

# PHD Thesis Sample

## Abstract

This thesis covers a theory-inspired, conceptual account involving organizational change at the current interface at further and higher education. In this specific thesis, the education in England will be focused on, especially during the period of 1988 to 2008. It is also focuses on colleges in further education, providing courses in higher education as overseen by a different higher education sector. The study will also look into the function and role of boundary organizations, as well as the nature of the boundary and exchanges work which takes place between these two sectors.

## Introduction

This thesis is theory-inspired, and a conceptual investigation on organizational and institutional change which has taken place throughout a period of twenty years, in both Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) sectors in the field of post-compulsory education. It bridges the gap in the field of research, especially the evolving relationship between both HE and FE sectors which it will be discussed as lacking a substantial theoretically informed research body in order to complement a policy-based empirical work. This thesis will also synthesize a range of different disciplinary traditions in order to create an analytical and conceptual framework for understanding currently emerging hybrid forms of FE and HE organizational forms and the organizational and institutional changes in the delivery of HR which are non-university based.

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## **The Field of Questioning**

The field of questioning investigated in this particular thesis involves the delivery of FE-HE at the interface of the English sectors considered throughout a period of twenty years (Lambert, 2004). The boundary work performed at the interface and the function and role of different boundary organizations which mediate exchanges throughout the FE-HE interface and is contextualized as a part of a much wider system.

This thesis also explores the ever changing roles and functions involved in FE-HE education theoretically, chronologically and conceptually. This two decade period was one that witnessed rapid organizational and institutional change. The purpose of the thesis is to analyze these changes and transitions as a main aspect involved in a wider political economy which situates FE-HE education in a wider analytical and conceptual framework. This framework will then be used in developing a model, contextualizing the exchanges which happens across the interface, as well as the reproduction of social, economic, symbolic and cultural capital crossing the interface (Chen, 2002).



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The study is only limited to FE-HE English education. It is also bounded by location, time and sector. Still, this provision needs to be properly understood considering a wider macro process which includes the massification and marketization of HE which accelerated from the mid-1980s and forward. Associated with these shifts was an emphasis regarding the introduction of private sector practices, competitive mechanisms and management techniques into the public sector. FE-HE education would not be expected to be immune from these trends.

## The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is structured into three different parts. The first part offers the context involving the understanding the developments in FE-HE education, reviewing relevant literature and offering a rationale for the adopted research approach. The second part develops an analytical framework which is used in conceptualizing FE-HE education, constituting the primary research body. The last part looks into the policy developments involved, and examines the importance of theory in illustrating policy (Martinez, 2010).

## References

- Chen, G. (2002). *Creating Markets. Restraints and Opportunities on Wall Street*. Florida: ABC University Press.
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- Martinez, F. (2010). *The idea behind Further Education and Higher Education*. New York: Open University Press.