Post-14 Local Educational Partnership Leaders: a study of characteristics and role perceptions

Jacqueline Hargis

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Sheffield Hallam University
for the degree of Doctor of Education

November 2015

Post-14 Local Educational Partnership Leaders: a study of characteristics and role perceptions

This study aims to develop an understanding of professionals who are employed in a lead role in Local Educational Partnerships (LEPs). They co-ordinate the work of schools, further education colleges and other organisations committed to working in partnership. The focus is on LEPs that operate in a locality such as a town or district to offer post-14 education.

The research adopts a case study methodology in order to:

- profile the characteristics of LEP leaders
- examine the ways in which LEP leaders perceive their role
- explore whether, and how, the professional background and experience of a LEP leader influences the way in which they understand their role.

The study is centred on 6 LEP leaders, but includes data gathered from a wider group of 30 participants. The data from two phases covers the period April 2012 - April 2013. The first phase involved the 6 participants and used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. In phase two a further questionnaire was developed which culminated in an additional 30 responses.

The study uses a theoretical framework developed from Paul Ricoeur's narrative and personal identity theories (1991a; 1992), that explore 'what I am', 'why I do the job' and 'what I do as a leader'. Consideration is given to the notion of authenticity which is conceived of as a behaviour that relates to personal identity and is concerned with being accountable to 'others' as a partnership leader.

What emerges is that the leadership role is situated within a changing and fragile partnership environment. Professional background and personal experience help to constitute and generate understanding and actions based on personal beliefs and moral endeavour. Those taking on the role are well qualified, and most have leadership and management qualifications, although these do not necessarily relate to working in partnership. There is an overall sense of doing the role to benefit others rather than a focus on reputation and career development.

Whilst the study is illuminative, it concludes that partnerships and LEP leaders are in many ways unique. Their aims are often about bringing resources and choices to young people in a locality, as well as those that work in the partnership and the partner institutions.

GLOSSARY

Abbreviation	Meaning
[]	Used to indicate my interpretation
{}	Used to indicate my reflection
(A) (B) (C) (D) (E) (F)	Participant indicators
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Professional Development
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfE	Department for Education
EdD	Educational Doctorate
EFA	Education Funding Agency
ESF	European Social Funding
FE	Further Education
IFP	Increased Flexibility Project
IQ	Interview Question
LA / LEA	Local Authority / Local Education Authority
LEP	Local Educational Partnership
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
RPA	Raising Participation Age
RQ	Research Question
QA	Quality Assurance
SEP	Schools Engagement Programme
SFA	Skills Funding Agency
SQ	Sub Question
YA	Young Apprenticeships
YPLA	Young Peoples' Learning Agency

FIGURES

Number	Title	Page
2.1	Training initiatives encouraging delivery collaboration	14
3.1	Points of power within partnership	35
5.1	Design procedure for mixed data collection	82
5.2	The sample composition	85
5.3	Profile of participants (n=6)	86
5.4	Example of structure relationship between research and interview questions	89
5.5	Phase 2 respondent sample total	92
5.6	Summary of returns to phase 2 questionnaire	93
5.7	Captured data analysis	95
5.8	Visual display of analysis phases	97
5.9	Approach to re-storying data	99
5.10	Actions taken to demonstrate rigour	100
6.1	Work Experience of LEP leaders	116
6.2	Leaders with teaching related qualifications	117
6.3	Highest level of qualification held by LEP leaders	117
6.4	Previous work experience	118
6.5	Length of time in current LEP leader role	119
6.6	Gender and age profile of the study population	119
6.7	Comparison of previous LEP leader experience	120
6.8	Leaders with leadership and management qualifications	120
6.9	Leadership and management qualifications by type	121
6.10	Leadership and management experience by sector	122
6.11	Descriptors used in job titles	124
6.12	Work activities	133
6.13	Years of partnership existence	134
6.14	Involvement in policy or research funded work	138

CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	2
Glossary	3
Figures	4
Chapter 1: **INTRODUCTION**	8
1.1 Purpose of the study	8
1.2 Research approach	9
1.3 The researcher	10
1.4 The structure of the study	11
Chapter 2: **THE CONTEXT: POST-14 PARTNERSHIPS**	13
2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 Historical vocational initiatives	13
2.3 Changing government policy	15
2.4 Summary	20
Chapter 3: **LITERATURE REVIEW**	22
3.1 Introduction	22
3.2 The partnership environment	22
3.3 Representation of partnership leader role	28
3.4 What is involved in being a LEP leader	31
3.4.1 Managing aims, accountability and communication	32
3.4.2 Managing power, building trust and membership structures	34
3.4.3 Leadership and appropriate working processes	38
3.5 The influence of personal background on the role	41
3.6 Summary	43
Chapter 4: **THEORISING LEADERS' IDENTITIES**	46
4.1 Introduction	46
4.2 Identity	47
4.3 A summary of Paul Ricoeur's narrative related personal identity	49
4.4 Situating Ricoeur's theory	54

4.5 Authenticity and identity 62
4.6 Identity situated in partnership 66
4.7 Summary 69

Chapter 5: **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY** 72
5.1 Introduction 72
5.2 Philosophical and methodological underpinnings 73
5.3 Research strategy 75
5.3.1 The case study 76
5.3.2 Mixed methods 79
5.4 The pilot study 81
5.5 Process 81
5.6 Ethical considerations 83
5.7 Data collection and sampling 84
5.7.1 Phase 1 – Sampling strategy (n=6) 85
5.7.2 Phase 1 – Participant questionnaire 86
5.7.3 Semi-structured interviews 87
5.7.4 Interview questions 88
5.7.5 Prioritising activity 89
5.7.6 Digital recordings 91
5.7.7 Phase 2 – Sampling strategy (n=30) 91
5.7.8 Phase 2 - Respondent questionnaire 92
5.8 Approach to data analysis 94
5.8.1 Stages in analysis 94
5.8.2 Phase 1 – the holistic approach 96
5.8.3 Phase 2 – the theme approach 98
5.8.4 Phase 2 – quantitative data 99
5.8.5 Phase 2 – interpretation using all data sets 99
5.9 Approach to rigour 100
5.10 Limitations 102
5.11 Summary 104
Chapter 6: **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION** 105
6.1 Introduction 105

6.2 Profile and identity of LEP leaders 106
6.2.1 Who I am 111
6.2.2 What I do as a leader 133
6.2.3 Why I do the job 154
6.3 Emerging themes 160
6.4 Summary 163
Chapter 7: **CONCLUSION** 164
7.1 Introduction 164
7.2 Overview of analysis 164
7.3 Future research considerations 171
7.4 Summary 172
Word count 175
Chapter 8: **BIBLIOGRAPHY** 176
Chapter 9: **APPENDICES** 188

Chapter 1: **INTRODUCTION**

I embarked on the journey of studying for the Educational Doctorate (EdD) programme primarily to continue my own learning. During early assignments I started to reflect on my working experiences, and when it came to deciding on what to research I found myself thinking around what was at the time, a key topic of partnership in the delivery of 14-19 policy reforms. I had experience of various roles that were touched by the reforms, and engaged with many people who worked at a range of levels to achieve local 14-19 implementation. I became very aware of a group of people that worked in a leadership capacity on behalf of Local Educational Partnerships (LEPs), who seemed to work tirelessly across different organisations, and some that I worked alongside, did at times confide in me, or seek guidance on matters that concerned them. The focus of this study emerges from an interest in how the LEP leader role is enacted.

1.1 **Purpose of the study**

When I started the EdD I was a civil servant with responsibility for developing and engaging with educational partnerships and had also taken on overall co-ordination of partnerships within a Local Authority (LA). It was during this time that I became involved with LEP leaders who worked on behalf of partnerships with varying structures, sizes and histories. Part of my role was to bring the LEP leaders together to inform them of any emerging policies, funding streams and other topical news. Another aspect of the role was to organise and collate feedback from the partnerships for the county steering group. Through both county level operational meetings, and individual meetings, I became aware that there could be tensions that related to the different backgrounds of LEP leaders. Because not all LEP leaders have the same experience, their ability to conduct some tasks was called into question, this was the prompt to find out more about the backgrounds of LEP leaders.

From a preliminary literature review it became clear that studies acknowledged a competent leader who could nurture a partnership, as essential if a partnership is going to progress collaboration (Noaks Moreton and Williamson 2004; Edem Spencer and Flyfield 2003). The review also revealed that leading collaborative initiatives is not necessarily a comfortable or rewarding experience (Vangen and Huxham 2003b). However, the published research tends to focus on the partnership, with leadership considered within the organisations that are participating in a partnership rather than leadership of the partnership. The LEP leader type role tends to be mentioned as a peripheral issue to the topic of partnership (Lumby 2009). This study is conducted with the aim of contributing to knowledge about those that work as LEP leaders, giving a voice to some individuals and colleagues that take on the role.

1.2 **Research approach**

The research is based on a case study and uses mixed methods, which may be seen as being in two halves, because of the use of quantitative data drawn from questionnaires, and the interpretive approach taken for looking at the construction of personal identity. My reasoning for the approach is covered in the research methodology described in Chapter 5.

The study is underpinned by personal identity theory and to the consideration of temporality - the past, present and future that feature in the narrative approach of Paul Ricoeur. The objectives are to:

- profile the characteristics of LEP leaders
- examine the ways in which LEP leaders perceive their role
- explore whether, and how, the professional background and experience of a LEP leader influences the way in which they understand their role.

The Research Questions (RQs) are:

1. What type of professional takes on a leader role on behalf of LEPs?
2. In what ways do LEP leads draw on their prior professional experience in undertaking their role with organisations in the partnership?
3. How do LEP leaders feel about themselves in the role?
4. What do leaders see as the opportunities and challenges of the role, and how do they construct their responses to these?

The study investigates the perceptions of 6 LEP leaders – (the participants), which is extended to a larger sample of 30 LEP leaders – (the on-line questionnaire respondents).

1.3 **The researcher**

The adopted research approach, with its strong emphasis on identity, means that the researcher is also the research instrument, heavily invested in both understanding and interpretation. This is described by Usher (1996) as a double hermeneutic because both the subject (the researcher) and the object (other people) of the research have the same characteristics, being both interpreters and sense seekers. It is therefore important to explore how my biography informs my positionality and motivations.

I applied to study for an EdD in 2007, shortly after being successful in finding a new job and relocating. For the previous 20 years I had worked in Further Education (FE) colleges, and for most of those years I had held management positions, culminating in Acting Principal charged with taking a college through its final stages of merger and last Ofsted inspection. In my new role as a Partnership Manager, my FE sector experience was invaluable, but I missed the college environment, particularly the planning and monitoring responsibilities which brought such intellectual stimulus and engagement with staff in the college and the wider sector.

Having always engaged in learning of some kind, I turned to studying again, and felt that the EdD would be an important learning opportunity for me, one where I would continue to learn about the sector I worked in, learn about myself, and develop new skills. I wanted the chance to learn more about educational research, to be in an environment that would enable me to meet similar minded people, and provide the opportunity to observe and take part in stimulating and thought provoking debate.

Before working in FE colleges I had worked in administrative roles in industry. I was brought up in a family with a strong work ethic, which is part of my identity. I studied for my higher level qualifications at the same time as working, and leads to my belief that we continue to develop and learn throughout life, but that this fact is not always recognised, particularly in the credit qualification system we have. I also believe that there is more than one way to achieve, and that as part of lifelong learning choices should be available to all. Wanting to continue my own development is connected to a personal need to prove myself. The study by Biesta and Tedder (2008) concludes that people learn from their lives, building identities based on their ideas of what a good life should look like, and so for me, this study forms part of my ongoing identity.

1.4 **The structure of the study**

The study is structured into nine chapters. They are as follows:

- Chapter 2 gives an outline of the historical context of post-14 partnerships, based on government policies. The justification for setting the context is that the role is situated in partnerships, that can have formal or informal arrangements, but either way has a place in education policy.

- Chapter 3 is the literature review and it concludes that there is limited research available on those that work as LEP leaders whereas much more is known about the viability of partnerships and the leaders of organisations involved in partnership.
- Chapter 4 discusses theories of identity in relation to leaders, with a main focus on Ricoeur's work on personal identity, constituting the main theoretical underpinning of the research.
- Chapter 5 outlines and justifies my research methodology, and describes the sampling and data collection instruments, followed by the approach taken to data analysis, interpretation and rigour.
- Chapter 6 provides an overview of the analysis and structures the findings to take account of the literature review conclusions, the environment of partnership, and illustrates the characteristics of a LEP leader, within a theoretical framework of identity.
- Chapter 7 brings the study to a conclusion by providing an overview of the analysis and future research considerations.

In this first chapter I have sketched the background to this study and included a biography because of the significance placed on the researcher being an instrument. In the following chapter I will outline the context from which post-14 partnerships have emerged in light of government policies.

Chapter 2: **THE CONTEXT: POST-14 PARTNERSHIPS**

2.1 **Introduction**

The purpose in including a section on context is to recognise that, a desire for schools to take account of wider engagement in their communities, or the world of work, is not new. Secondly, over the last four decades there has been a range of initiatives primarily aimed at offering a vocational education to young people still at school, involving other providers such as FE colleges. The following is intended to highlight partnership or collaboration across the school and college sectors rather than an exhaustive account of curriculum policies and changes.

2.2 **Historical vocational initiatives**

'New vocationalism' emerged in the 1970s from White Papers which led to a range of initiatives that attracted additional funding. Hodgson and Spours (2003) define the mid-1970s to mid-1980s as a period characterised by initiatives for the young unemployed, offering an alternative to GCE O and A levels. Figure 2.1 summarises, in alphabetical order, government funded initiatives from the 1980s up to the introduction of 14-19 diplomas, which encouraged schools and other providers, such as FE colleges to work together.

Schemes listed in Figure 2.1 were about providing young people with a perspective on a range of employment, and envisaged public support representing the world of work, local communities, and active partnerships (Coffey 1989). Local Education Authorities (LEAs) engaged in the training initiatives, often with an employee taking on a leader type role to manage the project, such as developing and leading bids as was the case in the wider Education Action Zone (EAZ) initiative launched in 1998.

Acronym and full title	Brief description	Time period
CPVE Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education	A mixture of academic, vocational preparation, life skills and work experience, to assist transition from school to adulthood. Initially through FE colleges and then schools.	1985-1991
DVE Diploma of Vocational Education	Successor to CPVE, a more occupational focus and offered in a three level framework starting at age 14.	1991-1992
GNVQs General National Vocational Qualification	Successor to CPVE and DVE offering an overview of occupations. Delivered in schools and colleges. Awarding Bodies promoted networking/collaboration (1995/6)	1992-2007
TVEI Technical and Vocational Education Initiative	Courses with technological and business application for 14-18 year olds. Local level development with emphasis on collaborative/consortia working. Schools have opportunity to bid for funding from the Manpower Services Commission for the first time. Available to all secondary schools (1987).	1983-1997
YTS Youth Training Scheme Renamed Youth Training (1990)	One year course created to dovetail with TVEI integrating job training and work experience as part of vocational routes for 14-18 year olds. Extended to two years in 1986	1983-1995

Figure 2.1: Training initiatives encouraging delivery collaboration (Bell and Jones 2002; Broadfoot 1986; Wright and Oancea 2006; Yeomans 1998)

EAZ was intended to encourage a mix of partnership types, being more than the collaborative delivery schemes in Figure 2.1. The government had an aspiration of wanting effective relations that shared development actions at a local level, envisaging partnerships of secondary and primary schools, working with social services, health and youth offending teams. EAZ funding was phased out after five years, as reviews found that whilst partners did share objectives, in practice, defining how to achieve the objectives proved difficult and the competitive context undermined attempts at collaboration, rather schools saw EAZ as a way of getting additional funding (Cardini 2006; Reid and Brain 2003). TVEI on the other hand, had a more local focus and the review by Yeomans (1998) found outstanding work, allowing a variety of curricula to be constructed, offering the possibility of development according to local needs.

The evidence is that government policy has recognised the need for other options to engage some young people in learning, which takes account of local communities, but it has been reliant on short-term funded initiatives. The TVEI findings illustrate what can be successfully achieved at a local level, in a period which Hodgson and Spours (2003) describe as a 'two track system', where local innovation was often led by individual teachers, schools and colleges. From 1991-2000 local innovation in curriculum and qualifications diminished and according to Hodgson and Spours the reason was because of the 'national triple-track' qualification system being developed in line with the White Paper Education and Training for the 21st Century (DES 1991). The following section looks at the implication of changing government policy in relation to collaboration.

2.3 **Changing government policy**

A significant change in government policy saw the introduction of Curriculum 2000 and from the criteria for evaluation developed by Hodgson and Spours (2003), it was suggested that it would require 'collaborative institutional capacity building' to improve the offer and 'development of local connective learning systems' shaped by collective local needs rather than institutional self-interest in the longer term. In my experience, this was a time where secondary schools with small sixth forms and a local FE college began to consider a 'local offer' and agree where small numbers would not be viable unless 'learners were shared'. The informal arrangements were often out of financial necessity and the partnership agreement was mainly about having a workable timetable.

A resurgence in partnerships starts around 2002. The Green Paper 14-19: extending opportunities and raising standards (DfES 2002) emphasised collaboration between schools and colleges by giving greater status to vocational qualifications from age 14 onwards, encouraging a broader curriculum including citizenship and work-related study. In the Regional Learning Partnerships, established in 1999 to support strategy and collaboration between providers, Briggs (2008) found 'nested' local voluntary 14-19 groupings working collaboratively on education provision. The flexible concept was to offer personalised learning and pathways to progression, anticipating an increase in collaboration between schools, colleges and employers (Hodgson and Spours 2003; Pring 2005). Again the government started to fund initiatives that offered young people a choice to study with other training providers for part of the school week. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC)[1], who funded post-16 education, was given the remit to implement a range of learning programmes for 14 year-olds, which meant funding was not guaranteed, and required annual bids. Evolving from the introduction of the Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education, the launch of the Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) in 2002 was expected to link the learning to everyday life experiences (Pring 2005). IFP lasted five years, relying on post-16 vocational providers running local programmes in partnership with schools, enabling 14 year-olds to study level 2 qualifications in subjects such as hair and beauty and electrical

[1]Skills Funding Agency and YPLA from April 2010

installation. The continued short-term situation is further illustrated in these initiatives.

Beginning in 2003 Pathfinders emphasised choice and flexibility, clear 14-19 progression routes, increases in the amount and quality of work-related learning and opportunities to experience enterprise activity. Institutional collaboration was seen as key to achievement of many of these objectives, especially in the crucial area of increasing choice and flexibility in curriculum pathways and offering another funding stream for partnership working. In reviewing Pathfinders, Higham and Yeomans (2010) found responses were dynamic and took account of local contextual factors, institutional values and showed interests which changed over time. During this period two more initiatives started, Key Stage 4 School Engagement Programme (SEP) and Young Apprenticeships (YA), administered by the LSC until the funding ceased in the 2010-11 period.

SEP offered a personalised programme to 14/15 year-olds, who were showing signs of dis-engagement with school, placing emphasis on the development of personal, social, vocational and key skills within a work-focused setting. SEP involved colleges and private training providers designing programmes for identified local needs, offered to schools with whom they worked in partnership. The YA scheme, involved pupils spending up to one day a week learning vocational skills and gaining experience of 50 days in the work place, leading to an industry recognised level 2 qualification. This was on top of subjects in the core national curriculum, so pupils still had a balanced curriculum. Both programmes aimed to provide wider choice for 14 year-olds with reliance on the expertise of post-16 providers. Through my own experience I know that local partnerships were involved, with funding channelled through a host institution rather than the partnership, in which LEP leaders were often the conduit to schools in their partnerships. These initiatives, as with those summarised in Figure 2.1, reinforce the point that the government recognised a need for a more vocational choice of curriculum for young people. The evidence is that vocationally related curriculum has benefits, but there has been a lack of consistent funding, and short-term initiative overload, in which collaboration and partnerships are expected to work. Within the same time frame there is also the key change introduced, planning for a wider post-14 curriculum, suggesting that lessons from the vocational initiatives for post-14 would be taken into account.

The White Paper 14-19: Opportunity and Excellence (DfES 2003) set out the intention to develop a new phase in 14-19 education. Central to the reforms was that young people were offered greater choice of what and where to study with an expectation that attendance could be at more than one provider hence the need for, and the promotion of, collaboration between schools and post-16 providers. This phase in 14-19 education relied on implicit structures of partnerships to develop and deliver the remodelled curriculum. Vocational specialist schools were introduced and required to play a role in partnerships and collaborate in diploma developments. The policies all had a focus on inter-agency working to achieve a coherent curriculum offer that would meet the need of each individual young person (Briggs 2008). Guidance on membership of partnerships came much later on in the 14-19 Partnerships and Planning document (DCSF 2009) and inferred that partnership is where LAs and other agencies such as Connexions and the LSC work with each other on 14-19 reforms at a county, city or regional level. In my experience partnership or collaboration is often used to describe a collection of schools, colleges and other interested organisations that are within a geographical district. A phased approach to the diplomas started with the introduction of the first lines in 2008. After the change of government in 2010, the planned roll-out of the policy to a full entitlement ceased, and by 2012 support for diplomas had been withdrawn.

Formally, the requirement for a 2013 learner entitlement, and the duties to co-operate with relevant partners, was repealed as part of the Education Bill (2010-11). Greater emphasis is given to competition between providers, with the academies programme and the introduction of Free and Studio Schools. Vocational qualifications for those learners at school became the subject of a review by Professor Wolf from which all recommendations were accepted by the government. The Wolf Report (2011) includes one statement relating to partnership work which is:

> "... innovation and flexibility should apply ... and encourage many more locally-based partnerships" (p 142-3).

The notion of more locally-based partnerships would seem to be in line with the move towards the broader policy of empowered communities, which Hodgson and Spours (2012) describe as 'laissez faire localism' in which schools have a significant role to play, and the freedom to contribute to the local community. Hodgson and Spours (2012) also highlight there are implications of institutional arrangements for those who work in partnerships, in an environment of 'different and competing versions of localism', in which LAs engage via partnerships in a degree of 14-19 planning which can lead to collaboration and competition between providers.

By 2013 the Wolf recommendation to allow colleges to recruit 14 year-olds directly commenced, taken forward by four of the 283 eligible colleges. In 2014 another model was introduced, the Careers College Trust initiative again targeting 14-19 year-olds, offering specific vocational training, linked to work place experiences. The Careers Colleges are in addition to the 17 new build University Technical Colleges and 18 Studio Schools. The main difference is that a Careers College has a separate governing body, but is expected to be housed within an existing institution, such as a college or a consortium of small businesses providing dedicated hubs for younger students (Exley 2014). Although there appears to be new routes for post-14 progression, the review by Hodgson and Spours (2014) recommends that collaboration between all 14-19 providers should be rebuilt because of the changing policies which would suggest that there is a need for support of local partnerships, including encouragement for schools and colleges to work together, as was envisaged by the DfE in its positive for youth policy (2011).

2.4 **Summary**

Funding has been the incentive for engagement of schools, colleges and other providers to develop a wider choice of learning opportunities for young people. Little is written about those that take the lead in writing the bid, or who project manage successful bids, other than employees of LAs in some instances.

Reviews and evaluations of initiatives indicate that there are positive outcomes at the level of local partnerships/collaborations. In particular, the ability of TVEI and SEP experiences to respond to local needs with innovative curriculum, and the EAZ findings that local informal partnerships can reach agreement and develop more quickly than those looking for a wider range of partners. However, Jones and Bird (2000) found that a simplistic view of partnership can overlook the conflicts of influence and management and the impact of inequalities of power and resources among partners.

The landscape for secondary schools and colleges continues to be one of change, particularly with the introduction of new colleges aimed at 14 year-olds. It remains to be seen as to whether partnerships will emerge, survive or disband as financial incentives decline. Some partnerships will remain in the short-term because of the need to continue to deliver shared provision such as A levels. The implications for LEPs and their appointed leaders is an unstable and fragile environment, especially where partnerships operate at different levels, and in some instances been have formed to engage in funding opportunities and for viability of numbers to retain sixth forms. A key point from an historical context is that partnerships, formal or informal, have had a place in educational policy. In the meantime, there remain people employed to work as leaders on behalf of LEPs and I believe we should learn more about them and the role they do.

Chapter 3: **LITERATURE REVIEW**

3.1 **Introduction**

The main purpose of this study is to contribute to existing knowledge, to understand more about the individual that takes on a partnership leader role, and whether their background has any influence on how they understand their role. This chapter reviews current research and knowledge in the area of partnership leaders. Using the style of a narrative review, the intention is to provide what Slavin (1986) describes as a best evidence synthesis that can take account of the experience of practitioners and lead to an illuminative evaluation.

The overarching question for the literature review is: "what existing knowledge is there that might be able to inform, or be the basis for understanding the role of the leader of a Local Educational post-14 Partnership (LEP)?" I will review relevant studies under two themes: firstly, on the nature of partnerships within post-14 education and the wider public sector, to gain an understanding of the environment that a leader might be working in; and secondly, on what is involved in being a LEP leader. I will then synthesise and summarise the emerging findings of the review to inform and support the analysis of data and subsequent findings.

3.2 **The partnership environment**

This review starts by discussing partnerships as the context for the LEP leader role. LEP leaders themselves are bounded by structures, organisations and role requirements determined by the environment in which they work – factors that are not of their own making. It is clear from the literature that partnerships have been part of the tapestry of education in all sectors in recent years. According to Hodgson and Spours (2015) local responsiveness is an important feature, and so LEPs can be seen as part of a broader socio-political shift in which relationships between institutions have achieved prominence. For example, during 2010-12 partnerships showed resilience in dealing with the national context of changing policy and uncertain funding, and from 2013 onwards there is evidence of collaboration being rebuilt, especially to support progression and guidance (Hodgson and Spours 2013).

The longevity and makeup of partnerships can be varied, because of the history of the partnership or its relevance to government policy at any given time. The different and complex environments within a partnership will clearly impact on someone working as a leader on behalf of a partnership. Government philosophy for the public and private sectors is to encourage partnership working, but reliance on partnerships appears in the mid-1990s (DfES 2003; Huxham and Vangen 2000a) especially with the introduction of Learning Partnerships in 1999 (Jones and Bird 2000), and peaking by 2009 with the implementation of the 14-19 reforms (Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007; Haynes and Lynch 2012). Different policies during the period have seen partnerships disappear, emerge or carry on evolving in response to policy change. This often occurs in local areas where the partnerships do not have any power other than moral authority, and where funding and inspection policies create tensions with any attempts that are made to meet the needs of local communities (Fletcher and Perry 2008). Particularly relevant to this study is the evidence found on partnership fragmentation, such as schools in partnerships joining the academy programme (Hodgson and Spours 2015).

Because partnerships evolve in response to government policies there are a range of definitions of what actually constitutes a partnership, and this ambiguity crosses all sectors of education (Glatter 2003; McQuaid 2000). However, there are common findings that relate to the changing dynamics, purpose and workings within partnerships, especially those working to respond to external frameworks of government policies. For those working in the partnership environment, studies show that the external influence of government policies can also lead to movement in the partnership, to changing membership, policy and job changes (Huxham and Vangen 2000b; McQuaid 2000).

Partnership working may be seen as a way of making efficiency gains or for attracting additional funding or resources, but this can bring tensions around roles and responsibilities, competing priorities, communication, professional and agency cultures and management (Atkinson et al 2002; Briggs 2008). Research suggests that it is important to consider relationships and rationales for being in partnership. Hopkins Higham and Ahtaridou (2009) identify that it is beneficial to have a clear understanding of each person's role in the collaboration so that there can be trust between the professional institutions. Research conducted by Briggs (2008) includes the assertion that:

> "... there must be strong incentives for the partnership leaders to collaborate ..." (p19),

and this is a view supported by other research. Lumby (2009) points out that organisations in partnership often use the relationship as a convenience to access resources that are not otherwise available to them, retaining a focus on their own institutional goals.

The evidence suggests that in practice it is not easy to satisfy, or reconcile, all differences in organisations attempting to work in collaboration and some do fail in meeting expectations for many reasons (Eden and Huxham 2001). Within the post-14 school sector, there is frequent reference to the tension faced by individual institutions and the partnership through the government policies that lead to competition and co-operation (Briggs 2009; Hodgson and Spours 2006). Specific barriers have been identified, and these include building and maintaining the spirit of collaboration and relationships (Vangen and Huxham 2003a; Huxham and Vangen

2004). The failure to meet expectations is often attributed to a lack of trust and vulnerability because of competing issues of funding and working with hidden agendas or even political manoeuvring and interference (Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007).

Many studies have identified and explored issues of power and trust, in some cases it is recognised that it is not necessary for all partners to have equal power, for example where some partners are engaged in a supporting capacity as has been evident in some educational partnerships. On the other hand it is argued that power can be seen as a way of enhancing a joint endeavour by empowering others (Huxham and Vangen 2005; McQuaid 2000; Wallace 1998). For example Webb and Vulliamy (2001) found that co-operation could be differentiated as being strong with school-focussed workers and yet expectations dependent on working with external agency workers did not always meet those expectations. Not only does the research focus on partner differences, implications for leadership of partner institutions are also identified, particularly in relation to determining effectiveness.

The effectiveness of partnership leadership is recognised as being difficult to define, not least because it is context specific, time bound and politically driven (Collinson and Collinson 2007; Rost 1993). However, in a broad sense the leadership displayed across the partnership is viewed as a mutual, collaborative process concerned with empowering followers, endorsed by professionals involved in partnerships (Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007). There is some evidence on how leaders use politics to pursue the aims of collaboration, which place importance on the need for partner leaders to demonstrate expertise. In modelling school based collaborations Coleman (2011) builds on the relationship management and agenda setting of Huxham and Vangen (2005), finding that political leadership involves a macro level where there is a need to understand national policy, which leads to a mezzo level whereby the relationship involves both operational and strategic dialogue between partners so that at a micro level, to achieve co-operation, individual relationships can be built that take account of historical context.

In the main, studies on partnerships are either evidence-based research, or government department commissioned evaluation studies, and focus on topics such as leadership, from the perspective of the institutions that are partners. An example of this is the literature on changing personnel in partnerships. It is generally considered that a new partner leader can have a strong influence and may change the dynamics in the partnership. Studies have explored how partnership leaders deal with new organisational leaders or partnership members, finding that they recognise the importance of an introduction to the partnership and so develop supportive activities and take steps to empower new representatives (Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007; Higham and Yeomans 2010; Hodgson and Spours 2006). Several of the texts identify that the change of leader in a partner institution, or in the individual representing an institution at meetings and working groups, can have a negative impact on the work of the partnership. For example, a new leader can distance the institution from the partnership taking on an internal focus to deal with other priorities such as performance (Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007; Sloper 2004). Other research found that a change of representative was a main threat to effective collaboration, particularly where an individual showed a strong allegiance to their organisation which worked against the partnership, or putting their professional interests first and so becoming a barrier (Noaks Moreton and Williamson 2004). So, the change in leaders and staff from partner institutions is recognised as being a dynamic that brings unknown impacts, regardless of the time spent on supporting and introducing them to the partnership.

Studies often look for evidence of effectiveness by measuring the strength of collaboration in the partnership and point to tension resulting from policy change (Hodgson and Spours 2006). There is also the problem that success can be measured in many ways, and in particular can be related to the individual organisation rather than the partnership. This is evident in the case of schools and their engagement with external agencies (Lumby 2009; Webb and Vullimay 2001). Within the school and college sectors, there is the political pressure to achieve good inspection grades and tension arises when performance data from a single institution influences the partnership (Sloper 2004). A further dimension exists within schools, of public perception and together with inspection results, are a main priority. The importance of partnership work, which in some cases is to offer choice and wider opportunities for young people is more difficult to define and does not feature as part of inspection and so partnership or leadership effectiveness in terms of its benefits to young people is rather difficult to determine.

Identified in this section is that there are many texts covering research into partnerships that help in exploring the environment in which a LEP leader is situated. So far I have highlighted that the partnerships themselves are both complex and ambiguous, formed for a variety of purposes and often described as unstable environments. However, common purposes for working together are important, with an opportunity to draw additional funding being the most significant motivator, followed by adding value to partners, such as material resources. There is strong evidence that changes within institution partners have an impact on the stability of the partnership. It is clear that how partnerships are formed and structured has a bearing as to how co-ordinators are able to engage at the strategic and operational levels within single institutions in the partnership (Noaks Moreton and Williamson 2004). The key point is that partnerships are ever changing in nature and that collaborations are rarely static. I have also found that there has been a limited amount of research conducted that gives an insight to LEP leaders. The next section of the review focuses on how a partnership leader is represented in relevant research.

3.3 **Representation of a partnership leader role**

In studies of partnership leadership, there tends to be a focus on looking with a single organisational perspective at those participating in partnership rather than the partnership as a whole. Studies suggest that effective partnership may be facilitated by a strong chair or co-ordinator, or where partners take a shared leadership role with joint responsibility for outcomes (Briggs 2008; Rodger et al 2003; Rudd et al 2004). In essence most studies focus on how leadership operates at a strategic level. Few studies look at how a leader is appointed and then acts on behalf of the partnership, although some studies do acknowledge the role as a collective resource (Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007; Briggs 2009). And so there is little about those tasked with leading or working on behalf of a partnership (Noaks Moreton and Williamson 2004; Huxham and Vangen 2005). This study seeks to make an original contribution to this neglected area, taking account of the fact that in the literature it is not always clear whether the role is being researched as one of working on behalf of the partnership or as the representative of an organisation in the partnership (Hodgson and Spours undated).

Of the texts reviewed that recognise the LEP leader role, it is variously described as a post-14 leader, manager, co-ordinator or facilitator (Briggs 2009; Higham and Yeomans 2010). The co-ordinator role that Briggs (2008) identifies is the closest fit with the leader role in this study, where leadership may fall to a trusted impartial co-ordinator. Not only does the review show the role is acknowledged and helpful to partnerships, some studies have also found that when a co-ordinator leaves the post it can bring fragility to the partnership (Noaks Moreton and Williamson 2004). From the studies reviewed there are some in which the role of a co-ordinator or facilitator is regarded by the partners as a *shared resource*, primarily with the purpose of identifying and pulling together different services undertaken by a range of professionals with different backgrounds and specialisms (Sloper 2004). An alternative perspective focuses on the ways in which a leader can create an effective partnership by demonstrating strong and effective leadership (Hodgson and Spours 2006), in other words it is often indicating that such an appointment has helped (Glatter and Kydd 2003; Stanton 2008).

The degree to which the role is seen in relation to effectiveness varies. There is some evidence that successful collaboration is linked to key individuals, such as the senior level appointment of a co-ordinator. This may be particularly important when implementing government projects with Noaks Moreton and Williamson (2004) finding that co-ordinators were "crucial to implementation .... keeping everyone positive" (p6), and highlighting that where effective partnership working and progress of collaboration has been found, an early appointment of a co-ordinator is a factor (Edem Spencer and Fyfield 2003). Effectiveness also relies on a dependency on their performance in such tasks as responding to needs of the local strategy (Noaks Moreton and Williamson 2004), offering strong and effective leadership and co-ordination (Hodgson and Spours 2006) and demonstrating continuous effort to sustain trust (Vangen and Huxham 2003b).

Research indicates that the status of the role is also important, indicating that the level is relational to the influence the leader may have. Not only is it suggested that the appointment will be at a senior level, but will also require management experience with an ability to demonstrate commitment to partnership working. If the LEP leader role is a senior appointment, it would seem to follow that working at the strategic and operational levels is appropriate given that most schools in partnerships align second or third-tier middle manager roles to act as co-ordinators in representing the school in any partnership (Briggs 2008; Lumby 2009; Ribbins and Gunter 2002).

Studies such as Noaks Moreton and Williamson (2004) recognise that the role will need to operate at different levels, and that it will also be with different people in more than one institution, which is described by Huxham and Vangen (2004) as leadership enactment, being a shift from the traditional hierarchical central leadership, because of the need to have mechanisms in place to meet outcomes of the collaboration. A partnership leader in a leadership enactment framework is recognised as a resource, and is engaged in the process which involves delivery of collaborative activities and reporting to member organisations, especially when some of the structures and processes are externally imposed. From this perspective, the partnership leader does not lead from a formal position of power, but has a focus on practicalities. This situation recognises the need to deal with issues at a specific time. Studies have found that this can mean informal leaders will also emerge or lead to shared leadership, particularly for different areas of development within the partnership (Coleman 2011; Rost 1993; Vangen and Huxham 2003 a/b).

What emerges from this section on partnership studies is that leaders appointed to work for the partnership are often regarded as being a senior appointment, although the role has no formal power. When research considers the success or effectiveness of outcomes and achievements of partnerships the role is acknowledged as being a key factor. The complexity of partnership working also means that informal leaders can emerge depending on the nature of the work at any given time. From the LEP leader perspective the leadership is recognised as being different, and described as enactment and a process rather than in the context of typical leader/follower leadership theories. It is in the knowledge that the role is bounded by the expectations and the specific environment of the partnership that I now turn to studies that identify what the role is likely to entail.

3.4 **What is involved in being a LEP leader**

Huxham and Vangen provide the most detailed commentary on a LEP leader type role, with their work regularly identified and referred to in other studies. Whilst their research has a focus within the wider public sector, the partnerships they describe do include representatives from the education sector and explores the nature of the practice of collaboration in an attempt to account for the challenges it brings to those involved (Huxham and Vangen 2004). Not only does their research recognise partnership managers, but also the time they have spent with those in the role, and this adds credibility to their findings, a valuable starting point for exploring what is known about co-ordination roles similar to LEP leaders.

There is evidence that a key requirement of the leadership in a LEP leader type role is to demonstrate the ability to resolve contradictory pressures and deal with challenges (Glatter 2003; Huxham and Vangen 2005). The most common challenges identified by Huxham and Vangen (2004) are derived from action research spanning 15 years. This research has focused on practitioners involved in collaboration and identifies the challenges as:

- Managing Aims
- Accountability
- Managing Power
- Building Trust
- Appropriate Working Practices
- Membership Structures
- Communication
- Leadership.

Aspects of these challenges can also be found in research of others such as Armistead Pettigrew and Aves (2007) and Briggs (2008). For example Briggs (2008) identifies power and trust as dependencies and constraints, with partnership and leadership at strategic and operational levels. Each of the identified challenges cannot be taken in isolation, as studies indicate that they are themed leadership activities and associated with relationships (Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007; Beech and Huxham 2003; Huxham and Vangen 2004). In what follows I look at the literature on partnership leader activities by organising the challenges into themes and associations:

Theme:		Associations:
Managing aims	→	accountability and communication
Managing power	→	building trust and membership structures
Leadership	→	appropriate working processes.

3.4.1 **Managing aims, accountability and communication**: studies highlight the challenges that arise determining the common aims of a partnership and how this contributes to a sense of purpose (Beech and Huxham 2003). Noaks Moreton and Williamson (2004) found a key function of a co-ordinator was to achieve the cohesion of ideas from partnership members in order to bring clarity of vision. This would help in the development of objectives, and enable the partnership to transform strategy into practice. Not only is the challenge about getting agreement on aims, it is also about dealing with differing expectations, underpinned by past experiences which can often have a kind of 'folk lore' status (Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007). Sustaining motivation and having the ability to demonstrate, encourage and support others in recognising how their work is related to the aims of the partnership has also been identified in the literature (Amey 2010). Managing aims is recognised as being a day-to-day activity, aligned to the need to be prepared to deal with changes in partnership members that might unsettle the group, leading to a new forming of group members within the collaboration. This suggests that there is a need to manage any subsequent fragility and impact, be it positive or negative (Beech and Huxham 2003; Huxham and Vangen 2005).

Accountability is a broad issue that can be interpreted in many ways. Individuals representing their organisation will be accountable to their organisation and to the partnership, which in turn can mean accountability to other organisations. Priorities are likely to differ in partner organisations and at some stage be a dilemma of tolerance to activities and decisions somewhere within the partnership. Finding a solution that is agreeable can take time and needs the leader to focus on communication, both checking with and between partnership members.

Research highlights the role of communication and how important it is across all levels of work in the partnership. Effective communication is seen as being of equal significance to co-ordination in transforming strategy into delivery, and crucial to building infrastructure opportunities. The need for a co-ordinator to work on communication is part of helping teams to develop an identity, so that views can be shared, and lead to a culture of partnership working being fostered, without such an ethos professionals tend to work in parallel (Huxham and Vangen 2005; Noaks Moreton and Williamson 2004). In acting as facilitator, a co-ordinated approach is needed to encourage and demonstrate to professionals, and others, that sharing skills and expertise is beneficial to partnership progress. At the operational level, communication is also chairing, facilitating and minute taking in meetings, ie managing and organising functions so that they run efficiently, with a clear focus, as well as ensuring groups are an appropriate size and constituency, so that opportunities for decision-making are maximised (Huxham and Vangen 2005).

3.4.2 **Managing power, building trust and membership structures**: the LEP leader has to manage and share power and incrementally build trust with, and among, those involved in the membership (Huxham and Vangen 2004). The general view is that power is a non-static relationship between reputation, status and motivation, reflected in practices of influencing and negotiating how activities are carried out, continually shifting at different phases in the collaboration (Rost 1993). Huxham and Vangen (2005) identified different phases of where power happens within partnerships (Figure 3.1). The significance of the theory is that it identifies levels in relation to power related activities, recognising that all participants (members, leader, or external connections) have power at one time or another and have the option to empower themselves. In theory, the power phases could involve a LEP leader, depending on the structure and working practices within the partnership.

Another finding is that the balance of power can lead to inequality from a dependency linked to who employs the partnership manager, illustrated by Vangen and Huxham (2003b) through partnership managers employed by LAs that did not feel able to act neutrally or, felt it appropriate to spend a high proportion of time supporting the needs of elected councillors.

Points of power happening:	**Different phases**
At Micro level	Where the network manager can be in a powerful position between meetings – as they are the only person with the partnership agenda as their main concern Those charged with looking after the financial resources
At Macro level	The individual charged with bid writing, setting up the contracts, or administering the funding, choosing the processes of activities such as how selection will take place on who to involve in the partnership
Through Communication media and processes	The chair or facilitator of the meeting is in a position of power during the meeting Those who choose location and time of meeting
Through External influences	Described as powerful in short-term ways, such as demanding reports or responses to initiatives

Figure 3.1: Points of power within partnership (Huxham and Vangen 2005)

Situations have also been found of misunderstandings across organisations, where a leader has to manage conflict because of clans within the partner organisations competing for power (Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007). Instances of this kind involve making value judgements, needing the leader to judge whether this was leading to knowledge creation and so assist the development of communal knowledge for the partnership (Biesta 2007; Scott and Usher 1996).

The evidence suggests that building and managing trust is important to the partnership, with trust recognised as fragile, subject to risk, and threatened if there is a lack of consistency between expectations and perceptions. Studies by Armistead Pettigrew and Aves (2007) and Briggs et al (2007) found that how to build trust in partnerships, is identified by participants themselves, who see having agreed values as fundamental if common systems such as quality assurance are to be achieved (Lumby 2009). Trust is described as being developed as a staged process, by working within relationships as part of developing mutual influence. In working to build a consensus, difficulty is encountered where there is a perceived lead partner dominance, often based on who has appointed the partnership leader, and so the situation often leads to ambiguity, and a lack of trust, with consensus becoming aspirational (Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007; Beech and Huxham 2003). Briggs (2008) found that individual organisation goals can also be at risk. This leads to a recognition that mutual trust in partnerships is not easy to achieve nor easily transferrable between the strategic and operational levels, and so causes practical constraints for the partnership and its leader to overcome.

The significance of trust is associated with respect, something that is needed by a partnership co-ordinator (Beech and Huxham 2003; Briggs 2008; Rost 1993). Studies identify that leaders rate trust highly (Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007; Briggs 2009), and yet Vangen and Huxham (2003b) theorise how progress of partnerships often requires politicking and manipulation. Other reviews, involving school and external collaborations, highlight the issues of trust when schools work with external agencies, and across professional boundaries, particularly where outcomes of the work is in the context of the school (Close and Raynor 2010; Noaks Moreton and Williamson 2004). For example, the On Track project had, at its core, partnership working as a requirement for the planning and delivery of services, needing professionals from a range of agencies to work together. Within the project, in working across professional boundaries, suspicion and misgivings were issues (Noaks Moreton and Williamson 2004). An extreme case is found by Higham and Yeomans (2010) of a partnership co-ordinator 'not being allowed to cross the threshold of a school'. Briggs et al (2007) endorses the need for a trusted leader, with evidence of a well-respected former head teacher appointed as co-ordinator, to keep a power balance of partnership members who perceive that they are equal, because of being leaders of their own institutions, and as such of their own destiny. Studies have found that if the importance of initial joint training, particularly to understand, respect and value the roles of other professionals, is not recognised it will lead to challenges of trust and power (Hodgson and Spours 2006; Sloper 2004). It is also the case, that as part of working together and learning from one another, there is a need ensure that is CPD developed (Atkinson 2002).

The theme of membership structures is associated with the challenges of power and trust in several ways: firstly, Huxham and Vangen found that group membership itself causes ambiguity and contradictions. Secondly, as technically the partnership manager is not a member of the collaboration, it can lead to power related issues (Beech and Huxham 2003), and thirdly, the environment in which a partnership manager operates, is open to a variety of conceptions by group members leading to uncertain expectations of the role, another cause of ambiguity (Beech and Huxham 2003; Huxham and Vangen 2000b). Research examples found partnership managers holding the view of being a resource for the group rather than a member of it, effectively acknowledging that they have no power, and others, working with individuals between meetings, striving to make things happen for the partnership, resulting in ambiguity, in a range of interpretations by group members leading to cautiousness in response.

3.4.3 **Leadership and appropriate working processes:** it is recognised that a partnership leader is likely to be facilitating as well as leading. This is described by Huxham and Vangen (2004) as 'enacting leadership' and includes delivering collaborative activities. This will involve liaising with different professions and specialisms across partner organisations as well as bringing together different services and providers. Research also identifies the emergence of informal leaders, offering different and more relevant forms of leadership; however there is a perception that the informality is a challenge to membership structures and appropriate working processes (Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007). With evidence that partnerships have a lack of traditional hierarchy, the relational leadership leads to opposing views of leadership activities, including leaders themselves finding the concept confusing and troublesome (Vangen and Huxham 2003a; Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007). Acknowledging that leadership in partnerships is distinct, and could be shared/distributed, Armistead Pettigrew and Aves (2007) found leaders adopting a default position of identifying with the behaviours of those of single organisational leaders. Nevertheless leadership is found to be the most significant factor in stimulating synergy in partnerships (Weiss Anderson and Lasker 2002).

The supportive aspects of leadership include needing to be pro-active and lead, even when not in charge, and creating structures and support for involvement, that can mean taking deliberate steps to indirectly influence the agenda (Vangen and Huxham 2003a). This will be within the context of endorsing the need to work across levels, recognising when to facilitate and make value judgments (Biesta 2007), wanting to make things happen because of a belief in what the partnership stands for and its aims. Further research on leader activities taken from Coleman (2011) and Weiss Anderson and Lasker (2002) reinforce what can be involved:

- concentrating on and committed to the partnership as a whole

- working to create an environment where differences of opinion can be voiced; resolving conflict among partners and aiming to empower partners through developing a common language
- sense-making, inspiring and motivating partners
- combining the perspectives, resources, and skills of partners
- helping the partnership look at things differently to be creative, in an environment of respect
- building relationships to develop a culture of trust and inclusiveness.

There is similarity with what is described as ability to influence, where the process is about using persuasion to have an impact, based on using power resources such as rational strategies, political analysis, ethical and moral stands that lead to mutual influence rather than authority (Lumby and Morrison 2010; Rost 1993). This dimension of influence in leadership is about positioning oneself as the leader, described as being how emotional relationships are conducted, how thought and actions are designed, which others will *accept* or *reject* (Lumby and Morrison 2010). It is also about learning to identify, live with, and progress activities within the partnership, by nurturing relationships, being committed to equity, knowing who is in the partnership, and recognising not all will be equal, and so there will be ambiguity and complexity (Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007; Huxham and Vangen 2000b).

In general, studies indicate that it is beneficial to the partnership if the leader has attributes that are demonstrable in achieving activities that they may be expected to engage and lead, which include:

- working at strategic and operational levels on behalf of the partnership as well as across its partners, which can involve working with a range of professionals from partner and external organisations to combine skills and resources. This involves working tirelessly at communication, using experience and knowledge of other sectors and services to develop a mutual understanding and having the ability to facilitate meetings and events

- demonstrating flexibility, responsiveness, showing empathy, having patience and being resilient, as within partnerships power operates dynamically, at different levels and times, with multiple layers of leadership (Briggs 2009; Hodgson and Spours 2006). A key part is building trust at an individual level and across the partnership, which can involve recognising and taking account of any competition that exists between partners, such as inspection data and gradings. If partnerships are of a voluntary nature, it follows that the role has little formal authority, meaning that the starting point for a LEP leader is having the ability to deal with complexity and ambiguity, and lead in uncertain conditions as processes constantly unfold (Amey 2010; Fletcher and Perry 2008)
- managing projects that may be externally funded. Research highlights that variations in the role exist reflected in different delivery models and management structures across projects. This is noticeable with regard to line management responsibilities, which range from direct responsibility (Noaks Moreton and Williamson 2004), delegated, to no formal authority at all, and might involve others taking a similar leadership role because of their specialism. (Glatter 2003; Hodgson and Spours 2006; Vangen and Huxham 2003b)
- engaging with, and providing staff development to keep abreast of external drivers, such as policy initiatives as well as developing the ethos of partnership working. The point is made that there are systems within systems which make analysis in which leadership is situated more complex. This is the case for those enacting leadership on behalf of a partnership, who offer guidance on the wider political and cultural environment, recognising the fundamental moral purpose of partnership working (Close and Raynor 2010), put in context by Endrissat Müller and Kaudela-

Baum (2007) in that a leader has to believe in the partnership and demonstrate commitment to its purpose, prepared to sustain and support others.

An extra dimension of the leadership is identified as impersonal, it is about mechanisms, structures and processes and built on systems that can lead to actual outcomes to make things happen, an ideology that recognises collaboration is about pragmatism, about doing (Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007; Huxham and Vangen 2000b). In a general sense, the practice is concerned with formation and implementation of policy and an activity agenda (Briggs 2008). This perspective is recognised as relevant and considered in the findings of this study in relation to working for the benefit of others through partnership. Therefore leadership is not only enacted by people, but also resides in structures, processes and participants, although there is a need for a democratic and facilitative style of leadership to move towards a fundamental conceptual shift of equity, mutuality and shared education purpose (Briggs 2009; Coleman 2011; Vangen and Huxham 2003b; Lumby 2009).

So far, based on findings of other studies, I have described the background evidence that can lead to activities in the leadership role, and why the leadership is different (Coleman 2011; Vangen and Huxham 2003b). At a more philosophical level, the leader should demonstrate self-awareness and emotional capability, and effective leadership practice rooted in personal and professional values, because education is about being able to make a difference and bring about improvements, with a moral purpose (Bush and Glover 2003; Elliott 2012). The next stage of my review is to consider the individual, and their personal influence.

3.5 **The influence of personal background on the role**

The premise for this study is that little is written about LEP leaders, with limited evidence of a personal and individual perspective recognised in the literature. Given that the context of the role is described as being about what is practised, there is evidence that it can be individual in terms of activities and workloads, and often underpinned by personal values of *wanting to make a difference* (Elliott 2012; Noaks Moreton and Williamson 2004). Studies focus on the need to move towards ethical maturity, where a step change in the development of leaders is necessary to work beyond the organisation, to recognise it involves others, and a sharing of values if partnerships are to survive, and work for the benefit of young people (Close 2012; Elliott 2012; Ribbins and Gunter 2002).

Development as an individual is more widely identified in reviews, pointing to the need for personal and professional development, both for those in the role and others working in partnership. In the single organisation model developed by Briggs (2008), training and development is recognised as a key component at the operational level, which suggests that the development will be for those staff who will be involved in some way in partnership working. The research by Noaks Moreton and Williamson (2004) looks at the training requirements from the partnership perspective, finding that each individual needs to reflect on their own training needs, to recognise the requirements of the partnership and their contribution, being honest enough to acknowledge any gaps in own knowledge, and prepared to work beyond their own professional boundaries (Noaks Moreton and Williamson 2004). There is also the need for participation in partnership training to achieve effective partnership working, particularly regarding working methods, sharing of skills and expertise (Noaks Moreton and Williamson 2004).

Whatever the background of a leader, the role is regarded as one of influence. With little known about individuals in the role, it is evident that personal values do make a difference. In the context of leading, the role is seen as being about relating their work to the aims of the partnership, and engaging and supporting others, often leading from a personal value of wanting to make a difference. Published research also leads to the need to recognise the importance of CPD at the individual level and taking responsibility to offer CPD for others, delivered through joint training across partners, particularly for major issues faced in partnership working, of contradictory pressures of competition and for understanding collaboration (Glatter 2003; Noaks Moreton and Williamson 2004).

3.6 **Summary**

What emerges from the review is that the LEP leader is not only bounded by the partnership environment in which they work, but also constituted by interplay between the partnership itself and external drivers. External drivers include being able to advise and consider responses to the partnership on government policy, seeking funding opportunities or other collaborative ventures, and this review reveals that many of the available texts are reviewing policy-led projects that are delivered through partnership. The partnership can be fluid, with informal agreements and differing levels of engagement from partners. Local area consortia are identified as an important type of partnership, yet they are described as fragile because they often come together on a voluntary basis for a common vision or purpose and have to deal with the autonomy of single institution leaders and conflicting government policies (Briggs et al 2007; Higham and Yeomans 2010; Hodgson and Spours 2006). The local context and purposes for the partnership need to be recognised and taken into account as part of determining the degree of collaboration. The research endeavours to identify the benefits of partnership working, but the environment is complex and this leads to a view that there needs to be good and clear reasons for working in partnership. The setting can impact on identities, both of the leader and others, along with likely limitations that occur in relation to leadership that is dependent on factors arising from partnership members (Briggs

2007; Haynes and Lynch 2012). There are similarities in studies looking at leadership and partnerships, but because the role is bounded by the local area, it can involve unique projects and tasks relevant to local needs, which leads to the claim that the role, in many ways is unique.

Studies provide an indicative insight to what a leader might do as part of the role, and what the complexities and challenges of leadership might involve, as well as desired attributes. Fewer studies focus on the leader of a partnership, meaning those that are specifically employed to work on behalf of the partnership. When studies recognise LEPs, their tendency is for the leader role to be mentioned as a resource in relation to partnership outcomes and effectiveness (Hayward et al 2006; Noaks Moreton and Williamson 2004), regarded as important, and an asset if the leader is experienced and holds personal values which include wanting to make a difference (Huxham and Vangen 2000b). There is no model for partnership leadership in its own right, and so to avoid weak planning and funding, the leader needs to offer determined leadership (Fletcher and Perry 2008), based on relationships, and the steer is that a leadership theory for partnerships should be a blend taking from existing models, such as authentic and distributed (Coleman 2011). What is more consistent is the fact that tensions are likely to exist and that significant variations in the roles exists.

With limited research available on roles and people engaged in partnership, much of the research recognises the findings of the longitudinal action research of Huxham and Vangen, from which theories are developed, the most relevant being leadership media and enactment (Vangen and Huxham 2003b) because of the focus on those participating as partnership managers. Recurrent across studies is the issues a leader is likely to come across, with matters involved in making things happen, such as managing aims, trust, power, communication, leadership and appropriate working practices (summarised in Appendix 9.1).

The literature review gives an indication and a sense that those working as LEP leaders want to make a difference. If the partnership is to be effective, the review highlights that those holding the role need to come with experience. It is with this knowledge that in the next chapter I am going to look at identity, both from a personal and professional perspective.

Chapter 4: **THEORISING LEADERS' IDENTITIES**

4.1 **Introduction**

The intention is to understand more about each of the participant leaders, as people, who they are and what it is they do. I take a relational view of identity, arguing that identity exists in the ways in which we relate and engage with other people. Identity is important because it helps individuals in framing, and in some instances, coping with living in the world and with other people. I agree with Ezzy (1998) that a person's life is a lived experience in which internal thoughts and conversations help in understanding 'who I am' and 'what I remember and anticipate'. With 'I' as a being-in-a-world, it is important to be able to try and understand myself and the influences that come from social relationships to be able to experience life. To help in looking for aspects of identity in the participants, I have considered identity theories that relate to personal and professional identity, including those that relate to being a leader, as well as where those identities may be situated and constructed.

I will outline the personal identity and narrative theories developed by Paul Ricoeur. It is my belief that Ricoeur's work is a constructive approach that offers a way in which it is possible to make sense of 'self' as a narrative of constancy and change, where 'self' is understood through reflecting on the involvement of actions of 'self' and 'others', a view held by Ricoeur (1992) and other writers (Alvesson 2010; Sparrowe 2005). I became drawn to the work of Ricoeur through reading Flaming's studies of nursing education (2005). By relating data to a framework based on Ricoeur, Flaming writes about the reflections of participants who show strong beliefs of knowing 'who I am', by saying things like 'it's just who I am', 'it just feels right', and put in context of how you feel about something, and how it leads to how you behave and treat people. I am able to relate Flaming's examples, drawing on reflections from my working life where I have had similar feelings, or observed and heard passion in others wanting to help and offer support in an educational environment. Through the participants in this study I am looking at how they make sense of their experience as a leader and how the sense they make does, or does not, draw on earlier experiences associated with their background, be it work or personal. The environment LEP leaders are working in is likely to involve dealing with change, and so a view of identity that can take account of change, and recognise background as part of the life of 'I,' is the most appropriate (Flaming 2005; Ricoeur 1992).

4.2 **Identity**

Identity has become a key area of interest in the social sciences. Giddens (1991) argues that the circumstances of late modernity underline the relationship between 'self-identity and modern institutions' creating conditions in which social actors are obliged to produce an ongoing narrative of the self. Theories of identity have drawn on a variety of traditions highlighting areas of both similarity and difference. Some authors argue that it is possible for the different psychological, sociological and philosophical approaches to co-exist (Jones and McEwen 2000; Lührmann and Eberl 2007; Smith and Sparkes 2008; Wieland 2010). Others, like Watson (2008) adopt a pragmatic view sidestepping the search for a correct definition of identity, focusing instead on the best way to help people cope with the world, acknowledging that identities involve contradictions and struggles in an ongoing project.

A review by Owens Robinson and Smith-Lovin (2010) attempts to connect social and psychological literature and draws on different approaches to identity. With a focus on the underlying theoretical mechanisms of identity that include role, identity and situated identity theories, Owens Robinson and Smith-Lovin (2010) summarise that the bases of identity are formed by similarities of which:

"… identities are elements of both the social structure and the individual self-structures that internalize them … as individualized as it is, one's personal identity information is the basis for one's other identities" (p479/80).

This review example illustrates how different approaches can be used if based on the self-structure of an individual, forming one's own biographical details, and within a social structure categorising one's-self as such by professional allegiance, which may resemble membership or being part of a community, and takes account of the situational encounters with others. These nested concepts bridge the social context of local interactions and situated environments, such as partnerships, and has personal identity as its foundation.

Some studies draw on the work of Mead and Ricoeur for contrasting perspectives on narrating selves and identities (Owens Robinson and Smith-Lovin 2010; Smith and Sparkes 2008), and are not dissimilar to Ricoeur's theory, in that they acknowledge elements of fixity and fluidity. For example, human self-consciousness may be constructed through things that are constant, such as date and place of birth, and also re-constructed through self-reflection and interactions with others. This can lead to a dynamic sense of 'who I am' (Collinson 2003; Ezzy 1998; Owens Robinson and Smith-Lovin 2010; Ricoeur 1992).

I have explained that discussions on identity are possible from different approaches. In recognising that narrative is also a key element within identity construction, there is also the debate on whether there is an agreed definition of identity. In wanting to engage with an identity theory, I am going to discuss the narrative-related personal identity theory developed by Ricoeur.

4.3 **A summary of Paul Ricoeur's narrative related personal identity**

I am going to highlight what I regard as the fundamentals of Ricoeur's ideas on identity and the relationship to narrative. I will propose that there are similarities with other theories, as well as distinct differences. Delanty and Strydom (2003) describe Ricoeur's work as playing a mediating role, identifying the common ground of other theories such as clarifying the relations between hermeneutics and critique debated by Habermas and Gadamer. Although similar in language, Ricoeur's perspective is different to that of identity construction described as fluid by post-structuralists.

At first glance, in Ricoeur's theory of identity, people develop a self-identity that has some stability and some similarities to the concepts found in other studies such as Owens Robinson and Smith-Lovin (2010). Ricoeur refers to selfhood, based on a philosophical discourse of the use of language and logical discussion of sameness and otherness, developed as a narrative answer to the question of 'who'. This selfhood is based on the acknowledgement that actors have the capacity to account for their actions (Pellauer 2007; Truc 2011). In answering "Who am I?" I can say what my name, date of birth and ethnicity is ..., all of which can be regarded as relatively stable. I can also consider the values and beliefs that come through life and by thinking of 'self' in relation to 'others', a reinterpretation of character at an individual and societal level, constructing and revealing why life has gone in a particular direction (Zhao and Biesta 2008). Ricoeur uses an overlap of the 'who' by the 'what' which comes from the question "Who am I?" based on the character of identity, and back to the question "What am I?" the ethical identity where 'I' is accountable for her/his actions (Pucci 1992). It is through narrative taking the role of mediation between the overlapping 'who' with the 'what' of character that leads to an identity that we recognise as being self. The two poles of identity that Ricoeur

(1992) describes as overlapping are *ipse,* seen in the form of the kept word and self-constancy in relation to selfhood and *idem,* being a permanence in time of character, referred to as sameness (Truc 2007). In his concept of identity Ricoeur recognises that using the word sameness is confusing because the possibility of overlap of *ipse* and *idem* is not sameness (Ricoeur 1991b). It is character that has significance in that it is something that has a history, is stable, which may be from a habit already acquired or being formed, by which a person is recognised (Ricoeur 1992), and yet through narration in considering 'self' and 'others' it may be interpreted differently:

> "By means of this stability, borrowed from acquired habits and identifications .....the identity of character is truly the "what" of the "who" .... Here it is a question of the overlapping of the "who" by the "what" which slips from the question "Who am I?" back to the question "What am I?" (Ricoeur 1992 p122).

In the Mallett and Wapshott (2012) study, they describe using character as being when we act in a consistent way so that changes in self-interpretation occur very gradually leading to what Ricoeur calls sedimentation, where *idem* and *ipse* overlap. The opposite of being in character, is being out of character, the other spectrum of *idem* and *ipse* where habits constitute a recognisable trait. It is the 'self' recognising and understanding 'who I am' and 'what I am' that can take account of being a leader, and the interaction it involves with 'others' as part of personal identity.

The process of self-reflection, described as narrative imagination by Ricoeur (1992) offers choices and possibilities for innovation and sedimentation meaning that reality is larger than a positivists' conception of objective reality (Vanhoozer 1991). One of the examples Vanhoozer uses to make the point on objective reality comes from Durkheim (1895) who explains that for him, in being a brother, the obligations it entails are executed as contracts, the duties are external to himself and have been inherited through education. The reality perceived by Ricoeur is quite different and takes account of the power of imagination where many stories can be developed from the same materials, where the self is a process beyond supplementary events and facts (Ricoeur 1991b). Ricoeur also talks about handed-down tradition of popular tales and myths tradition in which the narrative recognises interaction of innovation as rule-governed behaviour and works with the history sedimented models. Ricoeur explains that from the basis of tradition there is the possibility of deviance in the relationship between sedimentation and innovation, allowing for new ways of interpreting historical context, where stories are recounted in a structuralist manner, and lived in the belief that our understanding stems from creative imagination (Ricoeur 1991a).

It is the possibilities offered through imagination that lead to a recognition that the self can be unstable (Ricoeur 1992), and so I can become unsure of what I believe in or I might question my values. Character and identities can be unstable because characteristics of the self are regarded as being from multiple sources, offering choices and greater freedom often set in the context of upward mobility, material accumulation and career success, which is addressed by referring to Ricoeur's narrative identity as it is coherent, constructed in dialogue with other people, and both fluid and changeable (Collinson 2003; Ezzy 1998).

Ricoeur's view is that self-interpretation links the narrative process and the preceding lived experience, offering some stability in times of conflict and uncertainty. An example of this might be when identity pressure in the work place evokes a remembered past that is at odds with the anticipated future leading to tension and perhaps discomfort (Ezzy 1998; Mallett and Wapshott 2012). Ricoeur uses the word narrative in a specific sense, to refer to the way the story of the self changes over time. He outlines his use of narrative on two levels in that a narrative understanding stems from the creative imagination, followed by a reinterpretation described as a relation between the narrative and life set in the unstable context (Ricoeur 1991a). The use of narrative bridges life and fiction giving us the power to understand ourselves, implying that the story of a life grows out of events that are recounted from living in the imagination and come to constitute personal identity, recognising the instability of time past, present and future (Ricoeur 1991a). It is the process and non-static structures of narrative identity, the describing of lived time, the relationship between history, fiction and the temporal nature of self-concept, meaning that the narrative remains unfinished and is remade in the future as part of the ongoing process (Ezzy 1998). In their discussion of Ricoeur, Scott and Usher (1996) summarise the combination of time and narrative. They highlight that personal outlook is located irreversibly in time, expressed through narratives that are analysed, as ...

> "... life is composed of the narratives by which time is experienced ..." (p164)

... existing in a place, past, present and future which helps to form reasons for thoughts and actions, and leads to a coherent existence of character. From a personal perspective the narrative is stable, however there is also the need to consider narrative stability from the perspective of 'others', such as partnerships, where it becomes based on trust.

The narrative approach, developed by Ricoeur (1991b), applies identity to both personal and communities and is referred to in many studies. For Watson (2008) identity work means being self-reflective with an internal sense of identity and an outward facing social identity of being in groups, where social identity is the link between the personal internal and external. Similarly, Ybema et al (2009) situate identity as a lynchpin in the social constitution of self and society, in which identity involves the processes of negotiation between self and others, inside and outside, past and present. In stating that identity work, through narrative, is temporal and both internal and external, Collinson (2003) found that it can relate to being in or out of a community of specialists, particularly if there is a niche area of practice.

For some, the model of past, present and future raises the issue of involuntary memory leading to an unstable identity, in that we can remember and we can forget (Rée 1991), and so if we accept this point, the construct of the narrative can only ever exist at a given point in time, the present, and has to be accepted on the basis of trust. The stability of identity and the subsequent issue of trust are also findings for Beech and Huxham (2003). In action research on public sector collaborative partnerships, Beech and Huxham (2003) found participants formed both stable and dynamic identities assigned to 'self' and 'others' at different times, leading to the issue of trust, particularly in relation to the outcomes of the collaboration, as it leads to uncertainties in knowing how and whether an individual will act in line with their beliefs.

I have discussed what Paul Ricoeur's theory entails in relation to an individual making sense of who they are. The construct provides overlapping ideas that make an ongoing whole, based on self-reflection involving engagement with 'others', of 'who I am' and 'what I am' and the instability of a narrative based on the past in the present and future. The issue of trust also extends to relationships in partnership, identified along with stability and uncertainty with 'others', because of a mix of stable and dynamic identities at specific and different times, leaving some 'others' not sure whether an individual will act in line with their expectations. In the following section I will explore and compare Ricoeur's theory arguing that it has similarities with other theories as well as considering criticisms of his work.

4.4 **Situating Ricoeur's theory**

Ricoeur builds on earlier theories and looks for common ground between approaches. Reflecting on this, Delanty and Strydom (2003) write:

> "Paul Ricoeur – one of the leading philosophers of post-war France whose work is characterized by playing a mediating role between different schools of thought .... (p95)"

For example in Oneself as Another (Ricoeur 1992) and Narrative Identity (Ricoeur 1991) the theme of temporality refers to Heidegger, time and narrative to Kant, character and habit to Aristotle, and straddles theories of Gadamer and Habermas to suggest truth-claims of tradition can be set in a context of presumed truth (Ricoeur 1992; Vanhoozer 1991). Vanhoozer (1991) views Ricoeur's work on narrative and time as positive developments of the unfinished projects of Heidegger and Kant. On the other hand Rankin (2002), tells us that Ricoeur's use of Aristotle is contentious because of his reworking of *mimesis* into a narrative form, being a reflection of structuralism. Rankin (2002) argues that *mimesis* is not a structure, and therefore cannot be seen as the world that humans inhabit. The mediation and analysis of existing theories could be seen as leading to difficulties, in this instance in situating Ricoeur's personal identity theory. In another example, Flaming (2004) highlights that Ricoeur mediates between realist and anti-realist assumptions identifying strengths and weaknesses from each perspective in a belief that life has some constancy, but not certainty. Ricoeur's use of conscience in personal identity is perceived by some as being idealistic and inconsistent because it sits between selfhood and 'otherness' within extremes of accepting good and bad ethical guiding actions that over time help oneself to determine the way of behaving (Flaming 2006). Ricoeur's view on conscience is related to 'otherness' leading to a judging conscience, identifying what needs to be presented as a moral conscience, as well as being bound up with illusions of self (1992). It is through further thought on the matter of conscience that Ricoeur (1992) concludes that the philosophical discourse he describes does have an ending, in that for him, the 'otherness' of conscience cannot be reduced, and so he cannot say that the 'other' is a person he can look at in the face, and so he places the human condition in religion. This section has highlighted the recognition given to Riceour's consideration of other theories and indicated that there are areas where others find the reworking problematic. What follows considers and compares the approaches of other theories in relation to Ricoeur.

In looking at other studies, it is often helpful to identify the approach that forms the basis of the theory. For example essentialism, which through categorisation may lead to a person being absolute and knowable - a rigidity, greater predictability of attitudes and behaviours, a product of minds, cognition, psyche or socialisation practices, and so identity is seen as a taken-for-granted category (Beech and Huxham 2003; Benwell and Stokoe 2006). It would seem fairly straightforward that Ricoeur's personal identity does not take an essentialist position, not least because the theory does not suggest rigidity, and he claims that the self is more than a category of events and facts (Ricoeur 1991b) however in comparison with other essentialist identity studies, it does not seem to be so clear cut. For example Jones and McEwen (2000) develop an empirical and essentialist model, placing the sense of self as the core, the personal identity, where personal attributes and characteristics are guarded and deeply held by the individual. At first glance the model appears to have similarities to Ricoeur, recognising dynamic multiple dimensions of identities and contextual influences such as family background, however the difference is in that those individual experiences are seen as leading to ongoing construction whereas Ricoeur uses narrative in a mediating role recognising the story as unfolding in the present, as well as being ongoing.

Ricoeur's work on sedimentation and character stability might also be considered essentialist, however it is the subtlety of character that offers a more distinctive and broader framework. For Ricoeur (1991b) the self does more than belong to categories of events and facts, it mediates as we act, think and imagine. In other words, it is not possible to distinguish between the *idem* and *ipse* (1992). From this perspective it doesn't seem appropriate to regard Ricoeur's work as essentialism.

From a post-structuralist perspective, Ricoeur is regarded as placing an over-emphasis on interpretative elements of self-formation to the detriment of the power relations (Kiguwa 2006). With the emphasis on a deconstructive approach to language, it might be argued that Ricoeur's concept of narrative relies on explaining and understanding what has taken place in the past and projecting that into the present and the future. An alternative would be to consider discourse in relation to understanding subjectivity and the power of knowledge in relation to society (Delanty and Strydom 2003). For Ricoeur power is related to ethics, with an underlying aim to strive for equality. Power is recognised as being fragile because it exists only as long as people act together. Ricoeur's position on power deepens our understanding on what he considers is involved in striving to be a good person, as it relates to the individual as 'self', 'other', and 'others', especially in his use of characterisation. The key to looking more broadly than the dynamics of the individual and power, is that Ricoeur is clear that power only exists between people, the 'others'. It is the significance of actions, characterised in two ways, firstly because of living together, referred to as power in common, with the rules we abide by stemming from action, and secondly power domination of one person over another, where violation is identified and leads to the abuse of trust, with issues of morality challenged, such as we shall not lie (1992). Foucault and other post-structuralists have provided compelling arguments for subjectivication on how power is inscribed, revealing how power is exercised, particularly with regard to biopolitics in freeing power from the political domain to show the nature of power in social, political and personal relationships (Deveaux 1994). These accounts have been taken up by feminists interested in understanding gender identities and group exclusion through discourse (Deveaux 1994; Kiguwa 2006). But others have suggested that a Ricoeurian account using narrative identity offers new possibilities for non-linear subjectivity in looking at gendered experiences within given contexts (Kiguwa 2006). This view highlights the significance Ricoeur's work places on the engagement and consideration of 'others' in 'who' and 'what I am'.

There is broad recognition that identity development, sometimes termed identity work, is an ongoing process with both internal and external motives (Mallett and Wapshott 2012; Ybema 2009 Watson 2008). These accounts recognise that the individual will be involved in negotiations which are situated and, where the spaces and places involved need to be recognised as offering opportunities, as they can shape values and expectations of a preferred locale, or the opposite in that a locale can be a constraint on identity construction (Benwell and Stokoe 2006; Wieland 2010).

Constructing a self draws on many things, perhaps as a worker, or a member of a family and/or community, and any of these things can have demands and involve negotiation (Wieland 2010). There is also the view that to some extent how one sees oneself is as a member in certain social groups, a public and private self, sometimes modelled as a multiple identity (Jones and McEwen 2000). The public and private selves are described as being equal facets, involving self-categorizations based upon one's unique characteristics, including traits and attributes (Gardner et al 2005) where both categories of self are related because they form over time and are a consequence of the individual's reflection (Gardener et al 2005; Jones and McEwen

2000). Wieland (2010) suggests that personal and social should be reconnected so that identity is constructed so that ...

> "... whom one should be are woven into an individual's understanding of whom he or she is" (p504).

The work on social identity associated with being categorised as in and out of groups is often regarded as essentialist, its appeal being that it may be possible for an individual to feel that part of their identity, such as being a teacher, could place them in an 'in-group' with 'others' who are also teachers. Alternatively, someone who is a lecturer or trainer may not be seen as belonging to the same in-group of teachers. Post-structuralists challenge group identity theory, as well as essentialist notions of identity, and instead work with multiple identities (Benwell and Stokoe 2006), whereas Ricoeur's theory can be considered from both perspectives because from an ethical point of justice he recognises institutions, being where communities live together, in a bond of commonality. To some extent it could be argued that Ricoeur's linking of identity to a community through a set of acquired identifications is essentialist. As Ricoeur maintains:

> "... to a large extent, in fact, the identity of a person or a community is made up of these identifications with values, norms, ideal, models, and heroes, *in* which the person or the community recognizes itself", in other words the society setting is an influence on 'who we are' (Ricoeur 1992 p121 italics as in original text).

The identifications referred to could be seen as habits and traits, leading to a lasting disposition.

The Ricoeurian approach is seen as offering a multifaceted identity and a bridge between the humanist and post-structuralist self, through hermeneutic self-interpretation linking a narrative process and lived experience (Mallett and Wapshott 2012). I suggest that the post-structuralist view of identity being ambiguous, a contradiction and always in a state of flux, is recognised and addressed by Ricoeur. For Kiguwa (2006), Ricoeur's temporal dimension offers a move away from the binary of a stable or constant flux of self, to a sense of self-continuity within narrative, where narrative is functional in the construction of events. Ricoeur's theory is based on the idea that we make sense of our world through social narratives, where truth is achieved by understanding context, through the world of text, such as text gathered through conversations or interviews. Similarly, Mallett and Wapshott (2012) draw on Ricoeur to counteract the suggestion that narratives are unitary arguing that:

> "... narrative identity work processes mediate the dialectical tensions between the *idem* and *ipse* identities, embedding contradictions and multiplicity within viable plots that embrace the remembered past (even while subtly amending it), experienced present (while interpreting it) and (perhaps newly) anticipated future (p23)".

For post-structuralists such as Foucault, identity is constructed, fluid and produced within symbolic interpretation of language (Kiguwa 2006). Kiguwa explains the important difference of Ricoeur's writing on 'post-structuralist hermeneutics' in that subjectivity is at the level of the body and the materials, where narrative is central to self. Language then assumes a secondary status and for Ricoeur the word and sentence level have more than one meaning (Pellaur 2007). It is in the telling, through narrative where the past becomes the present that Ricoeur's identity and narrative theory recognises variations, taking account of the situation in which the story is being told. A post-structuralist might describe the narrative process as performative, reconstructed each time we speak or think and so always in flux, leading to difficulties for the individual in distinguishing between different aspects of personal and social identity (Long and Zietkiewicz 2006; Collinson 2006). My understanding is that Ricoeur demonstrates it is possible to study the relationships from two positions - because of the recognition of identity as being personal and within communities of 'others' (Ricoeur 1992), as well as through the temporality offered in the functionality of the narrative.

Narrative is seen to have limitations for some authors, such as Somers because of its history as a story telling method (1994).

Rankin's argument with Ricoeur's idea of narrative is that it lacks accountability in the way in which it transforms perception to meaning making. However, Rankin does recognise the significance of Ricoeur's debate on narrative to the centrality of narrative to human existence (2002). An alternative view to Ricoeur's temporal and sequential arrangement of events is provided by Polkinghorne (1996) who claims that stories can be organised thematically, whereby events and happenings can be drawn together in a structure where the individual is selecting what is important and relevant.

It is when we consider the pace of evolution in society and look for the areas to which Ricoeur would describe as stable that the differences really emerge. For example, there are studies that refer to the stability created by name, gender or religion, but in today's world even these categories can be changed (Collinson 2006; Flaming 2005). Within social settings actors can be pulled in different directions and, subject to contradictory forces such as love for, and demands of, the job or the need to build bridges across different educational sectors (Ybema et al 2012). As part of the acceptance that people are engaged in active work on their identities, the view is that whilst this might involve general conversations about profession, gender or age these will be interpreted in particular contexts that individuals experience in their everyday lives (Halford and Leonard 2006). Watson (2008) recognises that the individual will also select what is important to them in constructing their social identity. For example for someone who is an academic, s/he may see this as central to who they are, as part of their life and self, bridging the view of personal and social identity as separate elements, both inwards and outwards – this may be particularly important for those who see themselves as being in a changing world (Watson 2008).

The significance of the engagement process to reach identity is widely discussed with many recognising similar points to those made by

Ricoeur. For example, Ezzy makes the point that the self can be seen as something that resides in a social system for its members, with a pattern of social control for the individual and 'others' in the community (1998). Another example from Sparrowe (2005) relates 'others' to self in two ways that imply a relationship: as a source of imagination, and as persons that are intertwined with our own histories as part of 'the plot' in Ricoeur's theory. There is also the similarity of the negotiation process and social acceptability, where for Ricoeur, this is about working with 'others'. Schlenker (1984) in Lührmann and Eberl (2007) believes that identity only becomes possible through actual or imagined consensual validation, which can lead to a renegotiation, a 'working consensus', with 'others', which can be ambiguous or fragile as relationships and contexts change (Collinson 2006). Somers (1994) offers another view:

> "... all of us come to *be* who we *are* (however ephemeral, multiple, and changing) by being located or locating ourselves (usually unconsciously) in social narratives *rarely of our own making*' that are lived, enacted and performed." (p606)

And so we can see ourselves, and view ourselves as 'others' may see us, as well as compare ourselves with 'others' (Collinson 2003).

In this section I have explored key themes in Ricoeur's work on identity, suggesting that emphasis given to developing a narrative of the self helps look at episodes in life, recognising that they rely on the past, recalled in the present, and can be considered as the future, shaping 'who' and 'what I am'. I have also discussed and suggested that the significance of the society setting can be part of the individual's stability in which they make sense of the world, and identified that recognising a community is important in that it can involve sharing experiences and lead to a measure of own actions.

4.5 **Authenticity and identity**

With this study having a focus on the individual working as a LEP leader, it seems appropriate to look at aspects of authentic leadership in relation to identity, particularly as it is developed in the work of Ricoeur. I am interested in the acknowledgement of personal growth and self-awareness as part of determining 'who am I' and the contextual influences (Jones and McEwen 2000) with positive or negative trigger events (Gardner et al 2005) where an individual experiences events in life that can lead to reflection and interpretation of 'self' within different dimensions of identity. It is the relationship of Ricoeur's authenticity to identity that lends itself to considering authenticity of being a leader as part of 'what I am'.

Authenticity is rarely mentioned in Ricoeur's writings, however he does develop a view of self-constancy, as 'here I am', through which responsibility and accountability is associated to the relationship of 'others' (1992). Sparrowe (2005) makes the case for considering Ricoeur's narrative identity in relation to authenticity in that for him authenticity is about the regard one holds for 'others'. Ricoeur distinguishes 'what am I' (the character by which I can be identified) from 'here I am' (my lived experience with 'others'), that leads to accountability for the ways in which 'others' can count on me. Self-constancy, then, attaches ethical implications to the narrative, in considering how I behave. For Sparrowe (2005) this informs the positive principles and values the leader demonstrates for followers as well as the esteem the leader holds of self, and turns to Ricoeur's narrative theory, connecting the past to the present through engagement with real and fictional others. Under these circumstances, the leader behaves authentically in line with her/his inner values, beliefs and convictions rather than being authentic (Endrissat Müller and Kaudela-Baum 2007).

The premise of leader-follower forms the basis for most authentic leadership studies, where the perspective on authenticity sets the self over 'others' (Sparrowe 2005), and so studies on collaboration or partnerships call for different or hybrid leadership models, some of which suggest inclusion of authenticity (Coleman 2011; Collinson and Collinson 2007). In this study I would substitute 'others' for the followers because leadership enables consideration to be given to those representing organisations in the partnership as well as other staff in partnership organisations.

Similarities can be found in authentic leader-and-follower development models that adopt an essentialist standpoint, such as those of Jones and McEwen (2000). Categorisation used by Gardner et al (2005) includes personally held core values authentic leaders are likely to possess such as trustworthiness, integrity, credibility, respect for others, fairness and accountability. From a Ricoeurian perspective these values could well be seen as constituting 'a good person'.

As part of seeking 'who am I', authenticity is found in studies looking at leadership where it is linked to those individual leaders who are strong, and who relate to a collective identity of followers (Ladkin and Taylor 2010). Models developed for leadership position the concept as part of 'who am I' in personal identification, which I think displays some relationship to Ricoeur's ongoing project of personal identity theory. Various studies link authenticity to notions of identity, related to the individual as a leader, and more broadly to leadership and the organisation (Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007; Avolio and Gardner 2005; Endrissat Müller and Kaudela-Baum 2007; Ladkin and Taylor 2010; Shamir and Eilam 2005). The emerging themes are that:

- it is about the individual being true to themselves, motivated and acting according to personal values and convictions, and able to justify own behaviour
- it is necessary for the individual to be clear on knowing one's own position, lead from a personal point of view, stating it in terms of a clear vision, and having a personal and emotional relationship to the purpose of the organisation/partnership
- the leader needs to demonstrate a binding commitment, walking the talk, meaning what s/he says, being honest and true to 'self' and 'others', and admitting when there this a problem and so handles situations of opposition/resistance to achieving a goal rather than avoidance
- the leader is committed to tasks and projects, fostering close relationships among a team/community, with actions based on personal values and convictions.

From the above themes there is a sense of a leader being self-aware on a personal and leader level, being part of 'who I am', and an alignment to the partnership, and that it is their beliefs and values that determine the actions and manner of engagement with 'others' in 'what I do' and personal reasoning for 'why I do it'.

In the last 10/15 years a number of studies consider aspects of identity, in personal and leadership contexts, in relation to development and effectiveness. This has been described by Ford and Harding (2011) as a move towards an emphasis on positive emotional states in the workplace. A mixture of views emerge on training and leadership development, for example, that expert leaders may develop skills and conduct activities that are grounded in authentic values and self-relevant as part of their identities (Lord and Hall 2005; Lührmann and Eberl 2007). Others are more specific in asserting that development programmes are about identifying traits and developing other skills, as personality types, and defined by a set of competences and behaviours (Sparrowe 2005; Ford and Harding 2011). For Sparrowe (2005) a shift to using a narration of events that can lead to self-constancy in the transitions of life seem more appropriate. The authenticity aspect of being a leader could usefully be underpinned by Ricoeur's ethics of leading a good life, where stability is found in the character of the individual, of which experience as a leader and life in its broadest sense are partly sedimented.

If being authentic is ethical and a moral endeavour, then it does raise the possibility of inauthenticity. The over emphasis on authentic leadership development, where the focus is related to the organisation, is a model that Ford and Harding (2011) claim is itself immoral as it often means people will be selective, in what they disclose to others to achieve trust, to accomplish a task or objective. There is also the notion that leadership involves the 'construction of a public self' which destabilises authenticity and subsequently trust-related issues (Lumby and Morrison 2010). There will be actions taken in life, through particular stories, that may lead to recall and a feeling of conscience, knowing that what one did had consequences in the life of another, (for example, organisational restructuring might lead to colleagues being made redundant). On the other hand, there will be dilemmas that arise that are about engaging with 'others', particularly in partnership, such as differing approaches to curriculum delivery which could be perceived as creating quality issues, and because of the performativity requirements of inspection, a lack of trust is encountered among staff across member organisations (Lumby 2009). To reach the desired outcome it is likely that the LEP leader would be involved in working with the staff from across the organisations, perhaps aiming to build a group identity, which inevitably involves considering how to deal with issues of trust. In other words, the concept of authenticity as a behaviour, leads back to narrative, self-constancy and self-regulation, as one is responsible and accountable to relationships with 'others', and a central aspect of leadership (Sparrowe 2005). Put another way, Endrissat Müller and Kaudela-Baum (2007) say:

> "... consistent authentic behaviour is still possible but it is – just like the "true" self – developed through reflexive awareness by the individual in the interaction with others (Giddens 1991)." (p215)

Whether construction of identity is engagement through reflexivity or narrative interpretation, in the present telling the receiver should be aware to the possibility of bias. In recalling from the past into the present, it is the case that the individual may, in good faith be recalling an episode, but the recall through the use of imagination and memory will be as the individual sees it in the present. There may also be occasions when the individual, in the full knowledge of the past, chooses to be selective in what is told, which can be the case within an interview situation (Sparrowe 2005).

In this section I have illustrated how a link can be made between Ricoeur's personal identity and the significance of engagement with 'others'. I have taken the concept of leadership as being part of an identity, and related it to the idea that authentic leadership can bridge personal identity to that of being a leader of a partnership. This seems to be an important link to be made in an era in which there is changing educational policy that might compromise values and beliefs held by leaders.

4.6 **Identity situated in partnership**

So far I have explored Ricoeur's conceptualisation of identity and his ideas about narrative identity. The connection between this and more recent ideas about authentic leadership seem relevant to studying the work of leaders in LEPs. There may also be a need to account for a more inter-subjective account of professional identity, because a LEP can be about collaboration for a common purpose, and so the notion of a collective or group identity might also be considered. Partnership studies identify the fluidity of identities of those involved, along with the recognition of interplay between 'others' and self-awareness (Beech and Huxham 2003; Ybema et al 2012). Often collective identity is approached from an essentialist perspective identifying common characteristics or categories such as gender, ethnicity and class (Cerulo 1997). Other studies have found that leaders describe their identities as personal characteristics, beliefs and professional orientation (Armistead Pettigrew and Aves 2007; Lumby and Morrison 2010). For Coleman (2011) professionalism, as related to head teachers, is a category that lends itself to the concept of a collective identity based on common values, practices and approaches that reflect their personality and values. He associates professionalism to a leader's authentic performance, in line with social and role expectations, extending the collective notion to supporting colleague heads beyond the school, but does not suggest it extends, or is achievable at a partnership level.

Several studies indicate that partnership discourse is a dominant force, which includes rivalry between the groups, the boundary setting of organisations and professions who will deconstruct or downplay cultural differences. Rather than stand apart from 'others' a thin notion of identity is adopted in an attempt to include 'others' and smooth away differences with those in the partnership (Beech and Huxham 2003; Ybema et al 2012). Examples include managers in inter-organisational relationships constantly switching identifications so as to provide room to manoeuvre (Ybema et al 2012), and leaders consciously manipulating the identities they project, transferring their identity from one group to another, whichever group they belong being seen as the 'norm' (Lumby and Morrison 2010). This can lead to a kind of blindness or collusion with those who are perceived as being the dominant group. Specifically Beech and Huxham (2003) found partnership managers with deep-rooted predispositions of their own identity, along with a perception of the identity of 'others', which influenced their interactions, so that behaviour changes adapted to the perceived group norm in order to get agreements that served the partnership.

Within a partnership, the leadership can be about processes and the Lührmann and Eberl (2007) review on individual-focused identity, found the following issues connected with leadership processes:

- motivation, where leaders are motivated to act in ways consistent with their identities
- conformity and authenticity where the vision and beliefs communicated reflect what the leader really is
- power, where different sources, such as external and internal to oneself, compete.

These issues are placed in the context of the leader-follower model. Arguably, LEP leadership is more complex, with multiple relationships and ambiguous leader-follower relationships in play. In a sense most of the points raised can be associated and interpreted to processes a LEP leader might engage in, but the dualistic view of leader-follower identity is blurred and ambiguous because s/he is likely to be negotiating a variety of power relations at different organisational levels, with staff in a variety of roles and organisations (Collinson 2006). Acting in a motivational manner and dealing with different sources of power seems relevant to any relationship within the partnership, with emphasis needing to be placed on unequal power relationships, such as the context and situation of 'others' to reconcile, negotiate or confirm identities (Ybema et al 2012). It is through the recognition of 'others' that a deeper understanding of power and identity can be achieved through post-structuralist analysis of leadership (Collinson 2006). I would suggest that considering 'others', in the context of partnerships, is helpful in order to understand more about power and the leader.

Conformity and authenticity could have several interpretations in the life of LEP leaders, and it could be argued that conformity is about power in fluid relational models, whereas a partnership vision requires a wider ownership by partners. In considering personal identity from Ricoeur's perspective, the fluidity of identities described in earlier studies are based on engagement with 'others', and in a partnership context it is likely that at some stage this will mean striving towards agreements on vision and actions that lead to outcomes for 'others'. The work invariably will involve compromise, and for Ricoeur, this promotes reflection on personal behaviours and values in lived events.

4.7 **Summary**

In this chapter, I have provided the theoretical background to this study by focusing on identity theories, and in particular the idea developed by Ricoeur, that a person makes sense of who s/he is as a human being through personal construction (Ricoeur 1992). Ricoeur offers an approach to personal identity built on his philosophical orientation, providing a realist view that confers stability, to the study of individuals, but is also able to account for how this is situated in the broader realities of social and professional life (Flaming 2004). This theoretical approach can be usefully applied to the study of educational leadership in practice. For such a practice to exist there will be a community that share experiences and will measure their own actions against the experiences of 'others' (Ricoeur 1992). The literature shows it is possible to find similarities in theories and views on personal identity from various philosophical, sociological or psychological perspectives. Ricoeur's framework addresses 'self' as a narrative of constancy and change, where sense is made through reflecting on involvement of actions of 'self' and 'others' (Alvesson 2010; Ricoeur 1992; Sparrowe 2005). The significance of self-awareness and how the individual engages in the ongoing activity of self-reflection is discussed widely (Mallett and Wapshott 2012; Ybema

2009; Watson 2008). Ricoeur's position is developed in a way that offers a bridge between realist and post-structuralist accounts, indicating the strengths and limitations and focussing on exploring the tensions of constancy and changes the individual will experience in life. Ricoeur's exploration of how people develop a self-identity leads to a recognition of individual distinctiveness, even if there are similarities with 'others', we are not identical.

I have emphasised the importance of situational context, of stable and dynamic identities of how an individual acts, a belief in taking the right actions. It is also clear that when we act, we do so in the knowledge that we will never be absolutely certain that we know all the particulars of a situation (Beech and Huxham 2003; Flaming 2006; Ricoeur 1992). Some of the findings I have discussed are about in-groups and how that plays out in collaborative settings (Beech and Huxham 2003; Lumby and Morrison 2010). The dynamics of identity work are highlighted, as is the importance of situation and boundary work, in the ways in which individuals positions themselves, or manipulate or transfer identities in different interpersonal settings (Lumby and Morrison 2010). In summary, according to Ricoeur:

- human reality requires a combination of phenomenological description and hermeneutic interpretation
- structuralism alone is not adequate discourse, it requires objective analysis and self-understanding
- there is no un-mediated self-understanding
- we have an individual identity and we are bound up with 'others' and are understood through each 'other'
- what we say and do is important, their significance can come from responses to contexts not wholly of our making, which in some instances can lead to unintended meaning and values.

The literature raises awareness that the situation in which a person finds themselves is important to take into account in personal narrative construction. In the story or example being told the literature highlights it is about finding and affirming 'self' in actions that draw on a past located in time, and the present in the telling, and so it might be that sedimentation offers a glimpse to 'who I am', and yet the passing to time, and what is remembered can be lead to subtle amendments in the present interpretation and anticipated future (Biesta 2007; Scott and Usher 1996).

I believe that using Ricoeur's work on the basis that personal identity is an existence, made up of two parts, me a thing of sameness and as a being who engages with 'others', helps identify and interpret aspects of life experiences of 'who' participant LEP leaders believe they are, and 'what' it is they do in their role. Fundamentally this is in the broadest sense of 'others', being within a partnership, and 'why' they do certain things in continuity of identity and change. In education we are expected to reflect on our practice, often through monitoring, review and evaluation, and so by continuing this practice, it may lead to questioning our own sedimented views and actions, on being a leader and being someone aiming to do the right thing as part of leading a good life.

Chapter 5: **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

5.1 **Introduction**

In this chapter I introduce my research approach, discuss methodological matters and describe the methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation used in this study. The aim of the research is to study professionals who are employed in a lead role capacity on behalf of schools, FE colleges and other organisations committed to working in partnership, described as Local Educational Partnerships (LEPs). These LEPs operate on behalf of a locality, such as a town or district, providing post-14 collaboration. I contribute to knowledge by investigating the characteristics of partnership leaders, including their background and experience, and to see how these influence leaders in their understanding of the role.

The specific RQs introduced in Chapter 1 are:

1. What type of professional takes on a leader role on behalf of LEPs?
2. In what ways do LEP leads draw on their prior professional experience in undertaking their role with organisations in the partnership?
3. How do LEP leaders feel about themselves in the role?
4. What do leaders see as the opportunities and challenges of the role, and how do they construct their responses to these?

To answer these questions, the study primarily investigates the perceptions of 3 female and 3 male leaders, referred to as participants. A further data source is achieved by a second phase of data capture through an on-line questionnaire, leading to a data set featuring 30 leaders, referred to as respondents, the wider study group, and so in some instances the findings relate to a study population of 36.

5.2 **Philosophical and methodological underpinnings**

The approach is based on what Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) refer to as a multiple belief system rather than a specific subjective or objective reality. This means that I have a belief and perspective that reality is subjective, a constructed product reflecting beliefs and value systems, but I acknowledge that there are circumstances when a pragmatist view of reality will be relevant to research. Making choices is part of living and can lead to thinking about a self-interpretation of 'I', 'who I am', 'what I do' and 'why I do it', and this can take place within boundaries and contexts that are not of our own making. To be able to consider multiple views Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) suggest that pragmatism offers a middle position, philosophically and methodologically, to reach some agreement on values.

Ashworth (1997b) draws on Gadamer to argue that being aware of one's pre-understanding, it cannot be put aside, rather it is the starting point for acquiring knowledge, as well as prejudice, both being essential features of understanding. And so in any study, from the start, the researcher is an interpreter, and starts with presumptions 'however ill-informed'. In accordance with this view due consideration is given to my own experience and thoughts, recognising they are important as an instrument in the data collection, analysis and interpretation, and provide objectivity by identifying and highlighting them.

In the first instance any activity with participants starts with a pre-understanding, derived from my own experience of working with leaders of LEPs in different capacities. This includes having been a senior leader in a college, with responsibility for partnerships, followed by a move to a government agency working on post-14 relationships at a county level.

I regard interviews with participants as a learning experience and dialogue, which is about comparing and contrasting meaning between us, by accepting that I am part of the reality involved in forming partial and circular interpretations, where interpreting a part depends on interpreting the whole and the whole depends on interpreting the parts (Scott and Usher 1996). I associate my sense-making with the view of Usher (1996 p19):

> "... both the subject (the researcher) and object (other people) of research have the same characteristics of being interpreters or sense-seekers ..."

a process described as the double hermeneutic. I assume that the examples and answers participants tell me are shaped by their thoughts and understanding and so what I hear and transcribe is a construction of their making. Likewise when I interpret the examples, this is my discourse as I construct my own meanings of the meanings the participant has constructed, in the knowledge that an important characteristic of the hermeneutic circularity of interpretation in what Scott and Usher (2011 p30) describe as a:

> "... background of assumptions and presuppositions, beliefs and practices, of which both the subjects and objects of research are never fully aware".

The reiteration involved between participant and researcher negotiations and agreements are not distinct activities, but form part of the dialogue in the interviews and subsequent agreement of transcripts. I have tried to understand the meaning that each individual has constructed about their experiences.

Findings are based on participant interpretations and constructions of truth which enable participant validation, and where I am aware of any bias and value assumptions that indicate conflicting evidence or alternative views, I endeavour to state that this is the case (Darke Shanks and Broadbent 1998; Kvale and Brinkman 2009; Scott and Usher 1996). This study is not value or bias-free, by the very fact that it is informed by both my own views and beliefs, and those of the individuals who have participated (Darke Shanks and Broadbent 1998).

If it is accepted that the role of working on behalf of a partnership is driven by a desire to develop that partnership, the main aim being to make a difference to those studying and learning in the area, then it seems to me that I am an interpretive researcher. I am looking for a way in which the world can be understood and in this specific instance to understand and interpret what a leader does, thinks and says.

In adopting a pragmatist position I can take account of what I can, and want to, learn from a specific setting (Morgan 2007). In looking at the comparison of objective and subjective conceptions of reality offered by Cohen Manion and Morrison 2007, my line of thinking is more comparable with that of subjectivism and that my knowledge claims are based on a combination of constructivism and pragmatism (Cresswell 2003).

5.3 **Research strategy**

Much of the literature on education research leads to a view that the tools and procedures used are linked to a particular version of how the world is being interpreted. Both the case study and mixed methods are regarded as significant in educational research and according to Flyvberg (2006) a sound justification for using methods is what best helps answer the research questions. In this section I will outline and justify my choice of using a case study design and a mixed methods approach, which combines qualitative and quantitative data in a single case. I go on to describe and outline the case study strategy using the steps of unit of analysis, data collection, method, rigour, and write-up taken from Darke Shanks and Broadbent (1998) and Yin (1981; 1994).

5.3.1 **The case study**

Case studies are regarded as partial accounts, which involve selection through all stages from the sampling, editing, through to the presentation of the material, and so the unit of analysis, or case, in this study is a group of individuals who each have experience of being a LEP leader. This helps to gain greater insight into the LEP leader role that lies at the heart of this study (Stake 1978; Yin 1981).

A case study is bounded and distinctive by giving prominence to what is, and what is not, the case. This case study is of *leaders as people*, with a focus on their experience, as individuals, and how their professional identity manifests. It is about understanding the case, about wanting to know more about the people who take on this role, about adding what Stake (1978) describes as existing experience to humanistic understanding, being the discourse of persons struggling to increase their understanding of social matter, which match the characteristics of the case study. Another benefit a case study offers is that in order to bring rigour, it relies on a clearly structured approach in its analysis and recording, at the same time as offering flexibility.

Through a pilot study the approach was found to be well-suited to understanding interactions, providing specific examples of people in real situations (Darke Shanks and Broadbent 1998). Case studies can use multiple sources of evidence and data types, and the following discussion is related to the design of a single case study. The strengths that Cohen Manion and Morrison (2007) associate with case studies will enable the opportunity to find and portray what it is like to be a LEP leader, hear of participants lived experiences, along with their thoughts and feelings of situations. In wanting to broaden recognition of the roles undertaken by the participants, I seek to faithfully represent them, and so this study is what MacDonald and Walker (1975) classify as a democratic type, and involves agreeing and getting consent from participants on the ownership, use of and accuracy of the data they have provided for analysis, and negotiation at stages in the findings.

The case has a narrow focus with the intention of sharing what it means for those individuals that take on a LEP leader role, and is not about partnerships or leadership, although their role is bounded by both. This means the case is set within the boundary of LEPs and focuses on individual leaders. The political agenda leads to an unstable environment for LEPs, because of growing autonomy made available to schools, and other new and changing policies for post-14 education. The case itself is also bounded by the time and venues in which the participant data has been collected, and the imposed structure of a semi-structured interview. In a very practical sense, this results in a variation on times of interviews and volume of text captured (compared in Appendix 9.2). Within education there is recognition that using the case study can mean that there is a need to fit within the timescales of the participants, rather than the social science tradition of longitudinal studies (MacDonald and Walker 1975).

For case study research Yin (1981) advises that prior expert knowledge should be made clear and so in Chapter 1, I outlined my professional experience. I acknowledge that for me, the participants in the study are seen as having expert knowledge and this is evident in the findings. The other expert knowledge used in this study comes from the literature review, what others have found, and this is being used along with the findings from the pilot study, which encouraged me to want to extend what is known of LEP leaders and to hear more examples and views from individuals.

In being mindful of the need for rigour I endeavour to provide detailed information on the methods used in data collection and analysis. To provide sufficient breadth and depth of data to address the questions, data is captured in a bottom-up approach, with a narrow perspective primarily based on 6 participants, which is justified in the context of enriching understanding (Eisenhardt 1989). A variety of instruments are used, detailed in section 5.7, and an account of how the data is organised, and made accessible is provided (Appendix 9.3).

The case study is able to offer flexibility, and so for some it is seen as having a lack of rules, meaning that research can be open to real and imagined abuse (Macdonald and Walker 1975; Darke Shanks and Broadbent 1998). The question of rigour is addressed by using a chain of evidence at each analytic step leading to a conclusion, an example is given in Appendix 9.4. To help strengthen the findings consideration is also given to published research, which I have judged to be relevant (Eisenhardt 1989).

There is the matter of recognising and attempting to address the identified weaknesses, and in respect of the case study Cohen Manion and Morrison (2007) indicate that there is usually the inability to generalise, difficulties in cross-checking data, and observer bias. Whilst there is a view that generalisation is unlikely through a case study Stake (1978) advocates that it can do so for the reader because:

> "... naturalistic generalizations develop within a person as a product of experience. They derive from the tacit knowledge of how things are, why they are, how people feel about them ...." (p6).

It is the basis of intimate knowledge, gained through experience of cases that one becomes an expert, which according to Flyvbjerg (2006) is the highest level in the learning process.

Flyvbjerg (2006) challenges those that declare weaknesses like those given above because whilst they are useful to be sensitized to, they demonstrate a lack of knowledge of case study research. This case is not about generalising, but about the individual, within a context, and so according to Flyvbjerg (2006) it legitimately can mean different things to different people.

The writing of the study findings takes account of the guidance provided by Yin (1981) and MacDonald and Walker (1975) amongst others in that it needs to show rigour by being organised around specific propositions and questions. For each topic finding, interview segments include unedited responses from participants, and wherever possible I attempt to add credibility.

5.3.2 **Mixed methods**

I have chosen to use mixed methods as part of the data collection and analysis because it is recognised as an important tool for educational research. The rationale for mixed methods is that the practical and applied research philosophy enables an iterative approach which can offer a balance and compromise in the research (Bergman 2010; Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003). It is assumed that by bringing qualitative and quantitative data together a better understanding of the research problem can be achieved, and this case study is an example where quantitative data can play a supportive role to an interpretive qualitative framework, to provide a richer description of a case. (Creswell and Garrett 2008; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004).

The study is designed with phases of qualitative and quantitative data collection. The numeric data assists in drawing conclusions based on participant data, leading to claims on what they do in their role and experience they have, relevant to answering RQ1 (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). My approach is to privilege the perspective of participating individuals, to try to understand their interpretations of the world, and so the priority is given to the qualitative data.

According to Bryman et al (1988) using a qualitative approach is useful for understanding leadership as it generates a deeper understanding, and implies the interpretation of:

> "... action, events and perspectives through the eyes of those being investigated" (p16).

The pragmatic perspective of collecting numeric data is used as a counterbalance where it is regarded as valid to do so, such as in comparisons of partnership environments, and professional qualifications of LEP leaders and will add depth to the case findings (Morgan 2007). To help in understanding data collection, I have followed the recommendations of Ivankova et al (2006), and given priorities to different data types and phases in the design (Figure 5.1).

Debates on mixed methods research continue, particularly on issues of the language used, the types of design, how the data are mixed, what value-added the method brings and the techniques of conducting a mixed methods study (Creswell and Garrett 2008). Criticism of mixed methods tends to come from a purist perspective and is based on a particular world view that quantitative and qualitative need to be separate (Bryman 2004). My combining a questionnaire with a semi-structured interview could be regarded as being superficial and not a real combination. However, there is also the thinking that perfect associations are rare and practical considerations can lead to methods that are more flexible (Bryman 2004). A standard of consensus for mixed methods is yet to be reached, but according to Creswell and Garrett (2008) it "is here to stay" (p328) and for many, offers a logical and practical alternative (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). I believe that a case study, with mixed methods is the right combination for this study.

5.4 **The pilot study**

Because an earlier pilot study is influential in my design, it is important to provide a brief overview. The aim of the pilot study was to test out the feasibility of the research methods, the format and output from using a short questionnaire and semi-structured interviews which included a prioritising activity. The intention was to explore whether professional background and experience influenced 14-19 leaders. I started my pilot study by identifying LEP leaders by their different professional backgrounds.

The method was modelled on a framework described by Gorard (2005) as a full research cycle acknowledging that there would be subjective judgement in analyses. Developing a case study meant that I could take account of what people say, do, make or produce (Burgess Sieminski and Arthur 2006). The methods were found to generate sufficient data to answer the research questions.

5.5 **Process**

The process for the current study developed from that used in the pilot study. The study is planned in a way that allows development of a detailed view on an individual basis set in the context of a wider population. Experience from the pilot study led to a recognition that a visual model of the procedures is valuable when combining qualitative and quantitative data, and so for the phases post-pilot a procedure model is included (Figure 5.1).

The procedural design uses a vertical layout, and flows down through two phases. The emboldened capital or lower case of data type indicates the priority of the data so a capital **Q** is the highest order and a lower case **q** is the lowest, which becomes meaningful when you look at the action boxes of connecting and integrating data. Also, inductive data from phase 1 serves as input to deductive data in the revised questionnaire (connecting **q**uan and **Q**ual) before entering phase 2 (Figure 5.1).

Phase (Note: Initial capital is higher order of data)	**Timeline**	**Procedure** (Research Instrument)	**Product**	**Supports Research Question**
quan data collection 1	Apr-Jul 12	Pre-interview Questionnaire (n=6)	Numeric data	1,2
Qual data collection 1		• Semi-structured interviews (n=6) • Prioritising activity (n=6)	Textual data	1,2,3,4
connecting **q**uan and **Q**ual	Oct 12-Apr 13	Reviewing questionnaire	Revised questionnaire	1,2
Quan data collection 2		2nd Questionnaire Unrestricted (n=30)	• Numeric data • Comparative data	1,2
Integration **Q**ual and **Q**uan 2	Oct-Nov 13	Interpretation of the **Q**ual/**Q**uan results	• Findings • Future research	1,2,3,4

Figure 5.1: Design procedure for mixed data collection (Ivankova et al 2006; Sandelowski 2000)

5.6 **Ethical considerations**

It could be argued that research is, by nature, an ethical enterprise, and Bryman (2004) argues that the debate about the main elements of ethical enquiry has changed little since the 1960s. What is still regarded as crucial are the ...

> "... relations between researchers and research participants in the course of an investigation" (p507).

In this study ethics were considered in line with guidance from the University, which led to recognition of the centrality of human participation, and a review of my intentions against the definition of vulnerable participants as defined by the British Psychological Society (2010) (Appendix 9.5).

I chose to give participants the right to determine what, of their information, was included in the final report. The approach taken is in line with what Scott (1996) describes as a democratic researcher, where the researchers ...

> "... seek to allow participants in their projects rights of veto over what is considered germane to the study and what is included in the final report" (p69).

The assumption is that negotiations can take place on an equal basis and are implicitly concerned with fairness, accuracy and relevancy of what is going to be reported.

I had also to consider previous relationships and the possibility of power issues. Three of the participants were known to me, one from when I worked in a college, and a further two from working on county partnerships, although none had ever worked directly for me. During my work with the two county level participants I had been in a position of power in that I managed funding streams. I would also call upon them to attend meetings with me and to prepare reports on progress of their partnerships. However, by the time of the study I had moved role and was no longer directly involved in the county, and so if anything the power was no longer mine, but more with them, as by accepting the invitation to participate, they were able to control and determine what they wanted to say during the interview and subsequent validation checks. I acknowledge that by having been in previous work relationships, it offered the prospect of knowing about some of the work they were involved in, particularly with the participant who knew me through project work at the college.

5.7 **Data collection and sampling**

In this section I outline the following techniques used in the two phases of data collection:

Phase 1

- participant questionnaire
- semi-structured interviews with individual participants
- interview questions
- prioritising activity for use within the semi-structured interviews
- digital recordings of interviews

Phase 2

- respondent on-line questionnaire.

A combination of data collection instruments is a strength in this research. Here, as part of rigour, I give an account of the sampling strategy, starting with an overview of the strategy and then describing the different approaches involved in the logical order of the collection instruments, and how I anticipate they might illuminate my concepts (Mason 2002). The overall sample size is small (Figure 5.2), this is because by the time the study was able to progress the drive towards 14-19 partnerships had all but gone, and so as a matter of urgency it was a case of using local intelligence and contacts to reach active LEPs.

Data collection phase	Sample	Instruments and use in data
Phase 1	6 participants	Pre-interview questionnaire Semi-structured interviews
Phase 2	30 respondents	On-line questionnaire (the wider group)
Overall total	36	The full sample (the study population 36) Used in data analysis as 6 and 30

Figure 5.2: The sample composition

5.7.1 **Phase 1 – Sampling strategy**

The first phase of data collection in the study is an opportunity sample. The county where I aimed to focus my semi-structured interviews should have provided access to a sample of 6 LEP leaders. This approach had supervisory support as being the best way forward, as time was against the alternative of sending out a questionnaire, and then selecting on the basis of a stratified random sample.

The study is predicated on the premise that there are leaders of LEPs who have different professional backgrounds. I needed to ensure that selected leaders would provide a range of different backgrounds, to attempt to get different perspectives, for example a qualified school teacher, a qualified FE lecturer, a work based training assessor. The implications being that the sample would be likely to provide answers to the RQs and lead to suitable data. I was able to identify 3 volunteers through my previous work with partnerships. To achieve the agreed sample, former work colleague leads secured the final 3, all unknown to me, resulting in all 6 participants being located in the East Midlands. The profile of participants is given in Figure 5.3.

Participant	Male/Female	Age	Job Title	Sector experience	Known to researcher
A	M	26-36	Partnership Director	Private training provider	Yes
B	F	48-59	Director 14-19 'B'	Secondary and Sixth form	Yes
C	M	37-47	14-19 Partnership Director	Further education	No
D	M	60+	Consortium Co-ordinator	Secondary and Sixth form	No
E	F	48-59	Director 'E' Partnership	Higher	No
F	F	48-59	Consortium Director	Higher	Yes

Figure 5.3: Profile of participants (n=6)

5.7.2 **Phase 1 - Participant questionnaire**

For the first phase, I designed a questionnaire for participants to complete (Appendix 9.6). The first page provides introductory text on the rationale for the study, an explanation of why the data is being collected, along with how confidentiality and anonymity would be handled. There are 11 questions written to capture data on the profiles of participants, and then a further 4 questions seeking data on their partnership membership. The questionnaire relies on self-completion by the opportunity participant sample. The completed questionnaire would provide background detail and be used to check facts during the interview, and then later be included in a wider data set.

The protocol for engaging with those participants involved in the semi-structured interviews was to establish contact by telephone in the first instance, and then follow up with an e-mail. The decisions running alongside the protocol are outlined in the design process chart (Figure 5.1). A convenient date was agreed with each participant, scheduled for 1.5 hours, at a location of their choice. Shortly before the meeting I sent an e-mail indicating the likely areas/topics to be explored (Appendix 9.7). A hard copy of their completed questionnaire featured as a referral resource in the semi-structured interview.

5.7.3 **Semi-structured interviews**

Cohen Manion and Morrison (2007 p349) consider the interview process as:

> "... a conversation with a specific purpose" and one that is "initiated and constructed by the interviewer ...",

with the aim of obtaining relevant information. The semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore perceptions of background and how it plays out in their role. The intention was to examine in greater depth how leaders feel about themselves in the role and whether a perceived identity plays out in any of their activities. Data on participant perceptions, thoughts and feelings are collected through the individual face-to-face interviews, and where possible captured in the transcripts. As the interviewer, I am involved within the case because of my asking the questions, clarifying any points that a participant raises with regard to the questions, as well as looking for confirmation on what I believe has been said.

Kvale (2006) is concerned that the interview, although one of the most used methods of gathering data, is also one of the least analysed. In particular Kvale (2006) draws attention to the issues relating to power dynamics that lie with the interviewer, not least, the one-directional questioning and the fact that the interview situation itself can be defined by the interviewer. The counter measure, which I have chosen to use, is outlined by Kvale (2006) as being where the participants are involved in:

> "... a form of validation referred to as 'member check', as an attempt to obtain consensual knowledge" (p485) ...

by sharing the initial indicators of what might be the findings and cautioned about the approach because:

> "In practice, few interview researchers let their subjects have the final say on what to report and what interpretations to present in their dissertations" (p485).

5.7.4 **Interview questions**

Leading on from the 4 RQs are Interview Questions (IQ) intended to encourage explanatory answers that could be related to more than one of the RQs. Using open-ended style questions, I hoped to tease out what Mason (2002) describes as excavated knowledge, and also knowledge construct. In total there are 5 IQs of which IQs1, 2 and 4 have further Sub Questions (SQ). In thinking through what I hoped to get from the participants, I had to take account that I might not get the content or level of detail, and this would involve on the spot decisions, as to whether responses would be useful and this is the purpose of the SQs, available for optional use. Figure 5.4 provides an example of the approach taken to the questions. The relationship between all RQs and IQs is given in Appendix 9.8. As part of IQ5, a prioritising activity is included to focus on themes identified in other research, outlined in more detail in section 5.7.5.

RQ4: What do leaders see as the opportunities and challenges of the role, and how do they construct their responses to these?	
Supported by: IQ2	What do you find satisfying or good about the role you do?
IQ2 Sub Q	What do you think it is about you that helps?
IQ3	What would you describe as your greatest strengths, and how do you use them within your role?
IQ4	What has been your greatest achievement in the role?
IQ4 Sub Qs	Why was this? Which aspects of your professional experience do you think helped in the achievement?
IQ5	What are the challenges of the job?
Rationale: IQs2-4 are looking for examples of what has been perceived as opportunities in the role (RQ4). IQ5 is primarily looking at what are perceived as challenges in the role. IQs2-4 are worded to focus on the individual, with (SQs) written to delve deeper into their thinking about themselves.	

Figure 5.4: Example of structure relationship between Research and Interview Questions

5.7.5 **Prioritising activity**

Based on the positive experience of using a prioritising activity in the pilot study, another was prepared as part of IQ5. I knew that Huxham, with others, had conducted relevant research involving partnership leaders in the public sector, and chose to use the concerns and issues identified by partnership leaders as the basis for the activity (Beech and Huxham 2003). The themes used in the prioritising activity are:

- Managing Aims
- Accountability
- Managing Power
- Building Trust
- Appropriate Working Practices
- Membership Structures
- Communication
- Leadership.

The content of the activity cards can be seen in Appendix 9.9, and further detail on the themes is in the literature review, section 3.4.

Participants were asked to look at the cards (Appendix 9.9) and select any they felt were relevant to their role, as an issue or opportunity, and to add new themes that they felt were important, and then prioritise them, giving reasons for their choices. My perception is that participants felt at ease with the activity in that it gave an opportunity to think about specific themes in relation to their role, with answers based on their experiences, and sometimes broadened to wider comparisons of themselves to others. On reflection, IQ5 flowed more easily for participants because it wasn't directed in a way that focussed on them as the individual in the spotlight, whereas all other IQs did, a consequence being that the volume of valuable data was more than had been anticipated. The result of this activity leads to a belief that people can find it difficult to talk about themselves, which has implications when considering personal identity. However, another benefit is that this activity provides a stable structure within the answers, offering some degree of reliability.

5.7.6 **Digital recordings**

All participants gave permission for the interviews to be recorded. In my opinion, the value of using digital recordings within the interviews outweighs the drawbacks of the tool. It enables the interviewer to really engage in listening and observing the participant, and limits the reliance on taking notes. Offering limitless playbacks, the digital source acts as a memory prompt at times in the interview, such as identifying hesitation or times of emphasis. Detail on the length and word counts for each interview and any incidents noted during the interviews are provided (Appendix 9.2).

5.7.7 **Phase 2 – Sampling strategy**

A second phase of data collection took place after the 6 participants had been interviewed. The data collection was extended by broadening the sample to include other LEP leaders, referred to as respondents, who would contribute by completing a questionnaire. To some extent the use of questionnaires in two different phases is an attempt to provide facts, and led to what Fogelman (2002) calls 'simple results' and Bryman (2004) likens to …:

> "… discourse analysis in action, producing facts through quantification rhetoric" (p374).

In this study using a questionnaire to capture respondent data is a complementary strength to the research. Using my knowledge of existing organisations that might be aware of partnerships, I sought their help with a viral sampling strategy. Of the 33 organisations/associations contacted, 3 assisted by cascading and promoting the study to their members, and a 4th provided direct contact details. Through the Skills Funding Agency I identified funded projects implicitly requiring partnership, European Social Funding (ESF), 'Not in Education or Employment Training' (NEET) and 'Raising Participation Age' (RPA). I trawled the web using keywords such as learning/14-19/educational partnerships, to find LEPs. Figure 5.5 provides an overview of the phase 2 sampling strategy:

Type of contact	Number sent (n=152)	Resulting in completed questionnaires (n=30)
	Failed deliveries 17 (n=135)	
Organisations/Associations	33	0 (note may contribute to the 'unknown 5')
Skills Funding Agency listings	39	5
Leads given from other individuals (some known through work)	9	4
Returns without known route (forwarded from a contact or Association/Organisation)	N/A	5
Identified from web	71	16

Figure 5.5: Phase 2 respondent sample total

The extended period of the on-line questionnaire ran from November 2012–April 2013 and resulted in 30 completed returns, approximately 22%. As already mentioned, 14-19 policy reforms were starting to unravel, and earlier partnership listings were no longer reliable, and so there is no way of knowing how representative the sample is.

5.7.8 **Phase 2 – respondent questionnaire**

Data collection in this phase involved another self-completion questionnaire (Appendix 9.10). The purpose of the respondent questionnaire was primarily to capture data to assist in answering RQ1, and could be compared with the phase 1 participant questionnaire. In the context of whether there was anything to modify/add in the development stage of the respondent questionnaire, a review of the data collected from phase 1 was conducted (Eisenhardt 1989; Yin 1994). There was no need to change the characteristics used in the phase 1 participant questionnaire, but because of the emerging themes, both from the data and literature review, the respondent questionnaire was extended by 3 questions, taking account of the effect that the changing nature of partnerships was having on the role, and what leaders did as part of that role, such as project work and funding initiatives.

The respondent questionnaire was going to be distributed in a viral way, and so it needed to be reliable and as user-friendly as possible. Colleagues tested the on-line questionnaire, resulting in the introduction of check boxes and drop-down lists to collect responses. Final testing proved that the questionnaire could be completed within a 10-minute time frame, and judged fit for purpose. The respondent questionnaire was made available through a web page, which gave further information on the project and a link to download the questionnaire, meaning the contact e-mail could be shorter, and allow for onward transmission by others, to try and reach other LEP leaders. In Figure 5.6, the response summary shows that, to varying degrees, there is representation from all English regions. Appendix 9.11 gives the respondent profiles.

Respondent Questionnaire Returns (n=30)	**Region**
1	North East
4	North West
2	Yorkshire
1	East Midlands
4	West Midlands
5	South West
4	East
2	London
5	South East

Figure 5.6: Summary of returns to phase 2 questionnaire

5.8 **Approach to data analysis**

I will now turn to discussing the approach to data analysis. When faced with the data from the interviews, the words of Bryman (2004) rang true:

> "What do I do with it now?" and "There are few well established and widely accepted rules for the analysis of qualitative data,... and many writers would argue that this is not necessarily desirable" (p399*)*.

Data analysis is recognised as being difficult in a case study, and to help in the process Eisenhardt (1989) suggests it is important to become familiar with the case. On further reading it seemed a pragmatic approach of considering stages to data handling would help, and in the following section I elaborate on the data handling framework.

5.8.1 **Stages in analysis**

Sandelowski (1995) suggests two stages for handling data. The first being data analysis, which is initially about looking at the data to get a sense of the whole, extracting initial key topics and leading to a second stage of interpretation. Whilst Sandelowski is advocating that the analysis stage is also about reducing the data, and that was not my intention, her suggestion is a helpful way in which to start the process. I also considered the literal, interpretative and reflexive reading types identified by Mason (2002). I started by analysing the transcripts for their composition against the RQs, and any comments that arose in the process of the interviews themselves, becoming a reflexive document in which I organised my thoughts on the data capture, such as how often I used the SQs, and comparison of sequences across the interviews (Appendix 9.2). In a literal sense of reading the data as a whole, key topics emerged (Figure 5.7).

Phase	Data captured through:	Initial key topics
1	Six completed questionnaires from participants with data against 15 questions	• LEP leaders come with a range of professional backgrounds
1	• Six transcriptions totalling over 51000 words • Six sets of a prioritised activity covering eight themes of concern	• The role is complex • Wide variety of tasks and skills involved in undertaking the role • Unstable environment (political) – uncertainties for own future and that of the partnership • Level of project focus • Identified concerns seem relevant to all
2	30 returned questionnaires giving respondent data against 18 questions	• LEP leaders come with a range of professional backgrounds • Wide variety of tasks and skills involved in undertaking the role • Most are involved in project work • Small number of FE colleges involved

Figure 5.7: Captured data analysis

I then felt able to finalise a structure for further analysis and interpretation, concurring with the view of Burnard (1991) that:

> "... everything said in an interview is said in a context. Merely to cut out strings of words, devoid of context is to risk altering the meaning of what was said" (p463).

To take an approach that was based on codification, would result in the data being fragmented, which I did not think was suitable for dealing with examples that my participants had provided. I didn't want to deconstruct the transcripts, and so I have looked at the qualitative data from two angles, holistically and themed, and then analysis of the quantitative data sets leading to some integration in the use of the data. I will explain in more detail the phased analysis design (Figure 5.8), adopted from reading Cohen Manion and Morrison (2007); Plowright (2011) and Sandelowski (1995; 2000).

5.8.2 **Phase 1 - the holistic approach**

The holistic approach outlined in Figure 5.8 takes account of how the data was read. Analysis started at the literal level by first reading through each transcript in order to get a general sense and reflect on its overall meaning, and in transcribing the interview, it was possible to become immersed in the data, check, re-run the recording and re-read the transcript in reaching a finished document that could be shared with the participant. All emerging thoughts arising from reading the data were captured, (Figure 5.7) so that they could be considered in more depth, as part of interpretation, across all transcripts, in line with the holistic approach of the first reading. An adaption of guidance given by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) which is based on Miles and Huberman, enabled the text to be kept in context by:

1. reading interview transcripts to make sense and gain a general picture
2. scan each interview for frequency and use of words and read each interview again to identify and notate possible, themes, units of meaning and patterns ensuring that the meaning was kept in context
3. constructing a visual display of the different elements together with the sense of story
4. revisiting transcripts for further comparison, looking for individual opportunities and challenges, and then across transcripts for similarities and differences.

First phase - interview participants analysis
(two kinds of qualitative data)

Holistic approach	Theme approach
First reading - to gain sense of general picture	First reading - marking of text for themes
Second reading – search for frequencies and use of categories of words - key elements of each interview identified - units of meaning	Second reading - select and structure for personal identity consideration using experience and interaction (Figure 5.9)
Third reading – visual display of elements indicating a sense of event/example	Third reading - rewrite the example
Fourth reading – text identified for further comparison	

Second phase of analysis

- quantitative data collated and graphically represented
- quantitative identified for support of qualitative

Interpretation

- focus on answering RQs
- related to personal identity framework

Figure 5.8: Visual display of analysis phases

As part of a systematic approach, I also took into account concepts that occurred from other published research found in the early stages of the literature review. For the second reading, I used pairing (chosen by looking for commonality in experience) to help me become intimately familiar with the case, and in so doing look for similarities and differences between each pair (Eisenhardt 1998). Burnard (1991) cautions the researcher to remain aware of comparing one person's response to another, and I felt that analytic induction wasn't appropriate because its focus is on identifying problems (Bryman 2004). This meant that to handle the volume of data, the approach was to find patterns and differences that could be considered as 'units of meaning' aligned to the RQs. The transcripts also needed to maintain any accounts that related to personal experience and meaning, and so short accounts are identified from the transcripts, intended to provide meaningful events forming how each participant views themselves within the framework of the LEP leader role and the partnership for whom they work (Gubrium and Holstein 1997).

5.8.3 **Phase 2 - The theme approach**

I then searched in context and holistically, looking specifically at the theme of personal identity. For the second reading (Figure 5.8) I wanted to consider the qualitative data through a themed approach that related to the individual. Guidance from Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002) is used in the design structure which helps to review the examples (as part of dealing with the data) in the second reading stage (Figure 5.9). By using a type of narrative structure I am able to make sense of the meaning of events, through temporality of past, present and future as part of continuity, looking for information of past experiences and actions of an event or intent.

At the same time I can look at interaction, of 'I', their personal experiences in relation to 'others' within a specific situation (Beech and Huxham 2003; Ollerenshaw and Creswell 2002). Through the theme it is possible to relate to each individual, and consider the theory of personal identity of, 'what I do' and 'why I do it', related to 'who I am' (example given in Appendix 9.12).

Interaction		Continuity		
Personal	Social	Past	Present	Future
Inward looking	Context: other people Purpose	Experiences	Current thinking, feelings and actions	Looking forward, implied experiences

Figure 5.9: Approach to re-storying data

5.8.4 **Phase 2 – Quantitative data**

From the holistic readings in phase 1, a picture emerged of the type of activities the role involved, and this data was taken into consideration and formed additional questions in the respondent questionnaire. Although there is insufficient data for statistical analysis, the numeric data is analysed through Excel. By combining and comparing the participant and respondent questionnaire data it is clear that LEP leaders in the study come with a range of professional backgrounds, and a clearer picture of why it is that studies on partnerships declare that they are complex, as data shows that LEPs vary considerably in size and composition.

5.8.5 **Phase 2 - Interpretation using all data sets**

Because two questionnaires have been used, bringing the responses together is illustrative, such as in addressing RQ1. The structure of the findings are written to resemble the knowledge gained from exploring personal identity, and the interpretation of what is considered in identity construction, of a LEP leader. This leads to identifying the data through 'what I am', this is 'what I do' as a leader, and this is 'why I do' the job. The combination of data is particularly helpful in considering 'what I do'.

By using the approach outlined in Figures 5.1 and 5.8, it demonstrates what Yin (1994) refers to as an explicit chain leading to a conclusion (example in Appendix 9.4). An instance of how the quantitative data has helped in interpretation is given in relation to the existence of partnerships (Figure 6.13).

5.9 **Approach to rigour**

It is important to demonstrate to others that the questions, methods and research practice are honest and accurate, this means satisfying oneself, and being able to explain to any reader, why they should believe that it is reliable and accurate (Mason 2002). In this section I indicate the steps taken to give rigour to this study, with the aim of providing sufficient detail of the case and how the results are arrived at in relation to the propositions or RQs (Yin 1994). Rigour is concerned with both integrity and competence needing to be demonstrable throughout the study (Tobin and Begley 2004), and the stage of engaging in reflexivity (Mason 2002) has been taken in summarising in Figure 5.10 where rigour is considered in this study.

Stages in approach to rigour	**Action(s) taken**
Indicated when different data sets will be used	A systematic approach was designed to ensure the data was not fragmented during analysis (procedure given in Figure 5.1). In the findings, when data sets from all instances are compared, as part of aiding explanation and findings, the different sets are identified. The ultimate check being that the RQs2, 3 and 4 are answered (Creswell 2003; Darke, Shanks and Broadbent 1998; Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003)
Identified and taken actions for data cross checks, including member checking for credibility	The study uses multiple sources of data. Areas for error checking were identified and cross check actions taken. Member checking occurs in several instances because of the agreement to seek an agreed interpretation with each of the 6 participants (Appendix 9.13) (Ashworth 1997; Kvale 1995) continued ...

Stages in approach to rigour	Action(s) taken
Collated details of interviews themselves	As an initial stage in the analysis, reflection took place on the overall process of the data collected through interviews (section 5.8.1) and led to a reflective aide-mémoire document (Appendix 9.2).
Considered emerging findings in context of remaining open to ideas	The two phase approach to data collection enabled the analysis from transcripts to be considered before moving onto phase 2. Emerging findings made it possible to consider activities a LEP leader might engage in, and this information informed the respondent questionnaire, and supports the answering of RQs3 and 4. As recommended by Eisenhardt (1989) published research was reflected upon in that this could strengthen emerging findings, an example being the common findings of external influences on partnerships (section 3.2).
Outlined approach to interpretation	The approach to interpretation is based on treating the transcripts as a whole and as meaningful parts. The interpretation is supported with comparable data and benefits from the complementarity of the mixed method evaluation which enhances illustrations (Greene Caracelli and Graham 1989). For example in understanding the type of activities undertaken by those in the role. Evidence chains were also developed to show steps taken to reach each conclusion (example in Appendix 9.4), and assists in supporting dependability and confirmability (Yin 1994).
Considered the role of the researcher	A reflexive approach was adopted throughout the study. This included monitoring the possible effects of my own history, positionality and highlighting to the reader my professional experience (see section 1.4 for more detail) continued …

Stages in approach to rigour	Action(s) taken
Contained sufficient evidence to support findings and transferability	The findings are based on meaning and illumination (Usher 1996). In writing up the findings evidence is supported by data that is tabulated or graphically represented. Thick descriptions are also included, with identified beginning and ending of extracts, taken from participant transcripts (Chapter 6).

Figure 5.10: Actions taken to demonstrate rigour (Darke, Shanks and Broadbent 1998; Houghton et al 2013)

5.10 **Limitations**

The study does have limitations, as in all case study research, particularly in respect of generalisation. The small sample size limits the extent to which the findings can be transferred or generalised to other educational leader studies. There is a degree of generalisation in the study by looking across interview transcripts, or through results from the prioritising activity (Appendix 9.17) and questionnaires - this is for illustrative purposes rather than transferability.

Like many case studies this is also limited by the particular time at which it was conducted. By the time the study was approved, the political landscape had changed significantly and meant that access to potential participants was challenging, particularly as the 14-19 reforms no longer had to be implemented within a set time frame and priorities attracting funding had become uncertain. The anticipated main source for gathering numeric data of the published partnership contacts for diplomas became unviable, and led to a range of alternatives being used, not least by keyword searching the web to identify existing partnerships.

It has to be recognised that there remains the problem that the participants may have been giving responses which they thought I wanted to hear. Lumby and Morrison (2010) conclude that gathering data could be problematic because of power structures within groups, where participants may be reluctant to reveal their characteristics and experience. This issue may be relevant with 3 of the participants who knew me through work relationships. On the other hand, by my knowing 3 of the participants it is likely that there was trust which has improved the legitimacy of some of the data.

The qualification and experience information gathered through the questionnaire acted as a resource to aid discussion within the interviews. At the first interview, I asked additional questions, to ascertain thoughts on what the future held as well as to provide an opportunity for participants to mention anything else that they felt was important to them, which hadn't been covered. For consistency the additional questions formed part of all following interviews.

The interview, as a research technique may serve several purposes. In particular it allows access to information that would otherwise not be accessible and provides a rich source of empirical data. According to Tuckman's (1972) description of the interview:

> "... by providing access to what is 'inside a person's head', [it] makes it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge or information), what a person likes or dislikes (values and preferences), and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs)" (cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007 p351).

I considered that through the interview itself it could also lead to data being made available to me of events in the participant's past, and access to situations at which I was not present, if I asked appropriate questions and encouraged participants to answer freely (Burgess 1984 cited in Scott 1996).

Based on experience of using a prioritising activity in the pilot study, I anticipated a ranking request would provide some generalisability. This did not materialise in a robust way as one participant initially said it was impossible to rank, and chose to assemble the order as if preparing to start-up a new project partnership.

A personal disappointment has been the fact that it has not been possible to follow through on my commitment of consensual validation, engaging with participants at stages in the emerging findings. The planned timeline for my study had to be revised because of the unpredictable turns that occur in life, which in my case has been health related. There was a significant time lapse between agreeing the transcripts and although I did e-mail participants after the first delay, it did not seem appropriate to seek further time and engagement from them after a second delay.

5.11 **Summary**

In introducing the research strategy I have outlined the theme of this study in the context of my philosophical and methodological underpinnings. I go on to describe the research strategy and choice of a case study with mixed methods. The learning points from the pilot study inform the study, for example in the design of the case. A detailed account of the sampling strategies, research instruments, data analysis and interpretation is given so that it would be possible to replicate the case to enhance robustness. A visual representation of the level and phased approach to data is included.

I have explained that in this study the qualitative data is captured as a bottom-up approach with a narrow perspective because of the restriction of participants. The qualitative data collection method offers detailed data for analysis as interviews are conducted with leaders known to have different backgrounds. I indicate how quantitative data is captured, checked, used and presented. The justification for this approach is based on my intention to enrich understanding rather than prove a theory.

Chapter 6: **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

6.1 **Introduction**

The gathered data is intended to help in researching LEP leaders, to gain an insight to the role and the individual. The case study focus is on the experience of individual LEP leaders, 6 participants, supported by respondent data from a wider group of 30 LEP leaders, and presented through a structure which uses an identity concept. This is based on Ricoeur's narrative and personal identity theories on the assumption that a person makes sense of who s/he is as a human being situated in the realities of a social and professional life. I am looking to identify data where the leader is making sense of being a leader, drawing on their background in relation to self, based on a concept of identity of 'who I am' and the significance of 'others', in 'what I do as a leader' and 'why I do the job'. The structure draws on my understanding of Ricoeur's theories, involvement with 'others', and of associated relationships within partnership (Flaming 2005; Ricoeur 1992).

Looking for how leaders use or reveal aspects of identity has been captured in a passive manner, primarily because of the choice of instruments, which are outlined in the methods chapter. The semi-structured interview questions make no explicit reference to identity, the intention being to see if, and what, data naturally occurred within the dialogue which might be interpreted as aspects of identity. In asking interviewees questions on what they do, and feel they have achieved, their reflection on what examples and answers to give may lead to glimpses of personal values or beliefs that they connect or justify in what, and why, they do things within their roles as leaders.

The findings are based on data collected from 6 interview participants identified as (A) (B) (C) (D) (E) (F), who completed a pre-interview questionnaire, and 30 respondents (OQA-OQAD) to an on-line questionnaire leading to a wider study population of 36 answers to some questions that featured in both the participant and on-line questionnaire. The participant and respondent age and gender profile is given in Figure 6.6.

The qualitative data set, gathered through semi-structured interviews, offers the insight to 6 individuals performing the role, with examples of their personal experiences, and viewed in relation to what is involved in the role and personal reasoning for why they do the job. Relationships encountered by the 6 leaders are considered, in context of doing the job along with concepts found in the literature review, particularly relating to challenges identified by partnership managers. Throughout the analysis of the data, the development of the literature review has continued with the interpretation influencing the emerging findings.

Where appropriate, quantitative data captured through the participant questionnaire and the respondent on-line questionnaire, will support the qualitative analysis findings, or be used for setting the context of the environment in which the role is situated, for example shaping a broad brush picture of the partnerships represented. The findings use data initially aligned to 4 RQs, from a maximum number of 36 responses, and are illuminative for two reasons; firstly the unknown number of partnerships operating in England and secondly the low return of replies from those contacted and invited to participate.

6.2 **Profile and identity of LEP leaders**

Drawing on various theories associated with personal identity I have taken a view that it is possible to look at the participant LEP leaders from three perspectives interconnected with identity - 'who I am', 'what I do' as a leader, and 'why I do it'. There is difficulty in looking at aspects of personal identity in that it is personal, and so it is individual sense making, and the insight can only be based on what they choose to share, from which it is only possible to get subjective glimpses into what might be activity and experience contexts that the participant considers as part of their personal identity. The following outlines the basis of the construct, giving analysis examples that lead towards answering the RQs.

The starting point is taken from the philosophical theory of Ricoeur in that personal identity is an existence, made up of two parts, one described as an entity, me, a thing of sameness and secondly that as existing, a being, who engages with 'others'. The sameness is taken as involving history, and a moral being of values that forms 'who I am'. In engaging with 'others' it involves the ethical how, in 'what I do', which in this study is taken as being a leader. There is also similarity to other models in that there is a third element associated to the model, a belief in 'why I do a job', that is about 'others', achieved through activities on behalf of the partnership, such as knowing policies and regulations that are of interest to the partnership, and so brokers and shapes the rules across the cultures, sometimes described as system leadership, leading to outcomes/benefits for 'others' (Armistead, Pettigrew and Aves 2007; Close 2012). All three aspects of the concept are inter-related, dynamic, and can be in any sequence to make the whole. Illustrations of the manner in which the personal identity concept is used, in structuring, and as part of data analysis, now follow.

The dynamic inter-relationship is important, which means that using a linear and sub-heading approach to bring together the findings should not overlook that evidence may be relevant to more than one aspect. The transcript from (C) provides an example that relates 'what I do' as part of relating to 'others' (a being). (C) is demonstrating practical reasoning in reflecting on her/his experience in what s/he does, as part of a solution, explaining how experience enables her/him to engage with 'others' being institutions on the same subject matter, believing they should be treated fairly by using appropriate language, to lead to an agreed outcome for the Partnership 'others' of 'why I do the job':

> My broad breadth of professional experience helps me achieve. I have worked in quality assurance in colleges and work based learning providers, and been involved in other partnerships, so I have a very good understanding of the school quality assurance process and how it differs from the college. I am able to speak 'both languages as it were' with a significant degree of confidence. Some institutions are rather black and white on quality assurance issues and it is very hard to overcome some of those barriers, because I have a foot in either camp I am able to do so (C).

Another example from (B) highlights the construct of a reflexive 'self' indicating present reasoning is based on past experience and seen as an important part of 'who I am', illustrating constancy, and likened to sedimentation over time in Ricoeur's theory (1992). (B) thinks s/he is complicated, and whilst s/he has the title of 14-19 Director, refers to the other part of her/his role as Assistant Head, and to being a teacher:

> My feet are still firmly planted within the schools as a teacher, and then developed as Assistant Head, so there's always been a school-based direction to the role and all that I do. I am really complicated and different because I've grown up through the schools (B).

In the example (B) starts with his/her current title and then shares his/her inner thoughts and belief in that what s/he is rather different to the role title, indicating past experience is part of the coherent self, in an indicative answer to 'what is important to me?'.

In the study identity is looked at from the personal aspect, recognising that a profession and career are part of reflexive activity, where actions can influence and link with identity. In accepting that identity is an ongoing process, then it is about recognising our own values and the interaction with 'others'. For this study, participants are situated in an interview environment, in a venue of their choice, and the interaction with me, will likely lead to positioning of self in what values they divulge, or use to prove a point. For instance, sedimentation, over time of being a head and teacher are used in justifying success in examples from (B) and (D), who are describing the actions as externalised to 'others', one of which is me as the researcher, which relates to what Watson (2006) quotes from Currie in that:

> "We learn how to self-narrate ... through the process of identification with other characters. This gives narration at large the potential to teach us how to conceive of ourselves, what to make of our inner life and how to organize it." (p510)

The individual may, or may not, be aware of the identity they are building depending on the situation they are in, and so identities can change, but can also be deep-rooted (Beech and Huxham 2003). Within the data it can be seen that comparisons of self with another does occur, often leading to deep-rooted beliefs and feelings, for example:

(A) – contrasts own home and school background to other young people, explaining that what drives her/him, is the comparison of own life to those of 'others', and can be construed as part of the character development, a lasting disposition, whereby the life experienced is leading her/him to want to improve experiences for 'others' (Ricoeur 1992).

(B) – believes that her/his teaching background sets them apart from 'others' [meaning other LEP leaders]

(C) – believes that a FE background is a barrier when working in schools - with people in schools seeing her/his background as being non-traditional [meaning not a school teaching background]

(D) – refers to school heads as colleagues, situating her/himself as equal because of her/his career in teaching and headship

(E) – compares self to heads and sets her/himself apart in recognising the partnership is about changes that partners needs to be able to plan for:

I have a very grand title of Director of E Learning Partnership. I see myself as a leader across the partnership of schools and with the college, but obviously not in the same way, as that of somebody leading a school. I'm picking elements out of the different schools, and the college, looking at what is the common ground and how we need to push that forward, so that changes, depending on the political agenda, so it's also about adjusting to the change (E).

(F) – sets her/him apart by not comparing the role to 'others', but instead recognising own role as one that needs to be about influence:

I suppose all the work that I've done has been by influencing people that I haven't had a direct line management relationship and that's part of the job I most enjoy, because it's about making a case, it's about motivation, it's about setting clear objectives and bringing people with you without being able to tell them that's what you want them to do (F).

Given the situated role of a LEP leader, within the complexity of a partnership working environment, it could potentially introduce and lead to uncertainties in how a LEP leader feels, within professional and personal contexts. As the study was conducted at a time of uncertainty and demise of some 14-19 partnerships, it may result in leader experiences that are of the moment, and temporary in terms of being self-aware rather than being at a stage of incorporating into a coherent self, for example, participants talking about uncertain times of the partnership 'others' in which they work. Having given an outline of the construct, to gain an insight into the role and personal experiences of those in the role, and how I intend to use it, the following relates the analysis to 'who I am' and 'what I do' in answering RQs1, 2 and 3 and also to 'why I do' it to answer RQ4.

6.2.1 **Who I am**

In looking at 'who I am' for each participant, a linear approach is used to construct the narrative of past, present, future, not taking account of specific timings in past events. The past is being drawn on and put in context of the present, where the past represents continuity expressed in the present personal and social interactions with 'others', be it from a professional or personal perspective (Ollerenshaw and Creswell 2002). The construction is an attempt to create coherence from events drawn on reading time backwards Ricoeur (1980), revealing what is shared by each participant.

Starting with profile (A), s/he draws on personal experience as part of the reasoning for what s/he does and demonstrates how recognising oneself through the past is contrasted to 'others', connecting this is 'who I am' to 'what I do' and 'why I do' the job. (A) believes that there are alternative routes to a successful career. During the interview (A) turns and points to a photo on the wall and explains its importance as a reminder, from the past, sedimented in her/his identity, indicating a moral value of what is important in life - giving young people an education that offers choices, regardless of background:

> (A):
> I had a great start in life and I didn't go to university, I haven't got a degree, but I have set up companies, employed staff, worked at different levels in two or three organisations, it's just getting that message across that you can succeed in either way, I think that's important.
>
> I have worked for a work based learning provider, the largest in England, with a focus on young people needing help and extra support. Aged about 21, I spent two years working with pupils that had been excluded from schools and expelled from Pupil Referral Units. The biggest education in my life was the ability to be able to cope with the most challenging individuals in an inner city from some really deprived areas.
>
> I know that those two years changed my life and changed my view on life. I'd gone from a very privileged upbringing, I went to a private school and that's one world, and then going to this world where you've got these young people in tiny flats, with newspaper on the floor instead of carpet.

I was privileged to have been part of 12 young peoples' lives. There is a picture on my wall of that time, because it is important to me and reminds me of what is important in life and why I do what I do and I try and relate things back to that period in time, and that has driven me and has made me focus on what I do as I get older and more experienced and less impetuous, back to that time of my life.

My role is Partnership Director. I was attracted to the role because of the ability to introduce vocational courses and qualifications. My desire and drive is to help young people and a lot of social enterprises and community organisations have a key focus on young people. Personally I need to focus on being available to support as many people as want that support, the way in which I do that might end up changing. I want to work locally with local social enterprises to support their offer, their business.

I'd like to see my role in filling those gaps in a meaningful and structured way, using the skills I've developed in the last 10-15 years in supporting these small organisations to thrive and grow and compete with some of the national organisations.

In the profile of (C) s/he draws on life experiences and chooses to contrast with heads, as 'others', within the situated environment of schools. (C) believes that her/his background can be a disadvantage, based on the perceptions from 'others', whereas s/he has a personal view that professional experience has led to being a niche specialist. In looking to the future, (C) uses personal knowledge and reflection sharing uncertainties, firstly, through the fragility and lack of outcomes within the partnership, and then turns to views on partnerships in general, sharing a belief that partnerships offer wider opportunities for young people, demonstrating a moral value which s/he sees as being threatened by changing government policies:

(C):
I left school at 16, and trained as an automotive technician through an apprenticeship. I then went to university and gained a degree.

I have worked in two partnerships in different areas of the country. I have worked in quality assurance in colleges, and work based learning providers. I did work for NCSL – they spoke very much about leadership and developing people as leaders and not necessarily about developing people as leaders and managers. I think a head in a school is predominantly about management and not leadership.

I feel that coming from a further education background you have significant barriers to overcome in schools, I think there is what can only be described as snobbery in certain schools of people who have come from a non-traditional background.

My broad breadth of professional experience helps with my current role, very much a generalist, a Jack of all trades, but a niche specialist. I am very good at understanding the school quality assurance process, and able to speak both languages, with a significant degree of confidence. I feel quite good that I can work across a broad spectrum. See myself very much as a facilitator.

I came into role, specifically this role, with a lot of energy and I've spent a lot of that energy for very little, for limited rewards in terms of what's come out of it and I don't know if I could face doing that again.

I think there are wins that could be made by partnership working and I think by losing people like myself, with a wide range of skills, who can do funding, quality, curriculum, partnerships will miss out, become more insular, and put alongside a narrowing of the school curriculum, I don't think the young people will have a good a deal as they would expect. (C).

To (B) and (D), having a background in the school sector is seen as being important, emphasising and seeing being a teacher (B) and a head (D) as part of their identity. In the profile of (B) first and foremost is positioning oneself as a teacher in the belief that it sets her/him apart from 'others' who do a similar role.

(B):
I've come up through the school system, my Assistant Headteacher role is important in the development of the 14-19 Director role. I see myself as Assistant Headteacher, an important statement in itself [gives job title as 14-19 Director] I still do some teaching. I'm based in a school, I work alongside, deputies, timetablers, heads on a much closer basis than other colleagues do [those in similar LEP leader roles] who are not based in the school and haven't grown up through the school system. I am a good teacher, and I think in this role if you are going to bring about change you have to be able to model good practice. I think we are about education and teaching and we are about learning and I'm highly effective at that. When there are problems or issues I can bring my expertise to those problems initially as a teacher, as an educationalist and that has made a major difference in this role.

I took on second role as 14-19 Director, still keeping my post-16 role so I am really complicated and really different. I have done the role for a long time [over 10 years]. I have built up relationships with people across the partnership – you have to build relationships to make things happen, you have to know who to go to, I'm very effective at that.

I liaise directly with heads, I wasn't somebody from outside imposing something on them I was part of that vision for the area, I was part of their school and they knew that I could bring expertise from outside, but actually I was doing it for the right reasons. I was with 'them' rather than 'imposing it on them'. Fundamental to the whole thing, the fact that I came to it from an educational background, school background and teaching background on a tried and tested basis. The heads see me as part of their leadership and management team.

If I was sensible I should probably be getting out, because I genuinely think that we're in a rapidly changing world and I do think my position is quite vulnerable now. Years ago I should have become a deputy and then a head, but I happen to love the diversity of what I do; there's always new challenges. They all think that I do a great job, being realistic, sensible, I'd look for another job pretty quick, but I don't want to, part of me things I don't want to, so I don't know what the future holds for me. (B)

For (D) the profile shows the importance of the school background, as a head, and likens to the 'others' [meaning school heads] as colleagues, with a belief of being equal, which s/he sees as a value to leading the partnership:

(D):
It comes down to the individual and very often personal values in terms of what you want to achieve for young people. Headship is a great job and a dreadful job, good and bad days. It's not just about doing your job it's about you as an individual. My first headship was 5/6 years in a comprehensive, in a tough school. My last headship was 10 years within D partnership area. Way back I took a Masters' degree on leadership and management.

Being a head here [meaning the local area], my previous experience, my history in this area meant I saved time. I have had a considerable degree of freedom to operate with them [heads]. I set my own agenda.

They [heads in the partnership] have a culture now that is healthy and will allow collaborative work to continue. I mean you get a feeling that you've done a good job and I didn't want to continuously work in a setup by finding work. I will be leaving the role, finishing my professional work, carrying on with other things which are not to do with collaborative working in the educational sphere. It was me that managed my exit not the heads I wanted to finish at that point and I think the heads were relieved that they didn't have to put me out to pasture, I was able to do it myself. (D)

The profile built for (E) highlights that part of 'who I am' is being a parent, having a family as well as having a career and developing self. (E) connects aspects of career and decisions taken in the past that lead to a recognition that development for young people is sedimented in 'who I am', 'what I do' and 'why I do it'.

(E):
I wanted to work and continue career, having children meant I needed flexibility in job. It was important to work part-time, maintain a career and develop myself.

I changed job and took on a part-time role with a university, working with undergraduates and graduates on development needs to be able for them to enter the local labour market, it involved lots of projects and was the start of my working with young people.

I have a 20 year career in education. I am a social science graduate, and I worked in the Civil Service in a training role, and when I moved to the Training Enterprise Council (TEC) I became involved with HR as Strategic Employee Development Manager and studied for CIPD – which is when I recognised my passion and enjoyment as being 'employee development'.

It was working with professional football clubs, looking at vocational courses for young people, that took me into schools, enhanced my career and took it in a different way. I have tried to apply the philosophy I had when at the TEC [putting in employee development programmes] with focus on young people in the partnership. Anything I can do to help them move along, whatever I do as long as it's going to have an impact on young people, my niche is really with young people.

The profile for (F) shows that the dialogue is entirely related to the professional perspective of identity forming part of 'who I am', a successful partnership leader, with a career in partnership working. An indication of the early-on challenge of such work, leads to valuing skills and self-knowledge developed which s/he carries through to other roles. In the data (F) is unique in that s/he is the only one with a working life entirely in partnerships:

(F):
I started as a manager of a general practice in the Health Service. GPs are a group of individuals working together for a common framework. I worked with the GPs group for 3 years, was successful and got a reputation within the local Health Authority for being able to work with awkward people. [value]

I then worked for a Health Authority followed by a Primary Care Group, a forerunner of Primary Care Trusts. The idea was to look at the needs of the local community and the services for that local community, to try and improve the services.

I was very lucky that when I was interviewed for the leader of North F Learning Partnership job, in that I am a partnership person, and although I have no educational experience I think these skills are very transferable and fortunately they agreed.

I was very privileged to be able to study a post-graduate qualification funded by the DfE for partnership managers. The course was about delivering objectives for the public benefit through partnership working.

In North F we had a strong partnership and had a common aim, which was achieved in promoting adult learning as a 'force for good' something that one organisation can't be expected to pick up and deliver.

I see myself as somebody who achieves objectives by working with a partnership of people or organisations. My job is to do things that those organisations/partnerships couldn't be reasonably expected to do on their own, and I think that this has always been the case [always worked on behalf of a group of others]. I can see things from different points of view and identify that little spot in the middle and think that's what I can do.

If I look back over my career I have worked with a number of groups, of professionals, to deliver either government policy or outcomes for patients. (F)

Having illustrated the distinctiveness of personal identity for each of the participants, I am going to relate findings to the literature review and the wider study population (n=36). The literature review reveals that a range of professionals undertake a leader role in partnerships (Noaks Moreton and Williamson 2004), a view supported by findings in this study which shows LEP leaders usually come to the role with a range of experiences (Figure 6.1), and that the majority (83%) also hold teaching related qualifications (Figure 6.2).

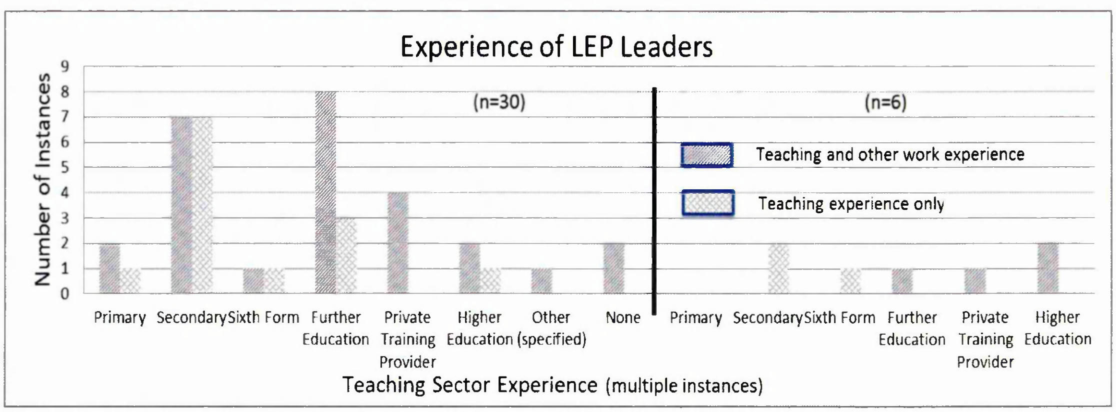


Figure 6.1: Work Experience of LEP leaders

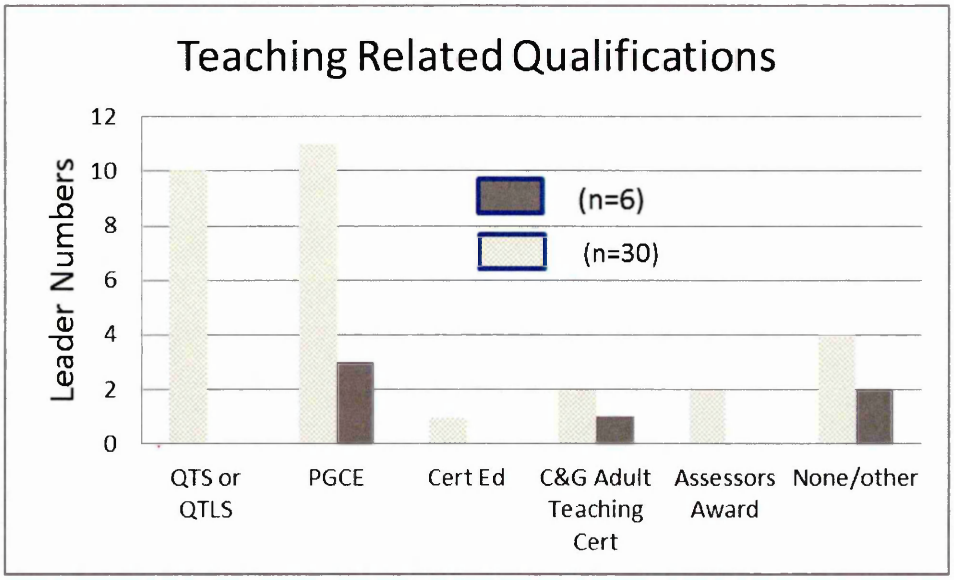


Figure 6.2: Leaders with teaching related qualifications

Those with just school experience is low at 12 (33%), and 4 do not have a teaching qualification, of which 3 have no teaching experience. The range and level of qualifications held by leaders, in the main are at level 6 or above, with those at level 3 including assessor awards (Figure 6.3).

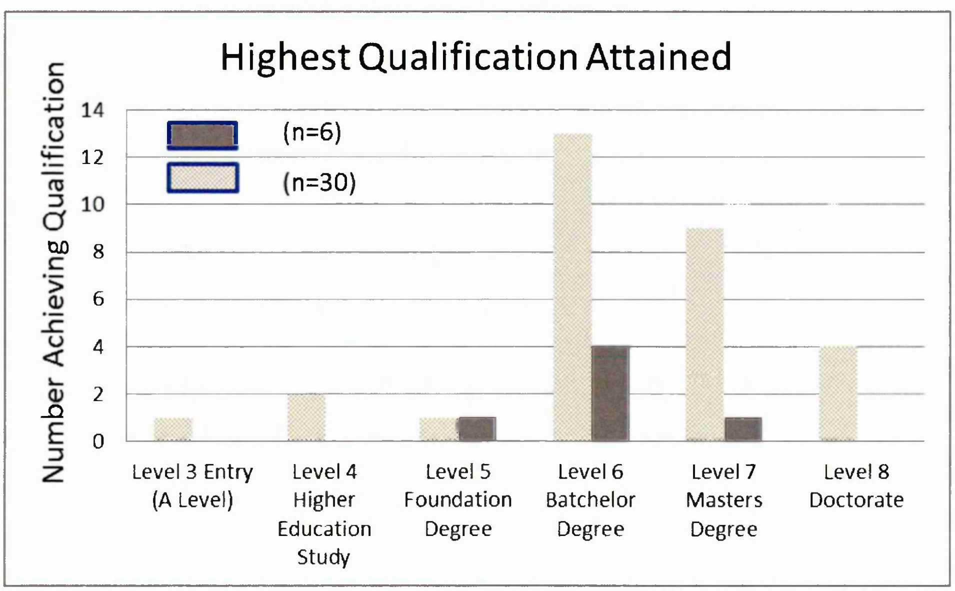


Figure 6.3: Highest level of qualification held by LEP leaders

The data also reveals that leaders have work experience other than in the education sector (Figure 6.4) with 64% having previously worked in other sectors. This is further evidence that LEP leaders come with a wide range of professional backgrounds, and qualifications.

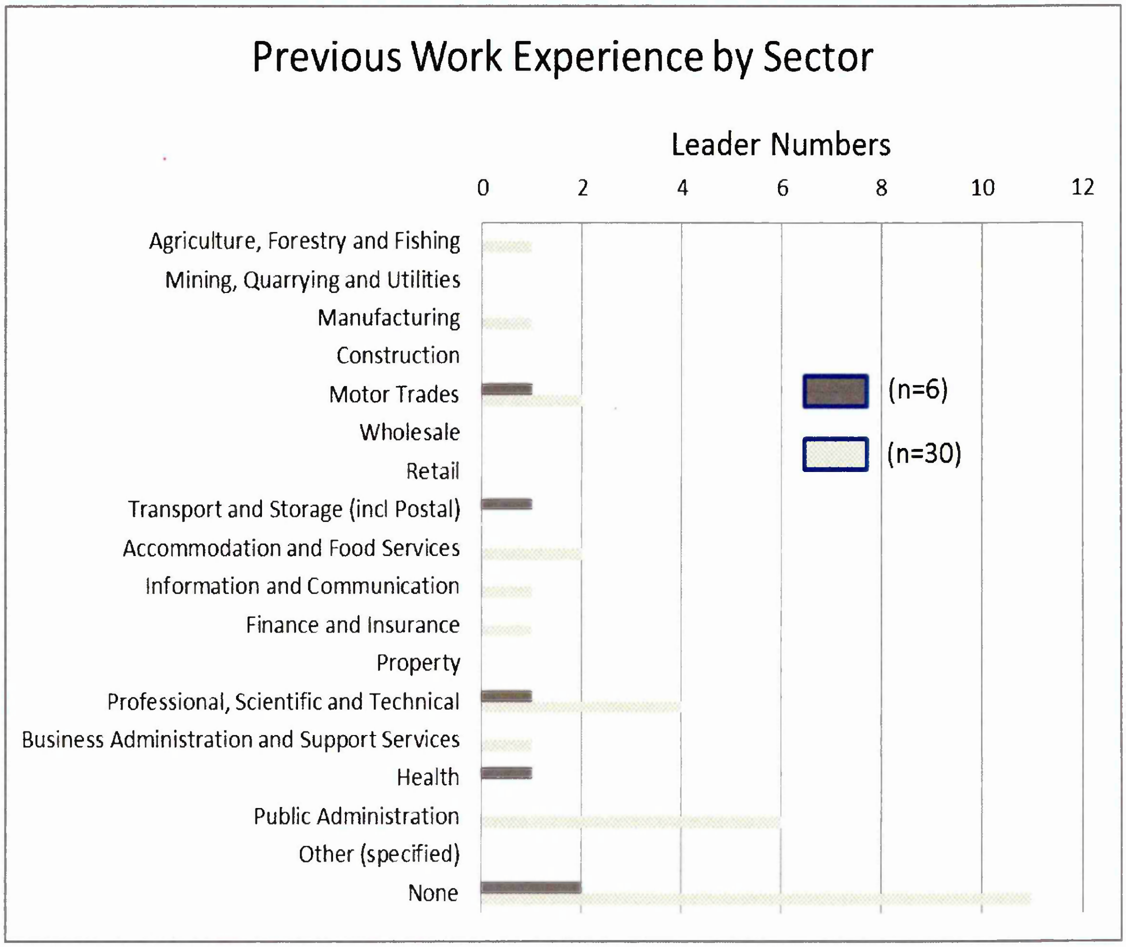


Figure 6.4: Previous work experience

Collinson (2003) argues that identities are less constant because of the greater freedom and choices available, particularly with the drive towards achievement being seen in the context of upward mobility, material accumulation and career success. So far the data on work experience shows that there is movement within the careers of the leaders, which supports Collinson's view. Figure 6.5 shows the length of time leaders have been in their current roles, providing evidence that some leaders have LEP leader role experience that pre-dates the 14-19 reform phase.

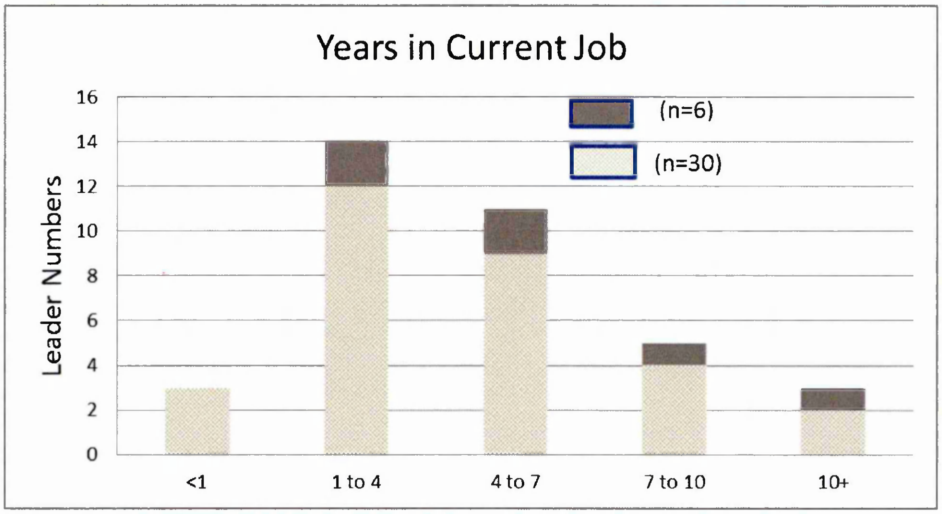


Figure 6.5: Length of time in current LEP leader role

Further analysis suggests that taking on a LEP leader role is a later stage in a career, as in the wider group 25 are aged 48 and above, which includes all 15 females in the study, whereas for the 11 males, who give their age as 47 or under, it appears to be an earlier career choice (Figure 6.6).

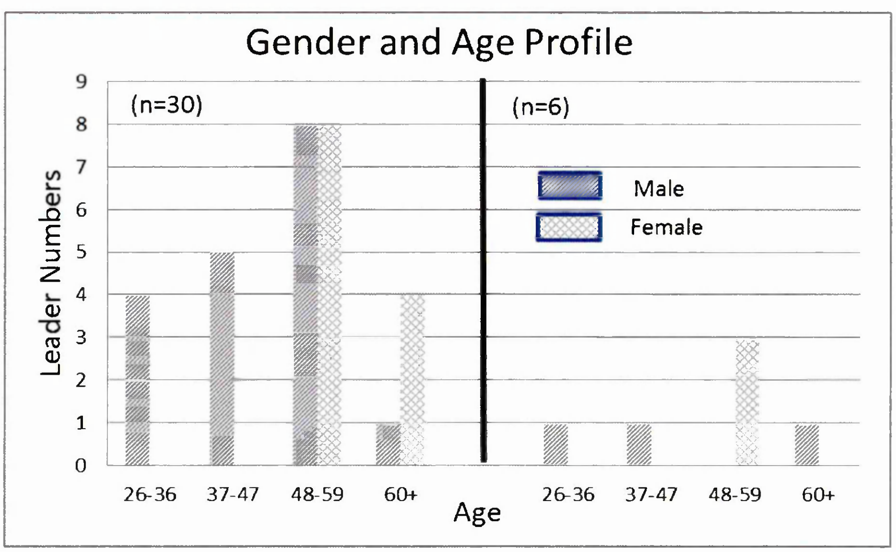


Figure 6.6: Gender and age profile of the study population

The wider data set indicates 50% have done a similar leader role before (Figure 6.7), which includes 4 of the 6 participants.

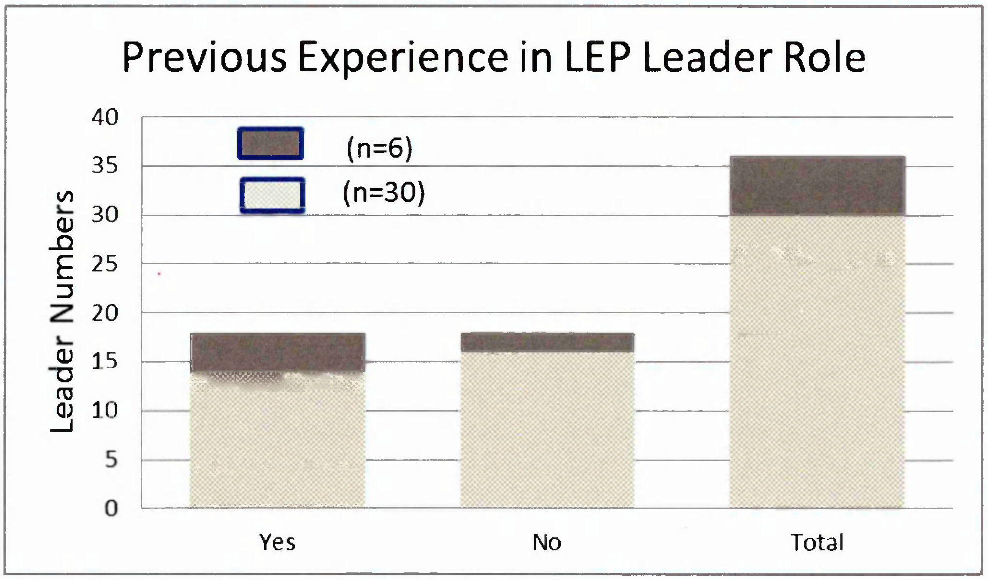


Figure 6.7: Comparison of previous LEP leader experience

The 2 participants without previous LEP leader experience have backgrounds entirely within the secondary school sector, in teaching and leadership roles (B D). Knowing from Figure 6.7 that 50% have experience of being in a similar role, those with leadership and management qualifications is also high (72%) (Figure 6.8).

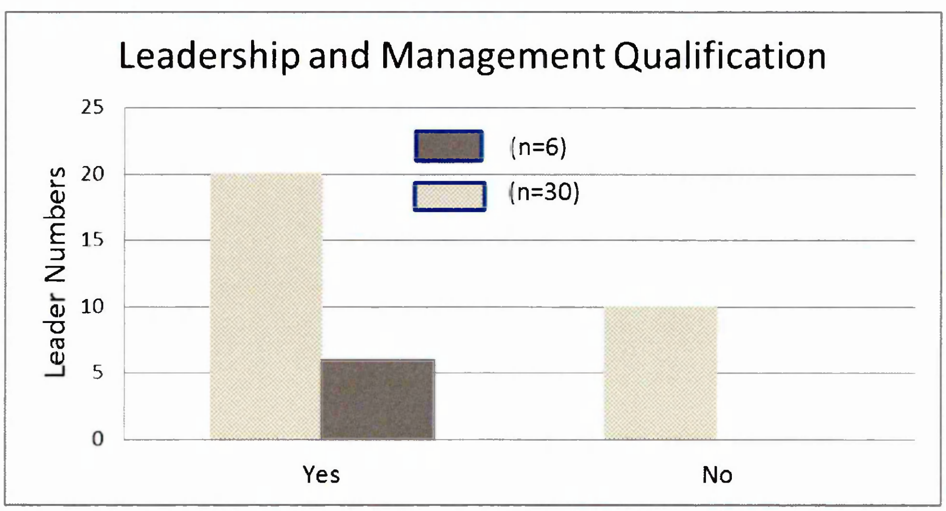


Figure 6.8: Leaders with Leadership and Management Qualifications

The level of leadership and management qualification covers a broad range (Figure 6.9), and is often related to sector specific agency awards.

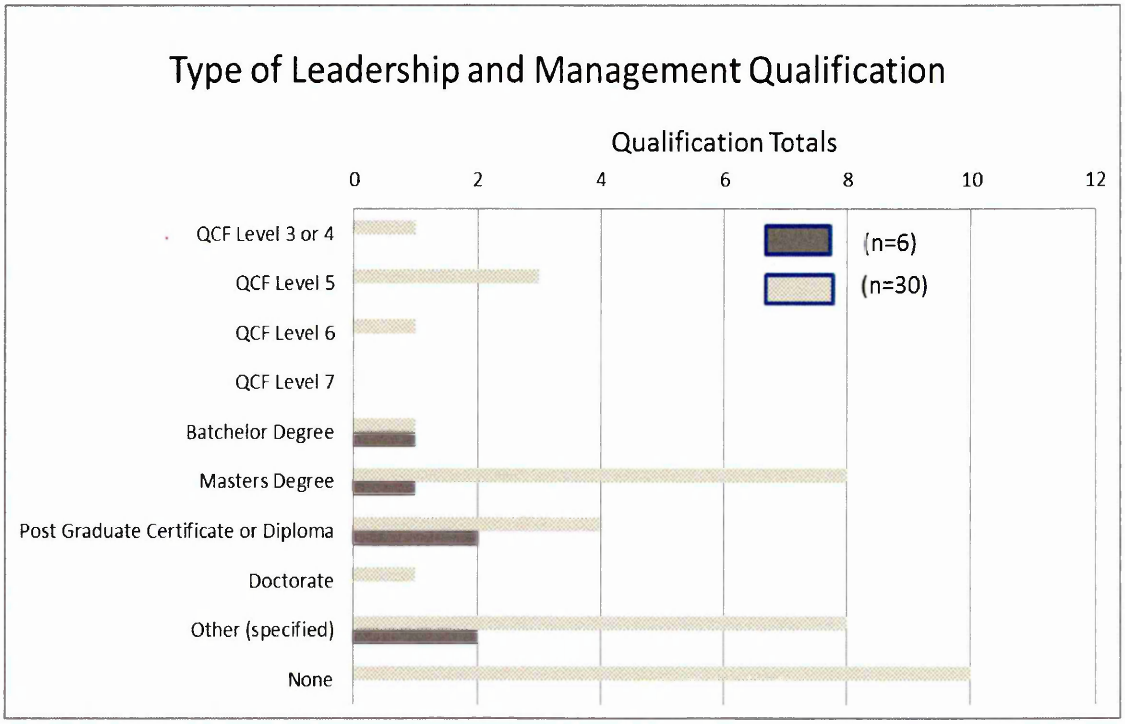


Figure 6.9: Leadership and Management Qualifications by type

All 6 participants hold leadership and management qualifications, and 20 respondents indicate that they hold at least one or more leadership and management qualification, in total 72% of the study population hold professional leadership and management qualifications (Figure 6.9) and maturity in the role comes through the examples given by participants, with 4 having experience of working in similar roles, the remaining 2 participants having leadership and management qualifications, the difference being that their background experience is entirely within the school sector.

From across secondary, FE, or a combination (multiple) of teaching sectors, the data indicates it is likely that LEP leaders will have held previous roles regarded as being of a leadership or management nature (Figure 6.10). The evidence leads to LEP leaders being well qualified and experienced in teaching and leadership and with many having other work experience.

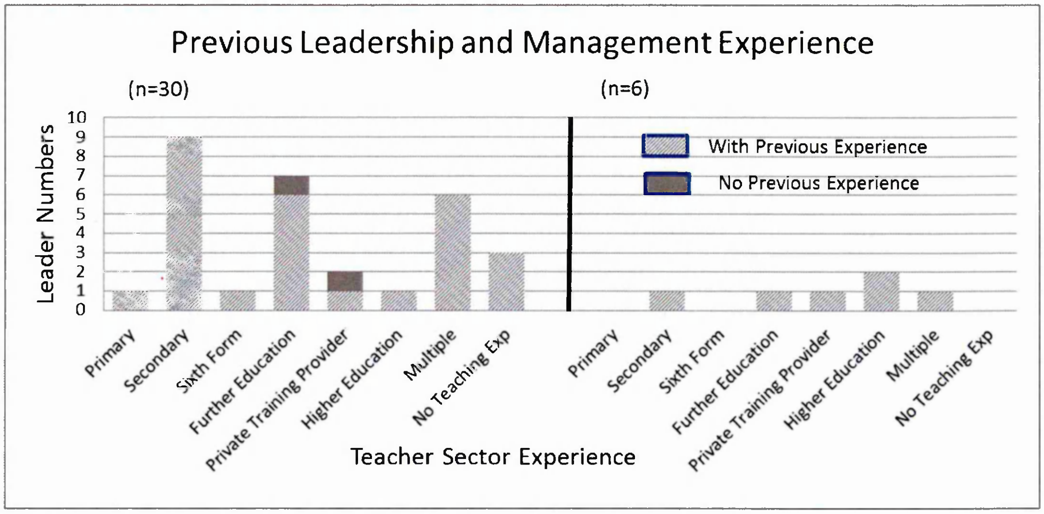


Figure 6.10: Leadership and management experience by sector

I am now going to look at the participant data to consider the relevance of leadership experience forming part of 'who I am'. The leadership demonstrated through the participant data indicates that it is about taking actions and developing processes to make things happen. It is evident that knowledge, styles and skills are used in dealing with the challenges of different educational sectors, the ambiguity of interfaces and the complexity of different management structures. The underlying point is that those involved in wanting the partnership to work are pulled in different directions (Ybema et al 2012). Participants recognise their engagement with 'others', giving examples of skills that are people related:

(A) recognises that s/he has negotiating and mediation skills:

Having the strength of negotiating and mediation skills, to get people who are used to getting their own way and having all the power, to think wider than what's in it for me and why should I dip out to let my competitor succeed. (A).

(E) demonstrates an ability to make judgements on which schools to approach so that s/he can discuss commitment to proposals:

> I am constantly asking them what they want [young people, the stakeholders] and then it is about selling that message to schools without costing them an arm and a leg, I don't always look for consensus with everybody (E).

(F) has a similar approach to (E) in that s/he evaluates activities and analyses the positions the partners are coming from but looks for an outcome that will satisfy all partners.

(C) talks about strengths in relation to dealing with resistance to partnership working, being an example of recognising what is important to her/him within the social setting of partnership (Watson 2008).

> I think I have various strengths, and the one what is very important is resilience because the role can knock your confidence because you are working at various levels in various institutions in which there is resistance to partnership working. Second is having a 'thick skin' as well as being able to temper the 'thick skin' to demonstrate sensitivity to any individual. Quite often it is differentiating organisational resistance and how that impacts on the individual, because the individual is quite keen to work in partnership. I am also good at negotiating, particularly where an individual is clearly not prepared to co-operate and it is holding back progress of other partners, such as agreeing a joint timetable. (C)

The participants give an insight to recognising that they deal with a range of personal feelings and beliefs related to the activity of being a leader. Participants who have a working life entirely within schools demonstrate affiliation and autonomy to the sector, and draw extensively on their knowledge from a working life based in schools.

Another aspect of 'who I am' is consideration to what 'I' describe myself as. The starting point is to look at job titles of the study population. The participant data shows the most common descriptor in the title is director (Figure 6.11), but this finding is not supported when compared as part of the wider group, where the most frequently mentioned role descriptor is co-ordinator, this may be down to regional variations in that participants are from one region, or a reflection of histories and complexities of partnership structures (see Appendix 9.14 for the composition and size of partnerships of the study population). Job titles of the 30 respondents are given, in order of popularity, in Appendix 9.15. Respondent job titles tend to define the work area and context of the partnership of the LEP leader role, for example including partnership or network titles, descriptors of co-ordinator or manager, a specified or inferred age range and in some cases reflect what the partnership is about, such as raising participation.

Descriptor in Job Title	**n=30**	**n=6**	**n=36**
Co-ordinator	12	1	13
Manager	10		10
Director	2	5	7
Lead Officer	2		2
Advisor	1		1
Chief Executive Officer	1		1
Facilitator	1		1
Head	1		1

Figure 6.11: Descriptors used in job titles

Studies of similar roles find that there is a perception of it being strategic and yet tends to operate strategically and operationally, which is also evident in 'what I do' (Briggs 2009). With 5 of the 6 LEP leaders interviewed having Director in their title, suggesting a senior role, the data indicates it may not be of significance in any concept in which they see themselves, 'who I am', but it does carry over to 'what I do':

(A) and (C) both describe themselves as being facilitators. (A) is very explicit in recognising the activity in a way that is associated with 'who I am':

> My role is partnership director so I see myself very much as a facilitator in a co-ordinating role between the schools and colleges that effectively pay my salary (A).

whereas (C) draws an implicit distinction by not referring to a role title, but talking about facilitating as an activity, as being 'what I do':

> My role in post has been very much around facilitating the key stage 3 and 4 transition agenda [pause] very much different in role to what I was appointed to (C).

(B) emphasises the importance of the other part of the role as Assistant Head Teacher within a school. (B) has the title of Director of B Partnership; however it is the structure within the schools that s/he draws on when talking about leadership (B):

> I've got a complicated role so I think I still see myself as Assistant Head Teacher, that's an important statement itself. The role is an isolated one, and I have enormous autonomy, but I see myself as an Assistant Head Teacher, and the heads see me as part of their leadership and management team, see me as part of them. (B)

(B) sees her/his teaching background as important, particularly in perception of autonomy and being affiliated to teaching and leadership teams within the schools.

(D) conducts the role through the belief of working with colleague heads, because of having been a head teacher. (D) displays confidence in knowing own leadership skills and how s/he could apply them from a different perspective in the partnership:

> I could use the skills that I have in terms of my leadership and strategic skills, and it was also bringing some back into the consortium at a different sort of level, and being able to work outside of a specific school and work collectively with a group of schools and group of institutions, and so in that sense it was quite fulfilling and it was quite well paid (D).

(E) sees her/his official title as being very grand, and that in reality s/he is a partnership leader

(F) does not attach a title, preferring to refer to her/himself as an achiever of objectives which are delivered through partnership.

The evidence from the data is that LEP leader participants will work at a range of levels, strategic and operational, as well as with a range of staff in partner institutions. This finding confirms and builds on the findings of other research, such as Briggs (2009). The evidence also points to it being unlikely that LEP leaders relate their job titles to being 'who I am'.

The variations in 'who I am' can also relate to 'what I do', with facilitating being aligned to leadership activities. What is also relevant to leadership and 'who I am' is the concept of a leader being authentic. A finding from the literature review is that the leadership aspect of the role is unique in that it does not comply with traditional leadership theories, but rather might be a blend of theories.

Having suggested that the role is unique in relation to leadership theories, I have considered the individual concept of a leader with regard to being authentic. The traits of participants, which are based on their beliefs and values, seem to be fundamental and likened to traits associated with authentic leader theories, demonstrating a rationale to justify actions or approaches taken to achieve outcomes leading from a personal conviction (Avolio and Gardner 2005). For example (E) shows a belief that leadership is about having conviction to plan ahead for a clear reason:

> I don't think the leadership bit is about facilitating activities actually. I think the leadership bit is looking forward strategically in terms of how we can [umgh] what does success look like in 5 years' time, what does it mean for that young person in E (E).

(F) gives an example from experience gained earlier in which s/he was involved in setting up a service, which relied on (F) having the skills and knowledge to recognise what needed to be done to achieve the outcome:

> We worked as a primary care group to work out what we could safely offer as an A&E service within that hospital and what we could afford to offer to a very far flung community that needed a lot of primary care services. And that was a very interesting and rewarding way to work for me, because those groups of people had never worked together with that objective and it was my job to bring them together and to facilitate that (F).

The example (F) gives is spoken in the context of readily accepting that the job is about facilitating, which could be contrasted to the view that (E) holds on leadership being strategic. However perspectives outlined by (E) and (F) can also be interpreted as being similar as the examples are arguably about future deliverables at the strategic level. The difference is that (E) is taking into consideration the leadership within the partner institutions from a position of knowing how to work with some of the heads, whereas (F) is starting with the knowledge of skills that are needed to achieve the strategic outcome because the partnership is new and has no history of working together, and shows conviction based on a belief that partnership is about delivering benefits:

> I think what is satisfying is that you can detect some public benefit of the work that you have undertaken (F).

Both examples (E , F) draw on knowledge demonstrating experience and a personal conviction forming part of 'who I am', authentic, believing that working in partnership can achieve beneficial outcomes, which can also be considered as part of 'why I do the job'.

There is some evidence of participants recalling previous experience in relation to how it has shaped aspects of their life or work, a personal conviction that leads to how they approach what they do:

(A) and (C) describe how their previous engagement with vocational training has led to a value, for (A) of wanting to give

young people options, and for (C) how working in industry early on in her/his career led to recognising the significance of 'others' (customers), and the development of negotiation skills.
(B) and (D) believe that having a school background is important to the job.
(E) and (F) develop a philosophy of the benefits of partnership working for 'others', through earlier work on employee development, and are now driven to work on behalf of young people (E), seeing opportunities to achieve things for local communities, through early health service work (F).

The importance of authenticity to 'others' appears to come from beliefs and values.

The next aspect is to look at 'who I am' from the perspective of skills that leaders identify, which play out in 'what I do' with significant 'others'. The data provides examples of where skills are part of the role of being 'who I am', which are applied in 'what I do'. (F) has a post graduate qualification which may be part of the framing s/he considers in the skills used:

> All the work I've done has been by influencing people that I haven't had a direct line management relationship over and I suppose that's part of the job I most enjoy, it's about making a case, it's about motivation, it's about setting clear objectives and bringing people with you without being able to tell them that's what you want them to do. I see myself as somebody who can deliver through partnership more than an individual organisation can deliver on its own (F).

(F) sees the job as matching her/his skills set, particularly in very rarely taking anything personally, and being extremely good at detaching the personal from the professional.

(A) mentions tensions within the partnership which s/he has to mediate, saying:

> I will always put myself out to ensure that the partnership succeeds if there is a tension, for example if a group of curriculum deputies are tasked to

design a joint timetable and an argument ensues about who is going to take on the extra responsibility, then I will do it. I think that's important otherwise it is a barrier to success and it's about overcoming them (A).

(E) finds that s/he applies the skills from earlier roles, to working with young people, recruiting, retaining and inducting them in roles to be undertaken within the partnership, which (E) believes gives young people a different perspective, and the ability to contribute.

The study population data indicates a relatively high number of LEP leaders have experience of working as qualified teachers. The number with more than 10 years' experience in secondary schools is also high. Those whose career is in the school sector believe that having a school background is highly relevant and makes the job easier. There are 2 participants with school careers of which (D) says:

Having been a head, the advice, experience and a history of success, breed success (D).

Experience not only features in 'what I do', but forms part of 'who I am'. The most important skill and experience (B) identifies is that of being a good teacher, which is central to what he/she is and interpreted in a social context of schools (Watson 2008):

Being a good teacher is fundamental to the whole thing, I come from an educational, school and teaching background on a tried and tested basis, with daily contact with kids (B)

(D) uses her/his leadership and strategic skills, developed in the school sector, and brought back into the consortium, giving ability to work outside of a school to work collectively, which (D) finds fulfilling.

(B) finds that working with people and seeing that you can actually make something better in some way for teachers, heads, parents and students is a driver:

I have the skills to be able to choose, influence and motivate the right people, convince people of what is the right way. I am highly effective in the role because it is based on experience of being a good teacher and

> having an existing Assistant Head role, you have to be able to model good practice so that you can bring your expertise to solve any problems and this makes a major difference in working in schools. (B).

There are similarities between examples given by (B) and (D):

> It is very much about me controlling the agenda and saying to the partnership these are the issues I perceive, I think we need to address, my advice is, I think we should be looking at this, we could use the funding this way, there is always implicit trust. I know there is trust and loyalty with colleagues, based on my association with headship. I can get access to heads that wouldn't normally be accessible, so I can chase, progress and move things on (D).

These examples suggest that being within a school is advantageous because it helps achieve trust and make things happen. Examples from (B) and (D) indicate that the head is the decision maker within the school, and when there is direct access to the head, it makes the job easier, and when there is not, it can cause delay or changes, which is an example of where the role is bounded by 'others'.

The data also provides an indication that those with an alternative to a school background tend to emphasise the importance of people and teams. The importance, authenticity, of how you deal with people comes across in examples from (A) and (C):

> Being honest and giving 100% trust to the people I work with is important, the starting point. I lead a team and developing that team, in the right environment, doing the right thing and supporting each other is where my interest lies, it's the people (A).

(C) draws on past work in the motor trade as being able to take an open and non-threatening approach in talking with people about issues, and how the issues impact on young people, who s/he saw as the learner, the customer:

> I'm not judging them as teachers, I'm trying to help them have an impact as part of an improvement process, and it is regardless of what background they come from (C).

(C) has analytical skills and uses a diagnostic approach as part of problem solving, bearing in mind it is always about the customer interface.

It seems that LEP leaders recognise the importance of CPD for their own development, with examples provided by (D E) and (F) of how their CPD has influenced them in the work they do. (F) describes specific training s/he undertook, a government funded initiative to support leaders of learning partnerships, and how the course provided a framework to deal with practical problems:

> I was very privileged to be able to study DfE funded a post graduate qualification for partnership managers. Spent a year looking at partnership issues thrown up through the general Learning Partnerships, extremely useful way of tackling practical problems within an academic framework, this was before 14-19 reforms. The course was about delivering objectives for the public benefit through partnership working. I think the Department 2 or 3 years into the process [umgh] realised that it was very easy just to have a talking shop between those partnerships, but to have any deliverable outcomes, requires something else and that academic framework was great from that point of view (F).

(E) draws on experience of studying for the Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD) in the approach s/he has taken in the past and continues to apply in working with and on behalf of 'others':

> I've tried to apply my underpinning knowledge and skills that I developed through studying the CIPD and then working for the Training Enterprise Council as a strategic Employee Development Manager. I was responsible for putting in place all their employee development programmes and through working with partners as well. I have tried to apply that philosophy to the work I am doing in that, if you are working across a partnership, if we got young people travelling across partnership, then how do we recruit those young people, what do they need to know to be able to select the right programme for them, once they've selected the programme and we know they are the right people how do we induct them into their new school, they could be in 3 different schools possibly across a week, and then how do we review progress and how do we move them on. So I have applied a different way of thinking to what I do in terms of partnership working compared to some colleagues, who have come through a teaching route, so they've come through [umgh] to their role as a partnership manager whatever, by the very fact that they've been a head in a school, or a deputy head, so I think I do put a different emphasis on things. (E).

The qualification (D) highlights for its impact on her/him in own working life is a Masters' degree because of its inclusion of professional development:

> The Masters' degree that I did way back, there were aspects of leadership, stress management in that, but the main theme was on professional development. I've always said as a teacher, as a deputy and as a head teacher, the most valuable resource you have in your institution is your staff. We were successful in the schools that I worked in, in that many of the staff moved on quickly, because you were bringing them, so leaving headship and moving into this post, it was just simply a question of transferring some of those ideals into a broader partnership and then providing professional development (D).

CPD as a leadership activity for 'others', also forms part of the LEP leader role, which will be discussed further in 'what I do'. The data analysed in considering 'who I am', leads to claims that:

- professional background and personal experience are evident in identity, and it is possible to trace how beliefs and moral endeavours come through from that understanding. It is a range of professionals that take on the role of LEP leaders, when taking account of the wider group, experience of secondary education being the highest at 47%, (2 participants and 14 respondents).
- Authenticity is evident through how they act in line with their beliefs and values.
- The role is often regarded as being at the strategic level, but in reality, participants recognise that they need to work across many levels, and specifically at both the strategic and operational levels to feel that they can achieve outcomes and legacies.
- Leadership and management qualifications feature highly in the professional experience of the leaders, and CPD is important to them.
- Professional and background experience, especially as being a teacher, are noticeable in relation to 'who I am'.
- Skills often relate to influence and motivation of 'others' to make things happen.

6.2.2 **What I do as a leader**

Another element of personal identity is the dependence on engagement with 'others', the ethical dimension of how, in 'what I do' in my role as a leader. In some ways the activities will be connected to the partnership 'others', 'why I do' the job, such as policies or projects that are government driven which may attract funding or require a form of collaboration, based on a belief that there will be benefits for young people and the wider economy of the country. In analysing the data in a literal sense, it is possible to get an understanding of the activities LEP leaders perform. Vangen and Huxham's (2003) action research into public sector partnerships found that much of the work a leader was involved in could be categorised as process and supporting activities, described as leadership enactment rather than a traditional leadership theory. Their work has influenced the choice of topics for data gathering, and so the subsequent findings, relating to leadership and what a LEP leader does, to some extent reflect and build on the views of Huxham and Vangen. For example, in Figure 6.12, the category of process is about mechanisms and formation of policy leading to an outcome relevant to the partnership, and supporting is in the sense that it is about empowering 'others' in the partnership, which some participants refer to as facilitating. Figure 6.12 summarises work activities captured from the respondent group. This data supports the claim that the activities are fairly typical of the work undertaken by LEP leaders.

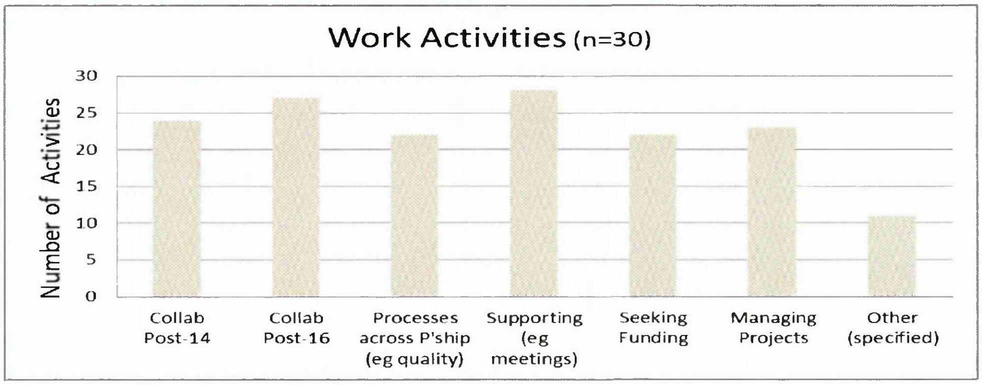


Figure 6.12: Work Activities

Because the specified others (Figure 6.12) have been compared with participant activities (Appendix 9.16), they can be counted towards processes and supporting activities, which means these activities are the most popular. All respondents are engaged in collaborative provision with the majority spanning both post-14 and post-16, and in comparing with the partnership existence data, (Figure 6.13) where the majority have been in existence over four years, coincides with the time period 2002-2010 of the 14-19 reforms.

Figure 6.13: Existence of Partnership

Of the partnerships with longevity of over 10 years, 4 participants indicate that their partnerships are involved in post-16 collaboration and align with the timing of the government initiative of Learning Partnerships in the period 1999-2002:

> (B D E) indicate that the role developed from a geographical local need of having a viable 6th form on behalf of a number of schools. Specifically (E) mentions her/his role has strategic responsibility for ensuring good post-16 provision and progression routes that meet the needs of the learners is available. As discussed in Chapter 2, around 2003 there was a new phase in 14-19 education, from which the diploma agenda emerged. The diploma implementation led LAs to inform partnerships that this additional element required a co-ordinator or director to manage the process.

Also inferred from Figure 6.13 is that government policies act as drivers, as there has been just one new partnership emerging in the post 14-19 phase of 2010, which is related to new funding opportunities.

So far, 'what I do' has been considered in relation to activities identified in the literature review and mainly led by the comparative data from respondents. The following discussion is driven by data from the participants starting with a focus on CPD as being a supporting activity. Studies by Noaks Moreton and Williamson (2004) and Atkinson (2002) found that, for effective partnership working there was a need for CPD, particularly so that respect and the roles of other professionals could be valued. The CPD of participants would suggest that partnership working has not been part of any CPD with the exception of (F):

> I was very privileged to be able to study a DfE funded post graduate qualification for partnership managers. The course was about delivering objectives for the public benefit through partnership working. (F)

However, there is more evidence that CPD as a supporting activity is seen as part of 'what I do' and a benefit to partnership working. CPD is mentioned for staff that may be associated with the partnership as part of the leadership activities (A B C D F) and extended to development opportunities for young people (E). (C) identifies development of practitioners [meaning from different sectors involved in the partnership] as one of the most satisfying parts of the role and the benefit it has to a process across the partnership:

> Things I find satisfying are about when you help practitioners on the ground, and seeing things happen that can really benefit practitioners, it's really good. We did have a generic plan for 14-19 development for the area, one strand which is around improving collaborative teaching and learning, there was an overarching statement of strategic intent, however different institutions engaged in different ways, and fairly early on we had an issue with one of the diploma programmes I was running where there wasn't the communication between the different delivery partners that there

should have been, which was not uncommon for that type of provision. I managed to get the practitioners to work together, talk together in an informal environment, then some shared teaching and then teaching on other people's premises where college staff, instead of bringing students to the college would go and do some additional teaching in the school environment and that had a really positive outcome in terms of teachers understanding the differences in each other's environment and the different ways, that the different professionals engage with young people. (C)

Participants say that they run inductions for new staff (A) or partnership members (F). {Reflection: what is not clear [because I didn't ask (A)] was whether there is ongoing staff development for the team of eight staff, whose work involves supporting the partnership and working in the vocational centre, or whether the induction includes any aspect of how the collaboration works within the partnership.}

The data highlights participant examples where there is a strong belief in team work, which may be part of their authenticity and concept of own identity and cascades through to 'what I do', and want to see achieved for young people, being 'why I do it', suggesting that leaders will build communities rather than focus on own reputation (Collinson (2006).

Teamwork is important to me in any organisation you work within, engendering that culture is really important and I know we have got that and it is a really nice feeling (A).

I enjoy grappling with the issues of why people don't want to work together, be it because of a competitive nature or because of underlying insecurity, there are still benefits where you can gain something really positive about getting people to work together, and when I get something positive out of it, I do feel good (C).

These examples differ in that (A) is responsible for two teams whereas (C) refers to the broader partnership. The belief in benefits of partnership leads (C) to recognising the opposite of teamwork and takes it upon self to turn the relationship around.

The interpretation from the transcript of (E) supports the view that the focus is on achieving outcomes and achievements that benefit what (E) calls the stakeholders, a community of young people, actively engaging with them, going further by giving them roles to perform, and so becoming a resource in the partnership, which (E) regards as her/his team. For (E), it is about building relationships in the partnership to progress to outcomes:

> It is important to demonstrate to partners that you have listened to them, building relationships with people, by building a picture of common ground that shows you understand where they are coming from, and also not being afraid to challenge people. You only move things forward if you've got people on your side and you need to have some quick wins (E).

(F) talks about the importance of being transparent and about fairness, and its importance, indicating an authentic belief in the approach s/he takes in 'what I do':

> I am good at creating a climate of mutual working, making sure everyone gets a fair hearing, that any resources (time or money) are deployed fairly, that people feel part of what the partnership is doing and not letting people de-rail it, it is incredibly important (F).

From the participants data on activities of, there is association with 'why I do it', in that to achieve certain outcomes, such as a new vocational centre or implement new policy, additional funding is the driver in the partnership. Dealing with funding is mentioned by all participants during the 14-19 reform phase, and subsequently RPA and NEET, alongside some who are active in seeking out other funding streams, such as from ESF, Local Enterprise Partnerships and Universities. Whilst some of the activities already outlined indicate that they will offer additional funding, there is also evidence that LEP leaders actively seek out funding streams, which can be a driver for partnership working, and so are involved in bid writing and running activities as projects. Participants said:

(A) I am so pleased I found funding

(B) I was involved in negotiating funding from the LSC for new buildings

(E) Securing extra income is specified as part of the role

(F) I have secured ESF funding and project managed the deliverables.

The respondent data supports the participant examples in that many are involved in seeking funding, and running activities as projects (Figure 6.12), it is part of 'what I do', and the financial incentives, which can be about forthcoming policy implementation, in a taken-for-granted political sense, are reasons for 'why I do it'. Figure 6.14 captures the policies and research opportunities available that attract funding or grants, and most respondents are engaged in some policy or research related projects where funding is through a bidding process.

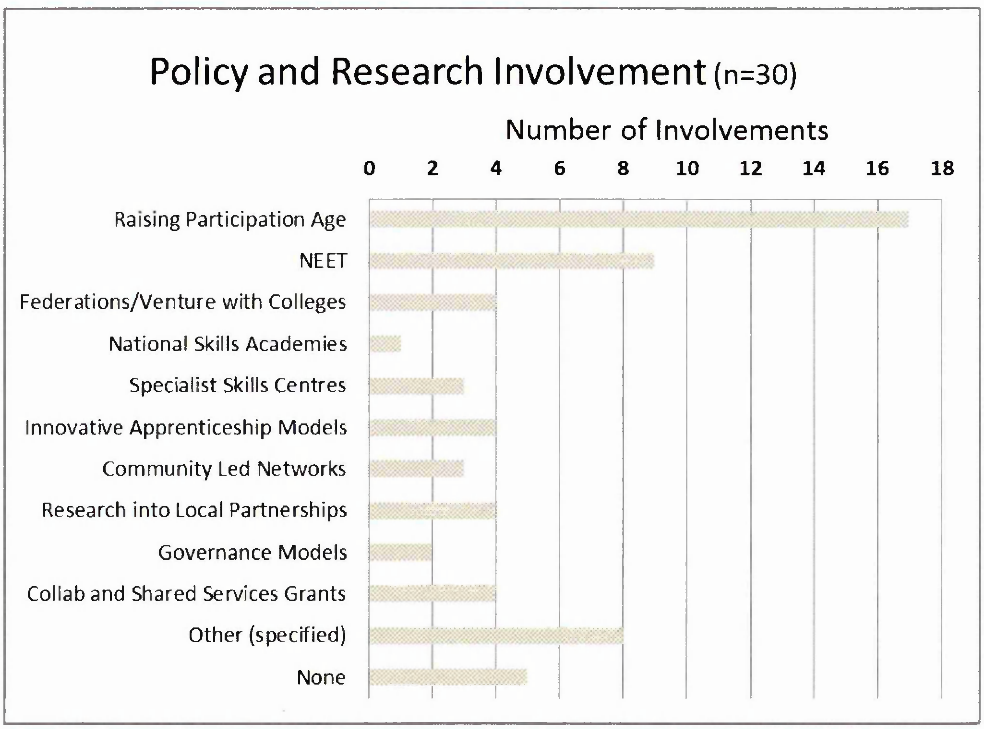


Figure 6.14: Involvement in Policy or Research Funded Work

There are examples from 3 participants on engagement in NEET, RPA, and collaboration and shared resources which highlight different styles of working. In the following (E) describes how s/he is approaching an initiative on a shared resources model and seeking other funding sources:

> What I'm doing is I'm taking bits out, the partnership bit, the collaborative bit that's got to be done, but they [meaning partners] probably haven't got the time to think about, so it's like the icing on the cake, for example, that's why I've been at the University of E to discuss putting in a bid to the education endowment trust which would be an absolute massive pot of money, a 5-year project across the partnership. If I wasn't here that wouldn't happen, there'd be nobody who would have the time to think about that.
>
> I'm working on, and setting up the school company, to manage all the devolved funding from the LA, that's within the interests of all schools to be involved, it is going to save them money, and unfortunately that's what we're in at the moment aren't we, a situation where it is about funding and being much more cost effective (E).

Having looked at work activities, the following discussion turns to the data from a prioritising activity instrument (which is based on identified issues and concerns as outlined in section 5.7.5). Before looking at what emerges from the activity, there is the need to recognise the positioning of the individual in the answer.

When an individual is working on behalf of a partnership, in collaboration, there is the possibility that they can choose to talk and answer from different perspectives, such as being the individual, which can be personal and/or in the capacity of being a leader, or from the collaboration, which in this study is taken as meaning the partnership itself (Huxham and Vangen 2004). To illustrate the point, (F) answers as a leader, acknowledging the themes were valid, and chose to talk about them in an order relating to setting up a new partnership. Two participants, answering from a partnership perspective, added other themes, for (B) it was outcomes and for (E), putting emphasis on her/his view that the themes also offer opportunities; young people as stakeholders.

In turning to the data from the activity, the following analysis relates to explanations of what and how participants recognise the issues. A common thread through the answers is power and trust which are often combined or related to other themes. There is wide variation on how power is recognised and managed, but for participants it is trust that features highly as an issue.

The discussion starts by looking at the findings on trust, an association with membership structures and then leads on to power, this is because participants often relate trust and power. (C) indicates that the biggest challenge faced is one of trust and confidence, explaining the issue of trust as part of 'what I do' in the context of singular organisations within the partnership, in the third person 'others', recognising the issue threatens the partnership, and introduces the management of risk:

> The biggest challenge I've faced is trust, and I would also use the word confidence, in terms of organisations to open up and admit areas where they might be less strong, so I would also include management of risk, where organisations working together could mitigate risk. In terms of managing aims, schools tend to be very good at knowing what they'd like to do, but they are less mature in terms of building a collaborative agenda. Schools now have more freedom to set their own longer term path of travel, I think that's challenging schools at the moment, and I've struggled with my partnership because of it, that's why I see it as my biggest challenge (C).

A significant part of the role which (F) refers to when talking about building trust and leadership is the importance of relationships:

> Nurturing relationships I think is incredibly important within a partnership and something I've always done is to make sure that people feel part of what we are doing and are appropriately thanked if they choose to leave, and that new people are properly inducted and looked after. I think it is really important that those relationships are managed. It is about getting those partners on your side, finding the central part of the Venn diagram and knowing that people can engage with that, have a non-controversial core to start with and then it's very easy to build on. I think it is about being able to see things from different points of view and being able to work with that (F).

(A) sees trust as something the individual [LEP leader] has to deal with on a daily basis, which is earned over time, inferring that it is all organisations in the partnership that need to see they are treated equally:

> Trust is less of an issue, if you can demonstrate over time your ability to be able to do what you say you are going to do, that everyone has an equal bite of the cherry, then hopefully you can build trust. (A).

(F) drew on partnership experience in a leader capacity in considering membership structures to those that would represent an organisation at a partnership meeting, bringing personal past into present experience, which relates to the view (F) expressed in the earlier extract in the need to nurture relationships as significant in building trust:

> In my experience in working in education, there's a sort of steer of responsibility below which it makes no sense to send somebody to a partnership meeting. Deputy heads and vps are best to have on your partnership, they are senior enough to know what the organisation is up to, have some decision making weight and financial responsibility within the organisation. I might meet twice a year with heads, I don't think you would get them around a partnership table on a regular basis, so if it were around diplomas, they might meet once to say yes, that's the strategic direction we want to go in, but they would never be involved in the implementation, so you need the deputies to make it work (F).

(B) holds a similar view to (F) in that membership structures is a frustration of partnership working, especially when the accountability structure within a school leads to not getting the right people at a meeting:

> Different schools would send different levels of people so sometimes you don't get the right people at the meeting that don't actually have the clout to go back and do anything, or you need to get heads at a meeting but they send a deputy, then the deputy will say I can't do anything I have to ask my head. (B)

Whilst building trust is revealed as the biggest concern for participants, the association to membership structures is not initially evident, with the overall ranking being low. (E) has given a low ranking to membership structures, s/he likens building trust to shifting sand because of the change in membership structures, answering from a perspective of the partnership 'why I do the job'. (E) expresses the view that changing heads, through the introduction of academies, means s/he needs to build relationships with new academy heads, in order to continue to offer choices to young people [an important value to (E)]. Also, the approach taken by (F), to consider the themes as stages in setting up a new partnership, leads to membership structure being ranked high, needing to be agreed and put in place at the start of a partnership, inferring that once this is done, it is a case of working within those structures to progress the work. And so from the supporting text, it appears that the membership structures are something that are accepted, leading to strategies to deal with whatever implications are thrown up, such as changing representatives at partnership meetings, all be it a frustration of the job.

This discussion reveals that for several of the participants trust is about building relationships. The connection with membership structures is recognised as an inevitable part of partnership working, accepting that structures do change. A maturity in the answers comes through in recognising what might be involved in building that trust, and in recognising that working on building and maintaining trust is an ongoing part of the job. The following discussion, and use of data, will extend to the personal perspective in relation to power and trust.

Different ways of managing power and building trust are found, and can be associated to the way in which the individual is situated within the institution or partnership, which in some cases leads to points of resistance (Watson 2005). Data for (B D and E) illustrates that through background experience, some of the issues are recognised as critical, in contrasting themselves with 'others' in similar roles, and yet not seen as issues for them. For example (B and D) have deeply held assumptions, that can be related to Ricoeur's view that the society setting is part of identity, with influence on 'who we are' as a person, in this instance being part of a teaching community sets them apart from other LEP leaders. The point is evident in the text of (D) who identifies building trust, managing power, leadership and accountability, as not being such as issue for her/him, referring to background knowledge and experience. (D) is accountable to the consortium and has a considerable degree of freedom to operate, because of her/his history in this area and so these are non-issues, but s/he compares self to 'others' and offers the view that for other people doing the job, without her/his type of history, they would have had difficulty, it would take them 12/18 months to get up to speed [tacit knowledge]. (D) recognises where the power lies describing that through her/his history, and position of trust, through previously being a head in the area, gives the ability to 'lobby behind the scenes', getting people ready to talk at meetings, a further example of Huxham and Vangen's politicking and manipulation theory (2005):

> I was in the middle of dealing with a disagreement in developing the funding model where schools felt the college was receiving too generous funding. I could see both sides and handled it to a successful conclusion by 'lobbying behind the scenes' with heads known to be 'digging their heels in' (D).

There are similarities with (B), in that s/he does not relate power to a present issue, but rather looks to an unknown future changing the power dynamics, ranking managing power as the highest issue:

> Managing power, a year ago this wasn't a challenge, in the new world order it brings it far more into focus, I think it is becoming increasingly a threat and a challenge (B)

The rationale (B) gives is based on local responses to the change in government policy where schools have the opportunity to become academies, threatening the partnership:

> Managing power is of the moment because schools are now in the position of becoming autonomous, at the same time as reduced funding and therefore having to reflect on their own practice and find different new ways of doing things. And as they become academies, wanting to manage their own destiny rather than seeing it linking with anybody. As schools become academised and become part of a bigger chain they become part of that family and not part of our family, now that's not happened yet, but I can see that if some schools get taken over by academy chains, this partnership may fall apart, be destroyed (B).

The data indicates that one aspect of managing power is the concern connected to the partnership external driver of change in government policy, which includes offering schools more autonomy, and is high on the minds of (A B C E).

Another association with managing power is made by (F) which includes managing aims and communication, holding the view that this [meaning the three themes] is what delivers the partnership work. In the following extract (F) describes how it is a LEP leader can make things happen by understanding the dynamics of aims, power and communication:

> Because this is about influencing people, setting goals for projects, looking at strategic direction of government policies, seeing if you agree with it, picking out the bits you like and making those work, there is no power in a partnership, there's no power to manage because you've got no line management responsibility over the people you work with, it's all about influence and collaboration and asking people to work together (F)

(F) makes a distinction in that the power is within the organisations, which endorses similar findings by others, such as Close (2012).

> All the individuals have power within their own organisations, you have no power over them and actually they have no power over you, so it is all about mutual respect and working together. If you don't accept that early on you are riding for a fall, especially if you come from a role such as a

head teacher who can give orders, it is a culture shock. You can say what you like, but unless you've made your case properly you can't persuade anyone to do anything. It is about recognising the dynamics of how all of this works and saying that's good, I find that a really exciting way to work and I can make some things happen through that (F).

Rather than the lack of power being an issue, (F) shows part of 'who I am' by acknowledging where the power lies and then following through by speaking as the leader. (F) describes taking a holistic approach by recognising that power sources can be competing within the partnership. In order to achieve, s/he finds ways in which to progress so that those with the power issues feel they can subscribe and lead to agreed aims, downplaying cultural differences, adopting what other studies describe as a thin notion of identity (Beech and Huxham 2003; Ybema et al 2012). (F) goes on to describe how communication might be perceived to support the power, speaking from the organisational 'others' perspective:

For communication it is about mutual understanding and common language between institutions. Within education FE and schools have commonality in that they are educational organisations, publically funded and in a slightly competitive environment, generally speaking they understand the business each other is in. It is slightly different for private training providers, although there is commonality in recruiting young people and delivering outcomes. Keeping up with the jargon in education is the most monumental problem, but I've never got the feeling that anyone didn't know what everyone else was talking about, they might pretend that it was a bit out of their sphere of experience, but generally speaking they understand each other's worlds (F).

As a contrast, (E), having indicated that the top priority has to be the young people as stakeholders, follows on to indicate that in order to manage aims and power it comes back to building trust and relationships, indicating the approach s/he takes:

I think there is an underlying acceptance in that we are all in this to make sure that young people achieve and progress to achieve their career potential, and we are all trying to do this in different ways. I am trying to do things that are very different to what the school does, [this is how E deals with power] I put the young person at the heart of it all, I don't put partners at the heart, I try to get young people to lead on some of these things, I get them to be ambassadors, for induction, and have event co-ordinators and partner schools agree to this approach. It is young people that will drive some of the changes that I work on. Not everybody [meaning institutions in the partnership] is going to be involved in everything all of the time, it's about what bids the schools want to get involved in. I'm working on a bid at the moment, and 2 heads are aware, it's about young people, raising aspirations and attainment, others will be interested. I do a lot of work around saving money, a big leveller, when you are saving them money, they [heads of institutions] like that (E).

(E) constructs his/her response recognising it is based on his/her commitment, as part of 'what I do', wanting to bring opportunities, and changes that benefit young people, as a rationale for justifying the work undertaken and demonstrates the belief that power lies within the context of, and with young people. In other aspects of the example (E) speaks about the manner of engagement of partners, in which s/he is recognising 'how' s/he works on responses to 'others' as part of 'what I do' and as a financial justification for 'why I do it' for the broader 'others' who benefit through the partnership. (E) recognises that managing power is critical and goes on to explain how s/he handles it:

To manage the power you've got to understand where they [meaning organisations as 'partnership others'] are coming from and that goes back to building trust and building relationships. I'm not going to influence the principals or heads on how they plan to run their schools to ensure they survive, I take bits out of the partnership, the collaborative bit, the bit they haven't got time to think about or do, so it's the icing on the cake, if I wasn't here those bits wouldn't happen, and they are the bits that make a difference to young people (E).

Again (E) turns the focus to the belief s/he has that the top priority is young people as the stakeholders:

If you are trying to manage all the power, the academy chains, the college, you waste so much energy whereas I can move things forward by working through young people and reporting back to my executive group. (E)

A pragmatic point is made by (C) in a belief that power is symptomatic of partnership working, and recognises the third person in the partnership 'others' in experiencing the breakup of the partnership implicit in context of 'what I do' in the present:

Managing power is a natural issue within collaborative working and is more generic partnership working, with issues about power, communication and accountability. A natural challenge is going to be managing power because you are asking institution leaders to work together and share manpower of the partnership leader. [share manpower is recognising the 'I' and linked to facilitate shared leadership] (C).

The data highlights that different aspects of power are recognised, often being with 'others', rather than themselves, and intertwined with other issues. In looking at power, for several participants, the discussion from trust and power lead to an association with accountability, and appears to lead to more significance being placed on building trust and communication.

Communication aligned to accountability is given greater significance by (A and D). (A) sees communication as an issue that relates to where power, from 'others', is an issue drawing on skills related to 'who I am' and 'what I do' as a leader:

I work so hard on communicating out and listening and working on feedback, but I still have anxiety and stress because of the lack of communication. We might be working on a project, all those attending the meetings agree, and then an internal meeting in one of the organisation's will happen and decide to 'go it alone' and the decision is made behind my back, and they [meaning the partner organisation] don't see the relevance of communicating the decision to me (A).

The example also relates to the issue of membership structures and accountability, in who it is that is representing a partner, whether they are clear on what authority and power they have in any decision making, and (A) goes on to say:

The other big issue for me is decisions that are made last minute that cause ramifications, for example, a careers fair is scheduled, and a chief executive from a national organisation has agreed to come along, give up her/his time for the benefit of young people, and then the school cancels the event the night before (A).

The example given by (A) demonstrates the individual position of working on communication, with a reliance on trust and accountability to achieve the agreed aim and outcome. The response demonstrates a return to the issue of power, inequality being perceived because of the competitive environment, in the knowledge that the single organisation is the higher priority, and how communication work is needed from a partnership perspective:

> Managing power just goes back to my point that you've got autonomous decision makers in academies who could be in silos competing against each other and it is to manage and negotiate the power within those organisations to keep them working together and remind them of the greater good idea of team work, sharing, support each other. Keeping them [meaning organisation head or representative in the partnership] on track is a big challenge, but one that I think I am successful with, as much as I can be (A).

(A) goes on to demonstrate how s/he uses previous experience to find a solution through developing a process in which the balance of accountability and power might be addressed to achieve aims for the partnership 'others' by explaining:

> People don't want to be held accountable for things, and one of the biggest things that I've learnt is that even though they might employ me I have to make them [meaning staff in partner organisations] accountable for things otherwise it would never happen, so service level agreements for the smallest of activity helps (A).

From the data a different context is given by (F) who ranks accountability fairly high, as does (A and C), but very much sees accountability as leading on from building trust because of the focus s/he puts on projects and assessing the level of risk, which is similar to the trust building loop developed by Huxham and Vangen (2004):

> Accountability leads on from building trust because if you are looking at the projects you take on, you try to match the level of risk that you take against the strength of your partnership and the challenges are the same as for the trust issues (F).

The accountability example from (C) looks from the partnership 'other' perspective in recognising that there is accountability within institutions, so if they work together that accountability is going to be more important and therefore harder to achieve for the partnership as a whole.

Communication was ranked second highest by (B), who emphasises the importance of knowing who the communication is aimed at, and is clear that it should be heads. (B) provides an example of the RPA initiative, where communication is targeted towards heads and how a key theme has to be outcomes because of the way in which schools perceive it needs to be of benefit for their institution:

> Communication is at the heart, communication to the right people at the right time, it could never happen if there wasn't effective communication to the heads. I get on and do something about it ensuring that they have all got shared aims and goals – shaping of the collaborative agenda, you're are not just in it for your school, you are in it for the partnership. The challenge is that schools often see it as what's in it for me, which goes back to OUTCOMES, what am I going to get out of it – you have to show that it's a bigger picture than getting £10K for your school, that's the challenge making people have shared accountability, aims and goals, it's a real challenge (B).

(D) answers from an individual view on being in the role and drawing on past experience in 'who I am', seeing communication as part of a group of operational issues:

> The concerns are operational and the other issues were relatively easy to resolve because of my own background, my relationship. In the operational group (communication, managing aims, appropriate working practices, managing structures) there were lots of taken-for-granteds, never articulated in terms of how things would operate because the partnership had operated for many years on a fairly relaxed and easy basis. It was with the partnership being formalised by the LA/LSC, there was a need to quickly make that operational and have rules set up. My main concern was to do with communication, ensuring that they were formalised and established so that we had meetings that were minuted, actions identified, people held responsible, which was difficult when the consortium grew so quickly from a college and 6 schools to Connexions, Aimhigher, D Training Network, it was big, 20 odd people sitting around the table, some not knowing why they were there, some sitting there texting and some heads feeling it was

imposed on them (D).

For (D) it was an early concern about communication on managing the process, trying to articulate the purpose and function of the partnership, it was no longer just about operating two post-16 centres it was bigger and broader issues, and (D) thinks heads felt Area Strategy Groups were an imposition. (D) put in place a formal structure to make things happen which some heads found somewhat cumbersome:

.. they were no longer able [meaning heads] to pick up the phone and ask a mate to do something with these kids in key stage 4 ... I was dealing on a strategic level across a 14-19 partnership with £.5M funding, it has to be fool-proof. (D)

Of the interview participants (E) ranked communication the lowest and looking from the partnership 'other' perspective, describes it as interesting:

... you can have the most effective communication strategy, you can't make people listen to what you've got to say and sometimes it's not what you do, not so much what you say, it's the actions (E).

The initial response on communication by (E) would suggest that through experience within the partnership there is effective communication and is able to list the types of communication. (E) ranked appropriate working practices the lowest, which is backed up by how s/he associates the maturity of the partnership to communication explaining the documentation that is in place:

We've got a memorandum of understanding, service level agreements, a values and missions statement, everything you'd expect to see across a partnership, we can tick the boxes, but sometimes communication can be an issue because one person might interpret it in a completely different way, so that is always going to be a massive challenge, how you communicate (E).

(E) draws on the knowledge that the partnership has a strong history and immediately relates this to future areas of work:

We need to have a new conversation about RPA, a NEET strategy and what else we can collaborate on, so we can all work more closely together, to save money, that's going to be the future of partnership working, a bit about young people attainment, and a bit about cost effectiveness (E).

The discussion on communication highlights its importance in all aspects of partnership working, and it is recognised by LEP leaders in the context of 'what I do' to achieve aims and outcomes, involving 'others' in a variety of contexts that are associated with trust, power and accountability. What follows relates to the data on leadership, involving working practices, which appears to be played down in 'what I do'.

Overall leadership, and appropriate working practices, are less of a challenge, suggesting that there is evidence that the situation is accepted as being complex and dealt with as best as one can and, for (D) recognising past experience is beneficial:

I could use the skills that I have in terms of my leadership and strategic skills and it was also bringing some back into the consortium at a different sort of level and being able to work outside of a specific school and work collectively with a group of schools and institutions and in that sense it was quite fulfilling. There is a measured quality that is also about being, not necessarily unflappable, but maintaining a calm when people around are seeking to have some kind of leadership which actually holds things together, and I've done leadership work, beyond the headship (D).

A further example of where leadership is played down is given by (B):

I think that's where funding can be a real driver and because I manage the money, I am in charge of that, I can make it very clear that unless we all work together we are not going to get the funding [which is also about power]. It's probably not the right reason, but it is a real driver, because I manage things, I suppose it is back to leadership, I can control things, I can make it very clear that unless they do it that way, they are not going to get the funding. I will work closely with external people so I can bring that person to the first meeting so together present a shared agenda and shared vision, so it is very clear it's not just for schools, but us working together, it's just this whole ethos of we are a partnership. I think there is a philosophy within the partnership of us all working together and I think I have that as an advantage that other areas haven't got. An underpinning ethos that helps me do what I'm doing, that is a history of collaboration (B).

(B) demonstrates confidence in what s/he has achieved and underpinned through her/his leadership culminating in a mature partnership, based on trust, citing a shared online data resource which gives results for every child in the partnership as an appropriate working practice. (E) provides further evidence of a mature partnership through planning future conversations. The maturity of the partnership that (E) mentions is reflected in the low ranking of appropriate working practices, however there is perhaps a contradiction in that later (E) mentions that the effective communication is across four key schools that are involved in post-16 collaboration rather than the wider partnership, identifying the relationship between the four schools as both informal and formal.

A similar finding of leadership not necessarily being an issue is given by (F). The contrast with (B and E) is that it is not connected to maturity of the partnership, but more about the approach to achieve early wins:

> It is something to do with getting those partnerships on your side, and finding that central part of the Venn diagram, and knowing that people can engage with that, so you've got a non-controversial core to start with, and then it's very easy to build on from that (F).

In some cases tension between facilitating versus participating arises, a position found in other studies (Huxham and Vangen 2005). (C) gives an example of working with all levels of leadership as well as leadership across partner institutions through an example on agreeing an overarching child protection policy:

> I'm thinking here about working processes. Most institutions for instance will have a child protection policy. Most will be very alike each other [meaning the policy], but then getting them [meaning the partners] to have a shared child protection policy is just a very difficult mechanistic process you need to go through and alongside that you have to facilitate shared leadership about getting people to have, just how things are going to happen, that something I'd describe that's very much mechanistic (C).

(C) does not dwell on the process other than to acknowledge that it does involve facilitating shared leadership, meaning the need to recognise where accountability and responsibility rests within the leadership of each partner institution with regard to a partnership policy.

The following example relates to appropriate working practices and trust-related implications. (F) gives the example that bridges appropriate working practices, with transparency, trust, accountability and aims, drawing on past experiences of 'who I am' into the present of 'what I do':

> I do have experience of taking over as a partnership leader, and seen what a mess you can get into if you do not have the processes properly set up. One of the things I've always done is make sure that everyone in the partnership knows where all the money is, full expenditure accounted for, signed off, and I've been in uncomfortable meetings between partners who rightly want to know where the money is, and the correct processes were not in place. The most appropriate working process is transparency. Make sure that everyone is absolutely clear about what you are doing with the money, that's what builds trust, and if you are not transparent, then the first thing people ask about is the money. Money is a key driver and something tangible as well. People [those representing organisations in the partnership] can ask and get a definitive answer about how you've managed it, whereas how have you influenced policy, well I've talked to young people, it is not such a tangible outcome. I've always made it my business to give clear answers as to where the money goes (F).

It could be argued that (F) is associating money with trust rather than with power which is a different perspective to the example given by (B) whose belief is that s/he has few issues with trust and is therefore able to use her/his responsibility and handling of money as a driver, giving her/him power through the connection to the trust.

In looking from a participant LEP leader perspective of 'what I do', the findings lead to the following claims:

- the main challenges in the role relate to trust and power, with the latter being evident in relation to 'others', which leads to an acceptance of power issues being something that is handled in various ways

- the issues and challenges presented are seen as something that they deal with, but which are not always perceived as such an issue for those from school backgrounds
- all give examples that indicate how they engage with others, essentially to benefit the partnership
- team work is especially important to those without school backgrounds
- the identified activity descriptors broadly equate to all, strengthened by respondent data, with evidence that each can be unique in approaches to progressing their partnership.

6.2.3 **Why I do the job**

In this section I will consider outcomes and achievements in relation to 'why I do the job', on the premise that the job is about working on behalf of partnership 'others'. The satisfaction achieved in the role is identified through a spectrum of engagement, which on first glance may not always seem to be associated to the wider goal. However, it does remain valid in that it is part of the 'why', and can be part of a process within the partnership, where the moral value of a people focus, the 'others', is a rationale. For example:

(A and C) indicate that team working is one of the most satisfying parts of the role. Neither (A or C) indicate that it is about leading a team, suggesting that it is more about working together.

(D) cites creating CPD opportunities for staff. (D) is consolidating a long held belief in the value and benefits of CPD, extending beyond the past experience of being within a school, to staff in schools who at some point engage in activities in partnership.

(F) has a belief that the work is to bring public benefit, for (B) it is about progressing vision, and for (E) it is seeing things move on.

The three broad statements infer active leadership to achieve strategic level outcomes.

Participant success in the role highlights the outcomes achieved on behalf of partnership 'others', and cited in response to being asked what has been their greatest achievement. For example, for (A and F) it is about providing new infrastructure through securing funding and subsequent project management. For (A) the success is leading on work resulting in a new social enterprise offering vocational courses:

> I am so pleased that I have been able to find funding to set up and grow a social enterprise in a rural centre, independent from the schools, for the ultimate benefit of staff and young people. I am proud that the enterprise will be seen as a legacy of the work I've done for the partnership. I've been able to achieve what first attracted me to the role, and that is introducing vocational courses, giving young people the opportunity to access vocational courses and qualifications mainly on one site. (A).
> {Reflection: I did not ask why it was seen as a benefit for staff}

The fragility of the role and partnerships is also highlighted by (A) in talking about the work undertaken towards legalising the partnership, and how suddenly the situation can change, and yet throughout (A) doesn't lose sight of 'why I do the job' in relation to 'who I am'. The joint venture between schools in the partnership leads to (A) working to create a legal entity, expecting to become part of the senior leadership team. (A) had a perception that s/he was valued and working as an equal with school heads, participating with and facilitating heads, whereas the outcome suggests this is not the reality. It is the engagement of leadership, with 'others' in 'what I do' that brings challenges to (A), and ultimately implications for the future:

> We are just in the process of legally formalising our partnership and it would have been an opportunity for these head teachers, who are very busy people, to see that they could have somebody that could be part of their senior leadership team supporting them, working with them to develop a business and they don't see that. I think they don't respect me

as much today as if I'd been a teacher or a head teacher. If I didn't have half the skills I have, half of the entrepreneurial drive that I have, but I had the badge that said head teacher there wouldn't be a problem. I've done all the work to the starting point, and because they see me as not an equal they are now going to marginalise what I do for them, that's really tough (A).

The example from (F) reinforces her/his belief in partnerships being about delivering for greater public benefit and describes a project approach to developing a connected learning community through expanding IT connectivity and innovation (F):

There were organisations in that partnership that were extremely pro extended learning, ie using IT to develop learning, there were some that really couldn't see the point of that, we were able to use the ESF money to bring some investment into F which it badly needed, and developed some extended learning in organisations that were very keen on it and in some organisations that needed development. It was an extremely challenging project, but it delivered all its outcomes. Although things move on quickly within IT, there is still some legacy in F from that project. This is one of the successes that I look back on. I wrote the project bid, got the money, managed the project, made sure the outcomes were delivered, so it is something that I saw through all the way. I had no line responsibility for any of the people involved, but I still had to deliver the objectives within the partnership. I think the skills I brought to it were personal tact and patience maybe, [umgh] because we had some quite fiery meetings. We were able to channel the energy to deliver the project outcomes (F).

(F) has a belief that s/he is a partnership person, has always worked in partnerships, and sees that the skills for partnership working are transferable, it's not about having a subject knowledge, it's not about having a teaching qualification, it's about being able to analyse where people are coming from and make that work in partnership. (F) displays an authentic trait in creating a climate where people can work together, built on a reputation of being fair, which means people are prepared to work with you.

(B and E) relate to the 14-19 reform phase, with the development, introduction and success for students studying the diplomas (E), and a bid linked to diploma developments leading to new vocational buildings on each school site (B):

I was really proud of myself when I worked in X I wrote the gateway application and got the first five lines, that was a very proud moment for me, because that enabled me to get the job here. The fact that I had managed the diploma gateway application, managed all the partnership, I'd put a structure in place across X city that was replicated in other areas. I moved to E and took E through the second gateway application and there's been a lot of hoo-ha about diplomas, but in E, our achievement has been great. I think that's not so much about the diploma, but I that this is about partnership working, so it could have been, another qualification we were working at, because I wouldn't be able to do my job if the schools weren't right behind me, the deputy heads were completely committed to partnership working and when things went wrong, we worked it out together so, again I suppose some tangible achievements … we are having a conversation with all the schools across E and X on a new way of working, so the old way of working with the IFP programme, the diplomas, that's gone (E).

In recent years it's got to be the introduction of diplomas. Ironic as they've all now disappeared. It was the right way forward in terms of getting the buildings as well, because suddenly we had a raison d'etre for the buildings in that if we were going to develop different lines of learning within different institutions you need the buildings to actually be able to resource it, yeah I think linking together diploma implementation with all the challenges that getting 5 buildings, a £million building on each site, that's got to be my greatest success really (B).

(B) chooses to give diplomas as the greatest achievement, and whilst not necessarily mentioned by all participants, an implicit belief is found in that they were part of a policy initiative, a constructive process and of value to young people. It is in connecting the value of building resources, and a personal view relating to the 14-19 policy that sets (B) apart from other participants, who outlines a conflict in values with perceived knowledge:

There was enormous cynicism about diplomas when they started, [umgh] I think I had reservations about the longevity of them but I suppose to go back to a strength I felt it was the right thing at the time and therefore had that ability to promote and sell them, convince people that it was the right way. (B)

For (C and D) their greatest achievements draw on what they have done 'what I do', associated with partnership 'others' in that for them their role is also to the partnership and leads to processes and systems across the partnerships, an important part of 'why I do the job'. (D) puts the role in a broader context 'it is about serving people' leading on to describe working models s/he regards as a legacy [a personal belief]:

> I was able to get in very quickly, that enabled D consortium to pioneer some of the quite interesting things that we did, such as QA, funding formulas, assessment models, logistical stuff with transport, moving students around and schools being prepared to just allow other students to come in an operate, to develop the whole range of diplomas. We have a well-established QA model in D which QAs all our offsite provision and monitors the work the students are doing, they have a website with all the details on, providers can do self-assessment reports, they're verified. That's a legacy of some of the work that I've been doing. I'm quite proud of it in terms of achievement, it's just one instance. (D).

In the case of (C) designing and implementing an inspection style observation process, across the partnership for 14-16 provision, involving observers from schools within the college environment, was success in that it helped build trust in the partnership, and formed part of CPD [a belief in it being a benefit to others].

> One of the things I set up was to involve schools in the college internal inspection of 14-16 provision. We run a college internal inspection on schools provision and this was run in terms of joint observations which would be observed by a member of college staff and a member of school staff, there was joint agreement of lesson observations grades, of learning materials, assessment materials and effectively it was a combined quality assurance process, the outcome of which was shared in terms of an internal inspection report back to the schools, that was a massive move forward in both the college's confidence to allow people in to see what goes on, and the schools' understanding of how the college works, and how learning is different in the college. That was an enormous benefit and is a win that I've had that nobody else has had in this role, from both school and college points of view (C).

The examples are similar in that they are dealing with quality issues, however they do differ in that the basis for the process (C) develops uses the externally imposed inspection system, ordinarily outside the control of the partnership, whereas (D) is describing a range of processes, which are controlled by the collaborators, such as transport and funding (Huxham and Vangen 2004). (D) draws on her/his professional experience of being a head, demonstrating her/his belief in the importance of loyalty, which could be regarded as an authentic trait of leadership:

> There's an issue about service and serving people and ultimately that is the role you fulfil [meaning being a head], being approachable, being loyal to colleagues, head and teacher colleagues, being prepared to go that extra mile for folk, to put their professional development at the front of what you are doing as an individual. As the partnership delivery of nine diplomas is in the final year [2012], what has stayed is the professional development acquired for teachers. The down side of putting colleagues first is that your own professional development is underdeveloped as a consequence. This job was the opportunity to step back, work in a bigger and broader area without the stress, strains and responsibilities of headship to do the kind of professional development work that I've always felt quite important. (D)

Four of the participants cite the introduction of diplomas and their success rates for learners as being among their personal, and the partnership's greatest achievements. (E) puts into context diplomas in relation to the external government policy as a driver, the passion s/he had for the outcomes/results for young people and the pride in her/his success of dealing with the process:

> I think with the diploma, even though diplomas are history, I think I was definitely a diploma ambassador. I was involved in shaping the society health and development diploma, and the public sector one, and so I was really passionate about the diplomas, even though they turned out not to be quite the qualifications we thought they were doing to be, so I was really proud of myself. We've had very good achievement. The first year we had 90% of our young people gaining a diploma, the second year with a lot more young people, 86% got their diploma, and this year the majority of our young people will get their diploma. I think it is around the achievement of young people actually, that's got to be me (E).

In looking at the data from the perspective of partnership others, in the context of 'why I do the job', the following points come to light:

- there is evidence that participants show authenticity in that they would rather work to benefit 'others' than their own reputation

- participants' tend to view the partnership as the vehicle to add value, bring change or resources to a locality that is important to them
- there is a strong sense that by doing the job it brings benefits and opportunities to young people and to others that work in partnership organisations
- a belief that they have skills and experience that can bring improvements or make a difference, albeit in a difficult and an uncertain environment.

6.3 **Emerging themes**

At the time of the data gathering, partnerships were found to exist in a variety of models, sizes and mix of institutions. Explicit educational policy requiring partnerships is no longer a reason for partnerships, those that remain seem to be because of previous policies, such as providing collaborative A level provision, or to address policies such as RPA. Several participants indicated an initial aim of the partnership as being to provide A level provision across an area (B D E) and subsequently all 6 worked on behalf of their partnerships to provide a new 14-19 diploma offer.

The demise of the 14-19 diploma reforms leads to uncertainties and different emerging strategies for those partnerships that remain. There is nervousness around the speed and number of schools converting to academy status, because of the instability it brings to the existing local partnership. The participants outlined how loyalty to the partnership is put in question because academies are in a family partnership themselves. Partnership settings remain complex for a variety of reasons and may vary over time, particularly in light of external factors related to government policy, not just academies, there is also the roll out of University Technical colleges and a growing number of Career colleges and Studio schools. Recognising the role is bounded by the partnership leads to two claims:

- firstly being that the settings in which partnerships are operating are complex, combining reactions to new national policy, such as the introduction of academies, and legacy policies such as the 14-19 reforms set within a context of meeting local needs.
- Secondly, implicitly not all partners are equal, with evidence that colleges in partnerships play an active role, but tend not to be seen as equal partners.

In looking at the construct of 'who I am' as part of personal identity, it is found that the LEP leader background, experience and self-perception is a dynamic that shapes their views and importantly reasons for 'why I do the job'. Most LEP leaders have experience of previous roles within schools or FE, have leadership and management qualifications, with the experience in secondary sector being at 47% (n=36). The study illuminates that participants with a school background strongly believe that they are effective because of their experience within the sector, being a teacher is important to the role, making the job easier and being more effective, and sets them apart from those who have a similar partnership role, but do not have a school background. Whilst job titles include being a director or co-ordinator, frequent reference is made to an identity of being a teacher or a head, leading to the claim that being a teacher or head is very much part of 'who I am'. There is a sense of being within the school sector brings a basis for trust and power.

Participants show extremes in what they see themselves as, with one end of the spectrum being achieving objectives that can only be delivered through partnership or, leading the partnership, to others that tend to belittle their role, seeing themselves as facilitating the partnership, which could infer being steered by others. As in other research, there is evidence that the role is often perceived as being strategic, and yet in practice operates across strategic and operational levels.

Those participants from other sectors and backgrounds expressed more strongly that they do the job because of wanting to make a difference, change things, and demonstrate approaches that come from a belief in a wider good for 'others' (young people, or community), recognising where the value in partnership can be achieved. Views come from personal and professional experiences of the past of 'who I am', tending to lead towards outcomes that offer alternatives to what is offered within school (in the present of 'what I do' and 'why I do it') and development for 'others' in the partnership.

Much of the work activities, 'what I do', encountered by the wider group of LEP leaders fall into the category of collaborative provision for post-14 (24) and post-16 (26), along with government funded policy initiatives such as RPA and NEET. Seeking funding and project management feature highly, with evidence from 4 participants, of some projects being of significant financial value leading to outcomes of new buildings or IT infrastructure to underpin a wider vocational offer. The role can also involve leading a team that works on behalf of the partnership, and offering CPD to other staff in the partner organisations also comes through as an important activity.

The job is not without its challenges, and power and trust feature highly in participant answers relating to 'what I do'. The connection of power and trust to other activities, such as communication and managing aims are recognised as needing to be continually worked at, and are rarely taken-for-granted. The participants provide examples of the pragmatic and innovative approaches they take to dealing with these issues on a daily basis.

As part of personal identity construction, the engagement with 'others' is expressed by all participants, and constructed at different levels, in its simplest form as 'being a people person', with some seen as equals, such as head or teacher, to those seen as not equal, which can lead to feelings of disappointment (A) or recognised as the way things are and forms part of how it is dealt with (E F). A common goal of why participants do the job is about offering the best opportunities to young people, be it through new facilities or wider choice of curriculum. For the partnership to be able to offer choices, the leader is expected to act as the expert on understanding relevant government policies and funding opportunities, which can mean that there is a degree of autonomy in the steer provided to the partnership.

6.4 **Summary**

In this chapter I have endeavoured to provide detail, within a theoretical framework of personal identity, that helps answer the RQs. The findings are driven from the analysis of participant transcripts and then explored to the wider data set provided through respondents, as well as aspects taken from the literature review.

The emerging findings show that professional background and personal experiences are considered in what and how the role is performed. The findings also give an insight as to what it is the role entails. For the individual participant, engaging with 'others', on the basis of wanting to be part of offering choices and opportunities for young people and staff is a key driver, a moral endeavour in 'why I do the job'. It is recognised that the role is situated within a complex and fragile partnership environment which raises concerns at many levels, such as own future, that of the partnership and the wider implications for young people.

Chapter 7: **CONCLUSION**

7.1 **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to contribute to understanding the role of a LEP leader, from an individual perspective. Throughout the study the intention has been to portray participants by using their own words, and keeping their responses within context. In this chapter I am going to consider the findings, as responses to the RQs, which are constructed within a theoretical framework of identity and the possible effects and implications on professional practice for those findings that are enduring.

7.2 **Overview of analysis**

The starting proposition has been that there is very little known about those that undertake a LEP leader role, and this came from an initial review of literature which led to the RQs. In looking from a LEP leader perspective of 'what I do', the findings lead to the following claims, in considering the type of professional that takes on a LEP leader role (RQ1):

- the role is complex and what it entails will be driven by local needs. LEP leaders are involved with different educational sectors and other organisations, motivated by 'wanting to make things happen'
- LEP leaders have a wide range of professional backgrounds and qualifications, with the majority having previous leadership and management experience. A small number have been in a LEP leader role before. Whilst there is a strong view from those with a school background, that to be successful this background is a prerequisite, the study highlights that professional experience, gained in many sectors, is brought to the role. A comparison of participants highlights that, because of the autonomy the role has, they can draw on their own experience. For example (E) demonstrates knowing the boundedness of the role, in relation to own experience, and so positions her/himself to look for the

added value s/he can bring to enhance the learning experience for young people, offered to schools in the knowledge that it is something that does not impact on the running of the school, and is something that they should consider, but do not have the resources to do so, such as careers events

- there is evidence that participants show authenticity and a certain degree of altruism in that they would rather work to benefit 'others', associating the 'why' with 'what' I do. The finding supports the view expressed by Shamir and Eilam (2005):

  > "... authentic leaders do not take on a leadership role ....for other personal rewards. ... they lead from a conviction ... they have a value-based cause or a mission they want to promote .... (p397)."

  All participants give examples that indicate how they engage with others, essentially to benefit the partnership 'others'
- partnership members place reliance on the leader keeping alert to policy initiatives and funding opportunities and communicating these and their relevance to the partnership
- identified activity descriptors broadly relate to all participants and respondents: collaborative provision, project management, seeking funding, developing processes and supporting activities. The evidence shows each leader can be unique in the approach they take to how activities are progressed within their partnership, for example, working on processes that lead to dealing with ambiguous relationships, requiring motivational reasoning. Participants saw funding as a key part of the role, and if a leader has responsibility and accountability for the funding, then it is seen as important to be transparent. Also, a key driver is finding and securing funding that can bring early wins to partners
- as part of what the leader does, issues and challenges are acknowledged, which are in line with those identified and used from the literature review. The biggest challenges are building

and maintaining trust, and power issues, which in relation to Ricoeur's identity theory is about the relationship with 'others', taking accountability and responsibility for our actions, and so this is seen in the context of 'what I do as a leader'. Participant data suggests that they pragmatically accept that these issues are part and parcel of the job, recognising different aspects of power, and demonstrating that they work tirelessly to build trust. For the leader to have some degree of power there is a need to demonstrate the benefits to partners, and so there is a reliance placed on communication.

The perception of background arises, in the strategies and perceptions of level of trust and power, in that those with school backgrounds are of the opinion that these are not so much of an issue for them, as it would be for others [meaning leaders], with an alternative background. Views expressed by Beech and Huxham (2003) on the dependency of trust needed for collaboration, is evident in responses and also for the leader, it is about mutual understanding and recognising the boundedness of the role. If accountability from the organisations in the partnership to the partnership as a whole is lacking, it brings issues of power and trust. An example cited was of agreed arrangements being changed, which caused ramifications to the partnership and external others, because of a school head decision. What also emerges is the lack of accountability for decision making, particularly within meetings, where a person attends on behalf of a partner organisation, and does not have the power to make a decision, and so the leader cannot progress.

The participants come from different backgrounds, secondary and sixth form schools, work and vocational based learning and the wider public sector, which they identify with, and describe within a context of 'who I am', which I associate with the binding commitment that transfers to 'others', an idea which Ricoeur develops as part of personal identity. The analysed data in considering 'who I am', relates to RQ2 in the use of prior professional experience which leads to claims that:

- professional background and personal experience are evident in identity, and that it is possible to trace how beliefs and moral endeavours come through from that understanding. It is a range of professionals that take on the role of LEP leaders, although the highest sector experience is secondary education at 47%. Being within a community leads to personal beliefs based on background experiences, specifically from the secondary sector, that it sets them apart from 'others'. Those participants from the school sector have a firm belief that a background of working in a school is important in doing the role, whereas developing, supporting and working within teams are important to those without school backgrounds
- the role is often regarded as being at the strategic level, but in reality, participants recognise that they need to work across many levels, and specifically at both the strategic and operational levels to feel that they can achieve outcomes and legacies. Skills often relate to the ability to influence and motivate in order to make things happen. For one participant (E), young people are the stakeholders, with power, and focuses on working to respond to their needs is what s/he uses to help influence the partnership. In recognising that s/he cannot influence heads in how they run their schools, s/he aims to add value and do things that schools don't have time for, such as arranging careers events
- experience and qualifications are important to 'who I am', most noticeably those who see themselves as being, or have been, a teacher. Leadership and management qualifications also feature highly in the professional experience of the leaders
- there are examples of where earlier life experiences can be seen as what Ricoeur sees as sedimentation, in that they are part of

'who I am' and are referred to in the present. For example, (A) referring to the value s/he places on own learning experience which leads to a belief that other young people should be made aware of what choices can be made available to them.

To consider the findings in relation to how participants feel about themselves (RQ3), the wider responses to the opportunities and challenges of the job (RQ4) are analysed. To do this I have related Ricoeur's 'others', as part of 'why I do the job' from the perspective of the partnership being the wider 'others' and the following points come to light:

- participants tend to view the partnership as the vehicle to add value, bring change or resources to a locality that is important to them, which can be aligned to Ricoeur's view of authenticity in that it can lead to improvements, and so is part of leading a good life
- there is a strong sense that doing the job brings benefits and opportunities to young people and to 'others' that work in partner organisations. Examples indicate that achievements [a reason to feel good about the job], are often aimed at improving the facilities or broadening the choice of curriculum options. The contrast is that the outcomes and achievements are often aligned to project outcomes, through funding opportunities that have benefit to some of the partners, accepting partners are not equal, and to feel the benefits of partnership it is better to have some early small wins
- a belief that having skills and experience can bring improvements or make a difference, albeit in a difficult and an uncertain environment. One participant (F) has only ever worked on behalf of partnerships and demonstrates a mature approach and a belief that partnerships can be beneficial:

> "... it's not about subject knowledge, it's not about having a teaching qualification, it's about being able to analyse where people are coming from and make that work in partnership." (F)

Through the experience of working on behalf of partnerships (F) is demonstrating that the role is worth doing, in the knowledge and belief that it is good to create a climate where people can work together for a wider community

- participants expressed worries over their roles, and their future, along with that of the partnerships, because of the changing membership structures emerging from government policies. The conversion to academy status of existing school members brings many unknowns, such as building new relationships when new heads are appointed to the academies, or changing dynamics when an academy chooses to leave the partnership. The future of the role is in a state of flux.

With regard to professional practice the implications of the findings take account of the fact that the period of data collection was at a time when changing government policies were starting to impact on local partnerships. The study highlights what the role can entail, and gives an insight into how outcomes are influenced by the personal and professional experience of those in the role. Senior leaders, such as principals and heads who lead their organisations into partnership, as well as those who may be involved in appointing a leader to work on behalf of a partnership, could take the following points into consideration:

- those that want to take on a LEP leader role do so because they want to make a difference, will work to support, develop and achieve outcomes for 'others'. This suggests that their personal and professional experiences should be taken into account;
- it is likely that those in the role will recognise the significance of relationships with 'others', both internal and external to the partnership;
- a significant proportion of time is taken up on activities and on efforts to build and maintain trust, as this is seen as the most

important aspect for progress and agreement within the partnership; and finally

- those in the role do recognise that they lack formal power.

The study points to the importance of CPD for developing an understanding of partnerships, especially indicating that it is beneficial for staff working at the strategic and/or operational levels in partner organisations. Having found that those in the role exercise varying degrees of autonomy, this may mean that other professionals, from different levels within partner organisations could be approached by a LEP leader seeking to engage them in contributing to the latest government initiatives or in particular projects that are relevant to the partnership. I would encourage officers from LAs and senior post holders in FE and schools to recognise the significance of CPD for staff who are likely to engage across the different sectors. An aim to develop an understanding of the purposes and benefits from being in partnership, and why a desire for commitment and a belief in the benefits for any planned outcomes is important. For professionals who come into contact with a LEP leader the study indicates that it would be of benefit to recognise that a LEP leader is likely to be in the role because of wanting to make things happen which s/he perceives as beneficial to either the learners or staff from organisations within the partnership. In particular, consideration should be given to focusing on what it might mean for different professionals from a range of organisations to work with a LEP leader. This should include raising awareness of how the role can operate, recognising that it can require working across organisations, and that this involves negotiation and a progressive approach to building trust rather than a reliance on power.

The study serves to illuminate the role - albeit from data collected in 2013, which was a period of significant change. Upon reflection, there are aspects that are likely to be influenced by the turbulence around partnerships at the data gathering stage. Firstly, regardless of the timeframe of partnership, in the main participants recognised the impact changing policies have on the future of the partnership, both with regards to their formation and their own future. Secondly, relating to the activities of a LEP leader, post-14 collaborative provision was still ranked highly and this is a finding that was of the time, especially as diplomas were coming to an end. Because much of the work had been on establishing processes, of which some would be for the collaborative delivery of diplomas, this finding may not be enduring. Finally, since the role is situated in local partnerships, it appears that desired outcomes can take account of local needs. This positive aspect may be threatened by ceasing to have a LEP leader, or if partnership members change, especially with the drive towards academy conversions and the introduction of other post-14 establishments such as University Technical Colleges.

Wherever the role continues to exist, the findings that consider the experience and type of professional that takes on the role is likely to remain beyond the time of data gathering. Other enduring aspects relate to broader issues of leadership enactment such as building and retaining trust, and the significance placed on continually working on communication.

7.3 **Future research considerations**

From the literature review and findings, certain themes come to light that are outside the remit of this study, and yet could be of interest to the research community:

- in leadership theories, follower identities can be differentiated and contested within the work place and this could be more complex if situated within a partnership context (Collinson 2006). Enacting leadership may benefit from further research that considers how followers might be identified, defined and how it impacts on projects undertaken in partnership.

- emerging from the data was the fact female leaders appeared to be taking on the role at a later stage in their careers, whereas the younger leaders are male. This leads to the suggestion that a study of the role from a gender and identity related perspective may challenge this claim, and help in understanding more about the choices we make that relate to professional and personal experiences.
- on the basis that a partnership has a LEP leader type role, the research could be broadened to look at the role from the perspective of the representatives of the partner organisations. This would bring another dimension to the research, from the view of partnership 'others'.
- a piece of research that has a sharper focus on the processes and actions involved in the role to discover more about the leader perception of what it is they do, and what they would describe as a process or action.

However, more recent research draws attention to the changes in external drivers which are leading to break-up and different formations of partnerships, undoubtedly raising uncertainty about the number of partnerships that still exist and continue to employ a leader, leading to difficulties in researching the role (Elliott 2012; Haynes and Lynch 2012; Hodgson and Spours 2015).

7.4 **Summary**

This study started with the aim of studying professionals who are employed in a lead role capacity on behalf of LEPs, with objectives to:

- profile the characteristics of LEP leaders
- examine the ways in which LEP leaders perceive their role
- explore whether, and how, the professional background and experience of a LEP leader influences the way in which they understand their role.

From working with a number of partnership leaders and knowing that there had, at one stage been over 200 leaders, I wanted to address what I felt was a lack of recognition and understanding of what the role was/is through the following RQs:

1. What type of professional takes on a leader role on behalf of LEPs?
2. In what ways do LEP leads draw on their prior professional experience in undertaking their role with organisations in the partnership?
3. How do LEP leaders feel about themselves in the role?
4. What do leaders see as the opportunities and challenges of the role, and how do they construct their responses to these?

The study builds on the research of partnership and its leadership conducted by others such as Briggs, Hodgson and Spours and Huxham and Vangen, in many instances confirming or extending what their research has highlighted. This study is a contribution that illuminates the type of person, and the activities that they might perform in working on behalf of a partnership. What the study does is highlight that each leader role is likely to be unique in some way, primarily for two reasons. The first being on what basis the partnership has been formed, in that they will operate in different ways to achieve different things. Secondly autonomy comes with the role, which enables experience and personal background, which forms part of LEP leaders' beliefs and values, to be of benefit in shaping partnership aims, or as adding value. In many cases the role can also influence strategy, as an expectation of the role is to be aware of policies and funding opportunities, and the responsibility to communicate and make decisions on what should be considered by the partnership. Some of the achievements that come from being in the role are regarded as being a reward, and sometimes as leaving a legacy, such as vocational centres or quality assurance processes.

In knowing more about the role and those that take it on, in thinking about the future, for those that have worked so hard to bring resources and change to local areas, I am saddened by the uncertainty hanging over partnership work. This study highlights that there is a wealth of talented individuals in the sector, who have valuable experience and skills to draw on, whatever the future holds for them.

Chapter 8: **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Alvesson M (2010) Self-doubters, strugglers, storyteller, surfers and others: images of self-identities in organization studies *Human Relations* **63** 193-217

Amey M J (2010) Leading partnerships: competencies for collaboration *New Directions for Community Colleges* No 149

Armistead C Pettigrew P and Aves S (2007) Exploring leadership in multi-sectoral partnerships *Leadership* **3** 211-230

Ashworth P D (1997a) The variety of qualitative research. Part one: introduction to the probem *Nurse Education Today* **17** 215-218

Ashworth P D (1997b) The variety of qualitative research. Part two: non-positivist approaches *Nurse Education Today* **17** 219-224

Atkinson M et al (2002) *Multi-agency working: a detailed study* National Foundation for Educational Research Slough

Avolio B J and Gardner W L (2005) Authentic leadership development: getting to the root of positive forms of leadership *The Leadership Quarterly* **16** 315-338

Beech N and Huxham C (2003) Cycles of identity formation in interorganizational collaborations *International Studies of Management and Organization* **33** 3 28-52

Bell R and Jones G (2002) *Youth policies in the UK: A chronological map* Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Bergman M (2010) On concepts and paradigms in mixed methods research *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* **4** 171-175

Biesta G (2007) Why "what works" won't work: evidence-based practice and the democratic deficit in educational research *Educational Theory* **57** 1 1-22

Biesta G and Tedder M (2008) *Learning from life in the learning economy: the role of narrative* The Standing Conference of University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA)

Benwell B and Stokoe E (2006) *Discourse and identity* Edinburgh Edinburgh University Press

Briggs A R J et al (2007) *Leading partnerships for 14-19 education provision* CEL Research Programme 2006-7 Research Report

Briggs A R J (2008) Modelling complexity: making sense of leadership issues in 14-19 education *Management in Education* **22** 2 17-23

Briggs A R J (2009) *Leading educational partnerships* BELMAS Annual Conference Educational leadership: where do we go from here? Sheffield 1-16

British Psychological Society (2010) *Code of human research ethics* Leicester

Broadfoot P (1986) Policy and Inequality: The United Kingdom Experience *British Journal of Sociology of Education* **7** 2 205-224 [Accessed: 29/03/2012 04:56]

Bryman A et al (1988) Qualitative research and the study of leadership *Human Relations* **41** 1 13-30

Bryman A (2004) *Social research methods* Oxford University Press

Burgess 1984 cited in Scott D Methods and data in educational research in Scott D and Usher R (eds) 1996 *Understanding educational research* London and New York Routledge

Burgess H Sieminski S and Arthur L (2006) *Achieving your doctorate in education* London Sage Publications The Open University Press

Burnard P (1991) A method of analysing interview transcripts in qualitative research *Nurse Education Today* **11** 461-466

Bush T and Glover D (2003) *School Leadership: concepts and evidence* Full report A review of the literature carried out for National College for School Leadership Nottingham

Cardini A (2006) An analysis of the rhetoric and practice of educational partnerships in the UK: an arena of complexities, tensions and power *Journal of Educational Policy* **21** (4) 393-415 [accessed 22/11/2009]

Cerulo K A (1997) Identity construction: new issues, new directions *Annual Review of Sociology* **23** 385-409

Close P (2012) Developing multi-agency leadership in education *School Leadership & Management* **32** 2 123-140

Close P and Raynor A (2010) Five literatures of organisation: putting the context back into educational leadership *School Leadership & Management: formerly School Organisation* **30** 3 209-224

Coffey D (1989) Vocational Education: The Way Forward? *British Journal of Educational Studies* **37** (4) 358-368 [last accessed 29/03/2012 04:58]

Cohen L, Manion L and Morrison K (2007) *Research methods in education* sixth edition London and New York Routledge

Coleman A (2011) Towards a blended model of leadership for school-based collaborations *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* **39** 296-316

Collinson D L (2003) Identities and insecurities: selves at work *Organization* **10** 527-546

Collinson D (2006) Rethinking followership: a post-structuralist analysis of follower identities *The Leadership Quarterly* **17** 179-189

Collinson M and Collinson D (2007*) 'Blended leadership': employee perspectives on effective leadership in the UK FE sector* Centre for Excellence in Leadership Working paper series 2077/022 Lancaster University Management School

Cresswell J W (2003) *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches* 2nd edition Thousand Oaks London New Delhi Sage Publications

Creswell J W et al (2006) How interpretive qualitative research extends mixed methods research *Research in the Schools* **13** 1 1-11

Creswell J W and Garrett A L (2008) The "movement" of mixed methods research and the role of educators *South African Journal of Education* **28** 312-333

Darke P Shanks G and Broadbent M (1998) Successfully completing case study research: combining rigour, relevance and pragmatism *Info Systems J* **8** 273-289

DCSF (2009) *14-19 partnership plans emerging findings from a group of volunteer partnerships*

Delanty G and Strydom P (ed) (2003) *Philosophies of social science* Maidenhead and Philadelphia Open University Press

DES (1991) *Education and training for the 21st Century* Norwich Stationery Office

DfE (2011) *Positive for Youth A new approach to cross-government policy for young people aged 13 to 19* Available Online at:www.education.gov.uk/positiveforyouth (accessed 09 August 2012)

Deveaux M (1994) Feminism and empowerment: a critical reading of Foucault *Feminist Studies* **20** 2 223-247

DfES (2002) *14-19 Education: extending opportunities, raising standards* London Stationery Office

DfES (2003) *White Paper 14-19: Opportunity and Excellence*

Durkeim E (1895) What is a social fact? In Delanty G and Strydom P (ed) (2003) *Philosophies of social science* Maidenhead and Philadelphia Open University Press

Edem A Spencer P and Fyfield B (2003) *Organisation of provision of post-16 education and training* A report to the DfES to inform the design of guidance on the conduct of Strategic Area Reviews Research Report Learning and Skills Development Agency

Eden C and Huxham C (2001) The negotiation of purpose in multi-organizational collaborative groups *Journal of Management Studies* **38** 3 372 -391

Eisenhardt K M (1989) Building theories from case study research *The Academy of Management Review* **14** 4 532-550

Elliott G (2012) Policy, performativity and partnership: an ethical leadership perspective *Research in Post-Compulsory Education* **17** 4 423-344

Endrissat N Müller W R and Kaudela-Baum S (2007) En route to an empirically-based understanding of authentic leadership *European Management Journal* **25** 3 207-220

Exley S (2014) Trailblazing colleges given the green light *TES further* No 5099 13 June 2014 48-49

Ezzy D (1998) Theorizing narrative identity: symbolic interactionism and hermeneutics *The Sociological Quarterly* **39** 2 239-252

Flaming D (2004) Nursing theories as nursing ontologies *Nursing Philosophy* **5** 224–229

Flaming D (2005) Becoming a nurse: "it's just who I am" *Medical Humanities* **31** 2 95-100

Flaming D (2006) The ethics of Foucault and Ricoeur: an underrepresented discussion in nursing *Nursing Inquiry* 2006; **13** 3 220–227

Fletcher M and Perry A (2008) *By accident of design: is our system of post-16 provision fit for purpose?* CfBT Education Trust

Flyvbjerg B (2006) Five misunderstandings about case-study research *Qualitative Inquiry* **12** 2 219-245

Fogelman K (2002) Surveys and Sampling in Coleman M and Briggs A R J (eds) *Research methods in educational leadership and management* London California New Delhi Sage Publications 93-107

Ford J and Harding N (2011) The impossibility of the 'true self' of authentic leadership *Leadership* **7** 463-479

Gardner W L Avolio B J Luthans F May D R Walumbwa F (2005) "Can you see the real me?" A self-based model of authentic leader and follower development *The Leadership Quarterly* **16** 343-372

Giddens A (1991) Modernity and self-identity *Self and society in the late modern age* California Stanford University Press

Glatter R (2003) Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration: the origins and implications of a policy *Management in Education* **17** 16-20

Glatter R and Kydd L (2003) 'Best practice' in educational leadership and management: can we identify it and learn from it? *Educational Management Administration Leadership* **31** 231-243

Gorard S (2005) Current Contexts for Research in Educational Leadership and Management *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* **33** 2 155-164

Greene J C Caracelli V J and Graham W F (1989) Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation design *Educational evaluation and policy analysis* **11** 255-274

Gubrium J F and Holstein J A (1997) *The new language of qualitative method* Oxford Oxford University Press

Halford S and Leonard P (2006) Place, Space and Time: Contextualizing Workplace Subjectivities *Organization Studies* **27** 5 657-676

Haynes G S and Lynch S (2012) Local partnerships: blowing in the wind of national policy changes *British Educational Research Journal* iFirst Article 1-22

Hayward G et al (2006) *The Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training* Oxford

Higham J and Yeomans D (2010) Working together? Partnership approaches to 14-19 education in England *British Educational Research Journal* **36** 3 379-401

Hodgson A and Spours K (2015) An ecological analysis of the dynamics of localities: a 14+ low opportunity progression equilibrium in action *Journal of Education and Work* **28** 1 24-43

Hodgson A and Spours K (2014) Middle attainers and 14-19 progression in England: half-served by New Labour and now overlooked by the Coalition? *British Educational Research Journal* **40** 3 467-482

Hodgson A and Spours K (2013) Rebuilding and extending 14-19 partnership working in London to improve participation, progression and transition for young people Institute of Education University of London

Hodgson A and Spours K (2012) Three versions of 'localism': implications for upper secondary education and lifelong learning in the UK *Journal of Education Policy* **27** 2 193-210

Hodgson A and Spours K (2006) The organisation of 14-19 education and training in England: beyond weakly collaborative arrangements *Journal of Education and Work* **19** 4 325-342

Hodgson A and Spours K (2003) *Beyond A Levels: Curriculum 2000 and the Reform of 14-19 Qualifications* London Kogan Page

Hodgson A and Spours K (undated) *From weak to strong collaboration in 14-19 education and training* Institute of Education University of London

Hopkins D Higham R and Ahtaridou E (2009) *School leadership in England: contemporary challenges, innovative responses and future trends* Schools Leaders Report Nottingham National College for School Leadership

Houghton C et al (2013) Rigour in qualitative case-study research *Nurse Researcher* **20** 4 12-17

Huxham C and Vangen S (2005) *Managing to collaborate: the theory and practice of collaborative advantage* Abingdon Routledge

Huxham C and Vangen S (2004) Doing things collaboratively: realising the advantage or succumbing to inertia? *Organizational Dynamics* **33** 2 190-201

Huxham C and Vangen S (2000b) Ambiguity, complexity and dynamics in the membership of collaboration *Human Relations* **53** 771-806

Ivankova N V et al (2006) Using mixed-methods sequential explanatory design: from theory to practice *Field Methods* **18** 1 3-20

Johnson R B and Onwuegbuzie A J (2004) Mixed methods research: a research paradigm whose time has come *Educational Researcher* **33** 7 14-26

Jones K and Bird K (2000) 'Partnership' as strategy: public-private relations in Education Action Zones *British Educational Research Journal* **26** 4 491-506

Jones S R and McEwen M K (2000) A conceptual model of multiple dimensions of identity *Journal of College Student Development* **41** 4 405-414

Kiguwa P (2006) Narrative of gender and identity constructs in Shefer T Boonzaier F and Kiguwa P (eds) *The gender of psychology* Cape Town South Africa UCT Press

Kvale S (1995) The social construction of validity *Qualitative Inquiry* **1** 19-40

Kvale S (2006) Dominance through interviews and dialogues *Qualitative Inquiry* **12** 3 380-500

Kvale S and Brinkman S (2009) *Interviews: learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* 2nd edition Thousand Oaks London New Delhi Sage Publications

Ladkin D and Taylor S (2010) Enacting the 'true self': towards a theory of embodied authentic leadership *The Leadership Quarterly* **21** 1 64-74

Long C and Zietkiewicz E (2006) Going places: black women negotiating race and gender in post-apartheid South Africa in Shefer T Boonzaier F and Kiguwa P (eds) *The gender of psychology* Cape Town South Africa UCT Press

Lord R G and Hall R J (2005) Identity, deep structure and the development of leadership skill *The Leadership Quarterly* **16** 591-615

Lührmann T and Eberl P (2007) Leadership and identity construction: reframing the leader-follower interaction from an identity theory perspective *Leadership* **3** 115-126

Lumby J (2009) Collective leadership of local school systems: power, autonomy and ethics *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* **37** 310-328

Lumby J and Morrison M (2010) Leadership and diversity: theory and research *School Leadership & Management: Formerly School Organisation* **30** 1 3-17

Lyon D (1999) *Postmodernity* Buckingham Open University Press

MacDonald B and Walker R (1975) Case-study and the social philosophy of educational research *Cambridge Journal of Education* 1-8

Mallett O and Wapshott R (2012) Mediating ambiguity: narrative identity and knowledge workers *Scandinavian Journal of Manager* **28** 16-26

Mason J (2002) *Qualitative researching* 2nd edition London Sage Publications

McQuaid R W (2000) The theory of partnerships – why have partnerships? In Osborne S P (ed) *Managing public-private partnerships for public services: an international perspective* London Routledge 9-35

Morgan D L (2007) Paradigms lost and pragmatism regained: methodological implications of combining qualitative and quantitative methods *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* **1** 1 48-76

Noaks L Moreton K and Williamson H (2004) *On Track thematic report: partnership working* Research Report RR257 London DfES

Ollerenshaw J A and Creswell J W (2002) Narrative research: a comparison of two restorying data analysis approaches *Qualitative Inquiry* **8** 329-347

Owens T J Robinson D T and Smith-Lovin L (2010) Three faces of identity *Annual Review of Sociology* **36** 477-499

Pellauer D (2007) *Ricoeur: a guide for the perplexed* London and New York Continuum

Plowright D (2011) *Using mixed methods* London Thousand Oaks New Delhi Singapore Sage Publications

Polkinghorne D E (1996) Explorations of narrative identity Commentary *Psychological Inquiry* 363-367

Pring R (2005) Labour government policy 14-19 *Oxford Review of Education* 31 1 71-85 [last accessed 03/06/2008]

Pucci E (1992) Review of Paul Ricoeur's oneself as another: personal identity, narrative identity and "selfhood" in the thought of Paul Ricoeur *Philosophy Social Criticism* **18** 185-209

Rankin J (2002) What is narrative? Ricoeur, Bakhtin and process approaches *Concrescence* **3** 1-12

Rée J (1991) Narrative and philosophical experience in Wood D (ed) (1991) *On Paul Ricoeur* Oxon Routledge

Reid I and Brain K (2003) Education Action Zones: mission impossible? *International Studies in Sociology of Education* **13** (2) 195-214

Ribbins P and Gunter H (2002) Mapping leadership studies in education: towards a typology of knowledge domains *Educational Management Administration Leadership* **30** 359-385

Ricoeur P (1992) *Oneself as another* Translated by K Blamey Chicago University of Chicago Press

Ricoeur P (1991a) Life in quest of narrative in Wood D (ed) *On Paul Ricoeur* Oxon Routledge

Ricoeur P (1991b) Narrative identity in Wood D (ed) *On Paul Ricoeur* Oxon Routledge

Ricoeur P (1980) Narrative time *Critical Inquiry* **7** 1 169-190

Riley K and Watling R (1999) Education Action Zones: an initiative in the making *Public Money and Management* **19** (3) 59-62 [last accessed 09/04/2012 07:15]

Rodger J et al (2003) *National evaluation of learning partnerships: final report* Research report RR391 Department for Education and Skills

Rost J C (1993) Leadership development in the new millennium *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies* **1** 1 91-110

Rudd P Lines A Schagen S Smith R and Peakes A (2004) *Partnership approaches to sharing best practice* LGA Research Report 54 Slough National Foundation for Educational Research

Sandelowski M (2000) Combining qualitative and quantitative sampling, data collection, and analysis techniques in mixed-method studies *Research in Nursing & Health* **23** 246-255

Sandelowski M (1995) Qualitative analysis: what it is and how to begin *Research in nursing and health* **18** 4 371-375

Scott D (1996) Methods and data in Scott D and Usher R (eds) (1996) *Understanding educational research* London and New York Routledge

Scott D and Usher R (1996) *Understanding educational research* London and New York Routledge

Scott D and Usher R (2011) *Researching education* data methods and theory in educational enquiry 2nd edition London and New York Continuum International Publishing Group [e-copy]

Shamir B and Eilam G (2005) "What's your story?" A life-stories approach to authentic leadership development *The Leadership Quarterly* **16** 395-417

Slavin R E (1986) Best-Evidence Synthesis: An Alternative to Meta-Analytic and Traditional Reviews *Educational Researcher* **15** 5-11

Sloper P (2004) Facilitators and barriers for co-ordinated multi-agency services *Child: Care, Health & Development* **30** 6 571-580

Smith B and Sparkes A C (2008) Contrasting perspectives on narrating selves and identities: an invitation to dialogue *Qualitative Research* **8** 5-35

Somers M R (1994) Narrative constitution of identity: a relational and network approach *Theory and Society* **23** 5 605-649

Sparrowe R T (2005) Authentic leadership and the narrative self *The Leadership Quarterly* **16** 419-439

Stake R E (1978) The case study method in social inquiry *Educational Researcher* **7** 2 5-8

Stanton G (2008) *Learning Matters: making the 14-19 reforms work for learners: by emphasising learning programmes as well as qualifications by learning from previous initiatives* Summary Report CfBT Education Trust

Tashakkori A and Teddlie C (2003) *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioural research* Thousand Oaks London New Delhi Sage Publications

Tobin G A and Begley C M (2004) Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework *Journal of Advanced Nursing* **48** 4 388-396

Truc G (2011) Narrative identity against biographical illusion: the shift in sociology from Bourdieu to Ricoeur *Ricoeur Studies* **2** 1 150-167

Usher R (1996) A critique of the neglected epistemological assumptions of educational research In: Scott D and Usher R (eds) *Understanding educational research* London Routledge 9-32

Vangen S and Huxham C (2003a) Enacting leadership for collaborative advantage: dilemmas of ideology and pragmatism in the activities of partnership managers *British Journal of Management* **14** S61-S76

Vangen S and Huxham C (2003b) Nurturing Collaborative Relations: Building Trust in Interorganizational Collaboration *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* **39** 1 5-31

Vanhoozer K J (1991) Philosophical antecedents to Ricoeur's time and narrative in Wood D (ed) (1991) *On Paul Ricoeur* Oxon Routledge

Wallace M (1998) A counter-policy to subvert education reform? Collaboration among schools and colleges in a competitive climate *British Educational Research Journal* **24** 2 195-215

Watson C (2006) Narratives of practice and the construction of identity in teaching *Teachers and teaching: theory and practice* **12** 5 509-526

Watson C (2005) Discourses of 'indiscipline': a Foucauldian response *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties* **10** 1 55-65

Watson T J (2008) Managing identity: identity work, personal predicaments and structural circumstances *Organization* **15** 121-143

Webb R and Vulliamy G (2001) Joining up the solutions: the rhetoric and practice of inter-agency cooperation *Children & Society* **15** 315-332

Weiss E S Anderson R M and Lasker R D (2002) Making the most of collaboration: exploring the relationship between partnership synergy and partnership functioning *Health Education & Behavior* **29** 683-698

Wieland S M B (2010) Ideal selves as resources for the situated practice of identity *Management Communication Quarterly* **24** 503-528

Wolf A (2011) *Review of vocational provision – The Wolf Report*

Wood D (ed) 1991 *On Paul Ricoeur* Oxon Routledge

Wright S and Oancea A (2006) Policies for 14-19 education and training in England, 1976 to the present day: a chronology *Briefing Paper 2 for Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training*

Ybema S et al (2009) Articulating identities *Human Relations* **62** 299-322

Ybema S Vroemisse M and van Marrwewijk A (2012) Constructing identity by deconstructing differences: building partnerships across cultural and hierarchical divides *Scandinavian Journal of Management* **28** 48-59

Yeomans D (1998) Constructing vocational education: from TVEI to GNVQ *Journal of Education and Work* **11** (2) 127-149 [last accessed 29/03/2012 01:52]

Yin R K (1981) The case study crisis: some answers *Administrative Science Quarterly* **26** 1 58-65

Yin R K (1994) *Case study research: design and methods* second edition Thousand Oaks London New Delhi Sage Publications

Zhao K and Biesta G (2008) *Lifelong learning, identity and the moral dimension: the 'reflexive project of the self' revisited* Paper presented at the 38th Annual SCUTREA Conference 2-4 July University of Edinburgh

Chapter 9: **APPENDICES**

Appendix Number	**Heading**
9.1	Prioritising cards with research notes
9.2	First stage transcript summaries
9.3	Data organisation and retrieval
9.4	Example of analysis and interpretation chain
9.5	Participant information sheet
9.6	Participant questionnaire
9.7	Example e-mail sent to participants
9.8	Interview questions aligned to research questions
9.9	Prioritising cards as used during interview
9.10	Example of on-line questionnaire used by respondents
9.11	The respondent population (n=30)
9.12	Examples of phases in data analysis
9.13	Areas checked for data errors
9.14	Size and composition of partnerships
9.15	Respondent job titles (n=30)
9.16	Comparison of respondent 'other' work activities with participants
9.17	Rankings from prioritising activity

Appendix 9.1

Prioritising cards with research notes

Managing aims	**Accountability**
Such as: • negotiating and specifying of goals • shaping of collaborative agenda ** end of card ** Based on comparative theories: Source: Huxham and Vangen 2004 (1) Different expectations – folk lore (Armistead et al 2007 p 40 1 of 4) Can be from the perspective of an individual (Huxham and Vangen 2004 p 192)	Such as: • of the members (representing an institution or organisation in the partnership) • of an organisation(s) in the partnership ** end of card ** Based on comparative theories: Associated with managing aims, especially accountability to participants own organisation p193 in (Huxham and Vangen 2004)
Managing power	**Communication**
Such as: • degree of power sharing and commitment to collaboration by individuals • negotiation of goals for a shared and stable identity of the partnership ** end of card ** Based on comparative theories: Source Huxham and Vangen 2004 (2) Managing conflict (Armistead et al 2007 3 of 4 p40) There is a view that the power lies in the funding and who holds the purse strings (Huxham and Vangen 2004 p 193) There are different points of power (Beech and Huxham 2003 also in my text see p 48)	Such as: • facilitating (partner representatives talking to each other) • for mutual understanding and common language between the different institutions in the partnership ** end of card ** Based on comparative theories: Source Huxham and Vangen 2004 Also linked to managing aims p 192 different professions, language, cultures (Beech and Huxham 2003 p 29)

Building trust	Membership structures
Such as: • process of building trust in the collaboration (partnership) • the management of risk • nurturing of relationships ** end of card ** Based on comparative theories: Source: Huxham and Vangen 2004 (3) Concensus building in Armistead et al 2007 p 40 2 of 4) Process of building trust to be able to start with some modest aims (p 194 Huxham and Vangen 2004) Risk – the need to take risk to initiate collaboration (p194) Nuture – to build incrementally (p195)	Such as: • Ambiguity of group membership, eg i. (the authority a member representative has at a meeting to vote or make decisions) ii. (how partners are selected) iii. (changing representatives for a partner institution, eg a new head of a school) • Partnership leader (the fact that your role is not member status) ** end of card ** Based on comparative theories: Collaborative structure highly sensitive to change, eg government policy, may lead to a shift in members (Beech and Huxham 2003 p42) Huxham and Vangen 2004 p 197) Dealing with partnership fatigue (p 195) Difficulty knowing who is in the partnership Learning to identify ambiguity and find ways to progress, links to nurturing relationships (p196) Huxham and Vangen Attaining performance (Armistead et al 2007 p 40 4 of 4)
Leadership	**Appropriate working processes**
Such as: • facilitating activities (eg setting up meetings, getting agendas agreed) • making things happen ** end of card ** Based on comparative theories: Traditional hierarchies don't exist, leadership is about making things happen, formation of partnership policies and activity agenda (Huxham and Vangen 2004 p 198) Also Beech and Huxham 2003 p 29)	Such as: • making collaboration happen • lack of consistency between expectations and perceptions (trust could be threatened) ** end of card ** Based on comparative theories: Structure and processes can be externally imposed eg funding body and have consequences for the leadership (Huxham and Vangen 2004 p 198)

Appendix 9.2

First stage summary of transcripts, which were conducted, transcribed and agreed during 3 month period (April 2012 – July 2012)

Account of transcript				
Participant and Date	Length of interview	Word Count of Transcript		Notes on process
		Total	Participant/Interviewer	
A 18.04.12	1 hr	7503	6078/1425	
B 18.05.12	1 hr	8650	6401/2249	• Background noise on recording • Had to rely on 2nd recorder
C 25.05.12	1 hr 10 mins	8726	6792/1934	Hot room – door opened gave some background noise
D 07.06.12	1 hr 15 mins	8029	6878/1151	
E 07.06.12	1 hr 10 mins	9947	8137/1810	Interruption by someone entering room
F 04.07.12	1 hr	8329	5651/2678	Hot room – some outside building noise
Total word count		51184	39937/11247	

continued over next two pages

Appendix 9.2 continuation

Question response analysis from first stage summary of transcripts, which were conducted, transcribed and agreed during 3 month period (April 2012 – July 2012)

Question analysis comparing word count and time spent by participant and question number (Notes: II* = Number of occasions of Interviewer Intervention; Word count '+' is where a sub question is used leading to '=' the total word count for the question as a whole)						
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Question 1: 2 sub questions planned (sqs)						
Word count	968	336+120+168=629	615+144+170=929	973+0+524=1497	528+500+603=1631	580+192+211=983
Time spent	15 mins	10 mins	12 mins	Not recorded	15 mins	8 mins (4+3+1)
II*	2	4+0+1=5	4+0+2=6	1+0+0=1	0+2+1=3	2+0+1=3
Question 2: 1 sub question planned (sqs)						
Word count	304+477=781	67+307=374	1228	244+287=531	420+130=650	836
Time spent	7 mins (2 sqs)	5 mins (1 sqs)	10 mins (1sqs)	5 mins	5 mins	7 mins
II*	3+1 = 4	0+3=4	6 + 1 = 7	0+1=1	0+0=0	11
Question 3: No planned sub questions						
Word count	641	1091	848	744	785	127
Time spent	5 mins	7 mins	5 mins	5 mins	10 mins	1 min
II*	1	7	4	0	3	3

Appendix 9.2 continuation

Question response analysis from first stage summary of transcripts, which were conducted, transcribed and agreed during 3 month period (April 2012 – July 2012)

Question 4: 2 sub questions planned (sqs)						
Word count	1391	1559	1237	1564+816=2380	562+94=656	882
Time spent	12 mins	Not recorded	15 mins	10 mins (1 sq)	5 mins (1 sq)	9 mins (2 sqs)
II*	5	13	7	3	1	2+4+11=13
Question 5: No planned sub questions						
Words	1401	2418	2210	1364	3946	2514
Time spent	10 mins	Not recorded	15 mins	30 mins	Not recorded	20 mins
II*	8	23	11	4	18	21
Question 6: (informal question – 2 parts 1) future and 2) anything to add						
Words	489	335	208	331	569	309
Time spent	2 mins	Not recorded	5 mins	5 mins	Not recorded	3 mins
II*	2	4	4	1	6	5
Total words	6078	6401	6792	6878	8137	5651

Appendix 9.3

Organisation of data and how it can be retrieved

The data has been stored in line with the conditions agreed with participants:

> The transcript of the digital file will be shared with you electronically for your approval before it is used as part of the study. If you wish, a copy of the digital recording can be provided to you. The digital file that I will store as part of data collection will be anonymised, and along with the recording, will be encrypted and stored on my personal computer, used only by me, and backed up on a USB memory stick for a period of 3 years. The memory stick and personal computer are secured in a lockable cupboard. The data will be destroyed in January 2015, or on an earlier date if the submitted study is accepted by Sheffield Hallam University.

Description of data captured	Storage	Retrieval
Phase 1 Participant questionnaire	• Completed Word documents • Saved in data collection folder • Extracted data is in Excel • Saved in data collection folder	Subject to confidentiality agreement By contact with researcher
Phase 1 Participant Transcripts	• Recordings retained on recorder and held in data collection folder • Completed Word documents of transcripts • Saved in data collection folder	Subject to confidentiality agreement By contact with researcher
Phase 2 Respondent Questionnaires	• Completed Word documents • Saved in data collection folder • Extracted data is in Excel • Saved in data collection folder	Subject to confidentiality agreement By contact with researcher

Appendix 9.4

Example of the analysis and interpretation chain leading to a conclusion (based on Yin 1994) (5 pages)

Extract from findings:

Those in a LEP leader role from other sectors and backgrounds express more strongly that they do the job because of wanting to make a difference, change things, and demonstrate approaches that come from a belief in a wider good for others, young people, or community recognising where the value in partnership can be achieved. Views come from personal and professional experiences tending to lead towards outcomes that offer alternatives to what is offered within school.

The following example shows the chain used in reaching the above claim.

Holistic approach

First and seconding reading - a literal approach led me to look abstract the key message against each interview question:

Interview Question (IQ)	Taken from Participant A Transcript
1 What do you see yourself as first and foremost?	Facilitator
2 What do you find satisfying or good about the role you do?	Team work
3 What would you describe as your greatest strengths and how do you use them within your role?	Communication
4 What has been your greatest achievement in the role?	Setting up a social enterprise

I then paired the transcripts. Here is an extract of my reporting, at the literal level, for the worked based learning pairing (Participants A and C) IQ1 sub q 2, which shows the difference in interpretation of the question from the participants. From the readings I recognised that it would be important to keep the transcripts whole, and give examples or findings in context, because (A) and (C) text gave different perspectives, both relevant, and yet not logically comparable:

(A) the attraction of the job was the idea I could help to support the education and increase the opportunities for young people. (A) always tries to relate the bigger tasks to groups of young people in the hope that it will have a positive impact on young people.

(C) is more specific in that initially the job was very much about the implementation of the diploma agenda which schools perceived as the key issue around 14-19, and was recruited to work at a 'head' level to work on strategy. A frustration of the role is mentioned when the change of government in 2010 led to a drift in terms of the partnership, and so the role became very operational with a focus on the key stage 3 and 4 transition agenda.

I then used the search facility in Microsoft Word in an iterative way across all transcripts to look for frequencies and categories of words, so I could was able to gauge whether what I thought was coming through as a common theme was actually the case, such as young people. This also helped in identifying the key activities which formed the Respondent Questionnaire, eg by looking for RPA, NEET, projects.

The next stage was to take the concepts taken forward from literature review. The following is an extract which shows how I have used the comment facility to identify concepts that can relate to personal identity of strengths, values and beliefs:

		A	For me it's given me that understanding that in a school setting you've got a whole different array of young people on the social spectrum some who have come into school that day didn't get a meal the night before, haven't had any breakfast, and then we wonder why they give people jip and then you've got other young people who've come from privileged backgrounds that have every opportunity afforded to them. For me it's being able to recognise that everyone should have the opportunities that give them the stepping stones to move on and I think that vocational education is really important and giving young people an opportunity to do something with their hands, hands-on opportunities, that just help them focus on something else. Also realising that not everybody is going to go to school, sixth form, college, A levels, university and actually there isn't anything wrong with going on and doing a vocational qualification or going straight on to employment. These are parallel and I am trying to sell the message – there is equity, both routes are important and ensuring that there are mechanisms in place to support both groups. Within my first few months I found all schools did events for 6th formers going to university but they didn't do anything at all for people who weren't going to go to university and I couldn't understand why	355 words

Comment [J1]: Belief: schools have young people from a whole array on the social spectrum

Comment [J2]: Belief: that all yp should have opportunities to move on

Comment [J3]: Belief: vocational education is important

Comment [J4]: Belief: young people have opp to use hands, help them focus

Comment [J5]: Belief: not everybody going to school will lead to university, nothing wrong with getting voc quals or going straight to employment

Comment [J6]: Belief: These [meaning academic and vocational routes] are parallel

Comment [J7]: Value: A trying to sell message – striving for equity of both routes

Comment [J8]: Value: Putting in mechanisms to support both groups

			they wouldn't introduce training providers, colleges, employers into these types of fairs, what do they do? There was 10/12 pupils in sixth forms who weren't going to university and they told them not to come in, and I couldn't understand that. I'm all for supporting gifted and talented as much as young people that are in a lower end of the spectrum, but people learn in different ways and for me I had a great start in life and I didn't go to university, I haven't got a degree, but I have set companies up, I've employed staff, I've worked at different levels in two or three organisations, it's just getting that message across that you can succeed in either way, I think that's important.	

Comment [J9]: A found discrepancy in events for 6th formers – nothing for those not going on to university

Comment [J10]: Belief: you can succeed either way [meaning academic or vocational] important to get the message across [to schools]

An example of a unit of meaning was identified as: relationships, team building, staff development, which is demonstrated in the following transcript analysis extract:

> (A): 'teamwork is important to me in any organisation you work within, engendering that culture is really important and I know we have got that and it is a really nice feeling' . (C): 'there is a great deal to be gained by team working and I enjoy trying to get people to work together, across institutions as well as within institutions.

The following is the visual display of the unit of meaning related to the personal identity framework:

Who I am		What I do		Why I do it
Job function: facilitator	→	Relationships: teamwork	→	Belief: that all young people should have opportunities to move on

Further comparison links to the second phase of analysis, where the text identified is considered with numeric data on professional background for where n=36 (see chart below)

The theme example

A first reading was done to identify themes that I judged would relate to answering the RQs. The following example relates to the theme of previous experiences showing that there is some use of recalling previous experience in relation to how it has shaped aspects of their life or work:

> Participants (A) and (C) describe how their previous engagement with vocational training has led to a value of wanting to give young people options (A) how working in industry early on in career led to recognising significance of others, customers and developing negotiation skills (C).

The second reading involved reading the transcripts for analysis on a structure of past present future in the context of experience and interaction the transcripts are highlighted to identify the personal, with others and the situation to which it applies. The following extract is the present section of the reading for participant (A):

	Professional	Personal
Present	My role is Partnership Director. I see myself very much as a facilitator in a co-ordinating role between the schools and colleges. I see my role as ensuring they are all in the right place at the right time working on set activities. We do have a common vision and funding has driven that, we have to continually work at it. I was attracted to the role was the ability to introduce vocational courses and qualifications. I'm very sure my role has been able to affect the lives of young people,[belief] giving them an interest in education and skills they wouldn't ordinarily get. I am ultimately responsible for two teams; I am one of four in a team working for the partnership and then there is a centre, which is an independent business, with 5/6 part-time people who deliver activities on a day to day basis. I report to two directors for the centre activities. [others: responsible for 2 teams] [applies: young people – provide skills training and vocational courses; works @ delivering vision and funding; sets work activities; co-ordinates and facilitate between schools and colleges]	One of the things I do outside the day job is do business development work with two social enterprises [others: two social enterprises] [applies: works at business development]

The interpretation that follows from the narrative theme approach leads to a decision that personal experience has played as part knowing 'why I do it' as part of an on-going personal identity:

Personal identity: (Why I do it)

I am so pleased that I have been able to find funding to set up and grow a social enterprise in a rural centre, independent from the schools, but for the ultimate benefit of staff and young people. I am proud that the enterprise will be seen as a legacy of the work I've done for the partnership. I've been able to achieve what first attracted me to the role, and that is introducing vocational courses, giving young people the opportunity to access vocational courses and qualifications mainly on one site, or in others across the partnership area (A).
Reflection: I did not ask why it was seen as a benefit for staff

Second phase analysis:

Based on the wider group (n=36) in numeric data

LEP leaders have a range of professional backgrounds (who I am)

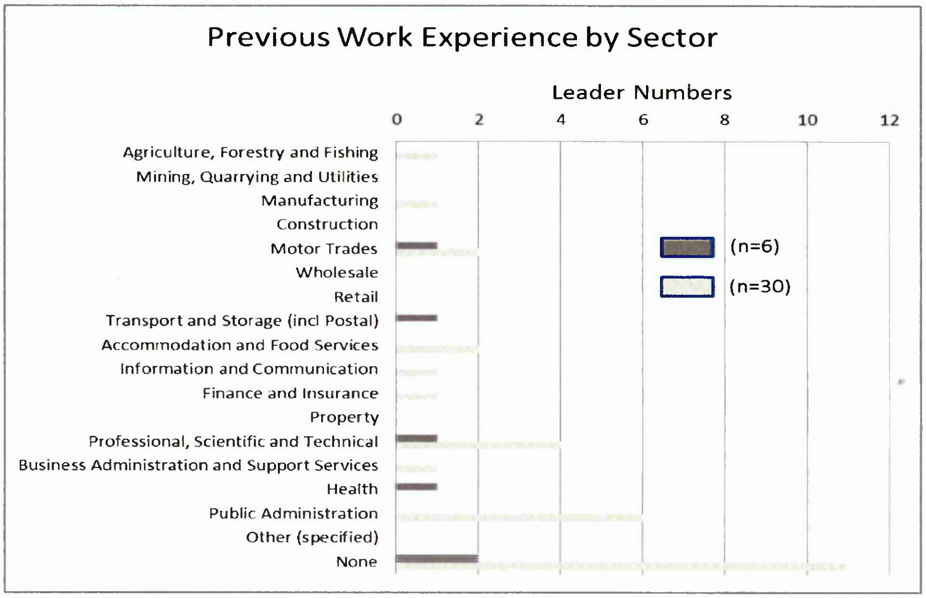


Figure 6.4: Previous work experience

Interpretation: A conclusion based on 4 of 6 participants, and supported by data from the wider group led to the claim that 23 out of the 36 have world of work and teaching experience. This leads to a finding that LEP leader background, experience and self-perception as part of 'who I am' will lead to shaping views and reasons for 'why I do the job'.

Appendix 9.5

Participant information sheet

Sheffield Hallam University

SHARPENS YOUR THINKING

Post-14 Local Educational Partnership Leaders: a study of characteristics and role perceptions

Participant Information Sheet

I am currently studying an Educational Doctorate at Sheffield Hallam University. Having been involved with post 14 partnerships for many years, I am conducting a research project which aims to study professionals who are employed in a lead role capacity on behalf of schools, further education colleges and other organisations committed to working in partnership, which I describe as Local Educational Partnerships (LEPs) operating on behalf of a locality such as a town or district that engages in post-14 collaboration. I want to investigate the characteristics of partnership leaders, including background and experience, to see if it influences how they understand their role.

Thank you for your verbal agreement to participate in my study. I have contacted you because I want to ensure my project represents the leader role in a LEP and knowing that you currently work as a holder of this position your experience would be a valuable contribution.

This information sheet provides further information on the plans for my research project which I would be grateful if you would read as part of your consideration to formally consent to participate.

Participation

The work plan for the study is within the period January 2012 – February 2014. Data collection is scheduled to take place during April – July 2012 and, if you agree to participate, would involve you in:

- completing a questionnaire designed to gather information on qualifications and professional experience. The questionnaire will be in an on-line format and exchanged via e-mail and should take no more than ten minutes of your time.
- participating in an interview, at a time and venue convenient to you. The interview will be semi-structured around three questions and include a prioritising activity, which will provide opportunities for you to talk about your experiences. Your completed questionnaire will be available as a resource during the interview. The interview will be digitally recorded.
- reviewing the transcript of your interview. So that the data from the interview reflects what you and I agree as a correct record, the transcript of the digital file will be shared with you electronically for your approval before it is used as part of the study. If you wish, I can also provide you with a copy of the digital recording. The transcript will be sent to you within 14 days after the interview with an expectation that you and I can agree on a final version and timeframe for sign-off within a period of 14 working days.
- reviewing emerging overview. During February – April 2013 I would like to contact you again to share with you the initial overview of the study so far. This will provide an opportunity for you to see how your contribution has been reflected and allow for further

discussions between us on your contribution if necessary. I envisage that this will take around 30 minutes.

- reviewing findings. By September 2013 further data will have been collected and analysed and I would like to meet with you to share the findings and seek your views on whether we agree that my findings are acceptable to you in light of your agreed earlier contribution. I envisage that this will take 1 hour.

If you would like to discuss your participation at any time during the study a debriefing can be arranged at a time and venue that is convenient to you.

I will notify you once the results of the study have been approved and send you a short summary paper which I intend to use for disseminating the information to relevant journals and newsletters. A copy of the thesis will be held by Sheffield Hallam University and be publically available through the learning centre.

Centre for Education and Inclusion Research
Faculty of Development and Society Sheffield Hallam University
Unit 7 Science Park City Campus Howard Street Sheffield S1 1WB UK
Telephone +44 (0)114 225 6061 Fax +44 (0)114 225 6068 www.shu.ac.uk/research/ceir
Executive Dean of Faculty **Professor Sylvia Johnson**

Confidentiality and Right to Withdraw

The interview is designed to capture data about you as leader, and how you undertake the role. Throughout the study your name will only be known by me and will not be passed on to other people or used in any other studies. Anonymity will be given to your contribution by assigning an alphabetic character to all your responses before it is included in the study and shared with anyone else, such as study supervisors. No one will be able to connect you with what is recorded and reported; however coding may not provide total anonymity with other leaders engaged in the study. The information that will be used in the study will only be from the questionnaire and the confidential interview. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you will have the right to withhold information at any time. You can withdraw from the study at any point if you decide to change your mind. However, if you do decide to withdraw after you have provided information that you and I have agreed within a time frame, the data generated from the information up to the point of withdrawal will be used in the study.

The interview will be digitally recorded and I may take some notes. The transcript of the digital file will be shared with you electronically for your approval before it is used as part of the study. If you wish, a copy of the digital recording can be provided to you. The digital file that I will store as part of data collection will be anonymised, and along with the recording, will be encrypted and stored on my personal computer, used only by me, and backed up on a USB memory stick for a period of 3 years. The memory stick and personal computer are secured in a lockable cupboard. The data will be destroyed in January 2015, or on an earlier date if the submitted study is accepted by Sheffield Hallam University.

If you have concerns during the study, or afterwards, you can contact my supervisor, Dr Bronwen Maxwell at Sheffield Hallam University: b.maxwell@shu.ac.uk .

Further questions

Finally, if you have any questions you would like to ask as part of deciding on whether to consent to participate, please don't hesitate to contact me: Jacqueline.m.hargis@student.shu.ac.uk

Consent:

*Please answer the following questions by using emphasis (**Bold**) for your responses*

Have you read and understood the information sheet about this study? YES NO

Have you been able to ask questions about this study? YES NO

Have you received enough information about this study? YES NO

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study?

- At any time? YES NO
- Without giving a reason for your withdrawal? YES NO
- That data collected and agreed before your decision to withdraw will be used in the study? YES NO
- You accept that the data will be captured digitally and held electronically for a specified time. YES NO

You understand that your responses will be anonymised before they are analysed. YES NO

Do you agree to take part in this study? YES NO

Your signature will certify that you have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study having read and understood the information in the sheet for participants. It will also certify that you have had adequate opportunity to discuss the study with an investigator and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction.

Signature of participant: .... Date: ....

Name (block letters): ....

Signature of investigator: .... Date: ....

Jackie Hargis e-mail: Jacqueline.m.hargis@student.shu.ac.uk

Please sign both copies and keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together.

Sheffield Hallam University

SHARPENS YOUR THINKING

Appendix 9.6

Participant Questionnaire

Post-14 Local Educational Partnership Leaders: a study of characteristics and role perceptions

Questionnaire for leaders appointed to work on behalf of partnerships

Introduction

This questionnaire is part of a research project to study professionals who are employed in a lead role capacity on behalf of Local Educational Partnerships (LEPs). In particular the study will lead to a profile of the characteristics of LEP leaders and explore whether the professional background and experience influences the way in which the role is understood.

This questionnaire is designed to gather information on:

- the qualifications held by participants
- the professional experience of participants
- and background information on the partnerships.

Confidentiality and Right to Withdraw

The questionnaire has been designed to capture data that can be used to draw a profile of the characteristics of LEP leaders. As indicated in the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form, you have the right to withhold information or withdraw from the study at any time. The questionnaire information can be withdrawn up to the point of 10 days after the following interview transcript has agreed with you.

The questionnaire is sent to you electronically and it is anticipated that you will return this electronically. The returned questionnaire will be anonymised and encrypted before being stored on my personal computer as outlined in the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study and for taking time to complete the questionnaire, your contribution is extremely valuable.

Completion of the questionnaire:

The questionnaire contains 15 questions and should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

Please complete and return your questionnaire to me by e-mail, before the date we have agreed to meet on for the interview.

Centre for Education and Inclusion Research
Faculty of Development and Society   Sheffield Hallam University
Unit 7   Science Park   City Campus   Howard Street   Sheffield   S1 1WB   UK
Telephone +44 (0)114 225 6061   Fax +44 (0)114 225 6068   www.shu.ac.uk/research/ceir
Executive Dean of Faculty **Professor Sylvia Johnson**

Profile of participant

Q1: What is your job title?

Enter your title here: ____

Q2: What is your gender?

Gender	Mark with an X
Female	
Male	

Q3: What is your age profile?

Years old	21-25	26-36	37-47	48-59	60+
Enter X under appropriate age range					

Q4: How many years have you been in your current job?

Number of years	Less than 1	1 to 4	4 to 7	7 to 10	More than 10
Enter X under the appropriate number					

Q5: Have you worked in a leader role (similar to your current role) for a LEP before?

Yes or No: **Please enter Yes or No:** _______

Q6: What is the highest qualification you hold? (Please answer by using the following table)

Level	Qualification	Insert an X alongside highest held
3	Entry qualifications for higher education eg A levels	
4	Higher education study	
5	Foundation Degree or middle stage of Bachelor's Degree	
6	Bachelor's Degree	
7	Master's Degree	
8	Doctorate	

Q7: What category of teaching qualification do you hold? (Please answer using the table below)

Category		Insert an X alongside any held
QTS or QTLS		
PGCE		
Cert Ed		
C&G Adult Teaching Certificate		
Assessor Awards		
Other: please specify or state 'None'		

Q8: What teaching or training experience do you have?

Using the following sector coding information, please look at the table below and enter a relevant sector code in a "number of years column" alongside your choice of area of learning to illustrate the main subject you teach/train in or taught/trained in:

Sector	**Sector Code to be used in table below**
Primary	PY
Secondary	SY
Sixth Form	SF
Further education	FE
Private training provider	PT
Higher Education	HE

Sector/Subject Areas (as used by Ofsted and Ofqual)		**Number of years teaching or training experience** (enter sector code in the year against relevant learning area)				
		Less than 1	1-4	4-7	7-10	More than 10
Health, public services and care						
Science and mathematics						
Agriculture, horticulture and animal care						
Engineering and manufacturing technologies						
Construction, planning and the built environment						
Information and communication technology						
Retail and commercial enterprise						
Leisure, travel and tourism						
Arts, media and publishing						
History, philosophy and theology						
Social sciences						
Languages, literature and culture						
Education and training						
Preparation for life and work						
Business administration and law						
Other: (please specify)						

Q9a: Do you have a leadership or management qualification?

Yes or No: **Please enter Yes or No**: ______

Q9b: If **Yes** please indicate the qualification level/type using the following table:

Qualification in leadership and/or management		**Mark any held with an X**
QCF Level 3 or 4 (eg ILM Award or Certificate in Leadership and Management Skills)		
QCF Level 5 (eg ILM Diploma in Leadership and Management)		
QCF Level 6 (eg CMI Certificate in Management and Leadership)		
QCF Level 7 (eg CMI Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership)		
Bachelor's Degree (university award)		
Master's Degree (university award)		
Post Graduate Certificate or Diploma (university award)		
Doctorate (university award)		
Other: (eg NVQ) (please specify)		

Q10: What previous leadership and management experience do you have? Using the table below please use an X to mark most appropriate or leave blank if none.

Role descriptor		**Mark most appropriate with an X**
Head/Principal of School or College		
Deputy Head/Principal of School or College		
Department Head		
Section Head		
Other: (please specify)		

Q11: Do you have at least a year of work experience in a sector other than teaching and training?

Yes or No: **Please enter Yes or No:** ________

If **Yes,** please use the table below and enter the number of years against each relevant sector:

Sector descriptor (as used by the Office of National Statistics)		**Number of Years**
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing		
Mining, Quarrying & Utilities		
Manufacturing		
Construction		
Motor Trades		
Wholesale		
Retail		
Transport & Storage (inc Postal)		
Accommodation & Food Services		
Information & Communication		
Finance & Insurance		
Property		
Professional, Scientific & Technical		
Business Administration and Support Services		
Health		
Public Administration		
Other: (please specify)		

Partnership profile

Q12: What institutions form the partnership you work for, and how many?

Type of institution		Enter Yes or No	If Yes enter the number of institutions
Schools (including Academies)			
Colleges of further education			
Private training providers			
Universities			
Others: (please specify)			

Q13: How long has the partnership been in existence?

Number of years	Under 1	1 to 4	4 to 7	7 to 10	More than 10
Enter X under appropriate number					

Q14: Who is your employment contract with?

Type of institution		Enter X to identify the institution type
School (including an Academy)		
College of further education		
Local Authority		
University		
Other: (please specify)		

Q15: What type of contract are you employed on?

Type of contract		Enter X to identify the contract type
Permanent full-time		
Permanent part-time		
Fixed-term full-time		
Fixed-term part-time		
Other: (please specify)		

Appendix 9.7

Example of e-mail sent to participants shortly before interview

JACQUELINE HARGIS <jmhargis@my.shu.ac.uk>

04/06/2012

to D [redacted]

jackie.hargis

Hi D

Thank you for returning the completed questionnaire.

Just to let you know that I will bring with me copies of the consent form.

Also, I thought it might be useful to share with you what the interview questions are likely to cover so that you can give some thought to them beforehand:

* gaining an understanding of why you do the job, and what it means to you

* understanding what you see yourself as first and foremost

* your strengths and how you use them

* your greatest achievements in the role

* what you find satisfying about the role

* what the challenges are (as part of an activity) with a set number of headings which I'd like you to rank and give examples to support your choice

Once again, many thanks and see you Thursday at 10.

Jackie

Appendix 9.8

Interview questions aligned to research questions

Research Questions:

RQ1: What type of professional takes on a leader role on behalf of LEPs?

RQ2: In what ways do LEP leads draw on their prior professional experience in undertaking their role with organisations in the partnership?

RQ3: How do LEP leaders feel about themselves in the role?

RQ4: What do leaders see as the opportunities and challenges of the role, and how do they construct their responses to these?

	Interview questions with supplementary options
RQ1, 2 & 3	1) What do you see yourself as first and foremost? Sub q: Why is this, and has this always been the case? Sub q: Why do you do this job and what does it mean to you?
RQ3 & 4	2) What do you find satisfying or good about the role you do? Sub q: What do you think it is about you, that helps
RQ2 3 & 4	3) What would you describe as your greatest strengths, and how do you use them within your role?
RQ2 & 4	4) What has been your greatest achievement in the role? Sub q: Why was this Sub q: Which aspects of your professional experience do you think helped in the achievement
RQ4	5) *What are the challenges of the job*? To help answer this question I'd like to use a prioritising activity. I have a series of themes, all on separate cards that I'd

	like you to consider and firstly: • select any you think are relevant. Under each theme there will be a brief explanation. Some of the themes may be a concern or regarded as a positive reward from collaboration. Once you have selected any that you think are relevant and meaningful to you I'd like you to • prioritise them starting with the one you think is most significant. (In other words gives you most concern). Also, • if you would like to add a theme of your own, please do so. Any theme you wish to add can be ranked wherever you think it is most appropriate. The themes I am going to give are published results from action research looking at identity formation in collaboration. It involved managers working on behalf of partnerships with membership from a range of interorganisational collaborations. (Beech and Huxham 2003) • Once you have your list prioritised, please explain the reason for your choice and give any examples that support your ranking **Themes of Concern** (8): Managing aims • negotiating and specifying of goals • Shaping of collaborative agenda Managing power • degree of power sharing and commitment to collaboration by individuals • negotiation of goals for a shared and stable identity of the partnership Building trust • process of building trust in the collaboration (partnership) • the management of risk • nurturing of relationships

	Communication • facilitating (partner representatives talking to each other) • for mutual understanding and common language between the different institutions in the partnership Appropriate working processes • making collaboration happen • lack of consistency between expectations and perceptions (trust could be threatened) Accountability • of the members (representing an institution or organisation in the partnership) • of an organisation(s) in the partnership Membership structures • Ambiguity of group membership, eg iv. (authority a member representative has at a meeting to vote or make decisions) v. (how partners are selected) vi. (changing representatives for a partner institution, eg a new head of a school)(partnership selection) • Partnership leader (the fact that your role as leader is not member status) Leadership • facilitating activities (eg setting up meetings, getting agendas agreed) • making things happen

The following two questions introduced in first interview as informal questions:

- What does the future hold for you?
- Is there anything else you'd like to mention that you think is relevant to you and your role which hasn't come through in the interview?

APPENDIX 9.9
Prioritising Cards (8) as used during interviews

<table>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX 9.11

Prioritising Cards (8) as used during interviews</td>
<td>Managing aims

Such as:
negotiating and specifying of goals
shaping of collaborative agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing power

Such as:
degree of power sharing and commitment to collaboration by individuals
negotiation of goals for a shared and stable identity of the partnership</td>
<td>Building trust

Such as:
process of building trust in the collaboration (partnership)
the management of risk
nurturing of relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership structures

Such as:
Ambiguity of group membership, eg
vii. (the authority a member representative has at a meeting to vote or make decisions)
viii. (how partners are selected)
ix. (changing representatives for a partner institution, eg a new head of a school)
Partnership leader (the fact that your role is not member status)</td>
<td>Communication

Such as:
facilitating (partner representatives talking to each other)
for mutual understanding and common language between the different institutions in the partnership</td>
</tr>
</table>

APPENDIX 9.11 Prioritising Cards (8) as used during interviews	**Accountability** Such as: • of the members (representing an institution or organisation in the partnership) • of an organisation(s) in the partnership
	Appropriate working processes Such as: • making collaboration happen • lack of consistency between expectations and perceptions (trust could be threatened)
	Leadership Such as: • facilitating activities (eg setting up meetings, getting agendas agreed) • making things happen

Sheffield Hallam University
SHARPENS YOUR THINKING

Appendix 9.10

Example of on-line questionnaire used by respondents

Post-14 Local Educational Partnership Leaders: a study of characteristics and role perceptions

Questionnaire for leaders appointed to work on behalf of partnerships

Introduction

I am currently studying an Educational Doctorate at Sheffield Hallam University. Having been involved with post-14 partnerships for many years, I am conducting a research project which aims to study professionals who are employed in a lead role capacity on behalf of schools, further education colleges and other organisations committed to working in partnership, which I describe as Local Education Partnerships (LEP), operating on behalf of a locality such as a town or district that engages in post-14 collaboration. I want to investigate the characteristics of partnership leaders, including background and experience, to see if it influences how they understand their role.

This questionnaire is designed to gather information on:

1. qualifications held by participants
2. professional experience of participants and
3. background information on the partnerships

so that the data can be analysed to give an insight into the type of professional that takes on a leader role on behalf of a LEP.

Contributing

If you are currently engaged in a leader role for a LEP, I would be grateful if you would consider contributing to my study by completing the questionnaire. It would require you to:

1. Open the questionnaire (attached) using Microsoft Word
2. Answer 18 questions (which should take no more than 10 minutes)
3. Save the file
4. Complete by **31 January 2013**
5. Return the file as an attachment via e-mail to: Jacqueline.M.Hargis@student.shu.ac.uk

Confidentiality

Anonymity will be given to your contribution by assigning an alphabetic character to all your responses. By completing the questionnaire you are giving your consent for the data to be used in the study described above.

The data collected from the questionnaire, will be anonymised, encrypted and then stored on my personal computer, which is only used by me, and a backup kept on a USB memory stick. The memory stick and personal computer are secured in a lockable cupboard. The data will be destroyed in November 2018.

Dissemination

If the study is accepted and an Educational Doctorate awarded, then a copy of the thesis will be held by Sheffield Hallam University. I will prepare a summary paper which will outline the main findings of the research. The summary paper will be used to promote the study to relevant journals such as FE Skills and LSIS Newsletters.

Your contribution to my study would be extremely valuable and in anticipation, I thank you for finding time to participate.

Centre for Education and Inclusion Research

- ***Use the TAB key or the down arrow key to move to each entry point***
- ***Use a left click or the space bar to delete an entry***

Profile of participant

Q1: What is your job title?

Enter your job title:	

Q2: What is your gender?

Gender	Mark with an X
Female	☐
Male	☐

Q3: What is your age?

Years old	21-25	26-36	37-47	48-59	60+
Enter X under appropriate age range	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q4: How many years have you been in your current job?

Number of years	Less than 1	1 to 4	4 to 7	7 to 10	More than 10
Enter X under the appropriate number	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q5: Have you worked in a leader role (similar to your current role) for a LEP before?

	Mark with an X
Yes	☐
No	☐

Q6: What is the highest qualification you hold? (Please answer by using the following table)

Level	Qualification	Insert an X alongside highest held
3	Entry qualifications for higher education eg A levels	☐
4	Higher education study	☐
5	Foundation Degree or middle stage of Bachelor's Degree	☐
6	Bachelor's Degree	☐
7	Master's Degree	☐
8	Doctorate	☐

Q7: What category of teaching qualification do you hold? (Please answer using the table below)

Category		**Insert an X alongside any held**
QTS or QTLS		☐
PGCE		☐
Cert Ed		☐
C&G Adult Teaching Certificate		☐
Assessor Awards		☐
Other: please specify or state 'None'		

Q8: What teaching or training experience do you have?

Using the following sector coding information, please look at the table below and enter a relevant sector code in a "number of years column" alongside your choice of sector/subject area to illustrate the main subject you teach/train in or taught/trained in by clicking in the relevant box and selecting the code from the drop down list:

Sector	**Sector Code used in table below**
Primary	PY
Secondary	SY
Sixth Form	SF
Further education	FE
Private training provider	PT
Higher Education	HE

Sector/Subject Areas (as used by Ofsted and Ofqual)		Number of years teaching or training experience (select sector code from the drop down box in chosen year box against relevant learning area)				
		Less than 1	1-4	4-7	7-10	More than 10
Health, public services and care		- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Science and mathematics		- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Agriculture, horticulture and animal care		- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Engineering and manufacturing technologies		- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Construction, planning and the built environment		- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Information and communication technology		- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Retail and commercial enterprise		- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Leisure, travel and tourism		- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Arts, media and publishing		- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
History, philosophy and theology		- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Social sciences		- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Languages, literature and culture		- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Education and training		- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Preparation for life and work		- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Business administration and law		- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Other: (please specify)						

Q9a: Do you have a leadership or management qualification?

	Mark with an X	
Yes	☐	If **Yes** please indicate the qualification level/type by using the table at Q9b:
No	☐	If **No** please go to Q10

Q9b:

Qualification in leadership and/or management		Mark any held with an X
QCF Level 3 or 4 (eg ILM Award or Certificate in Leadership and Management Skills)		☐
QCF Level 5 (eg ILM Diploma in Leadership and Management)		☐
QCF Level 6 (eg CMI Certificate in Management and Leadership)		☐
QCF Level 7 (eg CMI Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership)		☐
Bachelor's Degree (university award)		☐
Master's Degree (university award)		☐
Post Graduate Certificate or Diploma (university award)		☐
Doctorate (university award)		☐
Other: (eg NVQ) (please specify)		

Q10: What previous leadership and management experience do you have? Using the table below please use an X to mark most appropriate or leave blank if none.

Role descriptor		Mark most appropriate with an X
Head/Principal of School or College		☐
Deputy Head/Principal of School or College		☐
Assistant Head/Principal of School or College		☐
Department Head		☐
Section Head		☐
Other: (please specify)		

Q11: Do you have at least a year of work experience in a sector other than teaching and training?

	Mark with an X	
Yes	☐	If **Yes**, please use the table below and enter the number of years against each relevant sector
No	☐	If **No**, please go to Q12

Sector descriptor (as used by the Office of National Statistics)		**Number of Years**
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing		None
Mining, Quarrying & Utilities		None
Manufacturing		None
Construction		None
Motor Trades		None
Wholesale		None
Retail		None
Transport & Storage (inc Postal)		None
Accommodation & Food Services		None
Information & Communication		None
Finance & Insurance		None
Property		None
Professional, Scientific & Technical		None
Business Administration and Support Services		None
Health		None
Public Administration		None
Other: (please specify)		

Partnership profile and activities

Q12: What institutions form the partnership you work for, and how many?

Type of institution		Enter the number for each institution type
Schools (including Academies)		0
Sixth form college		0
Colleges of further education		0
Private training providers		0
Universities		0
Others: (please specify)		

Q13: How long has the partnership been in existence?

Number of years	Under 1	1 to 4	4 to 7	7 to 10	More than 10
Enter X under appropriate number	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q14: Who is your employment contract with?

Type of institution		Enter X to identify the institution type
School (including an Academy)		☐
Sixth form college		☐
College of further education		☐
Local Authority		☐
University		☐
Other: (please specify)		

Q15: What type of contract are you employed on?

Type of contract		**Enter X to identify the contract type**
Permanent full-time		☐
Permanent part-time		☐
Fixed-term full-time		☐
Fixed-term part-time		☐
Other: (please specify)		

Q16: What do you spend your time working on?

Type of activity		**Enter an X alongside any that are relevant**
Collaborative provision for post-14 learners		☐
Collaborative provision for post-16 learners		☐
Processes to work across the partnership (eg quality)		☐
Supporting activities (eg careers events, employer engagement, setting up and running meetings)		☐
Seeking funding opportunities		☐
Project management		☐
Other: (please specify)		

Q17: Is the partnership involved in any of the following policy or research initiatives?

Type of activity (source: #Education Funding Agency; *New Challenges, New Chances, BIS 2011; ~ LSIS, ◊ 157 Group)		**Enter an X alongside any that are relevant**
Raising Participation Age pilots#		☐
NEET pilots#		☐
Federations or joint ventures with colleges*		☐
National Skills Academies*		☐
Specialist Skills Centres*		☐
Developing 'innovative' apprenticeship models*		☐
Community led networks~		☐
Research into 'local partnerships'~		☐
Emerging governance models~		☐
Collaboration and shared services grant◊		☐
Other: (please specify)		

Q18: Is the partnership currently involved in funded projects?

Funding Stream		**Enter an X alongside any that are relevant**
European Social Funding (ESF)		☐
Local Enterprise Partnership		☐
Other:(please specify)		

Thank you for taking time to complete the questionnaire.

Please save the file and then send as an attachment to Jacqueline.M.Hargis@student.shu.ac.uk - either by using the hyperlink or through your e-mail.

Appendix 9.11

Respondent profiles (n=30)

Respondent	Male/ Female	Age	Job Title	Sector experience
OQA	F	48-59	Head of Adult Learning	Further education
OQB	M	48-59	14-19 Partnership Co-ordinator	Secondary
OQC	M	48-59	14-19 Co-ordinator	Primary & Secondary
OQD	F	48-59	Raising Participation Manager	Higher education
OQE	F	60+	Director Raising Participation Partnership	-
OQF	F	60+	Facilitator Learning & Skills Partnership	Further education
OQG	M	37-47	Partnership Co-ordinator	Further education
OQH	F	48-59	14-19 Lead Officer	Further education
OQI	F	60+	Partnership Co-ordinator	Further education
OQJ	M	60+	Local Area Partnership Co-ordinator	Sixth form
OQK	M	48-59	Partnership Director	Secondary
OQL	M	37-47	Apprenticeship Strategy Manager	Private Training Provider
OQM	M	26-36	Employment & Skills Board Manager	Secondary & Further education
OQN	M	37-47	Learning Development & Commissioning Manager (14+ education)	Secondary, Further education & Higher education
OQO	F	48-59	16-19 Manager	Private Training Provider
OQP	M	48-59	Partnership Co-ordinator	Secondary

OQQ	F	48-59	Partnership Co-ordinator	Secondary
OQR	M	37-47	11-19 Partnership Co-ordinator	Secondary
OQS	F	60+	Network Co-ordinator	Secondary
OQT	M	48-59	Chief Executive Officer	Secondary & Higher education
OQU	F	48-59	Schools Liaison Manage & Network Co-ordinator	Further education
OQV	F	48-59	Lead Officer 11-19 Learning and Skills	Primary, Secondary, Further education & Private Training Provider
OQW	M	37-47	Partnership Development Manager	Primary
OQX	M	26-36	11-19 Network Co-ordinator	Secondary
OQY	M	48-59	Partnership Director	Secondary & Sixth Forr
OQZ	F	48-59	14-25 Learning & Achievement Adviser	Further Education
OAA	M	26-36	Senior Partnership Manager	-
OAB	M	26-36	Partnership Skills & Progression Manager	Secondary
OAC	M	48-59	Community & Partnerships Manager	-
OAD	M	48-59	Aimhigher Co-ordinator	Further Education & Private Training Provider

APPENDIX 9.12

Examples of phases in data analysis

Looking for units of meaning and themes:

We've attracted more people in and I think for me building that solid team is so important, and having the right people, doing the right thing and supporting each other, that's what I'm interested in in that environment, it's the people
What would you describe as your greatest strengths and how do you use them within your role?
As I've just mentioned a big one is communication and that's not just within the small teams in which I operate but that's in the wider partnership. There's 100s of staff involved in the partnership and it's important they all understand that there is this sense of needing to work together. Increasingly as schools are becoming academies - all bar 1 of my schools are now academies and there is this kind of idea that academy means independence and fighting against other people, fighting against each other scrapping over £50 here and there. I am trying to get over that idea of 'you are not just in it' for yourself and you are able to come under a collective banner that is this partnership 'A'. By putting a bit in you get more out, that is really important. We have a newsletter every 6 weeks, have a web site we regularly update we send news out via e-mail to staff we have got several subgroups, heads of sixth, deputy heads, heads and I feed into those groups to keep people on track. We've got a development plan which I've again really thought was the biggest thing that could make a difference to the wider collective and so people have got an insight into whose going to be doing what, where, when, and what including funding to support activities. Negotiating skills is also really really important for the reasons I've just said. Sometimes people look at what's in it for me and why should I dip out to let one of my competitors succeed. It's being able to say you give up on this and we will give you that and for me, negotiating between lots of people who are used to getting their own way and having all the power has been quite difficult but certainly something I felt I've brought to the table. Maybe other people may not have seen the importance of that. Then there is mediation. Mediation between groups when they fall out. About 3 or 4 times a year we have big bust ups with school heads brought into it. We had a fall out between 3 schools over one Excel spreadsheet it was the simplest of things, it was for a business game - one school had developed it and wouldn't share it. I had to mediate with 3 deputy heads, but seeing the need to be able to identify that partnerships are fragile things and all of the time I put myself at the bottom of these things and ensure that if nobody does anything to make the change then I do it.
What do you mean when you say you put yourself at the bottom?
If there is tension over something I will always put myself out to ensure that the partnership

Comment [J11]: Belief: Building a solid team important

Comment [J12]: Interest is in people in a solid team environment

Comment [J13]: [I: demonstrating leadership]

Comment [J14]: Strength is communication within small teams

Comment [J15]: Strength in communication in wider partnership

Comment [J16]: Commn focus on staff in the pship to understand need to work together [I; wider than heads meaning a range of levels]

Comment [J17]: Schools converting to academies view held that academies perceived it means independence [disconnect with view of pship being a collective banner] [political: policy]

Comment [J18]: Negotiating skills

Comment [J19]: Dealing with people who question 'what's in it for me' perceives others a competitors

Comment [J20]: Being able to negotiate between people used to getting their own way and having ALL the power

Comment [J21]: Negotiating has been difficult but A has been able to do it[facilitate?]

Comment [J22]: Mediation

Comment [J23]: Belief: need ability to identify partnership are fragile things

Comment [J24]: [I: identifies role within mediation as being 'at the bottom']

Comment [J25]: [I:bottom [meaning end of chain] when unable to resolve through mediation and it involves doing something, making a change, then A will do it

succeeds. If we have a situation where we have a task to be done and its ordinarily done by a group of people, say curriculum deputies designing a joint timetable and they are arguing about who is going to take on the extra responsibility, as opposed to letting that job not happen when none of them will take it on, then I will do it. I think sometimes that's important, otherwise it is a barrier to success and it's about identifying those barriers, and how to overcome them. If that means I need to do these things to oil the wheels, to make change happen, then I will do it. Lots of times I think, I shouldn't do and I need to fight harder to get someone to do it, but I guess rather like parenting you just decide that you are going to do it as it's easier than getting into another argument and so my ethos is rather than give up, do it myself and overcome the barrier, and bring people along rather than just think it is a hurdle and give up

Comment [J26]: Recognises that there are tensions at times within pship

Comment [J27]: [I: see it as role to always ensure partnership succeeds] [Attitude]

Comment [J28]: Timetabling example of tension

Comment [J29]: Belief: Does things which doesn't believe are part of role to overcome the barrier

Comment [J30]: Belief: rather than give up do it and overcome the barrier bringing people along

Example of data analysis for identity:

Past	I have worked for a work based learning provider, the largest in England, with a focus on young people needing help and extra support. When aged about 21, I spent 2 years working with pupils that had been excluded from schools and expelled from Pupil Referral Units. I come from an organisation that is completely young person focussed. The biggest education in my life was the ability to be able to cope with the most challenging individuals in an inner city from some really deprived areas. [others: young people; wbl provider] [applies: learning to coping with challenging individuals]	I know that those 2 years changed my life and changed my view on life. I'd gone from a very privileged upbringing, I went to a private all boys' school and that's one world, and then going to this world where you've got these young people in tiny flats, with newspaper on the floor instead of carpet. For me I'd gone from one world to another world and this was an amazing opportunity. I was privileged to have been part of 12 young people's lives. There is a picture on my wall of that time, because it is important to me and reminds me of what it is important in life and why I do what I do and I try and relate things back to that period time and that has driven me and has made me focus on what I do as I get older and more experienced and less impetuous, back to that time of my life. For me it's being able to recognise that everyone should have the opportunities that give them the stepping stones to move on and I think that vocational education is really important and giving young people an opportunity to do something

		with their hands, hands-on opportunities, that just helps them focus on something else. Also realising that not everybody is going to go to school, sixth form, college, A levels, university and actually there isn't anything wrong with going on and doing a vocational qualification or going straight into employment. These are parallel and I am trying to sell the message – there is equity, both routes are important. People learn in different ways and for me, I had a great start in life and I didn't go to university, I haven't got a degree, but I have set up companies, employed staff, worked at different levels in two or three organisations, it's just getting that message across that you can succeed in either way, I think that's important.
Present	My role is Partnership Director. I see myself very much as a facilitator in a co-ordinating role between the schools and colleges. I see my role as ensuring they are all in the right place at the right time working on set activities. We do have a common vision and funding has driven that, we have to continually work at it. I was attracted to the role was the ability to introduce vocational courses and qualifications. I'm very sure my role has been able to affect the lives of young people,[belief] giving them an interest in education and skills they wouldn't ordinarily get. I am ultimately responsible for two teams; I am one of four in a team working for the partnership and then there is a centre, which is an independent business, with 5/6 part-time people who deliver activities on a day to day basis. I report to two directors for the centre activities. [others: responsible for 2 teams] [applies: young people – provide skills training and vocational courses; works @ delivering vision and funding; sets work activities; co-ordinates and facilitate between schools and colleges]	One of the things I do outside the day job is do business development work with two social enterprises [others: two social enterprises] [applies: works at business development]
Future	I can see the relationships within the partnership being much tighter/stronger going forward as it will be at a more strategic level than it has previously been. My desire and drive is to help	Personally I need to focus on ensuring being available to support as many people as want that support, the way in

	young people and a lot of social enterprises and community organisation have a key focus on young people. I am happy to be involved in this study because I do see that it is often individuals that make a difference and there are a lot of people who work in these types of organisations who don't like to say what they've done and don't see the value in promoting themselves. I think it is so important to look at individuals within the team, it's the people, in it that makes the difference and sometimes you can forget those things and so the focus on the individuals is really good. [others: supporting tighter relationships]	which I do that might end up changing. I want to work locally with local social enterprises to support their offer, their business. I think there is a role to play for in smaller organisations, charities, community interest companies and social enterprises. I'd like to see my role in filling those gaps in a meaningful and structured way, using the skills I've developed in the last 10-15 years in supporting these small organisations to thrive and grow and compete with some of the national organisations.

At the literal stage:

Identified top level summary of findings against the research questions:

Example: Research Question 1:

1 What do you see yourself as first and foremost?	Participant A: Facilitator	B: Assistant Head Teacher	C: Facilitator	D: Head Teacher	E: A Partnership Leader	F: An achiever of objectives delivered through partnership

- Themes identified to help in understanding identity:
  professional background; personal experience; concept of personal identity)
- Themes identified to help in understanding professional experience:
  traits and behaviours; attributes, skills and competencies
- Themes identified to help in understanding personal experiences:
  feelings and views – values and beliefs; concepts of identity
- Themes used in prioritising activity to help in understanding how constructs are used:
  to position self and others in relationships; making a difference to process or outcome; for whom;

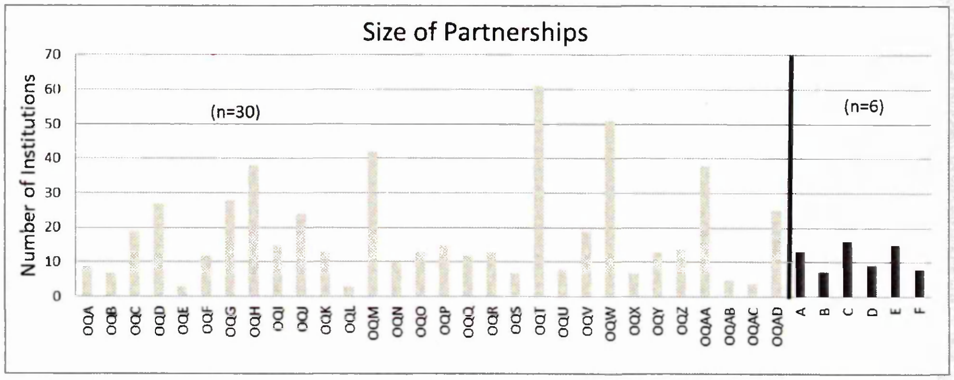
Appendix 9.13

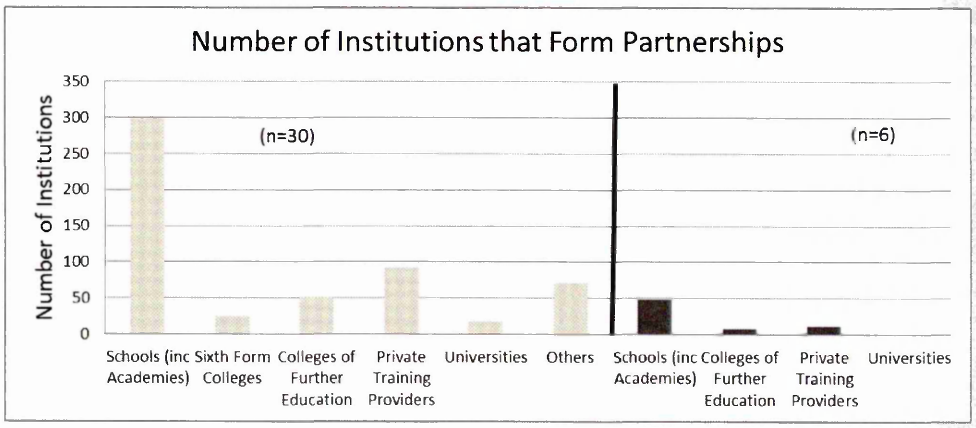
Areas checked for data errors

Areas identified for checking data errors	Action taken
Researcher bias	• Acknowledging in data write-up where my experience was leading to presumptions
Questionnaire design	• Made available through several routes to ease access for those participating • Using categorical selections for answer selections rather than free text • Trialled by colleague
Data input accuracy from questionnaires	• Input to Excel spreadsheet by 1 person using keyboard and other reading out data • 100% check of all questionnaire data entered into spreadsheet
Interviews	• Interview arrangements took account of convenience for participants • Introduction at start of interview providing opportunity for any points of clarification • Opportunity at end of interview for participant to add anything else
Transcription errors	• A minimum of two re-runs of digital recording to check transcription
Researcher interpretation	• Transcript discussed with participants and uncertainties clarified and agreed • Opportunity given to participants to add/amend transcript
Study readability	• Use of a critical friend • Supervisory feedback and guidance

Appendix 9.14

Size and composition of partnerships





Appendix 9.15

Respondent job titles in order of popularity

Job Title	Respondent Code
Co-ordinator: (10)	
Partnership Co-ordinator	OQG, OQI
14-19 Partnership Co-ordinator	OQB
14-19 Co-ordinator	OQC
Local Area Partnership Co-ordinator	OQJ
11-19 Partnership Co-ordinator	OQR
Network Co-ordinator	OQS
Schools Liaison Officer & Network Co-ordinator	OQU
11-19 Network Co-ordinator	OQX
Aimhigher Co-ordinator	OQAD
Manager: (9)	
Raising Participation Manager	OQD
Apprenticeship Strategy Manager	OQL
Employment and Skills Board Manager	OQM
Learning, Development and Commissioning Manager (14+ Education)	OQN
16-19 Manager	OQO
Partnership Development Manager	OQW
Senior Partnership Manager	OQAA
Participation, Skills and Progression Manager	OQAB
Community and Partnerships Manager	OQAC
Director: (5)	
Partnership Director	OQK, OQP, OQQ, OQY
Director – Raising Participation Partnership	OQE
Head/Officer/Advisor/Facilitator: (6)	
Head of Adult Learning	OQA
14-19 Lead Officer	OQH
Chief Executive Officer	OQT
Lead Officer 11-19 Learning & Skills	OQV
14-25 Learning & Achievement Advisor	OQZ
Facilitator Learning and Skills Partnership	OQF

Appendix 9.16

Comparison of respondent 'other' work activities with participants

Those respondents that indicated 'other' work activities are compared with participant activities:

Activity (Respondent)
Inspections (OQB) Inspection is part of an activity that is related to quality matters, and (C) cites introducing a process across the partnership of observations as a great achievement.
NEET and RPA (OQN) Both initiatives are post-16 funded projects. NEET project funding involves submitting a costed proposal for local area delivery involving partners. RPA is based on government policy and funded pilot projects were introduced before full national policy implementation. The work on either of these activities could involve developing a process to ensure outcomes are planned, achieved and reported on as well as supporting those in the partnership in updating on needs and possibilities of engagement, thus empowering others, and could equally be regarded as project management. Both activities can be found in participant data (B, E).
Student and staff events, CPD and Improving Cost Effectiveness (OQR) There are participant examples for all three of these activities, which demonstrate how they engage in process and/or supporting work. For example: Student events (A, E), Staff events CPD (C, D), Cost effectiveness (D, E)
Work Based Learning (WBL) placements and recruiting of assessors (OQAB) Participants A and C have past experience of WBL. Participant A gives her/his greatest achievement as setting up a vocational centre on behalf of the partnership, which implicitly has meant establishing processes for those employed to work in the centre, and ensuring that the partnership is supported and its centre employees empowered in their work with young people.
Understanding national policies (OQAA) All Participants allude to undertaking responsibility for cascading and interpreting latest directives or national policies, with some regarding it as the strategic part of the job. The evidence suggests that this would be categorised as supporting. Examples [B, D and E].
Other partnerships and networks eg Local Authorities (OQC) There is no evidence in participant data to compare
Behaviour partnership (OQQ) There is no evidence in participant data to compare

Appendix 9.17

Results of Prioritising Activity used in the Interviews

Priorities (random order) 1= highest 8 = lowest	Participants					
	A	C	B	D	E	F (^)
Managing Aims	4	1=	7	2(OG)	2=	6=(DW)
Accountability	3	4=	8	6	5	3
Managing Power	2	4=	1	8	7	6=(DW)
Building Trust	5	1=	3	5	2=	2
Appropriate Working Practices	7	7=	9	3(OG)	9	5
Membership Structures	8	7=	6	4(OG)	4	1
Communication	1	4=	2	1(OG)	8	6=(DW)
Leadership	6	7=	5	7	6	4
Added by B: Outcomes			4			
Added by C: Management of Risk		1=			1	
Added by E: Stakeholders						
(OG) = Operational Group						
(DW) = Delivers Work						
^ - F did not prioritise, all valid, and identified in order of setting up a new partnership						