

Needs Analysis within the Post Compulsory Sector: Using case studies to provide focus for changing times

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Abbreviations

ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
DFEE	Department for Education and Employment
DES	Department of Education and Skills
ED	Education Department
EU	European Union
FE	Further Education
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
HE	Higher Education
HRD	Human Resource Development
ISR	Individual Student Record
LEA	Local Education Authority
LECs	Local Enterprise Councils
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
NIACE	National Institution for Adult and Community Education
NETTS	National Training Targets for Education Training
NVQs	National Vocational Qualifications
OECD	Organisation for Economic Coordination and Development
OfSTED	Office for Standards in Education
RSDA	Regional Skills Development Agency
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
StARS	Strategic Area Reviews
TEC	Training and Enterprise Council
UFI	University for Industry
UK	United Kingdom
YOP	Youth Opportunity Programme
YTS	Youth Training Schemes

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Abstract

Needs analysis was introduced into further education as part of the strategic planning process: a response to government legislation as with many initiatives. At the time it was designed to make local colleges work with local organisations and people in a way that would reflect their own development. The hope being that this would provide a synergy between colleges.

The purpose of this research was to explore the way in which further education responded to the strategies designed by the funding agencies that were used by colleges through case studies.

Developments to further education during the period of this research changed. This was unexpected. Instead of a focus upon empowerment within colleges that provided them with the means to tailor what was on offer to local needs the emphasis was then placed upon LSCs who identified needs and as a consequence funding opportunities from afar.

The research reveals the complicated and consequently fragmented situation within which colleges attempted to meet the needs of the political and public agendas.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This research is based around the question:

From the period of incorporation (1992) how have the measures undertaken by the colleges in further education sector in using needs analysis to serve local communities met the political and public agendas?

Several aims were established to develop units of analysis:

To examine the influence of government initiatives since 1993 upon strategies designed to serve the needs of the community.

To assess and evaluate strategies used by the FEFC to conduct needs analysis.

To analyse the level of involvement that college employees have with the production of an educational and skills-based needs analysis within the context of political and public agendas.

To assess the influence of funding methodologies upon decision making processes.

1.2 Why the research took place

The idea of completing this research was partly born from inspiration out of previous research completed for the authors Masters Degree in Educational Management. Part of this previous research was to explore the quality management of the further education sector, the findings from that research highlighted prospects for other research focused on needs analysis (Harrogate 1996). The author was very interested in the process of needs analysis and the way colleges carried this out.

The whole process of who decides what the community needs and the perception of need could be addressed further. It was also born from the author's strong desire to continue with educational research.

The research for this thesis originally started in 1998 and was planned to be completed many years ago, unfortunately due to ill health and major changes in the dynamic further education system it unintentionally became a more longitudinal study (Arsenault and Anderson 1998), (Flick 2004).

The research was built around the units of analysis as highlighted in the research aims. Firstly, looking at the history of further education, prior to incorporation and post incorporation; gaining a deeper understanding of the policies and legislation. This was largely undertaken during the literature review. This phase made it possible to explore the previous government initiatives and policy levers to form an understanding of how the further education system had evolved from the jurisdiction of the Local Education Authorities to the Further Education Funding Council and the Learning and Skills Council (Hall 1994), (McKenzie 2001), (Hyland and Merrill 2004), (Matherson 2008).

The methodology paradigm followed a post-positivist approach (Opie 2005), and methods chosen were strongly qualitative, (Cohen and Manion 2007), (Marshall and Rossman 1995), (Denzin and Lincoln 2005), (Lincoln and Guba 1985), Maxwell (2005).

The main method used for obtaining information for analysis for this research was to complete case studies of selected colleges of further education. A semi-structured interview technique was devised and used to explore the key roles in further education and their involvement in understanding and completing a needs analysis, (Marshall & Rossman 1995), Yin (1994), Bassey (1999).

The responses from the case studies allowed analyses and evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategies used during the reign of the FEFC, identifying viewpoints from the people who had to work within the context of changing policy.

There were difficulties obtaining access to complete research at an appropriate LSC, therefore it wasn't possible to complete this. The research then focused on the two case studies, see (Appendix 1) for the original timescale and (Appendix 2) for the amended timescale.

1.3 Definition of Terms

To research needs analysis it is necessary to understand the concept of "need" the work of Bradshaw (1972, 1978 & 1994) and McKillip (1978) are referred to for definitions and models to follow. These models and definitions have formed the perception of the term "need" against which this research has been applied. These are described in detail in chapter 2 (pages 52:58). Needs are value judgements: that a target group has problems that can be solved, need cannot be dealt with in isolation from the way in which it has been defined (McKillip 1978, Bradshaw 1972).

Throughout the research there is the acknowledgement of the concept of the term "need", and the way in which the term has been used by government and the funding agencies. The research examines the concept of "need" and how is it used in the policy levers in further education, (Plant 1969, Packwood & Whitaker 1988). Although Bradshaw (1994:45) argues that the term "need" has always been too imprecise, too complex, too contentious to be a useful target for policy".

Needs analysis is the process of identifying and evaluating needs in a community or other defined population of people. The identification of needs is a process of describing "problems" of a target population and possible solutions to these problems, needs have been defined as a gaps between "what is" and "what should be" (Witkin et al 1995). This appears to be the context in which the government uses the term "need".

The term "need" may also be defined as a "gap between real and ideal that is both acknowledged by community values and potentially amenable to change" (Reviere et al 1996:5). This appears to be related to the value the government place on the "gap" i.e. the missing skills of the economy, therefore improving the skills base of the UK will lead to "World class skills". They use policy levers to encourage the further education system to stimulate demand and encourage potential learners to believe that they "need" the skills that have been identified.

If the learners level of perceived need is raised it may then become something potential learners want (Watkin & Kaufman 2002). Needs can be identified with such

related concepts as wants "something people are willing to pay for" or demands "something people are willing to march for" (McKilip 1987).

The word "need" is widely used in all of the government documents cited above from all three of the above concepts.

The uniqueness of this research lies in the contribution to understanding the concept of "needs" and "needs analysis" within the further education sector and how it was able to see changes in responsibilities and in workplace semantics of relationships and responsibilities.

The further education sector is never static. This is a piece of evaluative research which was undertaken during a turbulent time period for the further education sector looking at the strategies used by the FEFC to incorporate needs analysis into their remit. It focuses on the college's needs analysis being part of the yearly strategic plan during the jurisdiction of the FEFC.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The first part of the literature review looks at the history of further education leading up to incorporation that provides valuable information about the changes in further education policies and any approaches to needs analysis. It allows the research to identify the relevant literature relating to the time prior and after incorporation in 1993.

It includes the critical analysis of philosopher's views of the policies relating to further education. Some of the literature referred to having been written after the time of the research; however this has been included to keep the research relevant.

The second part of the literature review is used to explore how the term "need" has been defined and relevant theories to support the evaluation of the strategies used by the further education sector in conducting a needs analysis. It will also provide a foundation for the evaluation process of the strategies used by the FEFC to conduct needs analysis.

2.2 Political review in relation to the research aims

The first and second aims of this research have been explored through this part of the literature review.

An interesting point to start the literature review research is to ask the question: What is further education? It has many different labels, further education, community education, adult education, post-compulsory education; all covering any kind of education provided for people aged 16+ for some types of funding, people aged 18+ for others. The Education Act 1996 Section 2 describes further education as full-time and part-time education for persons over compulsory school age (including vocational, social, physical and recreational training) and associated leisure time occupation.

Sir Andrew Foster described further education as the "neglected middle child" of the British education system (Foster 2005:58).

This research will recognise further education as the provision provided by colleges recognising that policy and practice will often refer to wider issues. It also recognises that all the terms referred to above could be separated by complex distinctions or alternatively they could be classed as synonymous to each other.

One of the most influencing factors to further education's frail viability is that although Education Acts have created organisations to provide further education i.e. LEA'S, FEFC, and the LSC attendance is not compulsory. This by default leaves it a very vulnerable service. Despite this there has been an increasing history of educational policy which has placed a huge responsibility on the further education sector for improving the levels of skills, education, and economic prospects of the country. Further education has become pivotal to English educational policy with the

sector being central to strategies that seek to raise educational standards and widen participation (Avis et al 2004).

What is educational policy?

The term 'policy' has numerous definitions and means different things to different people (Hillier 2006:1). Public policy is described by Parsons, (1995:11) as "really about defining what counts as public, who provides, who pays, how they pay and who they pay". Educational policy is part of the "wider arena of public policy", ... "public policy including problems affecting housing, health and education". (Hillier 2006:2).

The aims of the policies have been analysed and described in various ways of enhancing society and the economy (Ball 2008). Hillier (2006) identifies the two major aims of FE policy in England as 'creating an inclusive society which is also economically successful.' Finlay et al (2007) agree describing it as being aimed at tackling social exclusion and contributing to economic efficiency, although they argue that increasing the individual's qualifications will give them a more advantageous position in the labour market, it does not necessarily mean that a general increase in skills levels will improve a nation's economic position. Hillier and Jameson (2003:12) support this stating: "There are other Government policies that relate less to learning as such, but make the assumptions that learning enables progression into employment."

Hodgson et al (2007) identify two policy drivers from their survey of policy documents. These were skills and social justice, but they argue that a close study of the documents indicates that social justice is intended to be achieved through, and is subordinate to, skills development. These key drivers were made clear in the statement made by Blunkett (2000:3), "Knowledge and skills are now the key drivers of innovation and change".

This research looks at the further education system before, during and after incorporation. This provides an outline of the history of political strategies, exploring the reasoning through the pathway of initiatives. This includes government documents, funding body circulars and educational reports and journals.

It can be seen in various FEFC circulars (FEFC Circulars 92/11 & 92/18) relating to the process of creating a strategic plan how the needs analysis formed part of this plan and therefore formed part of an integral funding justification. This focus shows the vision that government has had for further education in relation to completing a needs analysis as a way of partly justifying further education funding claims. Viewing these documents raises the question - during this time was there a clear definition for colleges to grasp? Was there a model for them to adapt, within which were there adequate resources and time to perform such a thorough process?

It reviews government documentation including statements and policies relating to funding regimes mainly FEFC and relative commissioned reports including Tomlinson, (inclusive learning 1996), and Kennedy (widening participation 1997). It looks at

historical documentation from incorporation 1993 to current initiatives. It looks at the economic drivers for education policy. There is reference to some documentation relating to the replacement of the FEFC by the new Learning and Skills Council.

Reference will be made to the skills task force reports i.e. *Funding Systems and their Impact on Skills* (DFEE 1999) where it was identified that employers continued to make the largest financial contribution to learning at 10.4 billion a year on training their workforce. Government funds post-compulsory education and funding levels were planned to rise to 3.4 billion by 2000-01. Government have an important influence on the supply of skills. They charged FEFC with allocating resources to 435 providers of FE. HE with the 135 universities and colleges of higher education. This also included the role of the 82 Training and enterprise councils (TECs). This research will deal with the FE sector from the 1992 incorporation the beginning of the FEFC through to their final year. It also discusses the development of the Learning and Skills Council.

2.3 Adult and Further Education under the LEA 1904-1992

Local Education Authorities (LEAs) had been responsible for the provision of Further education since the Education Act of 1904 (Ball 2008). The white paper, Educational Reconstruction 1943 saw the LEA playing a much larger part in further education; involving them in the expansion of technical, commercial and art education, they were to '*bring up a healthy and happy population, to train a balanced team of*

workers able to develop a prosperous economy, and to rear a people eager to advance its civilization and culture' (Peters 1967: 275).

It became their statutory duty from the 1944 Education Act to secure the provision of adequate full and part-time further education for persons over compulsory school age (Wolf 1998) as stated in (Section 41 of the 1944 Education Act). "*Who are able and willing to profit by the facilities provided for that purpose*".

Despite this intention to bring order to the system, all the LEAs (146 in England and Wales) interpreted their duties very differently; there were not one but many systems which grew from the 1944 Act. Different fees were charged, some continued to see the further education provision as technical and vocational and some providing a more non-vocational variety. The ambiguity arose from the interpretation of the word 'adequate' (Legge 1982). The LEAs continued in much the same way for the next 40 years within each area the individual further education institution enjoyed a degree of autonomy and flexibility (Wolf 1998) of a national system that was locally administered (Ball 2008). Since the 1944 Education Act the LEAs were largely influenced and guided by the research and policies made by other institutions (see Appendix 3).

In 1947 the newly appointed Labour Government's Education Minister requested that the LEAs submitted their further education schemes within the next year. They were also issued with a 200 page leaflet which was from then on referred to as the 'bible' (Ministry of Education 1947a) From this point on there was to be a further education

Institution – a college – in each centre of population and they were to offer a 'synthesis between the utilitarian and the cultural so that a wide choice of educational opportunities may be brought within the range of the imagination of all' (Ministry of Education 1947a); preparation for work was the primary purpose of this further education. There was also an attempt to achieve compulsory part-time education up to the age of 18 but due to a worsening economic crisis from 1947 onwards this ideal was abandoned in 1950.

The main pattern of further education courses during this period were day release courses for young working men who were being "trained off the job" with some full-time provision (Hillier 2006).

The Crowther Report of 1959 implied that further education would become the "next battleground of English education". Young people then were leaving school at 15 with few or no qualifications finding apprenticeships or employment. The 1964 Industrial Training Act enabled Colleges to provide the training required by apprentices (ibid:22).

From this time there became a divide in the way further and adult education was referred to; further education being related to as vocational education; referring to courses with qualifications being the final learning outcomes and, adult education being related to as non-vocational referring to courses with no qualifications (Smith & Spurling 1999).

2.3.1 The 1970's

It was during the 1970's that government began to take a keen interest in further education (Hillier 2006). Two reports in the 1970's; the Russell Report of 1973 looking at the LEA's Adult Education in England and Wales and the Alexander Report of 1975 looking at Adult Education in Scotland showed an analysis of the provision at that time.

The Russell Report (1973) described the provision as very diverse in atmosphere and activity stating that there had been very little change since before the Second World War; most of the education provision took place in day schools or FE colleges. There were characteristics showing that much of the LEAs provision was primarily concerned with interests and skills relevant to personal and not vocational life skills. Much of the content was practical and not academic. Courses were not designed with view to preparing students for examinations or assessments of their knowledge. There had been an increase in the number of language classes a development of specific short courses dedicated to certain aspects of a subject. An increased overlap of courses with programmes made by 'responsible bodies' such as: local studies, sociology, psychology, and astronomy. Teaching methods and styles were identified as a weakness not always responding to the 'needs of the students' and unevenness in the standards of achievement. Although the LEAs provided for and attracted the whole social range, the main attendance was predominately 'lower middle class', the less privileged social groups and those who had less previous education were under-represented (DES 1973).

The LEA's were then encouraged in the recommendation of the report to:

- Develop their major role and direct providers.
- To make opportunities for adults to complete their formal general education.
- Make more efforts to attract a wider cross-section of the population including those who had never attended adult education. (Very similar to the widening participation report of the 90s).
- To ensure co-operation and enhance their partnerships with other providing bodies by setting up broadly representative local development councils to facilitate discussion and consultation (DES 1973).

The Scottish Alexander Report concluded that their 35 County and City education authorities provision was only reaching 4% of the adult population in Scotland; these tended to be the older, more affluent and better educated (SED 1975). The comments made were almost identical to those made in the Russell Report of England and Wales (1973).

The Alexander Report recommended that:

- The responsibility for adult education should remain solely with the LEAs.
- It should be regarded as a wider youth and community approach.
- It should be made more relevant and more accessible and to aim to meet the needs of the disadvantage groups (SED 1975).

The 1970-1980s were a troubled time for the LEAs mainly due to less funding; 10% cuts in government grants (TES 1977). They did respond to the Russell report and provided many courses as part of schemes aimed at the unemployed, women returning to work, new opportunities for adults and access to higher education. Some LEAs were however seen as 'wantonly attacking adult education because it was seen as a soft target with little political support' it was regarded as an optional extra (TES 1978).

This was summed up by this article

"There appears to be little commitment to adult education by many education committees and they often seem to be pleased at the prospect of shedding their obligations. At best they want a financially self-supporting service and this inevitably means that only the popular and profitable classes will survive. We are in danger of a service which is accessible only to the well-to-do," (Stephens and Lawson 1979: 154 19).

The Ruskin speech (1976) also had an impact on the further education from the Labour Prime Minister, Jim Callaghan, he expressed his concern from his journeys "to find complaints from industry that new recruits from schools sometimes do not have the necessary basic tools to do the job that is required ... there is no virtue in producing socially well adjusted members of society who are unemployed because they do not have the skills." (Ruskin speech, Callaghan 1976) further education was to be seen as the natural provider to address this problem.

Patterns of provision changed during this time (Hillier 2006), “further education was becoming the new tertiary education system and seen as a political solution to economic and social problems caused by rising unemployment” (Green 1991 as cited in Ball 2008). This was the point in which economic policy became the driver for education policy.

Looking at the 1980's and 1990's there was a period of systematic government intervention in the FE sector. The economic expansion of the 1980s created major skill shortages that coincided with a demographic decline in 16-19 year olds leading the government to believe that the LEA controlled colleges were not responding quickly enough to train people in the skill-shortage areas. “The conservative government wanted to push LEA's and their colleges into a greater responsiveness to central government initiatives and the needs of employers...The intention was to reduce the influence of the LEA's ...” (Hall 1990:58).

2.3.2 The 1980's

With mass youth unemployment continuing to feature heavily in government policymaking further education was involved in the wave of programmes for young people and unemployed adults. These included Youth Opportunities Schemes (YOP) and Youth Training Schemes (YTS), and Employment Training (Hillier 2006). (See Appendix 4) for a timeline of curriculum reform.

During the 1980's there were three White Papers which had significant impact on further education:

In 1981, *A New Training Initiative: Programme for Action*. This was aimed at improving training, creating industry standards which would replace the previous style of apprenticeship training. In 1986 *Working together: Education and Training*. This was aimed at further establishing standards of competence. Then in 1989 *Employment for the 1990's* which was aimed at developing a strategy "training through life" (DFE 1989). The FE sector was having to face fundamental changes in the delivery of their provision, a move from training people in work, to training people for work delivering a qualification system based on industry standards (Bloomer 1997, Hillier 2006).

The DES sponsored a research project by Tim Packwood and Tim Whitaker (1988) which was to look at Needs Assessment in Post 16 education. The study sought to analyse how local education authorities and their institutions assessed the needs of the 16-19 year age group, and was carried out from 1983-1986.

The Education Reformed Act of 1988 still gave the LEAs in England and Wales the duty to *secure adequate* facilities for further education including vocational, social, physical and recreational education for adults. The financial responsibility was delegated to the FE colleges who had more than 200 full-time equivalent enrolments. Again the word 'adequate' was not defined and again the LEAs were required to consult with other bodies and have regard for their provision. The Act did introduce

numerical performance indicators which worked against experimentation and innovation. The Act also gave schools the right to opt out of LEA control and the Governing bodies of schools to control school premises outside the normal school hours. Further education was defined as including part-time and non-vocational education and the education of adults. These changes weakened the power of the LEA and gave more competition to the schools and the colleges to plan and secure adult education provision.

The 1988 government White Paper, *Employment for the 1990's* stated:

"Above all we must invest in skills and knowledge of our people and build up industry's skill base through a strategy of training through life, to enable Britain to continue to grow and generate jobs. The prime responsibility for this investment lies with the employers" (ED 1989 cmd 540).

From this followed a nationwide network of 82 Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) in England and Wales and 20 (LECs) Local Enterprise Councils in Scotland. They were local bodies funded by the Education Department (ED) to foster economic growth sponsoring and promoting training.

As described by (Hillier 2006:26) it was clear "then that the policies affecting the [FE] sector were drawing in control, on the one hand, through regulating management and governance and, on the other, by defining the type of training and qualifications that the sector should provide". New vocationalism was being created.

2.3.3 The 1990's

The next White Paper *Education and Training for the 21st century* was published in May 1991 this was released jointly by the DES and the ED. It proposed to end the divide between academic and vocational qualifications, to promote training through training credits and promote the role of employers in education through the TECs and give colleges more freedom to be able to expand their provision and respond more flexibly to the demands of their customers. It suggested that all further education and tertiary colleges be given independence from their LEAs and that this should also apply to sixth-form colleges Cantor et al (1995).

Instead of being funded through the LEAs colleges would receive their funds through two new funding councils appointed by and responsible to the Secretaries of State for Education for England and Wales respectively.

2.3.4 Incorporation

The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) was established under the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act and was the first major legislative change affecting FE since 1944 (Ainley & Bailey 1997). The 1992 Act gave 465 colleges of further education (FE) corporate status and removed them from the Local Education Authority (LEA) control.

The act stated that FEFC's statutory duties were to:

- *Secure the provision of sufficient facilities for full-time education suitable to the requirements of 16-18 year olds (taking into account education for that age group provided by LEA maintained schools, grant maintained schools, non-maintained special schools and city technology Colleges).*
- *To ensure the provision of **adequate** facilities for part-time education suitable to the requirements of persons over compulsory school age, and full-time education suitable to the requirements of those aged 19 or over, where such education falls within the scope of **schedule 2** of the act.*
- *To have regard for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, between the age of 16 and 25.*

The FEFC did not set out to tell colleges which courses they should offer or which students to teach. Colleges were part of the post 16 education and training market and, as such it was the colleges who sought funds for their strategic plans. The needs analysis which this research was based around formed part of this process. Despite this major change there was still little academic literature critiquing FE funding at the time (Robertson 1997).

Colleges could also receive funds from participation in SRB (single regeneration budget) projects, as partners to European Union projects and other local, regional and national initiatives. Colleges could also make money by providing full-cost courses tailored to meet the needs of specific client groups, and by providing conference facilities and restaurant services.

The FEFCs corporate plan listed eight aims, one of which was:

*To secure throughout England sufficient and adequate facilities for further education
to meet the needs of students, including those with learning
difficulties and/or disabilities, and the communities in which they live.*

Determining their provision overall, the FEFC advised colleges that they should consider the needs of their own locality and the Secretary of State's wishes to see collaboration between colleges and between colleges and other educational and training providers. Given the substantial structural and culture changes to FE colleges since incorporation, it is apparent that many found the transition from LEA control to quasi-business status problematic and painful.

As stated by Hillier (2006:28), "The comparative freedom granted to colleges to manage their own affairs led to a frenzy of activity" which included: recruiting "business managers... competing with school sixth forms and tertiary colleges for learners ... cut throat competition in setting fees ... any college could sell any learning opportunity to anybody" Hillier (2006:28).

The transition brought about many mixed views amongst college principals, some wishing they were still working with the LEAs, some welcoming the change. Critically in addition, with the demise of the LEA's control came the end of national negotiations about salaries and conditions of service for staff and a focus on individual college arrangements.

Research was undertaken by Barrie Withers during 1993-95 looking at the experience of Incorporation giving principals impressions; endeavouring to understand the reactions of individuals who were subject to this change; he found from the sample of principals he interviewed, *'half of the principals were openly pleased to be free of LEA control; the others thought they had been treated well and would have wished to stay with the old arrangements'* (Withers 1998: 43).

Withers concurs with Elliott & Crossley (1994), that the legislative phenomenon Incorporation was the most significant feature in the development of further education. The Further Education system in the UK was now going to be run like a business. There were very mixed reactions to incorporation from principals many became more than apprehensive about the new system and its likely effects on their colleges. Many of their attitudes stemmed from their background, philosophy and temperament; those who were primarily educationalists and were now expected to run a business and those who had wanted to run a business all along were now being given the opportunity to do so. (Research in post-compulsory ed vol 3 no 1 1998).

The FEFC funding methodology was unit based and complicated. A database of all learners was required to be kept known as an ISR containing 57 coded fields. Tri-annual periods were identified for on programme audits. Funding units were broken down into segments, an amount being apportioned to: enrolment, on programme, and completion. Subject areas were either load banded or allocated an amount of funding. Colleges became wise to what could be delivered in less time than had been allocated so funding could be accumulated quickly. The FEFC soon became aware of this and made funding alterations mid-way through academic years where it had become clear that some courses were being offered because of the funding they attracted.

Colleges were being steered primarily by national funding mechanisms, which focused their attention on recruiting and retaining learners at lower unit costs (Spours et al 2009). Survival became increasingly important to colleges, the effect of the funding methodology on curriculum development led colleges into designing curriculum around courses which would attract lots of funding. Walls were taken out of IT suites so classes could be larger and some courses would enrol up to 40-50 learners. Was the funding methodology enabling colleges to offer a curriculum that was "fit for purpose" meaning providing a curriculum which met the communities and learners needs? (LSDA 2002). This question was addressed in the case studies.

The survival of colleges in the post-incorporation era became increasingly dependant on their performance against externally-monitored targets Jameson (2008:6), Hargreaves (2003), Ball (2003), (Avis & Bathmaker 2004).

2.3.5 Throughout the 1990's and into the new millennium

The Government's primary concern was with the skills based capacity of the country; for over a decade Great Britain had been referred to as far behind its European counterparts in relation to skills and education, and training National Training Targets for Education and Training (NETTS) have been emerging in the UK from the late 1980s (CBI). The NETTS were first suggested in the 1989 CBI document *Towards a Skills Revolution*, which focused upon trying to reverse the perception that the British workforce was "under-educated, under-trained and under qualified" (CBI 1989:9).

In 1993 the European Commission under its president Jacques Delors published a white paper envisaging two alternative futures; one where a small number of people enjoyed secure and stimulating work and many faced casual short-term low-paid work, alternating with unemployment while the other was a world in which we invest in the skills of all the people in the confident belief that wherever there is surplus skill and talent new economies arise to make use of it. It recognised that the learning skills needed for the new economy were exactly those skills required for community development and for the pursuit of individual fulfilment ... 'we needed to give a concerted push to the construction of a learning society' (Delors 1995). Since this report the EU have adopted two programmes which relate to the themes; these are

the Socrates programme (1994-1999) which focused on measures to support member states education initiatives and the Leonardo programme (1994) which dealt with vocational training measures (and is also part of the Lifelong learning programme 2007-2013).

The UK Government have published and supported a number of reports that contribute to its political agenda regarding expanding and widening participation in further education such as:

- *Inclusive Learning by the Tomlinson Committee (FEFC 1996).*
- *Learning Works: Widening Participation in Further Education, by Helena Kennedy produced by FEFC 1997.*
- *Learning for the 21st century (Fryer 1997).*
- *The Learning Age, the Green paper (England) 1998.*
- *Learning to Succeed the White paper (DFEE 1999).*
- *Creating Learning Cultures (Fryer 1999).*
- *The Changing face of Further and Higher Education and Lifelong Learning (Fryer 1999).*
- *Success for all (DFES 2002).*
- *14-19 Education and Skills White paper (England 2005).*

Two types of drivers can be identified for this part of the political agenda as economic and non-economic returns to education (Thomas 2001). The economic factors being related to unemployment due to industrial decline and the

government's perceived need to develop a 'knowledge economy' or 'learning society'
(*ibid*:4) .

This ideal is made clear in the Green Paper:

"The Industrial Revolution was built on capital investment in plant and machinery, skills and hard physical labour. British inventors pushed forward the frontiers of technology and our manufacturers turned their inventions into wealth ... history shows what we are capable of, but we must now apply the same qualities of skill and invention to a fresh challenge. The information and knowledge based revolution of the 21st century will be built on a very different foundation – investment in the intellect and creativity of people" (DFEE The Learning age 1998 p9).

Learning is the key to prosperity – for each of us as individuals, as well as for the nation as a whole, investment in human capital will be the foundation of success in the knowledge-based global economy of the 21st century' (ibid p7).

The belief that "*education is the best economic policy we have ... we must bridge the learning divide*" (DFEE 1998).

The second driver the *“none economic returns to education – the intrinsic value of education to individuals and society, and an associated desire for social equity.”* (Thomas 1995) *“Learning is about opening access to economic activity and resources, and for promoting many aspects of social, cultural and personal life”* (OECD 1999 as cited by Thomas 1995).

The needs of the economy and concerns with personal development and social justice can be seen as very broad and complicated and had ‘interconnected issues’ (Jary and Thomas 1999).

2.3.6 Widening Participation

In December 1994 the FEFC set up the widening participation committee as a means of fulfilling one of its aims “to promote access to further education for people who do not participate in education and training, but who could benefit from it” Helena Kennedy QC was the chair of this committee. The report Learning Works by Kennedy, (DfES 1997:12-15) states:

‘Further education suffers because of prevailing British attitudes ... there is an appalling ignorance amongst decision-makers and opinion-formers about what goes on in further education, it is so alien to their experience.’
‘Adult education classes [seen as non-vocational courses] have meant added enrichment for many who have already benefited from education and see continuous learning as one of life’s pleasures. Further education

[seen as vocational courses] has been an alternative route to success for many young people who have foundered in the school system, frequently providing another alternative avenue to university education.'

'It is because the achievements in further education are so rarely lauded that we have failed to recognise further education's potential as a vital engine not only of economic renewal but of social cohesion'.

'..in all the political debates, it is the economic rationale for increasing participation in education which has been paramount. Prosperity depends upon there being a vibrant economy, but an economy which regards its own success as the highest good ... dangerous one. Justice and equity must also have their claim upon the arguments for educational growth. In a social landscape where there is a growing gulf between those who have and those who have not, the importance of social cohesion cannot be ignored'.

Kennedy implies that colleges will target the more able student who is likely to attract more funding through completing their course of learning.

'since funding has been related to successful outcomes, namely qualifications attained by students, there has been a tendency for too many colleges to go in pursuit of the students who are most likely to succeed'.

What choice did colleges have, if students did not achieve, then colleges would not be able to claim their funding.

We must widen participation not simply increase it, Widening participation means increasing access to learning and providing opportunities for success to a much wider cross-section of the population than now (DfES, 1997:15).

2.3.7 Inclusive Learning

The Tomlinson Report (1996) promoted a student centred approach that makes learners' individual needs the starting point for developing a responsive "tailor made" curriculum. Tomlinson made the case for fitting the provision around the needs of the learner, (LSDA 2002):

"by inclusive learning we mean the greatest degree of match or fit between how learners learn best, what they need and want to learn, and what is required from the sector, a college and teachers for successful learning to take place" Tomlinson (1996:8).

Although this reports main focus was concerned with helping students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to succeed it did highlight the relevance of inclusive approaches to all adult learners.

2.3.8 Lifelong Learning

This was a strategy put in place to confront the economic challenges that faced the UK. What is lifelong learning? It is defined by Smith & Spurling (1999:10) as:

"Learning that has the widest possible boundaries. It includes all the main types and classes of learning vocational, critical, formal, and the opposite of all these. It includes formal and informal education, and self-directed learning ... Lifelong learning relates to learning throughout the lifespan – covering all life from cradle to grave, and starting at any age ... it allows for some gaps and delays, so long as a broad momentum is maintained".

It was as early as the 1920s when the term 'lifelong education' was first referred to as part of conversations related to the 'Nordic education systems' (Hasan 1969 as cited by Hodgson 2000:2). It was then used again by Faure et al (1972) in the Faure report 'Learning to be', we have had the European union 'year for Lifelong Learning (1996) and the OECD report 'Lifelong Learning for All' (1996); and has been constantly mentioned and referred to during the 80's and 90's and used as an umbrella term *'all encompassing but in reality could be tailored to the particular requirements of the country or organisation for which the policy document originates.'* Hodgson (2000:2).

Many of the policies are viewed as - ie *"a kind of neo-marxist competitive global capitalism or HRD in drag ... or a new form of social control or – using metaphors to attempt to mobilise society"* Field (2000:250-52).

"Not everyone calling for a new lifelong learning culture wants it for the same reasons", (Smith & Spurling (1999:13). There are three broad attitudes to education and the expansion of opportunities to non-traditional learners highlighted by Sand (1998:17-39) and (Win 1998: 17-39) which are based on the works of Ball (1990). The attitudes are identified as *'modernisers'*, *'progressives'* and *'cultural restorationists'*. *"Modernisers emphasise the value of education and training to the economy; progressives are liberals, citing the role of education and learning in promoting social justice and self-realisation, while cultural restorationists are reactionaries seeking to preserve traditional values and academic standards, however, policies and practices often span more than one of these positions"* Sand (1998: 17-39).

The Learning and Skills Council's further education funding methodology expected colleges in the future to charge 50% of the NBR (national based rate) to students as the course fee, and therefore, would not fund colleges for this element. This will be constantly increasing and it is easy to identify with Woodrow (1999:11) as cited in Thomas (2001:7) *"who warns that the potential contradiction between widening participation and lifelong learning, unless priority in the latter is given to the former, but current trends in Europe are increasing individual financial responsibility for post-*

compulsory education, which means that lifelong learning will not be available to everybody”.

New Labours “Third Way” approach to lifelong learning

During the 1990s there was a gradual move away from state-led regulation of education and training towards a more “marketised” system (Thomas 2001, Ball 2008). It is possible to see that from ‘state led regulated’, ‘social partnership regulated’ and ‘demand led regulated’ approach that New Labour have continued with the previous inherited Conservative administration of a ‘demand led regulated’ approach. Although we have to look deeper at these layers of policy to see the differences between Conservative and New Labour approaches. There are three different approaches which are said to make up New Labours “Third Way” approach. Firstly New Labour wanted to show through their first policy document ‘The Learning Age’ (DFEE 1998) that they were more interested and comfortable with rationalising post-compulsory provision by introducing more local and regional planning. Overall there are a lot of national regulatory bodies. A single national Learning and Skills Council which has a strong employer representation – who are advised by two committees, one for 16-19 year olds and one for adults; having responsibility for funding all post-16 provision through the 47 Local Learning and Skills councils, (who became responsible for the overall Needs Analysis of the regions providing further education rather than previously under FEFC whereby the colleges were themselves responsible for providing needs analysis). The quality of the provision was overseen by two inspectorates OFSTED for the 16-19 provision and the ALI for the adult provision. The Local Learning and Skills councils were expected to consult with a

range of national, regional and local organisations who could represent the interests of the local community and needs of the learner.

Secondly New Labour stressed how important it was to involve trade unions and well as employers in debates around lifelong learning initiatives. They indicated that they believed that those who share the benefits of learning are also expected to share the responsibility and costs for it.

Thirdly tackling the problem of social exclusion; encouraging the focus to be on the needs of the learner rather than the provider.

2.8 The Learning and Skills Council

This research had already met radical changes in the post-16 education sector; mainly the change from the FEFC funding methodology to the Learning and Skills Council funding methodology, and even after the research the change from the Learning and Skills Council Funding agency which is outside the scope of this research. As a major factor affecting the research as a result of the change from FEFC to the LSC was that the needs analysis would no longer be the responsibility of the colleges as it was transferred to the Learning and Skills Councils.

In 1999 the Government published the White Paper *'Learning to Succeed'*. This set out plans to modernise and radically reform the management of post 16 education and training provision in England. The vision was of a nation in which individuals

would achieve their full potential and companies would thrive. From April 2001 the Learning and Skills Council would take on the functions of Training and Enterprise Councils and the Further Education Funding Council. There would be a national skills council and 47 local councils. Their annual budget would be around £6 billion. They would be responsible for funding and advocacy of provision through FE sector colleges, school sixth forms, work-based training for young people, workforce development and adult and community learning, information, advice and guidance for adults and educational business links. They were going to work towards achieving a learning culture which would be responsive to the needs of individuals and employees (DfEE 1999).

They imply in their proposed corporate plan that the wide remit they had enabled them to provide effective co-ordination and strategic planning at national, regional, sectoral and local levels, and they felt that for the first time the individual learner was placed at the 'heart of the system' while, at the same time, their statutory duty to encourage employer participation in the provision of education and training ensured that the skills needs of the economy and society would be fully met. It was their vision that by the year 2010 the young people and adults in England would have knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world.

They stated that their biggest challenge was to convince the large group of adults who had barely participated in learning since leaving school of the return that an investment in their own skills would bring. They needed to gather hard evidence to

convince such people that; attaining the right knowledge and skills really did lead to employment and progression, as well as personal fulfilment.

The White Paper Learning to Succeed was strongly critiqued by Coffield (2000). He generally agreed with the need for a radical change in the further education system. He welcomed the replacement of the 76 TEC's with the 47 LSC's, (although there was no mention of the replacement of the FEFC's by the LSC's) the "adoption of social partnership in the membership of the new Councils, as now trade unionists, educationalists, and representatives of local government and the voluntary sector would be more evenly represented" (Coffield 2000: 237- 246).

The substantial increase in resource "£725 million to FE Colleges to widen participation" and a large number of specific measures including the "determination to build on the principles of the Tomlinson Report on *Inclusive Learning* (1996) which go beyond a concern with students with special needs and whose implementation is creating a new approach to learning, curriculum development and organizational structures in further education colleges; the inclusion of theory in the vocational qualifications of young people on work-based training; the publication of an annual skills assessment by the LSC; a new employment right for 16/17 year old employees to study or train for qualifications; and education. Maintenance allowances for 16-19 year olds from low income families" Coffield (2000:237-246) highlighted a number of serious reservations for example, the "absence of a model of change", "the over-riding concern to meet the skill needs of business", "the over reliance on human

capital theory and the continued dependence on exhortation as a means of increasing employers' investment in training" (Coffield 2000:237-246).

Findings from The Learning Society Programme (1994) were then used to question some of the central assumptions underlying the official model of progress. It was argued that "endless technocratic reforms are more likely to foster conformity, compliance and control rather than emancipation, empowerment and the enhancement of learning. It was concluded that the "government was rightly pursuing radical, structural reform but was failing to recognise the potential of lifelong learning as a major lever on such change" Coffield (2000:237:246).

Until then the national skills targets had been largely top-down, reflecting national policy needs. The Learning and Skills Council wanted to give long-term advice to government which integrated top-down with bottom-up. In accordance with their remit by 2002 they intend to analyse their learning and skills needs from the bottom up, through local strategic plans.

During 2001 the 47 local councils were to analyse the needs of employers and individuals in their areas. They consulted with local and regional partners, building the results into their strategic plans. They stated that such a systematic analysis of local skills priorities across the country had not previously been undertaken. The research of one of the Local Skills Council's approach to needs analysis would look to see if their approach was different from the colleges? Were they better equipped to perform a needs analysis? They intended that by March 2002 each local council

would have developed and set a local strategic plan, also covering a three-year period, but rolling through to March 2005. Each local plan would contribute towards national needs, but would also ensure that education and training provision fully met local economic and social needs.

They aimed to have a three strand strategy: a *local skills strategy* which set out how the local councils would build long-term relationships with local employers, engaging them in defining skill needs and developing their workforces: a *local participation strategy* which would define strategies for bringing more people into learning, it would also take into account local regeneration policies, it would set out how the Council would improve tracking and destination feedback: a *local learning strategy* which would identify how the local council would deliver education and training provision which met local employers and learners needs (See Figure 1).

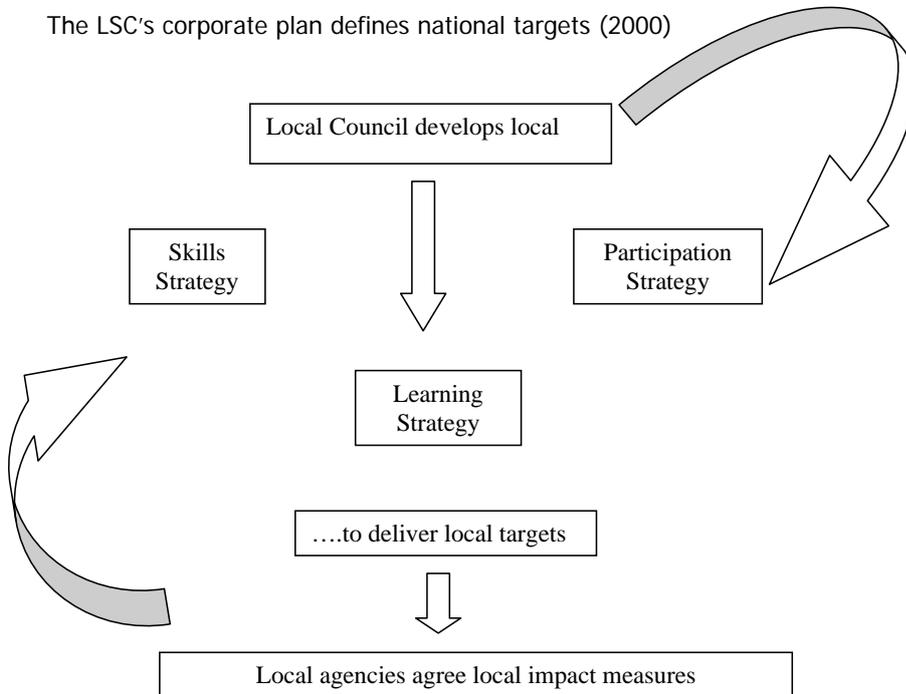


Figure 1 source: (LSC 2000)

Interesting research had been undertaken during this time that showed despite this new approach to identifying needs, it had become apparent following a NIACE study that numbers of adults participating in FE over the previous 2 to 3 years showed a drop from 46% to 39% (NIACE 2005). The KPMG consultants were appointed by LSC to look into why there had been a decline in the participation further education.

Although reviewing these documents was not part of this research it is beneficial to see how the government has continued to further review the way further education can continue to meet their agenda. The Learning and Skills Act (2001) brought

about the Learning and Skills Councils. The role and agenda for the Learning and Skills Councils was reviewed in the LSC Agenda for Change (2004). This was brought about by Foster review (2005) of the future role of further education colleges.

The Agenda for Change (2004) focused on six key themes that emerged from regional roadshows held with college Principals and Governors. Again included in these was a theme related to needs analysis:

- Skills and Employers – **how to help colleges best meet the needs of employers and the economy** (LSC 2004)

It can be seen that there has been a clear shift in approach from the aim in FEFC's corporate plan aims (Further Education Act 1992) as identified in the literature review:

- To **secure throughout England sufficient and adequate facilities for Further Education to meet the needs of students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the communities in which they live.** To "help Colleges" to meet the needs rather than just assume they can do this through the "adequate provision of facilities".

The focus has changed significantly from meeting the "**needs of students**" to the "**needs of employers and the economy**".

The Leitch report (2006) was commissioned by the government to identify UK's optimal skills mix in 2000 to maximise economic growth, productivity and social justice, and to consider the policy implications on colleges for achieving the level of change required. The report sets out the vision for the UK, which shows that government are of the opinion that the UK economy must urgently raise achievement at all levels of skill by 2020. It seems that government policies are even more focused than ever on the skills of the economy.

2.3 Defining needs and needs analysis

We are looking at a cycle of needs from government, funding bodies, employers, colleges and potential students/employees who all have a variety of perceptions, motives and motivations. How can we define needs analysis? Literature in this area is broadly based around three strands: special needs, motivational needs or marketing needs.

2.4 Needs analysis theory base

Much has been written by social scientists on the philosophy of needs. Maslow (1968) focuses upon motivational needs, and although these are not ruled out in terms of importance or relevance at some stage in the process of a student attending college, this research develops a more all-encompassing model/framework to refer to and work with.

How is the term 'need' understood? It has been said that "because the term need is used in a prescriptive way and carries with it the connotation that needs must be met, the problem [can] arise that is frequently used without precision and is open to different interpretations" (Packwood & Whitaker 1988 p 51).

A common statement used in the key elements of the term need often used in educational policy is identified by Walton (1969):

- i X is in state Y
- ii state Y is incompatible with the values held in society
- iii therefore state Y should be changed

The term need here refers to a condition or state that is absent or deficient in some way.

A further problem of defining need is to establish how much does the term 'need' differ from the term 'want' (Plant 1980), Milller (1976) explains that 'needs' are different from 'wants' because they include some form of objective statement made about an individual whereas wanting is a psychological state and reflects the behaviour of the individual.

This could be illustrated by saying that professional advisors, policy makers, may state that a certain educational programme is required by an individual or groups of individuals and the individual/s may not want it.

The role of values are an important part of considering needs, by recognising what may be a deficiency and making the decision whether action is necessary or desirable to meet the need Whitaker (1988).

For the purpose of this research Jonathan Bradshaw's (1972) work and Mc Killip's (1988) work was the most relevant. With reference to Bradshaw's work; although this is relatively old it is a classic (and still referred to in this field). It is the most appropriate for this research since it can be applied to all areas of life. It provides a framework which highlights that need cannot be dealt with in isolation from the way in which it has been defined. Bradshaw argued that how needs are defined may reflect the values and perceptions of different groups in his taxonomy. Four kinds of needs are identified: normative, felt, expressed and comparative.

Normative needs, expectation based on an expert definition of adequate levels of performance or service. Experts because of their experience and knowledge can provide guidance about what outcomes should be expected and about levels of service required to reach these outcomes. Groups or individuals who may fall short of these levels may be identified as being in need. However it should also be noted that this also reflects the value judgements of the professional groups involved. (Percy-Smith 1996).

Felt needs are expectations that members of the group have for their own outcomes (Bradshaw, 1972). Felt needs may not always be expressed. Felt needs depend on

the insight the target population has into its own problems – if a need for a service is not felt by the target population, it will probably not be used. If a College provides courses that the people within that community do not feel they need they will not attend, even if the need for that course to be offered to create a skilled workforce has been identified by needs analysis from providers of public expenditure. Felt need is closely related to the notion of want (Whittaker, 1988).

Expressed needs are expectations for outcomes that can be based on the behaviour of the target population; expectations are indicated by the use of services. This is closely related to the notion of demand. If a service is used, it can be funded, if not it can't. However, this does not mean the use of the service is appropriate. These needs rely on services that are currently available as they can also produce solutions that continue the status quo.

Comparative needs are expectations based on the performance of a group other than the target population (Bradshaw, 1972). Within the context for these needs a group or individual uses a service less than another or scores above or below the average of the population. Comparative expectations depend on the similarity of the comparison group and the target population and can neglect unique characteristics that invalidate generalisations. In this definition the notion of need can be seen as to be related to the principle of equality, or the need refers to a gap between services in one area and services in another (Whitaker 1988).

These techniques cannot be used in isolation as none of these are appropriate for all decision situations as a combination of techniques will present a less biased picture of the needs of a population.

Needs are value judgements: that a target group has problems that can be solved (McKillip 1988). Problems are violations of expectancies. For example, government sees this country has having a skills based problem, not having the skills in line with other European countries; they set a skills agenda to address this issue. With regards to a skills based workforce we are expected to be the 'same or better' than other countries. To solve this, a skills agenda is enforced as targets which public sector expenditure is set. If the skills agenda is met will Government see the problem as being solved?

Government set the skills agenda and provide Public Sector funding to enable providers (colleges) to attempt to meet these targets. Colleges attract students – individuals – previously the TECs and now the LSCs provide statistical data as does the employment office and data on the skills based needs in the locality. We have to ask the question is this data really common knowledge to the potential student? Do they know what has been identified as their localities skills based needs? Do they see them as their needs? What is their understanding of what they need? Doyle and Gough (1991) argue that individuals alone may not be the best judges of what they need since they may lack appropriate knowledge or information about what is possible.

This research has focused on the works of Bradshaw (1972) for his work on the concept of 'Need' and M^cKillip's (1988) 5 steps to needs analysis. In Bradshaw's work four areas of expectancy are discussed (the solutions for these vary in cost, impact and feasibility). Needs analysis involves the identification and evaluation of needs. Need identification involves the process of describing problems of a target population and solutions to these problems. Needs assessment evaluates the importance and relevance of the problems and solutions. Needs analysis in FE should be used as a decision making tool to identify whether a) services available to a population are adequate, b) if inadequate, specific actions will correct the inadequacy. If services are inadequate there is a need (M^cKillip 1988).

M^cKillip identifies a five step process to Needs Analysis:

- 1 Identify users and uses of the Needs Analysis (Weiss and Bucuvalas 1980).
- 2 Describe target population and service environment.
- 3 Identify Needs (Siegal et al 1978).
 - describe problems
 - describe solutions
- 4 Assess the importance of the needs, which are most important for the target population, which are the most relevant to the mission/experiences of the sponsoring agency.
- 5 Communicate results – decision makers and all relevant audiences.

2.5 Strategies for conducting a needs analysis by FEFC

Colleges were required by the FEFC in (Circulars 92/11 & 92/18) to produce a needs analysis as part of their strategic plan, a document process to secure funding. The statement 'meeting the needs of the community' was recurrent in most of the government documentation; without much clarity of the perception or concept of need or needs analysis. Although no formal training was established via the FEFC they did provide colleges with a document "identifying and addressing needs – a practical guide" (FEFC 1997) on conducting a needs analysis, this document was born from the Kennedy report Learning Works – widening participation in further education (DfES 1997).

This was a practical guide for further education colleges to use when compiling their needs analysis. This seemed a little late as colleges had been completing needs analysis since incorporation in 1992. This guide was commissioned by two FEFC committees, the Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities Committee and the Widening Participation Committee.

The 125 page document is made up of 5 sections:

- 1 Introduction to needs analysis.
- 2 Methods of analysing needs.
- 3 Assembling the evidence.
- 4 People with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

5 Needs analysis, strategic planning and management.

These sections were to assist colleges in identifying and addressing needs and included advice on how to map local populations and conduct needs analyses. This was very a lengthy document and suggested a variety of methods of analysis. Was this used as a working document or did it remain on the shelf, untouched or seldom referred to? This study addresses this question within the interviews in the college case studies.

It identified distinctions between expressed and unexpressed needs and met and unmet needs. It presented a diagram showing 5 stages which the needs of any particular segment would travel suggesting decisions colleges could make at each stage: (Fig 2).

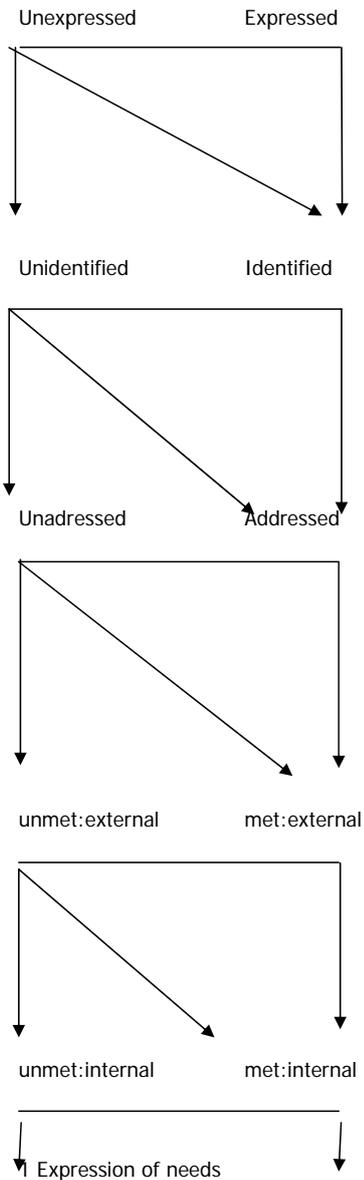


Figure 2 Source FEFC
Identifying and Addressing Needs in 1997:17

Are needs expressed? How does college simulate such expression, eg, through promotion and awareness training?

2 Identification of needs

Does college capture and analyse expressed needs, (eg, monitor enquiries) and/or does it identify unexpressed needs through research?

3 Addressing needs

Does college address identified needs in its planning and delivery or services? Where does needs analysis/assessment fit into planning

4 Meeting external needs

Do colleges attempt to meet all identified needs, or are there needs it cannot or should not attempt to meet? Does it succeed in recruiting target segments?

5 Meeting internal needs

Having sought to meet needs; does the service actually meet expectations?

There is no single right way to complete a needs analysis, there are different suggested approaches. The following table compares the approach suggested by the FEFC and the 5 stages identified by Mc Killiip (1988), (see Table 1).

It can be seen initially that there is no direct match, FEFC's stages are closely related to the funding methodology requirements and McKillips are more simplistic and more about the concept of needs analysis.

At stage 1 McKillip starts with a question which is not addressed by the FEFC to identify the "*users and uses*" whereas the FEFC concentrate on the understanding of the expression of need, whether needs is unexpressed or expressed. FEFC (1997: 3) do outline in their background information that "*each college has a distinctive mission, but common to all as a desire to serve the local community... the scale and nature of this responsiveness to local needs varies, and for some colleges there is a regional, national and even international role in addition to the purely local*", therefore it is assumed that the "*users and uses*" are predetermined in the colleges "*distinct mission*". The college and the funding agencies are the users of the needs analysis and it is used to provide evidence to support the justification of funding received to provide courses for the identified needs.

At stage 2 McKillip shows interest in the target population and existing service environment, those who use the service and those who are eligible to use them. FEFC wants colleges to identify how they identify needs, do they collect and monitor data or do they research external sources of information.

THE FEFC – IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING NEEDS guide compared to Mc Killips stages of Needs analysis

Identifying and Addressing Needs FEFC (1997)					
FEFC 5 Stages of identifying and addressing needs	1 Expression of needs Are needs expressed? How does college simulate such expression, eg, through promotion and awareness training? Unexpressed or expressed	2 Identification of needs Does college capture and analyse expressed needs, (eg, monitor enquiries) and/or does it identify unexpressed needs through research? Unidentified or Identified	3 Addressing needs Does college address identified needs in its planning and delivery or services? Where does needs analysis/assessment fit into planning Unaddressed or addressed	4 Meeting external needs Do colleges attempt to meet all identified needs, or are there needs it cannot or should not attempt to meet? Does it succeed in recruiting target segments? Unmet external Met external	5 Meeting internal needs Having sought to meet needs; does the service actually meet expectations? Unmet internal Met internal
Mc Killips 5 stages of Needs Analysis (1988)					
Mc Killips 5 Steps of needs analysis	1 Identify users and uses of the Needs Analysis	2 Describe target population and service environment	3 Identify Needs describe problems <ul style="list-style-type: none">• discrepancies• at risk• maintenance describe solutions	4 Assess the importance of the needs, which are most important for the target population, which are the most relevant to the mission/experiences of the sponsoring agency	5 Communicate results – decision makers and all relevant audiences

Table 1

It is clear from the diagram within Stage 3 that FEFC wanted colleges to be clear that the needs analysis fits into the strategic planning and to evidence this accordingly. McKillip suggests needs are identified and possible solutions suggested, recommending that no ordering or evaluating of importance of needs is done at this stage, problems can be described as discrepancies, at-risk, or maintenance.

Stage 4 FEFC required colleges to decide whether or not they should or could attempt to meet the identified needs. McKillip suggests that the importance of the needs be analysed here.

Stage 5 FEFC wanted colleges to evaluate whether they have been able to provide a service which actually meets the needs. McKillip suggests that all parties are informed of the outcome of the needs analysis.

This shows that these two approaches are in many ways quite different as there are different agendas for the purpose of the suggested approaches. FEFC have their agenda, the government's agenda, to meet and therefore the suggested approach to needs analysis is based on meeting such criteria. Mc Killip is suggesting a process to complete a task, the task being a needs analysis for human services and education so that the total process is not being arranged around external agendas. This supports Bradshaw's statement (1994:49) "in fact the word 'need' has become a smoke-screen to hide the true intentions of policy, to camouflage policies which in their intention and effect have the purpose of increasing inequalities" and also Percy-Smith (1996: 4) "while there is a considerable amount of work currently being

undertaken in relation to needs assessment across a number of policy areas, there is considerable unevenness in the way that work is being carried out”.

A further interesting paper appeared; a research paper from the Skills Task Force was released in 1999/2000 titled: *Anticipating Future Skill Needs: Can it be done? Does it need to be done?*

The Secretary of State for Education and Employment established the Skills Tasks Force to assist in developing a National Skills Agenda. This paper was one of the series which had been commissioned.

They were required to report on:

- How economists forecast skill needs.
- How the economy responds to a lack of skills.
- The economic consequences of not anticipating skills needs.

The research done in this paper was based on employers and the skills shortage in the UK and whether or not forecasts from economists are able to successfully identify the skills based needs of the economy. They conclude that “Individuals and employers are not very good at seeing the skills need of the economy, and not very good at responding to those needs when they do see them” (Chapter 5:1).

Within the same report it is stated that “skills shortages are widely seen as a problem...the reported level of shortages understates the true problem...economists generally attempt to forecast skill needs by forecasting occupations ... the real question is whether occupational forecasts are successful at picking up changing skill needs ... such forecasting should be supplemented by studies of the tasks and skill needs underlying occupations, not that we should abandon occupation forecasting ... it remains a useful framework for systematically thinking about the future” (Chapter 1:1,2).

It suggests and recommends that “given the market failure it is appropriate that the public sector should improve the information available to the labour market by funding forecasting, especially if this work can be developed to make it increasingly relevant to potential users” (Chapter1:2) .

The key question for the Skills Task Force and indeed for focus of this research was whether the FEFC funding methodology enabled Colleges to play their part in meeting the nation's skills agenda. ‘Given the seemingly financial fragility of the FE sector, it appeared that the FEFC funding system had not yet proved itself to be sufficient to ensure Colleges could respond appropriately and with consistency to the needs of their diverse range of clients and their local labour markets, let alone the national skill agenda (Skills Task Force, 2000).

2.6 Strategies for Conducting a Needs Analysis by LSC

Was the Local Skills Council approach to needs different from that of the colleges? Were they better equipped to perform a needs analysis? The LSC intended that, by March 2002, each local council would have developed and set a local strategic plan, also covering a three-year period, but rolling through to March 2005. Each local plan would contribute towards national needs, but would also ensure that education and training provision fully met local economic and social needs.

The LSC aimed to have a three strand strategy:

- a *local skills strategy* which set out how the local councils would build long-term relationships with local employers, engaging them in defining skill needs and developing their workforces.
- a *local participation* strategy which would define strategies for bringing more people into learning, it would also take into account local regeneration policies, it would set out how the Council would improve tracking and destination feedback.

a *local learning strategy* which would identify how the local council would deliver education and training provision which met local employers and learners needs (LSC 2004).

2.7 Popular Models of Needs Analysis

Whatever combination of uses a needs analysis has, they have the role of "reducing uncertainty" (McKillip 1988). The government and the funding agencies are

uncertain about what should be offered through further education without a needs analysis being completed. For the purpose of meeting the skills agenda a skills based analysis would be required.

Three models of needs analysis have been identified which may relate to the needs analysis used in further education and to the identified theories:

The Discrepancy Model

This is the most widely used approach to needs assessment (Kaufman & English, 1979, Whitkin, 1977) and is sometimes referred to as the “Gap” model which relates to normative expectations that is relative to Bradshaw's normative needs.

This involves three phases explained in Table 2:

1	Goal setting, identifying what ought to be	Performance expectations Necessary or minimal skills required
2	Performance measurement, determining what is	Outcomes are determined for target population
3	Discrepancy identification ordering differences between what ought to be and what is	Gaps are identified between what is and what ought to be Need is established

Table 2 The Gap model

This model can be related to the process used by government when setting the national skills agenda.

The Marketing Model

Needs assessment has been referred to as a feedback process for organisations to gather information and adapt to the needs of “client populations” “target markets” Kotler (1982) and by extending market principles from the private to the public sector.

The marketing strategy also has three phases outlined in (Table 3):

1	Selection of the target population, those actually or potentially eligible for the service and able to make the necessary exchanges	Colleges research local population identify target population in relation to government initiatives
2	Choice of competitive position, distinguishing the agency's services from those offered by other agencies and providers	Colleges awareness of other local providers provision – minimise dual provision
3	Development of an effective marketing mix, selecting a range and quality of services that will maximise utilisation by the target population	Colleges create a Curriculum “fit for purpose” Meeting the needs of the community and the learners

Table 3 – The three phases of the marketing strategy

This could be seen as relevant to the FEFC approach to needs analysis recommended in their guidance document. It focuses on expressed need whether by government or population.

The Decision making model shown in (Table 4) has three stages:

1	Problem modelling	<p>Need identification</p> <p>The decision problem is conceptualised by options and decision attributes</p> <p>Options are the choices confronting the decision maker</p> <p>Attributes may be the results of social indicator analysis</p> <p>Each option is measured on each attribute</p>	<p>Options may be courses that could be offered</p> <p>The attributes could be the previous enrolment numbers</p> <p>Relevance of enrolment no's</p> <p>Survey results of awareness and interest in options</p> <p>Learner ratings of subject or tutor</p>
2	Quantification	<p>Measurements contained in the need identification are transformed to reflect the decision maker's values and interests</p>	<p>Weights to indicate the importance or relevance of each attribute</p>
3	Synthesis	<p>Provides an index that orders options on need</p> <p>Gives information on the relative standing of these needs</p> <p>The overall need index is computed by multiplying weights and utilities and summing the products across attributes. The biggest need is the option with the highest index</p>	<p>Need index calculated</p>

Table 4: The three stages of the decision making model

This technique is different because values and their role in the needs analysis are made explicit and can be done using the values of the decision maker and or the researcher; its disadvantage is the complexity (Edwards & Newman, 1982; Pitz & McKillip 1984).

This model is more likely to be used by the college when planning the curriculum and unless attributes are selected and used across the college could produce very different results within departments/sections.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction to the Methodology

The “purpose” of this research was to answer the aforementioned research question which was developed at the beginning of this research in 1999 and subsequently adapted to the ever changing further education situation to the end of academic year 2007.

Comment [ICT1]: What is research? How do you define such a process in relation to your thesis?

This chapter will first discuss research and research methodology. It then discusses the ontological and epistemological position of this research, the research methods chosen, validity, reliability and ethics.

What is research? Research is defined as something which “aims to overcome the limitations of ‘common sense knowing’ (Cohen et al 2000:3-5). It is also said to be a process of: “seeking through methodical processes to add to one’s body of knowledge and hopefully to that of others, by the discovery of non-trivial facts and insights” (Howard and Sharpe 1963:6).

Research is “fundamentally a problem solving exercise” and educational research is “a disciplined attempt to address questions or solve problems through the collection and analysis of primary data for the purpose of descriptions explanation, generalisation and prediction” (Anderson & Arsenault 1998:6).

Therefore this research is a disciplined attempt to address the defined research question.

“Researchers discuss methodology and use methods” Mc Kenzie (2001:15). Part of the process is to establish how the research is going to be completed and to analyse the research paradigm, paradigm meaning “a basic set of beliefs that guide action”

Comment [ICT2]: Expand this intro

Opie (2005), Guba (1990:17) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000:19); which may be utilised to complete such research effectively. ||

Comment [ICT3]: Suggest you also need to make clear the distinction between methodology – as the philosophy grounded organising principles regarding HOW particular research questions are to be/have been addressed and ‘methods’ and the structured means of obtaining empirical data for analysis – see for example Mo Griffiths writings on this matter

There are three main research paradigm eras to consider, being loosely described as pre-positivist, positivist and post-positivist. To complete the research the researcher must understand and acknowledge the basis of these eras to ascertain which research paradigm is being adapted.

Comment [ICT4]: Describe what a research method is and make critical distinctions

Pre-positivist is the longest of the eras roughly starting from time of Aristotle (384 - 322 B.C.) and lasting nearly 2 millennia (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Most pre-positivists were seen by Wolf (1981) as cited by Lincoln and (Guba 1985) to take the stance of “passive observer”. Aristotle made two contributions of principles of logic, the Law of Contradiction (which states that no proposition can be both true and false at the same time) and the law of the Excluded Middle (which holds that every proposition must be either true or false). Aristotle believed in natural motion and as it was general consensus that human interference with nature was not seen as God’s way then little more was required during this period, (Wolf 1981).

The moving of scientists from the “passive observer” to the “active observer” moved science into the positive era, (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

The positivist approach can be seen clearly from the early 19th century which had its major impact in the scientific method and can be defined as “a family of philosophies characterised by an extremely positive evaluation of science and scientific method”. Reece (1980:450). There are at least five assumptions which positivism rests upon as outlined by Lincoln and (Guba 1985 p28):

- *“An ontological assumption of a single, tangible reality “out there” that can be broken apart into pieces capable of being studied independently, the whole is simply the sum of the parts.*
- *An epistemological assumption about the possibility of separation of the observer from the observed – the knower from the known.*
- *An assumption of the temporal and contextual independence of observations, so that what is true at one time and place may, under appropriate circumstances (such as sampling) also be true at another time and place.*
- *An assumption of linear causality; there are not effects without causes and no causes without effects.*
- *An axiological assumption of value freedom, that is, that the methodology guarantees that the results of an inquiry are essentially free from the influence of any value system (bias).”*

“Positivism claims that science provides us with the clearest possible ideal of knowledge” it is less successful “however ... in its application to the study of human behaviour where the immense complexity of human nature and the elusive and

intangible quality of social phenomena contrast strikingly with the order and regularity of the natural world" (Cohen et al 2007:11).

At the second half of the 19th Century the post-positivist/interpretive era saw the development of a new paradigm which accepted that values and perspectives were important considerations in the search for knowledge. What was seen was dependent on the perspective of the observer and what they were looking for. The post-positivists have been associated with working in natural settings rather than under experimental conditions. Their approach is holistic rather than controlling and it relies on the researcher rather than precise measurement instruments as the major means of gathering data (Anderson and Arsenault 1998).

After considering these research paradigms the author believed a post-positivist/interpretive approach most appropriate because the nature of the research involves looking at natural settings i.e. colleges and the staff who work there, their interpretations and construct realities in relation to the research question.

From this the research methods available have to be considered and a plan made. Research methods meaning, "the range of approaches to gather data which will be used for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction." (Cohen et al 2007:47).

Comment [ICT5]: Should I expand on research methods here or later on???

Research reflects the values, beliefs and perspectives of the researcher. Anderson and Arsenault (1998:3) argue that "Whether [the research] will be influenced by

ontologies which consist of the nature of reality and [can be] generally very wide ranging, different perceptions will affect how [the researcher] chooses to study the world around [them]". To be aware that just as "ontology affects methodological debates ... ontology ... affects epistemology" M^c Kenzie (2001 (ibid:p15), this being the philosophical theories about knowledge and how we know what we know Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:21). The epistemology is then said to be influenced by a current acceptable paradigm, M^c Kenzie (2001 et al) as the world of research contains a plethora of paradigms, based on positivist and interpretive approaches; some said to be suited to qualitative research and some quantitative. Understanding these methodologies and their uses, limitations, acceptability and validity enables the researcher to select the most suitable path.

Comment [ICT6]: What exactly?

Comment [ICT7]: Lincoln and Guba 1995 Naturalistic Inquiry – about page 35 ff present in summary a good discourse on the inter-relationship of ontology and epistemology – it might be worth looking at their writing ...
Have read this find if very confusing

This research is dealing with the area of educational research. Educational research is explained by Griffiths (1998:35) as research which "by its nature is concerned with human beings on/for/with". She points out how issues of methodology in educational research compare with such issues in physical sciences. The "main concern being the significance of human beings in educational research" she stresses that "human beings have agency" they are "not simply passive subjects of research and are "unlike objects of physical sciences – crystals, electrons, atoms, fluids, electromagnetic fields..." and states "They can and do construct interpretations of events and they can and do use such interpretations as reasons to act in particular ways" to conclude "human beings construct meanings for the events in which they participate. This has a significant impact on what can be known about human beings (epistemology) and how anyone could come to know it (methodology) (ibid 37). "

Because of this "agency" it is not possible to use some of the scientific methods of research as effectively as they would be used in scientific research. "Questions of human interpretations and how to discover them are not relevant in physical sciences, just as some of the kinds of knowledge and methods of physical sciences are of limited relevance in the human sciences" Griffiths (1998:36).

This "educational" research is about the views of colleges, the FEFC and Learning Skills Councils and the researcher's own views, all of which relate to the above philosophies in terms of "human beings" interpretation of events.

3.2 Educational Research Methodologies

Methodology refers to "the theory of getting knowledge" (Opie 2005:16), and its concern is with the description and analysis of the research methods not the actual practical use of the method. Confusion can arise though as the word 'methodology' is also used to describe the overarching approach to a research project.

It is argued that our ontological view can affect the way we complete research. Ontology, derived from the Greek word for "being" (Blackburn 2000), is our perception of the way we view the nature of reality. Ontological assumptions about social reality focus on whether a person sees "social reality or aspects of the social world, as external, independent, given and objectively real, or as socially constructed, subjectively experienced and the result of human thought as expressed

through language" (Opie 2005:20). This view is said to have an affect on the choice of methodologies and strategies used through analysing which ones are deemed as valid.

Comment [ICT8]: See also Lincoln and Guba op cit...

Comment [ICT9]: Notice also here that Opie has essentially created a binary opposition between objective and subjective etc ... if you are going to accept such an opposition they you need to provide a rationale for such a position. In producing such a rationale you need to be aware the some authors, in exploring "Rigour and Complexity in Educational Research" (Kincheloe and Berry 2004) have opened the possibility of the researcher having an explicit disposition to BOTH sides of the binary opposition identified by Opie...

Haven't read this text so I'm not sure that I can comment

It is explained by Opie (ibid) that if the social world can be seen as objective and independent, then it can be observed and accounted for through objective quantifiable data, if a social constructivists view is preferred then it would be more desirable to collect subjective accounts and perceptions of how things are experienced by the people involved.

Comment [ICT10]: So what is your position in the thesis?

I do state this later on – Should I move that to here ???

It can be argued at this point that the preferred framing for this research would be that of a social constructivist which will address the research question well.

"Many of the bitter arguments about the significance of research findings are founded in fundamental disagreements about knowledge and how to get it; these are precisely disagreements about methodology and epistemology" Griffiths (1998:33).

This research does not attempt to value one methodology over another but the researcher has chosen what they viewed to be the most appropriate methodology for the research to be completed effectively.

Epistemology is said to be the way we view how knowledge is acquired and communicated to others. "If we see knowledge as hard, real, capable of being

transmitted in tangible form this is usually defined in research terms as a empiricist's view meaning that no knowledge exists beyond that which is objectively, immediately observable". We could then be classed as a positivist. "If we see the nature of knowledge as softer, subjective, based on experience and insight of an essentially personal nature this is usually defined in research terms as a rationalist's view of knowledge, meaning that knowledge is perceived as created in the mind of the individual". We could then be classed as anti-positivist or interpretive (Opie 2005:14). The possibility of actually doing this has been questioned by Burrell and Morgan (1979).

3.2.1 Ontological and epistemological positionality of this research

From the philosophical position of the author, it is acknowledged here that ontologically and epistemologically the research question and aims are all written mainly from what has been defined as a rationalist's or interpretivist's view point. It is also believed that "questions around truth, validity and accuracy can be posed of both fundamental positions" (Opie 2005:22).

Further to this it is acknowledged that the research will be dealing with the perception of truth from three different sources, the researcher, the government agencies and the public sector organisations. Perception being "...an interpretation or impression based on one's understanding of something" (Berleant 2002).

Comment [ICT11]: Both positivist and constructivist forms of ontology could be taken as interpretivist... See for example Guy Roberts Holmes...

Ok I thought that I understood this ... now I don't

THERE ARE MANY FORMS OF INTERPRETIVISM – WHICH PARTICULAR FORM ARE YOU GOING TO ADOPT? WHAT IS YOUR RATIONALE FOR THIS DECISION?

??????

Comment [ICT12]: list interpretivist paradigms...

Do you mean for example constructivism, interpretivism, critical theory, and phenomenology

Comment [ICT13]: Need to define perception...

3.2.2 The authors view on the qualitative research

It is not feasible to say that one kind of research should be preferred over another, there are valid arguments for both qualitative and quantitative research, each lends itself more aptly to different fields of research dependant on the nature of the research; it can be seen that qualitative research is more relevant to the social sciences and quantitative research is dominant in the areas of scientific research. This does not mean that research cannot use both methods interchangeably at the most appropriate point, "nor does it imply that the boundaries between strategies – or the occasions when each is to be used - are always clear and sharp" (Yin 1994:4).

This research is of a social science nature and therefore all the research phases completed used qualitative methods. These were chosen as methods that would enable the researcher to look at perceptions and interpretation rather than the outcomes of statistics.

There is no set definition for qualitative research, Denzin and Lincoln (1994:2) offer a generic definition:

"Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of

empirical materials ... that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand."

The qualitative research paradigm allows the researcher to obtain an "insider perspective on social action" (Babbie & Mouton 2001:270), Denzin & Lincoln (1994:2) Du Plooy (2001:29).

There are many criticisms of qualitative research, "qualitative research does not [always] have the general acceptance that quantitative paradigms enjoy" (Marshall & Rossman 1995:142).

3.3 Choosing the appropriate Methodology, Method and Strategies for this research

The next stage was to choose the appropriate methods and strategies to complete this research. Appendix (5) shows Yin's (1984, p6) relevant situations for different research strategies. This was used as a tool to support the decision as to which strategy would be most appropriate for this research. It is useful as it outlines: three conditions to apply when contemplating the use of each strategy, type of research question posed, extent of control the researcher has over actual behavioural events.

It highlights how and why questions are more explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies, histories and experiments as the preferred research strategies. Such questions deal with operational links needing to be traced, this research will be looking at the operational link between government agenda issues and the funding regimes set from this agenda, focusing on how colleges respond to this.

Formulating the research question is the key to the strategy used Cambell, Daft & Hulin (1982). The how or why question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control. How and why questions form the context of this research justifying case studies as possible research method. The research question appears to meet this statement. The researcher has no control over this globally only within the FE sector within the area for which they are responsible.

The research question itself had been broken down into many aims for the research question to be achievable. Each of the research aims were looked at in turn to decide which would be the most suitable research method to use.

The first aim:

To examine the influence of government initiatives since 1993 upon strategies designed to serve the needs of the community

To achieve this aim the research needed an approach which would allow for historical research and indeed was to form part of the literature review and research about needs analysis.

3.3.1 Historical Research

The researcher believed that it would enhance the research to incorporate a historical dimension, looking at the history of further education to explore a relevant period of time (M^cCulloch & Richardson 2000). Seeking from this to form an understanding of how we may have arrived at our current situation, the “function character of this being to profit from the experiences of the past...” Good et al (1936:239-40). To unfold the policies and procedures of political decisions and the driving force of further education. To explore the government initiatives which are aimed at meeting the needs of the economy and updating the learners’ skills to meet such needs. This formed part of the literature review.

The second, third and fourth aims:

To assess and evaluate strategies used by the FEFC 1993-2001

To analyse the level of involvement that college employees have with the production of an educational and skills-based needs analysis within the context of political and public agendas

To assess the influence of funding methodologies upon decision making processes

These aims were looked at together as one was deemed closely related to the other.

Again these would require an amount of historical research into documented

evidence and the possibility of using case studies as a research method was considered.

3.4 Case Study

A case study is as cited by (Cohen & Manion 2007 in Nisbet and Watt 1984: 72). "a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle"

The case studies give a unique example of real people in real situations. They allow the researcher to understand ideas more clearly and abstract principles can fit together (Cohen and Manion 2007). The strengths of the studies lie in the opportunity to enquire about the real effects of the funding regimes and gain insight into the practicalities and reality of how the needs analysis were being completed within the chosen FE colleges. They focus on discovery rather than confirmation, (Babbie & Moulton 2001, Du Plooy 2001, Yin 1994 & Henning 2004).

As an acceptable part of a current paradigm Multiple Case Studies were considered an effective method for this research (Yin 1994), (Marshall & Rossman 1994). The case study can be done in conformity with the sciences' goals and methods. This method is accompanied by an intolerance of the ambiguities of non-laboratory setting, despite this it is a much used method in social science (Hamel 1992, Perry & Kroemer 1986, Yin 1984). The need to 'appreciate the complexity of organisational phenomena' (Yin 1984) leads the case study approach the most appropriate research method.

It was thought that various research strategies should be 'arrayed hierarchically' (Platt 1992) case studies being appropriate for exploratory phase, surveys or histories for the descriptive phase and that experiments were the only way of doing explanatory or causal inquiries, reinforcing the idea that case studies could only be used as an exploratory tool and could not be used to describe or test propositions. As Yin (1984) states case studies are far from being only an exploratory strategy. Each strategy can be used for all three purposes, exploratory, explaining forces causing the phenomenon in question, identifying plausible causal networks shaping the phenomenon, descriptive, to document the phenomenon of interest or explanatory, to investigate little understood phenomena identifying discovering important variables.

A case study is an 'empirical enquiry' that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when boundaries between the two are not clearly evident. Yin (1994) comprises an all encompassing method, within the logic of design and incorporating specific approaches to qualitative data collection and to data analysis a comprehensive research strategy (Stoecker 1991).

Case studies are based on any mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence. The five components as specified by Yin (1994) were complied with, the research questions, these are constantly evaluated and refined, its propositions if any, its units of analysis, the sequence of events, the logic linking of the data to the propositions, the criteria for interpreting the findings were all thought out carefully and considered.

Thus, leading to the development of a theoretical framework. There are four basic tests which are common to all social science methods (Yin, 1994; Kidder & Judd 1986). A table showing these can be seen in Appendix (6).

The decision had to be made on which case study design to use. The case study designs as interpreted by Yin (1994) were reviewed; these can be seen in Appendix (8).

Multiple case studies were chosen for this research because it is not deemed possible to generalise from a single case study. "If two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, replication may be claimed" stated by Yin (1999:31), and supported by (Babbie & Moulton 2001), (Marshall & Rossman 1995). Each site carefully selected being the subject of an individual case study being regarded as more robust (Herriott & Firestone 1983). The main criteria for each site was that they offered as similar programme areas as possible, although historically all FE sites have a presumed area of specialism.

The first task was to select which colleges to approach. Before this was done the FEFC were contacted to gain clear information about all the colleges which were funded through the FEFC and would therefore be completing a needs analysis as part of their strategic plan.

A letter was sent to the FEFC and a reply received with the appropriate list, further information was requested with regards to the programme areas that each college was responsible for delivering. This would help in the selection process and would make it possible to select colleges in similar areas which were offering the same kind of provision as far as was practicably possible.

Three colleges were selected and all were located in semi-rural town environments. All offered similar programme areas. The method of purposive sampling was used to select cases. Cohen and Manion (1997)

The appropriate case study category was also reviewed. A good summary of different case study categories can be found in Bassey (1999) this information has been adapted and put into a table format see Appendix (9).

Initially three colleges were selected from the East Midlands area, for the purpose of confidentiality none of the colleges will be referred to by name. Throughout the research they will be referred to as college A, B, and C respectively.

Location was also a factor in the decision making process of this stage because of the practicalities of actually visiting the colleges whilst also working full-time as a manager in a Community College.

Each college principal was written to requesting that they would allow themselves to be part of this research, a copy of the research aims were attached with the letter.

Written responses were received from each of the colleges but only two of them were able to allow the research to take place at their site/s. The third college declined because of a current internal dispute, at that time they did not feel able to allow any research to take place during that time. They stated they would inform me when the climate at the college was more suitable. As time passed they never forwarded any such information.

The other two colleges were happy for the research to take place and were very welcoming at the outset.

3.4.1 Categorisation of Case Studies:

Bassey set out to "reconstruct the concept of educational case study as a prime strategy for developing educational theory which illuminates and enhances educational policy" (1999:3).

"Referring to categories of research work does not imply that there is no mobility between the categories, for obviously a researcher may act at one time as a theoretician, at another time as an evaluator and at another time as an action researcher." Bassey (1999:41)

The categories which have been identified within this research are intrinsic and could be story telling or picture drawing. The research could also be seen as exploratory.

The case study method was chosen in an attempt to gain opinions, data, information from the "agency" dealing with the needs analysis at the time of the research. The case study design is based on Yin's "components of research design" see Appendix (6) Yin (1994:28).

3.4.2 The Propositions

Propositions are necessary to "direct attention to something which should be examined within the scope of the research" Yin (1994:21). The propositions for this research have been identified from the research aims drawn from the research question.

3.4.3 Units of Analysis

The units of analysis are necessary to define what the 'case' is, this part of the research relates again to the second, third and fourth aims.

- The aim of analysis being: assessing and evaluating the FEFC requirements of colleges to complete a needs analysis.
- The unit of analysis being: the FEFC funding methodology requirements.
- For the 3rd and 4th aim the unit of analysis being each college the sub-units being the interviews with relevant members of staff.

3.4.4 The Criteria for Interpreting the Findings

The criteria for interpreting the findings of the research are:

- Generating and testing analytical statements.
 - Condensing data whilst systematically coding into meaningful statements which give precise answers to the research question.
- Interpreting or explaining the analytical statements.

3.4.5 Planning to analyse the data

The diagram in (Appendix 11) shows the process of interpreting the findings. The process being:

A Research questions, through interviews, observations and readings etc., lead to raw data being collected.

Interviews were arranged at each college. Each interview was recorded where allowed.

The transcripts were typed and returned to interviewee for checking.

B Raw data to be stored in the case record as data items, each with a locatable reference.

Each interview transcription was tagged and coded.

C Creative and reflective thinking about the data items leads to draft analytical statements.

The interview transcripts were analysed for themes and re-curing statements, analytical statements were developed from this information.

D The draft analytical statements are tested against the data items, and amended or discarded as necessary as necessary, C and D together are an iterative process aimed to get the most from the data.

E When the iterative process is exhausted and analytical statements are re-expressed as empirical findings.

F The empirical findings may lead to fuzzy propositions in a report, or to an evaluative report, or to a story or portrayal according to the type of educational case study. In each of these, sufficient of the data items analytical statements will be included, with an account of the methodology, to give confidence in the report.

The raw data generated was processed following the above sequence.

3.4.6 The Cases

(Originally) this research was to include a case study of 3 colleges in the East Midlands area. Up-to-date information on college status was requested from the FEFC to aid selection process. Colleges permission was initially only granted from 2 of the 3 selected colleges so a third college had to be re-selected.

However, with the change in the government funding body from FEFC to the Learning and Skills Council at this time brought with it the change of the main process of needs analysis. Under the FEFC funding methodology the colleges were responsible for producing a skills-based needs analysis of their locality, now the Learning and Skills Council were to undertake a skills based needs analysis in each of the Local Councils localities. So the research had to change and it was hoped that the third case study would be a local LSC applying the research questions to their completion of a skills based needs analysis. Unfortunately this case study of the local LSC was not agreed to due to an internal grievance procedure. A regional LSC was contacted and information requested, a verbal response was made by the Director of planning and Development. However, this meant that the research could now only be of the two colleges.

Document analysis

There was the intention of a document compilation from each of the 2 colleges including documents such as corporate/operational plans, strategic plans, needs analysis and any other internal research or market research completed within the life of this research. However many of the documents were only given to be read and not kept due to the high confidentiality requirements of the colleges and their ethical requirements.

3.5 Ethical Considerations of the Research

Ethics (Greek for ethos, character) has been defined as: The study of the concepts involved in practical reasoning good, right, duty, obligation, virtue, freedom, rationality and choice (Blackburn 2006).

To comply with procedural ethical considerations, (Cohen *et al*/2007) each case study was approached by letter to request their participation in the research and, a brief summary of the research purpose was included in the request. Three further education colleges were approached and only two on them wished to participate.

An initial research interview was arranged for the two participating colleges with the college Principal so that issues of ethics could be discussed and agreed, the research was discussed in more detail, an informative process finding out about the staffing structure; ascertaining who would be the most appropriate people to interview and formulating the development of a case study plan.

Part of the ethical agreement included that throughout the case study chapters there would be no disclosure of actual job titles or staff names. Generic job titles have also been given for the purpose of anonymity.

It was also stated at both colleges that no internal documentation in relation to the needs analysis and indeed the needs analysis itself were to be taken off the colleges premises. These were considered as highly confidential documents. This information could be referred to but not duplicated.

Interviews would be allowed and could be taped where the interviewee was happy to allow this. A timetable was arranged for the interviews to take place at each college site at a date and times suitable for all involved. (see Appendix 14,15)

The transcripts would be checked by the interviewee for validity and authenticity before being used further.

The (table 5) indicates the main points agreed at each college in the initial interview.

This procedure enabled the research to be undertaken with full consideration of each participant's informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and validity; meeting the ethical requirements of each of the case studies.

During the research there were no unsolvable incidents in relation to ethics in relation to the interviews; not all interviewees were happy about being taped so an

interview sheet was designed to make the information easier to capture. There was reluctance to show and discuss any documentation on needs analysis. This appeared to be a very sensitive area. It was hard to convince Principals that the information would stay confidential; even though it had been agreed that no documentation would be removed or copied. This made the research difficult as a consequence the research on documentation related to the colleges was weak. The main research findings were eventually taken from the interviews.

3.6 Interviews and Questions

Interviews were chosen as the main research tool for data collection for each of the case studies. Interviews “enable participants.... to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view” (Cohen and Manion 2007:349). To answer the research questions the interviews are used to see the situation from the college staff points of view, so that their construct of reality can be compared with the funding agencies requirements.

There are different kinds of interviews to consider, the four types of interview identified by Paton (1980:206) were considered for this research (see Appendix 13).

From the above points it was decided that the ‘interview guide’ approach would be used, it was important to let interviewees describe their own and experiences and express their own opinions; during semi-structured interviews “the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topics are considered...to

let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher" stated by Denscombe (2004:167) and supported by (Du Plooy 2001), (Babbie & Moulton 2001). The researcher was quite inexperienced with this research process and on reflection it may have been more practical to use the closed qualitative interview to make data analysis more simplistic.

There are potential problems with the validity of interviews "The interview is a very artificial situation ...there is no guarantee that what people say in interview is a true account of what they actually do, whether they are intentionally lying or whether they genuinely believe what they are saying ... are quite capable of saying one thing and doing another, and of being quite unaware of this "interview effect" is as important as "interviewer effect" Oakley (1981).

So the interview needs to be "conducted in professional manner, of course all kinds of bias [may] creep in [but] if the interviewer does his job well [by] establishing rapport and asking questions in an acceptable manner, and if the respondent is sincere and well motivated, accurate data may be obtained" as argued by kitwood (1977) in Cohen et al (2007:349).

3.6.1 Interview Schedules

After receiving acceptance confirmation interview schedules were set. These can be seen at Appendix 14. The interview process is described by Babbie and Moulton (2001:290) as having seven steps, i.e. thematising, design, interviewing, transcription, analysis, verification and reporting. All these steps were applied to these interviews.

At the start of each interview each person was still given the opportunity to continue adhering to Mason's (2002:81) consideration of informed consent. The recorded job titles were slightly different in each case, but for the purpose of keeping anonymity interviewees were given the same job titles. All transcripts were available for the interviewee for verification (Babbie & Moulton 2001).

3.6.2 Semi-structured 'Interview guide approach'

Each interview had an outline structure aimed to gather information relevant to the 3rd and 4th research aims as identified in Appendix 15. As with this interview strategy "topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance" (Patton 1980:206) a copy of these statements were given to each interviewee prior to the interview so that they were aware of the focus of the interview.

There is no one single or correct way to analyse and present qualitative data" (Cohen et al 2004:461).

The researcher has to start by generalising natural units of meaning, progressing to classifying, categorising/ordering these units of meaning then structuring narratives to describe the interview contents and interpreting the interview data (Lincoln & Guba 1985, Cohen et al 2004, Brenner et al 1985).

(Miles and Huberman 1994) suggest 12 tactics for generalising meaning from transcribed/interview data, some of which were considered for this research:

- Counting frequencies of occurrence
- Ideas
 - Themes
 - Pieces of data
 - Words
- Noting patterns/themes
- Seeing plausibility
- Clustering - setting items into categories/ types/behaviours/classification.

Selecting Categories

This is a stage of categorising by questions or coding and deciding whether to have pre-ordinate categories (Glase 1978), meaning categories selected prior to interview or responsive categories that could be derived from the transcripts (Hycner 1985).

It was decided that categories would be selected responsively.

There are several ways of organising and presenting data

- By people – grouping responses
- By individual – separately ie singularly
- By particular issue –
- By each research question
- By instrument – (method ie interview, documents, field notes) (Cohen et al, 2007).

The following approaches were used in the analysis of the case study interviews:

- By research question
 - Structuring the narratives by taking the most direct and relevant statements from the transcripts, bullet pointing them to make it easier to recognise themes and analyse statements.
- By people – job titles
 - Keeping the job titles anonymous using the codes to identify roles Miles and Huberman (1994).

3.6.3 The case studies

It was concluded that even though the case study was the most effective method for this research, that one person doing the research would have to be realistic about how much could be done. There would be documents to review, informal

conversation interviews, which could last for more than an hour. This would mean a lot of time would be needed to transcribe notes or dictaphone recordings.

The case studies were to comprise of:

Case Study Plan	
Document review	College prospectus Mission statement Needs analysis
Informal conversation interview	Involvement in Needs Analysis View of current situation
Data compilation and analysis	Transcription of Interviews Comparison of Documentation

Table 5

3.7 Pause in research

As there were originally to be three case studies and only two accepted another college was approached but they also declined. With the break in the research due to ill health also came the change of the funding agency from the Further Education Funding council to the Learning and Skills council. The implications on the research with this change were great. Previously the FEFC empowered the colleges to complete needs analysis as part of their funding bid. Under the Learning and Skills Council this was no longer required from the colleges and the Learning and Skills Council were to complete regional skills based needs analysis.

This was a point where the research could have completely stopped, however after much consideration and discussion with mentors it was decided to continue.

It would have been practical to complete a case study of the appropriate LSC. A request was sent to the regional LSC for a case study to be permitted, unfortunately the request to interview staff was refused as there was a grievance procedure in motion at the time. A regional LSC was contacted and relevant information of the LSC's needs analysis strategies and process was requested.

A further request to receive information on the needs analysis strategies and procedures was agreed to yet only information over the phone was given. The decision to abandon the third case study was inevitable.

3.8 Research Validity and Reliability

3.8.1 Validity

Validity has been interpreted in many ways, it is said to: “refer to the degree to which a method, a test or research tool actually measures what it is supposed to measure” (Wellington 2000:201).

Validity/acceptability

*“Validity refers to the problem of whether the data collected is a true picture of what is being studied. Is it really evidence of what it claims to be evidence of? The problem arises particularly when the data collected seems to be a product of the research method used rather than of what is being studied”
McNeill & Chapman (1990:9).*

What is deemed as valid could also be decided from whether the reader has either a positivist viewpoint or a interpretive viewpoint and that there is bias towards what is acceptable as valid or not dependant on what the reader's ontological and epistemological viewpoint is “reliability and validity are tools of an essentially positivist epistemology” (Winter 2000:7). Validity and reliability are primarily positivist statements for these words to be used in qualitative research a different context has to be applied.

Not all validity models are useful in checking the validity of qualitative research, there were two models looked at for this research. The case study matrix by Yin (1994) and the typologies described by Maxwell (1992).

The Case study matrix (see Appendix 4) by Yin (1994) was referred to as a tool in the planning and implementation stage which helps identifies the tactics which could be used, to check the categories of validity when using the case study as a research method. With regard to this research the four tests were covered; Construct Validity was addressed by ensuring clear research aims were set clearly around the research question and that each case study was conducted with collection of the same types of evidence. Internal validity is only considered relevant in explanatory or causal studies; this research was more exploratory which placed more emphasis on the reliability of the interviews which is discussed later. External validity; identifying whether the findings from this research would be generalisable beyond the two case studies; "generalisation is not automatic" (Yin 1994:36). This research could form part of evidence for other research which could produce generalisation.

The five types of validity proposed by (Maxwell 1992:45-48) are referred to as: "Descriptive validity", the factual accuracy of the researcher accounts, "Interpretive validity" comprehending phenomena not on the basis of the researcher's perspective and categories, but from those of the participants in the situation studied, "Evaluative validity", the application of an evaluative framework to the objects of study, rather than a descriptive, interpretive, or explanatory one, "Theoretical validity", refers to an account's function as an explanation, as well as a description or

interpretation; validity as a theory of some phenomenon. "Generalisability", refers to the extent to which one extend the account of a particular situation or population to other persons, times, or settings than those directly studied. Three of these which are the ones most directly involved in assessing a qualitative account have also been used for this research (see Appendix 7).

3.8.2 Reliability

Joppe (2000:1) defines reliability in quantitative research as:

"the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable."

This research is mainly qualitative, according to Golafshani (2003) an important test of any qualitative study is its quality. This relates to the concept of good quality research when reliability is a concept to evaluate quality in quantitative study with a purpose of explaining while the quality concept in qualitative study has the purpose of "generating understanding" (stenbacka 2001 p 551 as cited by Golafshani 2003). Lincoln and Guba (1985) use the term "dependability" in qualitative research which closely corresponds to the term "reliability" in quantitative research.

Reliability and validity can be conceptualised as trustworthiness, rigour and quality in the qualitative paradigm (Golafshani 2003).

This research had aims which included generating understanding, especially aims two and three.

As stated before the reliability, dependability of the research findings in the case studies will relate to the interviewees being able to be open and honest, and that the researcher completes the interview in a professional manner, gaining the trust of the interviewee and increasing the trustworthiness of the information given.

Reliability of interviews is affected because as Denscombe (2004:190) describes "the impact of the interviewer and the context means consistency and objectivity are hard to achieve". This was addressed in this research through the discussions about ethics and the semi-structured interview process at initial planning meetings with each college.

There needs to be a sensible way to capture the data so it is fit for purpose i.e. so that it can be transcribed effectively. The researcher being new to methods of this nature and scale performed this process somewhat naively, the following points were considered.

The purpose of the interview; the research interview has been defined as a "two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by [the interviewer] on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation" (Canel

and Kahn 1968). These research interviews are for the specific purpose of gathering information for the 3rd and 4th research aim outlined below; which were made clear to all participants prior to the interviews being held.

The research interview questions were based on the outline structure for the 3rd and 4th aims. Each interview had an outline structure aimed to gather information relevant to the research aims. The interview questions intended to cover the issues are outlined in Appendix 15.

A semi-structured research interview technique was agreed and each interviewee would be asked about the above issues in the form of a question and also be given time to add any additional points they would like to make.

Depending on the type of research interview method used there would be several ways in which they may be responded to as identified by Tuckman (1972) see Appendix 16.

The response mode anticipated from the semi-structured research interviews would mainly be the unstructured response which has the advantage of allowing the interviewee to have the freedom to give their own answer fully as they choose and also has the disadvantage of making the coding and quantifying of the responses more difficult.

There were also issues of transcribing to think about prior to the interviews taking place. The taping of interviews and indeed using the interview sheet does not take into consideration other contextual factors such as the:

- Visual and non-verbal aspects of the interview.
- The atmosphere the distractions the attitude and behaviour of the interviewer or the interviewee.

There is a sense of moving from the oral and interpersonal to the written language and there is a difficulty of recreating the former with the later.

3.9 Summary of Research Methodology and Methods

To summarise this chapter the research was carried out from the basis of the researcher having an ontological and epistemological viewpoint of a post-positivist nature. This being the most appropriate methodology paradigm because the nature of the research involves looking at natural settings i.e. colleges and the staff who work there, their interpretations and construct realities in relation to the research question.

The methods chosen for this research were:

- A historical review of further education.

- Case studies of two further education colleges.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF DATA FROM CASE STUDIES

4.1 Generating information from raw data

The data created from the interviews was in its rawest form, transcribing the data from recordings and interview notes was a long time consuming task.

There are many philosophers' views about how the data from the interviews can be coded or scored, amongst them the list from Miles and Huberman (1994); which suggest twelve tactics for generating meaning from transcribed information were considered:

- *Counting frequencies of occurrence (of ideas, themes, pieces of data, words)*
- *noting patterns and themes*
- *seeing plausibility*
- *clustering; setting items into categories, types, behaviours and classifications*
- *making metaphors*
- *splitting variables to elaborate, differentiate and unpack ideas*
- *subsuming particulars into the genera*
- *factoring*
- *identifying and noting relations between variables*
- *finding intervening variables*
- *building a logical chain of evidence*
- *making conceptual/theoretical coherence.*

Also other issues considered were: should selecting categories be done before the interviews or from the transcriptions, there could be problems with each method. Selecting categories before the interview could be seen as an economical approach but could also risk losing the wholeness of the interview and data could be misrepresented being taken out of the order it was stated. As (Maxwell 2002), (Babbie & Mouton 2001), (Marshall & Rossman 1995) suggests it is far better to allow categories to emerge from the interview process.

Interview sheets were made up to record notes about each interview, not all interviewees were happy about being taped so a sheet was designed to make the information easier to capture. Although this turned out to be quite a lengthy document to use during the interview it was deemed the best alternative (see Appendix 17).

It was decided to code the answers by the college and interviewee, then by the outline structure of the interview. As not all interviewees wished to be taped in some cases the interview form had to be heavily relied upon.

The codes would be as follows:

Case	Interviewee	Outline structure
CA or CB	1-7	A-F

Table 6: Case study codes

Further codes would be devised from the transcription where categories could be further established and coded a-z accordingly.

Organisation of the data could then follow; the list below was considered (Cohen and Manion 2007):

By people – grouping responses

By individuals – separately, singularly

By particular issue

By research question – in this case outline structure

By instrument – method ie interview, documentary data.

It was decided that organising data by research question (outline structure) would be more logical.

The transcribed notes from the questions asked at all interviews are presented at Appendix 18 and 19 in the format of the interview sheets with relevant data inserted.

How the data was analysed and coded has already been explained in chapter 3, see page (88:89).

Responses to each question used in the semi-structured interviews was transcribed and typed in to the interview sheet, this was then structured further through bullet

points. Columns were also added to evaluate the perceived level, or depth of knowledge or understanding. It was then possible to identify any emerging themes, and comparisons of answers could be made.

Although the approach of analysing by question does not appear to be a recommendation (Powell & Renner 2003) it has made it easier to deal initially with each case in a more objective way, leading to a more valid analysis (Maxwell 2002).

Each statement from each member staff was analysed for themes and categories. A table expressing these was produced and an evaluation statement finally added.

The following pages show this analysis, and thereafter, each analysed question is further represented by an evaluation matrix, which enabled a comparison of College A and College B to be drawn.

To summarise the analysis a further section was added at the end to show the overall analysis of College A and College B. It also indicates any connections with the literature review.

The outline structure of the interview (see Appendix 15) had been based around the 2nd, 3rd and 4th research aims (see page 10). The completed structured narratives through the interview sheets can be found in Appendices 18 & 19. The following is a representation of the data in narrative style highlighting themes based on each question and the similarities and differences found between College A and College B.

4.2 Knowledge of needs analysis requirements from funding agencies between College A and College B

Question A was based around the knowledge of needs analysis requirements from the FEFC (see Appendix 24 for tabular format).

The themes which emerged from College A and College B were: knowledge, acquiring knowledge, purpose and compliance.

The similarities between College A and B

There were similarities between the colleges on 3 of the themes, knowledge, acquiring knowledge and purpose. There were varying levels of knowledge at each college and all staff which had identified how they had acquired knowledge had done so by reading FEFC circulars. Most of the responses from both colleges included their perception of a purpose for needs analysis.

The differences between College A and B

There were differences between the colleges on 2 of the themes; knowledge and compliance. In College A, it was more evident that members of staff with a higher ranking or status had acquired more knowledge. In College B new staff stated they had "little knowledge". College A indicated that they had to "comply" with the

requirements of FEFC and College B indicated value to the requirements i.e. "it was very important", "it can affect".

Evaluation statement

Both colleges had varying knowledge of the needs analysis requirements from the FEFC. Knowledge had been acquired by individuals own research not through college information systems. It was more apparent in College A that staff with a higher status were more knowledgeable. One of the staff interviewed in College B stated they had no knowledge of the FEFC requirements, however, this could have been an isolated instance. Staff who had knowledge were able to indicate their understanding of the purpose for a needs analysis to be completed; College A's responses indicated a frequency of opinion that it was a mandatory requirement and College B's indicated they attached value to the process.

4.3 Response to Involvement in this process between College A and College B

Question B was: How involved were individuals in the process of needs analysis? (see Appendix 27 for tabular format).

The themes which emerged from College A and B were: involvement, communication, information and absence of analysis.

The similarities between College A and B

There were similarities between College A and B on two of the themes; involvement and information. Evidence suggests not all staff in both colleges were involved in the needs analysis process. Both colleges utilised qualitative and quantitative information for needs analysis.

The differences between College A and B

There were differences on two of the themes; communication and absence of analysis. College A does not appear to communicate relatively to needs analysis, this is kept at top level. College B appears to use a flatter base communication system. There is some evidence suggesting that in College A not all staff believe that a needs analysis is actually undertaken; there appears to be little clarity of who or what role was responsible for completing the needs analysis. Staff in College B believe needs analysis happens but identified a financial implication to producing a comprehensive needs analysis.

Evaluation statement

There is a strong link between College A and College B showing that the staff involved in the needs analysis process appear to be functioning at higher levels. There is confusion in College A as to who is actually involved in the needs analysis process, even though the higher levels of management suggest all staff were

involved; some staff stated that they were not. College B identified barriers to producing a comprehensive needs analysis. Both Colleges were communicating about needs analysis but at different levels of openness; College B appears to have a greater variety of communication channels. Both colleges used internal and external sources of information of a qualitative and quantitative nature.

4.4 Involvement in the decision making process regarding curriculum development

Question C asked interviewees what their involvement was in the decision making process regarding curriculum development (see Appendix 30 for tabular format).

The themes that emerged from College A and College B were: level of involvement, sharing best practice, gaps, targets and provision.

The similarities between College A and College B

There were similarities on three of the themes between College A and College B; sharing best practice, gaps, targets and provision. Evidence from the interviews suggests that in both colleges managers shared and disseminated relevant information. Both colleges had recognised gaps within their level of provision. The responses suggest that the decision making process at both colleges were related to external targets set by government. Evidence suggests that both colleges provision was based around funding decisions.

The differences between College A and College B

Evidence suggests that there were differences between College A and College B on the themes of; levels of involvement, sharing best practice, gaps and targets. In relation to the levels of involvement, in College A evidence suggests that levels of involvement varied at higher levels, at higher levels it was more supervisory at lower levels more practical. In relation to sharing best practice, college B recognised that at operational levels the college functioned by section; there was a shift in provision where some areas were beginning to offer curriculum services to other sections. In relation to gaps, evidence suggests that the differences identified were specific; College A identified various gaps, internal knowledge gaps related to college provision, employers not being aware of what courses contained, the curriculum not providing enough variety. In College B it was recognised that internal staff skills may not be sufficient to meet the requirements of a curriculum that had to respond to identified need. In relation to targets in College A the curriculum is based around market signals and economic signals and in College B evidence suggests that targets are set and subjects are chosen on the basis gaining the highest amount of funding and meeting government targets.

Evaluation statement

Responses suggest that each college's level of involvement relate to the management style and culture of the organisation. The responses suggest that both

colleges share information between sections and that College B has progressed into sharing curriculum services. Responses suggest that both colleges have identified internal “gaps” within their remits, and are aware of external “gaps” identified by employers. The decision making process at each college is based around the need to obtain funding and meet external targets set by the government. There is an overall link between the theme of provision and targets.

4.5 If staff had knowledge of the needs analysis requirements from the funding agency how did they think this affected the provision of the curriculum?

Question D asked staff if they had knowledge of the needs analysis requirements from the FEFC, how did they think this affected the provision of the curriculum design? (see Appendix 33 for tabular format).

The themes which emerged from College A and College B were; effects of provision, reactions, staffing, growth, drivers/triggers.

The similarities between College A and College B

There were similarities between the themes of staffing, growth, drivers/triggers. College A and B recognised the need for specialist staff to be able to deliver courses where need had been identified and current staff weren't able to deliver. Both colleges commented on growth expressing their concerns about responsiveness, new

areas of provision, courses appearing and disappearing. Both colleges identified drivers and triggers which they clearly linked to funding depending on government agendas.

The differences between College A and College B

There were differences between the two colleges on the themes of; affects on provision. College A found the effect on provision and staffing to be 'profound', College B appeared to accept the changes more proactively.

Evaluation statement

Responses show that both colleges believed that the outcomes of the needs analysis did affect the curriculum design. Responses show that College A has responded as if the needs analysis was an event that has happened to them, College B has accepted needs analysis as part of the new process. Both colleges identify a possible requirement to create a team of subject specialists. Both colleges link the growth of provision to the findings of needs analysis in relation to market signals and government targets and funding. Responses from both colleges suggest strongly that they believe the main drivers are government agendas which are paired with funding methodologies.

4.6 Recognition of community needs

Question E required interviewees to discuss what they knew about the communities needs (See Appendix 36 for tabular format).

The themes which emerged between College A and College B were; types of need, barriers, gaps and collaborative working.

There were similarities between College A and College B on themes barriers, gaps and collaborative working. Both colleges identified barriers which related to government agendas and implementing them. Responses suggested that each college thought there were weaknesses in the level of knowledge about local community need. Both colleges agreed that collaborative working would be beneficial.

There were differences between College A and College B on the theme of types of need. College A's responses showed that the college had expressed the term need/s using the same terminology as identified as the FEFC. College B's responses suggest that needs are identified in general terms.

Evaluation statement

Responses suggest that both colleges have identified barriers which relate to fulfilling government agendas. Responses suggest that both colleges have identified a

collaborative approach to developing partnership work which will facilitate the requirements of the FEFC. The term need is defined by College A in the same way as the FEFC and College B uses more general terminology.

4.7 Links with any external agencies to meet community needs

Question F required interviewees to discuss any links with external agencies to meet the communities needs (see Appendix 39 for tabular format).

The themes which emerged from College A and College B are collaboration/partnerships and information.

There were similarities between College A and College B on the theme collaboration/partnerships. Both colleges had developed links with external partners.

Evidence suggests that there were differences between College A and College B on both themes collaboration/partnerships and information. College A had developed links and College B's links with external agencies had developed into relationships. College B had not developed their information systems as much as College A.

Evaluation statement

Responses suggest that although both colleges have developed links with external partners College B has developed these into relationships. Responses also suggest

that College A have utilised information to identify economic development needs by establishing a database to be accessed cross college.

4.8 Brief notes from College documentation

As stated earlier it was difficult to obtain the documentation from each of the colleges, the main document being the actual needs analysis itself (Appendix 120 and 21) show a brief summary of what was found.

This chapter has given examples of the raw data collected and how it has been transcribed. It has shown the emergence of themes and categories from each college and highlighted the similarities and differences. The full transcripts and tabular representation can be found from Appendix 18 to 19.

CHAPTER FIVE ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

All the aims of the research were revisited in terms of the data analysis. These will be discussed and analysed in relation to the research method applied to each aim.

5.2 Aim one and two: To examine the influence of government initiatives since 1993 upon the effectiveness of strategies designed to serve the needs of the community. To assess and evaluate strategies used by the FEFC to conduct needs analysis.

The literature review, because of the historic nature of this study, and the evolving environment in which it is situated, is inextricably linked with the first two aims. Simply by describing the evolving context, the changing way in which thinking has dominated the link between central and local partners in meeting educational needs is disseminated. Analysis will start with what can be learned from the research done to meet research aim one and two.

The government initiatives pre and post 1993 were considered and the influence they have had on the strategies designed to serve the needs of the community.

The literature review research gave a clear historical background to how the government policies developed over the last century. It showed that the education policy-making process changed dramatically since the 1944 Education Act (Hodgson

& Spours 2004). The analysis will concentrate on government initiatives from the 1990s and the responses in relation to these from the case studies.

5.2.1 The 1990s

“The 1990s have often seemed to be a ‘virtual’ decade, in which history has been abolished, traditional counts for nothing and everything is in a state of flux” (Elliot and Atkinson, 1988:250).

“Public speculation about the future of education grew throughout the 1990s, promoted by British governments committed to expanding further and higher education in order to generate greater economic prosperity via a “learning society” (McKenzie 2001:271).

For further education during the 1990s this was instigated through a plethora of educational legislation and reviews including in the following list as identified in this research:

- 1991 Education and Training for the 21st Century
- 1992 *Further and Higher Education Act*
- 1993 *review of NVQs Smithers (1993), Wolf (1995)*
- 1996 *Dearing Report, Review of Qualifications for 16:19 year olds*
- 1996 *Tomlinson Report Inclusive learning*
- 1997 *Kennedy report, learning works*

- *1997 change in Government new labour philosophy the third way shift from a welfare of assistance and a market-orientated model of atomistic individualism (Lea 2003:13).*
- *1998 The learning Age: a renaissance for a new Britain Green paper.*
- *1999 Learning to Succeed white paper.*
- *1999 Creating Learning Cultures (fryer 1999).*
- *1999 The changing face of Further and Higher Education and Lifelong Learning (Fryer 1999).*

The 1990's had been referred to as the age of uncertainty (McKenzie 2001:269).

Ball (2008:55-57) organises educational policy into four policy periods, the two periods relative to this research are shown in (Table 7):

Shift	Rapture	State
1976-1997		
Economic crises, mass unemployment and shift from Fordist to post-Fordist regime of accumulation and the first stage of deindustrialisation	Break from emerging comprehensive national system and the end of professional autonomy for teachers and schools	Neo-liberal state
1997-2007		
Assertion of the knowledge economy and new forms of work	End of a national system locally administered	Managerial or competition state

Table 7: Adapted from Ball (2008)

Even after years of expansion there were still claims that it had not expanded enough to provide the skilled workers needed for the UK to compete effectively with other countries.... It lagged behind in providing vocational qualifications (McKenzie 2001:280).

The above list is only a sample of the main government policies and initiatives that were introduced in the 1990s. They highlighted the evolving way in which further education was being steered and monitored.

As highlighted in the literature review of this thesis, it was through these initiatives the government was trying to achieve "an investment in skills and knowledge of our people which would build up industry's skill base through strategies of training through life, enabling Britain to continue to grow..." (ED 1989 cmdnd 540).

During the 1980's and 1990s there was a period of "systematic government intervention in the FE sector... the economic expansion of the 1980s created major skill shortages that coincided with a demographic decline in 16-19 year olds leading the government to believe that the LEA controlled colleges were not responding quickly enough to train people in the skill-shortage areas. The conservative government wanted to push LEAs and their colleges into a greater responsiveness to central government initiatives and the needs of employers...The intention was to reduce the influence of the LEAs" (Hall, 1990:58).

Hence, the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act (HMSO) separated colleges from

LEA control and set up the FEFC devolving responsibility to:

"...individual institutions alongside a new funding formulae, curriculum provision, marketing, resource management, estates and development of partnerships with external organizations..." (Lumby, 1999:72).

Different configurations of policy levers were being used to achieve this (Steer et al 2007). A "policy lever" referring to "government instruments" serving as a shorthand for the wide array of functional mechanisms through which government and its agencies seek to implement policies (Kooiman 2003 as in Steer et al 2007, Spours et al 2007).

The following diagram (Figure 3) was designed to create a visual representation of some of the policy levers affecting further education during the 1990s identified by responses in the case study interviews.

Policy levels – perception of case studies

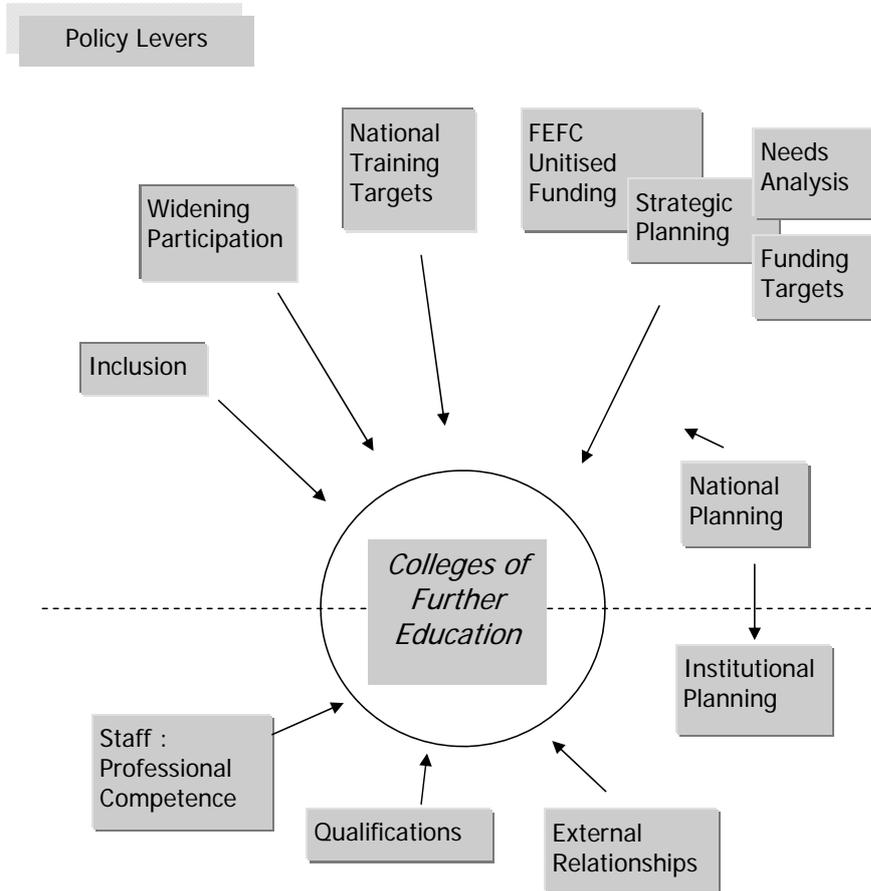


Figure 3

These pieces of legislation and policy levers all contributed to creating a very uncertain time in further education "The 1990s have often seemed to be a 'virtual' decade, in which history has been abolished, traditional counts for nothing and everything is in a state of flux" (Elliot and Atkinson, 1988:250).

The change of emphasis on the provision that further education sought to provide enabling them to meet government legislation can be identified throughout the research findings case studies, the following comments uncover the affects:

"there has been a change of focus over the last few years what previously colleges did was often just offer what you could offer, it was just a case of offer what you'd got , offering what you staff could teach and then waiting to see if anyone would turn up" (C1.2.6).

"regional development criteria was based on competitiveness, training needs analysis etc, that was a catalyst for change coupled with the new government in 1997 made colleges realise that they had to be more customer orientated or less product orientated."(C1.2.4).

Even though needs analysis was part of the strategic planning process, a requirement from the FEFC (Circulars 92/11 & 92/18) this was only seen useful and viable by some if everyone involved understood and agreed the agenda.

"One would ask do we need an economic forecaster to tell us what to do... does the funding methodology allow us to do the best thing anyway?...the term needs analysis I believe is totally related to the skills based needs.... Which is based on economic needs... which are identified for the government by economic forecasters... who then advise industry and providers like ourselves of what we should be providing to meet those needs... but that relies upon a lot of people all understanding the same thing... having the same information and agreeing... and expecting the general public employed and unemployed to see the economic side of things and again agreeing..."(C1.1).

As identified in the literature review during the 1990s there was a gradual move away from state-led regulation of education and training towards a more “marketised” system (Thomas, 2001). The demand led regulated approach and would continue to be so under the new Learning and Skills Council who were employed to further rationalise post-compulsory provision by introducing more local and regional planning (DFEE 1998).

5.2.2 Then into 2000s:

There continued to be a flow of legislation and reviews to fulfil the government agenda, though seemingly not as many:

(2001) Learning and Skills Act.

(2003) 21st Century Skills, Realising Our Potential, Individuals, Employers, Nation (Cm 5810).

Followed by the other main documents related to the review of governance of the LSC included in this time-line (Figure 4).

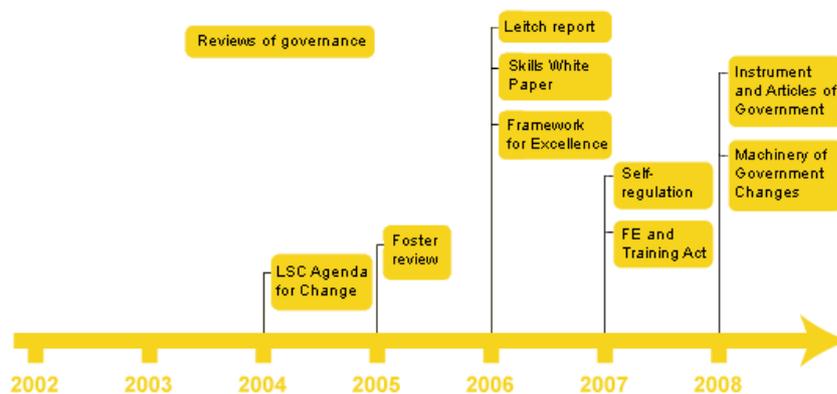


Figure 4 source: LSC (2008)

5.2.3 Strategies used by FEFC

Collecting data is part of the needs analysis strategy recommended by the FEFC (1997). The process of collecting data is highlighted by Watkins and Kaulfman (2002:22) they state that *"it is essential [for] data [to] relate to important questions, so that useful decisions can be made about what works, what doesn't, what to keep, and what to change... it must be targeted toward useful questions and results"*. They go on to suggest that successful data are the result of using two *"similar yet distinctive perspectives... an assessment perspective and an evaluation perspective"*. They outline the differences of these distinctive perspectives in the following (Table 8):

Primary Role	Goals	Compares	Examines
Evaluator	Reactive	Current results with intended results	Ways to improve existing programs, projects, or interventions (if possible)
Assessor	Proactive	Current results with justifiable required results	The effectiveness and efficiency of viable alternatives for achieving required and useful results

Table 8: (source: Watkins and Kaulfman (2002:24)

These roles of the evaluator and the assessor could be attributed to the colleges of further education and the FEFC during the period of 1992-2001 whilst colleges were expected to complete a needs analysis. As an assessor they were expected to

harvest data and identify gaps between current and required skills. As evaluators they were expected to make detailed analysis for current capabilities in comparison to stated objectives.

Evidence from the interviews suggests that colleges were trying to be assessors:

"We have to be sharp to market signals" (C1.1a).

"I attend many regional events to discuss market signals and economic climates..."(C1.1c).

"We have specifically set up certain sections with this in mind...they are acting as a bridge to close the gap between the level of understanding between local employers and ourselves" (C1.1e).

"... we have to predict unexpressed need, which is then turned into identified need, the younger cohort of learners have different needs, the post 16 adult learners have more complicated needs..." (C1.5b).

"There are certainly skills gaps which could easily be filled by people who could retrain" (C1.5e).

"we try to identify which area of the college specialism an employer would benefit most from and then work with the relevant section manager and staff in planning the service we provide..." (C1.5).

Some were unsure about their colleges capacity to be analysts:

"some areas of the college are more attuned than others (C1.1e).

"...we all think we know what the local community needs are, we say that we do in our strategic plans needs analysis... I wonder if we ever really do, or indeed ever really will..."(C1.3e).

Others were more confident:

"You need to be aware of the market signals ... the current market signals, which can be very difficult and take a long time to ascertain, they of course they change so quickly... we spend a considerable amount on market research ... have set up various projects and departments which will liaise and work specifically with local employers ... skills based needs will be identified... how

responsive we will be able to be will show strengths of provision and also the gaps...".

It was really evident from the research that there were inconsistent levels of understanding and progress in all areas with regards to assessing and evaluating need. Was there any evidence of any guidance? This was addressed again in the interview questions.

The FEFC outlined in their circulars that colleges had a responsibility to incorporate in to their strategic plan a local needs analysis. (Circulars 92/11 & 92/18) This was left to the devises of the colleges without any real guidance until 1997 when a guide identifying and addressing needs a practical guide was issued to colleges. A question was posed in the literature review as to whether this document was referred to or used?

The case study collected responses relating to this question which showed that some staff were aware of the document and that it was read and referred to:

"we have taken some of the ideas from the Identifying and Addressing Needs Guide... it raises lots of issues" (C1.1a).

"the FEFC guide, and incorporating the needs analysis into the strategic plan, I have read it...so yes, I have got knowledge of it.. I'm not sure that the college uses this exactly... but it is only a guide... something to help us, inform us of what the process should be...what it should include..."(C1.2.a).

"I'm fully aware of the suggested approach in the identifying and addressing needs; a practical guide I think its called... from 1997...I believe it was put together by Tomlinson and Kennedy..."(C1.4.a).

And others commented that the advice was given too late:

"we have struggled to understand what exactly is required, the guide that was produced ...eventually (laughs) from the FEFC was very useful, it would have been better to have been able to know all that guidance from the beginning..." (C2.3.a).

I have read the FEFC's practical guide to Identifying and Addressing needs... exciting isn't it [laughs] (C1.6.a).

It appears from the comments made that the guidance document wasn't really taken that seriously, that it really was given out too late to be of any use.

5.3 To analyse the level of involvement that college employees have with the production of an educational and skills-based needs analysis within the context of political and public agendas. To assess the influence of funding methodologies upon decision making processes.

In relation to these last two aims participants were asked four more questions for the third aim; if they knew about the needs analysis process and if they were actually involved with the production of the needs. For the fourth aim if they were involved in the decision making process regarding curriculum development and if they were; how did they think the requirements of the needs analysis and government policies affected the provision of the college.

In College A, six out of the seven people interviewed had strong knowledge of the needs analysis process. In College B only four out of the seven people interviewed had strong knowledge of the needs analysis process.

Comments supporting strong knowledge included:

"Yes I have good knowledge" (C1.1a).

"Obviously we have to comply with the needs analysis requirements requested by the FEFC" (C1.4a).

"Yes I have recently been studying myself and have done a fair amount of research into the FEFC funding methodology and needs analysis" (C1.6a).

"Yes the needs analysis is a main area of the strategic plan" (C2.4a).

"needs analysis is promoted as an important part of the strategic plan"(C2.3a).

Comments suggesting no knowledge or weak knowledge included:

"I'll be honest, I don't have much knowledge of this at all" (C1.7a).

"I'm afraid I don't really know very much about the requirements from the FEFC" (C2.5a).

"I have some knowledge of the requirement for us to provide a needs assessment of our community as part of our strategic planning process" (C2.2a).

Evidence suggests that the staff at College A were more familiar with the needs analysis process than College B. It also highlights that most staff found the information out for themselves through reading FEFC circulars or related texts.

"I've read about it with the FEFC documents..." (C2.6a).

"I keep up to date with the FEFC documents..." (C2.7a).

"Yes I have recently been studying myself and have done a fair amount of research into the FEFC funding methodology and needs analysis" (C1.6a).

The evidence also suggests that the higher ranking staff were more confident in their knowledge and attached value or duty to their knowledge.

"We have to be aware of the requirements from the funding agencies"(C2. 1a).

"Obviously we have to comply with the needs analysis requested by the FEFC" (C1.4a).

"Yes I have good knowledge of the needs analysis requirements from FEFC" (C1. 1a).

The next question revealed how involved in the needs analysis process they were. In both College A and College B five out of the seven people interviewed had a strong involvement in the needs analysis process. Comments which suggest strong involvement included:

"I'm involved at a strategic level (C1.3b).

"I am involved in directing the actual process" (C1.1b).

"I see my role or involvement in this process to develop processes and systems which all the managers can have access to...(C2.2 b).

Comments that suggested weak or no involvement included:

"we don't get involved in anything which is actually called a needs analysis for the whole college" (C1.7b).

Evidence also suggested that in College B there was a belief at higher levels that everyone was involved in the needs analysis process; *"We are all involved at some level"(C2.3b)*, yet there are other statements which contradict this:

"I don't think the College has a particular person or role who does the needs analysis" (C2.6b).

"I'm not really involved in the overall analysis..." (C2.5b).

The evidence also shows that in College B there are varying degrees of direct involvement. There were lots of "I" statements and "we" statements. It appears that the higher ranking roles have more direct involvement;

"I deploy the relevant staff who have direct involvement with our needs analysis" (C1.1b).

"I am involved at a strategic level" (C1.3b).

Interviewees were asked if they were involved in the decision making process regarding curriculum development, comments from all seven of College A's interviewees and six out of the seven people from and College B showed to have a strong involvement in the decision making process regarding curriculum development.

Evidence from statements suggesting strong involvement included:

"I have to ensure that the quality of provision is kept high across the college"(C1.2c).

"It's part of my role to oversee the Colleges provision and to ensure that all section managers are providing a robust and diverse curriculum within their areas..."(C1.3c).

"I am involved in the overall decisions made about the curriculum" (C2.3c).

The weaker involvement was a marginal weakness and showed involvement in discussion rather than decision making.

"we discuss things about the curriculum we offer..."(C1.7c).

The evidence shows most staff were fully involved in the way curriculum was developed within each college.

To address the last part of these aims interviewees at both colleges were asked how the requirements of the needs analysis affected their provision.

From the comments made in the interviews six out of the seven people in both College A and College B indicated that they thought the requirements of the needs analysis had an affect on their college's provision.

"I think the needs analysis requirements from the funding agency has had a big impact, with the actual funding methodology requirements..."(C1.2d).

"The requirements from the funders including the needs analysis has a profound affect on the colleges provision and this is becoming more complex as time goes on..."(C1.1d).

"of course the needs analysis requirements affect the provision of the curriculum ...everything"(C1.4d).

"I think the need analysis requirements results can have a big affect on the curriculum... what we are able to offer... advised to offer... no longer able to offer..."(C1.6d).

This was the question which opened the discussion to an array of other related issues, comments suggested that the funding methodology was having an impact:

"incorporation brought a lot of changes, the funding methodology affects everything..." (C2.2d).

"I think that we are more pressured to offer certain courses because they attract more funding and are more cost effective for the college..."(C1.7d) .

"our provision has to stimulate new demand... whilst maintaining a high standard of current provision..." (C2.1d).

"sometimes you find things that can cause other difficulties, sometimes we have to offer subjects in response to market demand and we aren't totally ready for this..." (C2.2d).

One comment from College B highlighted the concern over identifying needs without being seen to sustain themselves.

"There are many difficulties related to this issue... anticipating trends can be very time consuming and it can be difficult to agree on a satisfactory outcome... which doesn't give the impression that we are seeking to self sustain..."(C2.1d).

Comments suggested that there was a perception that government had their own agenda for what they would fund:

"I don't think the needs analysis itself is what affects the provision but the restrictions that come from the data/information which is identified at government level..."(C2.7).

"The governments targets must relate to their analysis of needs..."(C2.6).

" I mean if they say there is a need for a specific skill, then they will be generous with the funding in that area, even if there appears to be other needs...(C2.7d).

"it's very difficult to justify offering something new if it isn't recognised as a need for the country or region..."(C2.6d).

"there are certain programme areas which are favoured..."(C2.3d).

There was a real sense of fear of the unknown and being moved along to an unknown destiny.

The full transcripts and data analysis can be seen in Appendix 18-38.

5. Overall summary evaluation of College A in relation to research aims

Interviews were undertaken with 7 Managers around 7 areas related to the research aims (see page 10) the summary of the responses is as follows:

Interviewees were asked if they had knowledge of the needs analysis requirements from the funding agency (FEFC).

The responses suggested a varying level of knowledge across all staff that the needs analysis was a requirement of the FEFC. Some managers were aware of the needs analysis being part of the strategic plan. There was a general sense of compliance to fulfil the requirements of the FEFC.

It was noticeable that the management roles of a higher status had a deeper level knowledge than that of their subordinates. Managers that stated how they had acquired knowledge had done so through reading the FEFC documentation, suggesting a self-seeking approach to gaining knowledge as opposed to being given the information.

Interviewees were asked about their level of involvement in this process?

The responses suggest that there are varying degrees of direct involvement linked to the level of role or status of the Manager. Although higher management state that all

staff were involved some staff implied they were not. Some responses indicated that not all staff thought that the college actually completed a needs analysis.

Both qualitative and quantitative information was gathered for the needs analysis process from internal and external sources. This appears to be disseminated from a top down level. The most re-occurring communication channels mentioned were meetings and discussions.

Interviewees were asked if they had involvement in the decision making process with regard to curriculum development?

The responses suggest that levels of involvement varied, at higher levels of status the level of involvement was more supervisory and at lower levels more practical. The focus was that provision should be robust and diverse. Curriculum areas were encouraged not to put on courses that were not viable in relation to funding.

It appears that the managers recognise that the curriculum is based around market signals and economic climates, that curriculum decisions are based on local demand or identified economic need. Some managers identified that the curriculum was not providing enough variety.

Comments suggest that managers share relevant information from a top down level with cross College sharing developing.

Responses indicate that there has been an identification of various gaps with reference to internal knowledge gaps related to college provision, not all different curriculum areas were aware of what other areas were offering within the College. There was recognition that local employers were not aware of what courses contained.

Interviewees were asked if they have knowledge of needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affects the provision of the curriculum?

The responses suggest that colleges are driven by political agendas. The terminology used to describe the effect indicates that it is "profound". That there has been a shift in the speed in which colleges have to "respond" to the political agenda and market signals.

Managers indicate that this can result in the college being "ruthless" in some curriculum areas and creating "massive expansion" in other curriculum areas. Responses show that there is a need for adaptability within the workforce of the College, failure to provide this would result in high staff turnover.

Interviewees were asked if they had knowledge of their communities needs?

Response shows that the college has expressed the term need/s using the same terminology as identified by the FEFC "unexpressed" and "identified" being referred to.

Managers suggest that barriers "the ever changing goalposts" are the result of conflicting and changing political agendas.

Responses indicate that a more collaborative approach exists for the mutual benefit of the community. The college is working collaboratively to form a bridge to close the gap between the level of understanding between local employers and the college.

Interviewees were asked about links with any external agencies to meet community needs.

Responses suggest that numerous external links have been developed and that the college was in the process of gathering information about the economic development needs which was being processed and captured on a new college database.

5.5 Overall summary evaluation of College B in relation to research aims

Interviews were undertaken with 7 Managers around 7 areas related to the research aims (see p10) the summary of the responses is as follows:

Interviewees were asked if they had a knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from the funding agency (FEFC).

Responses suggest that there was a range of knowledge across the Managers interviewed with all levels of staff appearing to have reasonable knowledge.

One new staff member indicated that they had no knowledge of this process this is assumed as an isolated case, however, it would be appropriate for a new manager to be briefed about key requirements from a funding agency.

Staff showed understanding of the purpose of the needs analysis and how it forms part of the strategic plan. The responses indicated a sense of understanding the value of the needs analysis in relation to the requirements of the FEFC and the part it plays in the strategic planning and funding.

Managers that identified how they acquired knowledge suggested it was through reading the relevant FEFC documents acquiring knowledge themselves as opposed to being told.

Interviewees were asked about their level of involvement in this process.

Responses suggest that there appears to be more involvement at top levels of management with a conflict of opinion that not all staff were involved in the overall analysis process. Some managers indicate there appears to be no clarity in who or what role is responsible for completing the needs analysis. Indicating some managers may have believed that this process could be completed by one person. There was an awareness that a financial implication was linked to producing a comprehensive needs analysis.

Responses indicated that some managers believed that there was a process of needs analysis being completed, however, there appeared to be many parts of the process which did not appear to be co-ordinated in an holistic approach

Information is gathered from a variety of internal and external sources of both qualitative and quantitative nature. A variety of communication methods were being used which indicated a strong level of involvement through communication pathways.

Interviewees were asked if they had involvement in the decision making process regarding curriculum development.

Responses suggest that all managers felt a highly involved in this process with some managers adapting a more flat level approach where all staff could be involved.

It was identified that change had occurred in the way the curriculum decisions were made with curriculum planning now being funding led rather than traditionally led. This led to targets being set and the curriculum subjects sometimes being chosen on the basis of gaining the highest amount of funding whilst meeting government targets.

Recognition was indicated, that in real terms at operational level, colleges function by section.

Evidence suggests that staff recognised internal skills may not be sufficient to meet the requirements of a curriculum that responded to identified need.

Reports and data/information were produced and disseminated to relevant staff, this appeared to be done by all managers.

The responses indicated that the college was developing its capacity cross college to provide more flexibly with areas beginning to offer their curriculum services to other sections.

Interviewees were asked if they had involvement in the decision making process regarding curriculum development.

Responses suggest that the managers view the curriculum presented as being largely based on the need to obtain funding and that the subjects on offer are established

through the political agenda; even though localised studies may indicate that some subjects would reach capacity, they may still be unsuccessful in obtaining funding if this is contrary to the requirements of the government.

Some managers indicated that whilst some areas may flourish via an injection of funding, this may be at the expense of other subjects. Responses indicate that provision should be linked to meeting the demands of the community, however, they see a move towards 'specialisation' within certain areas.

Responses highlight that reacting to circumstances effectively may be a challenge at present time.

Interviewees were asked if they had knowledge of their communities needs.

Responses suggest that there is a varied level of knowledge about community need and that needs are identified in general terms. Producing a curriculum to meet the specific community needs was problematic. Responses suggest that it would be beneficial to acquire information from a variety of internal and external potential partners to build a comprehensive knowledge base.

Interviewees were asked about links with any external agencies to meet community needs.

Responses suggest that links have been developed into relationships with local employers. Responses suggest that the information/intelligence gleaned from external sources is in its embryonic stages of development.

5.5 Strategies used by LSC

As identified in the literature review and again in the methodology chapters it was not foreseen that the LSC would be created in the life of this research.

It was anticipated that it would be possible to complete a case study of a smaller nature of a Local Learning and Skills Council. After several attempts to address this it was concluded that this was not going to happen, the access was just not allowed.

However, even though the case study had to be abandoned it is worth looking at the process undertaken by the LSC.

5.15.1 The Strategic Area Reviews

Success for All (2002) sets out the Government's strategy for reforming further education and training and the impact strategic area reviews will make on learning and skills provision across England (LSC Circ 03/06).

"The discussion document Success for All sets out the case for a fundamental assessment of the pattern of provision in each part of the country. This would look at how well provision meets the needs of learners and employers and delivers the LSC's and Government's targets and overall policy priorities. It would also seek to identify the strengths of providers and areas of weakness. Most respondents to the consultation supported the proposed area reviews. They emphasised, however, the importance of flexibility and of taking account of work already done, for example through Area Wide Inspections.

From April 2003, building on work already undertaken, all local LSCs will lead Strategic Area Reviews which will ensure that there is:

- the right mix of provision of the right quality to meet learner, employer and community needs and drive up standards and success rates; and*
- in each part of the country a network of providers which are clear about their unique contribution and is working collaboratively to achieve educational and economic success.*

Local LSCs will be responsible for managing the process of Strategic Area Reviews within an agreed national framework which also enables local circumstances to be taken into account. Reviews will be advised by a steering group led by the local LSC and consisting of representatives from Local Authorities/LEAs, Jobcentre Plus, providers and other key local stakeholders including employers. (Dfes, 2002,27:29)

Strategic area reviews (StaRs) were developed to ensure that provision was well planned with the aim to build upon the high standard of existing provision in many parts of the post-16 sector. It was also used to identify options for improving weaker provision and filling gaps. StaRs aim to meet the learner, employer and community needs.

Firstly it is clear to see that there had been a shift from the colleges being responsible to produce needs analysis from the FEFC to the LSC completing a much larger scale analysis through the strategic area reviews.

Watkins and Kaufman's (2002:24) table can be referred to here again:

Primary Role	Goals	Compares	Examines
Evaluator	Reactive	Current results with intended results	Ways to improve existing programs, projects, or interventions (if possible)
Assessor	Proactive	Current results with justifiable required results	The effectiveness and efficiency of viable alternatives for achieving required and useful results

Table 8: (source: Watkins and Kaufman (2002:24))

These roles of the evaluator and the assessor could be attributed to the Learning and Skills Councils (2002-to 2005) with colleges being informed of the results of the Strategic Area Reviews to help them plan their curriculum.

The StARS consisted of seven activities:

a - preparatory planning work (local project plan)

b - information gathering and analysis

c - developing and appraising strategic options

d - appropriate local consultation

e - publish outcomes (local area delivery plan)

f - implementing the outcomes

g - evaluating the process and outcomes

In comparison to McKillip's (1988) five step process to needs analysis identified in the literature review: see (Table 1), there appears to be more similarities with the LSC than the process used by the FEFC.

StaRs	McKillip's five step process
Preparatory planning work (local project plan)	Identify users and uses of the Needs Analysis
Information gathering and analysis	Describe target population and service environment
Developing and appraising strategic options	Identify Needs <ul style="list-style-type: none">- describe problems- describe solutions
Appropriate local consultation	Assess the importance of the needs, which are most important for the target population, which are the most relevant to the mission/experiences of the sponsoring agency
Publish outcomes (local area delivery plan)	Communicate results – decision makers

	and all relevant audiences
Implementing the outcomes	
Evaluating the process and outcomes	

Table 9: Comparison LSC & Mckillip

So did they work? The StAR process was abandoned in 2005.

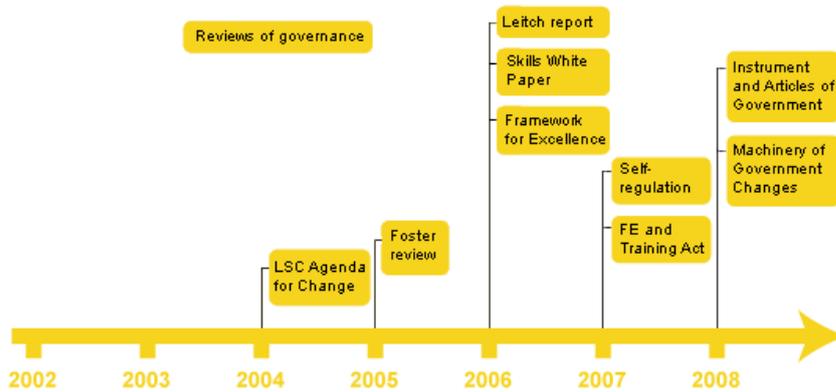


Figure 4 source: LSC (2008)

If they were not being done successfully did this contribute to the reasoning behind the Agenda for Change? From the timeline it can be identified that some StARS would have been being developed when the Agenda for Change (2004) was published.

Although it was outside the scope of this research to answer these questions, some clarity has been identified in other research from Fletcher and Davies (2004), Coffield et al (2008) that: the StAR process was largely unsuccessful and “was quietly dropped in 2005; after two years of concerted effort up and down the country ... questions had begun to be asked about the capacity and experience of the LLSC undertake such comprehensive planning tasks” Coffield et al (2008:8).

This chapter has evaluated the research done during the literature review and the case study interviews in relation to the research question and research aims.

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

6.1 Conclusions drawn from the research

The defined research question and aims for this research were as follows:

Since incorporation (1992) how have the measures undertaken by the colleges in further education sector in using needs analysis to serve local communities met the political and public agendas?

To examine the influence of government initiatives since 1993 upon strategies designed to serve the needs of the community.

To assess and evaluate strategies used by the FEFC and LSC to conduct needs analysis.

To analyse the level of involvement that college employees have with the production of an educational and skills-based needs analysis within the context of political and public agendas.

To assess the influence of funding methodologies upon decision making processes.

Originally the aims were completely different; they were refined and changed throughout the research several times. Aim two had the LSC added to it because of the birth of the Learning and Skills Council, which initially at the time seemed to be a reason to not continue. However, after much deliberation it was decided to continue, the research that had already been undertaken was still important and would be beneficial for other researchers to refer to.

The third aim was changed to a more specific aim, which related more to what was found during the case studies. The researcher had to learn that it was acceptable to do this, which for a while created internal turmoil.

Did the research meet these aims? This concluding chapter will address this question.

6.1.2 Influence of Government initiatives

Researching literature on the history of further education and government initiatives pre incorporation has given some insight into what had happened in further education and helped to unveil why incorporation had taken place. The main findings here highlighted that many government policies were replications of previous themes. They appeared to refine their initiatives to achieve the changes in their objectives (Hammond 2003).

On reflection of the findings from the 1990s in this research it appears that government started off with a wider variety of themes used as policy levers (Steer et al 2007) to achieve their aims through the FEFC and the LSC. There appeared to be a prescribed need by the government to improve the skills of the economy, whilst being perceived by the public to be inclusive and indiscriminate, highlighted by the Skills Agenda, the Inclusive Learning (1996) and the Widening Participation (1997).

With the White Paper, Learning to Succeed (1999), the Government's approach moved to defining aims even more specifically related to the economies skills based

needs. This continued as is shown through the legislation relating to the governance of the LSC during the 2000s (see Figure 4).

FEFC was created to enable the further education sector to achieve this, but in what would appear a more gentle approach in comparison with the LSCs. Government moved to a more hard approach through the LSC in the 2000s with more emphasis than ever on meeting the economies skills based targets, there seemed a shift in the urgency to achieve the political agendas. The vision was of a nation in which individuals would achieve their full potential and companies would thrive (Learning to Succeed 1999).

6.1.3 Strategies used by FEFC and LSC

The strategies used by the FEFC were largely unsuccessful. There appeared to be lack of instruction. Information and guidance was given too late to be of any substantial use. *"...it would have been better to have been able to know all that guidance from the beginning..."* (case studies C2.3.a) There appeared to be no real understanding of what needs analysis was or how to complete it. There was an expectation that colleges would just complete this process because they had to. *"We have to be aware that public spending will always relate to government agendas...we have to tow the line"* (case studies C2.1.a). There were also signs of concern about the political connections between "needs" and policies, *"training needs analysis or should I say "fit for purpose" has risen on the agenda for the last few years which I*

feel is a policy based on that of rationalisation, "fit for purpose" is my definition of a whole series of policy activities ..." (C1.4.e)

Colleges strived to meet this requirement and appeared to do the best they could with what knowledge and resources they could acquire. They were struggling to reconcile the political agendas with the public agendas and the problems highlighted in the case studies through this research were clearly outlined in this statement:

"You need to be aware of the market signals ... the current market signals, which can be very difficult and take a long time to ascertain, and then of course they change so quickly... whatever needs we identify we can only fund what the local funding agency will agree to ... what we are seeing is a conflict of agendas within the funding mechanism ... to meet unit targets and identify and meet the local economic skills based needs ..."(case studies C1.4.1).

It became clear from the findings of the case studies that needs analysis requiring that amount of information cannot be done on a small scale and that it would be *"Very costly to research information of that scale and nature"*. (case studies C2.4.b)

This was not something colleges were able to do.

This was addressed quite differently by the LSC. The thoroughness of the Strategic Area Reviews appeared to be a better approach, yet somehow the comment made by the spokesperson from the LSC didn't match the magnificent way in which the StARs were portrayed.

"Well, I think you will find that they were done, spasmodically by some councils, and none done very well... you will find it difficult to access the reports about this as they are no longer available on the web site..."(anon LSC 2008).

It was difficult to find information about the StARS viability, it has been critiqued by a range of authors; but mostly very briefly stating that the StARS were abandoned in 2005, (Coffield et al 2008).

6.1.4 Colleges involvement with needs analysis

From the case studies it can be seen that there were varying levels of involvement both within and between the two colleges (Chapter 4 and 5) in the formation of a skills based needs analysis.

It was also clear that not all staff were involved even though higher management suggested they were.

The culture of the colleges appeared to have an affect on the way in which all communication and involvement with the formation of the skills based needs analysis was compiled. The top down approach appeared to contribute to the lack of knowledge and motivation of some staff. The flat level approach appeared to create more involvement and value to the process (chapter 4 and 5).

6.1.5 How funding methodologies influence decisions

The case studies clearly addressed this aim within the context of the interviews and the responses made show that the FEFC funding methodology at the time, influenced decisions made about the curriculum provision in “profound” ways. There had been a shift in the speed in which colleges had to “respond” to the political agenda and market signals. Which often resulted in decisions about curriculum areas being “ruthless” (chapter 5).

There were statements to suggest that the funding mechanism was interlinked with what “needs” would be funded. *“whatever needs we identify we can only fund what the local funding agency will agree to ... what we are seeing is a conflict of agendas within the funding mechanism ...”(case studies C1.4.1).*

It also suggests that provision had to be part of achieving government’s targets to receive funding.

“I think you can obtain knowledge of community needs, but does it actually help you in terms of what you are actually able to offer as a college... will it be funded even if there is a need?, Does it match the government targets... ... if it doesn't and there's still a need what do we do? Find some other way of funding it I suppose...” (Case studies C1.2.e).

6.2 Methodology and Methods used in this research

The Qualitative approach as defined by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) was definitely the best approach for this research. The research methods chosen for this study were the most appropriate to gain the type of information required to answer the research question and aims. (Cohen and Manion 2007, Marshall and Rossman 1995, Denzin and Lincoln 2005, Lincoln and Guba 1985). The case study approach enabled the researcher to gain valuable insights into to how colleges were formulating their skills based needs analysis and allowed for the “agency” (Griffiths 1998, 35-37) as outlined in the literature review of the staff involved to be understood.

The strengths of this research were the way the interviews produced data rich transcripts which were able to show the effects of the requirements of the FEFC and fully address the research aims.

The weaknesses of this research came from a variety of factors. The ever changing FE sector, it was difficult to keep the research going after the closure of the FEFC and arrival of the LSC. The main theme being needs analysis was momentarily removed. The lack of co-operation regarding documentation that would have been very useful to this research from each case study made it difficult to analyse. The naïve trusting nature of the researcher was in this instance partly the reason why this happened, partly the college's reluctance to share what they thought was very

valuable information. Unfortunately it had not been possible to compile a case study of the Learning and Skills Council, which was frustrating and disappointing.

6.3 Implications for policy and practice.

Quite unintentionally this research had to deal with the effects of government policy on further education operations. The original idea of the author being interested in the process of the needs analysis rather than the politics had to change. It was very clear that the policies from government were drivers during the time period of the research and the two could not be separated.

Some very interesting points were highlighted in the research and the works of Spours et al (2006) will be referred to supporting these findings.

This research shows that there is a complex relationship between colleges, policy makers and funding providers, where confusion about what is actually required to implement the policy occurs.

Spours et al (2006:1) have developed three related concepts/metaphors to explain the complexity; "the process of mediation" – "a general process by which a range of actors interact with policy"; "acts of translation, specific interpretative acts by either professionals or policy makers" and "local ecologists, the dynamic relations within a locality" ... "in attempting to meet the needs of [their] learners, communities and

employers, colleges have to negotiate the challenges of national policy, translate policy levers and, at the same time, respond to local ecologies.

It can be seen from the discourse of the interview transcripts that through the 'process of mediation', there were a variety of ways in which the college staff interacted with the policy to produce a needs analysis.

*"Obviously we have to **comply** with the needs analysis requirements requested by the FEFC" (C1.4a).*

*"needs analysis is **promoted as an important part** of the strategic plan"(C2.3a).*

*I'm **suspecting** that in the needs analysis **they require** will **expect us** to show that **we are following up** on some kind of government initiative...(C2.5).*

It can also be seen how the translation of the policy implementation can be varied through lack of understanding of the requirements:

*"I **keep up to date** with the FEFC documents, I think **it's important that I understand what the executives are doing** ..." (C2.2c).*

*"we have **struggled to understand what exactly is required**, the guide that was produced ...eventually (laughs) from the FEFC was very useful, it would have been better to have been able to know all that guidance from the beginning..." (C2.3.a).*

It shows how the 'local ecologies' were perceived to have been affected through what would be offered in the curriculum:

*"I think we are **more pressured to offer certain courses** because they attract more funding and are **more cost effective** for the college to run" (C1.7).*

*"We **have to provide** what forecasters say is required in the region if we are **to be successful with funding bids**" (C1.1).*

*"the **latest funding requirements** which have **been more prescriptive** are for you to **make sure that students are studying for schedule 2 courses that they can't just turn up for a recreational course**" (C1.4).*

It is clear that "... colleges respond to the pressures from the external environment and turned these into internal plans, systems and practices" (Spours et al (2006:1).

The findings of this research support the conclusion from Spours et al (2006:1) that "national policy makers, who design national policy levers, may not be fully aware of these complexities and [believe] that there is a strong case to support the benefits of greater local control over policy levers, where these interactions are better understood".

This was also highlighted previously in a discussion in the House of Commons:

.."There needs to be a long hard look at the extent to which policy and practice interrelate effectively to drive the system the right way and I incorporate joined-up practice between government departments as part of that" (Humphries 2004:4).

6.4 Summary of contributions.

This research has developed insights into what was happening in colleges during the turbulent time of the 1990s in further education. It has shown how at a more micro level how colleges in further education were dealing with the requirements of meeting political and public agendas of producing a needs analysis.

It has attempted to provide reflective material for other researchers to use. There is very little specific literature available about needs analysis in relation to further education as this researcher found.

It has shown how the term "needs" and "wants" (Witkin et al, 1995) can be referred to and how political policy levers can be used to determine political agendas objectives. How these can be used to increase potential learner's perceptions of their desires into wants to encourage them to attend a learning programme and therefore eventually become part of meeting the political agendas needs to fulfil government's wants.

Another revelation which transpired from this research was that the public agenda was only identified by the government, everything that was happening in further education was related to what the political agenda required the public to do to meet government targets.

6.4 Prospect of future research

The researcher believes that the most important thing learnt here is that what ever needs analysis method or model is used it has the potential to be successful or not. The success would not necessarily rely on the construction of the needs analysis but on the way it is communicated, the way it is portrayed to the users, and how the users perceive it. In McKillip's (1987) stages of needs analysis there is a clear distinction that the users need to know what it is for. This research has found that not all users of the FEFC or the LSC needs analysis methods and models understood its uses.

"One would ask do we need an economic forecaster to tell us what to do... does the funding methodology allow us to do the best thing anyway?...the term needs analysis I believe is totally related to the skills based needs.... Which is based on economic needs... which are identified for the government by economic forecasters... who then advise industry and providers like ourselves of what we should be providing to meet those needs... but that relies upon a lot of people all understanding the same thing... having the same information and agreeing... and expecting the general public employed and unemployed to see the economic side of things and again agreeing..."(case studies C1.1).

Through listening to the tone of interviewees in the case studies it can be seen that needs analysis is not something that can be done on a small scale for a big agenda, whether the agenda is political or public (Coffield 2008).

This research could serve as the starting point for future research it has opened the door to many other questions:

- What happens in 2020 when the skills based targets are due to be met?
- What will happen with all the skills that learners acquire? Will there be jobs for them?
- What other policy levers will government initiate? How will this affect the further education system?
- Further evaluation of the term "needs" and "wants" and the context within which these word are used?

Research is never ending. Further education changes so much there will always be another research project waiting to be done.

The journey is long.

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Appendix 1

Original planned timescale content

Timescale	Research Phase	Action
2000-2001	Literature Review	Obtained as much information as possible on History of Further Education And Needs Analysis
2001-2003	Case Studies	Completed three Case Studies of Further Education Colleges
2003-2004	Data analysis and interpretation Write up of thesis	Analyse raw data

Appendix 2

Re-designed timescale process

Timescale	Phase of Research	Action		Pre-plan next stage
2000 -2007	Literature Review	Obtained as much information as possible on History of Further Education And Needs Analysis	It was necessary to keep in touch with relevant changes Also read methodology	Sought permission to commence Case Studies Pre-visit to discuss research
2002-2003	Case Studies	Completed two Case Studies of Further Education Colleges	Arranged interviews Gained consent Complete interviews	
2003-2005	Unfortunately the researcher had a ruptured eptopic pregnancy during this time and was also in a serious car accident and unable to continue with the research studies through serious illness.			
2006-07	Survey	Learning and Skills Council needs analysis methods	Collect data/information from the Learning and Skills council	Arranged sections of thesis
2006 – 2008	Data analysis and interpretation Write up of thesis	Analysis of data findings Write up draft-re-write edit Submit Oct 08		

Appendix 3

Institutions who helped advised the LEA's

1949 NIAE	National Institute of Adult Education	Advise on the liberal education of adults; by 1970's had become a prominent national focus and source of information and ideas about adult education
1963 NEC	National Extension College	A non profit making organisation committed to improving access to higher education
1969 OU	The Open University	Distance Learning Higher Education
1974 MSC	Manpower Services Commission (Later to become the Training Commission 1988)	Supervise employment as well as training. Had power to plan national training
1977 ACACE	Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education	One of the Russell's committees recommendations.
1983 NIACE	National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education	(NIAE) became The National institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE)
1984 UDACE	Unit for the Development of Adult and Continuing Education	Concentrating on guidance and counselling, education for older adults, open college networks, performance and quality, learning outcomes and competence

1989 TECs	Training and Enterprise Councils	Examine local labour market and assess key skill needs, prospects for expanded job growth and the adequacy of existing training opportunities
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(Source: Fieldhouse 1998:65-71)

Appendix 4

Time-line of educational curricula

The following is a brief time-line of educational curricula reforms during late 1970's, 1980s and early 1990's

1973	YTS – Youth Training Scheme – derived from Manpower services Commission MSC – to promote easier transition from school to work for 16 (work experience etc)
1978	YOPs – Youth Opportunities programme with day release for young people
1982	TVEI Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative which attempted to promote the introduction of elements of vocationalism across all curricula. This was used by many colleges to establish a greater awareness of work experience schemes; promoted the use of records of achievement where students, teachers and employers could monitor the building up of a range of competences amongst students; and it encouraged a more widely spread provision of information technology
1983	YTS – One year YTS government funded to increase provision by financing the employment of young people as trainees with local firms BTECs formed – Business and Technical Education Council. Which by 1986 had established the basis for provision of a range of courses aimed at providing qualifications for entry into a number of professional vocations which would have academic rigour, but

	would emphasise more practical vocational competence, when compared with GCSE (then O level) and A level qualifications. (BTEC firsts would be equivalent to five GCSEs; BTEC National Diploma would be equivalent to two or three A levels).
1984	CPVE – Certificate in Pre-Vocational Education was established as a qualification rather than an initiative or scheme. This was intended to be taught, more like a traditional course, but with an emphasis on competence and skill in a range of areas directly relevant to the world of work, and aimed at those students who were in danger of leaving school or college with no formal qualifications.
1986	One year YTS became a two year YTS NCVQ – National Council for Vocational Qualifications – which would seek to bring all the vocational qualifications under one umbrella; establishing a national framework of levels of achievement. This would mirror the traditional academic ladder, with five levels – from 1 to 5. The NCVQ would not establish new courses but accredit existing courses and work-based experience by establishing practically based competence and performance criteria, which they should incorporate.
1990	TECs (Training and Enterprise Councils) subsumed the YTS

	programme
1992	GNVQs – General National Vocational Qualifications – introduced as distinct courses and qualifications. In part this was because, in effect, many NVQs were being taught and awarded through simulated work experiences in colleges and training centres also it was thought the right time to establish a new taught vocationally oriented alternative to the GCSE/A level.

(Lea 2003)

Appendix 5

Case study planning tool

Planning tool, highlighted areas are relevant to this research

Strategy	Form of research question	Requires control over behavioural events?	Focuses on contemporary events?
Experiment	How, why	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, what, where, how many, how much	No	Yes
Archival analysis	Who, what, where, how many, how much	No	Yes/No
History	How, why	No	No
Case study	How, why	No	Yes

Source (Yin 1984:6)

Appendix 6

Case study Matrix

Tests	Case study tactic	Phase of research in which tactic occurs
Construct validity	Use multiple sources of evidence	Data collection
	Establish chain of evidence	Data collection
	Have key informants review draft case study report	Composition
Internal validity	Do pattern-matching	Data analysis
	Do explanation-building	Data analysis
	Do time-series analysis	Data analysis
External validity	Use replication logic in multiple-case studies	Research design
Reliability	Use case study protocol	Data collection
	Develop case study data base	Data collection

The case study matrix Yin (1994)

Appendix 7

Maxwell's (2002) typology of validity

Descriptive validity	This was checked through recording the interviews where allowed. Allowing interviewees to check and edit transcripts
Interpretive validity	Categories and patterns were allowed to emerge in the interviews, these were identified from the interviewees statements – not pre-determined
Theoretical validity	Although this is the hardest to clarify, the research looked at the historical and political issues surrounding the research question and aims

Appendix 8

Type of case study design

	Single-case designs	Multiple-case designs
Holistic (single unit analysis)	<p>TYPE 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When it represents the critical case in testing a well-formulated theory • When it represents an extreme or unique case • When it's a revelatory case 	<p>TYPE 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The same study may contain more than a single case • Multiple holistic cases
Embedded (multiple units of analysis)	<p>TYPE 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The same case involving more than one unit of analysis 	<p>TYPE 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each case involving more than one unit of analysis

Adapted from (Yin 1994, p 39)

Appendix 9

Case study categories

Case study categories				
(Adelman 1980)	Bounded system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The case selected as an instance of a class An issue or hypothesis is given, and a bounded system (the case) is selected as an instance drawn from a class... 		Bounded system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A bounded system (the case) is given, within which issues are indicated, discovered or studied so that a tolerably full understanding of the case is possible. 	
(Bassey 1999)	Theory seeking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studies of general issues Fuzzy propositions 	Theory testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studies of general issues Fuzzy generalisations 	Story telling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytical accounts of educational events, projects, programmes or systems aimed at illuminating theory Predominantly a narrative account of the exploration and analysis of the case, with a strong sense of a time line 	Picture drawing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytical accounts of educational events, projects, programmes or systems aimed at illuminating theory Predominantly a descriptive account, drawing together the results of the exploration and analysis of the case
(Stake 1995)	Instrumental <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research into one or more particular situations in order to try to understand an outside concern 		Intrinsic Research into a particular situation for its own sake and irrespective of outside concerns	
(Yin 1993/4)	Exploratory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aimed at defining the questions and hypotheses of a subsequent study Attempts to discover theory by directly observing a social phenomenon in its "raw" form 	Explanatory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents data bearing on cause-effect relationships – explaining which causes produced which effects 	Descriptive Presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context	

Adapted from (Bassey 1999)

Appendix 10

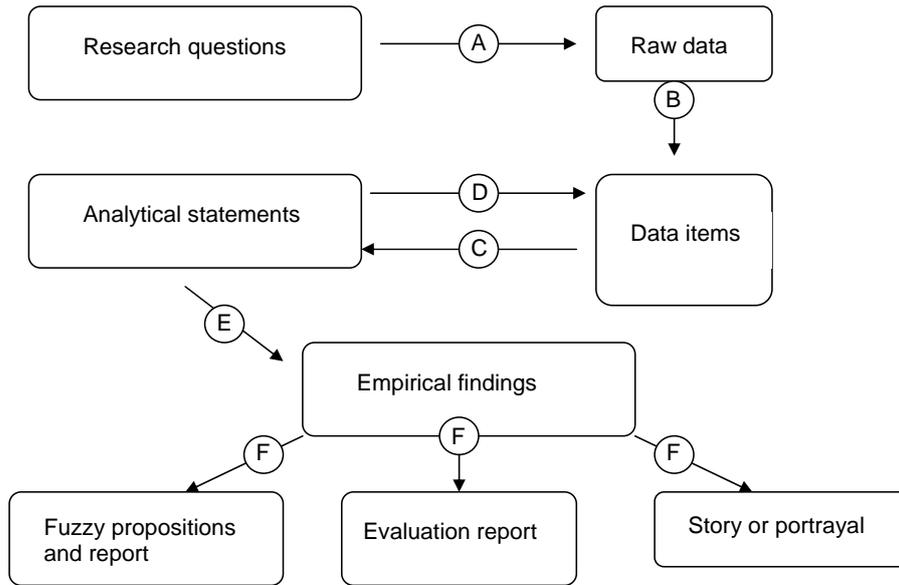
Components of research design

1	A study's questions
2	Its propositions, if any,
3	Its unit(s) of analysis
4	The logic linking the data to the propositions
5	The criteria for interpreting the findings

(Yin 1994:28).

Appendix 11

Process of data analysis



Source adapted from (Bassey 1999)

Appendix 12

Ethical issues discussed

Ethical issues discussed	Outcome	Informed consent	Confidentiality	Anonymity	Validity
Name of College	To remain anonymous and referred to as College A College B		✓	✓	
All staff to be interviewed to be written to by the researcher with full explanation of what the research was about and what was to be expected of them. Formal acceptance of participation to be received prior to interview	Letter requesting interview to be sent to relevant staff Formal acceptance in writing before interview arranged	✓ ✓			
Interviews were allowed to be recorded if the interviewee was happy for this to happen	Dictaphone used only when formally agreed	✓			
Interviewees names to be omitted from all text. They may be referred to by Job Title only	Interviewees to be referred to by Job Title only		✓	✓	
Interviews to be carried out at a convenient time to the interviewee	Interviewee to give a range of suitable convenient times	✓			
Transcripts to be agreed by interviewee before submitting to thesis	Transcripts typed and passed to interviewee for validity check				✓
No documentation related to needs analysis to be taken away from the college but may be read and referred to.	Documents related to needs analysis to remain in College – no copies to be taken		✓	✓	
Final summaries to be agreed by Senior staff	Final summary to College principle or delegated member of staff	✓	✓	✓	✓

Appendix 13

Four types of interviews

Types of interview	Characteristics	Possible use
Conversational Interview (unstructured)	Questions emerge from the immediate context and are asked in the natural course of things, there is no predetermination of question	More natural but could cause difficulties with data analysis
Interview guide approach (Semi-structured)	Topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form, interviewer decides sequence and working of questions in the course of the interview	Makes data collection analysis easier Could be difficult to make all interviews exactly the same
Standardised open-ended interviews (semi-structured)	The exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance. All interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order	Doesn't allow individuals to reflect their own circumstances Data analysis will have more comparability
Closed quantitative interviews (structured)	Questions and response categories are determined in advance. Responses are fixed, respondent chooses from among these fixed responses	Data analysis more simplistic Could be too impersonal and some questions could be irrelevant to some interviewees

Adapted from (Patton 1980:206)

Appendix 14

Interview Schedules

Interview schedule Case A	
Principle	Visit 1 10 am
Quality Manager	Visit 1 11.30 am
Curriculum Manager	Visit 1 1.00 pm
Finance Manager	Visit 1 2.30 pm
Section Manager 1	Visit 2 10.00 am
Section Manager 2	Visit 2 11.30 am
Section Manager 3	Visit 2 1.00 pm

Interview schedule Case B	
Principle	Visit 1 10.30 am
Quality Manager	Visit 1 11.45 am
Curriculum Manager	Visit 1 1.30 pm
Finance Manager	Visit 1 3.00 pm
Section Manager 1	Visit 2 10.30 am
Section Manager 2	Visit 2 11.45 am
Section Manager 3	Visit 2 1.30 pm

Appendix 15

Research Interviews Outline Structure

A	Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)
B	Involvement in this process
C	Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development
D	If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affect the provision of the curriculum
D	Knowledge of Community Needs
E	Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs

Appendix 16

Interview response modes

Unstructured response	Allowing interviewee to answer in anyway they choose
Structured response	Requesting specific examples
Fill-in response	Supply rather than choose a response
Scaled response	Structured by a series of graduations
Ranking response	Rank order a series of words, phrases or statements
Checklist response	Select one of alternatives offered
Categorical response	Offers only two possibilities ie true or false

As identified by Tuckman (1972)

Appendix 17

INTERVIEW SHEET

College

Generic Title:

Code

A	Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)
B	Involvement in this process
C	Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development
D	If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affects the provision of the curriculum
E	Knowledge of Community Needs

F Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs

Any further information

Appendix 18

College A Interview schedule

The interview schedule for College A was completed as follows:

Interview schedule College A	
C1-1 Principal	Visit 1 10 am
C1-2 Quality Manager	Visit 1 11.30 am
C1-3 Curriculum Manager	Visit 1 1.00 pm
C1-4 Finance Manager	Visit 1 2.30 pm
C1-5 Section Manager 1	Visit 2 10.00 am
C1-6 Section Manager 2	Visit 2 11.30 am
C1-7 Section Manager 3	Visit 2 1.00 pm

The following pages are the transcript interview forms for the above interviews:

INTERVIEW SHEET C1

College A

Generic Title: Principal

Code C1-1

A	Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)
<p><i>Yes, I have good knowledge of the Needs Analysis requirements from FEFC and how that is an integral part of the strategic plan...and we have taken some of the ideas from the Identifying and Addressing needs guide... it raises lots of issues...</i></p> <p><i>One would ask do we need an economic forecaster to tell us what to do... does the funding methodology allow us to do the best thing anyway?...the term needs analysis I believe is totally related to the skills based needs.... Which is based on economic needs... which are identified for the government by economic forecasters... who then advise industry and providers like ourselves of what we should... be providing to meet those needs... but that relies upon a lot of people all understanding the same thing... having the same information and agreeing... and expecting the general public employed and unemployed to see the economic side of things and again agreeing....</i></p>	
B	Involvement in this process
<p><i>I deploy the relevant staff who have direct involvement with our needs assessment process, I am involved in directing the actual process... I am in contact on a daily basis with key staff in the college who are responsible for providing the data and preparing these documents... of which I of course am responsible for final signature....[laughs]</i></p>	
C	Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development
<p><i>We have a large curriculum, covering many programme areas, and indeed many off site venues. The college itself has four sites, all with there own specialism, I am very involved in the final decisions for our provision and this is done cross college ... sections managers produce reports for me frequently...</i></p> <p><i>I attend many regional events to discuss market signals and economic climates... as do many of the section managers...</i></p>	
D	If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affect the provision of the curriculum
<p><i>As I said the requirements from the funders including the needs analysis has a profound affect on the colleges provision and this is becoming more complex as time goes on... we have to run more like a business since incorporation... we have to be ruthless sometimes... and this can be difficult for some staff to understand or appreciate... but that's how it is now... we have to provide what forecasters say is required in the region if we are to be successful with funding</i></p>	

<i>bids, we also have to deliver a high quality provision and show good results...</i>	
<i>We have to be sharp to market signals and quick to respond accordingly...</i>	
E	<p>Knowledge of Community Needs</p> <p><i>The college needs to develop as a whole here and I am aware that some areas of the college are more atuned than others, this is being addressed and will be constantly addressed in the future...</i></p> <p><i>We have specifically set up certain sections with this in mind... they are acting as bridge to close the gap between the level of understanding between local employers and ourselves...</i></p>
F	<p>Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs</p> <p><i>I am sure we have many, many links with a variety of external agencies all which will help with meeting the needs of the learners...</i></p>

Any further information
None given

INTERVIEW SHEET C2

College A Generic Title: Quality Manager

Code C1-2

<p>A Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)</p> <p><i>I'm aware of the documentation, the FEFC guide, and incorporating the needs analysis into the strategic plan, I have read it...so yes, I have got knowledge of it... I'm not sure that the college uses this exactly... but it is only a guide... something to help us, inform us of what the process should be...what it should include...</i></p>
<p>B Involvement in this process</p> <p><i>I know that the * department which has been set up has been involved, I was looking at tools/toolkits on training needs analysis with them out in companies. From the consortium of people involved is that is also indicated that erm there are a lot of ways in which you can go about it and specifically because of the fact that internally we've known as a college training needs analysis is carried out in, not a commercial way as it would be done in business that indicates that we could develop that way that it is used, the way it can be used; they way is should be done within the college. I suppose in some areas the way it works is the other way round, the identification takes place out there and erm the college fulfils the need. The sections communicate with employers and erm and often the leading element of that is by the employer, then colleges takes that on...</i></p> <p><i>I believe that the college does not have it's own needs analysis process as a general thing... its left to individual sections to deal with it in the way that they think is best...</i></p> <p><i>I know that some sections are involved with certain projects which are developing training needs analysis within their departments, but its within an area of erm expertise, mutual expertise, between the staff in the college and the employers so that they are talking the same language, but that's within an area of very specific skill subject content and subject area, so its not quite like doing a training needs analysis that might involve a range of skills erm I know that the people involved in the * project area doing training needs analysis the kind of more conventional type that im familiar with out there, but I don't know that necessarily occurs among other sections of the college...</i></p> <p><i>I have been involved in setting up the quality survey within the college ... quite a large marketing activity, involving questionnaires going out to students, x students and parents of students erm which again was erm not exclusively training needs analysis but did have that role and quite a lot of information came back from that and that was quite useful for me because it encompassed other issues which were quite important...</i></p> <p><i>Other areas form quite long-term relationships with employers so they do react</i></p>

<i>to need but they can also present quite interesting suggestions ...</i>	
C	<p>Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development</p> <p><i>I have to ensure that the quality of provision is kept high across the college, I have to work with some areas more than others at different times of the year.. included in this is whether learners feel that they are getting erm what they believed they would get from us throughout the course ...the information I generate is distributed back to section managers for them to use in their planning...</i></p>
D	<p>If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affect the provision of the curriculum</p> <p><i>I think the needs analysis requirements from the funding agency has had a big impact, with the actual funding methodology requirements...</i></p> <p><i>I think there are other issues related to the curriculum which link with this ... I think there has been a change of focus over the last few years what previously colleges did was often just offer what you could offer, it was just a case of offer what you'd got erm offering what you staff could teach and then waiting to see if anyone would turn up [laughing] hopefully turn up... in many ways this could be the early stage of thinking about what people out there actually want...</i></p> <p><i>I'm still struggling with the issue of erm batching the needs of potential students rather than the ability – what the staff abilities are and that's been evident the the * department when erm work has come in that couldn't be fulfilled by the staff at the college ...</i></p>
E	<p>Knowledge of Community Needs</p> <p><i>I think you can obtain knowledge of community needs, but does it actually help you in terms of what you are actually able to offer as a college... will it be funded even if there is a need?, does it match the government targets...erm ... if it doesn't and there's still a need what do we do? Find some other way of funding it I suppose...</i></p>
F	<p>Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs</p> <p><i>There is quite extensive use made of marketing information in terms of the environment and economic development... I think some areas of the college use this more than others...</i></p>

Any further information

*I think there may be good practice that could be shared, good practice that's not being passed on elsewhere really..
Some sections may be better at this than others, some sections may be using one method others many...or jus working on traditional historical information being passed on...*

INTERVIEW SHEET C3

College A

Generic Title: Curriculum Manager

Code C1-3

<p>A Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)</p> <p><i>Yes I am familiar with the Needs Analysis requirements from the FEFC and work with other key members of the College to inform them of the requirements and encourage them to work together to share useful information for this process...</i></p> <p><i>We as a College have spent a lot of time and resources on understanding the market signals...</i></p>
<p>B Involvement in this process</p> <p><i>I am involved at a strategic level, we have meetings for strategic planning with the other section managers and this is where we discuss the Needs analysis, well the local communities skills needs analysis...</i></p> <p><i>We haven't devised or adopted a whole College approach as each section works on their own specialist area and I would expect them to spend a certain amount of time and resources developing their sections needs analysis tool, whether that be in the form of a questionnaire or interview...</i></p> <p><i>We do encourage sections to share information and there is I believe a database being set up for this process to be more accessible...</i></p>
<p>C Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development</p> <p><i>Its part of my role to oversee all the Colleges provision and ensure that all section managers are providing a robust and diverse curriculum within their areas... They have the autonomy and authority to work with their sections... they hold the responsibility... I empower them to do more and direct them in certain areas, I can advise them not to offer areas which funders would question as viable...</i></p>
<p>D If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affect the provision of the curriculum</p> <p><i>The funding methodology is difficult to work with and the needs analysis adds to the affect ... it can sometimes be quite abrupt and some areas have felt the restrictions more than others...</i></p> <p><i>For Post 16 adult education it is difficult to predict need, or shall we say skills</i></p>

based needs, or indeed what is perceived by the funders as skills based needs, we can look at the prescribed statistics in the regional development plan, but this doesn't always appear to serve as a true practical reflection of what employers are looking for...

Employers often want something quite specific not necessarily what is contained within a certain curriculum area, it may be spread over several curriculum areas...

We have set up specific development sections to help bridge this gap... which at the moment seem to be working quite well...

E Knowledge of Community Needs

We all think we know what the local community needs are, we say that we do in our strategic plans needs analysis, which in itself is an interesting concept, but I wonder if we every really do, or indeed ever really will, there are so many different types of need, we have to predict unexpressed need, which is then turned into identified need, the younger cohort of learners have different needs, the post 16 adult learners have more complicated needs, as a college it would not be possible to meet them all, we have to focus on what we are able to do well... we are working with agencies which make demands on us and require that we provide for all these identified needs within the ever changing goal posts of FE...

F Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs

As a College we have formed many links with external agencies, each section has its own specialist links, these are also being recorded on our database which should allow more access to all college sections... an awareness raising strategy that we are currently developing...

Any further information

None given

INTERVIEW SHEET C4

College: C1

Generic Title: Finance Director

Code C1-4

<p>A Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)</p> <p><i>Obviously we all have to comply with the needs analysis as requested by the FEFC, I'm fully aware of the suggested approach in the identifying and addressing needs; a practical guide I think its called... from 1997...I believe it was put together by Tomlinson and Kennedy...</i></p> <p><i>I believe we are looking at how we identify unexpressed or unmet needs and needs analysis is an integral part of our strategic plan ... which is of course a requirement again from the FEFC ... I know this will change when the LSC takes over...</i></p> <p><i>[interviewee gave a historical brief of their view]</i></p> <p><i>It all has to tie in with the regional development plan the RDP ... based on each English region... RDPs have to be based on hard research qualitative as well as quantitative this is broken down into the objectives of the European social funds, 70% less average GDP objective 2 covers still old industries ship building etc, objective 3 which was more client generated rather than industrial orientated & new objective 4 objective 3 being unemployed, new objective 3 being the new sme development and finally objective 5 which was rural and fishery areas ie lincolnshire, east midlands & west Derbyshire, objective 6 doesn't really apply of united kingdom because it only applies to areas such as finland with very sparse students...</i></p> <p><i>Colleges should now write a rationale as to why they should be funded ... The audit regime also changed which would therefore veify that what was delivered tallied with the dossier application, which in turn would tally with the RDP...so even though you may be scored positively by the regional committee that still did not stop did not preclude the European auditor from going back and re-validating the application to make sure that it met the regional development criteria – and the regional development criteria was based on competitiveness, training needs analysis etc, that was a catalyst for change coupled with the new Government in 1997 made colleges realise that they had to be more customer orientated or less product orientated.</i></p>
<p>B Involvement in this process</p> <p><i>We inform section managers of the RDP and also there is a local/regional development analysis/plan done annually by the councils which inform us of all the local statistical analysis ...</i></p>
<p>C Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development</p> <p><i>strategic planning is done by sections ... against what is deemed as local</i></p>

economic need ... there is are different strategies for the full-time young cohort as there is for the part-time adult provision... and different strategies within each subject area...

D If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affect the provision of the curriculum

Of course the Needs Analysis requirements affect the provision of the curriculum everything, every area is now much more accounted for...

Kennedy demonstrated in her evidence that there was some excellent practice e in terms of widening participation, but of course when your being pushed to meet unit productivity and balance your budgets you go for easy growth, so what you see is a massive expansion, low level provision – not necessary mapped against long-term skills analysis – not necessarily mapped against long term productivity gains in the workforce ... and a good example of that this college along with others is having problems with language courses, is that even the latest funding requirements which have become more prescriptive are for you to make sure that students are studying for schedule 2 courses that they can't just turn up for a recreational course...

I think colleges are finding there core FEFC allocation is being driven towards "skills needs" as oppose to lifelong learning in its broader sense...lifelong learning perhaps is not a European concept in terms of skills generally, most of the European vocational system appears to be very much more training needs, business needs analysis, personal development needs, where as perhaps in English FE we've been a little bit more plurative, encouraging people to prove their skills and confidence and I think a number of colleges are now running into problems where they are stimulated extra volume of activity, but they're unable to track progression and as another phrase of mine once you've taught the world to type, you can't do much beyond that its about skill progression.

E Knowledge of Community Needs

You need to be aware of the market signals ... the current market signals, which can be very difficult and take a long time to ascertain, and then of course they change so quickly... whatever needs we identify we can only fund what the local funding agency will agree to ... what we are seeing is a conflict of agendas within the funding mechanism ... to meet unit targets and identify and meet the local economic skills based needs ...

We spend a considerable amount on market research and are and have set up various projects and departments which will liaise and work specifically with local employers... skills based needs will be identified ... how responsive we will be able to be will show strengths of provision and also the gaps...

Training needs analysis or should I say "fit for purpose" has risen on the agenda for the last few years which I feel is a policy based on that of rationalisation. "fit for purpose" is my definition of a whole series of policy activities ...

F Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs

We have many links with industry and voluntary agencies each section will have its own specialist area links ... you will find more specifics from the other section managers...

Any further information

Non Given

INTERVIEW SHEET C5

College 1

Generic Title: Section Manager

Code C1-5

<p>A Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)</p> <p><i>Yes, I do know about the Needs Analysis requirements from FEFC, its existence is one of the reasons why this department exists...we are here to help bridge the gap between employers and college provision...to help the college identify the needs of the local employers</i></p>
<p>B Involvement in this process</p> <p><i>We are involved in a practical sense... I attended a training day yesterday with EMDA supposedly to draw into a database all the services that we can offer to employers in the area, so what can this colleges facilities offer to employers, what services be it consultancy, training or recruitment, help with recruitment through training, erm so this is a very topical question as far as I am concerned ..</i></p> <p><i>erm also I went on an event to FEDA a couple of weeks ago about working with employers, colleges working with employers and there were lots of ways of working with employers that were explored and discussed that I have now suggested that this college can adopt, not always through [this section] but maybe through other channels in this college... my opinion is that it would be helpful if it were channelled through [this section] through our central database which we are building called maximiser which should give us a snapshot of a company and all the parts of the college that are in contact with that employer...</i></p> <p><i>so it's a bit like you do the sale operation .. you need to know a bit about your customer, what contact you have had with them before so you appear knowledgeable when you go out to the customer, so from that point of view I feel that we are feeding into the needs of employers and feeding into the needs of the college...we've got specialist support here that can go out and identify training needs within the company and other support needs that they have and if we cant supply what the company wants then we do know where to sign post people to, particularly through the European projects where we've got partnerships and that is very much on the agenda now...having partnerships and not trying to go it alone ...</i></p>
<p>C Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development</p> <p><i>We try to identify which area of the college specialism an employer would benefit most from and then work with the relevant section manager and staff in planning the service we will provide...this also helps to build up the information on the new database we are developing...also the database which EMDA has requested...</i></p> <p><i>This will make us even more specialised in that we will have the knowledge in depth knowledge about all of our courses in college, as I believe that at the moment there is a gap...</i></p>

We are working on 5 ESF projects at the moment which are all part of the college curriculum.. its working with these projects that allows us to build up relationships with local employers and utilise all the curriculum areas...

D If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affect the provision of the curriculum

I think the needs analysis requirements and also the whole funding methodology affects the provision of the curriculum.. all areas are affected by this ... we are also a link between this information and the different sections of the college, some areas are more knowledgeable about these things than others...

The funding methodologies don't allow us to be flexible enough in our approach...

We are driven by what skills gap areas the government want us to fill ie the third-age skills gap because there is now a push to get older workers back into the workforce because the demographics are showing that if there won't be the amount of young people that are required to fill the skills gaps ... so Im sort of pre-empting all that and trying to get the college at the leading edge of doing something to help meet these skills gaps for our employers by bringing specialist who can work with the erm over 50s because it's a different approach that's needed...

This is of course a combination of a response to government initiatives and something which has been identified in local regional needs analysis...

E Knowledge of Community Needs

We are constantly looking at the skills based needs of our community in this department as it is specifically for linking with employers and looking at their skills based needs ...

There certainly are skills gaps which could easily be filled by people who could retrain ... many of the third age workers are afraid of technology, because they feel that they haven't got the skills to deal with it.. but it's a fear and it needs to be overcome and I think if that barrier is overcome, a lot of them will make good progress..

The idea of [one of the projects] is that we use an outreach centre and the people who are dealing with the third age and potential new workers will deal with them in a very specialised way and it may well be that the right place for them to go initially is within that centre itself, before they move on to attending college and walking through the college gates and the feelings they have when they are amongst younger learners... try to make them feel like a special group and make them aware of their skills and help them overcome their fear...

Some of the barriers we face are actually getting into the company itself, when

you can get in and the owner manager or person that you are speaking to understands that you understand about their business then that is not a problem and they will talk to you and they will discuss their needs with you.. I think in the past there has been a lot of long standing beliefs that only academics go in from colleges and universities, Ive heard it said in companies "oh it's alright you coming in here telling us all the paper theories but we've go to make money..."

The college is fortunate that is has people like me here who have been at the sharp end in the workplace, had industrial experience first hand and realised what the constraints are in some of the businesses... that's an area I have really tried hard to address at the college...

Many of the companies the SME's in our patch find it very difficult to release people to train, we've go to be very flexible in our approach to meeting their needs and that's the culture change that I believe will take place in education ... hopefully when the LSC takes over we will be able to be more flexible...

F Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs

We have many links with all kinds of agencies... most of the different sections of the college also have their own specialist links... we are keeping those on a database too...

Any further information

I think there has got to be a radical re-think within the college about the way that they offer what they offer...

Maybe we should be looking at becoming a centre of excellence in our strong areas...

INTERVIEW SHEET C6

College A

Generic Title: Section Manager

Code C1-6

<p>A Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)</p> <p><i>Yes, I have recently been studying myself and have done a fair amount of research into the FEFC funding methodology and Needs Analysis, I have read the FEFC's practical guide to Identifying and Addressing needs... exciting isn't it [laughs]</i></p>
<p>B Involvement in this process</p> <p><i>I am involved as far as my own area of responsibility, I don't think the college has adapted this as a whole college approach, not yet anyway... we complete learner evaluations which help us capture some information from current learners as to what they think they need. We receive information from the RDA and the other local surveys done by the council which help us identify what skills based needs are suggested as a need in the local community... we also receive market research information from the College itself whenever that process is undertaken..</i></p> <p><i>I believe there is a college database being set up to help us develop more links with local industry and build relationships with local employers, so that we can find out more about what their needs actually are...</i></p>
<p>C Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development</p> <p><i>I am involved in making decisions about our curriculum area, well I make the decisions really, we hold regular meetings in which we discuss the current curriculum, qualifications and how successful or not they appear to be running, we discuss suggestions of any new qualifications and try to base this around what we feel local demand will be, both from the employers and the general public... although I feel there is a gap between what exam boards include in the content of courses and what the employers think they contain... what the employer wants can sometimes be very specific, very prescriptive and not always what is contained within the curriculum, sometimes the curriculum has more than is required, sometimes not enough...</i></p>
<p>D If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affect the provision of the curriculum</p> <p><i>I think that the needs analysis requirements results can have a big affect on the curriculum, what we are able to offer, advised to offer, no longer allowed to offer, we of course, have to work with whatever the funders say, they pay, but this doesn't always fit with what may have already taken a long time to set up... staffing, staff development can then become an issue, as also can redundancy for staff no longer required who cannot or do not want to be retrained... you almost have to have a bank of staff or specialists at your fingertips, which as we all know is not feasible...</i></p>

Also you cannot predict the timing of sudden interest or decline in interest in certain subjects or qualifications, something which worked extremely well one year may have nothing the next... predicting this is very difficult...

E Knowledge of Community Needs

This is again sometimes very difficult to acquire... you have what the funders say you should be offering because they have identified it as a need in your region, region not necessarily being your town or village... you have what you know traditionally, historically to work well in the area... you get some feedback from the learners in quality surveys expressing what they think they would like to see offered, does this mean that they need it??

Having knowledge of community needs is a collection of peoples perceptions of what they think they need, including the college which are all usually quite different ... who is right?? And how do we know??, that would be one very big survey [laughs] don't you think?...

We seem to only know if we have met a need when it stops becoming a need.. if that makes sense...

F Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs

There are many different learner needs and some we can cope with internally some we have to acquire external help, we do have links with volunteer agencies, we have links with help groups for various things...

We need links with employers to provide work placements for some learners, which again can be difficult especially in small companies....

Any further information

None given

INTERVIEW SHEET C7

College A

Generic Title: Section Manager

Code C1-7

<p>A Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)</p> <p><i>I'll be honest, I don't have much knowledge of this at all, we don't get told much about those kind of things. We do know where we can look on the website, but I don't think many of us actually look...</i></p> <p><i>We know we have to keep the 'bums on seats' to keep up the numbers but that's all, sorry, I don't know what the FEFC require from us in terms of Needs Analysis. (sighs) ...I'm guessing from this that I should...we get so wrapped up in the actual planning and delivery and changes in curriculum from the examination boards that we don't always read all the FEFC stuff, there's so much of it...</i></p> <p><i>We do get invited to the strategic curriculum meetings where we are informed of any major changes... and if there are subjects that the college just can't fund anymore...</i></p>
<p>B Involvement in this process</p> <p><i>We don't get involved in anything which is actually called a Needs Analysis for the whole college, we do our own quality surveys which tell us if we have met the learners requirements, and how they think we can improve things...maybe that's something that the college is going to develop in the near future...</i></p> <p><i>We work on the basis of what has run well in the past and can only run courses if there are enough learners, usually over 12 in each group...</i></p> <p><i>We try to offer the most up to date qualifications and are informed by the * managers which areas we are likely to get funding for and which we are not...</i></p> <p><i>Sometimes its hard to justify why you think a course will do well when really your just guessing it will do well ...</i></p>
<p>C Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development</p> <p><i>We have weekly meetings as a team and that's where we discuss things about the curriculum we offer, we talk about the problems we've experienced in the week and resources ... [pauses]... at certain times of the year we discuss what we should be offering next, what we think the local employers will want ... We rely on [Managers] at higher levels to keep us informed on some of that information, we don't have market research in our budget...</i></p>

D If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affect the provision of the curriculum

As I said I don't know much about the Needs Analysis requirements from FEFC but I think that we are more pressured to offer certain courses because they attract more funding and are more cost effective for the College to run...we get a bit anxious when its time to plan... most of my section are part-time and we're never sure if they will have a job next year...

E Knowledge of Community Needs

We need to improve on this, its quite a big thing to find out about really, there's been a lot of change in work available cos there's no pits anymore and we have lots of projects in all different areas ...

Some learners will come back year after year to build up their qualifications, its getting new people in that can sometimes be difficult, learners don't always know what they want.... Some people are too nervous to come back to College and don't feel confident that they can do it...

We do take part in the Colleges surveys and some of the information which comes back from them gives us some indication of what learners would like us to offer...

F Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs

We attend a community forum which has been set up to help link agencies with the college, like the volunteer agencies and some local employers, it's all very new at the moment and people are just finding their feet...

There is going to be a college database which we can all access...which should help us form more links where we need to...

Any further information

None given

Appendix 19

College B Interview schedule

The interview schedule for College B was completed as follows:

Interview schedule College B	
C1-1 Principal	Visit 1 10 am
C1-2 Quality Manager	Visit 1 11.30 am
C1-3 Curriculum Manager	Visit 1 1.00 pm
C1-4 Finance Manager	Visit 1 2.30 pm
C1-5 Section Manager 1	Visit 2 10.00 am
C1-6 Section Manager 2	Visit 2 11.30 am
C1-7 Section Manager 3	Visit 2 1.00 pm

The following pages are the transcript interview forms for the above interviews:

5.2.1 INTERVIEW SHEET C2/1

College B

Generic Title: Principal

Code C2-1

A	<p>Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)</p> <p><i>We have to be aware of the requirements from all the funding agencies, FEFC being our main one... because we are funded by the government we have to be aware that public spending will always relate to government agendas...we have to tow the line... needs analysis or needs assessment as we call it being part of the strategic planning process has to be done; as part of the justification of our funding bid; as you know... we have to be seen to be providing evidence to justify our proposed expenditure... we are to identify what we believe to be expressed and unexpressed needs of our community... and provide provision which closest meets these needs...</i></p>
B	<p>Involvement in this process</p> <p><i>It's my job to lead the college towards greater responsiveness...along with the governors to employ staff who can drive this forward... there are staff who have more involvement than others in this process, the [finance director] and [quality manager] along with several other managers are quite involved with this process... I determine how information is organised within the college, designating and resourcing relevant managers... together we take data and information regarding segmenting the local population... we identify what we feel are relevant segment characteristics... we discuss what we believe are met and unmet needs, expressed and unexpressed needs, market signals...</i></p>
C	<p>Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development</p> <p><i>Having discussions with FEFC and other agencies who provide us with relevant local economic information is part planning our provision... we do have certain areas which we are encouraged to provide provision for... managers have to provide reports on what they feel is the best provision we can offer in relation to their specialist areas... we have to draw from internal and external information... and deal with it at a strategic level... we require information from our student body and the local community...we have to try to anticipate trends...</i></p>
D	<p>If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affects the provision of the curriculum</p> <p><i>There are many difficulties related to this issue... anticipating trends can be very time consuming and it can be difficult to agree on a satisfactory outcome... which doesn't give the impression that we are seeking to self-sustain... our provision has to stimulate new demand... whilst maintaining a high standard of current provision... The other side to this of course is that we have to be able to provide a quality service to the community and ensure that we are able and equipped to do this...</i></p>

we may identify needs in certain areas that we are not necessarily specialist in at this current time...

E Knowledge of Community Needs

There is a wealth of knowledge about community needs within the college itself, we also have to pursued other external agencies to provide as much relevant community data and information as possible... we need to create a continuous pool of internal and external knowledge about the needs of the community... staying aware of the government agendas and where they match what we are actually seeing...

F Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs

We have many links with external agencies who provide us with intelligence about community needs... national reports, the tecs, local authorities all give us assistance with this process...each section also has links with agencies related to their specialist areas...

Any further information

None given

INTERVIEW SHEET C2/2

College B

Generic Title: Quality Manager

Code C2-2

A	Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)
<p><i>Yes I have some knowledge of the requirement for us to provide a needs assessment of our community as part of our strategic planning process and I do believe it can affect our funding bid...</i></p>	
B	Involvement in this process
<p><i>I see my role or involvement in this process to develop processes and systems which all the managers can have access to as much internal intelligence information about learners as possible, and encouraging the other managers to disseminate the information which they may have found from their external contacts... I can organise quality surveys which can include very useful questions related to learners needs... understandably this is limited to learners who are already attending the college...</i></p>	
C	Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development
<p><i>I am involved in strategic management meetings where curriculum decisions are made... my concern is that we can offer good quality in all the areas we offer... sometimes needs are identified and we need to up-skill our staff to provide high quality provision for this...</i></p>	
D	If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affects the provision of the curriculum
<p><i>Incorporation brought a lot of changes, the funding methodology affects everything...things have changed...the needs assessment is a good idea but very difficult to do thoroughly enough without lots of time, contacts and resources... sometimes you find things out that can cause other difficulties, sometimes we have to offer subjects in response to market demand and we aren't totally ready for this... you can't just offer what you are good at now... unless of course it's still in demand... I think before too long there will be a move towards centres of excellence or subject specialists operating in certain colleges or certain areas... it will not be possible to offer the level of skills required in all areas... I think some subjects will disappear all together...we are very driven by what the government agendas are... where they say the skills shortages are... it is expected that colleges will provide a solution to this...</i></p>	
E	Knowledge of Community Needs
<p><i>I am involved with all areas of the college, it's a cross college role, so I get to know lots of information about the communities needs, from internal and external sources... I can often signpost people to other areas which is useful...we need to put together some kind of internal information system which all managers can access.. we are in the process of doing this already...</i></p>	

F Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs

Again I have contacts with various agencies, some government so local volunteers, some companies... and this information is going to be part of the internal information system... addresses, contact numbers, and a profile of details of connection/s with the college...

Any further information

None Given

INTERVIEW SHEET C2/3

College B

Generic Title: Curriculum Manager

Code C2-3

A	Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)
<p><i>"Needs Analysis is promoted as a very important part of the strategic plan, we have to take greater measures to show that we are completing some form of needs analysis... we have struggled to understand what exactly is required, the guide that was produced ...eventually (laughs) from the FEFC was very useful, it would have been better to have been able to know all that guidance from the beginning..."</i></p>	
B	Involvement in this process
<p><i>"We are all involved at some level, I oversee the Colleges curriculum so I have frequent meetings with the other [section managers], we discuss the findings from local agencies who provide statistical information on local needs and employment needs and demands, we also look at the internal information from the MIS systems within College, we work on that part of the strategic plan together,"</i></p>	
C	Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development
<p><i>"Obviously this is my main area, as I said earlier I am involved in the overall decisions made about the curriculum and ensure that all the other [section managers] have access to all the relevant data and information. It is a very lengthy procedure and something that we work on all year round really...we have to be very aware of changes in the local economy and changes in what local employers want ... Our curriculum has to be reactive but we have to work on being more pro-active, watching for trends and keeping on parr with government initiatives, getting the blend right..."</i></p>	
D	If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affects the provision of the curriculum
<p><i>"The Needs analysis findings affect the provision the funding mechanism affects it even more... We are constantly working within constraints of the funding mechanism, methodology... there are certain programme areas which are favoured, its very difficult to keep on top of this... and maintain the quality of provision that is required..."</i></p>	
E	Knowledge of Community Needs
<p><i>"I have to be aware of several different curriculum areas, programme areas, the other [section managers] have to inform me of their specialist knowledge, it would be impossible for one person to be able to know everything, the community we serve is quite a large area with lots of different diverse needs. Its important that we all work together to build a College knowledge of</i></p>	

Community needs...

F Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs

"We have formed many important links with local employers, voluntary agencies, each area has its own specialist links..." We all have to work together to generate the kind of curriculum that is required from the Government ... to meet the local needs of the community...

Any further information

None Given

INTERVIEW SHEET C2/4

College B

Generic Title: Finance Manager

Code C2-4

A	Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)
<p><i>"yes, the needs analysis is a main area of the strategic plan ... we have to show that we are analysing needs and provide the data and information to prove that we are doing that... it was difficult to begin with as we were unsure of exactly what we should be producing... this has become clearer... we have had more advice from the Council in recent years, its something we are more proficient at now..."</i></p>	
B	Involvement in this process
<p><i>"we do rely heavily on external agencies providing us with relevant data .. it would be very costly to research information of that scale and nature... there are agencies which provide us with the relevant statistics... and we do use are own internal MIS information about the Colleges response to learners needs... I am involved in discussions about the needs analysis and I do participate in ..."</i></p>	
C	Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development
<p><i>"... the decisions regarding spending in each programme area ... I work with [section managers to produce targets to meet funding requirements ... some targets can have a dramatic affect on curriculum development ... and sometimes, even when a particular subject is heavily funded it may not be something which is relevant to our economic development, it may not have been identified in our needs analysis, to justify spending in that area could be difficult..."</i></p>	
D	If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affects the provision of the curriculum
<p><i>"the findings of the needs analysis should help us to provide a better curriculum which is more closely matched to the needs of the community, I think the real outcome of this is difficult to measure, and further education seems to be going through a very unsettled time..."</i></p>	
E	Knowledge of Community Needs
<p><i>"we all work together on that, my knowledge is varied between different programme areas... we all form our own opinions of what the community needs and then discuss this in reference to what the needs analysis information indicates ... we all have some areas which we know more about than others,"</i></p>	
F	Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs
<p><i>"we have built lots of relationships with external agencies in each programme area, this has helped us find out information about community needs in some cases on a more micro level, we also form relationships will local employers, all"</i></p>	

Colleges are encouraged to build relationships especially with local employers...

Any further information

None Given

INTERVIEW SHEET C2/5

College B

Generic Title: Section Manager

Code C2-5

A	Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)
<p><i>"I'm afraid I don't really know very much about the requirements from the FEFC, ... I'm quite new here and we operate mainly off-site and out in the community, so I'm still learning about a lot of the main procedures here... I'm sure the College follows the requirements... I have heard of the Needs Analysis..."</i></p>	
B	Involvement in this process
<p><i>"...but I'm not really involved in the overall analysis...(sighs) there have been so many new things to take in we do get information from MIS and various statistics are given to us about local demand...for skills based shortages..."</i></p>	
C	Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development
<p><i>"I like to involve all my staff in this process, we hold regular meetings about [our sections] curriculum development and I meet with the Curriculum [manager] we</i></p>	
D	If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affects the provision of the curriculum
<p><i>"Even though I don't fully understand the FEFC yet, I'm suspecting that in the needs analysis they require will expect us show that we are following up on some kind of government initiative... from what I've been told the funding regime is quite difficult to work with... quite restrictive..."</i></p>	
E	Knowledge of Community Needs
<p><i>"I have a lot of knowledge about the local Community needs related to our subject areas... I've come into this post from local industry..."</i></p>	
F	Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs
<p><i>"I believe the College has developed a lot of relationships with local external agencies and industry to help meet the needs of the community...!"</i></p>	

Any further information
None Given

INTERVIEW SHEET C2/6

College B

Generic Title: Section Manager

Code C2-6

A	Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)
<i>"... I've read the relevant Circulars... and the guidance documents on assessing needs...to do all that effectively would take a lot of time and money... I think it's a lot to ask of Colleges... and I don't think all Colleges will deal with it in the same way... So I'm not sure how effectively the process has been done..."</i>	
B	Involvement in this process
<i>" ... I don't think the College has a particular person or role who does the needs analysis... I think we all do our own bit... We all contribute what knowledge we have...and this gets amalgamated into the Colleges strategic plan..."</i>	
C	Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development
<i>"As a [section] manager I am involved in the decision making process for my department, and sometimes offer services to other departments for parts of their curriculum... Curriculum development is an on going process, we start to look at the next years programme soon after each year starts in September...I think things have changed with regard to what is offered, it's no longer the case of offering what was traditionally offered, everything has to be more justified... many areas of the curriculum are funding led...it's about surviving unfortunately...looking for courses that attract the most funding and still meet the government requirements regarding target areas..."</i>	
D	If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affects the provision of the curriculum
<i>"...the Governments targets must relate to their analysis of needs...skills based needs that is...and that's bound to have an affect on what Colleges will offer in their provision... it's very difficult to justify offering something new if it isn't recognised as a need for the country or region..."</i>	
E	Knowledge of Community Needs
<i>"...We know what we can find out...but I feel that often the information is about learners who have already been identified...what about the learners who don't attend... how do we know what they need?...not all people living in the community actually work in the community... looking at what local employers need... they all want something quite specific... very few vocational courses have the luxury of being bespoke..."</i>	

F Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs

"The College has worked hard to develop external links with various agencies from all areas... some programme areas have more links than others... I think this is an area where we could develop... we could share more information between sections...we are having to change the way we work as a College... its not possible to succeed working in isolation..."

Any further information

None Given

INTERVIEW SHEET C2/7

College B

Generic Title: Section Manager

Code C2-7

<p>A Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)</p> <p><i>I keep up to date with the FEFC documents, I think it's important that I understand what the executives are doing... well what they are required to do, what we are required to do... I think it's a good idea to research the local needs before we plan our courses... but I wonder how well we actually do it... we try our best... but how much time can we spend on that process, we must rely on lots of other agencies to provide us with data and information about what's required... I think it's all about skills based needs really, we are encouraged to look at courses which will provide access to better job prospects... and go towards meeting the government targets...</i></p>
<p>B Involvement in this process</p> <p><i>I think that we as a department try to find out ourselves what will work... we have to balance what we think is needed and what will actually run... there might be a need for the particular subject, skill, but that doesn't mean that the local community will attend it... we have links with local companies and acquire information from their internal skills audits which can sometimes give us leads as to what is "needed" in terms of skills... sometimes we are able to provide bespoke training to meet those needs... sometimes we pass this information on to other departments which are more able to provide the right course... sometimes we are limited by the skills our own staff have... companies quiet often want something very specific... qualifications have a tendency to be generic...</i></p>
<p>C Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development</p> <p><i>I am involved with all the main decisions about our sections curriculum development and have an input in conversations, meetings about the overall college provision, but as you probably know most colleges claim to work as a whole unit but in reality at an operational level they work or operate by section, or department... the funding methodology has affected so much over the last few years that it has made it necessary for sections/departments to work towards surviving, so the focus becomes insular not global...</i></p>
<p>D If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affects the provision of the curriculum</p> <p><i>This links to what I was just saying, I don't think the needs analysis itself is what affects the provision but the restrictions that come from the data/information which is identified at government levels... I mean erm if they say there is a need for a specific skill, then they will be generous with the funding in that area, even if there appears to be other needs, if they are not linked with what the government is saying we need as a country then, even if we could fill the classes the funding wouldn't necessarily be there...</i></p>

E	<p>Knowledge of Community Needs</p> <p><i>As I said we do the out there identification, identifying needs but not necessarily the analysis. I know that's part of the analysis, identifying needs but its not formalising it and its not doing any written papers on it, its coming back and saying hey I've just met 6 people out at * who wonder if we can put a computer course on, and they're going to look for some more you know – its identifying the need that there is a need for it you know... responding to it yea ... or saying to people well what do you want to do – we've got ** part of her work is called open door and we have open door facilitators who will literally just go in to a community and hire a hall and erm perhaps even walk out and say to people do you want to come in for a cup of coffee...and advertise it or try to get people in and that is .. erm its led by the group ... we don't say were going to put a course on and this we get a group of people together which only maybe 2 to 3 mums to start with and say well what would you like to see in this area – what's missing what can we do .. how can we help, and they get together as a group, socially initially and that grows and grows and becomes a class...</i></p>
F	<p>Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs</p> <p><i>We co-ordinate a lot with lea partnerships covering a 20 mile radius...we have built up lots of contacts with a variety of agencies which help with all kinds of learners... we also have good links within the college... all the other sections come to us...</i></p>

<p>Any further information</p> <p>None Given</p>
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Appendix 20

College A

Mission Statement

"We will ensure, through collaboration, high quality learning opportunities for all over the age of 16 in the [local] areas".

Needs Assessment

This formed part of the Strategic plan and consisted of:

An historical overview of the colleges previous provision with justification of changes in curriculum relating to regional economic requirements

Statistics from the emi

Information from regional surveys

Again used to justify the proposed provision

The researcher was not allowed to take a copy of this document.

Appendix 21

College B

Mission Statement

To provide excellent education and training for everyone.

We provide education and training opportunities for students from the age of 16 upwards, many students being adult learners. We have a wide variety of courses leading to nearly 350 different qualifications in almost 40 major subject areas, from Business Studies and Computing to Hair & Beauty and Nursing & Social Care. We also offer work based learning and apprenticeship courses.

The College delivers a full range of qualifications from GCSEs and A levels to NVQs, City & Guilds, HNCs and HNDs plus a number of professional qualifications. Study options are flexible, with full time, part time, community based, distance learning, workshops and short courses available.

The College is a vibrant and friendly place to study with facilities including a Learning Resource Centre with computers, quiet study area and library, a Bistro for meals and snacks, an active Student Union. It houses its own Hair and Beauty Salon, has a first class restaurant for that special occasion and a Travel Agency on campus.

It has excellent parking facilities and good public transport links close at hand

Needs Assessment

This formed part of the College's strategic plan

The researcher was not allowed to take a copy of this document.

Appendix 22

College A's response to:

A Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)

College A	Acknowledgement of own knowledge	Strong knowledge	Weak knowledge	No knowledge
C1 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Yes, I have good knowledge of the Needs Analysis requirements from FEFC</i> o <i>how that is an integral part of the strategic plan</i> 	✓		
C1 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>I'm aware of the documentation, the FEFC guide,</i> o <i>incorporating the needs analysis into the strategic plan</i> 	✓		
C1 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Yes I am familiar with the Needs Analysis requirements from the FEFC</i> 	✓		
C1 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Obviously we all have to comply with the needs analysis as requested by the FEFC,</i> o <i>I'm fully aware of the suggested approach in the identifying and addressing needs;</i> 	✓		
C1 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Yes, I do know about the Needs Analysis requirements from FEFC,</i> 	✓		
C1 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Yes, I have recently been studying myself and have done a fair amount of research into the FEFC funding methodology and Needs Analysis,</i> 	✓		
C1 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>I'll be honest, I don't have much knowledge of this at all,</i> o <i>We don't get told much about those kinds of things.</i> 			✓

College A's response to:

A Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)

<i>Category/theme</i>	Evidence	Evaluation statement
Knowledge	<p><i>Good knowledge</i> <i>Fully aware</i></p> <p><i>I'm aware</i> <i>Am familiar</i> <i>Do know</i></p> <p><i>Don't have much knowledge</i></p>	<p>A varying level of knowledge across all staff</p> <p>It was noticeable that the Higher status roles had more knowledge than that of their subordinates</p>
Purpose	<p><i>Integral part of strategic plan</i> <i>Incorporating needs analysis into strategic plan</i></p> <p><i>As requested by the FEFC</i></p>	<p>Some were aware of the needs analysis being part of the strategic plan</p> <p>That is was a requirement of the FEFC</p>
Compliance	<p><i>We have to comply Requirements from FEFC</i> <i>As requested by the FEFC</i></p>	<p>Shows a level of compliance to fulfil requirements from the FEFC</p>
Acquiring Knowledge	<p><i>Have done a fair amount of research</i> <i>The FEFC guide</i> <i>The documentation, the FEFC guide</i></p> <p><i>Don't get told much about</i></p>	<p>Those that stated how they had acquired knowledge had done so through reading the FEFC documentation</p> <p>Self seeking knowledge Not being given information</p>

Appendix 23

College B's response to:

A Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)

College B	Acknowledgement of own knowledge	Strong Knowledge	Weak Knowledge	No Knowledge
C2 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>We have to be aware of the requirements from all the funding agencies,</i> ○ <i>FEFC being our main one</i> 	✓		
C2 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Yes I have some knowledge of the requirement for us to provide a needs assessment of our community as part of our strategic planning process</i> ○ <i>I do believe it can affect our funding bid</i> 		✓	
C2 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Needs Analysis is promoted as a very important part of the strategic plan,</i> ○ <i>we have to take greater measures to show that we are completing some form of needs analysis...</i> 	✓		
C2 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>yes, the needs analysis is a main area of the strategic plan ...</i> 		✓	
C2 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I'm afraid I don't really know very much about the requirements from the FEFC, ...</i> ○ <i>I'm quite new here</i> 			✓
C2 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I've read about it with the FEFC documents we are advised to read every now and then</i> 	✓		
C2 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I keep up to date with the FEFC documents,</i> 	✓		

College B's response to:

A Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)

<i>Category/theme</i>	Evidence	Evaluation statement
Knowledge	<p><i>Have to be fully aware</i> <i>Have some knowledge</i> <i>I've read about it</i> <i>I keep up to date</i> <i>I don't really know very much (new here)</i></p>	<p>A range of knowledge across the people interviewed</p> <p>All levels of staff appear to have reasonable knowledge</p> <p>New staff may have no prior knowledge or be fully briefed</p>
Purpose	<p><i>Requirements from the funding agencies</i></p> <p><i>Main area of strategic plan</i></p> <p><i>Very important part of strategic plan</i></p> <p><i>Part of our strategic planning process</i></p>	<p>Staff showed understanding of the purpose of the needs analysis and how it forms part of the strategic plan</p>
Compliance	<p><i>Take greater measures to show that we are completing some form of needs analysis</i></p> <p><i>Very important part</i></p> <p><i>The requirement</i></p> <p><i>I do believe it can affect</i></p>	<p>A sense of understanding the value of the needs analysis in relation to the Requirements of the FEFC and the part it plays in the strategic planning and funding</p>
Acquiring Knowledge	<p><i>I've read about it within FEFC documents</i></p> <p><i>Keep up to date with the FEFC documents</i></p>	<p>From those that identified how they acquired knowledge it was through reading relevant FEFC documents</p> <p>Self seeking knowledge</p>

The research then compared each of the evaluation statements to look for similarities or differences from both cases.

This comparison process was repeated for each question and a table representing this information will appear after the evaluation of each question.

Appendix 24

Comparison of Case A and Case B

A Knowledge of Needs Analysis requirements from funding agency (FEFC)

THEMES	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES	EVALUATION STATEMENT
Knowledge	VARYING LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE	<p>CASE A More apparent that members of staff with higher status had more knowledge</p> <p>Case B New staff appeared to have little knowledge</p>	<p>Both cases had varying knowledge In Case A it was more apparent that staff with higher status had more knowledge</p> <p>In Case B a new member of staff had no knowledge (this could be a singular occurrence)</p>
Purpose	NEARLY ALL STAFF INCLUDED A PURPOSE IN THEIR RESPONSE		Staff were able to indicate their understanding of a purpose for needs analysis
Compliance		<p>Case A Indicated they had to "comply" which showed it was something they had to do</p> <p>Case B Indicated value to the requirement "very important" "It can affect"</p>	<p>Case A's responses showed a tendency to see the needs analysis as something they had to do</p> <p>Case B's response indicated they attached value to the process of needs analysis</p>
ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE	All staff who identified how they had acquired knowledge		The main form of acquiring knowledge about

	had done so though reading FEFC documents		the requirement to complete a needs analysis was described as reading FEFC documents. Not being given information by the College
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Appendix 25

College A's response to:

B Involvement in this process

College A	Involvement in this process	Strong Involvement	Weak Involvement
C1 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>I deploy the relevant staff who have direct involvement with our needs assessment process,</i> o <i>I am involved in directing the actual process... I am in contact on a daily basis with key staff in the college who are responsible for providing the data and preparing these documents...</i> 	✓	
C1 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>I believe that the college does not have it's own needs analysis process as a general thing...</i> o <i>left to individual sections to deal with it in the way that they think is best...</i> 		✓
C1 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>I am involved at a strategic level,</i> o <i>we have meetings for strategic planning with the other section managers and</i> o <i>this is where we discuss the Needs analysis, well the local communities skills needs analysis...</i> 	✓	
C1 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>We inform section managers of the RDP</i> o <i>there is a local/regional development analysis/plan done annually by the councils which inform us of all the local statistical analysis ...</i> 	✓	
C1 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>We are involved in a practical sense...</i> o <i>I attended a training day yesterday with EMDA supposedly to draw into a database all the services that we can offer to employers in the area, so what can this colleges facilities offer to employers, what services be it consultancy, training or recruitment, help with recruitment through training</i> 	✓	
C1 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>I am involved as far as my own area of responsibility,</i> o <i>I don't think the college has adapted this as a whole college approach, not yet anyway...</i> o <i>we complete learner evaluations which help us capture some information from current learners as to what they think they need.</i> 	✓	
C1 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>We don't get involved in anything which is actually called a Needs Analysis for the whole college,</i> o <i>we do our own quality surveys which tell us if we have met the learners requirements, and how they think we can improve things...</i> o <i>maybe that's something that the college is going to develop in the near future...</i> 		✓

College A's response to:

B Involvement in this process

<i>Category/theme</i>	Evidence	Evaluation statement
Involvement	<p><i>Deploy the relevant staff</i> <i>Directing the actual process</i> <i>At strategic level</i> <i>In a practical sense</i> As far as own area of responsibility</p> <p><i>Left to individuals to get on with it</i></p> <p><i>We don't get involved</i></p>	<p>Varying degrees of direct involvement</p> <p>Involvement linked to level of role or status</p> <p>Although higher management state that all staff are involved some staff stated they were not</p>
Communication	<p><i>Inform section managers</i> <i>Contact on a daily basis</i> <i>Meetings with section managers</i> <i>Discuss needs analysis</i> <i>Attended training day</i> <i>Meetings for strategic planning</i></p>	<p>Most common communication channel meetings and discussions</p> <p>Top down level</p>
Information used	<p><i>Learner evaluations</i> <i>How they think we can improve things</i> <i>Draw into a database</i> <i>local/regional development analysis/plan</i> <i>local statistical analysis</i></p>	<p>Internal and external information utilised</p> <p>Both qualitative and quantitative information is gathered</p>
Absence of analysis	<p><i>Believe college does not have its own needs analysis process</i></p> <p><i>Don't think college has adapted whole college approach</i></p>	<p>There is some evidence to show that not all staff think that the college actually does a needs analysis</p>

Appendix 26

College B's response to:

B Involvement in this process

College B	Involvement in this process	Strong Involvement	Weak Involvement
C2 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Having discussions with FEFC and other agencies who provide us with relevant local economic information is part planning our provision...</i> ○ <i>managers have to provide reports on what they feel is the best provision we can offer in relation to their specialist areas...</i> ○ <i>we have to draw from internal and external information... and deal with it at a strategic level...</i> ○ <i>we require information from our student body and the local community...</i> ○ <i>we have to try to anticipate trends...</i> 	✓	
C2 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I see my role or involvement in this process to develop processes and systems which all the managers can have access to as much internal intelligence information about learners as possible, and</i> ○ <i>encouraging the other managers to disseminate the information which they may have found from their external contacts...</i> ○ <i>I can organise quality surveys which can include very useful questions related to learners needs...</i> 	✓	
C2 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>We are all involved at some level,</i> ○ <i>I oversee the Colleges curriculum so</i> ○ <i>I have frequent meetings with the other [section managers],</i> ○ <i>we discuss the findings from local agencies who provide statistical information on local needs and employment needs and demands,</i> ○ <i>we also look at the internal information from the MIS systems within College, we work on that part of the strategic plan together,</i> 	✓	
C2 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>We do rely heavily on external agencies providing us with relevant data ..</i> ○ <i>It would be very costly to research information of that scale and nature...</i> ○ <i>there are agencies which provide us with the relevant statistics... and</i> ○ <i>We do use are own internal MIS information about the Colleges response to learners needs...</i> 	✓	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I am involved in discussions about the needs analysis</i> 		
C2 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>but I'm not really involved in the overall analysis...(sighs)</i> ○ <i>there have been so many new things to take in</i> ○ <i>we do get information from MIS and</i> ○ <i>various statistics are given to us about local demand...for skills based shortages...</i> 	✓	
C2 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I don't think the College has a particular person or role who does the needs analysis...</i> ○ <i>I think we all do our own bit...</i> ○ <i>We all contribute what knowledge we have...and</i> ○ <i>this gets amalgamated into the Colleges strategic plan..."</i> 	✓	
C2 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I think that we as a department try to find out ourselves what will work...</i> ○ <i>we have to balance what we think is needed and what will actually run...</i> ○ <i>there might be a need for the particular subject, skill, but that doesn't mean that the local community will attend it...</i> 		✓

College B's response to:

B Involvement in this process

<i>Category/theme</i>	Evidence	Evaluation statement
Involvement	<p><i>help develop processes systems</i></p> <p><i>All involved at some level</i></p> <p><i>We all do our own bit</i></p> <p><i>We as a department try to find out what will work</i></p> <p><i>Not really involved in overall analysis</i></p>	<p>There appears to be more involvement at top levels of management</p> <p>There is a suggestion that not all staff are involved in the overall analysis process</p>
Process	<p><i>Anticipate needs</i></p> <p><i>Quality surveys</i></p> <p><i>We all contribute what knowledge we have</i></p> <p><i>Discuss findings Meetings</i></p> <p><i>Find out ourselves</i></p>	<p>Although its clear that there is a process, there appear to be many parts to the process which do not appear to be co-ordinated in an holistic approach</p>
Communication	<p><i>Have discussions with FEFC and other agencies</i></p> <p><i>encouraging the other managers to disseminate the information</i></p> <p><i>frequent meetings</i></p> <p><i>discuss the findings from local agencies</i></p> <p><i>discussions about the needs analysis</i></p>	<p>There are a variety of communication methods being used</p> <p>Which indicates a strong level of involvement through communication Pathways</p>
Information used	<p><i>Specialist area reports</i></p> <p><i>Draw from internal and external</i></p> <p><i>From our student body and</i></p> <p><i>The local community</i></p> <p><i>Internal intelligence information</i></p> <p><i>MIS</i></p> <p><i>Agencies providing Statistics about local demand for skills based shortages</i></p>	<p>Information is gathered from a variety of internal and external sources</p> <p>Of both qualitative and quantitative nature</p>
Absence of analysis	<p><i>I don't think the college has a particular role or person who does the analysis</i></p>	<p>There appears to be no clarity in who or what role is responsible for needs analysis</p>

	<i>Very costly to research information of that scale and nature</i>	There is a financial implication to produce a comprehensive needs analysis
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Appendix 27

Comparison of Case A and Case B

B Response to Involvement in this process

THEMES	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES	EVALUATION STATEMENT
Involvement	(A) Although higher management state that all staff are involved some staff stated they were not (B) There is a suggestion that not all staff are involved in the overall analysis process		There is a strong link between College A and College B in that the level of Involvement is seen to more at higher levels of management
Communication		College B does not appear to operate communication relative to needs analysis at a top down level College B appears to use a larger range of communication systems	Both Colleges are communicating about needs analysis however, College B appears to have a greater variety of communication channels
Information	Internal and external information utilised of both qualitative and quantitative nature		Both Colleges use internal and external sources of information of a qualitative and quantitative nature
ABSENCE OF ANALYSIS		There is some evidence to show that not all staff think that the college actually	College (A) shows uncertainty of how many staff are actually involved

		<p>does a needs analysis</p> <p>There appears to be no clarity in who or what role is responsible for needs analysis</p> <p>There is a financial implication to produce a comprehensive needs analysis</p>	<p>College (B) identifies barriers to producing a comprehensive needs analysis</p>
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Appendix 28

College A's response to

C Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development

College A	Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development	Strong Involvement	Weak Involvement
C1 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>We have a large curriculum, covering many programme areas, and indeed many off site venues.</i> ○ <i>The college itself has four sites, all with there own specialism, I am very involved in the final decisions for our provision and this is done cross college ...</i> ○ <i>sections managers produce reports for me frequently...</i> ○ <i>I attend many regional events to discuss market signals and economic climates... as do many of the section managers...</i> 	✓	
C1 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I have to ensure that the quality of provision is kept high across the college,</i> ○ <i>I have to work with some areas more than others at different times of the year..</i> ○ <i>included in this is whether learners feel that they are getting erm what they believed they would get from us throughout the course ...</i> ○ <i>the information I generate is distributed back to section managers for them to use in their planning...</i> 	✓	
C1 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Its part of my role to oversee all the Colleges provision and ensure that all section managers are providing a robust and diverse curriculum within their areas...</i> ○ <i>They have the autonomy and authority to work with their sections... they hold the responsibility...</i> ○ <i>I empower them to do more and direct them in certain areas,</i> ○ <i>I can advise them not to offer areas which funders would question as viable...</i> 	✓	
C1 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>strategic planning is done by sections ...</i> ○ <i>against what is deemed as local economic need ...</i> ○ <i>there are different strategies for the full-time young cohort as there is for the part-time adult provision...</i> ○ <i>and different strategies within each subject area...</i> 	✓	
C1 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>We try to identify which area of the college specialism an employer would benefit most from and</i> 	✓	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>then work with the relevant section manager and staff in planning the service we will provide...</i> ○ <i>this also helps to build up the information on the new database we are developing...also the database which EMDA has requested...</i> ○ <i>This will make us even more specialised in that we will have the knowledge in depth knowledge about all of our courses in college, as I believe that at the moment there is a gap...</i> 		
C1 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I am involved in making decisions about our curriculum area,</i> ○ <i>well I make the decisions really,</i> ○ <i>we hold regular meetings in which we discuss the current curriculum, qualifications and how successful or not they appear to be running,</i> ○ <i>we discuss suggestions of any new qualifications and try to base this around what we feel local demand will be,</i> ○ <i>both from the employers and the general public... although I feel there is a gap between what exam boards include in the content of courses and what the employers think they contain...</i> ○ <i>what the employer wants can sometimes be very specific, very prescriptive and not always what is contained within the curriculum,</i> ○ <i>sometimes the curriculum has more than is required, sometimes not enough...</i> 	✓	
C1 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>We have weekly meetings as a team and that's where we discuss things about the curriculum we offer,</i> ○ <i>we talk about the problems we've experienced in the week and resources ... [pauses]...</i> ○ <i>at certain times of the year we discuss what we should be offering next,</i> ○ <i>what we think the local employers will want ...</i> ○ <i>We rely on [Managers] at higher levels to keep us informed on some of that information,</i> ○ <i>we don't have market research in our budget...</i> 		✓

College A's response to

C Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development

Category/theme	Evidence	Evaluation statement
Level of Involvement	<i>I am very involved in the final decisions to work with some areas more than others part of my role to oversee all the Colleges provision strategic planning is done by sections making decisions about our curriculum area</i>	Evidence suggests that levels of involvement vary at higher levels of status the level of involvement is more supervisory at lower levels more practical
Sharing Best Practice	<i>sections managers produce reports for me information I generate is distributed back to section managers for them to use in their planning work with the relevant section manager hold regular meetings weekly meetings as a team</i>	Evidence suggests that managers share relevant information Some cross college sharing is developing
Gaps	<i>I believe that at the moment there is a gap [about knowledge internally of provision] I feel there is a gap between what exam boards include in the content of courses and what the employers think they contain... the curriculum has more than is required, sometimes not enough... employer wants can sometimes be very specific, very prescriptive and not always what is contained within the curriculum</i>	Evidence suggests identification of various gaps Internal knowledge gaps related to college provision Employers not being aware of what courses contain Curriculum not providing enough variety

Targets	market signals and economic climates	Curriculum based around market signals and economic climates
<i>Provision</i>	<p><i>we discuss suggestions of any new qualifications what we feel local demand will be</i></p> <p><i>not to offer areas which funders would question as viable</i></p> <p><i>what we think the local employers will want</i></p> <p><i>what is deemed as local economic need</i></p> <p><i>robust and diverse curriculum within their areas</i></p>	<p><i>Evidence suggests that curriculum decisions are based on local demand or economic need</i></p> <p><i>Areas are encouraged not to put on courses which are not viable in relation to funding</i></p> <p><i>Provision should be robust and diverse</i></p>

Appendix 29

College B's response to

c Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development

College B	Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development	Strong Involvement	Weak Involvement
C2 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I am very involved in the final decisions for our provision and this is done cross college ...</i> ○ <i>sections managers produce reports for me frequently...</i> 	✓	
C2 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I am involved in strategic management meetings where curriculum decisions are made...</i> ○ <i>my concern is that we can offer good quality in all the areas we offer...</i> ○ <i>sometimes needs are identified and we need to up-skill our staff to provide high quality provision for this...</i> 	✓	
C2 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"Obviously this is my main area,</i> ○ <i>as I said earlier I am involved in the overall decisions made about the curriculum</i> ○ <i>and ensure that all the other [section managers] have access to all the relevant data and information.</i> ○ <i>It is a very lengthy procedure and something that we work on all year round really...</i> ○ <i>we have to be very aware of changes in the local economy and changes in what local employers want ...</i> ○ <i>Our curriculum has to be reactive</i> ○ <i>but we have to work on being more pro-active, watching for trends and keeping on parr with government initiatives,</i> ○ <i>getting the blend right...</i> 	✓	
C2 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"... the decisions regarding spending in each programme area ...</i> ○ <i>I work with [section managers to produce targets to meet funding requirements ...</i> ○ <i>some targets can have a dramatic affect on curriculum development ...</i> ○ <i>and sometimes, even when a particular subject is heavily funded it may not be something which is</i> 	✓	

	<p><i>relevant to our economic development,</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>it may not have been identified in our needs analysis,</i> ○ <i>to justify spending in that area could be difficult...</i> 		
C2 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"I like to involve all my staff in this process,</i> ○ <i>we hold regular meetings about [our sections] curriculum development and</i> ○ <i>I meet with the Curriculum [manager</i> 	✓	
C2 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"As a [section] manager I am involved in the decision making process for my department,</i> ○ <i>and sometimes offer services to other departments for parts of their curriculum...</i> ○ <i>Curriculum development is an on going process, we start to look at the next years programme soon after each year starts in September...</i> ○ <i>I think things have changed with regard to what is offered,</i> ○ <i>it's no longer the case of offering what was traditionally offered, everything has to be more justified...</i> ○ <i>many areas of the curriculum are funding led...</i> ○ <i>it's about surviving unfortunately...</i> ○ <i>looking for courses that attract the most funding and still meet the government requirements regarding target areas..."</i> 	✓	
C2 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I am involved with all the main decisions about our sections curriculum development and have an input in conversations, meetings about the overall college provision,</i> ○ <i>but as you probably know most colleges claim to work as a whole unit but in reality at an operational level they work or operate by section, or department...</i> ○ <i>the funding methodology has affected so much over the last few years that it has made it necessary for sections/departments to work towards surviving,</i> ○ <i>so the focus becomes insular not global...</i> 		✓

College B's response to

C Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development

<i>Category/theme</i>	Evidence	Evaluation statement
Level of Involvement	<p><i>very involved in the final decisions</i></p> <p><i>involved in strategic management meetings</i></p> <p><i>involved in the overall decisions made about the curriculum</i></p> <p><i>decisions regarding spending in each programme area</i></p> <p><i>involve all my staff in this process</i></p> <p><i>involved with all the main decisions about our sections curriculum</i></p>	<p>Evidence suggests that all managers feel a high level of involvement in this process</p> <p>Some managers adapt a more flat level approach where all are involved</p>
Sharing Best Practice	<p><i>managers produce reports for me frequently</i></p> <p><i>ensure that all the other [section managers] have access to all the relevant data and information</i></p> <p><i>work with [section managers to produce targets to meet funding requirements</i></p> <p><i>sometimes offer services to other departments for parts of their curriculum</i></p> <p><i>most colleges claim to work as a whole unit but in reality at an operational level they work or operate by section, or department</i></p>	<p>Evidence suggests that Reports and data/information are produced and disseminated to relevant staff</p> <p>This appears to be done by all managers</p> <p>Areas are beginning to offer curriculum services to other sections</p> <p>Recognition that at operational level colleges function by section</p>
Gaps	<p><i>sometimes needs are identified and we need to up-skill our staff to provide high quality provision for</i></p>	<p>Evidence suggests that staff recognise internal skills may not be sufficient to meet the requirements of a</p>

	<i>this</i>	curriculum that responds to identified need
Targets	<p><i>looking for courses that attract the most funding and still meet the government requirements regarding target area</i></p> <p><i>produce targets to meet funding requirements</i></p>	Evidence suggests that targets are set and the curriculum subjects are chosen on the basis of gaining the highest amount of funding and meeting government targets
Provision	<p><i>no longer the case of offering what was traditionally offered, everything has to be more justified</i></p> <p><i>very aware of changes in the local economy and changes in what local employers want</i></p> <p><i>watching for trends and keeping on parr with government initiatives</i></p> <p><i>funding methodology has affected so much it has made it necessary for sections/departments to work towards surviving</i></p> <p>MANY AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM ARE FUNDING LED</p>	Evidence suggests that change has occurred in the way the curriculum decisions are made, curriculum planning being funding led rather than traditionally led

Appendix 30

Comparison of Case A and Case B

C Involvement in decision making process regarding curriculum development

THEMES	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES	EVALUATION STATEMENT
LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT		<p>(A) Evidence suggests that levels of involvement vary at higher levels of status the level of involvement is more supervisory at lower levels more practical</p> <p>(B) Evidence suggests that all managers feel a high level of involvement in this process</p> <p>Some managers adapt a more flat level approach where all are involved</p>	Responses suggest each colleges level of involvement appears to relate the Management style and the culture of the College
Sharing Best Practice	<p>(A) Evidence suggests that managers share relevant information</p> <p>Some cross college sharing is developing</p> <p>(B) Evidence suggests that reports and data/information are produced and disseminated to relevant staff</p> <p>This appears to be</p>	<p>(B) Recognition that at operational level colleges function by section</p> <p>(B) Areas are beginning to offer curriculum services to other sections</p>	The responses suggest that both Colleges share information between sections, it would appear that College (B) has progressed into sharing Curriculum services

	done by all managers		
THEMES	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES	EVALUATION STATEMENT
Gaps	Evidence suggests that both Colleges recognise "Gaps" within their level of provision	<p>Evidence suggests that differences identified by the Colleges are specific.</p> <p>(A) Evidence suggests identification of various gaps</p> <p>Internal knowledge gaps related to college provision</p> <p>Employers not being aware of what courses contain</p> <p>Curriculum not providing enough variety</p> <p>(B) Evidence suggests that staff recognise internal skills may not be sufficient to meet the requirements of a curriculum that responds to identified need</p>	Responses suggest that both Colleges have identified internal "gaps" within their remits, and are aware of external "gaps" identified by employers
TARGETS	<p>(A) Curriculum based around market signals and economic climates</p> <p>(B) Evidence suggests that targets are set and the curriculum</p>		The responses suggest that the decision making process at both Colleges is based around the need to obtain funding and meet external targets set by the

	subjects are chosen on the basis of gaining the highest amount of funding and meeting government targets		government
THEMES	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES	EVALUATION STATEMENT
PROVISION	<p>(A) Evidence suggests that curriculum decisions are based on local demand or economic need</p> <p>Areas are encouraged not to put on courses which are not viable in relation to funding</p> <p>Provision should be robust and diverse</p> <p>(B) Evidence suggests that change has occurred in the way the curriculum decisions are made, curriculum planning being funding led rather than traditionally led</p>		<p>Responses suggest that this is closely linked with the above theme of targets</p> <p>Strengthening the evidence the decision making process at both Colleges is based around the need to obtain funding and meet external targets set by the government</p>

Appendix 31

College A's response to:

D If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affects the provision of the curriculum

College A	If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affects the provision of the curriculum	Strong Knowledge	Weak Knowledge
C1 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>As I said the requirements from the funders including the needs analysis has a profound affect on the colleges provision and this is becoming more complex as time goes on...</i> ○ <i>we have to run more like a business since incorporation...</i> ○ <i>we have to be ruthless sometimes...</i> ○ <i>and this can be difficult for some staff to understand or appreciate...</i> ○ <i>but that's how it is now...</i> ○ <i>we have to provide what forecasters say is required in the region if we are to be successful with funding bids,</i> ○ <i>we also have to deliver a high quality provision and show good results...</i> ○ <i>We have to be sharp to market signals and quick to respond accordingly...</i> 	✓	
C1 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I think the needs analysis requirements from the funding agency has had a big impact, with the actual funding methodology requirements...</i> ○ <i>I think there are other issues related to the curriculum which link with this ...</i> ○ <i>I think there has been a change of focus over the last few years what previously colleges did was often just offer what you could offer, it was just a case of offer what you'd got erm offering what you staff could teach and then waiting to see if anyone would turn up [laughing] hopefully turn up...</i> ○ <i>in many ways this could be the early stage of thinking about what people out there actually want...</i> ○ <i>I'm still struggling with the issue of erm batching the needs of potential students rather than the ability –</i> ○ <i>what the staff abilities are and that's been evident the the * department when erm work has come in that couldn't be fulfilled by the staff at the college</i> 	✓	
C1 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>The funding methodology is difficult to work with and the needs analysis adds to the affect ...</i> ○ <i>it can sometimes be quite abrupt and</i> 	✓	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>some areas have felt the restrictions more than others...</i> ○ <i>For Post 16 adult education it is difficult to predict need, or shall we say skills based needs, or indeed</i> ○ <i>what is perceived by the funders as skills based needs,</i> ○ <i>we can look at the prescribed statistics in the regional development plan,</i> ○ <i>but this doesn't always appear to serve as a true practical reflection of what employers are looking for...</i> ○ <i>Employers often want something quite specific not necessarily what is contained within a certain curriculum area,</i> ○ <i>it may be spread over several curriculum areas...</i> ○ <i>We have set up specific development sections to help bridge this gap...</i> ○ <i>which at the moment seem to be working quite well...</i> 		
C1 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Of course the Needs Analysis requirements affect the provision of the curriculum everything,</i> ○ <i>every area is now much more accounted for...</i> ○ <i>Kennedy demonstrated in her evidence that there was some excellent practice in terms of widening participation,</i> ○ <i>but of course when your being pushed to meet unit productivity and balance your budgets you go for easy growth,</i> ○ <i>so what you see is a massive expansion, low level provision –</i> ○ <i>not necessary mapped against long-term skills analysis –</i> ○ <i>not necessarily mapped against long term productivity gains in the workforce ...</i> ○ <i>and a good example of that this college along with others is having problems with language courses,</i> ○ <i>is that even the latest funding requirements which have become more prescriptive are for you to make sure that students are studying for schedule 2 courses that they can't just turn up for a recreational course...</i> ○ <i>I think colleges are finding there core FEFC allocation is being driven towards "skills needs" as oppose to lifelong learning in its broader sense...</i> ○ <i>lifelong learning perhaps is not a European concept in terms of skills generally,</i> ○ <i>most of the European vocational system appears to be very much more training needs, business needs analysis, personal development needs,</i> ○ <i>where as perhaps in English FE we've been a little bit more plurative,</i> ○ <i>encouraging people to prove their skills and confidence and</i> ○ <i>I think a number of colleges are now running into</i> 	✓	

	<p><i>problems where they are stimulated extra volume of activity,</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>but they're unable to track progression and as</i> ○ <i>another phrase of mine once you've taught the world to type, you can't do much beyond that its about skill progression.</i> 		
C1 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I think the needs analysis requirements and also the whole funding methodology affects the provision of the curriculum..</i> ○ <i>all areas are affected by this ...</i> ○ <i>we are also a link between this information and the different sections of the college,</i> ○ <i>some areas are more knowledgeable about these things than others...</i> ○ <i>The funding methodologies don't allow us to be flexible enough in our approach...</i> ○ <i>We are driven by what skills gap areas the government want us to fill</i> ○ <i>ie the third-age skills gap because there is now a push to get older workers back into the workforce</i> ○ <i>because the demographics are showing that if there won't be the amount of young people that are required to fill the skills gaps ...</i> ○ <i>so Im sort of pre-empting all that and trying to get the college at the leading edge of doing something to help meet these skills gaps for our employers</i> ○ <i>by bringing specialist who can work with the over 50s because it's a different approach that's needed...</i> ○ <i>This is of course a combination of a response to government initiatives and something which has been identified in local regional needs analysis...</i> 	✓	
C1 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I think that the needs analysis requirements results can have a big affect on the curriculum,</i> ○ <i>what we are able to offer,</i> ○ <i>advised to offer,</i> ○ <i>no longer allowed to offer,</i> ○ <i>we of course, have to work with whatever the funders say, they pay,</i> ○ <i>but this doesn't always fit with what may have already taken a long time to set up...</i> ○ <i>staffing, staff development can then become an issue,</i> ○ <i>as also can redundancy for staff no longer required who cannot or do not want to be retrained...</i> ○ <i>you almost have to have a bank of staff or specialists at your fingertips, which as we all know is not feasible...</i> ○ <i>Also you cannot predict the timing of sudden interest or decline in interest in certain subjects or qualifications,</i> 	✓	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>something which worked extremely well one year may have nothing the next... predicting this is very difficult...</i> 		
C1 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>As I said I don't know much about the Needs Analysis requirements from FEFC</i> ○ <i>but I think that we are more pressured to offer certain courses because they attract more funding and are more cost effective for the College to run...</i> ○ <i>we get a bit anxious when its time to plan...</i> ○ <i>most of my section are part-time and</i> ○ <i>we're never sure if they will have a job next year...</i> 		✓

College A's response to:

D If they have knowledge of needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affects the provision of the curriculum

Category/theme	Evidence	Evaluation statement
Affects on Provision	<p><i>a profound affect on the colleges provision</i></p> <p><i>needs analysis requirements from the funding agency has had a big impact</i></p> <p><i>needs analysis requirements results can have a big affect on the curriculum</i></p>	<p>Responses show that the terminology used to describe the affect indicates that it is "profound".</p>
Reactions	<p><i>we have to be ruthless sometimes</i></p> <p><i>there has been a change of focus</i></p> <p><i>and quick to respond accordingly</i></p> <p><i>what you see is a massive expansion</i></p>	<p>Responses show that there has been a shift in the speed in which Colleges have to "respond" to the political agenda and market signals</p> <p>This can result in the College being "ruthless" in some curriculum areas and creating "massive expansion" in other curriculum areas.</p>
Growth	<p><i>be sharp to market signals and quick to respond accordingly</i></p> <p><i>We have set up specific development sections to help bridge this gap</i></p> <p><i>balance your budgets you go for easy growth</i></p> <p><i>what you see is a massive expansion</i></p>	<p>in some curriculum areas and creating "massive expansion" in other curriculum areas.</p>
Staffing	<p><i>redundancy for staff no longer required who cannot or do not want to be</i></p>	<p>Responses show that there is a need for adaptability within the</p>

	<p><i>retrained</i></p> <p><i>almost have to have a bank of staff or specialists at your fingertips</i></p> <p><i>difficult for some staff to understand or appreciate</i></p>	<p>workforce of the College, failure to provide this would result in high staff turnover</p>
Drivers/triggers	<p><i>provide what forecasters say</i></p> <p><i>sharp to market signals</i></p> <p><i>actual funding methodology requirements</i></p> <p><i>prescribed statistics in the regional development plan</i></p>	<p>Responses suggest that Colleges are driven by political agendas</p>

Appendix 32

College B's response to

D If they have knowledge of need analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affects the provision of the curriculum

College B	If they have knowledge of Needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affects the provision of the curriculum	Strong Knowledge	Weak Knowledge
C2 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>There are many difficulties related to this issue...</i> ○ <i>anticipating trends can be very time consuming</i> ○ <i>and it can be difficult to agree on a satisfactory outcome...</i> ○ <i>which doesn't give the impression that we are seeking to self-sustain...</i> ○ <i>our provision has to stimulate new demand... whilst maintaining a high standard of current provision...</i> ○ <i>the other side to this of course is that we have to be able to provide a quality service to the community and ensure that we are able and equipped to do this...</i> ○ <i>we may identify needs in certain areas that we are not necessarily specialist in at this current time...</i> 	✓	
C2 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Incorporation brought a lot of changes, the funding methodology affects everything...</i> ○ <i>things have changed...</i> ○ <i>the needs assessment is a good idea but very difficult to do thoroughly enough without lots of time, contacts and resources...</i> ○ <i>sometimes you find things out that can cause other difficulties, sometimes we have to offer subjects in response to market demand and we aren't totally ready for this...</i> ○ <i>you can't just offer what you are good at now... unless of course it's still in demand...</i> ○ <i>I think before too long there will be a move towards centres of excellence or subject specialists operating in certain colleges or certain areas...</i> ○ <i>it will not be possible to offer the level of skills required in all areas...</i> ○ <i>I think some subjects will disappear all together...</i> ○ <i>we are very driven by what the government agendas are...</i> ○ <i>where they say the skills shortages are... it is expected that colleges will provide a solution to this...</i> 	✓	

C2 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"The Needs analysis findings affect the provision the funding mechanism affects it even more...</i> ○ <i>We are constantly working within constraints of the funding mechanism, methodology...</i> ○ <i>there are certain programme areas which are favoured,</i> ○ <i>its very difficult to keep on top of this...</i> ○ <i>and maintain the quality of provision that is required...</i> 	✓	
C2 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>the findings of the needs analysis should help us to provide a better curriculum which is more closely matched to the needs of the community,</i> ○ <i>I think the real outcome of this is difficult to measure, and further education seems to be going through a very unsettled time...</i> 	✓	
C2 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Even though I don't fully understand the FEFC yet,</i> ○ <i>I'm suspecting that in the needs analysis they require will expect us show that we are following up on some kind of government initiative...</i> ○ <i>from what I've been told the funding regime is quite difficult to work with... quite restrictive..."</i> 	✓	
C2 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>the Governments targets must relate to their analysis of needs...</i> ○ <i>skills based needs that is...and</i> ○ <i>that's bound to have an affect on what Colleges will offer in their provision...</i> ○ <i>it's very difficult to justify offering something new if it isn't recognised as a need for the country or region</i> 	✓	
C2 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>This links to what I was just saying,</i> ○ <i>I don't think the needs analysis itself is what affects the provision but the restrictions that come from the data/information which is identified at government levels...</i> ○ <i>I mean if they say there is a need for a specific skill, then they will be generous with the funding in that area, even if there appears to be other needs,</i> ○ <i>if they are not linked with what the government is saying we need as a country then, even if we could fill the classes the funding wouldn't necessarily be there...</i> 		✓

College B's response to:

D If they have knowledge of needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affects the provision of the curriculum

<i>Category/theme</i>	Evidence	Evaluation statement
Affects on Provision	<p><i>our provision has to stimulate new demand</i></p> <p><i>should help us to provide a better curriculum which is more closely matched to the needs of the community</i></p> <p><i>I don't think the needs analysis itself is what affects the provision but the restrictions that come from the data/information which is identified at government levels</i></p>	Suggestion that provision should be linked to meeting the demands of the community
Reactions	<p><i>anticipating trends can be very time consuming</i></p> <p><i>its very difficult to keep on top of this</i></p> <p><i>you can't just offer what you are good at now... unless of course it's still in demand...</i></p>	Suggestion that current experience indicated that reacting to circumstances effectively maybe a challenge at present
Staffing	<p><i>there will be a move towards centres of excellence or subject specialists...</i></p> <p><i>we may identify needs in certain areas that we are not necessarily specialist in at this current time...</i></p>	Suggestion that staff see a move towards 'specialisation' within certain areas
Growth	<p><i>I think some subjects will disappear all together...</i></p> <p><i>if they say there is a need</i></p>	Suggestion that whilst some areas may flourish via an injection of funding, this maybe at

	<i>for a specific skill, then they will be generous with the funding in that area</i>	the expense of other subjects
Drivers/triggers	<p><i>we are very driven by what the government agendas are...</i></p> <p><i>We are constantly working within constraints of the funding mechanism</i></p> <p><i>if they are not linked with what the government is saying we need as a country then, even if we could fill the classes the funding wouldn't necessarily be there...</i></p>	Suggestion that the curriculum presented is largely based on the need to obtain funding and that the subjects on offer are established through the political agenda; even though localised studies may indicate that some subjects would reach capacity they may still be unsuccessful in obtaining funding if this is contrary to the result of the Government.

Appendix 33

Comparison of Case A and Case B

D If they have knowledge of needs analysis requirements from funding agency how do they think this affects the provision of the curriculum

THEMES	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES	EVALUATION STATEMENT
AFFECTS ON PROVISION		(A) Responses show that the terminology used to describe the affect indicates that it is "profound". (B) Suggestion that provision should be linked to meeting the demands of the community	Responses show that both Colleges believes that the needs analysis affect the Curriculum Responses show that College (A) is responding as if the needs analysis is an event that has happened to them
Reactions	<i>(A) we have to be ruthless sometimes</i> <i>(A) there has been a change of focus</i> <i>(A) and quick to respond accordingly</i> <i>(A) what you see is a massive expansion</i>	(B) anticipating trends can be very time consuming (B) it's very difficult to keep on top of this (B) you can't just offer what you are good at now... unless of course it's still in demand...	Responses show that College (B) is responding with the needs analysis as part of the process
Staffing	<i>(A) almost have to have a bank of staff or specialists at your fingertips</i> <i>(B) there will be a move towards centres of</i>	<i>(A) redundancy for staff no longer required who cannot or do not want to be retrained</i> <i>(A) difficult for</i>	<i>Responses suggest that both Colleges identify a possible requirement to create a team of subject</i>

	<p><i>excellence or subject specialists</i></p> <p><i>(B) we may identify needs in certain areas that we are not necessarily specialist in at this current time</i></p>	<p><i>some staff to understand or appreciate</i></p>	<p><i>specialists</i></p>
GROWTH	<p><i>(A) be sharp to market signals and quick to respond accordingly</i></p> <p><i>(B) I think some subjects will disappear all together</i></p> <p><i>(A) We have set up specific development sections to help bridge this gap</i></p> <p>(A) WHAT YOU SEE IS A MASSIVE EXPANSION</p> <p><i>(B) if they say there is a need for a specific skill, then they will be generous with the funding in that area</i></p>		<p><i>Responses show that both Colleges link the growth of provision to the findings of needs analysis in relation to market signals and funding</i></p>
DRIVERS/TRIGGERS	<p><i>(A) provide what forecasters say</i></p> <p><i>(A) sharp to market signals</i></p> <p><i>(A) actual funding methodology</i></p>		<p><i>Responses from both Colleges suggest strongly that the main drivers are Government agendas which are paired with</i></p>

	<p><i>requirements</i></p> <p><i>(A) prescribed statistics in the regional development plan</i></p> <p><i>(B) we are very driven by what the government agendas are</i></p> <p><i>(B) We are constantly working within constraints of the funding mechanism</i></p> <p><i>(B) if they are not linked with what the government is saying we need as a country then, even if we could fill the classes the funding wouldn't necessarily be there...</i></p>		<p><i>funding methodologies</i></p>
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Appendix 34

College A's response to:

E Knowledge of Community Needs

College A	Knowledge of Community Needs	Strong knowledge	Weak Knowledge
C1 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>The college need to develop as a whole here and</i> ○ <i>I am aware that some areas of the college are more attuned than others,</i> ○ <i>this is being addressed and will be constantly addressed in the future...</i> ○ <i>We have specifically set up certain sections with this in mind...</i> ○ <i>they are acting as bridge to close the gap between the level of understanding between local employers and ourselves...</i> 	✓	
C1 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I think you can obtain knowledge of community needs,</i> ○ <i>but does it actually help you in terms of what you are actually able to offer as a college...</i> ○ <i>will it be funded even if there is a need?,</i> ○ <i>does it match the government targets...erm ...</i> ○ <i>if it doesn't and there's still a need what do we do? Find some other way of funding it I suppose...</i> 	✓	
C1 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>We all think we know what the local community needs are,</i> ○ <i>we say that we do in our strategic plans needs analysis, which in itself is an interesting concept,</i> ○ <i>but I wonder if we every really do, or indeed ever really will,</i> ○ <i>there are so many different types of need, we have to predict unexpressed need,</i> ○ <i>which is then turned into identified need,</i> ○ <i>the younger cohort of learners have different needs, the post 16 adult learners have more complicated needs,</i> ○ <i>as a college it would not be possible to meet them all,</i> ○ <i>we have to focus on what we are able to do well...</i> ○ <i>we are working with agencies which make demands on us and require that we provide for all these</i> 	✓	

	<i>identified needs within the ever changing goal posts of FE...</i>		
C1 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>You need to be aware of the market signals ... the current market signals,</i> ○ <i>which can be very difficult and take a long time to ascertain,</i> ○ <i>and then of course they change so quickly...</i> ○ <i>whatever needs we identify we can only fund what the local funding agency will agree to ...</i> ○ <i>what we are seeing is a conflict of agendas within the funding mechanism ...</i> ○ <i>to meet unit targets and identify and meet the local economic skills based needs ...</i> ○ <i>We spend a considerable amount on market research and are and have set up various projects and departments which will liaise and work specifically with local employers...</i> ○ <i>skills based needs will be identified ...</i> ○ <i>how responsive we will be able to be will show strengths of provision and also the gaps...</i> 	✓	
C1 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>We are constantly looking at the skills based needs of our community in this department as it is specifically for linking with employers and looking at their skills based needs ...</i> ○ <i>There certainly are skills gaps which could easily be filled by people who could retrain ...</i> ○ <i>many of the third age workers are afraid of technology, because they feel that they haven't got the skills to deal with it..</i> ○ <i>but it's a fear and it needs to be overcome and I think if that barrier is overcome, a lot of them will make good progress..</i> ○ <i>The idea of [one of the projects] is that we use an outreach centre and the people who are dealing with the third age and potential new workers will deal with them in a very specialised way and</i> ○ <i>it may well be that the right place for them to go initially is within that centre itself,</i> ○ <i>before they move on to attending college and walking through the college gates and the feelings they have when they are amongst younger learners...</i> ○ <i>try to make them feel like a special group and make them aware of their skills and help them overcome their fear...</i> ○ <i>Some of the barriers we face are actually getting into</i> 	✓	

	<p><i>the company itself,</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>when you can get in and the owner manager or person that you are speaking to understands that you understand about their business then that is not a problem and they will talk to you and they will discuss their needs with you..</i> ○ <i>I think in the past there has been a lot of long standing beliefs that only academics go in from colleges and universities,</i> ○ <i>Ive heard it said in companies "oh it's alright you coming in here telling us all the paper theories but we've go to make money..."</i> ○ <i>The college is fortunate that is has people like me here who have been at the sharp end in the workplace,</i> ○ <i>had industrial experience first hand and realised what the constraints are in some of the businesses...</i> ○ <i>that's an area I have really tried hard to address at the college...</i> ○ <i>Many of the companies the SME's in our patch find it very difficult to release people to train,</i> ○ <i>we've go to be very flexible in our approach to meeting their needs and that's the culture change that I believe will take place in education ...</i> ○ <i>hopefully when the LSC takes over we will be able to be more flexible...</i> 		
C1 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>This is again sometimes very difficult to acquire...</i> ○ <i>you have what the funders say you should be offering because they have identified it as a need in your region,</i> ○ <i>region not necessarily being your town or village...</i> ○ <i>you have what you know traditionally, historically to work well in the area...</i> ○ <i>you get some feedback from the learners in quality surveys expressing what they think they would like to see offered, does this mean that they need it??</i> ○ <i>Having knowledge of community need is a collection of peoples perceptions of what they think they need, including the college which are all usually quite different ... who is right??</i> ○ <i>And how do we know??, that would be one very big survey [laughs] don't you think?...</i> ○ <i>We seem to only know if we have met a need when it stops becoming a need.. if that makes sense...</i> 	✓	
C1 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>We need to improve on this, its quite a big thing to</i> 		✓

	<p><i>find out about really,</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>there's been a lot of change in work available cos there's no pits anymore and we have lots of projects in all different areas ...</i> ○ <i>Some learners will come back year after year to build up their qualifications, its getting new people in that can sometimes be difficult, learners don't always know what they want....</i> ○ <i>Some people are too nervous to come back to College and don't feel confident that they can do it...</i> ○ <i>We do take part in the colleges surveys and some of the information which comes back from them gives us some indication of what learners would like us to offer...</i> 		
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College A's response to:

E Knowledge of Community Needs

<i>Category/theme</i>	Evidence	Evaluation statement
Types of need	<p><i>predict unexpressed need</i></p> <p><i>which is then turned into identified need</i></p> <p><i>local economic skills based needs</i></p> <p><i>peoples perceptions of what they think they need</i></p>	Response shows that the College has expressed the term need/s using the same terminology as identified by the FEFC
Barriers	<p><i>ever changing goal posts of FE</i></p> <p><i>conflict of agendas within the funding mechanism</i></p> <p><i>afraid of technology</i></p> <p><i>Some of the barriers we face are actually getting into the company itself</i></p>	Suggestion that barriers are the result of conflicting and changing political agendas
GAPS	<p><i>Local level of understanding</i></p> <p><i>how responsive we will be able to be will show strengths of provision and also the gaps</i></p> <p><i>There certainly are skills gaps</i></p>	Suggestion that gaps are found at a local level
Collaboratively working	<p><i>they are acting as bridge to close the gap between the level of understanding between local employers and ourselves</i></p> <p><i>set up various projects and departments which will liaise and work specifically with local employers</i></p>	Suggestion that collaborative approaches exist for the mutual benefit of the community

Appendix 35

College B's response to:

E Community Needs

College B	Knowledge of Community Needs	Strong Knowledge	Weak Knowledge
C2 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>There is a wealth of knowledge about community needs within the college itself,</i> ○ <i>we also have to pursued other external agencies to provide as much relevant community data and information as possible...</i> ○ <i>we need to create a continuous pool of internal and external knowledge about the needs of the community...</i> ○ <i>staying aware of the government agendas and where they match what we are actually seeing...</i> 	✓	
C2 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I am involved with all areas of the college, it's a cross college role, so I get to know lots of information about the communities needs, from internal and external sources</i> ○ <i>I can often signpost people to other areas which is useful</i> ○ <i>we need to put together some kind of internal information system which all managers can access..</i> ○ <i>we are in the process of doing this already...</i> 	✓	
C2 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I have to be aware of several different curriculum areas, programme areas, the other [section managers] have to inform me of their specialist knowledge,</i> ○ <i>it would be impossible for one person to be able to know everything, the community we serve is quite a large area with lots of different diverse needs.</i> ○ <i>Its important that we all work together to build a College knowledge of Community needs...</i> 		
C2 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"we all work together on that, my knowledge is varied between different programme areas...</i> ○ <i>we all form our own opinions of what the community needs and then discuss this in reference to what the needs analysis information indicates ...</i> ○ <i>we all have some areas which we know more about than others,</i> 		
C2 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"I have a lot of knowledge about the local Community needs related to our subject areas</i> ○ <i>... I've come into this post from local industry...</i> 		

C2 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"...We know what we can find out...but I feel that often the information is about learners who have already been identified...</i> ○ <i>what about the learners who don't attend... how do we know what they need?</i> ○ <i>not all people living in the community actually work in the community...</i> ○ <i>looking at what local employers need...</i> ○ <i>they all want something quite specific... very few vocational courses have the luxury of being bespoke...</i> 	✓	
C2 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>As I said we do the out there identification, identifying needs but not necessarily the analysis.</i> ○ <i>I know that's part of the analysis, identifying needs but its not formalising it and its not doing any written papers on it,</i> ○ <i>its coming back and saying hey I've just met 6 people out at * who wonder if we can put a computer course on, and they're going to look for some more you know –</i> ○ <i>its identifying the need that there is a need for it you know... responding to it yea ...</i> ○ <i>or saying to people well what do you want to do –</i> ○ <i>we've got ** part of her work is called open door and we have open door facilitators who will literally just go in to a community and hire a hall and erm</i> ○ <i>perhaps even walk out and say to people do you want to come in for a cup of coffee...</i> ○ <i>and advertise it or try to get people in and that is .. erm its led by the group ...</i> ○ <i>we don't say were going to put a course on and this we get a group of people together which only maybe 2 to 3 mums to start with and say</i> ○ <i>well what would you like to see in this area – what's missing what can we do .. how can we help, and</i> ○ <i>they get together as a group, socially initially and that grows and grows and becomes a class...</i> 	✓	

College B's response to:

E Knowledge of Community Needs

<i>Category/theme</i>	Evidence	Evaluation statement
Types of need	<p><i>the communities needs</i></p> <p><i>large area with lots of different diverse needs</i></p> <p><i>local Community needs</i></p> <p><i>related to our subject areas</i></p> <p><i>what local employers need</i></p> <p><i>learners who don't attend how do we know what they need</i></p>	Responses suggest that needs are identified in general terms
Barriers	<p><i>not all people living in the community actually work in the community</i></p> <p><i>very few vocational courses have the luxury of being bespoke</i></p>	Responses suggest that producing a curriculum to meet the specific community needs is problematic
GAPS	<p><i>we all have some areas which we know more about than others</i></p> <p><i>impossible for one person to be able to know everything</i></p>	Responses suggest that there is a varied level of knowledge about community need
Collaboratively working	<i>information about the communities needs, from internal and external</i>	Responses suggest that it is beneficial to acquire information from a variety

	<p><i>sources</i></p> <p><i>pursued other external agencies to provide as much relevant community data and information as possible</i></p> <p><i>important that we all work together to build a College knowledge of Community needs</i></p>	<p>of internal and external potential partners to build a comprehensive knowledge base</p>
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Appendix 36

Comparison of Case A and Case B

E Community Needs

THEMES	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES	EVALUATION STATEMENT
Types of need		<p>(A) Response shows that the College has expressed the term need/s using the same terminology as identified by the FEFC</p> <p>(B) Responses suggest that needs are identified in general terms</p>	<p>Response suggest that College (A) is using FEFC terminology to define needs</p> <p>Response suggests That College (B) is defining needs using more general terminology</p>
Barriers	<p>(A) Suggestion that barriers are the result of conflicting and changing political agendas</p> <p>(B) Responses suggest that producing a curriculum to meet the specific community needs is problematic</p>		<p>Responses suggest that both Colleges have identified barriers which relate to fulfilling Government agendas</p>
Gaps	<p>(A) Suggestion that gaps are found at a local level</p>		

	(B) Responses suggest that there is a varied level of knowledge about community need		
COLLABORATIVE WORKING	<p>(A) Suggestion that collaborative approaches exist for the mutual benefit of the community</p> <p>(B) Responses suggest that it is beneficial to acquire information from a variety of internal and external potential partners to build a comprehensive knowledge base</p>		Responses suggest that both Colleges have identified a collaborative approach and developing partnership work will facilitate the requirements of the FEFC

Appendix 37

College A's response to:

F Links with any external agencies to meet community needs

College A	Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs	Strong Knowledge	Weak Knowledge
C1 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>I am sure we have many, many links with a variety of external agencies all which will help with meeting the needs of the learners...</i> 	✓	
C1 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>There is quite extensive use made of marketing information in terms of the environment and economic development...</i> o <i>I think some areas of the college use this more than others...</i> 	✓	
C1 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>As a College we have formed many links with external agencies, each section has its own specialist links,</i> o <i>these are also being recorded on our database which should allow more access to all college sections...</i> o <i>an awareness raising strategy that we are currently developing...</i> 	✓	
C1 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>We have many links with industry and voluntary agencies each section will have its own specialist area links ...</i> o <i>you will find more specifics from the other section managers...</i> 	✓	
C1 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>We have many links with all kinds of agencies... most of the different sections of the college also have their own specialist links...</i> o <i>we are keeping those on a database too...</i> 	✓	
C1 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>There are many different learner needs and some we can cope with internally some we have to acquire external help,</i> o <i>we do have links with volunteer agencies, we have links with help groups for various things...</i> o <i>We need links with employers to provide work placements for some learners, which again can be difficult especially in small companies...</i> 	✓	
C1 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>We attend a community forum which has been set up to help link agencies with the college, like the volunteer agencies and some local employers,</i> o <i>it's all very new at the moment and people are just finding their feet...</i> 		✓

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>There is going to be a college database which we can all access...which should help us form more links where we need to...</i>		
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College A's response to:

F Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs

<i>Category/theme</i>	Evidence	Evaluation statement
Collaboration/ Partnerships	<p><i>many links with a variety of external agencies</i></p> <p><i>formed many links with external agencies</i></p> <p><i>links with volunteer agencies</i></p> <p><i>some local employers</i></p> <p><i>specialist area links</i></p>	Responses suggest that numerous external links have been developed
Information	<p><i>extensive use made of marketing information</i></p> <p><i>information in terms of the environment and economic development</i></p> <p><i>There is going to be a college database</i></p> <p><i>being recorded on our database</i></p>	Responses suggest that information about the economic development needs is being processed and captured on a new College database

Appendix 38

College B's response

F Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs

College B	Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs	Strong knowledge	Weak Knowledge
C2 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>We have many links with external agencies who provide us with intelligence about community needs...</i> o <i>national reports, the tecs, local authorities all give us assistance with this process...</i> o <i>each section also has links with agencies related to their specialist areas...</i> 	✓	
C2 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Again I have contacts with various agencies, some government so local volunteers, some companies... and</i> o <i>this information is going to be part of the internal information system... addresses, contact numbers, and a profile of details of connection/s with the college...</i> 	✓	
C2 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>"We have formed many important links with local employers, voluntary agencies, each area has its own specialist links..."</i> o <i>We all have to work together to generate the kind of curriculum that is required from the Government ... to meet the local needs of the community...</i> 		
C2 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>"we have built lots of relationships with external agencies in each programme area, this has helped us find out information about community needs in some cases on a more micro level,</i> o <i>we also form relationships with local employers, all Colleges are encouraged to build relationships especially with local employers...</i> 		
C2 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>"I believe the College has developed a lot of relationships with local external agencies and industry to help meet the needs of the community...!"</i> 		
C2 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>"The College has worked hard to develop external links with various agencies from all areas..."</i> 	✓	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>some programme areas have more links than others....</i> ○ <i>I think this is an area where we could develop...</i> ○ <i>we could share more information between sections...</i> ○ <i>we are having to change the way we work as a College...</i> ○ <i>its not possible to succeed working in isolation..."</i> 		
C2 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>We co-ordinate a lot with lea partnerships covering a 20 mile radius...</i> ○ <i>we have built up lots of contacts with a variety of agencies which help with all kinds of learners...</i> ○ <i>we also have good links within the college...</i> ○ <i>all the other sections come to us...</i> 	✓	

College B's response to:

F Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs

<i>Category/theme</i>	Evidence	Evaluation statement
Collaboration /Partnerships	<p><i>with external agencies</i></p> <p><i>so local volunteers, some companies</i></p> <p><i>local employers, voluntary agencies, each area has its own specialist link</i></p> <p><i>built lots of relationships with external agencies in each programme area</i></p> <p><i>We co-ordinate a lot with lea partnerships covering a 20 mile radius</i></p> <p><i>its not possible to succeed working in isolation</i></p>	Responses suggest that links have developed into relationships with local employers
Information	<p><i>intelligence about community needs</i></p> <p><i>information about community needs in some cases on a more micro level</i></p> <p><i>we could share more information between sections</i></p>	Responses suggest that the information/intelligence gleamed from external sources is in its embryonic stages of development

Appendix 39

Comparison of Case A and Case B

F Links with any external agencies to meet community (learners) needs

THEMES	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES	EVALUATION STATEMENT
Collaboration/ Partnerships		<p>(A) Responses suggest that numerous external links have been developed</p> <p>(B) Responses suggest that links have developed into relationships with local employers</p>	<p>Responses suggest that although both Colleges have developed links with external partners College (B) has developed these into relationships</p>
Information		<p>(A) Responses suggest that information about the economic development needs is being processed and captured on a new College database</p> <p>(B) Responses suggest that the information/intelligence gleaned from external sources is in its embryonic stages of development</p>	<p>Responses suggest that both Colleges have acquired information to identify economic development needs, College (A) was establishing a database to further utilise this information cross College</p>