

# **Beyond Compliance: Exploring The Complexity of Teaching Practices and Transversality of Hierarchies**

**Dr. Zahid Naz**

Queen Mary, University of London, United Kingdom

## **Abstract**

This paper elaborates on the manifestation of complexity through an interpretation of teaching practices by paying particular attention to a process-oriented conception of quality in education. Drawing on the principles of complexity theory, which bear striking similitude to Michel Foucault's discussion on 'emergence' and 'polymorphous' correlations, this paper weaves together findings from semi-structured interviews and classroom observations to examine quality improvement agendas within the context of Further Education sector in the UK. Data collected for this study illuminate the significance of moving away from linear expectations in reductionist observations and audits as a starting point.

The second part of the analysis takes the complexity analysis further by exploring a range of ecological factors that shape institutional hierarchies. It is shown how teaching practices are a combination of compliance and non-compliance at the same time making hierarchal relations complex and transversal rather than based on an oppressive and top-down model. By challenging the traditional attribution of power to senior managers, I explicate how it is possible to rediscover authoritarian relations which are comprised of new forms of power. The patterning of power, I argue, is not automatic and predictable. We must unthink or current common sense to understand that there are no unified identities and subject positions that can be called universal.

**Keywords:** emergence, Further Education, observation, power, quality