

Gomery, D. (2019). University technical colleges: Pedagogy meets market demands. In F. Marhuenda & M.J. Chisvert-Tarazona (Eds.), *Pedagogical concerns and market demands in VET. Proceedings of the 3rd Crossing Boundaries in VET conference, Vocational Education and Training Network (VETNET)* (pp.34-44) <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2641685>

University Technical Colleges: Pedagogy Meets Market Demands

Gomery, Dianne

UCL Institute of Education d.gomery.14@ucl.ac.uk

Abstract

There is growing global interest in how countries help prepare young people for participation in the world of work. In seeking to understand the relationship between schooling and ‘readiness’ for work this paper examines University Technical College (UTC) leaders’ perceptions when operating in a ‘demand-led’ quasi-market system in England. Key findings highlight the complexity and interrelatedness of the perceived competitive environment, populated by a range of pressures, tensions, and challenges. Despite working in a ‘messy’ culture and environment, these leaders continued to believe in the technical education on offer, and its value in meeting students’ needs. Many students across the research sample had broadly similar profiles, leading to suggestions that some UTCs may operate, inadvertently, as a form of social segregation. A salient finding was the effectiveness of the quasi-market to generate perceptions of competition between providers, irrespective of a UTC’s ‘niche’ technical education offer, the valued knowledge exchange between sponsors and students, the state of the art buildings and industry standard equipment, and employer demand for a skilled workforce.

Keywords

university technical colleges; quasi-market; pedagogical concerns; leaders’ belief in technical education; social segregation

1. Introduction

This paper contributes to the growing interest in young people’s transition between school and work, and vocational education and training (VET) in non-work settings that has echoes of international research findings (Ball, Junemann, & Santori, 2017; Billett, 2018; Henning Loeb & Lorenz, 2018; Obaid Al-Mujaini, 2018). In parallel, the study also contributes to debates regarding VET and the market system of “spontaneous order” (Foreman-Peck, 2004) that operates in England as an ostensibly efficient mechanism to determine supply and demand (Institute for Government, 2012). Throughout the paper two terms are adopted - ‘technical education’, and ‘leaders’. Following the Wolf Review (2011) of vocational qualifications, the term technical education has become more widely adopted to refer to a programme of academic and vocational study that prepares students for progression into the world of work or study, and ‘leader’ refers to a principal (Head Teacher) or deputy principal.

The study examines UTCs as new technical education institutions through three lenses: firstly, by considering how leaders manage their pedagogical concerns when operating within a demand-led system; secondly, through leaders’ perceptions and responses to the demands that emanate from the quasi-market and central Government; and thirdly, by leaders’ perceptions of themselves as being empowered, in practice, to fulfil the aim to establish a technical education route with a curriculum that meaningfully meets the needs of students.

The initial concept of a university sponsored technical education college for students age 14-18years was championed by the late Sir Ron Dearing (1930-2009) and Lord Kenneth Baker, following the demise of Tomlinson’s (2004) proposals for wider education reform.



Together Baker and Dearing set up the Baker Dearing Educational Trust (BDT) in 2009 to promote the establishment of UTCs, and in the same year Baker became both Chair of “BDT, UK”, and Chair of the independent charity “Edge Foundation, UK” (2009 to present day). BDT asserts that UTCs were developed by the Trust in response to:

The repeated demands from employers for an increased number of well-educated, high status technicians and engineers. They [UTCs] are demand-led, and have strong support from all three main political parties (BDT, 2014, p. 1).

Employer participation was therefore not only pivotal to the intended success of UTCs but also to broader efforts to boost the UK economy by ensuring an increased and improved supply of technicians and highly skilled vocationally qualified people (Baker, 2013). Established in England from 2010 UTCs are all-ability, mixed gender, state-funded secondary schools that operate independently of local authority government control, with a typical capacity of 500 to 800 students. Students ‘self-select’ to attend a UTC after completing either 3 years (at age 14) or 5 years of secondary education (at age 16) at a school sited across a sub-regional admissions area. There were 49 UTCs open in April 2018, 8 had closed since 2010, and one was due to close (2019). Each of the 49 open UTCs were sponsored by one or more ‘sponsor stakeholders’ (universities and local or national employers) with strengths in the UTC’s STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and technical education subjects, that required access to industry-standard equipment.

In the early development phase of UTCs (2010-14), sponsor stakeholders included further education (FE) and higher education (HE) institutions, and employers. Collectively these sponsor stakeholders worked in partnership to devise the UTC’s strategic direction, ethos and vision, input into the curriculum; and, importantly, they were to also contribute to teaching and learning. Employer sponsor stakeholders were to provide students with a range of support including industry-devised projects and work experience opportunities intended to enable them to make well informed ‘life-course transitions’ either into the world of work or on to further study. Thus, a new ‘community’ was formed around the UTC model as a ‘hybrid’ institution that crossed the boundaries of the existing and complex series of systems and organisational structures, governance models, programmes of study, qualifications, and skills matrices of the different agencies and actors involved (Edward et al, 2007; Evans, 2014; Keep, 2015; Lave & Wenger, 1991; UKCES, Group, & Gazelle Colleges, 2013).

University sponsorship of UTCs was, however, significant, for it offered a potential alignment of the curriculum to university progression pathways. As such, university sponsors were viewed by leaders as ‘enablers’ that crossed the traditional institutional boundaries and therefore worked to legitimise UTCs within education, and promoted, to a degree, the value of ‘technical education’ as an equally valid route to university. Encouraged by BDT’s vision for UTCs, leaders had perceived that their collective work could help change the “deep cultural attitudes and assumptions that cannot be rectified through tinkering with frameworks of provision or qualification, nor even through well-choreographed exhortation” (Lucas, Claxton, & Webster, 2010, p. 1). Employer sponsor stakeholder engagement was also central to the UTC model as a means of facilitating the acquisition of high level competencies and transferable skills, such as learner autonomy (Ravitz, 2008) and collaborative teamwork that are increasingly in demand by employers and international governments (Warmington & Leadbetter, 2010). Employer sponsors were instrumental in engaging UTC students in “the kinds of authentic problems individuals are likely to face on the job” (Duke, 2014, p. 83).

The expansion of UTC numbers was driven by BDT and, significantly, by the Trust’s Chair, Lord Baker, the former Secretary of State for Education and Science (1986-89) under the Conservative Government (1979-90). BDT’s vision was for UTCs to create “a

performance and development culture based on setting high expectations in which students can succeed” (Gurr et al, 2014, p. 87), and one that would be attractive to parents and students. A defining characteristic of the UTC model was its responsiveness to the knowledge and skills their sponsor stakeholders prioritised and valued (BDT, 2012; Baker, 2013) to create practical learning contexts where typically “there is a fusion of intellectual and physical activities” (Gazeley & Pring, 2013, p. 72). To help the formation of UTCs the Department for Education has, since 2011, allocated “almost £330m of capital spending” (Dominguez-Reig & Robinson, 2018, p. 6). Recent research has proposed that UTC closures are the outcome of a range of “inherent problems” (Kettlewell et al, 2017) that include the number of students recruited, the curriculum offer, students’ performance in national examinations, national inspection grades, the quality of marketing and brand identity, and the range of sponsors.

In parallel, changes to the global labour market since 2010 have generated a trend in England for employment to become increasingly precarious and less secure, for pay levels to remain low and pay increases suppressed, and for reduced employer investment in ‘on the job’ training (Standing, 2016). The disappearance of large sectors of the economy that formerly operated as transition hubs between school and work are becoming ever more fragile and tenuous or may no longer exist. Thus, an increasing percentage of students are attempting to manage the shift in social, political and technological change, whilst continuing to attend school or training. For some students schools, however, may now operate outside of what they perceive as schools’ “legitimising purpose”, that is, schools no longer act as a direct stepping stone to future employment (Kress, 2008, p. 259) nor sufficiently prepare students to consider their transition ‘options’ into work. An outcome of this shift is the high percentage of young people, and in particular boys, who are alienated from school and from what school has to offer. While Kress identified these shifts in 2008 as major problems for countries of the ‘West’, current research would suggest these problems continue to exist across many countries (Avis, 2017; Billett, 2018; Henning Loeb & Lorenz, 2018). As the authority of the State increasingly shifts to “the all-pervasive power of the market” (Kress, 2008, p. 259), and responsibilities increasingly fall to the ‘young’ themselves to ‘own’ their future, irrespective of the levels of information, advice and guidance (IAG) that may be available, it is reasonable to anticipate further shifts. The independent panel report on technical education (Sainsbury et al, 2016) emphasised the need to have two distinct pathways at post-16; the ‘academic’, and the ‘technical’ pathway with new Tech Level qualifications (2020) to aid progression into work and further study. The success of these developments may signal the trajectory of future shifts.

2. Method

Qualitative research was undertaken (spring 2017) with 10 UTC leaders (existing principals and former principals of open and closed UTCs) of 9 UTCs sited across differing geographical contexts in England (see Table 1). The research design drew upon Jabbar’s (2015) conceptual framework that conceived of competition and competitive practices between schools in the US, which was devised on the understanding that school leaders’ perceptions inform their activities and their responses. Thus, the conceptualisation comprised of four conceptual insights: competitive pressure, mediating factors, range of strategies adopted, and outcomes.

Qualitative data from participants, and document data from publically available government documents and websites were captured to conceive of the complexities of competition and competitive practices as perceived by UTC leaders. Participants (4 female, 6 male) were UTC principals (6 including one deputy principal) or former principals (4) with a range of prior senior leadership experience (3 to 34 years) who were in post between the academic years 2010-17.

Table 1 UTCs (2010-18) Regional Context and Sponsors

UTCs	n=9
Closed	2
Open	7
Lived Market Context	
Urban	3
City and Rural	1
City and Very Rural	3
Town and Rural	2
Sponsor	
Employers 1 or more	9
University 1 or more	9
Further Education College	4
Other	4

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted in either a face-to-face meeting in the empirical setting (6), face-to-face at a designated location (2), or online (2), and all were audio recorded. Audio interview data were fully transcribed, coded to the conceptual framework, were subsequently analysed and interpreted using NVivo11 software, and axial coding was employed to establish patterns and themes across the data.

3. Findings

Successive governments education reforms that liberalised the supply of provision in England, particularly from 2010, enabled Baker, Dearing and the Trust they established to try to harness supply-side reforms for the purposes of technical education, and thereby address the problem of skill shortages of highly trained technicians. To convince government, the public and consumers, Baker and BDT presented the UTC concept and its curriculum as “innovative”, “stimulating and relevant”, informed by employers and supported by universities. Baker’s vision for UTCs was that they would operate as “agents of social mobility” that “gave to many the second chance opportunity that the grammar school had provided forty or fifty years ago” (Baker, 2013, pp. 29–30). UTCs were intended as harbours for the disinterested and disengaged and it was claimed that by closely linking learning to the workplace, students would become interested and involved. Baker had pledged that UTCs would help reduce truancy and disruptive behaviour.

In practice the findings of this research suggests leaders have struggled to balance their pedagogical concerns for ‘learning by doing’ with central government’s emphasis upon national averages of academic performance across all schools, particularly throughout Key Stage 4 (KS4) [when students are aged between 14 and 16years]. Despite the trend to shift the responsibility for students’ transition into work from the State to the ‘Individual’, students have not ‘self-selected’ to attend a UTC. It is also possible that mainstream secondary providers may be actively squeezing ‘niche’ provision, such as UTCs, out of the market by limiting their capacity to compete in the market, and thereby enhancing its own.

3.1 Managing Pedagogical Concerns

There was a broad consensus of support among research participants that UTCs’ strength was the celebration of technical pathways, which were not ‘second class’ and held the equivalent value as any other [academic] pathway, and could lead on to university. By ‘second class’

participant 5 referred to the general perception, including among many parents, students, school providers and some teaching staff, of technical education having lower status and being secondary to that of academic study. Baker's technical education model with its emphasis upon 'learning by doing' through industry projects, and a governance model that included sponsors, was argued by BDT to have the potential to remedy what Gove described as the government's "Failure to provide young people with a proper [a term undefined by Gove] technical and practical education of a kind that other nations can boast" (Gove, 2010, p. 1 para 4.).

The concept of straddling two competing imperatives the 'theoretical' [technical] and the 'practical' or 'learning by doing' was embedded in BDT's original vision (2010) for the UTC curriculum. To ensure balance within the curriculum it was divided at KS4 between Core Academic (60%) and Technical Specialism (40%), and at Key Stage 5 (KS5) between ages 16 to 18years the emphasis upon technical education increased providing 60% of curriculum time on the Technical Specialism and 40% on Core Academic. Students in KS5 typically followed a curriculum that was, invariably, a mix of two 'A Levels' (academic or applied qualifications) and a large 'vocational' qualification. The Baker Dearing Trust envisioned UTCs as 'niche' technical education institutions that were open and attractive to all students with an aptitude for and interest in STEM subjects, and encouraged students to 'self-select' to attend the UTC.

The composition of student intake, across the research sample (Table 2), indicated that admissions were well below capacity, and suggests that this intake was out of line with the national average for the percentage of boys attending, the number of students who claimed free school meals (FSM), and those students who were eligible for Special Educational Needs (SEN) support.

Table 2 Composition of Student Intake (January 2017)

	National Average		50.80%	14%	14.40%	
UTC	n=9 Total	Capacity	Actual Students on Roll (Jan 2017)	Average % Boys	Average % FSM Students Eligible SEN Support	
Total	9	5310	1560	81.4%	9.6%	15.7%

In response leaders most often changed the curriculum and in some cases reduced the number of employer sponsored projects to, ostensibly, meet the needs of students who leaders' perceived as having low prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) at age 11 years, and/or a disrupted Key Stage 3 (KS3) between the age of 11 and 14 years or on entry to the UTC at age 14. The curriculum was also changed to help students and the UTC perform well against the national accountability measures in England (Attainment 8 and Progress 8 introduced 2016) and when measured against the academic performance of all local providers.

Table 3 Student Absences and Persistent Absences (2016-17)

	National Average	5.40%	13.50%
UTC	n=9	Pupil Absence	Pupil Persistent Absence
No data		1	
2016-17 Data		8	
Average		8.6%	24.6%

The profile of average percentage of student absences (8.6%) and persistent absences (24.6%) across the sample were also significantly well above the national average (Table 3). This data reflected, to a degree, the aims of the trust in that these students were potentially the ‘disengaged’ students to whom Baker had referred. However, the absence data would suggest that UTCs as ‘harbours for the disengaged’ may have some way to go to re-engage these students and increase attendance (Table 3). The data may also indicated that other factors were possibly at play that could explain the high concentration of predominantly male students, who were eligible for SEN support and were regularly and persistently absent.

In general, leaders were under a great deal of pressure, particularly throughout KS4, to quickly plug any perceived gaps in students’ prior achievement and learning, and this had resulted in some UTCs reducing the percentage of curriculum time available for sponsor projects and for students to ‘learn by doing’ [participant 9]. Addressing the social and behavioural needs of students and absenteeism rates were common concerns across the data, as was leaders’ perception that some schools were recommending certain students with additional needs apply to attend the UTC (taking students off-roll). In doing so those schools may have improved their overall performance in national examinations, attendance and behaviour, at the expense of the UTC.

Six of the 9 UTCs that reported on a total of 369 KS4 students had Progress 8 (2016-17) scores (a national performance progress measure between KS2 at age 11 and KS4 at age 16) that were all ‘below average’, and 4 were ‘well below average’. At KS5 the majority of the total 561 students had been entered for academic ‘A levels’ (209) with a lower number (196) achieving technical qualifications. It must be noted that the larger Technical Baccalaureate qualification was achieved by less than 40 of the 561 students. This data would appear to be at odds with participant 8’s assertion that students had a preference for “learning through doing” and had a desire to “benefit from the latest technology, working in an environment that feels more like being at work than school” for students were entered for a high number of academic or applied ‘A Level’ qualifications.

Leaders were very aware that they had a number of partners, including sponsors and the government, whose organisational structures, performance indicators and drivers were different from each other. Leaders were mindful that their employer sponsors were responding to changes in the apprenticeship programme and their increased role in determining skills and standards and worked hard to explain to employers the importance of UTCs performing well within the school system. At the same time leaders were managing the considerable impact of the government’s; reform of qualifications (2015-20), national inspection of schools, and reporting of student performance and progress.

3.2 Demands of the Quasi-Market

The underlying hypothesis for the introduction of the quasi-market into schooling was that markets were efficient mechanisms, and that schools would become more effective when they supported the rights of individual consumers (parents and students) to choose their school, whilst schools remained under the indirect control of central government (Chubb & Moe, 1991; Le Grand, 2011). Market proponents (Croft, 2015; Sahlgren, 2013) support the concept of the market as a ‘spontaneous’ and efficient mechanism that enables services to remain viable, is responsive to changes in market forces, such as parent demand, and, ostensibly, is able to drive up standards through competition. Critics (Ball, 2008; Ball, Bowe, & Gewirtz, 1994; Gorard, 2016) suggest this notion of competition to remain viable is based on the false premise that school improvement and raising educational standards will be the outcome of allowing ‘good’ schools to compete for student admissions and thus thrive, while it allows for ‘poor’ schools to struggle and close (Johnson & Mansell, 2014, p. 3).

A defining characteristic of the UTC model was its responsiveness to the knowledge and skills that sponsors prioritised and valued, and working in partnership with sponsors to devise the ethos and vision, curriculum content and input into teaching and learning (BDT, 2012; Baker, 2013). Involving employer and university partner organisations as stakeholders in enacting education reform is not new in England, for stakeholders (employers) supported the formation of City Technology Colleges in the late 1980s, and their participation was integral to the 2004 Diploma developments for whole scale system reform. The input of a range of ‘other providers’ into the skills agenda, including employers, was also a focus of the Leitch Review of Skills (2006). Leitch envisaged collective responsibility would increase action, and provide greater investment in the development of a world-class, skilled workforce, and had therefore recommended that those likely to gain the greatest private return on that investment [employers] contribute the most.

Under the Coalition Government (2010-15) the skills agenda was subsequently populated with a number of policy reviews and initiatives. These included, among others: the introduction (2010) of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs); the launch of UTCs (2010); a Work Programme (2011); the publication of the Wolf Review of Vocational Qualifications (2011); the Employer Ownership of Skills (announced 2011) and the Education Act (2011); City Deals were announced and “New Challenges, New Chances” were launched in 2012; followed by the publishing of the Richard Review (2012) and its implementation plan (2013). In 2013 more initiatives followed that included the Commission for Adult Vocational Training and Learning (CAVTL) report ‘Its about Work’, ‘Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills’ was also published; the ‘Education & Training Foundation’ was established; Study Programmes and Traineeships and Phase 1 (Apprenticeship) Trailblazers (employer groups charged with identifying the new apprenticeship standards for their sector) were announced. The pace of change continued throughout 2014 with: funding for Study Programmes that was conditional on continued study of English and maths; Applied General and Technical Level qualifications were introduced; and Careers Company was announced.

The role of ‘sponsors’, in particular employers, in these reforms and plans for technical education and training may be indicative of a changing relationship between the State, education and employers (Carberry et al., 2015; Keep, 2014). This changing relationship may also be indicative of a neo-liberal approach that supports a demand-led education system, intended to be responsive to market need and trends (Gleeson & Keep, 2004). The drive for a demand-led system with the lead involvement of employers and businesses is predicted to increase, and this could put relationships between providers of education and employers even more centre stage (Carberry et al., 2015), and give employers direct powers over strategy, funding, delivery, and future developments (Carr, 2015).

Partnership working between employers and education establishments is increasingly viewed as a policy solution formed between government and those employers prepared to share the responsibility to address young people’s transition into work. These partnerships, largely unregulated, can be difficult to sustain and are consistent with new public management approaches that emphasise the formation of alliances and shared responsibility.

3.3 Leaders’ Empowerment

Leaders’ commitment to the UTC model and belief in its concept featured strongly across the sample with leaders setting up a professional business environment so that students, as soon they walked through the door, felt that they were entering a building as young adults and were no longer students. Leaders’ believed that this perception came not just from the building, but also from the people [students, leaders and sponsors] who worked in the building [participant 7]. Considerable concern for students was voiced by all leaders, as was a strong desire to do the very best for them because as [participant 3] articulated: “if you care, and you want to do a

good job, and you care about the kids and the results they get, you're completely torn". Here 'torn' makes reference to the tensions leaders experienced between helping students perform academically well in national examinations, and doing what staff believed was 'right and best' for those students. This tension had resulted in some leaders making pragmatic decisions based on what they believed would help the UTC 'survive'. Leaders, generally, were under significant pressure that frustrated them in particular government reform believing: "The government – the same set of goal posts, they've moved and parked them somewhere else, 20 minutes later – parked them somewhere else...I've had enough of you moving the goal posts" [participant 3]. As such, leaders perceived that government had insufficiently considered how the concept of a sub-regional recruitment area would work in practice [participant 10], which created additional pressure, and another form of dissonance, between the concept and delivering the technical education offer in practice. For those UTC leaders in their first year of headship (2), and for whom the option to be 'assertive' with government agencies was not deemed an option at that time, the financial viability of their organisation was particularly difficult.

Leaders in general were highly sensitised to the need to recruit students and low student admission numbers was an on-going concern, as were the small teaching groups, which were costly to deliver both in terms of staffing and per student costs. The resulting variance between predicted and actual student numbers had applied additional financial and competitive pressures (Gomery, 2018). Leaders' perceptions were best summarised by participant 5's assertion that "schools don't want to lose money, and they don't want to be seen that their kids went to the UTC, because we're a competitor". In general, leaders unanimously questioned central government support, and the level of competition that a student's 'unit value', in terms of financial resource, was able to generate between providers. The need to 'attract, retain, or lose' students, and the funding implications unleashed as an outcome, were factors affecting all school leaders. Participant 10, who had previously been a secondary school Head Teacher in a number of schools, commented that the competitive nature of secondary schools meant that if the UTC took 10 students from one school then "that will be a teacher that will need to be made redundant". Participant 10 understood that, as former Head Teacher of a secondary school, he "would not want that to happen". Equating students as a source of 'financial worth' and a 'unit-value' was echoed by leaders and was evident throughout the data.

Overall, leaders valued employers' optimism, their willingness to support projects, student workplace opportunities, and support for student transitions between the UTC and particular occupations that had created its own community of practice with knowledge sharing between the expert and the novice at its core (Felstead, Fuller, & Jewson, 2007; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Similarly, leaders were frustrated by the lack of empowerment they were afforded regarding admission arrangements, and by the national reporting and school inspection regime that did not, in their opinion value, understand, nor support the valuable and meaningful work that they believed was taking place.

4. Conclusion

An education model that purports to meet the differing needs of students and stakeholders through an increased supply of diverse provision may be generating, through competition, 'winners and losers' in the parental choice game (Exley, 2012). It is also possible that the increase of diverse supply of provision may be contributing to a 'virtual' form of school improvement as schools compete for high-performing students, and 'off-roll' students with predicted low academic performance, behavioural or other special needs, to provision that, ostensibly, better meets their needs.

This study would suggest that UTCs' "inherent problems" are less easily identified, and remain hidden within successive governments' belief in and its support for the market (since the late 1980s) as an efficient mechanism to achieve its education reforms. These findings highlight the interdependency, inter-relatedness, and complexity of different agencies working together to create a meaningful technical education offer for young people age 14 to 18 years. The urgent call for more research "into pedagogies that are effective at developing wider skills, in the context of both academic and vocational learning" (Lucas et al., 2010, p. 30) remains as pressing today as it was in 2010. The introduction of UTCs as a niche technical education offer, however, has done little to change deeply held preconceived ideas about technical education at a national, regional, parental and student level. This research suggests that a meaningful form of technical education, that has a project-based teaching and 'learning by doing' pedagogy, is important. Indeed, too important to allow the responsibility for the skills agenda to; further slip from the State to the market, responsibility for students' future work to shift further from the State to the individual, and for all providers to improve through the laissez-faire mechanisms of the quasi-market.

References

- Avis, J. (2017). Crossing Boundaries: VET, the Labour Market and Social Justice. In *International VET Conference: Crossing Boundaries in Vocational Education and Training - Social Dimensions and Participation* (pp. 21–28).
- Baker Dearing Educational Trust. (2012). University Technical Colleges. London UK.
- Baker Dearing Educational Trust. (2014). *University Technical Colleges - Status Report*. London, UK.
- Baker, K. (2013). *14-18 A New Vision for Secondary Education*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Baker, Lord. (2013). Westminster Education Forum "The future shape of 14-19 learning in England." In *A vision for the future of 14-19 Education* (pp. 7–11).
- Ball, S. J. (2008). *The Education Debate* (2nd ed.). Bristol: Policy Press.
- Ball, S. J., Bowe, R., & Gewirtz, S. (1994). Schools in the market place: an analysis of local market relations. In W. Bartlett, C. Propper, D. Wilson, & J. Le Grand (Eds.), *Quasi-Markets in the Welfare State* (pp. 78–94). Bristol, UK: School for Advanced Urban Studies, University of Bristol.
- Ball, S. J., Junemann, C., & Santori, D. (2017). *Edu.net: Globalisation and Education Policy Mobility*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Billett, S. (2018). Promoting Work-Based Vocational Education Provisions: Case Studies and Lessons from Arab Region Countries. *Trends in Vocational Education and Training Research. Proceedings of the European Conference on Educational Research (ECER), Vocational Education and Training Network (VETNET)*, 79–86.
- Carberry, K., Cheese, P., Husbands, C., Keep, E., Lauder, H., Pollard, D., ... Unwin, L. (2015). *How should our schools respond to the demands of the twenty first century labour market? Eight perspectives*. Retrieved from www.educationandemployers.org
- Carr, R. (2015). The Next LEPs Unlocking growth across our localities. Retrieved August 5, 2016, from <http://www.localis.org.uk/research/the-next-leps-unlocking-growth-across-our-localities/>
- Chubb, J. E., & Moe, T. M. (1991). British Journal of Sociology of Education Politics, Markets and America's Schools. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 12(3), 381–396. <http://doi.org/10.1080/0142569910120306>
- Croft, J. (2015). Summary of the inaugural CMRE Friedman Lecture by Professor Sir Julian Le Grand. London, UK: CMRE.

- Dominguez-Reig, G., & Robinson, D. (2018). *UTCs: are they delivering for young people and the economy?*
- Duke, D. L. (2014). A bold approach to developing leaders for low-performing schools. *Management in Education*, 28(3), 80–85.
- Edward, S., Coffield, F., Steer, R., & Gregson, M. (2007). Endless change in the learning and skills sector: the impact on teaching staff. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 59(2), 155–173. <http://doi.org/10.1080/13636820701342483>
- Evans, J. (Lead S. (2014). *Vocational Qualifications*. London.
- Exley, S. (2012). Making working-class parents think more like middle-class parents: Choice Advisers in English education. *Journal of Education and Policy*, 28(1), 77–94. <http://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2012.689012>
- Felstead, A., Fuller, A., & Jewson, U. (2007). *Learning, Communities and performance*. Leicester.
- Foreman-Peck, J. (2004). Spontaneous Disorder? A Very Short History of British Vocational Education and Training, 1563-1973. *Policy Futures in Education*, 2(1), 72. <http://doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2004.2.1.10>
- Gazeley, L., & Pring, R. (2013). *The life and death of secondary education for all*. *British Journal of Educational Studies* (Vol. 61). Routledge. <http://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2013.816045>
- Gleeson, D., & Keep, E. J. (2004). Voice without Accountability: the Changing Relationship between Employers, the State and Education in England. *Oxford Review of Education*, 30(1), 37–63. <http://doi.org/10.1080/0305498042000190050>
- Gomery, D. L. (2018). Laissez-faire localism. *Management in Education*, 32(3), 119–125. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0892020617747610>
- Gorard, S. (2016). The complex determinants of school intake characteristics and segregation, England 1989 to 2014. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 46(1), 133–148. <http://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2015.1045446>
- Gove, M. (Secretary of S. for E. (2010). It's not simply an academic question – why we need radical reform of vocational education: Edge Foundation Lecture. London, UK: Edge Foundation.
- Gurr, D., Drysdale, L., Clarke, S., & Wildy, H. (2014). High-need schools in Australia: The leadership of two Principals. *Management in Education*, 28(3), 86–90.
- Henning Loeb, I., & Lorenz, L. (2018). Trends in Vocational Education and Training Research. Proceedings of the European Conference on Educational Research (ECER), Vocational Education and Training Network (VETNET). In C. N. and B. E. . Stalder (Ed.), *Quality in Swedish and Austrian VET and VET Teacher Education. A Comparative Study* (pp. 173–181).
- Institute for Government. (2012). *The Development of Quasi-Markets in Education*. London, UK.
- Jabbar, H. (2015). *How Do School Leaders Respond to Competition*.
- Johnson, M., & Mansell, W. (2014). *Education not for Sale*.
- Keep, E. (2014). *What Does Skills Policy Look Like Now the Money Has Run Out?*. London.
- Keep, E. (2015). Governance in English vocational education and training: On the functioning of a fractured “system.” *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 1–12. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1745499915612185>
- Kettlewell, K., Bernardinelli, D., Hillary, J., & Sumner, C. (2017). *University Technical Colleges : Beneath the Headlines NFER Contextual Analysis*. Slough, Berks.
- Kress, G. (2008). Meaning and learning in a world of instability and multiplicity. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 27(4), 253–266. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-007-9070-2>
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*.

- Cambridge University Press.
- Le Grand, J. (2011). *Delivering Britain's public services through "quasi-markets": what we have achieved so far*. (H. Simpson & S. Smith, Eds.), *Research in Public Policy*. Bristol: Centre for Market and Public Organisation.
- Leitch, S. (Lord). (2006). *Leitch Review of Skills: Prosperity for all in the global economy - world class skills Final Report*.
- Lucas, B., Claxton, G., & Webster, R. (2010). *Mind the gap: Research and reality in practical and vocational education*. London, UK.
- Obaid Al-Mujaini, A. (2018). *An Overview of the TVET System in the Sultanate of Oman An Investigation on Modules of Work-Based Learning (WBL) Programmes Implementation for Youth in Oman*. Beirut. Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Beirut/images/Education/Oman.pdf>
- Ravitz, J. (2008). Project Based Learning as a Catalyst in Reforming High Schools. *American Educational Research Association*, 1–14.
- Sahlgren, G. H. (2013). *Dis-location School choice, residential segregation and educational inequality*. London, UK.
- Sainsbury, D., Bladgen, S., Robinson, B., West, S., & Wolf, A. (2016). *Report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education*. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536046/Report_of_the_Independent_Panel_on_Technical_Education.pdf
- Standing, G. (2016). *The precariat: the new dangerous class* (Bloomsbury). London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Tomlinson, M. (2004). *14-19 Curriculum and Qualifications Reform Final Report of the Working Group on 14-19 Reform*. London.
- UKCES, Group, 157, & Gazelle Colleges. (2013). A new conversation: Employer and college engagement. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/306968/A_New_Conversation.pdf
- Warmington, P., & Leadbetter, J. (2010). Expansive Learning, expansive labour: conceptualising the social production of labour power within multi-agency working. In H. Daniel, A. Edwards, Y. Engeström, T. Gallagher, & S. R. Ludvigsen (Eds.), *Activity Theory in Practice: Promoting learning across boundaries and agencies* (pp. 72–89). Abingdon, Oxford: Routledge.

Biographical Notes

Dianne Gomery is an EdD student studying under the supervision of Dr Rob Higham and Professor Peter Earley of the London Centre for Leadership in Learning, UCL Institute of Education. She is a BELMAS (British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society) and BERA (British Educational Research Association) member, and a recipient of a BELMAS Bursary Award (2018). Her thesis, to be submitted spring 2019, examines and analyses University Technical College (UTC) leaders' perceptions of competition and competitive practices. Dianne is a former lecturer in Further and Higher Education who has also worked in the private sector. Her recent Management in Education articles include "Laissez-faire localism: Features and emergent themes presented in a case study University Technical College" (2018) Volume 32, Issue 3, and Critical Educational Policy and Leadership Studies (CEPALS) research interest group (RIG) (2018) Volume 32, Issue 4.