

# Preface

Interest in emotion work and in the emotional labour of teaching and learning in different educational sectors is a growing area of research interest. It is particularly relevant within the context of Further and Higher Education sectors where many researchers are themselves based. This book presents research based in England's Further Education sector where increasing emphasis on marketised systems means accountability and audit cultures have become embedded within everyday teaching practice. Uniquely, this book explores micro-level issues of the managerial policies regarding classroom lesson observations; the profoundly emotional, philosophical aspects within the processes of these situations, which research asserts causes stress and anxiety for many staff.

For those interested in researching the subject of classroom observation, a small number of 'how-to' guides exist, aimed at helping teaching staff and management with the practical aspects of preparation and stress management before and during these events. Most of this literature is based in schools rather than post-compulsory sectors. There are also chapters about lesson observations within teacher-training textbooks which aim to support new teaching staff entering education, or staff development. However, this research provides very little in-depth discussion of the philosophical and psychosocial aspects of observations. This book illuminates contextualised individual experiences of lesson observations, within the increasing pressures of a global, marketised education system. Drawing on psychosocial theoretical concepts exploring the interplay of hidden or 'underground' micro- and macro-elements of teaching and learning contexts, this book argues how the presence of an observer fundamentally alters the dynamics of a classroom. This is because the observer embodies a witness to emotional labour that is an unarticulated personal act which paradoxically is not measurable, nor perceived as of great value. So, it is not necessarily the performativity that creates the stress and anxiety in an observation, it is the individual's *perception* of this performativity and how it relates to a wider consideration of their emotional labour in the classroom. For this

reason, this book puts forward a case for ending the formal, graded method of lesson observations, in favour of a developmental, holistic approach that is sensitive to the emotional nuances of the individuals involved as well as the social and historical contexts of the institutions in which they are situated.

Because of the diverse use of lesson observations as a tool for staff development and quality assurance policies, educational researchers, policymakers, teachers and managers from many different sectors and backgrounds will find this book valuable.

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