor cousin* or *poor relations* who have *fallen off the radar*, *running around from pillar to post* like *Cinderella*, *pinching* a *stale chunk* of bread *dipped* in water *with a wind blowing*.

Like *round pegs in square holes*, we must offer a *Rolls Royce service with Skoda parts*, *equipped* with an *extra string to our bow* and, *with these strings*, *harness invisible skills* to achieve *miracles*. With the *goalposts moving*, we are *under the cosh* to produce a *lightbulb moment* for students. We must *juggle wiping their arse*, *cushioned with cotton wool*, while *taking their hand in a pampering stage*.

We *push* on in this *cut-throat* scene crawling *muddied* through a *minefield*, under the *hammer* and lacking *clout*, *churning out* results even at *breaking point*. If we *switch off* and *scratch the surface* or *spill* a drop, it may *hit* or *bang on* something that *destroys* us. Only by *shining the light in the corner* and not *losing sight* of our *destination* will we move *along the avenue* and *come through the door*. If we *knock off* or give up the *chase*, we would *shoot ourselves in the foot* and *flatline*, and we will be *back to square one*.

* Leaders Group 2

COMPLIANCE ABOVE #4

There is a desire among college leaders and staff to summon the courage to resist Government interference, accompanied by a fear of the consequences if they did so. They regard themselves as having been too willing in the past to comply with its damaging or unrealistic demands.

Leaders:

"Sometimes we exacerbate that situation by being super-compliant as a sector."

"We never get to go and say 'actually, no, we're not going to comply with your ridiculous chaotic requests for this particular fund; just give us the money'. We never do."

"We've been at fault for being so flexible and responsive that we give a message that says 'you can chuck anything at us and we'll deal with it'."

"We should band together and say 'enough is enough'."

"We just dance to whatever tune that is thrown at us."

"Maybe it's about being willing to say 'actually I'm not going to do that. That's not priority for me right now' and that being acceptable."

"We've got to say 'no, that's not how I lead organisations' and push back."

COMPLIANCE ABOVE #5

Visceral Image #7

This image depicts leaders as pulled in two directions at every turn, always glimpsing a narrow landing strip that meets the needs of everyone but is fraught with danger. They may glimpse a brighter financial future but must not risk their reputation or self-esteem to achieve it.

Leaders*:

Starting topic: being hopeful about the future.

Ending topic: the importance of wellbeing.

Our role is *to dance to those drums*, to *dance to whatever tune will tug on the heartstrings*. When *we pull strings*, there are more *strings attached*. Should we *band together on the journey* and *pick our battles* to *get more of a voice*, or *bust a gut* to *fight on every front* and risk *toppling over*?

We are *on the cusp* between *Jekyll and Hyde*, *yin and yang* – as we *crawl into the water*, seeking *a path through*, it *ebbs and flows*, with *drag left and right*. As we *pitch up* and *go off the edge*, water *pours in* and we are *sucked into* it, *dragging everybody down*. Then it *wanes*, and we *stretch* and *grab at green shoots*, staying *on the back foot* so as not to *tip over the edge* and *go to the wall*.

We seek *a light at the end of the tunnel* but will *get lost* unless we *play a different game* – a *numbers game*. By *game changing*, we can keep *plates spinning* but must be *flight footed* to walk a *fine line* and *land on a postage stamp* without *kicking back and scoring own goals*. Then, the *beautiful trauma* we escaped by ignoring the *big picture* would be *mirrored*: the *fickle finger of scrutiny* would *poke our bruises* and *blow it out of proportion*. Everything would be *battered down*; we would be *tarnished with a brush* and become *rotten eggs* that have *hit the bottom of the barrel*.

* Leaders Group 3

COMPLIANCE IN-BETWEEN #1

The pressure on performance encourages staff to set their own boundaries either by going off sick or by declining to respond to requests for help from colleagues. As well as increasing the burden on others, this also leads to a breakdown in trust between staff members and contributes to a less positive working culture.

Key words in-between: accountability, motivation, distortion

Support staff:

"I feel that, really, I'm a business manager and conversations around curriculum, offer, teaching and learning are non-existent."

"I think that's the most frustrating thing, having those people who say 'that's not in my job description'. It's really irritating."

"You get the same serial offenders going off sick and there don't seem to be any consequences or any taking accountability."

"It's difficult when you get reliant on one person and then, at certain pinch-points, they go off sick and everyone else says it's not their job."

"If you are ill when you are here, then you feel like you have still got to come in. You know no one is going to cover. So, you keep going and keep going and finally, you shut down."

"There's a great lack of understanding from the academic down to the administration of, if you don't do things, the impact it has on staff and on the department and the amount of work it creates."

COMPLIANCE IN-BETWEEN #2

Students are learning to 'game' the system by enrolling on courses so that a parent can retain tax credits while they live at home, or to secure an exemption from council tax, gain a free bus pass or acquire free (eg hairdressing) equipment. Colleges can be slow to notify the authorities when students fail to maintain their attendance.

Support staff:

"It is a case of getting on the course, getting that letter to say they are on it and then we wonder why the retention's bad."

"Or they need to be there because Mum needs to still claim her tax credits. That is huge and they are told 'go off and do a course'."

"There's a student who picks his bus pass up every week but I know for a fact, he's only here once a week."

"Students come in, sign up, we give them a letter for the council to get free council tax. When they withdraw within a couple of weeks, nobody lets the council know. Which is fraud."

"We should be able to write a letter saying 'this student has withdrawn; they are no longer in full-time education'. Why should I have to pay council tax?"

"A couple of years ago, it was said on Facebook 'go to the college, sign up for hairdressing and you'll get a free kit. Then just leave. That was the word on the street."

"You have a student who says 'I don't want to be here; it's stressing me out; I'm going to commit suicide'. You tell him 'you don't have to be here' and you phone his Mum and she says 'this is not my problem. You have to deal with this or I will lose the benefits. I know he doesn't want to be here but he has to be.' What do you do?"

COMPLIANCE IN-BETWEEN #3

Visceral Image #8

This image depicts support staff as having to work under intense scrutiny dealing with undeserving as well as deserving students.

Support staff*:

Starting topic: communication breakdown.

Ending topic: the need for praise and reassurance.

We *gear up* for a *new cohort* by being *wired up* to the *proper channels*, always *touching base* to stay *on the same page* and *hit the ground running*. Some students *go downhill* and *drop off the face of the earth* because they have *switched off* or their *cogs are not working*. We *do a sweep* to rescue *fallen angels* and *signpost* a *light at the end of the tunnel*. We offer a *praise sandwich* for those with too much *crammed on their plate* who *buckle* when *overloaded*.

Our *bugbear* is the *serial offenders* who *swan about* and *shout loud enough*, ready to *kick off* if we don't *float their boat*. They *barge in fullbore* with a *battering ram* hoping to *work the system*. We are *set up for a fall* and *pick up flack* when we *pick up* their *voice in our ear*.

Work is a *never-ending cycle* spent *going full circle in a goldfish bowl*. It is *full on* but *fragmented* so we *put a plaster on it* and *put it in a box*. Like a *caveman family shuffling around* on our *knuckles*, we are *under the cosh*, *dragged by the hair* towards a *large pot*. We either *jump in* or go *from the frying pan into the fire*.

*Support staff Group 5

COMPLIANCE IN-BETWEEN #4

The pressure to secure funding from multiple pots has created a perverse incentive for colleges to create additional courses and places for students and then gamble on 'finding a way' to get them to pass.

Teachers:

"If you immediately give an area a target that's not achievable, you'll get into a situation where people will be forced to – how can I say this – make things up, to make it achievable, blur the line, instead of trying to do something properly."

"We are probably more flexible than we should be about attendance and behaviour. You know that, if that student drops out, you are going to get in trouble and your course is put under threat."

"The big thing, going back to a bit of wellbeing, is actually believing in yourself and believing in what you do, to stand up and go 'no, this is wrong; this is what we should be delivering'. Sometimes you feel a bit downtrodden."

"If people aren't turning up to courses and not caring and not actually wanting to be there, there is no point in keeping them on the course."

"EIP – what a con what a scam, what a scandal!. How is it that was not picked up in the recent audit?"

"I'm flabbergasted that awarding bodies haven't identified the cut in teaching hours and what we're delivering versus college FE requirements. You're signing up to an awarding body where you have to deliver x amount of hours of teaching and that's not being done, yet we're still expected to deliver the same results."

COMPLIANCE IN-BETWEEN #5

Visceral Image #9

This image depicts teachers as knowingly set an impossible task and then blamed for failing to deliver it.

Teachers*:

Starting topic: being watched by senior management.

Ending topic: not being understood by senior management.

College is the *flagship* run by *dinosaurs riding in on their white steeds*. They don't want the *overflow* to *land on their laps* when the *groundswell* hits a *rocky patch* and *makes waves*.

We are the *battery hens wearing two hats*: first, to be *clowns* in a *goldfish bowl* who *kill ourselves chasing this carrot* to *juggle from pillar to post* while *jumping through hoops*; second, to be *robots*, treated like *poor cousins* and made to *bust our arses* and *flog ourselves to death* to *blur the lines* in a *grey area* to ensure a *snapshot* finish.

We go *flat out* in a *heart-breaking box-ticking exercise*, *wrung out* to *mental breaking point* trying to *magic things out of thin air*. If, despite reciting *chapter and verse* in an *echo chamber*, we take *huge strides* but *plateau over a barrier* and *fall over, fragmented*, we face a *kangaroo court: down comes the sledgehammer* and *down comes the axe* to *land on the doormat*.

*Teachers Group 1

COMPLIANCE IN-BETWEEN #6

By appraising teachers on the basis of their students' attendance, punctuality and retention as well as their achievement, management creates a disincentive for uncommitted students to be withdrawn from their courses. The appraisal data includes their students' performance in English and Maths GCSE classes over which the teachers have little control.

Teachers:

"Our targets were attendance, punctuality, retention and achievement. And if you didn't get your figures, you didn't get your pay review."

"When I have my appraisal, it will be all about my retention rate and how many students didn't pass and why."

"It's not our responsibility but it still falls on us – if there's a safeguarding issue and they are not here, we are still penalised for their attendance."

"If students are absent, you can't leave the class to find them. You will get allowance if they miss GCSE Maths and English but not for the other stuff. You are responsible for chasing them."

"One of the things I say, when people come for a job and I say 'why do you want to teach?' and they say 'because I've got a passion for the subject' is to say 'well go and do it then!'."

"Listen to us. We don't get listened to."

COMPLIANCE IN-BETWEEN #7

Students are sometimes enrolled on courses promising – on paper, at least – a pathway to employment, only to find that the course has been hollowed out to attract less able students or reduce teacher contact time, or equips them with skills and practices that are no longer relevant to employment.

Teachers:

"You can get your qualification and get a job not knowing anything."

"Some courses we have offered haven't helped the students to progress, because the qualification isn't a good qualification."

"What's the point of putting them on a course that we know they are not going to succeed on?"

"Sometimes you reinforce failure by giving them a qualification they can't pass."

"They come out with qualifications but they are not competent."

"You hunt around to find an appropriate qualification to give that learner and quite often they fail it because it doesn't fit what it is that you need to teach them."

"From the industry point of view, they're coming back and saying 'what you're actually teaching isn't relevant. What we're getting from apprenticeships, your young people coming through, they haven't got the skills mainly because they're not taught it in college.'"

COMPLIANCE BELOW #1

An increasing proportion of students attending courses are perceived as disengaged from studying, and as bringing with them onto campus the baggage of their turbulent or dysfunctional personal lives. This can make them unwilling to accept responsibility for their own conduct or for its impact on other students.

Key words below: indiscipline, control, copying

Students:

"There is not much discipline in the local schools, from what we see. They come with all this baggage and learn what they can get away with and what they can do."

"It felt to me like a lot of students were just here because they thought 'it's going to be easy' and it was just for the sake of doing a college course because they'd come out of education and then literally needed somewhere to go."

"What I've noticed this year is a lot of kids with discipline problems, not following the rules."

"The loss of role models is a problem for youth behaviour. That again impacts on attendance, because they start getting involved in things that they shouldn't; they're on the streets."

"Some teachers know how to deal with it and some don't. You've got teachers who can dominate in class, know how to control the class and teachers who can't."

"Bullying is massive. I was literally getting shouting, swearing, punching in the face. And they still haven't sorted it out yet."

"I am looking at this 18-year old girl saying to me 'I want a time out card'. She has no EHCP; she has absolutely no reason for that requirement. It's stressful because we are feeding it."

COMPLIANCE BELOW #2

Visceral Image #10

This image depicts a characteristic student experience of being overwhelmed by conventional teaching methods, with authoritarian teachers mistaking their panic and frustration as ill-discipline.

Students*:

Starting topic: dissatisfaction with teaching methods.

Ending topic: the hazards of voicing dissatisfaction with teaching methods.

Learning is a *full-on* experience *from my end*: they teach *a load* of *bumped up rubbish*, too *packed* to *absorb*, too *jumbled-up* to *have a go at*. They *spring it on* you like a *shadow in the mist* until you *get messed* by it.

If you got *handy* and *fought for* a *new story*, you get *kicked out*. If you say what *bugs* you and admit you are *all over the place*, *drowning in* it, *falling behind*, they *push you* back *under the river*.

*Students Group 10

COMPLIANCE BELOW #3

Pressure to retain students or lose funding means that some colleges are being more tolerant of indiscipline than they should be; while the number of students enrolling only because they cannot leave education without passing GCSE Maths and English means that more are enrolling with significant domestic, personal or educational challenges.

Students:

"People who aren't good at lessons struggle to concentrate and be interested. They can be challenging and start arguments because they don't want to be there."

"If you know that a student doesn't want to be here and they are playing up in class and they are affecting the learning of other students, you are saying to your boss 'they don't want to be here' but they won't withdraw them, that can be quite frustrating, can't it?"

"We had five Stage 3s and two of them have been excluded completely. What's going to happen to those kids? I worry about them."

"They will come in and threaten you with knives; they'll threaten to beat you up; they will threaten to come and find you because that's their personality. Obviously, they're not that bad otherwise we wouldn't take them but they have an outburst and then that happens."

"Dare I say it: to be sworn at, violence, not meeting their needs because of their mental capacity. You are not equipped to deal with this."

"They might be having separate issues outside which might prevent them from coming into college, which is understandable. Things like home issues, alcohol abuse, substance abuse, domestic abuse, crime, getting involved in something they shouldn't."

COMPLIANCE BELOW #4

Visceral Image #11

This image depicts students' classroom experience as a physical fight, perhaps between (academic) head and (vocational) hands.

Students*:

Starting topic: waiting to receive counselling support.

Ending topic: exams as the cause of depression.

Class *kicks off* if you *turn up*: you get *slapped in the face* and the pain *kicks in*. You must *take that on your own head* or be *dumped on* the floor. You either *grimace and bear it* or *get at the first hand* and *bring it up* to *the face*. If you *push everyone down* like a *rolling ball*, going *round in a circle*, it may be a *step too far*. So if a challenge *comes to light*, *knuckle down* or *duck out*.

*Students Group 4

COMPLIANCE BELOW #5

Some students are submitting work which is not their own, having bought it from an essay factory, borrowed it from someone at another college or copied it from the internet. Teachers under pressure to improve their record of student achievement are tempted to turn a blind eye.

Students:

"The problem is the punishments are too lax. About half our class got warnings for plagiarism."

"Sometimes, you and a friend at another college may have the same unit. They can send the assignment to you and you can submit it."

"There are sites where you can pay someone to do your assignment for you. I don't see the point of assignment."

"It's quite easy to catch people. Most people don't write proper English so you can tell when they have copy and pasted it. Some disguise it. We have to do an online exam every week but our teacher basically told us to cheat on that – just copy and paste answers into it. We are required to do it but we don't need to."

"It's all cut and paste. Tutors don't care."

"I have found, on the level 1 course, the teachers aren't enforcing literally anything. You can turn up for lessons when you want. People were literally not turning up and there were no repercussions for it. I have jumped from level 1 to level 3 and the difference is total."



An Organisation for Promoting
Understanding of Society

OPUS - An Organisation for Promoting Understanding of Society is an educational charity (no. 282415) founded in 1975 to promote understanding of society. It encourages reflective citizenship as a way for people to take more personal and collective responsibility for the common good – through active involvement in society and its institutions, rather than self-interested behaviour.

OPUS provides a combination of education, training, academic research, publication, public events and organisational consultancy. Its Listening Post methodology is now in regular use in over 30 countries around the world.

www.opus.org.uk

Sandy Henderson is an organisational consultant, researcher, coach, writer and former City law firm partner. He was the Director of OPUS from 2016-2019.

sandy@thinking-aloud.com

Published February 2020

The Further Education Trust for Leadership

Website: www.fetl.org.uk

Email: enquiries@fetl.org.uk

[@FETforL](https://twitter.com/FETforL)