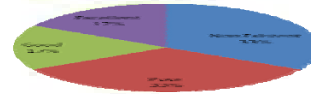


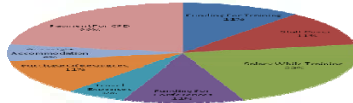
Gillian Rowe

vocational currency: the elephant in the room

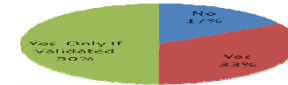
5.1 Does your institution offer you support to ensure that you maintain your vocational currency?



5.2 In what ways does your institution offer you this support?



5.0 If there was a forum which offered you dedicated and validated support for subject specific vocational currency, would you use it? And under what circumstances would you use it?



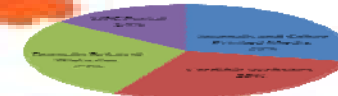
5.3 How do you intend to ensure you are up to date with your vocational currency?



5.4 How do you intend to ensure you are up to date with your vocational currency?



5.5 How do you intend to ensure you are up to date with your vocational currency?



Back ground to the research

- Teachers employed in the FE sector have traditionally come from the technical sector where technical knowledge was a prerequisite for employment; however the cliché 'out of the job, out of date' remains a truism for those with technical expertise.
 - To examine current practice on the maintenance of subject specialisms, I interrogated evidence using the IfL and the HEA websites, however both proved unsatisfactory. As a generalist teaching across the FE and HE boundaries, nothing seemed to apply to my circumstance, and no-one seemed to be having this conversation. This indicated that research needed to be undertaken
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Vocational currency

- The word vocational has many connotations; it has a relationship with a calling, occupation and employment,
 - *Vocation (n) a divine call to, or sense of fitness for, a career or occupation, profession (OED 1994)*
 - Currency relates to the current and not to the fiscal interpretation
 - *Current (a) belonging to the present time, happening now, in progress, recent, up to date, contemporary*
 - (OED 1994)
 - The operative noun here is *sense of fitness*, and the operative adjective is *contemporary* therefore maintaining and developing fitness in contemporary subject specialist knowledge will be called vocational currency
-

Research rationale

- It was important that this research should be seated in lived experience and therefore a qualitative approach was adopted. A semi structured interview format was used, the questionnaire being a guiding structure, because the information sought had a subjective element, this structure allowed for open questions and a selection of responses.
 - Because each interview is personal and unique, it was important to allow each respondent the opportunity to develop any themes that might emerge. As the research had problem solving at its heart, the questions were formulated to encourage critique and discussion on a focused area.
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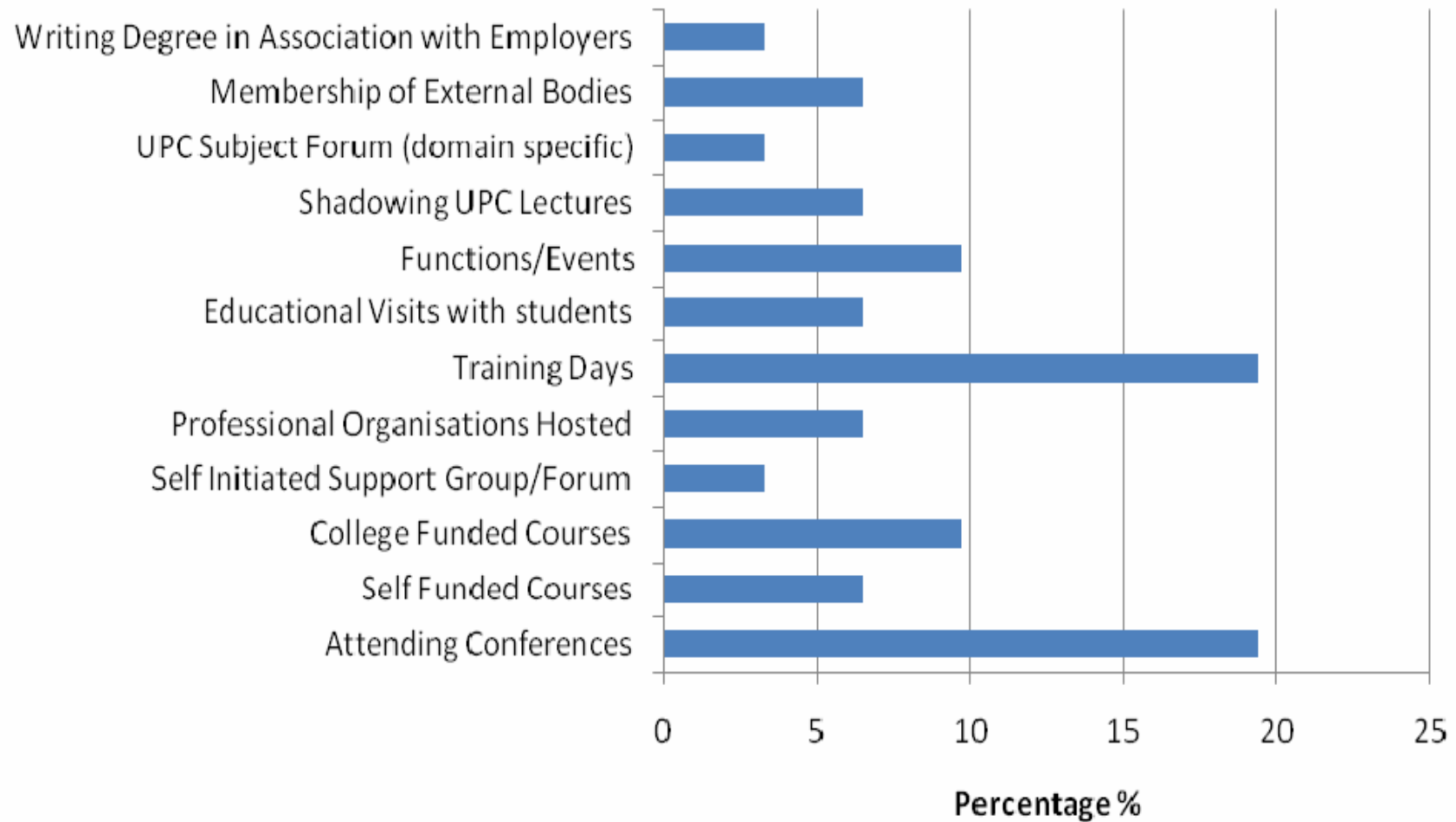
Notions of professionalism

- what constitutes professionalism? engaging with professional development
 - Eraut states: 8 learning trajectories of professional development
1.task performance, 2. awareness and understanding, 3. personal development, 4. academic knowledge and skills, 5. role performance, 6. teamwork, 7. decision making and problem solving, 8. judgement
 - (Eraut, M. (2003). *Developing Professional Knowledge and Competence*. London. RoutledgeFalmer)
 - Engaging in scholarly activity is a requirement of personal development
 - Boyer, Schon, The Prime Minister's Office of Public Services Reform and Dearing says we should engage with it
 - What is scholarly activity?
-

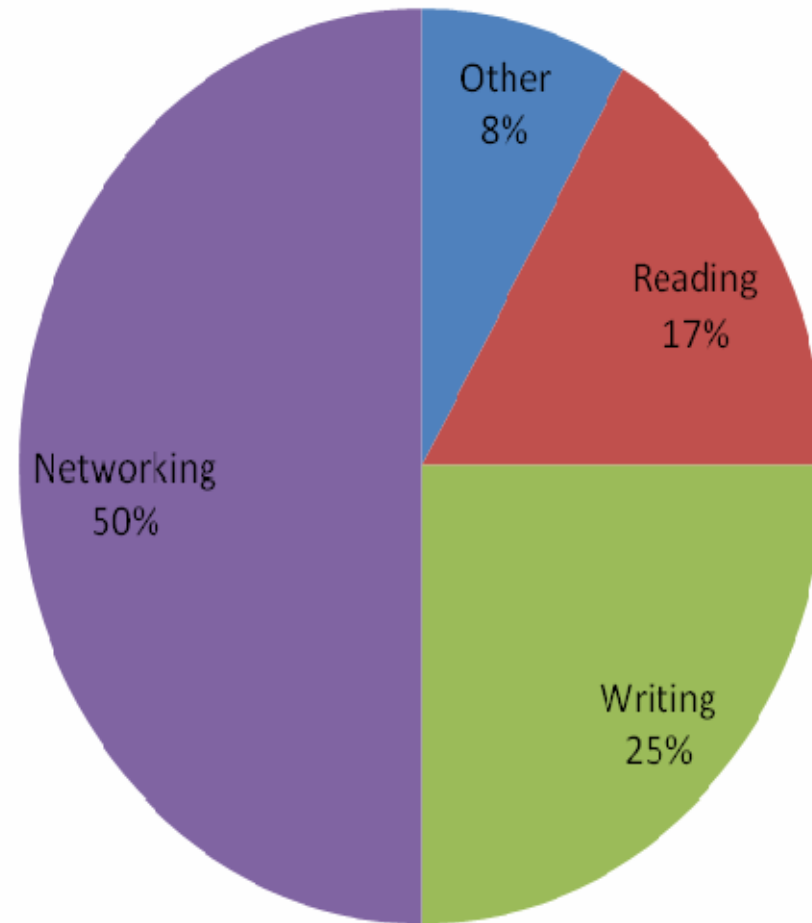
Blackie. P, Hayday. S, Greenwood. M, Parker. L, Thompson. A, (2009) Supporting Higher Education in Further Education Colleges: Policy, practice and prospects
HEFCE

- HE curriculum development
 - Curriculum development that involves research
 - Updating ICT skills
 - Taking higher qualifications – masters, doctorates and teaching qualifications
 - Consultancy to industry and other agencies
 - Research and publications
 - Practitioner/applied research
 - Personal development – action research and reading
 - Attending staff development events within the college
 - Attending conferences and workshops externally.
 - Keeping up to date with the subject specialism
 - Industrial secondments or work shadowing
-

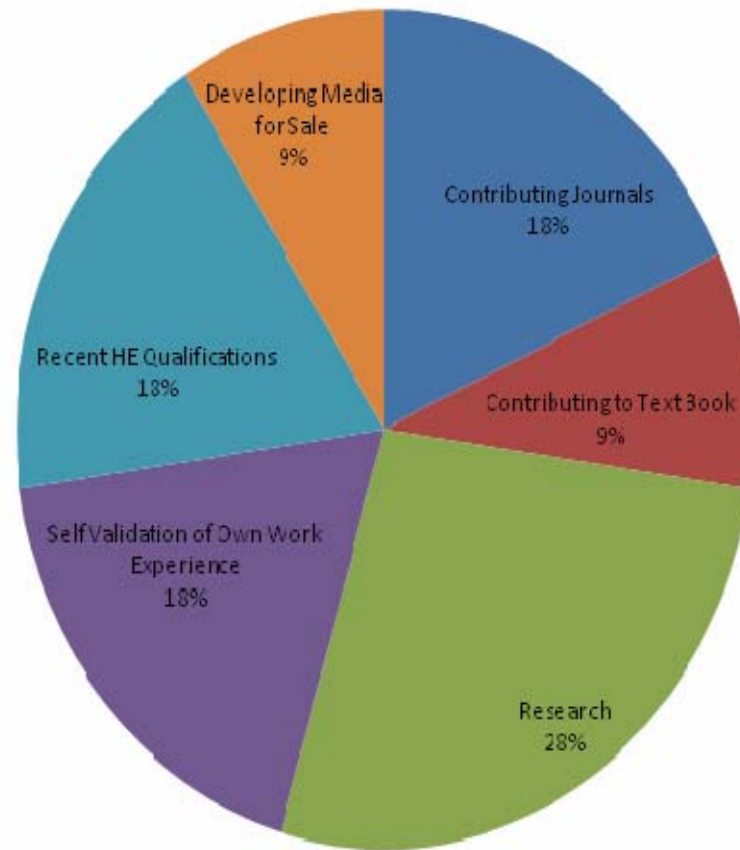
3.0, 3.1, 3.2: Strategies for Maintaining Vocational Currency



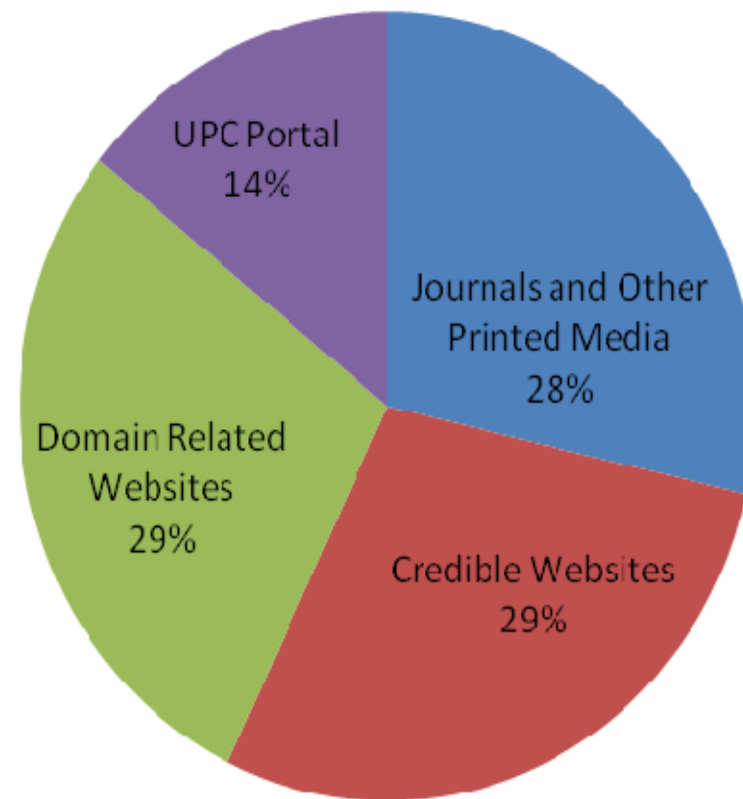
3.0, 3.1, 3.2: Strategy Category



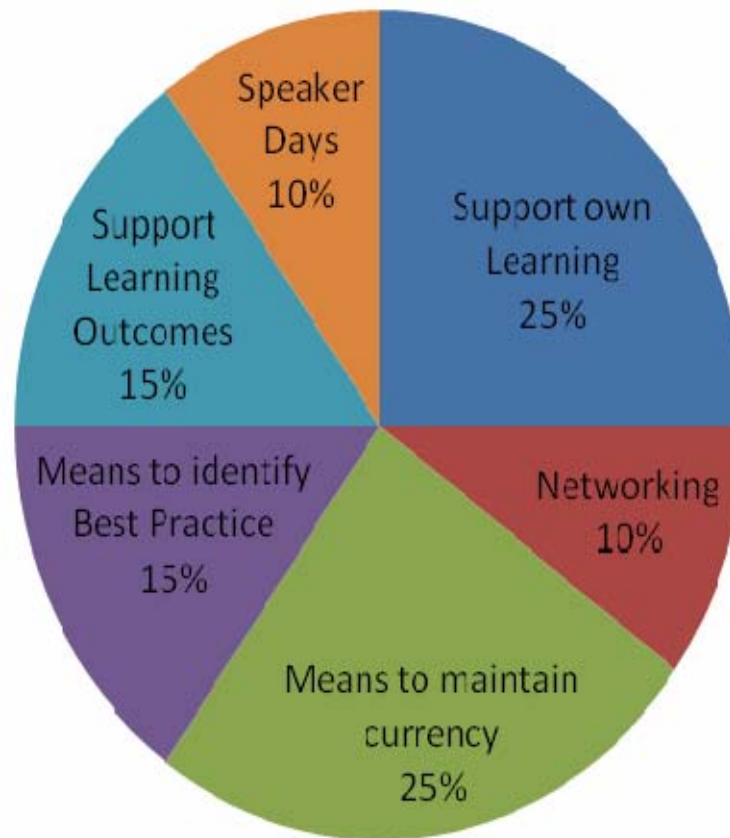
3.0, 3.1, 3.2: Strategies for Maintaining Vocational Currency: Writing



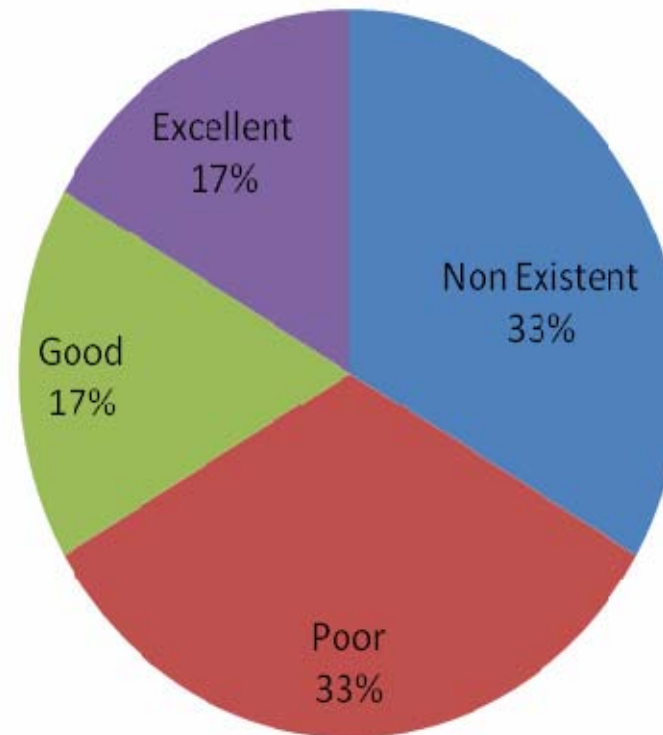
3.0, 3.1, 3.2: Strategies for Maintaining Vocational Currency: Reading



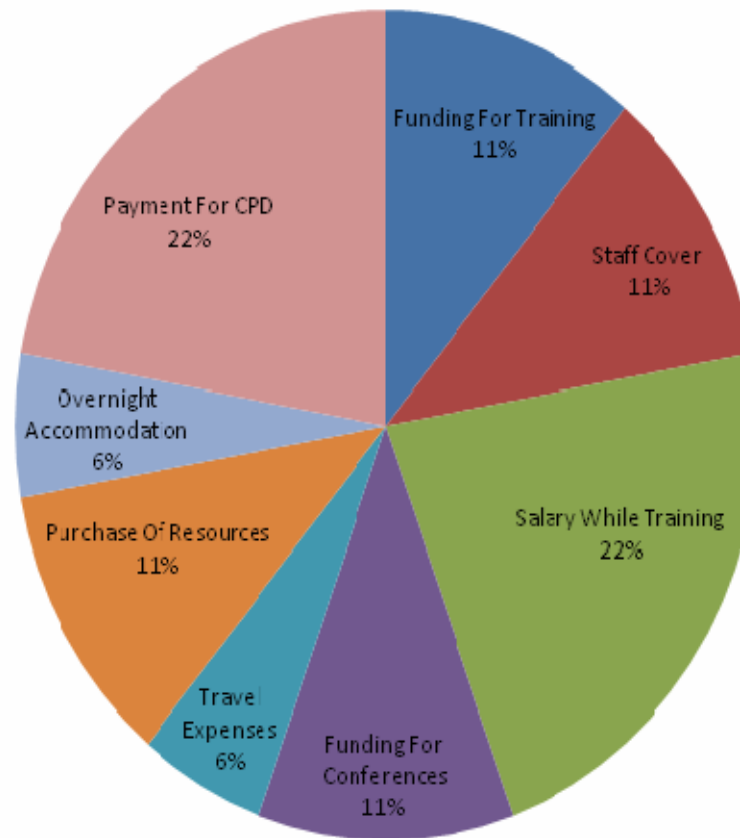
4.0: Reasons to invite guest speakers who are current practitioners



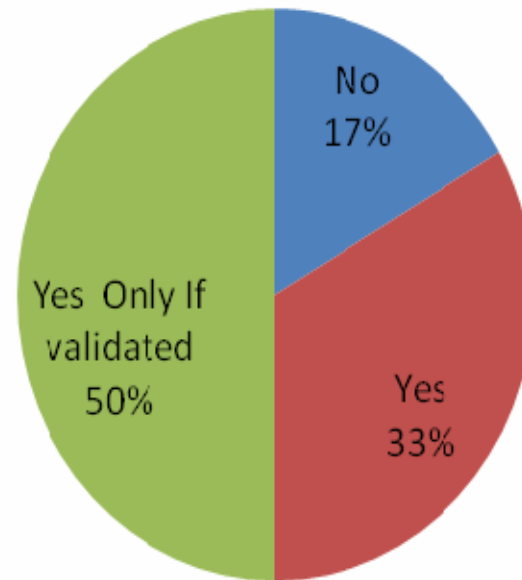
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discussion

- From the analysis of the research, some emerging questions were not resolved, included in this was ensuring quality, this was reflected in self learning from journal work, all the candidates engaged with journal reading and discovery work on the internet, but as one respondent stated 'I cannot read everything'
-

discussion

- This research also considered the use of subject forums, this revealed a complexity of attitudes, the prevailing view was that use of a subject forum as a ‘good thing’, but closer examination exposed questions of validity. Some wished to have a certificate of attendance that would contribute to CPD, and others felt that such was worthless as this was not evidence of learning outcomes
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conclusion

- This research asked the question ‘how do we maintain vocational currency’; the respondents evidenced considerable efforts of self supporting learning that are matched to Blackie’s (et al 2009) definition of scholarly activity, however this is problem that afflicts HE in FE. FE in FE has the IfL, HE in HEI’s assumes membership of specific institutions. HE in FE falls between two stools, with no clearly recognised form of validation that is acceptable to the IQER process. This has led to practitioner insecurity, until this issue is resolved, I contend that maintaining vocational currency is a scholarly activity and should be subject to parity of esteem and a respectful discourse about means of achieving it
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