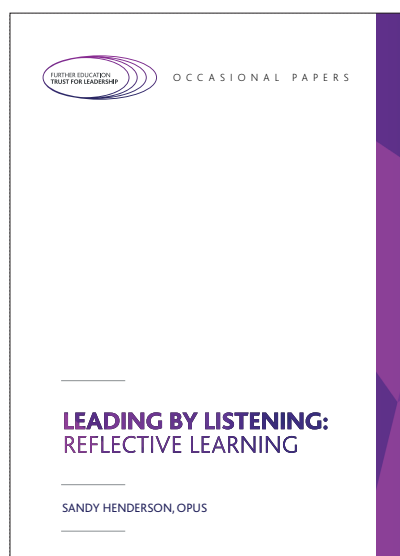


What do FE staff and students really think?

New research published by FETL offers a snapshot of further education based on the views of the people who work and study in the sector

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



There is a great deal of talk about what further education leaders, staff and students think and need, but it is rare that their views are presented directly, without filter or varnish. This new set of papers, written by Sandy Henderson of educational charity OPUS, and funded and published by the Further Education Trust for Leadership (FETL), aims to redress the balance.

Leading by listening: Reflective learning was commissioned in 2019 to assess the mood and wellbeing of the FE sector in England – to provide a 'snapshot' reflecting the thoughts, concerns and preoccupations of a community of people at a particular moment in time.

The project used the 'listening post' methodology, a research tool that seeks to 'surface' the unspoken assumptions that frame people's understanding of how a system or organisation functions. It began with a group discussion, based around participants' experiences in further education, the transcripts of which were then analysed for 'themes and patterns that speak for the whole sector' and 'unconsciously express some of the characteristics of the wider system to which that group belongs'. Between June and November 2019, some 33 Listening Posts were conducted in the FE sector.

FETL President Dame Ruth Silver said: 'This is a unique study, and a highly fascinating and valuable one, which the Further Education Trust for Leadership (FETL) has been delighted to fund and publish. It provides a snapshot of where the further education community is at this moment and gives voice to the concerns of sector leaders, teachers, support staff and students.'

'Giving the people working in further education a space in which to think and elaborate their ideas and preoccupations provided, of course, the rationale for setting up FETL in the first place; for that reason, we have been especially pleased to support OPUS, and Sandy Henderson, who has led the project, in listening to the sector and sharing the results. 'The project provides us with direct access to what is going on among communities of people involved in the everyday delivery of teaching and learning. This is welcome indeed.'

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